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"To Forge or to Follow"
Women of the Church of Ireland in Dublin
1910-1925

CONAGH F. WALSH

Ph.D. 1998
MAY NOT BE CONSULTED UNTIL AFTER 12 MAY 2004
‘To Forge or To Follow’:
Women of the Church of Ireland in Dublin, 1910-1925.

Oonagh Walsh

Thesis submitted in the Department of Modern History (Arts Faculty), Trinity College, Dublin, in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

I hereby declare that this doctoral thesis is entirely the product of my own work and has not been submitted for a degree at any other university. I agree that the library of Trinity College, Dublin may lend or copy this thesis upon request.

Oonagh Walsh
Summary

‘To Forge or To Follow’: Women of the Church of Ireland in Dublin, 1910-1925

is an analysis of areas of particular significance to Church of Ireland women in this period. The topics investigated include the secondary and tertiary education of these women in the early twentieth century, the impact and significance of charitable work, and the involvement of certain individuals in Irish political life between 1910 and 1925. Drawing upon the growing body of work on Irish women’s history to date, the thesis expands the field in two main ways. One is through the source material consulted, and the other is through the particular focus upon the experiences of women of the Church of Ireland.

With regard to the first point, I have made extensive use of records held in the Representative Church Body Library, Dublin to explore women’s attitudes towards work, education, philanthropy and political change. With regard to the second, the thesis contributes to an established field of studies in Irish Protestantism, but is one of the few to consider Protestant women specifically.

The methodology is derived from recent developments in the fields of gender history and women’s history, as well as work published in Britain on areas comparable to the main chapters of the thesis. The most important finding relates to the creation and maintenance of a distinct culture in early twentieth century Ireland. This was expressed through for example charitable work, which emphasised the responsibility which members of the Church of Ireland had towards their church-fellows. Philanthropic work allowed for the creation of a complex series of networks which operated to strengthen Church of
Ireland interests in Dublin. Women co-operated with each other to ensure a comprehensive charitable organisation, but they also directed their energies towards particular religious, social and political outcomes. Those involved in evangelical missions represented the cruelest form of religious expansionism, but even those who were distant from charges of proselytising frequently conducted campaigns of conversion, but in more subtle ways. Where work was undertaken within a solely Protestant environment, women as both activists and objects contributed to the maintenance of Church of Ireland interests, through support for institutions which upheld particular religious and political perspectives. This is not to say that these women were relentlessly conformist: on the contrary, the involvement of women of the Church of Ireland in the independence movement suggests that some at least resisted the ideological thrust of the majority. Their actions throughout the period under examination reveals that the position of the church, and the women within it, was under continual interrogation and assessment.
### Abbreviations

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Military Archives</td>
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<td>NAI</td>
<td>National Archives of Ireland</td>
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<td>NLI</td>
<td>National Library of Ireland</td>
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<td>PRONI</td>
<td>Public Record Office of Northern Ireland</td>
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<td>RCBL</td>
<td>Representative Church Body Library</td>
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<td>TCD</td>
<td>Trinity College Dublin</td>
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Many people have helped in the completion of this work, but my first debt is to my supervisor, Prof. David Fitzpatrick. His enthusiastic and provocative teaching in my undergraduate years led to the start of this project, and his continued encouragement, despite the difficulties caused by distance, to its completion. Many thanks.

The librarians and staff of the several archives I consulted in the course of research are too numerous to list individually, but I would like to particularly thank the staff of the National Library of Ireland, Trinity College, Dublin, The Representative Church Body Library, The National Archives, The Cathal Brugha Military Archives, The Public Record Office, Belfast, and the Library of the University of Aberdeen.

My grateful thanks must also go to Pauric Dempsey, to the extended Emmet family of Co. Wicklow, to the many women in Dublin who agreed to be interviewed in the course of research, and to friends and colleagues at the University of Aberdeen. Finally, my greatest debt is to my parents, Phil Russell and Niall Walsh, and to Glenn, without whom I can say with truth this work could not have been done.
Introduction
Women’s History in Ireland

Irish women’s history has made significant advances in recent years. From a position in which academic engagement with the topic was minimal, there now exists a substantial body of historical writing which explores the key areas of interest for women. However, much debate continues regarding the ideal methodological approach, with the argument over gender history and women’s history in particular recurring in a series of works. For example, in 1991, two essays were published which described academic achievements to date, and suggested possible paths forward for the writing of women’s history. Mary Cullen’s ‘Women’s History in Ireland’ called for more reflection on the social and political context in which this new history was being written, while David Fitzpatrick’s ‘Women, gender and the writing of Irish history’ argued that a greater degree of interpretative subtlety was needed in order to present an accurate picture of women’s experiences. The following year saw a further article, entitled ‘An Agenda for Women’s History in Ireland, 1500-1800’ by Margaret MacCurtain and Mary O’Dowd, contribute another strand to the debate. They argued that women’s history should remain outside of mainstream Irish history, and develop a school of women’s writing which would be capable of offering ‘a major challenge to mainstream Irish history.’ A simultaneously published article, by Cliona Murphy however, entitled ‘Women’s History,

4 ibid, p. 5.
Feminist History, or Gender History?, offered an altogether more inclusive approach to the topic. In this essay, Murphy argued that the marginalising dangers of a separatist historiographical strategy are profound, and that gender history represented the most productive way forward.6

Despite the often heated debate, there is now widespread agreement regarding the validity of research in Irish women’s history.7 The first published works,8 perhaps predictably, concerned themselves mainly with high-profile individuals and movements,9 presenting biographies and often narrative accounts of the more obvious women’s movements and organisations.10 The suffrage movement for example has been well covered, in particular by Cliona Murphy in her 1989 study The Women’s Suffrage Movement and Irish Society. Murphy’s in-depth appraisal of the early years of the

5 Cliona Murphy, ‘Women’s History, Feminist History, or Gender History?’ in The Irish Review no. 12, Spring/Summer 1992.
6 While recognising the force of MacCurtain and O’Dowd’s approach, and agreeing in particular with the necessity to establish a sound body of scholarship on women’s history before venturing into gender history, I agree with Murphy that research in women’s history must seek a ‘meeting ground’ between women’s and mainstream histories.
7 The plethora of publications in women’s history in the past decade is in fact only the start: the most encouraging development in the area is the large number of theses currently being researched in the field in Irish and British universities.
8 See the bibliography for a comprehensive list of publications on women’s history relating to the period of this thesis.
movement provides a critically engaged perspective on Irish suffrage, advancing significantly the earlier brief glimpse provided by Rosemary Cullen Owens. However, Murphy's text ends inexplicably in 1914, leaving a considerable portion of suffrage history untouched.

In addition to recent work on suffrage, women's mainstream political roles have also received attention, especially their contribution to the nationalist movement. Margaret Ward's *Unmanageable Revolutionaries* represents one of the earliest of these 'second wave' political histories. However, while breaking new ground, and drawing attention to the absence of recent research in this key area, the text suffers somewhat from its lack of access to important sources held in the Military Archives (unavailable at the original time of publication), and a self-expressed desire to view this aspect of women's history as part of an historical continuum: 'The tensions [between men and women, between suffragists and nationalists]...are again echoed today as we live through another cycle of the nationalist struggle. And that, primarily, is why this book has been written.' Although a large number of women-focused male-authored essays exist, there are very few full-length studies of women's history by men. One exception is Roger Sawyer's *We Are But*  

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11 In her introduction, Murphy writes that 'After 1914 the nature of the suffrage movement in Ireland changed considerably and therefore that period will to a large extent remain outside the scope of this study.' (p. 9) Yet in many ways the post-war period was the most interesting as far as the suffrage movement in Ireland was concerned, given the intense debate between women suffragists and nationalists over the public roles of Irishwomen.


13 Ward, *Unmanageable Revolutionaries*, p. 3.
Women: Women in Ireland’s History, an unfortunately weak and inaccurate examination of women in Irish political life.

Several other areas of women’s lives have received more authoritative attention. For example, female education has been productively researched over the last decade or so, with Mary Cullen’s edited volume of essays drawing together a wide range of work, and presenting important articles on the development of women’s secondary and tertiary education. Another growing field is the subject of paid employment for women. In this area books by Mary Daly and Mary Jones have both emphasised the importance of women as workers, and contributors to the national economy. However, despite the fact that domestic work, paid and unpaid, was undertaken by most Irishwomen, it still remains a neglected area of research. This has been partly redressed by Joanna Bourke’s Husbandry to Housewifery: Women, Economic Change, and Housework in Ireland, 1890-1914, and Mona Hearn’s Below Stairs: Domestic Service Remembered in Dublin and Beyond.

Women’s experiences of emigration, and their strategies for advancement through

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16 Mary Daly, ‘Women in the Workforce from Pre-Industrial to Modern Times’ in Saothar 7, 1981. This article was one of the first to draw attention to the significant contribution women made as workers in Ireland. See also Women and Work in Ireland, Dublin: Economic and Social History Society of Ireland, 1997. Although Mary Jones’ Those Obstreperous Lassies: A History of the Irish Women Workers’ Union, Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1988, concentrated mainly upon the political mobilisation of women, it revealed the sheer scale of female participation in the workforce.
17 Joanna Bourke, Husbandry to Housewifery: Women, Economic Change, and Housework in Ireland, 1890-1914, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993. This exhaustively researched text demonstrates the extensive nature of female participation, and also charts the broad range of their organisation on a national basis.
education and migration have been explored by David Fitzpatrick, and the largely hagiographical mould of women’s lives in religious communities interrogated by individuals such as Catriona Clear. A further facet of women’s experiences concerns their contribution to charitable endeavour. In this area Maria Luddy has indicated the diversity of female involvement, and raised crucial questions regarding philanthropic motivation. Indeed, even texts on charity work which do not specifically address women or charity inevitably contain considerable amounts of information on them, both as administrators and recipients. Jacinta Prunty’s Dublin Slums 1800-1925: A Study in Urban Geography is just such an example, and reveals how the importance of women’s contribution may be presented in a text which is not explicitly about women.

Although many historiographical advances in Ireland have been made, the writing of women’s history is at a relatively early stage by comparison with English and American work. However in many ways, research on Irish women’s history has advanced

20 Catriona Clear, Nuns in Nineteenth Century Ireland, Dublin: 1987. Given the numbers of women who entered religious orders in Ireland in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, there is an astonishing dearth of research on the topic.
23 There are of course considerable gaps in our histories of Irish women. The area of women’s sexuality is only beginning to be explored, while elsewhere it is a well developed topic of study. The few exceptions are Maria Luddy, ‘An Outcast Community: the Wrens of the Curragh’ in Women’s History Review 1:3, (1992); Dymphna McLoughlin, ‘Women and Sexuality in Nineteenth Century Ireland’ in The Irish Journal of Psychology 1994, 15, 2 & 3; and Jo Murphy-Lawless, ‘The Silencing of Women in Childbirth or Let’s Hear It For Bartholomew and the Boys’ in Women’s Studies International Forum 11, no. 4 (1988). The Maria Luddy and Cliona Murphy edited Women Surviving: Studies in Irish Women’s History in the 19th and 20th Centuries Dublin: Poolbeg, 1990, also includes some examinations of neglected areas such as prostitution. Curiously, given the current Irish academic interest in colonial and post-colonial histories, the role of women in that process has also been largely ignored. Mary O’Dowd’s forthcoming article ‘Women and the Colonial Experience in Ireland, c. 1550-1650’ in T. Brotherstone, D. Simonton
remarkably rapidly, due partly to the work being done in other countries. Thus some of
the more recently published material displays a willingness to interrogate the role of
women in less popular movements, and to present more accurate, if less celebratory,
interpretations.24 In particular, a number of collections of essays in the past few years have
drawn together a range of new research, and have engaged with the question of how Irish
women’s history might be presented. These collections are interesting in terms of their
implicit prioritising of areas of interest, and for their engagement with wider
historiographical issues. For example, the 1994 volume Coming Into the Light: The Work,
Politics and Religion of Women in Ulster, 1840-194025 emphasises the lack of attention
women’s roles in Ulster have received from historians. Yet the collection of eight essays
focuses heavily upon Protestant women - only one has a specifically Catholic focus, on
convent organisation, and another has no particular religious bias. This raises the question
of whether region, gender, or religion should be the principal focus, though it also
emphasises just how problematic a term ‘women’s history’ can be. Similarly, the 1997
Gender Perspectives in 19th Century Ireland: Public and Private Spheres26 provides a
practical demonstration of how ‘gender’ is interpreted in many current studies as
‘woman’. Out of a total of eighteen essays, only three present either a gendered reading of

and O. Walsh (eds.) Gendering Scotland: International Perspectives in Scottish History Edinburgh:
Cruithne Press, 1998, is one of the first to tackle the subject.
24 Mary Cullen, ‘How Radical was Irish Feminism between 1860-1920?’ in P.J. Corish (ed.) Radicals,
Rebels and Establishments, Dublin: Historical Studies, V. What is also cheering is the reconsideration of
women’s public participation in the early years of the Free State. From a standard presumption of
deliberate exclusion of women from the political process, Mary Daly has indicated a somewhat different
picture, which allows for the emergence of a more complex history. See ‘Women in the Free State, 1922-
39: the Interaction between Economics and Ideology’ in Journal of Women’s History vol. 6, no. 4/vol. 7,
25 Janice Holmes and Diane Urquhart (eds.), Coming Into the Light: The Work, Politics and Religion of
an event or text, or deal with male and female experiences equally. Of the remainder, two have an exclusively male focus, and the others are exclusively female, raising questions about the use of gender as an analytical tool by Irish historians and literary critics.27

Essay collections are of course determined to a significant degree by current research, and by the available sources. The 1995 volume, Women, Power and Consciousness in 19th Century Ireland: Eight Biographical Sketches reveals significant shifts in focus for just these reasons: ‘Our original intention was to study a number of Irish women who were consciously feminist and played key roles in campaigns to improve the status of women in the nineteenth century. This plan was modified by the research which was actually in progress and on which we could draw.’28 However once again the criteria applied - in this case ‘power’ and ‘consciousness’ - throws up a particular type of women. Of the eight, only one is Catholic. Perhaps these moments reveal a more interesting aspect of Irish women’s history, in that they demonstrate on a practical level the most important influences on the lives of individuals and groups. The 1997 Women and Irish History does however represent a new departure in the history of Irish women.29 Contributors were asked to ‘explore the ways in which women’s history has challenged their understanding of traditional Irish history’30 and the end result, determined by a thematic rather than biographical approach, is one in which the mainstream narrative is genuinely expanded to

27 The foreword, by Mary Cullen, encapsulates the difficulty. Although defining gender as ‘social relationships between men and women, and also between different groups of men and different groups of women’, she goes on to discuss, exclusively, women’s history and women’s experiences. pp. 6-9.
30 ibid, p. 14.
include women. The essays stand as specific examinations of women’s involvement, while enriching the existing, predominantly male accounts of politics, law and the family.

**Methodology**

This thesis concerns itself with some of the broader issues relating to Irish women’s history generally, but it focuses specifically upon the experiences of women of the Church of Ireland in Dublin. The chronological span is 1910 to 1925, and the thesis examines areas of particular interest and activity for many of these women, during a period of often intense political, religious and social tension in Ireland. The transition from a British to an Irish administration was not unproblematic for many, but what is perhaps surprising is the manner in which many ordinary Protestant women of the middle and working classes adjusted to both the prospect of change, and to change itself. In the main, a pragmatic acceptance was characteristic, tempered however with a determination to maintain a strictly Protestant identity in the new state. As early as the 1890s, the groundwork was laid by strengthening religious links within the Anglican Church as a whole, as well as encouraging contact with Presbyterians and Methodists, and continuing to educate and raise children within an all-Protestant milieu.

Examinations of the Protestant experience in early twentieth century Ireland are not new; interest in the status of Anglicans in particular has expressed itself in publications from the early 1970s onwards.31 Concerns regarding the survival of the Church of Ireland

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community in the modern Irish state are behind many of these works, an emphasis which has perceptively moved with recent political developments, especially the outbreak of the troubles in Northern Ireland. Jack White’s *Minority Report* for example assessed the history of the Anglo-Irish since Independence, and countered assertions that they had been actively discriminated against since 1922. The most recent study of the community, Alan Acheson’s *A History of the Church of Ireland 1691-1996* while cataloguing a long and vibrant tradition, indicates that the aftermath of the recent Troubles may pose the greatest threat to the Church of Ireland. In many of these discussions, however, remarkably little attention has been paid to the experiences of Protestant women, especially the non-elite. Despite the significant roles played by Protestant women in the fields of literature, philanthropy, education and politics, they remain the most neglected sector of Ireland’s largest minority. A few recent studies have however gone some way towards addressing this problem. For example Alison Jordan’s two books *Margaret Byers: pioneer of women’s education and founder of Victoria College, Belfast,* and *Who Cared?: Charity in Victorian and Edwardian Belfast* demonstrate the importance of Protestant women’s contribution to the fields of education and philanthropy respectively. Similarly Anne O’Connor and Susan Parke’s history of Alexandra College reveals a good deal about

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*34* ibid, p. 264.

Protestant women's self perception in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.\textsuperscript{37}

Leon O'Broin's lively exploration of the contribution made by Alice Stopford Green and her niece Dorothy Stopford Price to Irish nationalism, is part of a broader study of Protestant responses to nationalist politics. In the main however, the little work pertaining to specific Protestant women has focused upon atypical individuals such as Constance Markievicz and Maud Gonne, women who self-consciously abandoned the standards and values of the Irish aristocracy.

There are of course some works which specifically concentrate upon Irish Protestant women, but they relate mainly to the north of the country, and focus in particular on women's roles in Unionist politics. Nancy Kingham's work on the Ulster Women's Unionist Council\textsuperscript{38}, although entirely uncritical, nevertheless provides an early study of a largely neglected Protestant female grouping. Almost twenty years later, Diane Urquhart tackled the subject again, revealing incidentally that no such work has been undertaken in the interim.\textsuperscript{39} This northern emphasis supports Martin Maguire's statement that 'because the standard history of Irish Unionism by Patrick Buckland\textsuperscript{40} is in two thematic volumes the medium has become the message and Irish Unionism has been treated as two distinct and different entities, Northern Unionism and Southern

\textsuperscript{35} See footnote 35.
\textsuperscript{36} O'Connor and Parkes, \textit{Gladly Learn and Gladly Teach}.
\textsuperscript{38} Diane Urquhart, 'The Female of the Species is More Deadlier Than the Male?': The Ulster Women's Unionist Council, 1911-40' in Holmes and Urquhart (eds.) \textit{Coming Into the Light}.
Unionism.\textsuperscript{41} Southern Protestant women, lacking the sort of formal political structures described by King and Urquhart, have been even less visible than their northern counterparts.

As the sources indicate, women of the Church of Ireland have made significant and often unexpected contributions to the modern Irish state, and in particular to Dublin. My decision to focus on Dublin city and county was determined partly by the available sources, which display a significant Dublin bias, but also because Dublin represented the largest grouping of Protestants in Ireland outside of Belfast.\textsuperscript{42} Dublin city and county offered opportunities for substantial degrees of contact between Protestant women, who worked together in charitable, political and social organisations, and whose records indicate the importance of urban contact. Dublin city and county brought together women of differing classes and backgrounds, and while this contact did not significantly alter class perceptions and preoccupations, it did allow for an exchange of ideas which was less a part of the Irish rural experience. Moreover, the ideological commitment which many Protestant women offered to the British administration was most effectively expressed in the city, where overt displays of loyalty, expressed for example through demonstrations, addresses and work in support of the maintenance of the Union, were more easily executed than in the sparsely populated rural regions of Ireland.

The debate between women's history and gender history has tended to polarise research into women's social and political history. Methodologically, this thesis falls


\textsuperscript{42} In 1911 for example Protestant women constituted 16.5 per cent of the Dublin female population as a whole.
between those two positions. Although each chapter represents an empirical study of specific aspects of their lives, I have attempted to situate their experiences within the broader framework of Irish history, and to explore the records mindful of the gendered context in which they were composed. The approach presumes gender difference, and while not subjective in terms of assessments of women's position in society, argues that women operated from positions of disadvantage to greater or lesser degrees. These disadvantages are a matter of historical record. Women were not merely accorded a lesser legal status than men in the early twentieth century, but were constrained by custom and social expectations. Indeed, the sources themselves continually emphasise the importance of the gendered context. Many relate to mixed-sex institutions and campaigns, although they may be primarily concerned with women. Even those sources which relate to all-female organisations, such as the records of the Clergy Daughters' School or the records of the Lady Registrar's Office, are significantly effected through their administration by a mixed-sex board in the former case, and entry into an all-male environment in the latter.

A good deal of the source material used in this work was created by and relates to middle class women. This reflects the obvious fact that they were well educated, articulate, and therefore left the best records of their activities. There are however some glimpses of the experiences of the working classes, particularly in the archives of the various charitable organisations. Nevertheless the dominant view is from above, and implies a position of relative privilege. There is also a general unanimity with regard to conceptions of class, with for example a broad acceptance by women charity workers that their charges should be encouraged to accept their material lot, and conform to a fixed
class code. With regard to religion, I am less concerned with doctrine than with the
perception of religion as a mark of identity. As has been noted, the two main religious
groups in Ireland have more in common with each other than is usually acknowledged,
particularly with regard to their attitudes towards women.

Structure

This thesis is divided into five chapters, each dealing with an area of particular
importance for Church of Ireland women. The work does not attempt to address the
entirety of their experience – a vast undertaking – but rather to present some key aspects
of it. Chapter one examines the importance of Dublin as a base for women of the Church
of Ireland. It presents a general profile of women in the city in the first instance, and then
focuses specifically upon the occupation and distribution of Protestant women. The
economic, social and religious positions established here provide the basis for the specific
discussion which follows in the subsequent chapters.

Chapter two examines the crucial role played by Protestant women in Irish
education. It raises questions regarding Protestant dominance in the quest for equal
educational rights for women, and examines the backgrounds as well as career choices
made by Protestant candidate graduates. The socialisation of girls in secondary
institutions, such as the Clergy Daughters’ School and Alexandra College is explored, and
questions of allegiance, religious and political, raised. The position of women in Trinity
College as students and staff is examined, and the importance of Protestant liberalism in
educational standards discussed.

43 Akenson, Small Difference, p. 38.
In chapter three I assess the experiences of women who, for varied reasons, sought charitable relief in Dublin in the early twentieth century. The 'charity mentality' is examined, and power relations within the charity relationship scrutinized. Differing class attitudes are examined, in particular the quite different experiences of the working class women who applied to the Protestant Orphan Society, and the middle class who applied to the Clergy Widows' and Orphans' Society. Because of the political situation in Ireland, working class female petitioners to Protestant charities were, at least intermittently, in positions of relative privilege. The anxiety prevalent amongst charitable organisers to ensure that no defection to Catholic agencies occurred produced a more liberal response than was usual amongst voluntary organisations in this period, a fact which was exploited to the full by theoretically disempowered working class women.

Chapter four examines the roles played by Protestant women in philanthropic endeavor in Dublin. Drawing upon records not previously used for a study of this kind, I indicate the opportunities available to Irishwomen to abandon stereotypical gender roles through their organisation and administration of charitable bodies. More importantly, the manner in which these women used charity work to shore up their support for the Union is examined, as are the crucial roles they played in ensuring that despite political changes, property and privilege would remain in Protestant hands. Their active advocacy of Protestant-only assistance and apprenticeship was remarkably successful in maintaining both a strong Protestant identity, and the guardianship of areas of traditional Protestant employment in Dublin.

44 The rich resources of the Representative Church Body Library are only beginning to be explored by non-ecclesiastical historians. This chapter focuses primarily upon the vast records of the Church of Ireland Clergy Widows' and Orphans' Society, and the various Southern Irish Loyalist Relief Associations.
The fifth chapter is an exploration of Protestant nationalism. Following an overview of female political activity in Ireland, I examine the experiences of a small group of women who deviated significantly from conventional Protestant allegiances. Although Presbyterian radicalism had an established history in Ireland, Anglicans were in the main opposed to militant nationalism. Yet a significant number of Anglican women actively supported a radical campaign for independence in Ireland, and it is their contribution to both the Anglo-Irish and Civil Wars which is discussed here. The specifically gendered nature of their entry to militancy - through the apolitical and female-centered Gaelic League - is raised, and the significance of factors such as professional qualifications, marital status and self-perception are assessed.

Finally, the conclusion draws together the principal points raised in the course of the thesis, and discusses the key changes which occurred amongst the Church of Ireland community between 1910 and 1925. Although debate still rages over specific phenomena such as the decline in Protestant numbers, some tentative conclusions are drawn.
Chapter 1: Women and Dublin
Dublin in the early twentieth century was a city beset with social, religious and political contradictions. The centre of British administration through Dublin Castle, it also acted as the main focus of the 1916 Rising. Home to some of the worst slums in Europe, it nevertheless allowed the middle class to live well ‘on an income which meant poverty in London’. Religious antagonisms permeated areas as diverse as charitable work, the campaign for the further education for women, and the election of representatives to local government. Despite, or indeed because of, these differences, Dublin was a city which offered considerable opportunities to women who wished to expand their horizons beyond the home. Protestant women in particular found it a well appointed base for such movements. Nor only did it contain the highest number of working women outside of Belfast, but it allowed those of a charitable disposition significant opportunities for work. There was always useful work to be done in the inner city slums, and every degree of commitment could be accommodated, from those who made a casual donation to a favoured organisation, to the most zealous evangelist. This chapter will discuss the importance of Dublin as a base for women of the Church of Ireland in 1910. Following a brief outline of personal responses to the city, I will present the position of women within the church by 1910, and then discuss their social and geographical distribution. Their relative populations, and their employments, will then be presented.

Dublin in 1910 was a city in which political, religious and social divisions were spatially expressed. The poor held the inner city, the wealthy the suburbs, with

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2 Dublin was a better prospect than Belfast for evangelical purposes, as Catholic and Protestant working class districts were less rigidly defined. Church workers could therefore move across different groups with relative ease.
suburban occupation further divided into identifiably Protestant or Catholic zones.

Dubliners had little cause to move outside of their own areas, and indeed permanent incursions into unsuitable territories were discouraged. In writing of her childhood on the Protestant Temple Road, a ‘refuge of highly respectable business people’, Louie Bennett indicated the strict divisions pertaining to residence:

One household was left severely alone. The Murphys were not only in business, they were also Roman Catholics. In the ’80s the Catholics were still struggling to penetrate professional circles and were not accepted without question within the fold of Temple Road.3

Dublin had declined from its pre-union heyday4, despite the continued presence of the Lord Lieutenant, and a social world which imitated, if it did not equal, that of London. Not all were enamoured of the Royal Presence though, and aside from nationalists who wished to break the British connection entirely, there were those who felt that the city’s development was retarded by a link which served only as a reminder of more glamorous days: ‘Dublin is a modern Tara; a metropolis from which the glory has departed; and the Vice-royalty, though it pleases some of the tradesmen, fails altogether to satisfy the people.’5

Suburban development in the late nineteenth century changed the character of Dublin entirely. Accelerated by an improved tramway system - ‘the arteries to Dublin’s life’6 - which allowed for ease of movement between suburb and city, more

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4 ‘Protestant Dublin in Victoria’s reign was a philistine city’, declared Terence de Vere White, adding that culture throughout the country had departed along with the parliament. Irish country house libraries contained ‘few additions of any significance after approximately 1800.’ The Anglo-Irish London: Victor Gollancz, 1972, pp. 116-7.
Protestants moved steadily outwards, further distancing themselves from their working class co-religionists. They too were experiencing change. As Mary Daly has noted, during the nineteenth century there had occurred a significant decline in the Dublin Protestant working class population of Dublin city. Moreover as the city centre became increasingly associated with deprivation and poor housing, middle class Catholics also joined the flight to the suburbs, encouraging further the decline of the inner city.

This large-scale movement had significant effects. Not only did it segregate the middle and working classes, but it contributed towards a strong sense of local identity, based upon class and religion. Within a relatively short period of time, suburbs such as Rathmines developed an individual character, which has been well documented by contemporary residents. Described as ‘the ultra respectable section of the city with social aspirations disproportionate to their means,’ residents, Catholic as well as Protestant, subscribed to a liberal unionism which had a strongly social expression: ‘There were many West Britons in Rathmines; the women in particular served on every kind of war charity committee which would bring them into contact with the garrison or the Castle establishment.’ Indeed, it was mainly through these sorts of activities that such social contacts between religions could be made, since the male business world was rather more segregated.

This is not to say that relations were always cordial between Catholic and Protestant Dubliners. On the contrary, there were frequent clashes over politics and

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7 Mary Daly, ‘Social Structure of the Dublin working class, 1871-1911’ in Irish Historical Studies vol. XXIII, 1982-83 p. 123.
9 ibid.
religion, many of which focused upon women’s work in the city. Women of the 
Church of Ireland were presumed to be unionist in sympathy, and in fact their explicit 
support for war work, or demonstrations of loyalty to the crown during royal visits, 
aroused a good deal of antagonism. The rise in nationalist sentiment in the early teens 
of the century was allied to a rejection of most things ‘British’, whether cultural or 
political. The result was that those who persisted in declaring their British identity 
often received unwelcome attention, and even such gestures as the playing of ‘God 
Save the King’ at the conclusion of entertainments and meetings was sure to provoke 
a reaction.\textsuperscript{10} Not to do so, however, appeared to some women as an invitation to 
anarchy. In the aftermath of the 1916 Rising a friend of Mrs. Lennox Conygham 
blamed the rebellion on the fact that Fr. Finlay had refused to have the children sing 
‘God Save the King’ at the conclusion of a school concert.\textsuperscript{11} The significance of such 
ritual displays, and the emphasis placed on their public performance, illustrate the 
often uncomfortable relationship which existed between many Dublin Protestants and 
the Catholic majority. The Patriotic Children’s Treat organised in 1900 by female 
nationalist activists to protest at Queen Victoria’s Irish visit was one all-female arena 
in which these symbolic differences were fought. However, religious tensions also ran 
high in inner city areas, occasionally breaking into open conflict over accusations of 
religious evangelism by both sides.\textsuperscript{12}

Membership of the Church of Ireland did not necessarily imply a common set 
of experiences for all. It created a bond, but not one strong enough to breach class

\textsuperscript{10} C. S. Andrews recorded a near riot when Trinity students sang ‘Rule Britannia’ and ‘God Save the King’ to an unappreciative audience of National University students on the first anniversary of Armistice day. ibid, p. 127. 
\textsuperscript{11} Ms 244/1/2. Mrs. Lenox Conygham’s 1916 diary, Rosamund Stephen papers, RCBL. 
\textsuperscript{12} See the two charity chapters.
divisions. Indeed Brian Inglis has argued that class was an impenetrable barrier in Dublin in the teens and twenties, more important even than religion or politics. As a young man in Malahide, he found that while a landed Catholic could be invited to join a Protestant golf club, the invitation could not be extended to the women’s captain of TCD’s golf team, who was the daughter of a wealthy Protestant merchant. The objection was not on the grounds of sex but class: such an invitation ‘would be the thin end of the wedge.’ In Malahide, suggests Inglis, there was little contact between different Church of Ireland classes:

There must have been poor Protestant families in Malahide who sent their children there [the Protestant National School], but we had no contact with them except in connection with charitable enterprises, when some of them would join in helping to do the heavy work of preparation, discreetly effacing themselves on the actual day of the church fête, or whatever it might be.

Similarly, financial decline did not mean a loss of status: ‘Given the right religion and the right family background it was possible for a spinster living on an annuity of three pounds a week to regard herself as the equal, if not of Lord Talbot...at least of the Jamesons of Seamount, over the hill.’

Such social segregation meant that Dubliners had quite different, and geographically specific, perspectives of their city. Unknown areas were unreal, or associated with danger, as south-side resident Elizabeth Bowen remembered:

...[W]e did not venture to cross the Liffey. So the North side remained terra incognita. Yes, I do see the Four Courts, to which my father went every morning...Otherwise, painted with that one dome, the rest of the North Side was so much painted canvas on

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13 Tony Farmar also believes that class considerations outweighed those of religion. In assessing the most important indicators of status in Dublin in 1907, he lists gender, followed by class, and then religion. *Ordinary Lives*, pp. 1-2.
16 ibid. p. 20.
which had been contrived clouds and perspectives. This canvas was pierced and entered only by the lordly perspective of Sackville Street. And, till I went one day to a party in Mountjoy Square, I took it that Sackville Street had something queer at the end.17

Although sharing Bowen’s ascendency background, Edith Somerville and Martin Ross presented a convincing portrait of the ‘middle layer’ of Church of Ireland society. In The Real Charlotte they indicated how the world of the Protestant lower middle class was as distant from the upper as it was from the inner-city slums. The opening of their 1894 novel has the briefest, but most telling of sketches of the social and cultural geography of that class:

An August Sunday afternoon in the north side of Dublin. Epitome of all that is hot, arid and empty. Tall brick houses, browbeating each other in gloomy respectability across the white streets; broad pavements, promenaded mainly by the nomadic cat; stifling squares, wherein the infant of unfashionable parentage is taken for the daily baking that is its substitute for the breezes and the press of perambulators on the Bray Esplanade or the Kingston Pier.18

Women in the Church

The Church of Ireland had been transformed in the nineteenth century, under the Irish Church Act of July 26, 1869. Originally intended as part of a package of measures by Gladstone, which was to include land reform and the establishment of a Catholic university, it finally stood alone as a key piece of legislation. The Act ‘[broke] absolutely the legal connection between Church and State’,19 and despite the dire predictions by certain churchmen, left the church in a strong financial position.

F.S.L. Lyons has estimated that the church distributed around thirteen million pounds

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between 1871 and 1923, which was expended in the relief of poverty and church
administration, while Alan Acheson puts the figure at over eight million between 1871
and 1915. 20 Whichever figure is the more accurate, the Church of Ireland was not
impoverished as a result of disestablishment.

Despite the difficulties caused by disestablishment, the period was one in
which the role and function of the church was redefined, in many ways for the
better. 21 The long-standing resentment on the part of the majority of the population to
tithes 22 had eased, and, equally important, the Church of Ireland was liberated from
the sense that it was an unwelcome parasite on an unwilling Catholic host. The
hierarchy were also swift to respond to the mood of change by addressing themselves
to the issue of church structures, and the assumption of responsibility for their own
affairs encouraged a revision of administrative organisation. 23 The General
Convention of 1870 provided for an annual meeting of a General Synod, 'the supreme
governing body of the Church of Ireland,' 24 composed of two houses (the House of
Bishops and the House of Representatives) with members of the clergy and laity
elected triennially. The new organisational structures were comprehensive, with each

20 ibid, p. 145; Alan Acheson, A History of the Church of Ireland 1691-1996 Dublin: The Columba
21 Acheson however believes that the character of the church changed for the worse: 'Many matters
previously subject to private initiative were centrally co-ordinated...if greater uniformity was
achieved, however, creative diversity tended to be lost, and the church in time to be less
comprehensive and tolerant.' p. 213. This intolerance extended to an unwillingness to allow women
a fuller role.
22 The so-called 'Tithe Act' of 1838 had eliminated the practice whereby the majority population paid
a tax for the support of the church of the minority, but resentment still remained over the established
status of the Church of Ireland. Kenneth Milne, The Church of Ireland: A History Dublin: APCK,
23 The Representative Church Body was established, principally to administer the finances of the
church, and the hierarchy were now responsible for the appointment of Bishops, previously the right
of the government.
24 Milne, Church of Ireland, p. 50.
diocese given its own diocesan synod, responsible for local church organisation under the direction of the bishop. In addition to electing individuals to the House of Representatives of the General Synod, each parish within the diocese had a lay General Vestry, which every Easter elected a Select Vestry which was responsible, in co-operation with the clergy, for administering the parish.

The key role of the laity in determining church directions is clear from the numbers involved: in 1870 there were 655 delegates to the General Convention, 446 of whom were laymen and 209 clergy.\(^{25}\) This stands in sharp contrast with Catholic church structures, which discouraged the direct intervention of lay people in the formation of church policy.\(^{26}\) The Church of Ireland laity ‘flex[ed] their strongly Evangelical muscles’\(^{27}\) in the debate over the revision of the Book of Common Prayer, which took place in 1878.\(^{28}\) However, despite this highly democratic structure, women in the nineteenth century were not permitted a formal role in church administration. The General Convention of 1870 decreed that all church offices should be confined to men.\(^{29}\) Women were not even eligible to serve on general vestries, which they had been before 1870\(^{30}\), nor were they any longer permitted to act as

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\(^{26}\) The autocratic rule in church affairs is embodied in Cardinal Paul Cullen, described by Joseph Lee as ‘head master of the Irish Church.’ *The Modernisation of Irish Society 1848-1918* Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1973, p. 43.


\(^{28}\) The laity were in favour of a more emphatically Protestant character, to emphasise the distinctions between the Church of Ireland and the Catholic Church, but aside from some minor changes in services, and the introduction of a series of Canons, the Book of Common Prayer, as Kenneth Milne points out, ‘retain[ed]...its 1662 character virtually intact.’ *Church of Ireland*, p. 52.

\(^{29}\) Acheson, *History* p. 218.

\(^{30}\) When women laid claim to this lost right, as part of the reform campaign of the early twentieth century, opponents acknowledged it had existed, but claimed that its abolition was necessary, as ‘...the law considered their acting as churchwardens abnormal.’ ‘Women and Select Vestries’, in the *Church of Ireland Gazette*, March 27, 1914, p. 257.
churcharwardens, discriminations which rankled for a full forty years.

So what was the position of women within the Church of Ireland from 1910? Formally, it was very limited. Informally however they provided a crucial support network which bound the church together, and alleviated the burden of work on the clergy. Women played significant roles in charitable organisations, and encouraged the maintenance of a distinct identity in a period of great change.\(^31\) Their unofficial status as clerical auxiliaries was acknowledged, and they became increasingly concerned with specifically female areas of work. Their willingness to adapt themselves to the new structures did not mean that there was an acceptance of their limited roles, however. On the contrary, the fact that they had frequent contact with other Protestant churches in Ireland, and with the Church of England, meant that they were continually reminded of the more privileged position of women in allied churches. In fact, comparisons were explicitly used by church activists, male and female, to argue for changes within the Church of Ireland.\(^32\)

It was not until the early teens, however, that women began to campaign vigorously for their integration into church structures. It is interesting that this movement paralleled the broader suffrage campaign, although no formal association was made between them. From 1913, the *Church of Ireland Gazette* began to carry increasing numbers of articles and letters on the question of the election of women to the General and Select Vestries. An article by Miss L.A. Walkington\(^33\) succinctly outlined the limits placed upon women members:

\(^31\) See chapters 3 and 4.

\(^32\) The women’s petition to the General Synod of the Church of Ireland pointed out that Englishwomen could sit on Select Vestries. ‘Petition to the General Synod of the Church of Ireland’ in the *Church of Ireland Gazette*, March 27, 1914, pp. 255-6.

\(^33\) A suffragist as well as campaigner for church reform.
What is the position of women in the church? It seems to me that they have no recognised position whatever, and that the Church as a Church simply ignores them. Officially, of course, I mean; for unofficially we are permitted gladly to do a great deal of unpaid, and often unrecognised, work - work that men either cannot or do not wish to do. Women may teach in the Sunday School, sing in the choir, decorate the church, above all, they may subscribe and collect money. But no matter how much they subscribe, they may not have a vote in the General Vestry, they may not sit on either it or the Select Vestry, and they may not have a voice, officially, of course, I mean, in the disposal of the money which they either subscribe or collect. In all the Canons of the Church official positions are reserved for men only; women are simply ignored as if they were simply non-existent, except in the Marriage Service and in the Thanksgiving after Child Birth, where it would not be easy to ignore them.34

Walkington argued that as the same services were used to baptise, confirm, marry and bury women with men equally, women should therefore have the same rights within the church. What appears to have equally rankled was the fact that the author was ‘older, better educated, and better endowed with this world’s goods’ than her rector, who nevertheless was in a position to tell her that women were ‘simply to do as the rector told us.’35 There was a willingness on the part of individual churchmen to expand women’s roles36, but many more were against it, and the Gazette editorial of May 15, 1914, commenting on the recent failure of a resolution to allow women representation on vestries, summarised the feelings of many when it declared:

...[W]e are thankful that the proposed resolution was thrown out. It asked too much, and it asked it all at once...We are among those who are convinced that women are fully entitled to a larger voice in the administration of affairs if they so desire. [But] it was in reality a petition to hand over the control of the greater part of our

34 L.A. Walkington, ‘The Position of Women in the Church’ Church of Ireland Gazette, August 1, 1913, p. 669.
35 ibid.
36 A petition signed by more than 1,400 women asking for membership of the General and Select Vestries and presented to the General Synod in 1914, had the support of no less a figure than the Lord Primate. A resolution prompted by the petition was nevertheless rejected. For the text of the petition, see the Gazette for March 27, 1914, pp. 256-7.
ecclesiastical machinery to women, and it sought to confer upon them the greatest possible powers, without any preliminary attempt to test their working as members of vestries with such powers as might be conferred upon them.  

The broad opinion of church members, however, as reflected in letters, editorials and articles in the *Gazette*, was not generally against the advancement of women. Indeed, the hierarchy of the Church of Ireland was supportive of their parliamentary enfranchisement, while emphasising that women should use their votes to uphold rather than challenge the status quo. This practical conservatism was also true of the women’s campaign. They claimed they merely wanted the restoration of rights, not an unprecedented advance. Demographic changes strengthened their case. Pointing out that ‘in many Parishes in the West of Ireland the number of Registered Vestrymen is not sufficient to fill the list of the Select Vestry’, women should be allowed to step in. However, they set themselves strict limits, targeting areas in which they already worked, or which were clearly suitable for women:

As Members of Select Vestries, women could be of special service in the following ways:-
(a) In Collecting Assessments.
(b) In Allotting Parish Relief.
(c) In the Upkeep and Cleaning of Churches, Schoolhouses, and the Care of Graveyards.
(d) In matters relating to Church Music.

37 ‘Women and Vestries’, *Church of Ireland Gazette*, May 15, 1914, p. 422.
38 One editorial gave a back-handed compliment to working-class women in describing them as deserving of the vote: ‘We believe that a girl, as a young woman and as a wife, the woman of the working classes, is more worthy of citizenship than the man. She is more intelligent, more economical, more temperate than her husband. She has so much to do that she does not go into the streets and shout for ‘Votes for Women’, and she despises very thoroughly the women who pour black liquids into letter-boxes in order to spoil the letters...we think that, if they were given the vote, they would show more independence and moral courage than the great majority of Irish electors.’ Editorial, ‘Injustice to Women’, *Church of Ireland Gazette*, January 3, 1913, p. 11.
39 ‘Petition to the General Synod of the Church of Ireland’ in *Church of Ireland Gazette* March 27, 1914, p. 257.
40 Ibid.
Population and Distribution

Women of the Church of Ireland represented a significant proportion of Dublin’s population. In 1911 they numbered 41,400 in the city and county combined, and represented 16.5% of the total female population in that area. However, as indicated above, their distribution was not evenly spread across the city. The majority resided in rural areas, and in certain middle class suburbs. 11,122 lived in rural county districts, with another 16,525 grouped in largely Protestant urban areas, accounting for almost 70% of total Church of Ireland female numbers. Although much of the social, economic and political life of the city was dominated by Protestant interests, the middle class confined themselves increasingly to specific residential areas of the city and county, leaving the city centre slums to the proletariat. Since the final decades of the nineteenth century, much political power had been transferred from Protestant to Catholic hands, most noticeably in local government. Dublin corporation was predominantly Catholic and Nationalist in its make-up, with Protestant influence strongest in those suburban areas of Rathmines, Clontarf, Kingstown and Blackrock.

However, Protestant interests remained strong in commerce and business, with 38% of the professional and public service workforce Protestant in 1911, and 27% of those engaged in clerical work, banking and insurance. The dominance of Dublin Protestants in business, despite their minority status, is explained by the continuing importance of patronage social contacts, from which much of the Catholic population were excluded.

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41 Census of Ireland for the year 1911, table xxxiii, pp. 91-99.
42 Census of Ireland for the year 1911, tables xx and xxi, pp. 20-27 and 60-65.
43 Joseph O’Brien points out that Catholic rise in the professions was remarkably slow, even outside of those occupations which depended upon patronage. Dear Dirty Dublin: A City in Distress, 1899-1916 Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1982, p. 40.
business, and in government appointments. Civil Service posts, especially the higher ones, went to Protestants, with for example 34 Protestants employed to 13 Catholics in the Local Government Board in 1913.\textsuperscript{44} Protestants also tended to reach higher grades, and earn higher salaries, than Catholics. In the Board of Works 79 Protestants earned on average £326 per annum, while their 48 Catholic colleagues averaged £197.\textsuperscript{45} The rise of Catholics in the professions in the early twentieth century is most marked in those areas where education and formal qualifications were the criteria for selection, and conversely Protestants enjoyed speediest promotion when recruitment was conducted on the basis of personal contact.\textsuperscript{46}

The proportions of men and women\textsuperscript{47} within the Church of Ireland in Dublin varied from area to area, with the middle classes showing a somewhat higher female representation than the working class. Table 1 shows the relative numbers of Church of Ireland males and females against the total populations in six key districts.

\textsuperscript{44}Farmar, \textit{Ordinary Lives}, pp. 23-4.
\textsuperscript{45}ibid.
\textsuperscript{46}O’Brian, \textit{Dear Dirty Dublin}, p. 24.
\textsuperscript{47}See table 7, end of this chapter, for comparative male and female figures for all religions in the city.
Table 1: Church of Ireland Population in Urban County Districts, 1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Cofl Females</th>
<th>Cofl Males</th>
<th>All Others, F &amp; M</th>
<th>Cofl % of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blackrock</td>
<td>1,425</td>
<td>946</td>
<td>6,709</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dalkey</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>2,739</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killiney and Ballybrack</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingstown</td>
<td>2,661</td>
<td>1,738</td>
<td>12,820</td>
<td>25.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pembroke</td>
<td>4,418</td>
<td>3,037</td>
<td>21,839</td>
<td>25.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rathmines and Rathgar</td>
<td>7,085</td>
<td>5,809</td>
<td>24,946</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The predominantly middle-class profile of these areas may be gauged by the high levels of literacy for each. In Dalkey and Killiney, Church of Ireland illiteracy rates amongst females aged 9 and over were 0%, compared with Catholic rates of 2.3% and 1.2% respectively. Rates were also extremely low in the other districts of Blackrock (0.2% against 2.3%), Kingstown (0.3% against 4.5%), Pembroke (0.4% against 3.4%), and Rathmines and Rathgar (0.3% against 1.6%). All across the city and county levels of literacy were higher for Church of Ireland women when compared with Catholic, with the greatest contrast arising in the city. Table 2 shows comparative literacy rates in the five Parliamentary Divisions:

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Table 2: Population and Literacy Rates by Parliamentary Division, 1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Coill Females, total &amp; % illiterate</th>
<th>Coill Males, total &amp; % illiterate</th>
<th>Catholic Females, total and % illiterate</th>
<th>Catholic Males, total and % illiterate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>North Dublin</strong></td>
<td>4,220: 0.2%</td>
<td>4,700: 0.2%</td>
<td>14,265: 1.6%</td>
<td>13,015: 1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coill Females, total &amp; % illiterate</td>
<td>3,651: 2.0%</td>
<td>4,152: 1.1%</td>
<td>34,532: 8.0%</td>
<td>31,671: 5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>College Green</strong></td>
<td>3,339: 1.2%</td>
<td>3,537: 1.3%</td>
<td>32,039: 6.5%</td>
<td>30,401: 5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coill Females, total &amp; % illiterate</td>
<td>4,101: 0.8%</td>
<td>3,221: 0.3%</td>
<td>20,200: 5.6%</td>
<td>16,357: 4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dublin Harbour</strong></td>
<td>4,003: 1.6%</td>
<td>4,433: 1.0%</td>
<td>31,120: 10.1%</td>
<td>29,768: 6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coill Females, total &amp; % illiterate</td>
<td>3,221: 1.3%</td>
<td>3,537: 1.3%</td>
<td>32,039: 6.5%</td>
<td>30,401: 5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>St. Stephen's Green</strong></td>
<td>4,220: 0.2%</td>
<td>4,700: 0.2%</td>
<td>14,265: 1.6%</td>
<td>13,015: 1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coill Females, total &amp; % illiterate</td>
<td>3,651: 2.0%</td>
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<td>34,532: 8.0%</td>
<td>31,671: 5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic Males, total and % illiterate</td>
<td>3,339: 1.2%</td>
<td>3,537: 1.3%</td>
<td>32,039: 6.5%</td>
<td>30,401: 5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>St. Patrick's</strong></td>
<td>4,003: 1.6%</td>
<td>4,433: 1.0%</td>
<td>31,120: 10.1%</td>
<td>29,768: 6.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1910, the position of the Church of Ireland in Dublin appeared secure. However, there were long-term demographic and political trends which had certain worrying implications for the future. The most obvious of these were an ageing population in which deaths outnumbered births and, amongst the working class, marriage patterns which lessened the number of Protestant offspring through migration and intermarriage with Catholics. The age profile of Church of Ireland women in 1911 shows that while the majority were of working age, they had a slightly higher proportion of the elderly than the majority of the city population. Table 3 charts Church of Ireland male and female age profiles against Catholic, indicating a significantly younger Catholic city population.

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49 Census of Ireland for the year 1911, table xxxiv, p. 44.
Table 3: Age Profile in Dublin City, 1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Coff F.</th>
<th>Coff M.</th>
<th>Cath. F.</th>
<th>Cath. M.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-19</td>
<td>33.2%</td>
<td>35.5%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>39.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-39</td>
<td>33.1%</td>
<td>33.4%</td>
<td>34.7%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-64</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25.3%</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These factors in themselves were not especially striking, but allied to other tendencies, they suggested certain difficulties as far as the long-term survival of the community in Dublin was concerned. Of particular concern was the fact that there was a high rate of marriage amongst Church of Ireland women to soldiers, especially amongst the working class. This meant that not only were young women widowed as a result of the First World War, but large numbers left Dublin with the withdrawal of troops after the Treaty. Losses in the war also affected the middle and upper classes. As Patrick Buckland has demonstrated, there was large-scale commitment to the war effort on the part of the Anglo-Irish gentry. Almost every family with males of an age to serve fought in the war, and many lost their heirs. The second factor contributing to decline, especially amongst the working class, is that there was a considerable rate of intermarriage with Catholics, with the children of these marriages commonly raised (by as much as 80%) as Catholic. Charity records give an idea of the extent of such unions. Between 1904 and 1929, 44 applications for assistance were refused by the

50 Census of Ireland for the year 1911, table xv, p. 62.
51 Martin Maguire has suggested that marriages to soldiers may have accounted for 30% of unions in certain parishes. The Dublin Protestant Working-Class 1870-1932: Economy, Society, Politics, M.A., University College Dublin, 1990, pp 55-6.
54 Maguire assesses rates as high as 15% in 1901 and 1911. The Dublin Protestant Working-Class, p. 59.
Protestant Orphan Society. 14 of these marriages were mixed, Anglicans and Roman Catholics. As far as mixed marriages were concerned, it would appear that the Church of Ireland was facing assimilation, not integration, with the Catholic majority.

This is not to say that Church of Ireland women were either in a perilous position in 1910, or that they were helpless in the face of changes. On the contrary, they actively worked to preserve their Protestant culture in Dublin, and to protect the more vulnerable members of their community through charitable work. They led the way in expanding opportunities in education and employment, and implicitly demonstrated a faith in their futures by training for work, and taking university degrees in numbers out of proportion to their representation in the population. In any case, Protestant women were already well ensconced in the more skilled sectors of the female employment market by 1911, and were not considering themselves to be especially vulnerable.

**Women and Work**

The returns of the 1911 census provide the basis for a statistical snapshot of female occupation in Dublin city and county. However, I am using the categories outlined in the 1911 census returns with some reservations, since although they provide much useful information, they are a coarse means of evaluating the numbers of women actively engaged in paid and unpaid work in Dublin. Many paid employees

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55 1045/5/4, Kinsey Marriage Portion Fund Applications, Protestant Orphan Society, NAI.
56 'If assimilation is the more appropriate description, it suggests that Protestants will eventually disappear by being absorbed into the larger Catholic community. Integration, on the other hand, implies that Protestants will survive as their differences with Catholics decline in social importance and become matters of personal and private choice.' Kurt Bowen, *Protestants in a Catholic State: Ireland’s Privileged Minority* Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1983, p. 3.
57 See chapter 2.
were in fact outworkers, whose income depended on the quantities of goods they produced from home. Similarly, many worked on a part-time or casual basis and, being largely unskilled, do not fit the several descriptions of workers outlined by the census forms. One finds these discrepancies with regard to employment at various levels of society, not merely at the working-class extreme. For example, the records of charitable institutions catering for Dublin city and county indicate a high rate of employment amongst women of middle class Protestant backgrounds, albeit irregular and often poorly paid, or paid in kind. The women describe themselves variously as 'housekeepers', 'companions' and as governesses and teachers of a wide variety of subjects. Many if not most of the women thus employed do not feature in the official returns, since their employment was often organised on an informal basis, or based upon familial or social connections. Although large numbers for example describe their means of support as 'needlework' in their applications for aid, it is highly unlikely that they would have described themselves as seamstresses in the census returns. Thus the strict cataloguing of occupations in the official records, while useful, cannot be said to provide a complete picture of Protestant (or Catholic) female activity in Dublin. Also excluded entirely from these categories are female voluntary workers whose labours, while unpaid and non-productive in a narrowly literal sense, nevertheless formed an important part of these women's lives.

The first decades of the twentieth century were ones of dramatic change, particularly for women in Ireland. Considerable advances had been made in terms of

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58 In one year (1912) almost one quarter of Protestant women seeking assistance from the Church of Ireland Clergy Widows and Orphans Society stated that they had supplemented their incomes through needlecraft. Ms 464/6/3, RCBL.
their contribution to local government,59 and they had, like women in England, made
certain legal advances in terms of marriage and divorce.60 All religious persuasions
were moving into the workforce in greater numbers, although their distribution was
not necessarily equal. Table 5 indicates the changes in the various categories for the
employment of Church of Ireland women between 1901 and 1911:

Table 4: Women’s Occupations, Dublin City, 1901-191161

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>1901 total</th>
<th>CofI % of total</th>
<th>1911 total</th>
<th>CofI % of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class I (Professional)</td>
<td>3,465 62</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
<td>4,488</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class II (Domestic)</td>
<td>19,832</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>15,596</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class III (Commercial)</td>
<td>1,062</td>
<td>23.9%</td>
<td>2,035</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class IV (Agricultural)</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class V (Industrial)</td>
<td>20,941</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>18,601</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class VI (Indefinite and Non-Productive)</td>
<td>104,858</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
<td>116,307</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most of the categories do not indicate a dramatic change in work profiles. However,
one can see that there is an increasing representation in occupations which require a

59 See chapter 5. See also Maria Luddy, ‘Women and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Ireland’ in
Maryann Gialanella Valiulis and Mary O’Dowd (eds.) Women and Irish History, Dublin: Wolfhound
60 See Joan Perkin, Women and Marriage in Nineteenth-Century England, London: Routledge, 1989,
pp. 292-310; Cliona Murphy, The Women’s Suffrage Movement and Irish Society in the Early
61 Census of Ireland for the year 1901, table xx, pp. 28-35, and Census of Ireland for the year 1911,
table xx, pp. 66-70.
62 This category includes 749 nuns. If one removes them from the total, on the grounds that they
represent a grouping in which Protestant women cannot be represented, then the total in the
professional class is 2,716, of which Church of Ireland women represent 25.8%.
degree of training or formal qualification, and a decrease in the more menial occupations, especially domestic service. The occupations of Protestant females as recorded in the 1911 census emphasises the importance of Dublin as a working base.

In the occupational survey which follows here, I will discuss each of the six class categories as outlined in the census, and comment upon some of the sub-categories within each class as appropriate.

Protestant women accounted for 12.5% of the total population of Ireland in 1911, and some 16.5% of the total population of Dublin city and county. Yet amongst the female working population of Dublin city and county Protestant women were over-represented in sections of the workforce, particularly in the professional and commercial classes, and under represented in the domestic, agricultural and industrial categories. Table 5 gives the breakdown of Church of Ireland female occupation in Dublin city in 1911:

Table 5: Occupations of Church of Ireland Women in Dublin City, 1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class I (Professional)</th>
<th>Total Females</th>
<th>CofI F. Total</th>
<th>CofI F. as % of F. Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Females</td>
<td>4,488</td>
<td>977</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class II (Domestic)</th>
<th>Total Females</th>
<th>CofI F. Total</th>
<th>CofI F. as % of F. Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Females</td>
<td>15,596</td>
<td>1,190</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class III (Commercial)</th>
<th>Total Females</th>
<th>CofI F. Total</th>
<th>CofI F. as % of F. Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Females</td>
<td>2,035</td>
<td>452</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class IV (Agricultural)</th>
<th>Total Females</th>
<th>CofI F. Total</th>
<th>CofI F. as % of F. Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Females</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class V (Industrial)</th>
<th>Total Females</th>
<th>CofI F. Total</th>
<th>CofI F. as % of F. Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Females</td>
<td>18,601</td>
<td>1,201</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class VI (Indefinite and Non-Productive)</th>
<th>Total Females</th>
<th>CofI F. Total</th>
<th>CofI F. as % of F. Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Females</td>
<td>116,307</td>
<td>15,487</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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63 Census of Ireland for the year 1911, table xx, pp. 66-70.
Total Females, all categories: 157,151. Total Church of Ireland Women, all categories: 19,315
Church of Ireland Women as % of Female total: 12.2

Table 6 gives a breakdown of Church of Ireland female occupation in relation to the total female population in Dublin city and county:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Total Females*</th>
<th>Total CofI F.</th>
<th>CofI % of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class I (Professional)</td>
<td>7,973</td>
<td>1,922</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class II (Domestic)</td>
<td>30,575</td>
<td>3,181</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class III (Commercial)</td>
<td>3,191</td>
<td>857</td>
<td>26.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class IV (Agricultural)</td>
<td>512</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class V (Industrial)</td>
<td>23,436</td>
<td>1,850</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class VI (Indefinite and Non-Productive)</td>
<td>184,790</td>
<td>33,561</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Females, all categories: 250,477  
CofI F. Total, all categories: 41,400  
CofI F. as % of Female Total: 16.5

*’Total’ includes females of all religions, including Roman Catholics, Episcopalians, Presbyterians and Methodists.

In striking contrast to other parts of the country, the largest representation of Church of Ireland working women were in the Class 3 category, the commercial. They formed almost 27% of the total female population, with the greatest number being employed as commercial clerks. This category also accounts for the largest number of Catholics, and reflects the importance of clerical work in a major business

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64 Census of Ireland for the year 1911, table xx, pp. 23-28, and pp. 54-57.
environment such as Dublin. Other cities such as Galway reflect the employment opportunities offered to semi-skilled women in urban areas. Although the proportion is significantly less than in Dublin’s case at 8%, this category remains the single greatest paid occupation of Protestant women. Similarly, in Westmeath, 18% of the total female commercial clerks were Protestant. The beginning of the twentieth century marked an increase in the move of women in the workforce to clerical positions, in England and America as well as Ireland. In response to this new area of employment for women, Alexandra College offered secretarial training courses which, by 1918, had an annual enrollment of 56 students. The presence of large numbers of Protestant women in this category reflects their contacts in the Dublin business world, with Protestant managers and owners recruiting from amongst their co-religionists. The increasingly gendered nature of clerical and secretarial occupations may also be seen in this category, as Ireland followed the world-wide trend of high levels of recruitment for women in these jobs.

Close behind the commercial clerks in terms of percentages employed was the Professional class, of which Church of Ireland women comprised 24% in Dublin city and county in 1911. As already noted in table 5, the inclusion of nuns in this category is problematic. If they are removed from the figures, the percentage of Church of Ireland professional females rises to almost 30. For both major religious groups the largest single category of employment in this section was that of ‘subordinate medical service’, that is, physician’s assistant, private nurse, and so on. The relatively low

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66 There were 1,760 nuns in Dublin city and county in 1911.
number of women with full professional qualifications in categories such as the 'medical profession' (only ten female physicians in Dublin city, two Catholics and eight Protestants, out of a category in which women made up 59% of the total employed) or the 'Legal Profession' (in which 1.1% of women were represented) illustrate how slowly professional opportunities were extended to women in the capital, despite the fact that medical degrees had been opened to women in the Irish College of Physicians and Surgeons in 1877, in Trinity College in 1904, and in the National University and Queen's University Belfast in 1909. However the census of 1911 does give some indication of new trends in women's expectations, in that 13% of the women in Class 1 were 'students - undefined'. Of this group, 38% were Protestant, and of the Protestant total, 62% belonged to the Church of Ireland.

In the teaching profession, women in general were heavily represented, as one might expect, forming an overwhelming 71% of the total teachers, male and female, in Dublin city and county in 1911. Within the female group one finds an interesting social sub-text to the occupation. Given the determination of the Catholic Church to maintain educational control over its members, religious teaching orders were an important part of the Catholic school system. Thus the first category under the sub-heading of teachers, that is, 'Schoolmistress, Assistant', finds a Catholic female majority of 66%. However, the second category of 'Teacher, Lecturer, Governess' finds Church of Ireland women in a substantial minority of 45%. Private education in the form of tutors and governesses was the norm for young members of the Protestant middle-class, and the profession of governess was one of the largest single occupations of unmarried women of the Church of Ireland. Although for many the
decision to become a governess was taken as a positive career choice, for many others it was the sole recourse for an educated unmarried 'gentlewoman' with no other means of support. Widowhood or non-marriage could lead eventually to near destitution, and the plight of women dependent on their own resources was well recognised by this period.67

One of the largest discrepancies between Catholic and Church of Ireland female employment lay amongst those who classified themselves under the heading of 'Artists'. 45% of the total thus occupied were Protestant in Co. Dublin, with the heaviest Protestant weighting found amongst professional painters, at a ratio of 6:1. Although the total numbers involved were relatively small, it is difficult to account for such a striking difference satisfactorily. If opposition to Catholic women entering an artistic career was based upon the belief that it was somehow socially unsuitable, these grounds applied equally to Protestant women of the middle and upper classes.68 For example the number of Catholic and Church of Ireland female engravers were almost exactly matched. This perhaps reflected the greater security a training as an engraver offered, being commercially exploitable in terms of manufacture, as opposed to the life of a freelance painter, whose commissions were usually erratic and unreliable. Women of all religious groupings formed a significant percentage of the population of artists

67 See for example the frequent appeals by Protestant clerics for support of the various charities dealing with 'destitute gentlewomen' from the 1840s onwards. The problem became the subject of intense debate in both Ireland and Britain, especially in the twentieth century, as feminists began to argue that what was needed was training for women to avoid these sorts of circumstances, rather than allowing women to reach such states of dependency upon charities. One such debate was carried on between March and April, 1897 in The Nineteenth Century in articles entitled 'How Poor Ladies Live'; 'How Poor Ladies Live; A Reply', and 'How Poor Ladies Might Live: An Answer from the Workhouse'.

68 Prominent Protestant women such as Violet Martin and Constance Markievicz both faced familial opposition to their decisions to study painting. See Gifford Lewis, The Selected Letters of Somerville and Ross London: Virago, 1989, p. 124.
in Dublin, making up 38% of the total, male and female. The fact that the majority of these women were in the 25-45 year age group indicated that they were actually making careers of their talents, rather than merely displaying the presumed accomplishments of well educated women of the period.

The largest single occupation for both groups of women in 1911 was domestic service, with a total of 30,575 thus engaged in Dublin city and county. 10.4% of the total belonged to the Church of Ireland, making this category the third largest occupational classification amongst that group. Dublin had an unusually high percentage of Protestant female domestic servants, a good deal in excess of other counties such as Galway at 0.4%, Westmeath at 6% and even Cork, with a large Protestant population, at 5%. The high numbers in Dublin reflect the heavy demand for household workers which existed in such a heavily populated urban area, where two servants were the norm for middle-class families, as opposed to the rural pattern of employing one general servant for a variety of tasks. It also illustrates the fact that the institutions for training such workers were located principally in Dublin city. Many householders preferred to take a young girl into service without training, since a lower wage could be offered than to an experienced worker, and trainees were less likely to make demands upon their employer. The vast majority of domestic servants in Dublin came from rural areas outside the city and county, and many Church of Ireland servants entered service through institutions such as the Domestic Training Institute for Protestant Girls in Charlemont St., which offered instruction in domestic economy to prospective servants in Dublin, and for those intending to emigrate and go into

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service abroad. For Protestant orphans, as for Catholics, the most common occupation on leaving the care of an institution such as the Protestant Orphan Society was domestic service. Similarly the efforts of Protestant reformers and philanthropists to provide employment for the women they 'rescued' usually took the form of appealing to householders to employ them as domestic servants, the reason being that unmarried mothers and other 'fallen' women could redeem themselves through honest labour.

Although the majority of domestic servants were Catholic, some employers did seek to employ fellow church members. The Irish Times and the Church of Ireland Gazette carried advertisements for servants seeking employment, and householders seeking servants, with both frequently advertising their religion. In 1914 there were on average six advertisements of domestic situations vacant weekly in the Church of Ireland Gazette in which the employer sought Irish Church members. In the same period on average four servants seeking employment stated the fact that they were Episcopalians. In the Irish Times, servants and employers alike adopted a similar strategy. The numbers of Protestant employers who recruited directly from specifically Protestant institutions is difficult to assess, as records of how positions were secured are often lacking in detail. However it would appear that servants, once trained, depended largely upon references and personal recommendations when

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70 Annual Report of the Domestic Training Institute for the year ending December 31, 1911.
71 Annual Report of the Protestant Orphan Society, 1913. See also Ms 1045/5/5, minutes of the Protestant Orphan Society, 1905-1924, NAI.
72 For a discussion of this work in relation to Catholic women, see Maria Luddy, Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth Century Ireland Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, pp. 164-6.
73 Irish Times March 29, 1911.
74 The Church of Ireland Gazette January-December, 1914.
75 The Irish Times, March, April, May and June, 1914.
changing positions, and such social contacts were in all probability strongest between either Protestant or Catholic middle and upper classes.\textsuperscript{76} The wages paid to servants do not appear to have varied from Catholic to Protestant households, and ranged from six pounds per annum for an untrained 'general girl' to twenty pounds for an experienced indoor servant. Given the fact that wages were paid above and beyond bed and board, it is perhaps surprising that a higher proportion of poorly educated Protestant women were not represented in this category.

Class 4, the agricultural workers, provides an extremely low level of Church of Ireland female participation. As one would expect, given Dublin's large urban population, the total number of female agricultural workers is very low, standing at 0.8\% of the total of those who described themselves as in employment; however the total figure of 5.6\% for Church of Ireland women is by far the lowest of any of the categories. Even outside of the principal urban areas, Protestant females provide a consistently low percentage of total female agricultural workers, standing at 0.7\% in Galway, and 4\% in both Cork and Westmeath. The broad category for agricultural workers, in which men outnumbered women by a ratio of 8:1 in Dublin, may have resulted in some women 'misplacing' themselves on the returns, as the census notes themselves suggest.\textsuperscript{77} However the numbers thus potentially misassigned are so small as to make little difference to the overall categories.

The Industrial classifications accounted for 7.8\% of those Church of Ireland

\textsuperscript{76} Judging from the names provided by contemporary accounts, several diaries and household account books I have examined, as well as incidental references to religious and social practices, it appears that the more significant household staff in middle and especially upper class Protestant homes were often themselves Protestants. See for example Lady Wynne's Diary, Ms 10247/12/33, TCD; Countess of Fingall, \textit{Seventy Years Young} Dublin: Lilliput Press, 1991. I have not come across any case of Protestant domestic servants employed in Catholic households.

\textsuperscript{77} \textit{Census of Ireland for the year 1911}, table xx, note (a) p. 55.
women in paid work in Dublin city and county in 1911, with the main sources of employment being drapers (15.2% of the total females employed), general shopkeepers (9.7% of total females employed), and milliners/dressmakers (8.7%). The fourth area in which Protestant women provided a significant minority (of 20.8%) of those employed was as 'Lodging House, Boarding House-keepers'. This category points up the shortfalls of using census data to evaluate women's work in this period. As charity records show, many Protestant women kept lodgers as a means of maximising their resources in difficult times. It allowed them to retain their assets (generally a family home) once widowed or single and without means, and was the second most common means of making a living described by Protestant women seeking support from charitable institutions. However, they would not describe themselves as landladies by profession, and would more accurately be returned in the category of 'Indefinite and Non-Productive'. Within the industrial class, it is interesting to note that despite the massive decline in the traditional Protestant arena of silk goods manufacture, three out of the four female workers thus employed were Protestant. The final category in the census, that of 'Persons Not Producing' accounts for the vast majority of both Catholic and Protestant women in Dublin (some 141,783 women, of whom 28% were Protestant). If one discounts the under fifteen and over sixty five-year age group as being less likely to seek employment, paid or unpaid, there remain 112,898 women without work. It is impossible to calculate just how many of these women were in fact engaged in paid employment, however erratic or unskilled. However it seems likely that a good percentage did regularly engage in labour outside the home, whether as casual, seasonal workers, unpaid charity and
social workers, or in extending the ‘(informal) philanthropy of the poor to the poor.’

The social and economic conditions of Dublin, both city and county, in the early twentieth century led to the mobilisation of female volunteer workers on a huge scale. Lacking a strong industrial base, the working classes were dependent upon casual labour which was often seasonal and erratic. The high numbers of 'general labourers' listed in successive censuses tended also to be those who over-populated the tenement slums, principally on the north city side of the Liffey. The city death rate had fallen somewhat in the early twentieth century, from a high of 30.13 per 1000 in the period 1841-50 to 23.92 in 1901-1910, and the infant mortality rate decreased slightly during this period also. However by the turn of the century the adult death rate was the fifth highest in the world. Given the appalling conditions under which much of the population lived and worked, the scope for the involvement of voluntary female philanthropists was huge. In conclusion, one finds that the employment distribution of Protestant women in Dublin in 1911 is markedly different to that of Catholics in so far as Protestants were over-represented in the professional and commercial classes, and under-represented in the unskilled, semi-skilled and labouring categories. In this, they generally followed the patterns of their male co-religionists, and thus shaped the social and political scene in Dublin in the early twentieth century.

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80 ibid, pp. 244-6.
81 25% of Dublin families lived in one room, four person tenements, and at least 16,000 families lived below the poverty line in the first decade of this century.
Table 7:
Male and Female Populations, Dublin City and County, 1911

### All Denominations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>City</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>City &amp; Co.</th>
<th>W. % of combined total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>147,656</td>
<td>78,708</td>
<td>226,364</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>157,151</td>
<td>93,686</td>
<td>250,837</td>
<td>52.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Protestants (Church of Ireland, Presbyterians and Methodists)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>City</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>City &amp; Co.</th>
<th>W. % of combined total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>23,456</td>
<td>20,621</td>
<td>44,077</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>22,440</td>
<td>25,811</td>
<td>48,251</td>
<td>52.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Church of Ireland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>City</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>City &amp; Co.</th>
<th>W. % of combined total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>20,043</td>
<td>17,237</td>
<td>37,280</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>19,314</td>
<td>22,086</td>
<td>41,400</td>
<td>52.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Presbyterians

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>City</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>City &amp; Co.</th>
<th>W. % of combined total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>2,220</td>
<td>2,107</td>
<td>4,327</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>1,997</td>
<td>2,293</td>
<td>4,290</td>
<td>49.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Methodists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>City</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>City &amp; Co.</th>
<th>W. % of combined total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>1,193</td>
<td>1,277</td>
<td>2,470</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>1,129</td>
<td>1,432</td>
<td>2,561</td>
<td>50.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class</td>
<td>Total Protestants</td>
<td>Coff</td>
<td>Coff % of total</td>
<td>Presbyterians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class I</td>
<td>2,355</td>
<td>1,920</td>
<td>81.5</td>
<td>308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Professional)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class II</td>
<td>3,517</td>
<td>3,181</td>
<td>90.4</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Domestic)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class III</td>
<td>1,067</td>
<td>857</td>
<td>80.3</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Commercial)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class IV</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>87.8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Agricultural)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class V</td>
<td>2,161</td>
<td>1,853</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Industrial)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class VI</td>
<td>39,117</td>
<td>33,561</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>3,427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Non-Productive)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Protestants, all categories: 48,250
Total Church of Ireland, all categories: 41,401
% of total Protestants: 86
Total Presbyterians, all categories: 4,291
% of total Protestants: 8.8
Total Methodists, all categories: 2,558
% of total Protestants: 5.3
Chapter 2: Education
This chapter will examine the issue of education as it related to Protestant women in Dublin. Taking a number of distinct groups as examples, I will attempt to chart the progress of women from secondary level through to university admission, and on to careers. The women chosen for this study are the pupils of the Clergy Daughters’ School, women students at Trinity College, Dublin, and applicants to the Clergy Widows and Orphans Society, who after varying periods of employment sought support from this charitable organisation. Although the TCD student body includes numbers of non-Anglicans, my analysis relates to the majority, who belonged to the Church of Ireland, and focuses upon the significance of TCD as a Dublin city institution. While many of these women students came from outside the capital, attendance at Trinity College provided unique educational opportunities, as well as making them part of this urban based movement for educational equality. In this chapter I hope to demonstrate what were the particular constraints and advantages associated with Protestant female education. In particular I wish to examine popular perceptions of education for women, and the role of institutions such as the Clergy Daughters School, Alexandra College and Trinity College. I also want to discuss the employment options available to educated women, with particular emphasis upon governesses and teachers.

Women’s education in nineteenth-century Ireland has been considered principally in terms of ‘the limitations imposed on the education of girls and women...[and] the strength and persistence of sexual stereotyping in moulding [their] educational experience.’¹ Although I would agree that these are the dominant issues

¹ Mary Cullen, ‘Introduction’ in M. Cullen (ed.) Girls Don’t Do Honours: Irish Women in Education
with regard to the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries\(^2\), critical approaches based on these tenets have the effect of simplifying the debate, and disregard the often considerable advances made by some women in secondary and tertiary education. The term ‘education’ has for women a broader meaning than the achievement of literacy and numeracy skills. Educational processes have a significant socialising function, as well as defining the limits of that socialisation.\(^3\) However in turn of the century Dublin, there was an added significance as far as Protestant women were concerned. The question of the religious dimension in education was particularly acute in Ireland, where secondary schooling was conducted for the most part upon denominational lines. Given that the most significant early educational reformers were Protestant, the general thrust of the campaign might have been expected to follow these religious divisions. However, the activists presented a curiously neutral campaign, in the sense that they attempted to eliminate any bias in terms of class, religion, and even - despite the object of the campaign - gender. By this I mean that they claimed equal education for women as a right, to be provided on the grounds of merit, and not sex. Their attempts to remove gender bias were not always successful, but the ambition was nevertheless there.

Overall, there was a determined effort made to stress the cross-denominational nature of the educational campaign, despite the preponderance of Protestant leaders.\(^4\)

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\(^2\) Indeed, some would argue that this element of education is just as prevalent today, but is rather more subtly expressed: ‘When we talk of the hidden curriculum we are referring to the social norms and values that are implicitly communicated to pupils in schools by the way in which school and classroom life is organised.’ Sheelagh Drudy and Kathleen Lynch (eds.) *Schools and Society in Ireland* Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1993 p. 182.


\(^4\) In the 1906 Petition from the National University Women Graduates Association requesting that
Occasionally, however, these efforts served only to emphasise how Protestant the campaign was. In 1903, the *Lady of the House*, a relatively liberal middle and upper class women’s journal⁵, presented a feature entitled ‘The Education of the Irish Girl: Some Lady Principals of the Irish Schools’.⁶ The article briefly profiled ten women, all heads of girl’s schools throughout the country. The list included some of the most significant and progressive institutions, including Alexandra School and College, Victoria College, Belfast, Victoria High School, Derry and Rochelle Girl’s School in Cork. No Catholic schools were mentioned. At the end of the article the following statement was appended:

We much regret that we have been unable to include amongst the portraits illustrating ‘The Education of the Irish Girl’ representatives of the Nuns who have won distinction as educators of youth in the convent schools of Ireland. We specially desired to include a representative selection, but found that portraits of these ladies could not be supplied for publication, and we were therefore, regretfully obliged to render, by their omission, ‘The Education of the Irish Girl’ less complete than we would wish it to be.

**Secondary Education: Alexandra College and the CDS**

The secondary education of middle-class Protestant girls in Dublin was

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secondary teachers continue to be registered with the Association, the regional Presidents were: Isabella Mulvany, L.A. Walkington, C.I. Foreman and Hannah Aderson. NUWGA I/3 (I), UCD.⁵ Although the magazine regarded itself principally as a social gazette, it used changes in fashion and social practice as the basis for discussion amongst its readership. Editorial policy usually precluded direct comment on issues, but text was frequently intended to provoke a response. For example, the Christmas issue of 1906 featured a full page photograph of Lady Castlereagh ‘astride on horseback’ with the commentary ‘The fashion of ladies riding astride is growing rapidly, and there are now many well-known people who adopt the method, a revival, it may be noted, of that favoured in pre-Elizabethan times. Lady Castlereagh, for instance, is seen in the row daily wearing a divided costume, and there are quite a number of girls who have adopted the bifurcated garments...Doctors, however, differ as to the wisdom of the new fashion, but there are many who recommend it, although not exactly on artistic grounds.’⁶

⁵ *The Lady of the House* Christmas Issue, Dublin, 1903.
broadly similar to that available in England and Scotland. There was no great
distinction between the curriculum offered to boys and girls, apart from the so-called
‘aesthetic subjects’ of music, singing and drawing, upon which there was a greater
emphasis in girl’s schools. There was however more attention paid to religious
conformity and observance in schools in Ireland. From the late nineteenth century,
educationalists insisted that religious instruction be a core curriculum subject in
Protestant schools. At the Church of Ireland General Synod in 1911, the question of
religious education was discussed at length, and the following resolution passed:

That the General Synod of the Church of Ireland urges all parents,
and those who are instructed with the education of the young
members of the Church, to take proper care for their instruction
and education in the teaching of Holy Scripture and the principles
and system of the Church of Ireland. The Synod hopes that the
Programme issued by the association for Promoting Christian
Knowledge, acting in conjunction with the Education Board of the
Synod, will be adopted in all Secondary Schools where the pupils
are members of the Church of Ireland.

One girl’s institution which took this resolution very much to heart was the
School for Educating Daughters of the Irish Clergy, established in 1843, in order to
provide an education for the impoverished female offspring of Church of Ireland
clerics. Although not a charity in the sense of the Protestant Orphan Society, or the
several Anglican organisations which took care of destitute Protestants, it did assist
families who would otherwise have been unable to afford private secondary education
for their daughters. Fees were graded according to the number of sisters in school at

7 Felicity Hunt, ‘Divided Aims: the Educational Implications of Opposing Ideologies in Girls’
Secondary Schooling, 1850-1950’ in Felicity Hunt (ed.) Lessons for Life: The Schooling of Girls and
8 General Synod of the Church of Ireland: Report for 1911.
9 Known as the Clergy Daughters’ School (CDS) and hereafter referred to as such.
the same time, the subjects taken, and the ability of the father to pay the costs. The CDS had close links with Alexandra College, one of the most ‘progressive’ female educational establishments in the country. As such, the CDS became part of the broader campaign for the advancement of women’s rights, particularly in the sphere of education. However, the committee of the CDS were not necessarily in sympathy with the radical challenge to social and educational processes represented by Alexandra College, with the result that the CDS remained rather on the periphery of events, largely independent, yet partly integrated with Alexandra. The educational advantages of attendance at Alexandra College were a significant attraction, reflected by high academic standards within the CDS. However, the clerical board appear to have been rather anxious about the potential for radicalism which Alexandra and its staff posed, through its support for advanced educational and social rights for women, and its willingness to provide a forum for divergent opinions. The CDS board exercised influence over its pupils by limiting the contact which they had with Alexandra pupils. Thus girls attending the Clergy Daughters’ School did not board with Alexandra students, but resided in their own institution on Earlsfort Terrace. Neither did they socialise with each other, at least during term time. Although the CDS girls were allowed to use Alexandra’s sports facilities, they exercised at different times. Disciplinary procedures for CDS girls were determined solely by the CDS committee: if a pupil misbehaved while at classes in Alexandra College the matter was not dealt with there, by Alexandra staff, but rather by way of a report which was sent

10 Although most of the pupils were Protestant, Alexandra accepted girls from a range of religious backgrounds, and employed staff with varied political beliefs, including Dorothy MacArdle and Patrick Pearse.
to the CDS committee.\footnote{Ms 357, Clergy Daughter’s School Committee Meeting Minutes, February 23, 1917, RCBL.}

Full integration with Alexandra College, had it been attempted, would have raised difficulties for the families of many of the CDS pupils. Apart from those parents who wished for close Church supervision for their daughters, or who feared the effects of too prolonged an exposure to Alexandra’s liberal philosophy, there was the question of funding. It had become clear from early in the establishment of the CDS that a large number of clerics were unable to afford high, or in many cases even moderate, fees for their daughters’ education. Thus the school committee considered each application on its own merits, and opened the selection of candidates for assistance out to the broader religious community. In this way, the educational process became far more tied to the whole Church of Ireland population. If clergy daughters were the feminine embodiment of the Church, through their associations with the establishment, then all tithe payers had a say in their election. Each candidate had to be initially proposed, assessed as to eligibility, and then elected into the school. This procedure echoed that of the principal Protestant charitable organisations such as the Clergy Widows and Orphans Society, and implied that these were relief cases rather than those in need of partial assistance. In fact, the fees charged were often considerable, ranging from ten pounds per annum for the most basic accommodation and education, up to forty five pounds for the full range of facilities. Instruction in music and ‘gymnasium’\footnote{See for example Ms 357, CDS Committee Meeting Minutes, June 23, 1905, RCBL.} were designated extras, and had to be paid for by the fathers, although a reduction in fees was granted if more than one daughter attended

\footnote{Up until 1911.}
the school simultaneously.

Even given these concessions, there was a surprisingly high level of default on fee payments, and the committee devoted a good deal of its time discussing offenders. While this may reflect the poor stipends available to many Anglican clerics who lacked any private income, it also suggests that the threat of an interrupted education for their daughters did not overly concern many. The excuses offered in some cases stretched the credulity of the committee:

Rev. W. Scully... repudiated the debt of fees for two and a half years on the grounds that the secretary had omitted to furnish him with the quarterly accounts, and... he was under the impression that a prize was paying for his daughter.\(^{14}\)

In most of the cases of non-payment, the fees were simply waived. In Scully's case, however, the committee reduced his considerable debt to £30, to be paid off in quarterly instalments of £3-15-0.' The committee did have recourse to a higher authority in cases of unpaid fees, which they exercised only with the worst offenders:

'The Secretary having reported that Mr. Meara and Mr. Duke were in arrears of payment of fees, it was suggested that their respective Bishops should be approached on the subject.'\(^{15}\)

The Clergy Daughters' School was an invaluable institution as far as ministers of the Church of Ireland were concerned. Most of the pupils came from areas outside of Dublin city and county, very often from areas with low Protestant numbers, and limited educational facilities for religious education. The school did attract some

\(^{14}\) Ms 357, CDS Committee Meeting Minutes, November 21, 1913, RCBL.
\(^{15}\) ibid, April 24, 1914.
students of a high academic calibre - CDS pupils were eligible to apply for scholarships to Alexandra College - but the surprisingly high number of students who attended the school for relatively short periods of time suggests that a comprehensive education was not deemed essential for parents. This pattern may also be seen in middle-class Catholic schools. For example, analysis of attendance at the Sacred Heart Convent, Roscrea, and the order’s board school at Mount Anville, Dublin, between 1870 and 1893, indicates that ‘the majority of girls coming to (Roscrea and Mount Anville) were using [them] as a ‘finishing school’, with over 60% of pupils in both institutions remaining there for less than two years. Similar rates of attendance applied to the CDS. Between 1905 and 1910, five pupils on average withdrew annually before their education was complete. Various reasons were presented for the withdrawals, from illness to lack of application. In several cases the CDS committee themselves requested a pupil’s removal. In November 1912, two pupils were dealt with summarily:

It having been reported that Miss Bessie Hannah had been absent for over a year, it was directed that her father be informed that her place cannot be kept open, and that unless she is able to return after Christmas and with a medical certificate...her place will be declared vacant. The committee reserve the right of having her examined by their own physicians.

It was directed that as Muriel Mitchell is reported as deriving no benefit from the school, notice of withdrawal at Christmas be sent to her father.

17 Pupil numbers varied in these years, but there were for example a total of 52 pupils in the CDS in 1910.
18 Ms 357, CDS Committee Meeting Minutes, November 22, 1912, RCBL.
Although this turnover of students had clear academic disadvantages for the individual concerned, it was not viewed in an entirely negative light by parents, or indeed by the committee itself. A continually changing body of students ensured that a greater number of pupils passed through the CDS, and by extension through Alexandra College, than would have been possible if each pupil remained for the entire course of her schooling. As the majority of the pupils were not taking formal examinations, it would seem that attendance at these two institutions, however brief, conferred a reasonable educational status. On average, girls attended the CDS for three to four years at a time, although theoretically they were eligible to remain at the school for ten years, from the ages of eight to eighteen.19

It should not be presumed that parents regarded the CDS as a cut-price finishing school however. The academic standards were consistently high, and maintained through the use of a qualifying exam for admission:

Every child, upon entrance to the School, must pass a qualifying examination, graduated according to age, in the following course:
- Scripture - General Questions on the Life of our Lord;
- Arithmetic - Notation, Numeration, four simple and Compound Rules;
- English Grammar - Uses of the Parts of Speech, Simple Parsing, Dictation, Composition;
- Geography - General Outlines of the British Isles;
- English History - Outlines to the end of Henry III’s reign;
- French - Use of Articles, Auxiliary Verbs, Agreement of Adjectives. If she fails to satisfy the Committee that she possesses a reasonable knowledge of these subjects, her admission will be delayed until she has been further instructed.20

20 ibid.
The list of subjects, while not comprehensive, indicate that a sound general education was expected of each pupil prior to admission. The emphasis upon Scriptural Knowledge is unsurprising, given the nature of the school. What is more interesting is the restricted nature of the history curriculum. Although reflecting the general approach of Protestant schools in avoiding the subject of modern Irish history, it left a significant gap, which was remarked upon by other contemporary commentators:

The Board of Education at that time was wise in its generation in not allowing history - English or Irish - to be taught in National Schools, for if we had been taught Irish History it would have broken through the crust of our conventional Unionism and even if we had read English History some of us with enquiring minds might have wanted to know 'the other side of the story'.

English history was taught as if it were a rubber stamp, to be pressed on to your brain and give you a British trade mark - you learnt the dates when English Kings reigned, fought battles and died. As for Irish history - whenever I hear anyone singing 'Who Fears to Speak of '98?' I feel that a great many of our generation could have answered that question by saying 'Every single teacher in the school where I was taught'

It was a well kept secret in my old school that we lived in Ireland, or had any history of our own at all.

I knew my English History well and liked it. Of Irish History I learned nothing, except when it was mixed up with English, such as the Anglo-Norman Invasion, and a passing reference to the various 'rebellions.' That my country had a history of its own, more wonderful and far older than that of Britain, I did not know until years later.

The practice of avoiding potentially disruptive subjects, or presenting a selective curriculum in schools, was not confined to Protestant establishments. However, the

21 Elizabeth Bloxham, Statement to the Bureau of Military History n.d. P31, pp. 11-12, UCD.
period leading up to Independence imposed a particular restraint upon Protestant schools in terms of the subjects they could comfortably teach. Indeed, a policy of ducking controversy continued even after the immediate political tensions had been somewhat resolved. Rochelle School in Cork took an explicitly apolitical line with its pupils, a policy which one commentator felt limited the development of the pupils:

Undoubtedly many of the parents must have viewed the new Irish government with suspicion. Miss Bewley [the headmistress] had to steer the school into this new Ireland without at the same time antagonising these parents. She seems to have done so by a rigid curtain of censorship, which was continued with success into the thirties and forties; no newspapers, no politics, no modern history of Ireland, no discussions, no recriminations, and a continuance of co-operation with the State Education Department. Miss Bewley was a very intelligent woman and I am sure this was a deliberate policy and one which worked very well at the time... I do feel, however, that this went on for far too long in Rochelle, so that, while the pupils may have been turned out free of prejudices, they were terribly ignorant of current affairs.24

Alexandra College had a more advanced attitude towards the questions of both modern history and current affairs, with students taking part in debates within the college on contemporary issues, and speakers from various organisations addressing the pupils regularly. The Alexandra Guild, an umbrella organisation for various social groups within the college, sent student representatives to important social and political gatherings in Ireland and beyond. In 1909, for example, students attended the Conference of the National Union of Women Workers in Portsmouth, and reported back through the college magazine.25 ‘History (Ancient and Modern)’ was taught at Senior level at the college, and pupils from the Clergy Daughters’ School could take

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25 Alexandra College Magazine December, 1909.
An important part of the education of girls at the CDS and Alexandra College was the realisation of their likely future positions in Irish society. The college had an extraordinarily broad range of clubs and societies which met in and outside the institution, including the Literary Society; the Browning Class; the Church History Class; the History of Art Class; the Biblical Greek Class; the Cercle Francais (with over 60 members); the Temperance Union; the Christian Union; the Reading Union; the Dramatic Club; the Debating Society; the Missionary Association; the Games Club, and the Alexandra Children’s Holiday Fund. Through the College Magazine, girls were reminded not merely of their responsibilities to others, but were made aware of the training and education available to them to pursue careers outside the home. The girls were encouraged to spend much of their free time working for others, and the extent of their responsibility was perhaps surprising. The College owned properties in Summerhill, Pembroke Gardens, and Grenville St., Dublin, and rented out rooms to deserving families. The senior pupils were responsible for visiting the tenants, collecting rent, and ordering repairs when appropriate. Their work went beyond the usual children or teenage charity involvement, and while the girls undoubtedly learned valuable lessons in balancing books and dealing with tradesmen, the implicitly superior position of the children to the older tenants must have been

27 Every edition of the magazine contained reports of the various college guilds and clubs. They also featured articles discussing the options open to well-educated women in Ireland, and printed the text of lectures given in Dublin on issues of relevance to women such as the suffrage movement, the rights of working women, options available in university and training colleges, and information on the qualifications required for particular careers.
somewhat grating. Unfortunately the attitude of the residents was not recorded, beyond the bland yearly references to their contentment in the annual reports of the Alexandra Guild.\textsuperscript{28} The CDS and Alexandra students also ran the Working Girls’ Club at the Greenmount Spinning Factory.\textsuperscript{29} They attended evening meetings, and organised games and activities for the girls, including physical drill, dressmaking and cookery. Ironically, given the high academic standards of the pupils, they did not organise reading groups. The practical experience gained by the pupils - they collected money for dressmaking material, chased bad debtors, and regulated attendance - was considerable, but perhaps the early acceptance of their Christian obligation to assist the less fortunate was equally important.

There is an interesting and significant difference in the broader curriculum between that available to Alexandra and CDS pupils in Ireland, and comparable institutions in England.\textsuperscript{30} Apart from the avowedly academic institutions, there was an increasing emphasis upon ‘curricular differentiation’ between boys and girls schools which stressed suitably gendered subjects.\textsuperscript{31} For example, a comparison between the courses available at Alexandra College and the Manchester Institution indicate that the subjects taught at both junior and senior levels in Alexandra were academic rather than vocational, and that there was a greater emphasis placed in the English institution

\textsuperscript{28} See for example the reports in the \textit{Alexandra College Magazine} vol. XLVIII, June, 1916, pp. 58-60.
\textsuperscript{30} Alexandra College had in fact been modelled upon Queen’s College, London, and the curriculum in both schools in the nineteenth century was therefore very similar. Queen’s taught Theology, History, English, French, Latin, Geography, Arithmetic, Algebra and Geometry, Natural Science, Philosophy, Music, Drawing, and Drill. See Elaine Kaye, \textit{A History of Queen’s College, London: 1848-1972}, London: Queen’s College, 1972, p. 88.
\textsuperscript{31} Hunt, ‘Divided Aims’ p. 11.
upon 'the knowledge and skills considered appropriate for a young lady.'\textsuperscript{32} The courses offered at senior level at the Manchester Institution included 'English Reading, Grammar, Geography, Arithmetic, and Writing; French Language and Literature; Plain and Fancy Needlework; Cutting-out and Making-up of Dresses; Biography and Criticism of English Literature; Landscape, Flower, and Figure Drawing; Music (Instruction on the Piano Forte); Modelling of Fruit, Flower, &c in wax and plaster, and Class Lectures on Natural Philosophy and Chemistry.'\textsuperscript{33} The subjects taught at Alexandra were academically wider ranging, with far less emphasis upon domestic and accomplishment skills:

Junior School: - Arithmetic, English (Grammar, Reading, Spelling), Writing, English History, Geography of Europe, French, Drawing, Needlework, Singing, Science of Harmony, Drill, Callisthenics.

Senior School:- Arithmetic, Elementary Mathematics, English Language (Grammar, Composition, Reading, Analysis), French, Latin, History (Ancient and Modern), Geography, Natural Science, Domestic Economy, Needlework, Science of Harmony, Part-singing, Drill, Callisthenics.\textsuperscript{34}

Another English institution which shared Alexandra’s belief in a sound academic training was Cheltenham Ladies’ College. Under the direction of that pioneer of women’s education, Dorothea Beale, it produced well educated girls, many of whom competed successfully in public examinations. Yet again in comparison with the Dublin institution, the curriculum was more conventionally feminine. The subjects taught were ‘holy Scripture and liturgy, history, geography, grammar, arithmetic,
French, music, drawing and needlework, with German, Italian and dancing as ‘extras’. High achievement at Alexandra may have been partly spurred through competition with Catholic schools: this was certainly an element in the development of Irish Catholic girls’ education (see below). Alexandra did, indeed, offer courses which could be described as more traditionally feminine, but interestingly they were presented as optional extras, for which parents had to pay a supplementary fee. Thus students could take instruction in Drawing and Pianoforte, but it cost an additional £3 per annum.

Alexandra College’s curriculum reflected the institution’s commitment to high intellectual and educational standards. This policy had been established in the nineteenth century, when Alexandra students became the measure against which Catholic schools evaluated their own pupils. As Eibhlin Breathnach has suggested, ‘Alexandra College with its traditions and standards of excellence was regarded as the touchstone of educational achievement against which Catholic efforts scarcely registered.’

Indeed Alexandra influenced the development of Catholic girl’s schools, in two key ways. One was the attendance of Catholic pupils at the school, and the other was the spur which high rates of success in competitive public examinations by Alexandra gave to Catholic educationalists. ‘We Catholics are behind the Protestants in everything’, declared Mary Hartley to Archbishop Walsh, ‘are we

Catholics to be forced to apply to the Alexandra College for higher education? In order to secure support for the expansion of convent schools, the sectarian card was strategically played. As it was quaintly put to Walsh, ‘...the lectures there given (at Alexandra) are certain to take the bloom of faith off their foes.’

The influence of Alexandra College on the development of higher Catholic educational standards should not be under-estimated. Alexandra and Victoria College Belfast were both assessed as models of excellence by Catholic female educationalists, and their high educational standards adapted for the Catholic institutions.

Graduates of Alexandra College had a solid academic training which not only opened a broader range of career options than many of their English counterparts, but also better equipped them for entrance to university. This was to be ‘won’ by the Irish girls through high academic achievement, not, as June Purvis has pointed out in relation to Roedean College in England, because of the ‘cultural capital’ Roedean offered. This was of crucial importance once the campaign for university admission accelerated in Ireland. One of the principal arguments against the admission of women to third level education in England was their lack of academic subjects and, in particular, the classics and mathematics. In Ireland, institutions including Alexandra College, Victoria College Belfast, Victoria High School Derry, and the French School

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39 *Ibid*, p. 120.
40 The Superior General of the Loreto Order visited Victoria College as well as secondary schools in England, in order to plan a new curriculum to prepare Catholic girls for matriculation. *Ibid*.
41 Purvis, *History of Women’s Education* p. 90. Purvis quotes a Roedean pupil who declared that ‘while Roedean may not have been the stupidest school in England, it certainly rated high.’ The girls however acquired ‘forms of knowledge, ways of speaking and behaving that made access to higher education possible.’
in Bray all actively sought to expand educational limits for women, and saw as their ultimate goal university access for at least some of their students. Ironically, Alexandra College’s high academic standards contributed to the failure of its attempt to become the women’s college of Dublin University. The pupils at Alexandra, with their intellectual expectations raised through superior secondary education, looked far less favourably on the creation of a separate women’s college. Having been encouraged to consider themselves the intellectual equals of men, they wanted to study for TCD degrees.\(^43\) The picture is quite different for Catholics, as Catholic educationalists in the nineteenth century were less concerned with university education for women than their Protestant counterparts. A sound secondary education was one which fitted the soul for good, rather than prepared a girl for life, to paraphrase Mary Colum.\(^44\) Indeed, the Archbishop of Dublin actively opposed the teaching of academic subjects at secondary school, and stated that Catholic girls should be taught, ‘to be wise, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, sober... gentle, obedient to their husbands [so] that the word of God be not blasphemed.’\(^45\) Thus although Catholic girls received an education which fitted them well for middle class life,\(^46\) they lacked the grounding in academic subjects which were required for university entrance. The importance to Protestants of ‘preparatory colleges’ may be seen in an examination of the Trinity College entrance

\(^{43}\) O’Connor and Parkes, *Gladly Learn*, p. 141. Despite some measure of support amongst certain TCD staff for the recognition of Alexandra, the effort was eventually unsuccessful. See Breathnach, *A History of the Movement*, p. 181.

\(^{44}\) Quoted in O’Connor, ‘Revolution’, p. 41.

\(^{45}\) Ibid, p. 36.

\(^{46}\) Irish Catholic education drew heavily upon the French tradition, which, as Anne O’Connor has shown, reflected Irish views of the role and position of women. *Influences Affecting Girls’ Secondary Education*, p. 473.
register for 1904 to 1924. 918 women are listed, of whom 466 provided details regarding their prior education.47

Table 1: Pre-University Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INSTITUTION</th>
<th>NO. OF STUDENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alexandra College, Dublin</td>
<td>292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Privately Educated</td>
<td>39*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vict. High School, Derry</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wesley College, Dublin</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magee College, Derry</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vict. College, Belfast</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist College, Belfast</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballymena Academy</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Ten of these women were Catholic

The inclusion of a relatively large number of Catholic women amongst the female entrants to Trinity is significant. Out of a total of 81 Catholic women who took their degrees at TCD during these years (representing nine percent of the total female students), fourteen had been educated at Alexandra College which, unlike Margaret Byers' Victoria College in Belfast, was a genuinely inter-denominational institution.48

Although Catholic women were in a significant minority amongst the female students specifically and the student body generally, they indicate that hostility towards

47 MUN/V/23/7&8, Trinity College Entrance Book, 1904-1924, TCD.
Catholic attendance at Trinity College on the part of the Catholic hierarchy had a limited effect.

The Clergy Daughters' School exercised a good deal of control over the whole lives of its pupils. Not only did the committee decide whether an individual was gaining sufficient benefit from the school to justify her continued attendance, but it applied on occasion what it regarded as a reasonable veto over the student's own decisions with regard to careers. Presumably on the grounds that the CDS had provided the means for students to earn their livings, as well as making contacts with suitable employers, the committee demanded that their wishes be considered paramount. In one particular case, the committee overrode the decision of one of the pupils to reject a position:

It having been notified to the committee that Miss Georgina Trotter intended to decline the offer of Miss Beresford to retain her as an employee in the Royal School of Needlework, on the expiration of the two years of apprenticeship, the secretary was directed to write to Mr. Trotter urging that, as his daughter had been received by Miss Beresford... he should impress upon her the importance of accepting the post.49

As far as the CDS committee were concerned, one student did not have the right to jeopardise important employer contacts for the school, but the attitude reflects the autocratic control exercised on behalf of the school.

The emphasis upon the religious component in girls education in the CDS is hardly surprising in early twentieth century Ireland. An institution such as the Clergy Daughters' School, which was not merely institutionally linked with the Church of

49Ms 357, CDS Committee Meeting Minutes, June 23, 1905.
Ireland, but constitutionally bound to promote Anglican beliefs, incorporated religious education into its daily routine. Trinity College, as a liberal third level institution, had no such specific agenda. However, it could be argued that this imperative was unnecessary, as the student body was overwhelmingly Protestant. The associations between academic and religious education remained a significant issue nonetheless. As recently as 1992, a conference in Dublin argued for the centrality of religious instruction in higher education: 'When it comes to third level education, we are faced with the extraordinary anomaly in Ireland that the Christian Churches have no theological place or educational presence in our universities due to the 1908 Universities Act. The State in Ireland makes no direct provision for the study of Theology or Religious Education in our publicly funded universities...How can the universities claim to be universities and yet exclude the study of the religious dimension of human experience and its revelation in Judaism, Christianity and other faiths?'

Yet despite the numbers of denominational schools, there existed a perception that Protestant organisations were less dominated by the clergy than were their Catholic counterparts. In 1918, there was a proposal to allow schools to raise funds through local taxation, which would limit the power of the various religious bodies to control funding, and by implication, the schools themselves. When submissions were received by the Committee of the Vice-Regal Enquiry into Primary Education, the view of one of the Belfast representatives was: 'I think there is probably a feeling on

the part of Protestants - I do not think that Catholics resent it in anything like the same way - I think Protestant people believe that clerical control should be removed as far as possible.51

**Popular Perceptions of Women’s Education**

An important aspect of the women’s education debate is the perception of the largely uninvolved population towards increasing opportunities for women. *The Lady of the House* reveals general attitudes towards the question of university education for women, and raises several questions. How was it viewed by those not directly involved in the campaign? Did activists see it as a means of gaining equality with men, revolutionising career structures, or simply as a means of raising existing female accomplishments to a higher level? *Lady of the House* took an active interest in these questions, and between 1901 and 1908, when the debate over women’s higher education raged, the journal ran a series of articles discussing social changes for women, and the sorts of implications these might have. In 1903, for example, readers were invited to comment upon the question of ‘What Profession, Untried by women, would be the most suitable for Them?’52 It is illuminating to compare the suggestions made by the readers with the actual university courses chosen by women in Trinity College after 1904.

The winning letter suggested a career in market gardening. The author made no specifically gendered explanations for the choice, presenting instead practical

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51 *Vice-Regal Committee of Enquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1918. Report of the Committee*, vol. II - summaries of evidence, memoranda and returns, p. 37. For more discussion of the Committee and its findings, see below.

52 *Lady of the House*, April 15, 1903.
advice on the relative ease with which it could be pursued, and the great economic advantages it offered. In 1923, some nineteen years after women had been admitted to all courses in TCD, only one woman was studying agricultural science. Despite the associations between femininity and creative abilities in the garden, women were apparently not making professional careers out of this leisure activity. The second most popular suggestion from readers of Lady of the House was architecture, a perhaps surprising option which in this period was entirely male dominated. However, the suggestion was made for purely practical reasons: ‘It is right and wise that a woman should plan and direct the building of the house which is to be the site of her own or some other woman’s kingdom.’ The author’s criticisms of male architecture were made for aesthetic as well as practical reasons: along with a condemnation of ‘pseudo-Elizabethan and mock Queen Anne atrocities’ there was a denunciation of poor design. Moreover ‘badly placed doors, windows and fireplaces...ill ventilated rooms...and the thousand-and-one inconveniences under which householders labour’ were all criticised. Yet despite this consciousness that those who spent most time in the home were best equipped to design it, not one woman was recorded as studying architecture in 1923.

The third most popular suggestion in this readers’ survey was the legal profession. The selected letter cited Shakespeare’s Portia as an example, but interestingly no stress was placed upon women’s particular ability to embrace sophisticated legal argument, but rather upon their supposedly innate feminine virtues,

53 MUN/WOMEN/8/6, TCD.
54 Lady of the House, April 15, 1903.
and upon their readiness to use guile:

...among women are to be found all the qualities necessary in a pleader - discrimination, patience, forbearance, wit, the power of seizing and turning to account an opportunity, and above all, of working the feelings of an audience.

Another writer also suggested law as a suitable career for women, but advised that women would be best suited to be judges in juvenile court, for obvious reasons: '...it requires the loving, maternal instinct rather than the man's cold judgement - to find out just how the little hearts may be touched, and the young lives lifted out of the muddy by-ways of sin into the clean, straight road of truth and honour.' In 1923, five women were studying law, with another three taking a degree in legal and political science. Medicine was also suggested by readers as a likely option for women, given their supposed inclination towards the alleviation of suffering, but it was merely the fifth option, despite an established tradition of women physicians in Dublin. The Royal College of Surgeons produced the first female graduate in 1885, and several well known women doctors already practised in Dublin before Trinity College opened its training facilities to women in 1904. Yet in 1923, eighty two women out of the total of 215 who were listed with their course of study chose medicine. In fact medicine was the second most popular course for study for women in 1923, just marginally behind what were regarded as suitable areas of study for women - literature and history.

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55 This low number may be partly explained by the fact that women were not admitted to the legal profession until after the enactment of the 1919 Sex Discrimination Removal Act.
57 MUN/WOMEN/8/61, TCD.
The reasons for these choices, and the difference between a public perception of suitability and the actual options taken, are not especially obscure. Despite the popularity of medicine, arts subjects still accounted for the majority of women students. Medicine itself, although a highly skilled and intensely professional occupation, nevertheless represented an extension of an area in which women already predominated - nursing. Although nursing was increasing acceptable as a career to middle class women, members of the upper class still regarded it with some reserve. A professional qualification in medicine was however different. Women also tended to remain in general practise, or specialise in areas such as paediatrics. Even when they did not specifically train in female-centred branches of medicine, they often worked in areas which focused upon children and the working classes. One might expect that in Ireland, as in other countries, there would be a demand for women doctors from female patients, but there appears also to have been a suspicion of the new body of professional women, and a tendency to associate a greater degree of competence with men. The Lady of the House ran a session, as part of their ‘Women’s Parliament’ series, where contemporary issues of relevance to women were discussed. Concerning the question, ‘Are Women Patrons of Women?’, the correspondents answered with a resounding negative. There was a clear sense that professional women represented a radical change, and only those consumers who were of a like mind (‘women who have progressive opinions’) would, it was felt, consult them. One writer believed, however,

that it was merely a question of enlightening the clientele:

There is also a class of women who though not actually antagonistic to progressive women, are so accustomed to consult men and to rely on them that they are unwilling to change. This is, perhaps, the greatest difficulty that women entering men's professions have to contend with, and sometime must elapse before women can hope to gain equal recognition with men in professions which have hitherto been looked upon as the legitimate sphere of the latter.\textsuperscript{59}

As far as medicine was concerned, there was at least one body of men upon whom women could depend for support in their campaign: missionaries. The Protestant missionaries desperately needed female doctors to assist in their evangelical medical work overseas, to reach the women who would not allow themselves to be treated by male doctors. The Dublin University Mission Society, for example, actively sought the admission of women to the medical faculty at TCD, as they found their work in Chota Nagpur was greatly hindered through their inability to reach upper caste Indian women.\textsuperscript{60} Those women who travelled abroad as medics found that they could achieve positions of responsibility and status from which they were excluded at home, thereby adding to the attraction of a professional life outside of Ireland. This held true for professions other than medicine, particularly teaching, and the attractions of overseas work may be seen through the large numbers of women who volunteered. In 1903 for example, there were twenty two former Victoria College graduates at work as teachers and doctors in Damascus alone.\textsuperscript{61}

\textsuperscript{59} Lady of the House, November 15, 1905.
\textsuperscript{60} Dublin University Mission Magazine Michaelmas Term, 1907. For full account, see Oonagh Walsh, "The Dublin University Mission Society, 1890-1905" in History of Education 1995, vol. 24, no. 1.
\textsuperscript{61} Jordan, Margaret Byers, p. 49.
Of the range of arguments marshalled against the education of women by non-professional observers, the claim that higher education would render women more masculine, and less able to carry out their domestic duties as a result, had the greatest resonance. The gender implications of educating women in early twentieth century Ireland were widely discussed, and followed two contrary lines. One was that women would become masculine, a process which interestingly seemed to require men to become more feminine. At the heart of the argument was power and authority, and a presumption that if higher education and the access to significant positions it implied were opened to women, it would result not in equality, but in a reversal. The other argument, particularly strong amongst the Board at Trinity College, was that women sought access to University in order to secure husbands, and had no genuine interest in educational advancement (see below).

From the very start of the campaign to allow women into university, the charge of subverting the natural order was ranged against activists. Ironically, women themselves used the argument that higher education would produce not an academically ambitious female, who would leave the domestic sphere for the wider masculine world, but rather a better adapted housewife. Mary Hayden suggested to the Royal Commissioners at the turn of the century that a university degree would provide a woman with the training necessary to professionalise her housework: 'Experience has not shown that women who have received a University education are thereby rendered less fit for the discharge of domestic duties. On the contrary, they bring to those duties a spirit of thoroughness, a habit of steady work and a dislike
for idleness, or a life filled with mere empty amusement which enables them to
discharge their household tasks more systematically, more steadily and more quickly
than other women. Hayden may have felt professionally qualified to extol the
benefits of higher education for women as housewives, but her own decision was to
remain outside the domestic sphere. She never married, preferring a career to the
satisfactions of domestic life, however professionally conducted it might have been.

Education and Training for Employment

The pursuit of education, either for direct employment, or for entrance to
University, required a degree of commitment on the part of the individual. Courses
were lengthy and often expensive, and there was moreover a resistance on the part
not only of employers generally, but the women themselves, to invest significant
resources in what might prove to be a short-term career. The large number of women
who left paid employment upon marriage gave support to the argument that the
education of women was wasted. However, organisations such as the Irish Central
Bureau for the Employment of Women sought to raise the standards and range of
training for women, so that there would be a greater advance in terms of occupations
chosen: ‘The objection to spend time and money in training, though not so strong as it
formerly was, is still one of our great obstacles. Girls desire to begin at once to earn
money, and are often short-sighted enough to prefer to take a position to which a
miserable pittance is attached, rather than spend even six months in fitting themselves

for a much superior and more lucrative post. However, even though the Bureau existed in order to encourage the further training and employment of women, it presented a rather grim picture of the available opportunities. In 1907, an analysis of the variety of jobs available to educated women was undertaken:

| Civil Service: Jobs few, resign on marriage | Housekeeping: Fair, better when older |
| Cookery/Household: Fairly numerous         | Life Insurance: None                  |
| Dairying: Hopeful                          | Journalism: None                      |
| Dispensing: None                           | Laundry: Good                        |
| Domestics: Growing Demand                  | Librarian: £25-100 p.a.               |
| Embroidery: No difficulty                  | Medicine: Few                        |
| Examinerships: Good academic career needed | Music: Varies                        |
| Gardening: Some private work               | Nursing: Good                        |
| Damask Embroidery: Poor                    | Poultry: Poor                        |
| Leatherwork: Poor                          | Secretary: Fair                      |
| Needlework: 17-22s weekly                  | Teachers: Poor                       |
| Photography: Fair                          |                                      |

Despite the increasing employment opportunities available to women, the range of employment was still very narrow, and for the most part poorly paid. In the preface to this guide, the Countess of Dudley wrote that the Bureau provided a service for 'women of good birth and education, who, for lack of means, are forced to take up remunerative work'. If this represented the brightest opportunities which educated women could reasonably expect to achieve in Dublin, it was not especially encouraging.

Schools, Colleges, and, eventually, universities, offered varied courses for the education and training of women. There were however some other institutions which

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64 Myrra Bradshaw, *Open Doors for Irishwomen* Dublin: Irish Central Bureau for the Employment of Women, 1907.
65 ibid, preface.
prepared Church of Ireland women for the competitive labour market. To take two examples at the opposite end of the social scale, there were the various schools of art in Dublin, and the missionary settlements of the city. From the late nineteenth century, women had been joining, and indeed forming, art societies. The number are quite surprising, and included the Irish Amateur Drawing Society (1870), which became the Watercolour Society of Ireland in 1888, the Ladies Sketching Club (1872), the Dublin Sketching Club, which had an honorary female membership (1874), the Queenstown Watercolour Club (early 1890s), as well as several local societies. Although the groups were started as social organisations, they rapidly attracted the best female artists in Ireland, and became a means of making valuable links with both other artists, as well as commercial contacts. One of the interesting elements in this formal organisation of the artistic was the dominance of Protestant women. Early leading figures included Fanny Currey, Harriet Keane, Frances Keane, Sarah Purser, Edith Somerville and Henrietta Phipps, and in the early twentieth century, Mildred Anne Butler, Wilhelmina Geddes, Mainie Jellett and Evie Hone. Painting was course an expected part of an educated lady’s repertoire, but the majority of the women cited here sought to make careers out of their abilities. Several attended the Metropolitan School of Art in Dublin, and then travelled to the continent, especially Paris, for further training. The artistic community of late nineteenth century Ireland, with the Gaelic Revival and an increasing acceptance of women in public artistic roles, offered

67 Edith Somerville studied at Kensington School of Art, at Dusseldorf, and at the Colarossi School in Paris, for varying periods of time. ibid.
broad, if precarious opportunities. For example, the Yeats’ sisters, Lily and Lolly, turned their abilities to practical use through the establishment of Dun Emer Industries in Dublin. This institution became much more significant than its output might suggest, and ‘working at Dun Emer became a way-station, almost a rite of passage, for many young women involved in nationalist cultural enterprises’.68

Moreover a formal training increased the chances of full employment for Protestant women: in the 1911 census, Protestant women painters outnumbered Catholic by a ratio of 6:1.69

For less privileged women, opportunities for advancement through education took different forms. One was the training received as missionary workers for the Church of Ireland. Biblereaders and visitors were educated by the mission leaders: indeed, some of their best workers were the working class women who had attended the mission schools as children.70 In some cases, the more promising girls were sent to be trained in London at the CMS or SPG centres, and received certificates and diplomas in social work. For the rest, the Missions offered chances to broaden their education. The Church of Ireland Women Workers’ Society encouraged working class activists to attend lectures given at the settlement homes in the city: ‘The Settlement is also an intellectual centre for educated women. Series of lectures of an advanced type, in Church history, etc., are given during the winter months by distinguished scholars.’71 The calibre of speakers was indeed high, with Professors

69 Census of Ireland for the Year 1911, table xx, p. 24.
71 ‘Church of Ireland Women Workers’ Society’ in The Church of Ireland Gazette, June 18, 1920, p.
from Trinity College, including John Pentland Mahaffy, regularly lecturing at the Fishamble Street Mission. Although these lectures and courses did not lead to any formal qualification, they did provide access to forms and standards of education which were otherwise beyond the grasp of working class women. Perhaps just as importantly, they satisfied a need for intellectual satisfaction which was not fed by basic primary and secondary schools.

But did the possession of formal qualifications significantly improve women’s employment opportunities? Because they were considered for a narrow range of occupations, the possession of degrees and academic titles in some cases left women over-qualified for the available posts. Even amongst the pioneers of greater educational and occupational opportunities for women there were some who, while recognising the necessity for well trained women, deplored the fact that women went out to work. Victoria College, Belfast, large numbers of whose graduates went on to attend Trinity College, had a policy of encouraging pupils to consider careers as well as marriage. However, despite the pragmatism displayed by the writer below, advice to the students was given in a manner which stressed the negative aspect of women’s work:

In approaching it [the question of women and work], and in advocating the complete removal of all legal and social restrictions which preclude women from engaging in particular professions and trades, I am not desirous to advance any argument in favour of the absolute right of woman to the control of her own destiny. It is rather my intention to emphasize the fact, that, whether willingly or unwillingly, an increasing number of women are obliged by the force of circumstances to provide for their own support, and therefore it seems to me to be desirable and almost a matter of duty, that

394.
educated women and those who possess the means of giving effect to their convictions should try to understand this question; and if they are of the opinion that the condition of society which obliges so many women to become bread-winners is unavoidable, they should try to lessen the difficulties which surround almost every department of women's work.\textsuperscript{72}

Once qualified, women still faced a great deal of opposition towards progression in their fields. Even when women were equally or better qualified than the men with whom they worked, they remained unpromoted, and employed in the more menial tasks. In 1911, M.O. Gordon actually warned Alexandra students to avoid careers in academia, on the grounds that 'the prevailing custom in universities, of using the acquired knowledge of women immediately on their gaining the degree, for subservient purposes in describing scientific specimens, annotating papers, taking observations and recording.'\textsuperscript{73} A far greater hostility was certainly expressed towards women who sought careers in the Sciences than in the Arts. Presumptions regarding the greater suitability of languages, literature and history as areas of study and even specialisation for women carried into their later employment. Certainly if one examines the greatest successes of Irish female academics the bias is overwhelming. Early female professorial appointments in Ireland were exclusively in the arts: Mary Ryan, Professor of German, U.C.D. 1910; Mary Hayden, Professor of Modern Irish History, U.C.D. 1913; Mary Macken, Professor of German, U.C.D. 1913; Elizabeth M. O'Sullivan, Professor of Education, U.C.C. 1911 and Agnes O'Farrelly, Professor of Modern Irish Poetry, U.C.D., 1932. Curiously, despite an avowedly more

\textsuperscript{72} T. M'Glade, 'Women and Work' in \textit{Victoria College Magazine} vol. 1, no. 1, 1887 p. 19.
\textsuperscript{73} M.O. Gordon, 'The Prospects of University Women' in \textit{Alexandra College Magazine} June 1911, pp 15-16.
progressive attitude towards the education and employment of women, Trinity College remained a largely male domain in terms of academic appointments.

Constantia Maxwell was awarded a personal chair in 1939, and became Lecky Professor in 1945, but was followed by very few other women across the university. At a more basic level, women teachers, many of whom were poorly trained, were being exploited because of lower rates of pay for women. In 1918, the General Secretary of the Irish National Teachers’ Organisation argued that women were being used as a means of educating the young at the cheapest possible rate: ‘No junior assistant mistresses as such should be appointed in future. No unqualified person should be allowed to engage in teaching. The present arrangement is an attempt to provide cheap labour...The general opinion I find among teachers is that these Junior Assistant Mistresses are largely engaged in teaching infants and junior classes and it is in those very classes that the best teaching qualifications are necessary in the teacher. You would really want to have special qualifications to deal with infants.’

_Governesses and Teachers._

The career options open to women, and especially middle class women, were rather limited. The necessity to maintain a respectable position in society narrowed career choices considerably, although there were certain well-trodden paths which allowed women to earn their own livings, while still retaining middle class status. One of these was the occupation of governess, and the other was that of the trained primary school teacher. In both of these educational spheres, women of the Church of

Ireland played significant roles.

Although, as Eibhlin Breathnach has pointed out, our image of the governess is largely derived from nineteenth century English novels,\textsuperscript{75} the reality of these women's lives was often similar to their fictional counterparts. In the nineteenth and twentieth century, there was a gross oversupply of governesses, with an estimated 25,000 women in England alone offering their services.\textsuperscript{76} The profession was one which was open to exploitation and abuse on both sides, and which was all too often adopted by women as a last resort. In Ireland, the precarious nature of governessing can be clearly seen in the number of charitable organisations which catered for 'distressed gentlewomen', the startling majority of whom had worked as governesses. There were two principal charities which catered specifically for such women: the Home for Aged Governesses and other Unmarried Ladies, established in 1838, and the Governess Association of Ireland, founded in 1869\textsuperscript{77}. These two bodies supported a total of 54 women in 1919, and were both approached by far more applicants than they had funds for.\textsuperscript{78} But there were in addition several other charities which offered assistance to such respectable women. In 1917 for example The Association for the Relief of Distressed Protestants assisted nine women who had

\textsuperscript{75} Breathnach, \textit{A History of the Movement}, p. 14.
\textsuperscript{76} Kathryn Hughes, \textit{The Victorian Governess} London: Hambledon Press, 1993, p. xi.
\textsuperscript{77} This organisation was not solely concerned with supporting the elderly or infirm, but was intended to promote the higher education of women. However, shortly after its establishment, it was realised that large numbers of former governesses seeking assistance required some form of structured support, leading to the creation of a governesses fund. The organisation also attempted to raise the standards of governesses, and implicitly limit the number of women entering the profession, by establishing a register of 'Qualified Governesses and Teachers'. These efforts were consistently undermined by women who took up temporary employment as private governesses, but did not intend to make a career of it.
\textsuperscript{78} \textit{Annual Report of the Home for Aged Governesses and other Unmarried Ladies} for 1919, Dublin: 1920; \textit{Thoms Directory}, 1919.
worked as governesses, but who could no longer secure employment. Indeed the problem of unemployed governesses was so acute that several organisations had separate funds specifically for the care of aged governesses, such as the Ladies’ Irish Association. For instance, the records of the Clergy Widows and Orphans Society testify to the numbers of women who had worked as governesses, but who were now dependent upon charity for survival (see below). Low pay, unregulated employment, and a reliance upon the good will of the employer, all meant that governessing was a career which depended to an extraordinary degree on luck.

There was no clearly defined career path for governesses, unlike the primary teaching profession, which in the twentieth century became increasingly regulated. As will be seen below, primary school teachers followed a set course which resulted in a nationally recognised qualification. Governesses had to present their accomplishments as positively as possible, but were not necessarily required to possess formal qualifications. It was not a career which young women entered - Church of Ireland charity records show that most women began in their thirties, at the earliest. In some cases, and indeed in the majority of applicants to the CWOS, the women were in their forties before they began. This age profile corresponds to women in England: the 1861 census records that only one in eight governesses was under the age of 20. As Martha Vicinus has noted, the ‘gentlewomen...in their forties and fifties looking for work for the first time after the death of their parents’ produced a sympathetic, if

79 Ms 485, Minute book of the Association for the Relief of Distressed Protestants, May-June, 1917, RCBL.
80 Ms 464/6/3: Letters of Application to the Clergy Widows’ and Orphans’ Society, 1907-1923, RCBL.
81 Hughes, *Victorian Governess*, p. 29.
The age at which such a career started caused a good many problems. In the first place, a short working life meant that most women were unable to build up savings, leading to complete impoverishment in old age. Secondly, many positions offered largely board and lodgings, with perhaps a small salary above that. In 1913, the Governess Association stated that a salary of £25 per annum was regarded as very good by Irishwomen—a sum which had been described as poor in England some fifty years earlier. Thirdly, most governesses were hired for just a few years at a time. In Ireland, as in England, governesses taught either small children of both sexes, or young ladies, while a male tutor was hired to educate boys and young men. As their charges grew, the importance of the governess declined. Unlike a family nurse, who routinely cared for successive generations of children, and were often either pensioned off or kept in the home, the governess rarely had strong claims once children had moved beyond the schoolroom. As women grew older, they found it increasingly difficult to secure positions.

One should not however ignore the advantages to many women of being a governess. Despite all of the difficulties raised above - social status, erratic employment, variable wages - there were certain psychological advantages attached to this career. The most important was the fact that a governess remained within the domestic sphere, despite earning her own living. For the many women who turned to

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82 'The annual reports of the Governesses’ Benevolent Institution starkly documented the large numbers of gentlewomen willing to work for inadequate wages for fear of being totally unemployed...One GBI annuity of £20 drew 150 applicants over fifty years old, of whom 83 had not one penny in the world'. Martha Vicinus, *Independent Women: Work and Community for Single Women, 1850-1920* London: Virago, 1985, p. 23.


84 Hughes, *Victorian Governesses*, p. 23.
this employment because of the loss of the family home, this was a crucial factor.

Applicants for relief repeatedly state that they sought work which would allow them to live in, as housekeepers, governesses, nurses and companions.85

There was another key reason for seeking work as a governess. Until well into the twentieth century, governesses were rarely expected to possess any formal qualifications, beyond having a sound education themselves. Throughout the nineteenth century, as school examination results increasingly determined the funding an individual institution received, higher standards were demanded from teachers, and this included their own qualifications as well as the standards achieved by their pupils. As the pupils of privately employed governesses rarely entered public examinations, such pressures were lessened.86 The traditional accomplishment subjects were valued - besides basic literacy skills, singing, drawing, needlework and languages were all taught by governesses, but without the horrors of the competitive examination.

Governessing may be regarded less as a pitiable last resort of helpless women, and more as the (albeit unreliable) safety net of the Church of Ireland middle class. The numbers of otherwise unskilled Church of Ireland women who turned their own education to good account are high. For example, the 1911 census reveals that just under 300 Protestant Episcopalians were categorised as ‘Teacher, Lecturer, Governess’ in Dublin city and county, 87 a perhaps unsurprising figure. However if one considers that governesses did not necessarily remain so all their lives, and indeed

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85 Ms 464/6/3, CWOS Letters of Application, RCBL.
86 Some privately educated pupils did take University entrance examinations, however. Just over 8% of the women entrants to TCD between 1904 and 1924 were privately educated. See table 1.
87 Census of Ireland for the Year 1911, Table xx, pages 23 and 54.

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tended to take up the profession at different intervals, depending upon their changing circumstances, the actual figure is much higher. If one looks at the requests for assistance to the Clergy Widows' and Orphans' Society, one finds a surprisingly high rate of occupation as governesses. Over 55% of applicants to the Society between 1907 and 1923 indicated that they had been employed as governesses at various stages of their lives.\textsuperscript{88} The high rate of employment amongst Church of Ireland women as governesses has a good deal to do with Protestant demography. One of the bedevilling problems for the church was the thinly-spread church population over the country, which made it difficult to maintain schools and church congregations. However, it provided a suitable environment for women seeking employment as governesses, as they were favoured by families who did not want to send their children to boarding schools, and did not have Protestant schools near them. This brought about both a high degree of mobility amongst the women, and increased their chances of employment.

The other main source of educational employment secured by women of the Church of Ireland was primary teaching. As early as 1824, women had been trained as teachers at the Kildare Place Training Institution in Dublin. The institution provided a professional training for women when formally educated women were regarded with some suspicion. Originally established as a charitable body, the college quickly became the main provider of trained Protestant teachers in Ireland, and reflected the changing fortunes of that community over the years.

From 1900, when the new rules of the National Board of Education came into

\textsuperscript{88} Ms 464/6/3, Letters of application to the Clergy Widows' and Orphans' Society, RCBL.
operation, Church of Ireland rural schools came under increasing threat. Under the proposed new regulations, institutions had to have a minimum enrolment of 25 pupils to qualify for a government grant, a figure beyond the reach of a large number of schools. Although this threat was defeated through the eloquent intervention of the Rev. Kingsmill Moore, the future of small Church of Ireland schools was in doubt. Even in Dublin, many institutions had very small attendances. However a further development acted to increase the threat to small schools, and by implication the Church of Ireland Training College which supplied their teachers. Under the 1900 regulations, the teaching profession was progressively graded. Promotion within the three grades was dependent upon the size of the school, so that in order to be promoted to the second class grade from the third a teacher had to be working in a school with an average attendance of 30-50 pupils, and for promotion to the first class grade with an average of over 70 pupils. All third grade teachers (the newly qualified, for the most part) had the same salary: £44 for women and £56 for men. For Protestant teachers in small Church of Ireland schools, the reality was that most would not advance beyond grade three for the whole of their careers, regardless of their abilities. The immediate, and indeed long-term effect of this was to cause young men to abandon the teaching profession in droves, while women took their places. The occupation of teaching was effectively downgraded, once it became a female-dominated profession. However, lack of alternative opportunities ensured that women of the Church of Ireland continued to enter the Training College, so that by the

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outbreak of the First World War women students predominated. The training college had always strictly segregated male and female students, so that there were two quite distinct departments to be maintained. The college was licensed to admit 50 male residential students, but the take up was so poor that an appeal had to be issued to the clergy to encourage them to recruit suitable candidates.90

Nevertheless, primary teaching was becoming increasingly dominated by women, and this development was common to all denominational schools, not merely those of the Church of Ireland. In an extension of the belief that women were the most suitable educators of young children, the Board of Education decreed that boys under the age of eight could only attend schools in which there was a female assistant teacher. Although this extended the number of available posts for female teachers, it also strengthened the perception that women should occupy the junior positions in schools, while men prepared for grades two and one, and for principalships. There were moreover pressures upon women to continue their commitment to primary education, regardless of the lack of promotion.

In this period, there was universal acceptance of the important role played by women in the education of the young. Mothers were believed to be the key means of transmitting sound morals to their children,91 and single women were also encouraged to educate by example. Women of the Church of Ireland had long been associated with the Sunday School movement, and indeed the *Church of Ireland Gazette*

90 Standards for male students were progressively lowered, in order to ensure a supply of male teachers. The qualifying examination for men was dropped, and limited funding made available to encourage male applicants. Numbers continued to decline, however.

91 Lady Talbot de Malahide, in *Foundations of National Glory* declared that the education received at a mother’s knee would determine the moral path chosen by a man. London: 1915, p. 35.
emphasised their responsibility to spread the appropriate message through voluntary work in these schools. The journal published ‘Sunday School Notes’ every week for these women workers, and offered advice and encouragement in other unrelated articles. The Archdeacon of Dublin in 1920 listed the qualities which made women the best teachers of children: ‘They have a quiet and sure insight into character, especially into that of their own sex; they have a ready sympathy, a gentleness, an enthusiasm, a modesty, a freedom from coarseness and sins of violence far beyond men.’

Women’s suitability as teachers, allied to a lack of other professional opportunities, ensured that the Church of Ireland Training College produced a healthy number of graduates. In 1914, there were 115 women students in residence, far outnumbering the men at 20. Even in the difficult period of 1918-1923, numbers remained constant, for one important reason. A formal link had been established in 1921 between the Training College and Trinity College, which allowed students entering the Training College to become registered students at TCD. The Training College provided professional education, while the university gave the instruction in arts. At the end of two years, the students received the university’s diploma in elementary education. They could moreover easily progress from the diploma to a B.A. degree. This method of obtaining a university qualification proved popular with women, especially those who did not wish to attend the university as fully-fledged students.

The possession of a formal teaching qualification was a significant advance for

93 Parkes, Kildare Place, p. 126.
94 ibid, p. 133.
95 ibid.
women. However, as soon as they began to seek employment, they realised that there were many difficulties to be overcome, especially in the area of pay. Even when the authorities recognised that women did a better job than men, women were not believed to merit an equal salary. The evidence presented to the 1918 Vice-Regal Committee of Enquiry into Primary Education revealed a faith in differing wage levels:

In my opinion, women teachers do better work than men teachers, but the logical inference that they should have larger salaries cannot be drawn. We have to lay ourselves out to attract a certain type of men to the profession. We must offer a larger salary to men than to women, I do not say that they deserve it. A man is more suitable to act as a principal of a large and important school with several assistants. A man looks forward to getting married at a certain time of life and supporting a wife; accordingly, he requires a higher salary.96

On the evidence supplied to the CWOS, it is clear that many of the female applicants were responsible for the support of relatives, just as the hypothetical man in this statement was. Moreover, the presumption in this statement that a female teacher would marry, and not require her own wages for survival, was based on scanty evidence. In his testimony to the commission, the Rev. J.E. Browne went on to argue the same point - that women had alternatives to paid employment in marriage - ‘While recognising the fact that a woman succeeds best as a teacher of some standards, I think that a man’s salary should be higher for economic reasons. A married man should be paid at a higher rate than a single woman. No man should be asked to give his life to a profession in which it will be financially impossible for him to get married.

A man is usually charged more than a woman for permanent board and lodging. If we want the best men for the work, the inducement of an adequate salary must be given.\textsuperscript{97} The implication that there was no necessity to attract ‘the best’ women to the teaching profession had a sound basis in fact. Women’s limited career opportunities ensured that well educated women were entering the teaching profession at a lower rate of pay, and poorer conditions, than their male counterparts. They also had much more limited fields for advancement within the profession than men. John McNeill, Chief Inspector of the Commissioners of National Education, went on to argue that ‘It puts a very severe strain on a woman to rear a family and conduct a school at the same time. That is a thing which should be avoided if possible.’\textsuperscript{98}

Even those women who were themselves in favour of increased professional opportunities were reluctant to tackle the question of equality of pay. In 1911, Maria Gordon argued in \textit{Alexandra College Magazine} that women needed to gain a foothold in the professions before seeking any significant financial remuneration:

> If, in some of those appointments,\textsuperscript{99} the salaries appear small for University women, it must be remembered that the woman who does well in public work, to a certain extent new in character, is a marked woman for promotion or transference, and also that the near future undoubtedly holds for us new legislative enactments, likely to further increase the number of well-paid appointments for women of experience in public work. I would not like University-trained women to exclude themselves from the running in minor posts, because they would then, for lack of experience, miss the opportunities of the more responsible and better paid posts as they arise.\textsuperscript{100}

\textsuperscript{97} Rev. J.E. Browne, Representative of Protestant Schools in Belfast, ibid, p. 47.
\textsuperscript{98} ibid.
\textsuperscript{99} Factory and Sanitary Inspectorships, classed officially as ‘women’s’ inspectorships.
\textsuperscript{100} Gordon, ‘The Prospects of University Women’ p. 10.
As a means of allowing women to enter the workforce this strategy was effective, in that cheaper, well qualified individuals were hired where there may otherwise have been opposition. However, the association made between women’s work and a lower rate of pay was increasingly difficult to break, and the anticipated legislation guaranteeing equal pay did not emerge until the 1960s. Protestant women teachers did have some advantages over their Catholic counterparts, however. Catholic Church control over secondary schools severely curtailed scope for movement as far as lay teachers were concerned. The possibility for men or women of securing a headship ‘may be said not to have existed at all in the case of Roman Catholic teachers who wished to remain in Ireland’, since priests or nuns would invariably fill these positions.\(^\text{101}\) Furthermore, given that funding for Intermediate education came largely from the Catholic Church, with little or no contribution from the state, it refused to allow any appeal to an independent tribunal against dismissal from staff.\(^\text{102}\)

Professional qualifications were increasingly demanded by employers in the twentieth century, a fact which had immediate implications for women teachers. There were substantial denominational differences between Catholic and Protestant teachers in terms of qualifications, which reflected the role played by Catholic teaching orders in Ireland. At the turn of the century, ‘only 11.5 percent of male Catholic teachers and only 8 percent of female Catholic teachers were University graduates. Protestant schools were more favourably circumstanced in that 55.8 per cent of male teachers


\(^{102}\) ibid, ‘Minority Report’.
and 30 per cent of female teachers were graduates. Apart from the possibly higher standards of education in Protestant schools implied by these figures, the figures also suggest that for Protestant women contemplating a career in teaching, a third level qualification would be a significant advantage. Given the dominance of professed religious in Catholic schools, a university degree would not guarantee advancement, a factor which may have acted as a disincentive to women, in particular, in attending university for professional reasons.

There were other difficulties for women who sought to make a professional career out of teaching. Progress through the various grades was painfully slow. The Vice-Regal Committee of Inquiry into Primary Education in 1913 calculated that it would take thirty years for a teacher to rise to the highest grade in the profession. Given the additional impediments facing women - slower promotion, domestic responsibilities, and the difficulty of maintaining an unbroken career record - it was little wonder that although women dominated the teaching profession as a whole, they were significantly under-represented in the higher grades, as indeed they remain today.

**Entry to Trinity College**

The experiences of female students at Trinity College mirrored in many ways those of women at other British universities in the same period. Perhaps the most obvious difference, a reflection of local conditions, was the relative homogeneity of the students in class and religious terms. Because of the hostility on the part of the

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104 Vice-Regal Committee of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland) 1913. p. 4.
Catholic Church towards Catholics attending Trinity, the religious profile was overwhelming Protestant. Trinity College was traditionally regarded as the last bastion of the ascendancy in Ireland, representing the Anglican community above all else. Female entrants do reflect this stereotype to an extent, with 537 students out of a total of 918 admitted between 1904 and 1924 belonging to the Church of Ireland. The remaining 42%, representing a considerable proportion of the total, came from a wide range of religious backgrounds. The principle of denominational tertiary education had been accepted by most at the beginning of the twentieth century. Educationalists acknowledged the reality of the workplace by accepting that Protestants would find a degree from TCD more useful than from a Catholic establishment. In her evidence to the Robertson Commission Alice Oldham had declared that she did not think that ‘a degree in a Catholic University would be of any value whatever to Protestant women.’\textsuperscript{105} Proportionate to their numbers in the general population, Presbyterians and Methodists took full advantage of the opportunity offered by Trinity in 1904. Out of the total female entrants between 1904 and 1924, Presbyterians accounted for fifteen per cent and Methodists seven per cent. A large number of the Presbyterians may be accounted for through the arrangement between Trinity and Magee College, whereby ‘students who had kept their first two years at Magee could, if they attended lectures in Trinity for one term of their Junior Sophister year and all three terms of their Senior Sophister year, present themselves at the degree examination and qualify for a Dublin B.A.’\textsuperscript{106} The Presbyterians and

\textsuperscript{105} Quoted in Breathnach, \textit{Women's Higher Education} p. 161.  
Methodists shared a predominantly northern Irish profile, which remained steady over the years, regardless of external political developments. Catholics made up 9% of the total female attendance, a significant number, given the disapproval of the Catholic Church. Other denominations included the Church of England at 4% of the total - a small but steady representation over the years. Jews, Quakers and the Plymouth Brethren also attended. However, despite the significant connections between religion and politics in Ireland in this period, and the explicitly sectarian prism through which Trinity College was often viewed by both Catholics and Protestants, the determining factor in women’s higher education would appear to be class and not religion. In addition, up until at least the 1920s, women attending TCD or indeed any university may be regarded in the light of pioneers, and not necessarily typical of the broader population. As the female students came from broadly similar social and cultural backgrounds (see table 2 below), the issue of ‘contamination’ which Sara Delamont discusses in relation to the mixing of different social groups at school and college is rather less pressing at Trinity.

Once the College doors were opened, it was clear that the Protestant merchant middle classes were taking advantage of the opportunities offered to women by Trinity College. John Coolahan has argued that ‘University education was not a

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107 As was noted earlier, the Catholic hierarchy was less concerned with university education for women than a suitable secondary schooling. Competition for university places was encouraged in the late nineteenth century for reasons of religious rivalry, as Anne O’Connor and Eibhlin Breathnach have both shown. Even the professional training of women offered by the universities held little appeal. Indeed, as Breathnach has suggested, the Catholic hierarchy were actually in favour of developing women’s third level colleges as a part of secondary institutions, so that nuns would not have to attend a mixed-sex university in order to qualify as teachers. “Charting New Waters”: women’s experience in higher education, 1879-1908” in Cullen (ed.) Girls Don’t Do Honours, p. 73.
highly valued commodity amongst the majority of the Irish middle-class in the
teneteenth-century. Denominational disputes no doubt affected attitudes but, even
allowing for this, demand for the facilities available remained very low. By the
twentieth century however this picture had changed significantly, with a perhaps
surprisingly high rate of female attendance at TCD. What is interesting about the class
make-up of entrants to Trinity College is the lack of representation of the gentry. This
may be partly explained by the fact that their offspring tended to be educated at
Oxford and Cambridge, rather than Dublin. However some historians claim that there
was no great tradition amongst the Anglo-Irish ascendancy of university education for
their children, a pattern which could be traced to a reluctance to allow their children
to attend community secondary schools: 'The gentry, even the decayed gentry, and
professional men, rather than allow their daughters to mix in a school with the
daughters of respectable shopkeepers and well-to-do farmers, often prefer resident
governesses. Poor, but proud parents can engage only cheap and consequently badly
educated governesses.'

The image of Trinity as the educational home of the Irish Ascendancy is
therefore rather a false one. Upper class Irish males were more often educated at
English universities, and the women made up a tiny proportion of the female
university body. The daughters of the merchant middle classes formed a significant
proportion of the student body, with clergy daughters achieving a surprisingly high

110 Miss Byers' statement to the Endowments Commission, reproduced in *Victoria College
Magazine*, June, 1887, p. 4.
level of representation, given their relative proportion of the population.\textsuperscript{111}

Table 2: Occupations of Fathers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Merchants</th>
<th>Clergy</th>
<th>Farmers</th>
<th>Civil Servants</th>
<th>Medicine</th>
<th>Gentleman/Landowner</th>
<th>Legal Profession</th>
<th>Clerks</th>
<th>Other Professional</th>
<th>Dead/N.A.</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1908-12</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% 26</td>
<td>% 18</td>
<td>% 4</td>
<td>% 2</td>
<td>% 9</td>
<td>% 2</td>
<td>% 6</td>
<td>% 5</td>
<td>% 7</td>
<td>% 6</td>
<td>% 15</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913-16</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>153</td>
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<td></td>
<td>% 25</td>
<td>% 13</td>
<td>% 5</td>
<td>% 6</td>
<td>% 6</td>
<td>% 7</td>
<td>% 7</td>
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<td>% 8</td>
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<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917-20</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% 27</td>
<td>% 13</td>
<td>% 14</td>
<td>% 4</td>
<td>% 13</td>
<td>% 2</td>
<td>% 8</td>
<td>% 2</td>
<td>% 6</td>
<td>% 5</td>
<td>% 12</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920-24</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% 30</td>
<td>% 12</td>
<td>% 13</td>
<td>% 2</td>
<td>% 7</td>
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<td>% 8</td>
<td>% 4</td>
<td>% 7</td>
<td>% 3</td>
<td>% 13</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What is perhaps surprising about the figures above is their consistency over a twenty year period. The social classes represented at the outset at TCD, as far as women students were concerned, was largely unchanged for the first two decades. This pattern contrasts with the experience of other universities in England and

\textsuperscript{111} Figures calculated on information provided in MUN/V/23/7&8, Registrar of Entrants, 1904-1924, TCD.
Scotland, which demonstrate a greater shift in access to third level institutions amongst differing social groups.\textsuperscript{112} One reason may have been the delayed entry of Irishwomen to college, which allowed for higher standards of second level education amongst the middle and upper classes generally by the end of the nineteenth century, and eliminated the time-lapse associated with broader changes across the educational board. Another is the almost total absence of the daughters of working class fathers, even skilled artisans, in TCD. The registers indicate a uniformly middle to upper middle class entry, unlike for example Aberdeen University during the same period, which had a broad class base and included women from working class households.\textsuperscript{113}

In TCD, financial assistance towards fees, and scholarships and bursaries, were less generous than at some other institutions. Women at TCD were not eligible for Fellowship and Scholarship as men were, as these privileges conferred the right to vote for Dublin University candidates for elections. The privilege of voting as a Fellow clearly raised problems in 1904, when women could not yet vote as citizens. There appears to have been little attempt to retain the voting right by the early entrants, but this should not necessarily be construed as a lack of commitment towards equality for women. Rather, the demand to vote within and without the university would have strengthened opposition towards any further advancement in educational terms, and was better dealt with as part of a non-university suffrage campaign. However, the acceptance of the voting restriction, with its allied loss of the right to compete for Fellowship and Scholarship meant that only ‘Non-Foundation

Scholarships' were open to women, which were of less value than the former.\textsuperscript{114}

An important part of the university experience for men and women alike was the contacts made with students from all over the country. In Trinity's case, the student profile was predominantly urban, and in particular biased towards Leinster and Ulster.

Table 3: Geographical Origins of TCD Women Students\textsuperscript{115}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ulster</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Munster</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leinster</td>
<td>378</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connaught</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Urban/Rural Breakdown of Women Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dublin</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belfast</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galway (city)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cork (city)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derry (city)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural North</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural South</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{113} ibid, p. 123.
\textsuperscript{114} MUN/WOMEN/8/286, TCD.
\textsuperscript{115} MUN/V/23/7&8, Register of Entrants, 1904-1924, TCD.
There were in addition students from England and further afield, representing 62 individuals (seven percent of the total) in the former case, and 39 (four percent) in the latter. Thus apart from the case of Dublin city, the profile of women students at TCD was overwhelmingly rural, or at least not linked with large urban centres. In this sense, the women at TCD undermine the presumption that radical or liberal movements must necessarily be centred in urban areas, and led by those from professional backgrounds. The women who took immediate advantage of the opportunity offered by TCD were on the contrary from rural or small urban bases, and were the daughters of businessmen, farmers and clerics. Their university education and experiences did not necessarily imply a radical reappraisal of their social or political positions, and they went on to support the same sorts of value systems and structures after graduation as they had before. Women’s entry to Trinity College did not establish a radical feminist intellectual tradition, partly because they were integrated from an early stage into the university structure, and not placed in distinct women’s colleges such as emerged in Oxford and Cambridge.

During the long campaign to enter university, women had been accused of harbouring a series of devious ulterior motives. One of the commonest, and perhaps for contemporaries the most plausible, was the charge that women saw the university as a hunting ground for well qualified husbands. This was emphatically not the

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116 This figure includes a small number of students from Wales and Scotland.

117 This argument was also used in England to discourage universities from opening their doors to women. However, it would appear that it was not until well into the twentieth century that individuals could point to specific cases. Of one thousand women who graduated from English universities between 1930 and 1952, 36 per cent had met their husbands there. Carol Dyhouse, *No Distinction of Sex?: Women in British universities 1870-1939* London: University college London Press, 1995, p. 25.
case. Out of 503 female graduates\textsuperscript{118} between 1910 and 1930, 254 were married and 249 unmarried.\textsuperscript{119} Of course, some of the women may have gone on to marry some years after graduation, but the figures indicate that the female students did not cast their education aside once they had secured a man. McDowell and Webb suggest that in the lax post-war years, women ‘seeking primarily a good time and a suitable husband’ began to appear, but there is little evidence to suggest that these represented anything more than a tiny minority, if they existed at all.\textsuperscript{120} Women at Trinity traditionally had a high completion rate as far as their degrees were concerned, and some few gained academic distinction. The numbers of women who married fellow TCD graduates are more difficult to determine, but at least 104 husbands had also taken their degrees at Trinity. Curiously, there is little discussion regarding the safety of the women students from male prospectors, and the rule which prohibited female visitors in male rooms without a chaperone was intended to protect the man, rather than the woman or her reputation.

If a woman applied to TCD with the sole intention of meeting eligible men, she would be disappointed at the physical limits put upon her by the University authorities. As soon as women were admitted to the college, certain restrictions were placed upon their movements within the college grounds. Geographically, the new female students were positioned on the fringes of College life. Rooms in numbers 5 and 6 were set aside for their use, and provided a place to which they could retire

\textsuperscript{118} These figures refer to women for whom there are records regarding marital status.  
\textsuperscript{120} McDowell & Webb, Trinity College, Dublin, p. 343.
between lectures. The location of the rooms, immediately inside Front Gate, meant that the women ventured further into college only to attend lectures, as they had no legitimate business in any other part of the university's grounds. In addition, the Lady Registrar's office was located there, which centralised the administrative and social worlds of the female students in just two rooms.

The fact that female students were beyond parental supervision while at College raised the question of their own safety within and without the university grounds. The average age of women students entering Trinity was nineteen\(^{121}\); old enough to marry, but still designated in need of protection as a single student in a predominantly male environment. Respectable behaviour was demanded in order to protect both males and females, and to help enforce the regulations laid down for women, the interesting office of 'Lady Registrar' was created. This woman was to act \textit{in loco parentis} for the new entrants, and was invested with significant, if unacknowledged powers, which extended beyond administering to the academic needs of the female students. For example, under College regulations, 'Women students attending lectures must reside wither with their parents or guardians in town, or in Trinity Hall [the official women's university residence] unless by special leave from the Provost.'\(^{122}\) Those women who sought accommodation in Dublin outside of the above options had to seek approval from the Lady Registrar, who would inspect the proposed lodgings and make a decision regarding their suitability. Failure to consult with the L.R. would result in the student's parents being contacted. As late as

\(^{121}\) MUN/V/23/7&8, TCD. The youngest student entering between 1904 and 1924 was sixteen years of age, and the oldest 34.

\(^{122}\) MUN/WOMEN/8/286, TCD. There was no such limitation upon men.
1925, Olive Purser, the then Lady Registrar, was pursuing students who had changed accommodation without informing her in advance. In a letter to the mother of a medical student who had recently moved, Purser wrote: 'This is an address which I would not approve for women students as the house is let out in service flats.' The principal objection raised to this unapproved accommodation is interesting. Purser emphasises the point that as self-contained units, the flats are most likely to be occupied by single working men and women, raising the possibility of unsuitable neighbours. Such a flat, moreover, implied total independence for the student, who would have the freedom to come and go without the restrictions necessarily imposed by residence at Trinity Hall, or the close eye of relations or landladies. The student could also entertain guests, and as far as the Lady Register was concerned, the reputation of the individual student was inextricably tied up with that of Trinity itself.

Such close supervision, as well as a self-determination to remain above criticism, had the required result. Trinity's women students had a reputation for conformity and respectability, which was noted outside of the university and indeed the country itself. In 1926, a lengthy correspondence ensued between the Lady Registrar's office and the secretary of Lady MacRae, in the quest for a suitable governess for Lady MacRae's daughter: 'An ultra-modern girl who smokes cigarettes or swears or talks slang would not be an eligible companion for her. That is one reason why Lady Margaret would prefer not to have an English University woman. 'Slang and hockey' she says are their chief qualifications and she wants something

123 MUN/WOMEN/8/1/72, TCD.
more feminine.124 It is interesting that what is being sought is an old fashioned
governess, who will teach the child the traditionally feminine virtues, but who also
possesses a university degree. It is also curious that despite women’s early entry to
third level education in Ireland, the early acquisition of the vote, and a recent political
upheaval which depended heavily for its success upon women, Irish graduates were
considered by individuals such as Lady MacRae to be more ‘feminine’ than their
English counterparts. This sense of propriety and restraint may have been more
perceived than real by the early 1920s. In Purser’s brief history of women in TCD, she
declares: ‘For some reason there was little interest among the [women]
undergraduates in the franchise movement or in politics generally. And in spite of the
long list of Trinity women in the professions, in the civil service, in education, in
research etc., it has remained characteristic to prefer an individual approach to public
problems and, as University women, to combine on University interests.’125 Although
Purser correctly identified a keen sense of loyalty on the part of the female Trinity
graduates towards the university, such a sweeping assertion seemed designed more to
reassure conservative readers than to reflect reality - TCD graduates such as Dorothy
Stopford Price who played an active and influential role in the suffrage campaign as
well as the Anglo-Irish and Civil Wars present a rather different picture.

However, in order to enter Trinity College in the first place, women students
did have to conform to an acceptable standard of behaviour, which had to be verified
by an authoritative source. Quite apart from testifying to their academic ability,

124 MUN/WOMEN/8/1/87, TCD.
entrants from Alexandra College, for example, were also required to provide references from their Principal. In some cases, these were highly detailed, and provided not only information regarding grades in examinations and general academic ability, but also a commentary on character and behaviour at Alexandra, and speculation as to eventual chances of success in university and beyond. All female entrants had to be personally ‘vetted’ by the Lady Registrar before taking their place in College, and although there appear to be no cases of students being refused admission as a result of an unsatisfactory interview, the meeting served the purpose of reminding students that they were, and would continue to be, monitored. In addition to the attentions of the Lady Registrar, the female students, along with the males, were assigned a personal tutor, which ensured that their academic and personal progress was continually under review.

Although women, when finally admitted to TCD, were supposed to enjoy largely the same status as men, their treatment outside of the formal arenas of instruction were quite different. The special regulations created to cater for the women raises the question of how far the college was willing to accommodate the new students, and how far it intended to allow them to integrate with ordinary university life. From their admission, the women students made a determined effort to conform to a rigid respectability, to avoid any distinctly gendered charge of frivolity. Given that in the early twentieth century women were not allowed to remain in the college after 6pm, the scope for outrageous behaviour was somewhat curtailed,

126 See for examples MUN/WOMEN/8/1/17, TCD.
127 ’Special Regulations for Women Students in Dublin University, Hilary Term, 1905’, MUN/8/286, TCD. See McDowell and Webb *Trinity College, Dublin* for a summary of the removal of restrictions
but amongst the earliest female entrants there was a keen sense of responsibility to maintain the highest standards of respectability. One curious regulation which had the effect of rendering the female students highly conspicuous in college was that which regulated dress: 'Except when entering or leaving College, they [women students] shall wear their Academicals in the College Squares and Parks, unless accompanied by a chaperon.' Male students, on the other hand, 'are not required to wear academicals except when carrying out academic functions.' This concern on the part of the college authorities to be able to identify women students at a glance appears to have been motivated by a series of anxieties. One was that the admission of women to the college breached an exclusively male domain, and made it difficult to determine which women were on legitimate college business. As with the regulation regarding restrictions upon the visiting of rooms, the dress distinction indicated a suspicion of the intentions of the women. Both of the regulations could be waived, if the student was accompanied by a chaperon. Thus, academicals distinguished women from their male fellow students, marking them out as dangerously unaccompanied and unsupervised. The wearing of academicals also served to emphasise the fact that women were being admitted solely for the purposes of furthering their education. The broader benefits of university attendance, the sense of collegiality which was an important part of men's university life, was rather more restricted in the female case. However, the wearing of academicals rapidly became a source of pride for women undergraduates, and the college did not lay down any other restrictions upon dress for

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on women's movements in College throughout the twentieth century, pp. 352-353.
128 ibid.
them. Because women were admitted at a relatively late stage as far as the campaign for university education for women world-wide was concerned, there was less anxiety regarding the appearance of the students. In some third level institutions in Britain and America elaborate dress codes had evolved which sought to emphasise the serious and irreproachable nature of women’s education by covering as much of the person as possible.129

The concern to distinguish women students through their academic gowns, to mark them as creatures apart, reflects the sense shared by men and women alike that these undergraduates marked a significant departure from the norm. By entering university, with the implicit intention to move into other largely male areas of employment, these women represented a break with known female domains. The new ‘uniform’ became a means of separating her from those women who still inhabited the familiar roles of sister, wife, mother or servant. Thus women were under observation, but were also banding together as self-conscious pioneers. In the lecture theatres, for example, women were expected to sit in the front rows, together.130 By 1919, this ‘grouping’ of women was being described as having evolved ‘by recognised usage’131 rather than by regulation, but it is interesting that this same practise emerged at Aberdeen and Glasgow universities also.132 Mutual support as well as propriety appears to have played a part in this particular development.

129 Delamont, Knowledgeable Women, pp. 80-86.
130 Purser, Women p. 7.
131 MUN/8/286, TCD, ‘Statement on women in Dublin University’.
132 Moore, Bajanellas p. 104, and Geyer-Kordesch and Ferguson, Blue Stockings, p. 34. It was also common practise at the mixed-sex Owens College, which Esther Roper attended. Gifford Lewis, Eva Gore Booth and Esther Roper: A Biography London: Pandora, 1988, pp 55-6.
Although women were not prohibited from joining mixed sex social clubs in college[^133] they formed their own organisation, the Elizabethan Society, which became their main social focus within the University. The Society reflected the sorts of organisations many of the students were already familiar with from their secondary schools, where debates were held and social functions organised. The E.S. did, however, provide a means through which new students could easily and quickly integrate into this women’s university world. When the society was well established, it actually turned its original isolation into an advantage, and made a virtue out of exclusivity:

There was a proposal made from outside to combine with another Dublin institution. But the Trinity women were unwilling to merge the university prestige of which they were very conscious in any other group. I do not recollect any desire, much less any agitation, to join the men’s clubs (perhaps we were too pleased with ourselves!) and the girls set about organising this side of their college life for themselves on lines similar to, but parallel with, the existing societies.[^134]

What is most interesting about this statement is not merely the fact that a necessity is being made into a virtue, by denying any ambition to join the men’s clubs, but that women students rapidly came to identify with collegiate exclusivity. The use of the terms ‘outside’ and ‘university prestige’ suggest a developed sense of identification with the college, and undermine the argument that the campaign for university access for women was motivated by a desire for equality of opportunity rather than access to privilege. In a practical sense, though, single-sex clubs such as the

[^133]: The necessity to leave college grounds at six in the evening made membership in any event somewhat pointless.
Elizabethan society ensured that women retained an autonomous control which would have necessarily been compromised in mixed organisations.

The sense that women students at Trinity formed a distinct and separate unit did have some practical advantages. The Lady Registrar's Office, the Elizabethan Society, and TCD's own Women's Graduate Association provided an 'old girls' network which was efficiently used to further graduates' careers. Lacking the direct influence in commercial and professional circles to which male graduates had generally easier access, the women nevertheless used contacts to the full. Former students alerted undergraduates to suitable vacancies, and acted as referees for applicants. For example, the successful career of Thekla Beere in the civil service began with a letter from a former student to the Lady Registrar, asking the latter to alert suitable candidates to recently advertised posts. The advertisement stated that women were not eligible to apply, but the writer had checked the regulations and found this to be untrue. These appointments were particularly sought after, as the salary began at £150 per annum and rose eventually to £500 per annum in addition to bonuses. Given that the salary for a Grade I (the most senior) woman teacher was £124-151 per annum, civil service appointments represented a professional wage on a par with that available to male graduates. Although most TCD graduates did not move in upper-class circles, they nevertheless established a useful network of contacts amongst the upper middle class. Letters regarding contacts as governesses and companions were most common, and the relative geographical mobility of TCD graduates was a significant factor.

135 [MUN/WOMEN/8/67, TCD.]
136 This rate was fixed in 1912. *Vice-Regal Committee of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland), 1913*, p. 18.
graduates opened the possibility of employment in England, the Continent, Canada and even Mexico. The sense of loyalty which TCD graduates appeared to feel towards the university took precedence over any general commitment towards the educational and professional advancement of women. Although TCD and the National University of Ireland were linked through the Irish Association of Women Graduates and Candidate Graduates, they pursued often separate agendas. When the National University Women Graduates’ Association was established in 1927, the IAWGCG lost what little power it had to act as a cohesive force for women’s further education in Ireland, and the TCD Women Graduates’ Association pursued its own path.

137 MUN/WOMEN/8/1/87, TCD.
Chapter 3: Protestant Recipients of Charitable Relief
In early twentieth century Dublin, there existed a complete world which revolved around the charity circuit. The object of this chapter is to examine philanthropic work from the perspective of those who received it, and raise questions regarding the nature of charity work. Did recipients believe that acceptance of charity implied an obligation towards the organisation or individual who provided it? Did charity recipients internalise the value systems professed by the organisations to which they applied? Was charity blind, or did organisations reveal class presumptions in dealing with applicants? In addressing these questions, I will draw mainly upon material from the Clergy Widows’ and Orphans’ Society,¹ and the Protestant Orphans’ Society,² although reference will be made to other charities as appropriate. These two organisations, the former catering for middle class women and the latter mainly for the working class, were chosen because of their importance within the Irish Anglican community, but also because their records provide useful information regarding the life cycles of Protestant women. In addition, the differing responses to the two supplicant groups indicates the extent to which Protestant charitable response was determined by class considerations. Charity records also raise some interesting issues of gender, in the sense that administrators made certain presumptions regarding appropriate behaviour for male and female applicants, and assistance was often granted on the basis of conformity to these standards. There is a certain difficulty in attempting to establish the perspective of charity recipients, because of the nature of the available sources. But for the most part, official records reflect the opinions and preoccupations of the organisers, while often only obliquely

¹ Established in 1863.
² Established in 1828.
revealing those of their objects. Statements and testimony from the charity applicants do survive in significant amounts, but the nature of application to charities - the necessity to appear in a particular light, and fulfill certain criteria - can often produce a standardised response. In determining attitudes towards charity and its impact upon recipients lives, therefore, I have included material in this chapter from unsuccessful applicants, whose appeals and protests against their exclusion offers an additional perspective.

One of the difficulties facing those charitable organisations in Dublin which catered for Protestants was the popular perception that all Protestants, regardless of social class, were relatively well off. Despite the existence of several largely Protestant working-class districts in the city, such as the Coombe, the liberties and Ringsend, there was a clearer association between poverty and Catholicism, as far as most of the population was concerned. C.S. Andrews declared that in his youth it was broadly believed 'there was no such thing as a poor Protestant.' Similarly, Frank O'Connor's mother presumed that the maid who worked next door was a fellow Catholic: 'Mother talked to her at great length about the convent and about Mother Blessed Margaret, her favourite among the nuns, but Betty hinted darkly that there was nothing she did not know about nuns and chaplains and the dark goings on in convents, and Mother realised, to her great astonishment, that Betty was a Protestant as well [as her employers]. Nobody had ever explained to Mother that Protestants could also be poor.' Indeed, contemporary observers seem to suggest

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that it was impossible to be both Protestant and impoverished at the same time: 'But
in Ireland there is no Protestant proletariat except in the North. The number of very
poor bona fide Protestants in Dublin is inconsiderable and you will find it very hard
to come across any at all in the South and West. In spite of all the persecution and
bribery of the past, the poor people still profess the Catholic religion.' "5 The number
of charities which catered for the Protestant poor would suggest that they in fact
existed in very considerable numbers. 6 There are however a series of difficulties
inherent in attempting to determine the true degree of want amongst Dublin
Protestants. For example, Mary Daly suggests that the Protestant working-class was
in numerical decline from the 1870s onwards. 7 The statistics, based upon census
returns, do show a pattern of reduced numbers amongst Protestants across all
occupational categories. The conclusions one may draw with regard to relative levels
of poverty are however less clear. The figures may reflect a more general decline in
the Protestant population as a whole, or, as the charities themselves believed, an
upward mobility amongst the Protestant working class which removed some from the
lower categories. 8

Another problem which lies in determining degrees of poverty amongst
Dublin Protestants is the confusing impression of great want created by the large
numbers of organisations directed towards their assistance. In fact, despite their often
impressive titles and grand aspirations, and even the considerable number of

5 Anon., Grievances in Ireland, by One of the Tolerant Majority Dublin: James Duffy & Co.,
1913, p. 55.
6 See Appendix A, chapter 4.
7 Mary Daly, ‘Social structure of the Dublin working class, 1871-1911’ in Irish Historical Studies
individuals claimed to be assisted, many bodies actually gave very small amounts of money and support to their charges. For example, the Church of Ireland Jubilee Fund for Promoting the Education of the Sons and Daughters of the Clergy of the Church of Ireland⁹ may have given the impression, through its title, that it was a well-endowed institution. Indeed the committee boasted Bishops and Archbishops as ex-officio members, and the 13 strong lay members included one senator and three titled individuals. However, the members were somewhat parsimonious when dispensing funds, and the maximum amount awarded annually to applicants who had fulfilled the strict criteria was £10.¹⁰ Similarly, the Clergy Widows’ and Orphans’ Society had few reserve funds to allow for generous awards. One applicant to the Society had been on the waiting list for eight years before finally being elected in 1914. In that year, she was no longer able to continue in her position as ‘companion housekeeper...as she is a great sufferer from rheumatism, and is sometimes unable to walk’.¹¹ After all the delay, she was awarded an annuity of ten pounds per year. Small sums of money, it was hoped, would encourage recipients to work for their own advancement rather than seek further assistance. G.D. Williams, author of the handbook Dublin Charities, defined the ideal charity as ‘adequate help to relieve distress without weakening self-reliance’;¹² and this attitude is exemplified by most of the Protestant bodies. Indeed this is clearly appreciated by many of the applicants, who provide not merely detailed accounts of the efforts they have made to support

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⁹ Established in 1887.
¹⁰ 39th Annual Report of the Church of Ireland Jubilee Fund for Promoting the Education of the Sons and Daughters of the Clergy of the Church of Ireland, Dublin: 1928.
¹¹ Ms 464/1/5, Clergy Widows’ and Orphans’ Society Minutes, list of candidates, February 1914, RCBL.
¹² G.D. Williams, Dublin Charities Dublin, 1902, p. 2.
themselves, but stress in their applications the temporary nature of their necessity. The increasing involvement of middle class women in charity work also had the effect of spreading funds thinly: when voluntary work became ‘little more than a genteel occupation for otherwise idle hours’, and charity ‘a fashionable pastime’, workers and subscriptions were unreliable.¹³

As in the case of women involved in voluntary charitable work, it is difficult to accurately assess the numbers of Protestant women in Dublin who were partially or solely dependent upon philanthropic support. However, some examination of the numbers regularly assisted by the more mainstream charities give an indication of the scale. In the Dublin Prison Gate Mission¹⁴ for example, which catered for a predominantly Protestant clientele,¹⁵ on average 106 women were assisted each month throughout 1910.¹⁶ Of this total, an average of 74 were resident in the Mission, sleeping in the open dormitories, while the remainder came daily to the institution to work in the laundry and sewing rooms. Residents stayed in the Mission for varying periods of time¹⁷, from one night to several months, but the turnover could be astonishingly rapid. In addition there were a number of women who made use of the facilities of the Mission to ease periods of unemployment or, as Maria Luddy has documented with regard to prostitutes entering Catholic asylums, ‘as a

¹⁴Established in 1876.
¹⁵The mission was open to all denominations, but the majority of women cared for were Protestant. However, workers were frequently accused of attempting to convert Catholic women to Protestantism as part of their mission work.
¹⁶Ms. 263. Figures compiled from the Minute books of the Dublin Prison Gate Mission, 1900-1915, RCBL.
¹⁷Most of the laundry workers were women who had been residents. Their integration to society was therefore gradual, as they continued to work in the laundry after they had left the mission buildings to live in the city.
temporary refuge from their occupation. In the case of the DPGM, a major attraction for women was the Mission creche, which allowed them to remain with their children while they made decisions regarding their futures. This was a significant attraction, as most other residential charities did not offer children’s accommodation. There were on average twenty two children resident in the Mission with their mothers throughout 1910.

The DPGM had been established in 1876, taking over the work of the Shelter for Females Discharged from Prison. The new body was rather more lenient than its predecessor, in that the women did not have to live full-time in the institution, and those who did lodge in the mission’s dormitories did not have to commit themselves to a specified period of residence. The organisation is a most interesting example of how women, in apparently disadvantaged positions as penitents, could in fact manipulate the charity system to their advantage. Women were met at the prison gates on their discharge, and were offered ‘lovingly and kindly a home and shelter, with work which aims at affording them a chance of restoration to a life of honest industry.’ The mission workers were meeting the prisoners often for the first time, as the DPGM did not use prison visitors. However, as there were several women who appear in the DPGM records as frequent admissions, it is likely that even first offenders were made aware within the prison of the DPGM representatives, and of the regime adopted by the mission. The former prisoners were mainly young women, who with some assistance were still capable of embarking on new careers

19 ibid.
20 Church of Ireland Gazette, November 24, 1911, p. 1019.
21 See the DPGM pamphlet [n.d.] bound with the mission minutes for 1910. Ms. 263, RCBL.
as domestic servants, or of leaving Ireland entirely as emigrants. They had served short sentences, from three days to three months, and were regarded as promising prospects for rescue by the mission workers. Thus the staff of the DPGM often appeared loath to discourage women from entering the mission, and were prepared to accept a perhaps surprising amount of irregular behaviour, rather than lose them entirely. The lady superintendent, while reporting on the misconduct of inmates at the mission’s monthly meetings, would often add an appeal on their behalf: ‘Miss Rice was authorised to give another chance to two former inmates, whose conduct had not been satisfactory.’

The women who entered the DPGM worked at various tasks, but they were trained principally as laundresses and domestic servants. Like their contemporary Catholic organisations, the governors of the DPGM encouraged penitential occupations which would remind the women of the reason for their admission: they were however less concerned with this than many other such bodies. At the mission they were paid a small wage for their labour which came, in theory, from monies generated by the laundry and workroom. In fact, the women’s wages were a considerable strain on the mission’s resources, and were only paid through the periodic sale of shares and the maintenance of a large overdraft. Yet it was felt to

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23 Ms 263, DPGM minutes, September 9, 1910, RCBL.
25 The introduction of the National Insurance Bill in 1912 had caused great anxiety, although the mission managed to secure a partial exemption from the Commissioners. Minutes, August 9, 1912.
26 By 1914 the mission was in a ‘very dangerous financial position.’ The committee were forced to ‘realise £500 of the Canadian Pacific Shares to meet the large amount due to the Royal Bank’, but even these measures were insufficient. However, they remained committed to the principle of paying the women a wage, instead of merely offering them a refuge. ‘That having carefully investigated the salaries of the workers, the women’s wages, and the cost of maintenance, we are
be important to assure the women that they were accumulating capital, however small, and not merely receiving charity. In this way the DPGM differed significantly from other rescue homes and Magdalen asylums, where there was rather more emphasis upon penitence and atonement for sins. Those who proved themselves diligent and trustworthy were assisted to situations outside the home. The mission claimed that 50 women were placed each year - 'and the great majority of these have proved faithful' - a very high success rate, if accurate. The women were suitably 'fitted out' at the mission's expense, and those few who emigrated also had their passage paid. Charitable assistance could therefore genuinely prove a means of advancement, particularly for those women who had no other resources.

The numbers of women supported by other charities similarly varied. In the case of the Clergy Widows' and Orphans' Society, although relatively small numbers of women were elected to the books each year, the total supported was significant. The system of election had a cumulative effect, as the majority of successful applicants remained dependent upon the Society for the remainder of their lives. As some few were elected to the Society's books in their thirties and forties, this meant a commitment of anything up to fifty years. Thus between 1913 and 1930, only 19 widows and 43 orphans were successful in their applications to the Society. However, there were on average 27 widows and 50 orphans receiving

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of the opinion that none of these items can possibly be reduced, without seriously impairing the extent and usefulness of the work.' Ms 263, DPGM minutes, March 13 and 24, 1914.

27 Church of Ireland Gazette November 24, 1911, p. 1019.
28 Ms 263, DPGM minutes, March 14, 1913, RCBL.
29 The average age of widows was 59 and orphans 51. Figures compiled from the letters of admission, Ms 464/6/3 and Ms 464/6/4, RCBL.
30 ibid. Figures based on Clergy Widows' and Orphans' Society Application Forms and Committee Minutes, 1913-1930. There are no available figures for 1915.
annuities of between 10 and 40 pounds per year from 1916 to 1928. The Protestant Orphan Society\(^{31}\) cared for much greater numbers than most other societies. In 1911 for example, the POS spent around £4,000 on their orphans thus.\(^{32}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>On roll, January 1, 1911:</th>
<th>494</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Admitted during year:</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprenticed, or cared for:</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Given up to friends:</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emigrated:</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Died:</td>
<td>1</td>
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The outbreak of the war had a significant impact upon Protestant charities in Dublin and the numbers of their dependents. Although the country did not witness the sorts of upheaval experienced in England, an initial rush to enlist in the army significantly reduced the number of charitable workers in Dublin, for two main reasons. One was the direct loss of male volunteers, who had to be replaced by women workers, and the other was the loss of women themselves, as they turned their attentions to war work. The experiences of the Wynne family illustrates the experiences of many women volunteers. Alice Wynne had been actively involved in charitable work up until the war, principally local organisations in Wicklow and the tenants and employees on her estate. Although she continued to look after the welfare of her tenants during the war, her other charity work was now directed towards the war effort, for example gathering sphagnum moss for the manufacture of dressings, and organising food parcels and fund raising for the troops.\(^{33}\) As far as women who were dependent upon charitable assistance were concerned, the war had a particular significance. As the conflict progressed and the death rate amongst

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\(^{31}\) Established in 1828.

\(^{32}\) 83rd Annual Report of the Protestant Orphan Society, 1911, p. 12.

\(^{33}\) Ms 10247/12/35. 1917 Diary of Alice Katherine Wynne, TCD.
soldiers rose, the question of replacements, both in the army itself and in the broader population, came to the fore. The increasingly eugenicist emphasis with regard to the working classes in this period has been documented in England, but in Ireland also, influenced in addition by specific local factors, there was a renewed interest in the fates of the working class. Orphans, young dependents and even widows who were associated with the charities in Dublin, began to be viewed in the context of national pride, and as a resource to be drawn upon. Immediately upon the outbreak of the war, the matron of the Cottage Home for Little Children presented the crisis in terms of the urgency of raising replacement troops:

True patriots will now, more than ever, need to find out the best way to replace those brave and noble men who for the safety of our country have left these shores, many, alas! never to return. Is our country to be peopled by the descendants of the shirkers, or those physically or mentally enfeebled?... Is it not high time that we individually and as a nation realised that the noblest task we can possibly set ourselves is to try and gain for every child born into this world the possibility of growing up into a good man or woman.... In this Cottage Home we are trying, in however small a way, to check the wastage of human life, to bring up children so that they may become worthy citizens of this great Empire.

The interesting point about this statement is that the children in the home are regarded as worthy successors to those who may die in the war, despite their disadvantaged circumstances. However, the children, mainly orphans, of the

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35 Established in 1879.
37 The concern with infant health and this view of children as a national resource had become a part of advertising by the end of the war. The Church of Ireland Gazette of December 27, 1918, carried an advertisement for Robinson’s Barley Water, depicting a blank cheque with a banner headline ‘What is your BABY worth to the Nation?’. The following copy reads: ‘Any mother would fill up the above blank cheque with a fabulous sum. She knows the value of her baby! But the Nation also values every baby more highly to-day than ever. For the nation’s sake as well as her own, therefore, it behoves every mother to exercise the greatest care in selecting her baby’s
Cottage Home differed somewhat from those in other such institutions, in that they were all legitimate, and as such did not carry either the stigma of illegitimacy, nor the uncertainty as regards psychological, physical or religious inheritance. As children in the care of a public body they were particularly suitable candidates for replenishing the nation. In the absence of a father or family, the whole Protestant community, and indeed the whole Empire, became the family.

**The Protestant Orphan Society**

The Protestant Orphan Society (POS) was established in 1828, and was the most important of the Anglican orphan bodies in Ireland. There were regional Protestant Orphan Society branches in most counties, with the Dublin branch functioning uniquely as a national administrative centre as well as an independent branch in its own right. The original impetus behind the establishment of the POS was the widely publicised case of a Protestant man whose children were taken to a Catholic orphanage upon his death, there being no Protestant Orphan Society in existence to care for them. This anxiety over the loss of Protestant children to Catholic charities was keen throughout the nineteenth century; indeed it intensified with the sharp rise in the number of Catholic nuns who became involved in charitable work in Ireland, particularly in the post-famine period. In the face of this

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38 The Deed of Constitution read: 'The objects of the Cottage Home are to teach the lesson of self-help to the industrious poor by assisting in providing a Home for legitimate children of both sexes whose protector or guardian shall profess such child to be of the Protestant religion, and who shall, when admitted, be under the age of six years.' ibid, p. 1.

39 This incident was described in each of the Society's annual reports, and in many of the appeals for subscriptions.

expansion, there was concern amongst Protestant charities to consolidate their efforts in order to produce a more effective philanthropic mechanism. The POS had in the nineteenth century operated alongside a similar organisation, confusingly entitled the Protestant Orphan Refuge Society (PORS). This society catered for the children of mixed marriages, while in the early years of its establishment the POS only accepted children both of whose parents were members of the Church of Ireland. This strategy proved more appealing to subscribers, who channeled their donations to the POS rather than the PORS. It was the proud boast of the POS 'never to refuse a case coming fairly within its rules', while the PORS was regularly obliged to reject applications because of a lack of funds.\[^{41}\] In 1898 the PORS bowed to the inevitable, and was taken over by the POS. The amalgamation led to a change in the constitution of the POS, and for the first time the Society accepted applications on behalf of the children of mixed marriages. However, the original Anglican bias which had characterised the POS remained, and applicants who came from Anglican families continued to achieve a higher success rate.\[^{42}\] The constitutional change did reflect an increasing tendency amongst Protestant charities to band together in the

\[^{42}\] All of the successfully elected orphans between 1921 and 1931 were children both of whose parents were Anglicans. However, the society were reluctant to lose children of mixed marriages if there was a possibility that they might be successfully raised as Protestants. Several women who intended to raise their children as Catholics nevertheless applied to the society, intending to remove their offspring once material conditions improved, or simply draw upon the funds for as long as they could remain undetected. Some such attempts were remarkably transparent - one woman, herself a Protestant, claimed that her Catholic husband had always really wanted his two children to be raised as Protestants, despite the fact that they, and the remainder of the offspring who were too old to apply to the society, were practicing Catholics. On another occasion, the POS unwillingly became embroiled in a posthumous marital dispute. The father was a lapsed member of the Church of Ireland, the mother a Catholic. On his deathbed, the father made a dramatic return to the Church, and wrote his own 'last will and testament', in which he 'bequeathed' his children to the POS, to be raised as Protestants. Application was made to the society on behalf of the dead man by a friend appointed executor in the will. The mother refused to acknowledge the application, and would not allow an inspector to visit and make a report. The case was eventually

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early twentieth century, recognising a shared Protestant heritage in the face of an increasingly vocal Catholic nationalism. Despite often substantial theological and philosophical differences, and the tensions created by charitable competition, the move towards a greater unity amongst the Protestant churches continued into the twentieth century. At the 1910 annual meeting of the Synod of Clogher, ‘the Bishop delivered a noteworthy address on home reunion, and made some practical suggestions with the view of bringing about a union between the Church of Ireland, the Presbyterian Church and the Methodist Church.\footnote{Irish Times, October 5, 1910.}

This proposed cooperation reflected a constant worry of the Protestant charities - that a lack of vigilance on their part would leave vulnerable Protestants open to conversion by Catholics. The nineteenth century applications to the PORS for example, and particularly the letters of recommendation from Protestant clerics, reveal a developed perception of themselves as under continual siege from the agents of the Catholic Church. One case, from 1863, concerned a family whose father had converted to Protestantism some thirty years before his death. The mother had remained Catholic, but the four children were being raised as Protestants, in accordance with the father’s wishes. When he fell ill, the mother, now destitute, was apparently being put under pressure to baptise the children as Catholics. The encroachment of the forces of Catholicism was depicted in quasi-military terms, with the Protestants making a defiant last stand:

[On his deathbed he]...solemnly committed to God and

\footnote{Irish Times, October 5, 1910.}
the Church of England his little ones: so deep was his attachment to the faith...that, when recovering from a swoon, during which his wife had brought in a Priest of Rome; he summoned up all his expiring strength, to rise for the last time on Earth, and put out the intruder!45

This case was refused because of insufficient funds, and the eventual fate of the children was not recorded. The perception of the predatory Church of Rome remained unchanged: if anything, the siege mentality deepened over the years. It manifested itself in a somewhat suspicious attitude towards applicants, with careful checks being made to detect any ‘Roman’ tendencies. For example, one of the commonest means of supplementing incomes for widows with property was to let out rooms to lodgers - so prevalent was the practice that the inspector’s report form included a section on the numbers of rooms let to non-family members. Generally the reports simply record numbers, but when the tenants were Roman Catholics, a special note was taken of the fact.46

What is most interesting about the concern amongst Protestant charities to combat Romish tendencies is the fact that this anxiety was also shared by Catholic charities. The threat of conversion by impoverished Catholics was far greater than Protestants, and Catholic supplicants to Dublin charities were well aware of this. There was of course a near-mythic tradition of Protestant evangelical crusades in

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45 1045/11/3, NAI. Application made to the PORS, 1863. Most of the nineteenth century charities depended heavily upon such emotive cases when publicising their work. The Victoria Jubilee Masonic Annuity Fund was established supposedly as a result of an encounter between an elderly freemason and his physician. ‘Some time previously, in a Dublin Poor Law Hospital, an old man died, penniless and alone. The young doctor who had attended him was moved to find under his pillow the old man’s solitary possession - his Master Mason’s Certificate. Struck by the old man’s fortitude, and his pride in not trading on his membership of the Craft, the young doctor, already an earnest Freemason, determined to launch a movement which would save our brethren from a like Fate.’ R.E. Parkinson, History of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons Dublin: Lodge of Research, 1957, p. 333.
46 1045/5/5, NAI.
Ireland, especially during the Famine, and this fuelled Catholic campaigns to ensure that vulnerable individuals did not approach Protestant bodies. Their efforts were often unsuccessful, and large numbers of Catholics ‘crossed-over’ from Catholic to Protestant organisations, and back again. For impoverished Dubliners, philanthropic competition had certain advantages. In the records of just two organisations, the Fishamble Street Mission⁴⁷ and the Protestant Orphan Society, there are frequent references to those who accepted charitable relief from both Catholic missions as well as their own, and who attended the Protestant services as required.⁴⁸ Some went even further, offering to convert in order to secure support. In one case dealt with by the POS a Catholic mother declared that she would raise her son Protestant, after his father, if the society agreed to support him. The child was duly elected at £6 per annum. To strengthen her case, she also agreed to convert to Protestantism. However, she changed her mind and had the boy baptised Catholic, and the society withdrew its support. There was a good deal of sympathy on the part of the committee for her dilemma; and a certain admiration for her determination to raise the boy according to her own conscience. The inspector concluded his report: ‘I think that nothing further can be done by the POS, and that even if Mrs. Carter agreed again to give the boy to the care of the society she would take him away again as soon as she could support him without its help.’⁴⁹ The committee dealt with Mrs. Carter with a good deal of sympathy, recognising the desperate straits to which she

⁴⁷ Established in 1852.
⁴⁸ Ms 453, Minutes of the Fishamble Street Mission, December 10, 1913, RCBL. The organisers of the Mission’s various clubs commented on the willingness of individuals to hear bible readings and so on, but they feared that the motivation was largely materialistic. Nevertheless, they remained hopeful that attendance at the Ragged Schools and Free Breakfasts would have a positive long-term effect.
⁴⁹ 1045/5/4, NAI.
was driven. Her case was far from unusual, but it indicates how supplicants could make use of a readily exploitable resource.

Not all of the cases of apparent abuse were perpetrated by desperate individuals, however. Many working-class people saw in the Dublin charities an opportunity to improve their lot, not merely to survive. Indeed, Martin Maguire has suggested that working class members of the Church of Ireland had a far more cynical attitude towards the provision of charity by religious bodies than has previously been suspected. 'For the poor, religion functioned as a source of money and was there primarily to keep them out of the poorhouse.'50 There is certainly evidence to support this view that the working class were prepared to exploit charitable resources as far as possible. In 1918, the Fishamble Street Mission workers had to call a special meeting to discuss complaints from the clergy of neighbouring Protestant missions. They were told that adults and children were attending a series of missions, less out of religious zeal, and more out of a desire for material advancement. The FSM Coal Club, which offered up to twelve bags of coal per regular subscriber,51 was in fact being used by women who were also members of similar schemes in other parishes. Further investigation revealed that some women were members of two loan funds, organised by different missions. The rates of interest were low, and the meeting did not record any instances of default. The women involved appear to have been simply taking advantage of the opportunity offered by Dublin’s multiplicity of charities, and suggest that the Protestant poor in

50 Martin Maguire, ‘The Church of Ireland and the problem of the Protestant working-class of Dublin, 1870s-1930s’ in A. Ford, J. McGuire and K. Milne (eds.) As By Law Established: the Church of Ireland since the Reformation, Dublin: Lilliput, 1995, p. 203. 51 The mission heavily subsidised the club, as the intention was to provide a practical exercise in the benefits of regular saving.
the city turned to philanthropic organisations not necessarily as a last resort, but as a means of improving their positions. The ability to repay two loans successfully suggests a high degree of determination and organisation, and also reveals a pragmatic response to charitable organisation in Dublin.

Public appeals for subscriptions to the POS were made on two main fronts. One related to the concern above that the most vulnerable members of the Protestant population were being lost to Catholicism. The other, which raises significant gender issues, was the presentation of the POS as a parent to the orphaned children, and the obligation on all Protestants to take their share in this responsibility through subscriptions. The gender implications will be discussed more fully below, but they relate to the fact that in the majority of cases, children presented to the Society were rarely true orphans who had lost both parents, but rather children whose fathers had died. Women were deemed to be in need of both material assistance, and perhaps more importantly, to be less capable of providing all that the term ‘family’ implied without the assistance of either a husband or the implicitly masculine authority of the POS. In one important sense, the POS retained a traditional view of the family. As if implementing the spirit of the mid-nineteenth century domicile laws\textsuperscript{52}, the POS until 1895 had a strict policy of removing children from their mothers, and placing them in the Society’s orphanages. In the PORS case above, the male inspector recommended that the children be removed, despite the mother’s commitment to raise them as Protestants: ‘It is thought to place the orphans in some ‘Refuge’ at a distance from their Mother, who though she withstood the urgent requests of her Priest to allow

the children to be baptised by him, is, not only deeply devoted to her Creed, but so poor and helpless, that she may not be able to withstand the well known pertinacity of her Clergy and people.53

In most cases, the separation was temporary, to allow the mother to find work and create a home for her children. There were very few applications, particularly in the twentieth century, from men whose wives had died. Parental applications to the POS were almost always made by the mother, since applications were only considered from male single parents if they were totally ‘incapacitated, either bodily or mentally’ and incapable of providing for their children.54 The gender implications of this policy are interesting. On the one hand, the society was willing to assume the role of the father, by providing for the material needs of the child. It also implicitly recognised the difficulties facing women who upon widowhood had to support a family as well as themselves. Men on the other hand to prove their ‘total incapacity’ as breadwinners before they were considered for assistance. In the context of early twentieth century Ireland, this was not an unusual response. However, the children of a widower were always placed in the orphanages; a single man was not considered able to raise his children alone. Thus the children who lost their mother also lost their home. After 1895 widows were allowed to apply for assistance and keep their children, but were also expected to contribute to the family economy by taking in lodgers or going out to work. Thus women were in the position of being considered less able, to the extent that they were eligible for aid by

53 ibid.
54 If the mother were absent through death, incapacity or in search of employment, the application was usually made by an aunt or grandmother, who assumed the maternal role.
virtue of their sex, but were also impelled to become earners, and assume partial financial responsibility for their children.

**Care of Children**

The children of widowers were sent mainly to the orphanages which accepted nominees from the POS. There were two such orphanages for girls, one in Kilternan and the other in Malahide which was forced to close in 1915 because of lack of funds. The boy's orphanage was situated in Swords. Many of the children were placed in the institutions as a result of a work-related death of the father, and other long stay orphans were usually the result of the death of both parents, or the abandonment of the child to the society, on the disappearance of the mother. Successful applicants to the society's books were either 'placed in country parishes in the County of Wicklow, with Protestant nurses of good character', or were sent to the three orphanages with which the society had special arrangements in Co. Dublin. It was only in 1895 that the constitution of the POS was altered to allow families to remain together, but the more humane strategy of allowing mothers to be elected as nurses of their own children, on the recommendation of both the local minister and the Society's inspector, resulted in a huge increase in the number of orphans on the Society's rolls. The POS still retained the option of extending assistance only on the condition that the children be removed from their parental home, and continued to hire suitable nurses for the orphans. The orphanages also continued to accept a regular number of children proposed by the POS each year. However by 1917 the picture of orphan care had altered considerably. Out of a total of 432 children

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appointed to the care of the POS in that year, 269 were in their mother's care, 129 were placed with nurses, 14 were residents at the female orphanage at Kilternan, and 20 boys were living at the orphanage at Swords.\textsuperscript{56} As the nineteenth century progressed, so too had the age limit for the admission of orphans steadily increased, perhaps reflecting an increased appreciation of the importance of an extended childhood, and a postponement of the age of responsibility.\textsuperscript{57} In 1895, children under the age of ten were being accepted by the Society - the limit had been until then nine years of age - and in 1897 this strict cut-off point was raised to thirteen. Once accepted by the Society, an orphan could theoretically remain on the rolls until they had reached the age of fourteen, but in fact the children were maintained in many cases after that age, if they were still at school, or were in training for a career.

The change in policy also brought about increased expenditure on orphans per capita, as it became more expensive to maintain children in their own homes than in institutions. Between 1920 and 1930, for example, the average annual allowance paid to a single applicant was £15 per annum, paid in monthly installments.\textsuperscript{58} The amount varied with applications for several children, and was subject to continual review, so that a family with three children on the books were granted, for example, £24 per annum (£8 for each orphan) in 1925, and £36 per annum in 1934, as the farm which the mother managed after her husband's death was producing a bare subsistence living.\textsuperscript{59} To maintain an orphan in one of the institutions to which the

\textsuperscript{56} 89\textsuperscript{th} Annual Report of the POS for 1917, Dublin, 1918.
\textsuperscript{57} The POS took its responsibility as parent very seriously, and displayed a long-term concern for its charges. It preferred to receive children as young as possible, and unless family circumstances improved radically, it maintained them for anything up to eighteen years.
\textsuperscript{58} Based on a selection of cases from 1045/5/5, NAI.
\textsuperscript{59} 1045/5/5B3, NAI.
Society had access cost £9.10s per annum, ‘for which sum, supplemented by local sources, they are clothed, maintained and taught either in the local schools or in the homes themselves.’\textsuperscript{60} Ironically, one of the reasons for the collapse of the Malahide Home was that the POS weren't sending enough children to them to cover expenses, given the fact that the POS received a special rate.\textsuperscript{61} However, despite this financial saving, the demand from mothers to keep their children dictated a move away from a policy of institutionalisation. The interesting point about the change in policy is that it was a response by the Society to the demands of the mothers. They had not initiated a campaign to force change, but they had refused in large numbers to give up their children. The Society was left with the choice of refusing to assist them, and run the risk of the women looking for aid elsewhere, or adapting to circumstances.

Not all mothers were however able to keep their children with them, for one reason or another. On occasion they gave their children over to the committee, who maintained them in single sex orphanages outside Dublin city. The main female residence was ‘Sunnyside’, an orphanage in Kilternan. Private enterprise played a significant part in charitable relief in this period. The home had originally been run single-handedly by a Miss Burroughs, but in later years, the POS had met half of the expenses incurred by the home. In 1916, due to failing health, Burroughs offered the orphanage which consisted of the house and about four acres of land to the POS, on condition they maintained it as an orphanage. The committee jumped at the opportunity, as they laid great emphasis upon the purity and healthiness of country living for the children. They recommended acceptance of the offer, stating ‘...it is

\textsuperscript{60}85\textsuperscript{th} Annual Report of the POS for 1913.
\textsuperscript{61}86\textsuperscript{th} Annual Report of the POS for 1914.
most important that this Society, to enable it to carry on its work properly, should have a country Home, to which respectable Protestant girls who require special attention and country air, can be sent.  

The POS certainly got the best of the bargain, as the expenditure on the home per capita was less than maintaining orphans in their own family homes. However, what was more important as far as the POS committee were concerned was the opportunity ownership of Sunnyside provided to create a home environment for the children in their care. The possession of Sunnyside at times appeared to encourage the various POS committees to remove children from their homes, and place them in reconstituted, institutional families. Within Sunnyside, in an atmosphere protected from familial tensions and difficulties, children could be reared in an ideal environment. This strategy, with its implied criticism of the capacity of mothers to rear their children, was expressed in the annual reports of the homes, which stressed the benefits to children of being reared by professionals. Indeed, this perception was not solely confined to the rather patriarchal committees - a number of widows sought admission for their children because they felt that their own single parent families were lacking in emotion, financial or 'fatherly' support. Interestingly, this was particularly the case with boys, whose mothers felt were becoming too unruly without a father's influence, or who were going to get into trouble because of a lack of discipline at home. One boy was sent to Swords at his mother's request because she felt that he was 'getting into mischief'.

62 Report of the Executive Committee of the POS, 1916. 1045/13/1, NAI.
63 1045/5/4 - 5/3/1913, NAI.
sons be sent to the orphanage "as he is wild and disobedient." Thus the Society provided not merely the means through which children could be maintained, but it also supplied what some mothers regarded as a necessary masculine authority and role model for the orphaned children. There were no requests by mothers to have daughters admitted to the orphanages; it would seem that both they and the POS committee believed that girls would receive the necessary discipline and training in appropriate behaviour from their mothers.

It would appear that the POS succeeded to an extent in re-creating a home environment within the institution. The visitor's book at Sunnyside certainly conveys the impression of a considerate management, although it must be remembered that the comments were penned by Society visitors, and their friends and supporters, who were committed to the maintenance of the institution. The greatest concern for visitors was the homely atmosphere, and there is a striking uniformity regarding the visitors' comments, particularly in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries:

I cannot say how delighted I have been this afternoon with everything at 'Sunnyside' - it is truly a home in every sense of the word, the children looking so bright and happy. I wish it every blessing.65

I love to visit Sunnyside, it is a real home.66

Had the pleasure of visiting the Home & found all its inmates well & happy. The atmosphere is one of love on all sides, & nowhere could orphan girls find the need of parental tenderness, & all that is in the word 'Home' more beautifully provided.67

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64 1045/5/4 - 1/10/1923, NAI.
65 1045/13/3, July, 1908, NAI.
66 1045/13/3, November, 1912, NAI.
67 1045/13/3, October, 1915, NAI.
For these visitors it was clearly important to emphasise the homely nature of the institutions. Apart from a popular concept of orphanages as Dickensian nightmares, and the stigma and hostility towards bodies associated with charitable workhouses and relief, there was also the fact that many of these children had been removed from an existing family home, and separated from mothers and siblings.

There is a key difference in practice between an organisation such as the POS and a charity such as the Dublin Prison Gate Mission with regard to the best environment for children, which indicates that policy could be tailored by organisations to appeal to the target group. The DPGM had a policy of allowing mothers to keep their children with them in the Mission while they resided there, ostensibly for recuperative reasons. The Primate of all Ireland applauded this policy in 1916, on the grounds that although these women had ‘fallen’ because of an abuse of their womanhood, they could be redeemed through the product of that abuse - their illegitimate children:

The Mission’s method of dealing with the unmarried mothers had appealed to him. One of the greatest difficulties in work like that - and no man could face it - was how to deal with the children of unmarried mothers. Anything that could be done to make the natural love of the mother for her child to develop in her was the best way of re-creating her character and restoring her to something like the image of God.68

The important distinction to be made between the children of DPGM women and those in the POS is that of their legitimacy. Although the Mission appear to be kinder in their response to the mothers in their care, they were also responding to circumstances. Unmarried mothers were far more likely to abandon their children,

68 Church of Ireland Gazette March 24, 1916, p. 234.
and to remain outside the reach of charitable institutions such as the DPGM Widows, on the other hand, were more responsive to the conditions and demands of the POS committee, and to accept the Society’s recommendations regarding their children’s upbringing. This is not to say that the POS abused their position, but that they demanded a certain response to their charity on the part of the mothers, which they generally received.

Although the attitude of the POS executive became steadily more humane as the decades progressed, rules were vigorously enforced, sometimes beyond the strict letter of the law. The role of the inspectors, and the relationships they struck up with the applicants, were a crucial factor in determining whether a child would be allowed to remain with its mother. Each inspector was required by the Society to evaluate a mother’s ability to care for her children, and if he or she69 advised the POS committee that the children be removed, for whatever reason, assistance was offered only on that basis. In all of the cases I have examined where a conflict arose between a mother’s request and an inspector’s recommendation, the mothers have always rejected aid in order to keep their children. This often led to considerable hardship for the family, but it emphasises the fact that charity applicants retained their independence, despite pressing circumstances. The dignified responses of the mothers in refusing assistance offered under such conditions made the apparent inflexibility of the POS committee all the more striking. The women who sought aid from the Society were often far from being weak and dependent creatures, who merely sought to replace one breadwinner (their husband) with another (the POS). Many felt the act

69 The majority of the initial inspections were carried out by men, with the women workers being more often employed on subsequent visits.
of application to be degrading, and resented the implication by the Society's inspectors that they were incapable of rearing their own children. One woman who took a position as housekeeper after her husband's death was offered aid on condition she send her daughter to the female orphanage. The mother's angry response is indicative of the mood of many applicants, if a little more forthright:

I shall never give Ethel into any persons care, or part with her: it was a dying request, not to part with her: I'm well able and willing to educate her, if I only had time...All I wanted was to get employment near a Protestant School and besides Ethel might not be long a burden on the Dublin society as I might get something in another county and then I could get her transferred.70

The authority which the inspectors possessed to reject cases, and the lack of right to appeal on the part of the mothers, illuminates the power relations between Society and supplicant. In many cases, the inspectors refused assistance to apparently deserving individuals. One woman submitted excellent references, and the inspector found her children and her home well cared for, yet he recommended that the children be elected to charitable schools.71 The woman refused aid on that basis, and declared: 'I have come to the conclusion that it would be better for me to try and keep them at home and struggle along, the alternative would mean the breaking up of the home altogether and I must avoid that at all costs.' Although she goes on to say 'you can understand my case', it certainly appears that the POS made little effort to do so, as they made no alternative offer of assistance which would enable families to remain together. The POS exercised an autocratic rule in this sense - the reports of its inspectors were final, and no dialogue was entered into, despite representations by

70 1045/5/4, June 9, 1909, NAI.
71 1045/5/4, April 30, 1918, NAI.
women themselves, or authoritative figures on their behalf. Part of the reason for the inspectors’ inflexible attitude was the danger of false applications, despite the rigorous investigation procedure. The occasional applicant, however, believed that using the Society’s fear of Catholic charity would be sufficient to recommend an unlikely application. One woman had been on the Society’s books in Cork, but moved to Dublin after quarreling with her brother, in whose house she lived. She applied to the Dublin POS for grants for her two children, but the inspector recommended the rejection of her application, as she was ‘spending as fast as she can the remains of some insurance money’ while making plans to build herself a new house. In the meantime she was renting a suite of rooms in a hotel in Malahide for herself, her children and her maid. The final blow to her case came however when she rowed with the inspector on a train to Dublin:

Mrs. Long’s temper is (as I was warned) rather short and today when I remarked on her frequent visits to Dublin traveling second class (with her little boy generally) while some of our Malahide subscribers travel third she asked me rather sharply why I did not travel third myself and said if there was any more trouble in the matter she would hand the children over to the Roman Catholics.

This sort of threat was not an idle one. Although the Dublin poor faced many disadvantages, they did possess at least one strong bargaining ploy - the threat of conversion. Dublin possessed an enormous range of charitable organisations, each of which had to compete with each other for ‘clients’. As Jacinta Prunty has pointed out, religious tension in Dublin meant that the very poor were better catered for in

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72 1045/5/4, January 17, 1923, NAI.
73 ibid.
the city than elsewhere, given the proliferation of charities. Success in charity work was interpreted as divine justification for an organisation, and deep-rooted religious antagonisms found full expression in philanthropic competition. Many of the organising committees were aware that they were being exploited, but accepted a certain degree of abuse rather than risk losing individuals to a Catholic charity or indeed a rival Protestant one.

The objects of charity were far from oblivious to this competitive element. In the nineteenth century there had been a number of high-profile cases involving Catholic and Protestant charities accused of illegally detaining individuals in their institutions, to prevent contact with workers of the other denomination. One of the best known was that involving Margaret Aylward, the founder of the Sisters of the Holy Faith, tried and imprisoned in 1858 for contempt of court. The case had arisen over allegations that Aylward had knowingly allowed a child, Mary Mathews, to be removed from the Catholic St. Brigid’s Orphanage, in order to prevent her Protestant mother from rearing her. Contemporary commentators indicated that the trial was motivated by antagonisms between ‘a Roman Catholic institution and a Protestant institution’, indicating that this was a constant element in charitable work. In the twentieth century, these antagonisms continued, and indeed intensified, as political changes seemed to herald a shift in power bases within the city. The opportunity this afforded the poor to avail themselves of several sources of assistance was, in many cases, taken up. Catholic charities found this a particular problem, as many Protestant

organisations targeted impoverished Catholics as well as fellow religionists.

The POS had, as mentioned above, another option to either removing the children to orphanages, or allowing them to remain with their mothers – placing them in the country with suitable nurses. This strategy avoided the greater difficulties of institutionalisation, and emphasises again the primacy of the family unit in the minds of the POS committee. Children were transplanted to the bucolic splendors of Co. Wicklow, to lodge with Society-approved mothers, as opposed to their own. Only married women were eligible to apply as nurses, and the term ‘nurse’ did not imply any degree of professional training - the principal qualification was the successful running of one's own home. The children were housed with the nurse's own family, and an allowance paid directly to the woman, at three or six monthly intervals. While the maintenance allowance was not munificent by any means, it more than covered the orphan's costs, and left a small sum over for time and labour. The only accounts which survive of nurse's wages in the POS archive relate to 1896-1898, but as wages did not fluctuate to any great degree until mid-way through the First World War, these figures are also applicable to the early twentieth century.76

Women were paid from £2/10 to £5 per six months per child, and were also granted an allowance for shoes of between 6/6 and 7/6. While some women took only one orphan, a small majority of nurses were responsible for between two to five children (apart from their own) at any one time. As in the cases of children removed to the orphanages, the POS struggled to recreate the ideal home environment, in some cases reconstructing family units. Where possible, efforts were made to allow

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76 1045/10/6/3, Nurses' Wages Book, 1896-1898, NAI.
brothers and sisters to lodge together. In the homes of seven out of thirteen paid nurses who were not the mothers of the children they cared for, the orphans were siblings. The occupation of nursing was clearly popular with women, judging from the Visiting Committee’s Minutes, as women could incorporate their responsibilities into an established domestic routine. There was a certain amount of ‘recruitment’ into the practice by example and word of mouth - eleven of the thirteen above shared a common location (townland, village or street) with at least one other nurse. It is interesting to note that in two cases, orphans of the same surname were living with different nurses in the same area of towns, where the POS attempted to ‘match’ siblings to a shared location.

Although keeping orphans on behalf of the Society did not make a great deal of money for the nurses, the positions were eagerly sought after, leading to some unscrupulous behaviour on the part of prospective nurses. Women in the same area reported each other unsatisfactory, and applied to have the children for themselves. The Society were quick to respond to charges that nurses were taking advantage of the scheme, and investigated allegations immediately. It is interesting to note that the nurses were informally ‘graded’, with the inspectors relying upon the opinions of those women whom they deemed ‘respectable’. In one case in 1911, a Society visitor was informed that one of the nurses was ‘unsatisfactory, as she does not mind herself’. The Visitor reported to the committee that she ‘got her information from two of our respectable women.’ One of the senior inspectors was directed to call unannounced on the nurse and report back: ‘He visited Mrs. Addie (twice) and saw

77 1045/2/8, 1904-1922, NAI.
78 Visitors Committee Minutes, March 20, 1911, NAI.
no evidence of charge made about Mrs. Addie. For the most part however the system worked quite well. As far as the natural mothers were concerned, there was generally a greater willingness to allow their children to board out with these nurses rather than be sent to the two orphanages. In the less formal environment of another’s home, visits were more easily arranged, and the mothers had a greater input into the rearing of their children, in one case for example supporting a recommendation regarding an apprenticeship for a son. Under these circumstances, close ties were sometimes established between the children and their host families. The records indicate that small numbers kept the children on after the agreed period. In 1910, for example, a Mrs. Darcy asked the Society to allow her charge to remain with her family for training: ‘[She asked] the committee to approve of her keeping Samuel Carey for two years to learn farming.’ The applications by former orphans to the Society for marriage portions (see below) frequently make reference to their upbringing by these nurses, and emphasise the sympathetic treatment they received. However, as this testimony was provided by individuals looking for further support from the Society, it may not be entirely transparent. Mothers and children often favoured placement with nurses over admission to the orphanages, but all stress that the maintenance of the family unit was the best possible option. The Society however were unshaken in their conviction that they could judge what type of family structure was most suitable for each case, and they acted accordingly.

Later Careers of Orphans

79 ibid.
80 ibid, September 25, 1914, NAI.
81 ibid, November 18, 1910, NAI.
Responsibility for the orphans on the books of the Society did not end when the child reached the age of apprenticeship. Like any parent, the POS continued to advise, chasten and maintain individuals up to, and in some cases after, marriage. This long-term relationship with the Society has left some valuable information regarding the later careers of orphans, and shed some light upon the expectations of the Protestant working class in Dublin. A heavy emphasis was placed by the Society upon securing employment as quickly as possible. However, there were strict conditions regarding suitable occupations, which strengthened the Protestant community in the city. The POS arranged apprenticeships to Protestant firms only, through their sophisticated network of contacts with the Protestant business community.82 This ensured that there would be little religious contamination from Catholic employers, but also that trades, and indeed firms, would remain firmly in Protestant hands. Firms such as Guinness', Winstanley's, Weir's Jewellers, Switzer's department store and Eason's bookshop were among the best known to routinely apprentice POS orphans, but there were dozens of smaller firms who also drew upon the Society. Indeed, Catholic charities bitterly complained that Protestant bodies used their business contacts to attract the Catholic poor with promises of employment. The committee of the Catholic St. Brigid's Orphanage claimed that the Dublin Providence Home had told Catholic mothers they would be guaranteed work, if they gave their children to the care of the Protestant orphanage, and trained as domestic

82 This practice was also followed by Catholic charities. Young women who had left the various Catholic asylums and refuges frequently went to work as domestic servants, but only in Catholic homes. Luddy, *Women and Philanthropy*, pp. 190-4. For a discussion of how Catholic charities exploited business contacts in order to ensure employment for their charges, see Prunty, *Dublin Slums*, p. 261.
servants in the Providence Home. The POS also maintained strong links with charitable bodies which trained Protestant children for employment. The Domestic Training Institute for example took a number of girls from the POS each year, to teach domestic economy and train them for lives in service. The DTI worked under the Board of Education of the General Synod of the Church of Ireland, and in connection with the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland, and its ‘certificates of proficiency’ were highly regarded by employers. As the institute was for ‘Protestant girls of good character’ only, and was the sole such training body in the country, it was regarded as particularly important in terms of providing young women with skills for their futures, within a specifically Protestant environment. Many of the girls entered the institute from the country, and there was a particular concern to protect them from the risks of the city. Thus they were advised to stay in either the Girls’ Friendly Society Lodge in Merrion Square, or at the Young Women’s Christian Association Hostel in Harcourt Street and Ely Place.

By 1911, the DTI was facing considerable financial difficulties, for an interesting reason. Although there was a limited demand for Protestant domestic servants, the industry was dominated by Catholics, and there was a broad acceptance amongst Protestant employers of Catholic women. Protestant girls were in the main reluctant to consider careers as servants, and even those who had been reared and educated by the POS made their preferences for training as shop

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84 Established in 1877.
85 Annual Report of the Domestic Training Institute, for the year ending December 31, 1911.
86 Established in 1877.
87 See introductory chapter.
assistants, dressmakers, and so on, clear from their age of apprenticeship. The DTI attempted to broaden the scope of the institute by offering courses to 'girls emigrating', and to housewives and 'ladies wishing to obtain the instruction for home purposes', but such initiatives were largely unsuccessful. Thus even when they were the objects of charity, Protestant working class girls anticipated a broader range of employment than their Catholics counterparts, and the charitable employment network allowed them, within limits, to choose higher status occupations.

The POS was just one link in a complex Protestant network which emphasised the responsibility of each member to preserve a strong religious and political identity. The Southern Irish Loyalists Relief Association was another, formed in order to protect Irish Protestants from discrimination and intimidation in the early twentieth century. Although based in London and administered from there, the Association issued appeals on a world-wide basis, and cited both the universality of Protestantism and the specific debt owed by the Empire as justification for these demands for money. Although Protestant men were credited with contributing most towards England's prosperity in the pre-treaty period, it was the women on whom the appeals were mainly based, cast as defenseless victims of the Free State. The SILRA presented themselves as the protectors of the weak, and stressed the element of duty which all Protestant Loyalists had to maintain their Irish brethren: 'In those who have suffered the loss of property through malicious injury, we are faced with the duty of keeping these alive until such times as their just claims are met by the

88 In 1913, grants were withheld by the Society in order to force three girls to enter service. Visitors Committee Minutes, October 24, 1913, NAI. See below for fuller details, p. 35.
89 Established in 1922.
90 'Protestantism at Stake' published by The Southern Irish Loyalists Relief Association, Dublin, n.d. [1918?].
Government responsible.⁹¹ The international nature of Loyalism was stressed by the fact that Protestants were urged to supply not merely funds, but also employment for the Irish Protestants. In this organisation, unlike many others, women and children were presented as primarily political victims and agents, and the religious aspect, so crucial a part of most philanthropic rhetoric, was conspicuously reduced. Perhaps this was a consequence of the organisation being both based in England, and directed towards an English audience, where even in the early twentieth century a more secular philosophy prevailed than in Ireland. In addition, the women who organised the SILRA were connected to the most sophisticated political circles, and were thus able to capture attention and support for an immediate political crisis than were groups which organised on a sectarian basis.

Rather than stress the debt owed by others to loyal Protestants, the appeals for funds for the POS were made in parallel terms to those of the Church of Ireland Clergy Widow and Orphans Society, a similar organisation which however had a quite different class base (see below). Both bodies embraced the notion that they operated as a substitute family, offering religious guidance, political advice, a home and, in the case of the POS, a dowry. They dominated their subject’s lives as if they were real parents. As the more fortunate members of the Protestant community, then, each member of the Church had a moral responsibility to assume this paternal role, through subscriptions and practical assistance: ‘In caring for the orphans the Society is looking after the interests of the members of the Church. The possession of a common Faith - membership in one Church, are privileges of no mean order, and, it

⁹¹ ‘Southern Protestant Appeal’ April 8th, 1922. Southern Irish Loyalists Relief Association, Dublin.
is only right to add, these privileges carry with them corresponding responsibilities.

When the bread winner...has been removed by death, or opportunity is given to the other members of the Church to remain to look after those who thus have become poor and destitute. The aspirations of the committee also found expression in the wider sphere they envisaged for their charges: 'While these orphan children are brought up members of the Church, and while they are taught to love their Fatherland, they are also reminded that Ireland is but part of a great Empire...A good moral character is formed in their young minds - a character which will stand them in good stead, wherever their lot may be cast, and in whatever part of the Empire they subsequently may go to reside.' Many of the former orphans did fulfill these expectations as the Empire's 'soldiers of destiny', and enlisted for example during the war - eighteen from the Dublin area were killed in the First World War.

Applicant details provide a very specific picture of the class from which the orphans came. Out of the 12 cases accepted between 1921 and 1931, all of the fathers were in employment at the time of death. Of the twelve, four were tradesmen, one being a fitter, another a coachmaker, the third a baker, and the fourth a tailor. Of the others, there were two chauffeurs, a farmer, a clerk, a miner (in England), a gardener and two caretakers. Incomes ranged from 25s to £5 per week, with the average earnings being £3. 15s per week. Those on the lowest wages (for example the gardener who earned 25s) had other resources; in his case, the family were supplied with 'house, coal, light and vegetables.' Although some incomes

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92 82nd Annual Report of the POS for 1910, Dublin, 1911, pp. 11-12.
93 ibid, p. 12.
95 Cases 1045/5/SC1-3; C5; C7-8 and 1045/5/SC1-6, NAI.
96 1045/5/SC1, NAI.
fluctuated from week to week, as in the case of the tailor who earned as much as £5 per week when business was steady, the men were in regular employment, and able to maintain their families comfortably. Home ownership was rare, and in three cases, a house was supplied as part of the contract of employment, and had to be vacated on the death of the worker. The widows in five cases took up residence with relatives (parents and brothers) and let out rooms to provide incomes. There was a heavy emphasis upon the responsibility of close relations to assist the widow and children, and it would appear that they took this obligation seriously, even when it meant hardship for themselves. In one case, that of Dolly Clifton, the father had died in 1923. The mother died in 1925 and the child, aged five, was taken in by an aunt. The orphan had initially been in the care of the Board of Guardians, but her aunt wanted to bring her home, although she had three children of her own as well as an invalid mother. Her husband was a chauffeur, earning £4 per week. When the case came up for review in 1935, when Dolly was fifteen, the aunt had five children, and her husband was in erratic employment. Despite the fact that the girl was described as ‘delicate’ and suffering from ‘fatigue’, which in the opinion of her doctor meant that she could not go to work for the foreseeable future, her aunt was still determined that she would keep her with her own family.

Long after the orphans were beyond the literal age of dependence, they continued to draw upon the Society for financial support. As the twentieth century progressed, individuals were remaining on the books for significantly longer periods. By the First World War, the age limit for applications had been raised to fourteen,

97 1045/5/5C7, NAI.
but children continued to be supported beyond this age if they remained in full-time education, or were undertaking some sort of training for employment. The sense of obligation which this created had an impact upon the subsequent career choices. On a very basic level, orphans were dependent upon the good will of the Society, for it paid their apprentice fees if they entered a trade, or contributed towards the costs of further education. It also usually outfitted orphans who were entering the workforce, and those who emigrated. In return for this assistance however the Society, mainly through its visitors, expected to play a significant role in decisions regarding careers. Although they clearly felt that they were acting in the best interests of the children, they exercised autocratic rule, and simply vetoed decisions and requests from orphans if they felt that an unwise decision had been made. For example, many of the orphan girls and their mothers were reluctant to consider lives as domestic servants, and disregarded the urgings of the committee to accept what were regarded as suitable positions. In 1912, after a series of unsuccessful attempts to persuade girls to enter service, the committee adopted harsher measures: 'On the question of domestic service for our girls it was suggested that pressure be brought on their mothers by withholding grant of apprentice fees to girls suitable for service.'98 The following year, this penalty was invoked for three girls. 'In the cases of Anne Carroll, Ethel Farrell and Elizabeth Dagg, the secretary was directed to write to their mothers informing them that the committee would look out for situations in domestic service for them and if they would not accept the positions their names would be taken off the roll.'99 By the next committee meeting, all three mothers had agreed. In two of

98 Visitors Committee Minutes, May 17, 1912, NAI.
99 ibid, October 24, 1913, NAI.
the cases there were younger children who were still on the Society’s books, and there was evidently a fear that refusal in the case of their daughters would result in difficulties for the others. The Committee were also in a position to dictate as far as the education of children was concerned. The POS had links both with other Protestant charities, and with several Protestant schools, and recommendations regarding the further education and training of individual orphans were frequently made. The Royal Hibernian Military School accepted orphans of both sexes, and the committee would, at intervals, recommend to mothers that their children should be sent there. Again, refusal to comply meant that the child was removed from the Society’s rolls.

The Society were willing to consider requests for financial support to continue a child’s education, but as with the committee of the Clergy Daughters’ School, they made independent decisions regarding the practical benefits for each individual child of further education. In March 1911 the inspector reported to the visitors committee meeting that she felt one child should be removed from school: ‘She [the inspector] suggested that William Scraggs be sent to learn gardening, as he was unfit for further literary education.’ The position and occupation of the guardians appeared to have an impact upon assessments of a child’s potential, however, and those orphans who came from relatively well educated or financially stable backgrounds stood a better chance of being funded through further training. In one case from 1911, the aunt of an orphan applied ‘for help to enable her to send her

100 There were however key class differences between the POS orphans and the girls of the CDS, in that the latter were encouraged to pursue their education for significantly longer periods. See education chapter for a fuller discussion.

101 Visitors Committee Minutes, POS, March 24, 1911, NAI.
niece...to learn shorthand and typing.' Her application was approved, as she was herself a clerk, and the committee believed she would ensure that her niece completed the course. In some ways, this represented a sensible allocation of resources, in that those orphans who were likeliest to make full use of further education were enabled to do so, but short shrift was given to the pleas of mothers who wanted to advance their children professionally, if the committee decided otherwise.

**Work and Marriage**

Although surprisingly few of the female orphans worked after marriage (see below), they were employed in a variety of occupations when single. There was however a generally working to lower middle class band of employments, unlike for example those of the girls in the Clergy Daughters’ School, or the Female Masonic Orphan School. Out of 52 cases who provided details regarding their employment before marriage, the majority, some 17, had been domestic servants, earning between four shillings per week and 1/12/6 per month. Other occupations included nurse/children’s nurse (7); shop assistant (7); dressmaker (5); clerk (3); machinist (2); stitcher (2); housekeeper (2); milliner (1); chemist’s assistant (1); bookkeeper (1); waitress (1); laundress (1); nursery governess (1); typist (1); and, intriguingly, ‘artiste’ (1), who ‘appears in cinemas and at concerts’ around the country. The highest wage earned was £2 per week, by one of the clerks, and the lowest 4 shillings per week, by an outdoor servant, although the majority of the applicants did not provide any information regarding their wages, despite being asked to do so.

102 ibid, May 19, 1911.
103 Based on the applications to the Kinsey Marriage Portion Fund, 1045/5/9, 1917-1921, NAI.
The orphans who received support from the POS were taught from an early age that adulthood brought responsibility, in particular the duty to contribute towards the family economy. Reviews of allowances were made on a regular basis by the Society, which entailed a visit by the inspectors to each home, and a precise evaluation of income and expenditure. One finds that practically without exception all income earned by offspring was handed over to the mother for the support of the family as a whole.\(^{104}\) The Camlin family provide one such case. All five of the children had been supported by the POS following the death of their father, and were maintained and educated at the Society’s expense, with each receiving £3 for outfitting when they began their jobs. In 1934, when the case came up for review, four were in employment\(^{105}\):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Employer</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Wage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lydia</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Nicholls, Excheq. St.</td>
<td>Clerk</td>
<td>1/5/10 p.w.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Dockrells</td>
<td>Clerk</td>
<td>16/1d p.w.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frederick</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Brooks Thomas</td>
<td>Clerk</td>
<td>£1 p.w.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gladys</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Nicholls</td>
<td>Cashier</td>
<td>15s p.w.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What is interesting about this case is the uniformity of employment taken by the whole family. Their father had been a baker with the Dublin Bakery Company, earning £5.15s per week, and the family had been relatively well off, with a degree of ambition regarding their children’s futures. Thus the mother’s applications for money to train the eldest child in bookkeeping and shorthand had been granted, and her success further eased the passage of the following siblings. It is no coincidence that

\(^{104}\) A similar case appeared in 1924. The widow of a coach maker, whose family had lost their home on his death, applied on behalf of two of her four children. The eldest two, aged 15 and 17, were earning 16/6 between them, all of which they handed over to their mother. 1045/5/5B2, NAI.

\(^{105}\) 1045/5/5/C2, NAI.
all of the family entered the same profession, or that the two sisters were working in the same firm. Companies often favoured recruitment within families, on the grounds that siblings would encourage and assist each other, and a greater degree of loyalty to the firm was ensured. All of the Camlin children were still living at home, and the mother was in receipt of £18 per annum for the youngest child, Frances. Although the inspector recommended that this amount be reduced, in view of the contributions made by the older children, the child was allowed to remain on the books, and was encouraged to consider training for a similar career as her siblings. The Society was swift to censure any former orphans who failed to contribute towards their mother’s support, however. Thus an application made by the widow of a chauffeur for an allowance for her youngest son noted that she lived with a married eldest son, a clerk with a railway company, who made all of his wages available for the family’s support. 106 It was also noted that another son, a civil servant in Belfast, earned £3 per week ‘but does not help. He is delicate and subject to fits.’ 107

As the final stage in the Society’s responsibilities for their charges, the committee provided what were in effect dowries for the orphans, to allow them to get married and set up home. The conditions under which grants were given were strict, and set down in court, so that negotiation was never entered into between the committee and applicants regardless of the circumstances of each case. Any orphan in the care of the Society for two full consecutive years was presented with a certificate of eligibility to apply to the Kinsey Marriage Portion Fund (the KMPF), whose finances were entirely separate from those of the remainder of the Society.

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106 1045/5/C8, NAI.
107 ibid.
The applicant had to marry a member of the Episcopalian Church, and no exceptions were made for the several applicants who proposed marrying Methodists or Presbyterians. If an orphan had broken any of the Society’s rules during their time on the roll, or had for example left an apprenticeship arranged by the Society, they were automatically refused. Other grounds for refusal included a less than exemplary life led by the former orphan. One was rejected because he intended opening a public house, and another because it could not be proved that the man was a regular churchgoer. Applications had to be made shortly before marriage, or within twelve months of it, and cheques were released only on the submission of a marriage certificate. Early unions were frowned on by the Society - men had to be over the age of twenty two at the time of marriage, and women over eighteen. Every application had to be signed by the local minister, and the couple had to supply a minimum of two up-to-date character references each, although the correspondence between applicants and the secretary of the Society indicates that as many references as possible were encouraged to strengthen one's chances. Before the First World War, the sums granted to successful applicants was fixed at £50 for a man and £40 for a woman, but the increasing number of ex-orphans seeking assistance led the Society to reduce these amounts during the war, initially in 1915 to £40 for men and £30 for women, and then further to £30 for men and £20 to women in 1920.\textsuperscript{108} The increasing trend towards more grants of lesser value led to the number of grants made doubling between 1910 and 1921.\textsuperscript{109} If an applicant successfully secured a grant, he or she was eligible to apply again within five years for a 'further portion', as

\textsuperscript{108} 87\textsuperscript{th} and 92\textsuperscript{nd} Annual Reports of the POS for the years 1915 and 1920.

\textsuperscript{109} Annual Reports of the POS, 1910-1921.
they were termed, of a lesser amount. However these further portions came from any funds left after the initial applications had been dealt with, and in several years no additional grants made, through lack of money. A refusal of the second application often led to a heated correspondence between orphans and the secretary, as the former felt that they were being denied their rightful inheritance, and quoting cases known to them where others had been given two grants. In this way, the Society very much took the role of a beneficent parent, dividing resources equally between argumentative children.

Applications to the Kinsey Fund throw some light on the life cycles of working class Dublin Protestant women. A striking feature shared by a majority of the applicants (some 60%) between April 1917 and November 1921 was a willingness to leave Dublin. Just under 40% of the applicants during this period do not state that they had lived outside of Dublin: the remainder left for varying periods, and must include those who emigrated permanently. The available data refers only to their early married lives; consequently the question of how many former orphans never returned to their home city is difficult to answer. However, it does appear that a considerable proportion of those who left returned after periods of between three to ten years, and this is particularly the case with those couples who settled in Britain for a period of time. Britain was in fact the main destination for those women who left Dublin, with only one applicant migrating internally to Longford, and two to Belfast. Four went to Scotland, and three to Wales, but there were none to the areas

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110 Figures are based on the 63 female applicants to the fund between those dates. 1045/5/9, NAI.
111 Individual cases are not assigned separate identification numbers, so I will identify them by their dates of application.
112 38 out of 63 female applicants left Dublin for varying periods of time.
traditionally associated with Irish Catholic emigration to Britain, such as Liverpool or Manchester.

The orphan emigrants give few clues in their applications as to why they left Dublin. In one case\(^{113}\) the applicant had been raised in England by her mother, who had moved from Dublin to take up a position as a Housekeeper when her husband died. The Society would accept applications from overseas if the children had been born and at least partly raised in Ireland. However, all of the remaining emigrants had moved to England as adults. These women also displayed a tendency to return to Ireland after relatively short periods of time. Little information regarding their decisions to return is available from the records, but some applicants indicated that they came back to rear their children, or to look after their mothers. In several cases, the higher cost of living in England was cited, but those applicants who identified financial difficulties in their appeals tended to want to remain in England rather than return. Of course the relatively high rates of marriage to Englishmen by these women probably had the effect of determining their domicile there. In other cases, some applicants simply became homesick, as in the case of the couple from Mountjoy Square, now living in Southampton. The husband had been on the POS roll, and so made the application: ‘It is almost impossible to live on my pay in England (£2.5.0. per week) and I was hoping you might be able to find me a berth in Ireland of some sort as my wife is longing to return and I feel I should like to be back there again.’\(^{114}\)

One possible explanation was that they moved to Britain to improve their employment prospects. It is certainly true that a wider range of occupations would

\(^{113}\) 1045/5/9, April 27, 1921, NAI.
\(^{114}\) 1045/5/9, November, 1920, NAI.
have been available there than in Dublin, particularly in urban areas. However, the women do not appear to have altered their employment patterns to any great degree from that prevailing in Dublin. Before marriage, whether in Dublin or Britain, the majority of the women were in full-time employment. In addition to supporting themselves, a good number were also responsible for widowed mothers and, in fact, often cited care of an elderly relative as the reason for their inability to save money for marriage. The perhaps more surprising element in these women's employment profiles concerns their lives after marriage. Of all of the applications received for marriage portions and further portions, many of which stress the difficulties faced by women attempting to maintain a home, there are no cases of women remaining in employment, or attempting to supplement family incomes after marriage. Some applicants described themselves as practically destitute, yet never considered paid employment outside the home, an attitude that was as prevalent amongst women who had no children as those who did. The following application was typical of many in describing the difficulties faced through erratic employment for married men:

We are careful when he is working but with so much unemployment since the strike he has hardly had one weeks wages otherwise if I was not really in great need of it [a further portion] I would not have bothered, but I am worried to Death as my rent had not been paid for 4 weeks and we would have nothing only where I always get my groceries, the manager lets me have them and I pay just what ever I can.115

The Kinsey Marriage Portion fund was a crucial element of the POS organisation. These young couples represented the future of Irish Protestantism, and the careful vetting process which applicants underwent ensured that they were

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115 1045/5/9, October 13, 1921, NAI.
entirely of the right sort. Although the Society did support former orphans who were living abroad, they were especially helpful to returning couples, or those who declared in their applications that they were considering emigration, owing to financial difficulties at home. One referee in 1917 summarised the anxieties of many Protestants over their futures in Ireland:

Both religiously and socially they are of the most worthy type of artisan, and at present like many other Protestant artisans in Dublin unless they can find additional help to enable them to live here, they must emigrate or sink. Under ordinary circumstances such a household would be deserving of special help, but under the present circumstances they are doubly deserving. I have much pleasure in recommending them for an additional Kinsey Marriage Portion, and much regret in urging the vital necessity to Artisan Protestants in Dublin of such assistance.  

_Cases Refused_

For each of the successful applicants to the POS, there were of course several cases not considered suitable by the Society, for various reasons. Between 1904 and 1929 there were 44 applications which were either rejected outright, or withdrawn or abandoned by the widows. While the circumstances and backgrounds of this group were similar in many ways to the successful batch quoted above, there were several slight differences, which indicate that the Society exercised a policy of extending aid on grounds other than simple necessity. The first small deviation from the successful profile relates to incomes. The average weekly wage earned by this group was £2.5s; some £1.10s less than that of the others. Of course, by the time of application, the husband's income was irrelevant in a literal sense; however it does indicate a

116 1045/5/9, November 14, 1917, NAI.
117 1045/5/4, NAI. There are no sub-references for this file, so I will identify each case as it occurs in the text by the date of application.
somewhat higher social status, even for those men engaged in the same trade. As regards the occupations of the men, there was no great deviation from the unskilled and semi-skilled profile outlined for the first group. There was a higher representation of unskilled workers, including four labourers and six soldiers. The other occupations include all of those mentioned for the first study, and the proportion of tradesmen is identical, at 25%. A wider range of jobs, including one commercial traveller and a sculptor, is exhibited.

There were five main reasons for the rejection or withdrawal of these applications, which help to illuminate the relationships which existed between the Society organisers and the female petitioners. A striking element is the suspicion with which the Society viewed the applicants. One could argue that this was an inevitable part of the philanthropic process, and that the caution of the organisers protected both funds and more vulnerable dependents from exploitation. However, on the basis of the records, false applications were very much the exception, with women facing significant hardship before seeking help. Perhaps not surprisingly, class presumptions played a part in the attitudes of the committee. Applicants to the POS, in common with those to the SSFA below, operated under an extraordinary level of surveillance. Cases were investigated and regularly reassessed to prevent fraud, and the level of influence which the Society felt it could exert over family affairs was high. With the middle-class CWOS, however, the attitude was different. Applicants did have to undergo a lengthy process of application which many found traumatic, but they were allowed to present their own evidence, and were not subject to the

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118 This suspicion was not confined to the POS. The organisers of the SSFA (see below) were similarly wary of women’s motives in applying for assistance.
same visits and inspections as the POS dependents. The middle class applicants were perceived as more honest (they were, after all, the widows and daughters of clergymen), and the notion of continual checks upon their situations was distasteful to the CWOS committee. There were in fact several cases of fraudulent application by women to the CWOS, but this did not produce the sorts of strict vetting procedure which was routine by the POS and SSFA committees. In 1915, for example, the committee of the Church of Ireland Jubilee Annuity Fund (established to assist ‘respectable gentlewomen’) discovered that one of its annuitants had in fact several sources of income: ‘The Secretary reported that in the case of Mrs. A Cooney...he had seen a letter from her son in which he stated that he allowed his mother £2 a week previous to the war and at the rate of £40 a year since...She had received 30/- a week from the S.S.F.A. (Soldiers and Sailors Families’ Association) for four weeks to November 1914 and 15/- a week to the end of April and that he (the secretary) had seen Mrs. Cooney who admitted this.’ The woman had been elected in November 1913, but her various incomes had gone undetected until May 1915. The committee decided that ‘in the interests of the poor the money should be refunded’ and, in addition, Mrs. Cooney’s name was removed from the list of annuitants.

The principal reason for rejection of an application to the POS, which included almost one fifth of the total, was the demand by the inspector that the child be given up. This was a major dilemma for the mothers, who apart from a basic reluctance to surrender their children, rightly feared that the children would be

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119 Committee Minutes of the Incorporated Association for the Relief of Distressed Protestants Jubilee Annuity Fund, May 5, 1915, RCBL.
difficult to recover once they had entered the orphanages. The major problem for
these women was that many of them, lacking formal training or qualifications beyond
housekeeping, were limited to occupations within that sphere on widowhood. If they
surrendered their children and secured an appointment as housekeeper, they were
seldom permitted to have their children with them. Thus they faced the decision over
whether to become self-supporting and have their children placed in the orphanage
or, as many stated to the inspectors, ‘struggle along’. One woman who applied for
assistance in 1915 was described by her referees as ‘respectable’ and was offered a
grant if she would give up her eligible children:

She occupies two rooms in a small but fairly decent tenement
house... the mother and five of her children are living in two very
moderate sized rooms. In one the mother and her two daughters
sleep. In the other the three sons sleep, apparently in a moderate
sized single bed. This room is also the kitchen and the living room
of the family.\textsuperscript{120}

In this case, the mother was earning around 5 shillings per week sewing, and
mentioned in her application that she was receiving some assistance from a ‘friend’.

In this case, as in others, there is a division between what the Society view as
appropriate for the children, and what the mothers believe to be in their best
interests. The inspector’s reports make frequent and bewildered reference to the
stubbornness of mothers. One case which was refused because the mother would not
give up any of her children involved the extraordinary total of twenty eligible
orphans, the product of children from the previous marriages of both parents, and
their own.\textsuperscript{121} The mother in this case was Catholic, and the father had been Church

\textsuperscript{120} 1045/5/4 - 5/4/1915, NAI.
\textsuperscript{121} 1045/5/4 - 11/4/1914, NAI.
of Ireland, but the children were being raised as Protestants. The mother initially agreed to give the children up, if she could not get assistance any other way, but when she was offered places in the orphanages, she refused.

The second most common reason for the refusal of cases was a fear that even with the assistance of the Society, the children would become converts to Catholicism, or would live in houses with Catholics. The POS sought to provide their orphans with a purely Protestant environment, even to the extent of refusing assistance to households with any Catholics, such as lodgers or employees. Many of the applicants to the Society were Catholic women who had married Protestants, and whose children, in accordance with the rules for eligibility of the POS, were being raised as Protestants. Such cases were even more thoroughly investigated, and there was always a good deal of concern over whether the children would continue to be raised as Protestants once elected to the rolls. One application concerned a child whose mother had remarried, and had sent the child to live with her grandfather. Although the girl was being raised as a Protestant, and references were supplied from her minister, the child was accepted only on the grounds that she be removed to the home at Kilternan, as the grandfather 'has lately turned R.C.', and was considered a dangerous influence by the inspector. Occasionally, however, the mothers themselves agreed to the condition of removal of the child in order to keep the child out of the hands of Catholic relatives. In 1912, a Protestant women, widow of a Catholic, applied to the Society. According to the inspector's report, the husband had 'spent all her money, and eventually died intestate. He had been married before, and his first wife got the bulk of what remained. The child was raised Protestant, but it is feared
that the mother is coming under pressure to give the child over to R.C. relatives.\footnote{122}

The girl was elected on condition she be removed to a Protestant school, and after an initial refusal, the mother agreed. The Society showed a remarkable lack of faith in the ability or, indeed, the stated intention of mothers and guardians to raise children as Protestants, if there was a single Catholic in the household. In a case from 1910, an application was made by the sister of an orphan, both of whose parents were dead.\footnote{123} The case was refused outright because the woman was married to a Catholic, even though she was a practicing Protestant herself, and declared that the child would remain Protestant. Even in these cases where there seemed to be no uncertainty about the commitment to raise the children as Protestant, the Society shied away. One convert had been a practicing Protestant for twenty years and had raised all her children accordingly. The inspector reported however that Catholic relatives had offered to take in some of the children following their father’s death, and although the mother had stated that she wanted to keep the children with her and raise them as Protestants, the Society refused her application.

The other main reasons for the rejection of cases was a refusal on the part of the mother to accept conditions laid down by the society, principally regarding the suitability of her home. Objections were raised by the inspectors on a variety of grounds - overcrowding, unhygienic conditions, proximity of Catholic tenants or lodgers, general costs - and if the woman refused to move, no assistance was given. In their applications, the women put forward reasonable explanations for their reluctance to move, generally because they had a network of family or friends who

\footnotesize{122} 1045/5/4 - 2/7/1912, NAI.
\footnotesize{123} 1045/5/4 - 4/8/1910, NAI.
would support them, or proximity to work, and so on, but the Society regarded these reasons as insufficient. They argued that they were concerned with the welfare of the child, but they disregarded the broader environment which the mothers in many cases felt was more important. The fourth reason for refusal of assistance was a lack of documentation to support cases. The POS accepted only legitimate children who could be proven to be Protestant, and each application had to be accompanied by a reference from the local minister, testifying to the regular Church attendance of both children and mother. In addition, marriage certificates and baptismal certificates had to be produced. In one unusual case from 1920, a woman who had been a convert from Catholicism applied for the support of her four eligible children. She claimed to have married her husband in a Presbyterian Church in Scotland, against her family’s wishes. On her return to Ireland she attended St. Werburgh’s Church. However, she could not produce a marriage certificate, and the inspector believed her to be unmarried, and using the somewhat confused circumstances of her claimed ceremony in Scotland to disguise the fact. The children were elected to the Society, but on condition that a marriage certificate be produced. The case remained open as no such document was presented. In another, a deserted wife applied upon the death of her husband: ‘For some time before his death he sent her no money owing to her refusal to live with him. She heard of his death only through an outside source.’

The family tensions in this case led to the husband’s father claiming that the dead man was another individual of the same name, and refusing to testify that the man was his son. The fact that this woman had had a child before her marriage (which

124 1045/5/4 - 14/5/1920, NAI.
125 1045/5/4 - 4/2/1925, NAI.
was noted by the inspector) as well as the one for whom she was claiming assistance, appears to have played a part in the refusal of the case.

The final key reason for rejection was sufficient income. This was a common area of contention between mothers and the POS, not merely because the two sides often differed as to what constituted a reasonable living, but because the Society was reluctant to provide funds which would allow for training or education beyond what they considered appropriate for each particular child. The Society's suspicious attitude towards applicants might suggest that these women were actively avoiding responsibility for their families. This is far from the truth; in fact, the widows made strenuous efforts both to keep their families together and to earn their own livings. Out of the twelve successful cases already mentioned\(^\text{126}\), three sought work as domestic servants, thereby resuming their pre-marital occupations, and one looked for a situation as a caretaker, which offered not merely employment but also accommodation for the family. The women would agree to leave their children with relations until they had settled into employment, and then take them to their new homes, but it appears this often became a semi-permanent position. Young widows with children often faced exploitation by employers, who took advantage of their lack of mobility and employment opportunities to pay appalling wages. One such case was that of Violet Cupitt's mother, who went into domestic service on the death of her husband.\(^\text{127}\) Since part of her 'remuneration' was her child's keep, she earned only 5 shillings per week. She eventually requested that Violet be sent to the orphanage at Kilteenan, until she could earn enough money to set up home for both

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\(^{126}\) See page 131.

\(^{127}\) 1045/5/5C8, NAI.
of them. However, three years later, she returned to Yorkshire where she had originally lived with her husband, and could not be traced by the society. The child remained in Kilternan until the age of fourteen, when she left to take up employment.

The POS committee insisted upon evidence that widows were actively seeking employment. Applications were considered on several grounds - degree of necessity, references from former employers, support offered by relatives - but a crucial element was the mother's efforts to earn a living for her family. Many of the women had in fact been in paid employment prior to their marriages, and these cases usually stated in their applications that they were intending to resume these former occupations. As the POS only accepted children under the age of fourteen, their mothers were still young enough, for the most part, to enter the competitive employment market. Those women who had no skills, or had never been employed, often turned to relations, generally single or widowed brothers, and acted as housekeepers, renting out rooms when possible to supplement the household income. In one case, a brother who owned his own home took in his two widowed sisters, one of whom had an infant daughter. Within two years the child's mother died, and the brother and sister assumed responsibility for the child. The sister rented out three rooms to lodgers, bringing in £169 per annum for their support. Before her death, the orphan's mother had undertaken much of the household work. Indeed, her contribution may be assessed by the fact that when she died, her sister had to hire a daily maid. The demand that widows earn their keep is in striking and curious contrast to the policy adopted towards Kinsey Fund applicants, none of whom worked outside the home. Although some widows retained the family home, often
taking in lodgers to supplement income, the death of a husband usually ensured an immediate return to the workforce, even for the mothers of very young children. Through their application requirements, the POS encouraged such a cycle. By providing small financial grants in the form of ejecting orphans to the society's rolls, and by placing children in orphanages or with nurses, they allowed the widows geographical and familial freedom to take up employment and eventually set up home with their children.

The mistrustful attitude towards women implicit in the POS was reflected, as mentioned above, in other charitable organisations. During the war, the wives and dependents of Irish soldiers serving in the British army were entitled to certain allowances, paid directly to the women. From the very beginning of the war, there was a deep sense of unease amongst charity workers over the freedom with which this money was expended, with no masculine authority to temper it. The committee of the Dublin County Division of the Soldiers and Sailors Families’ Association\textsuperscript{128} wrote to the Central Committee in England to ask if the money could be sent to the Association in Dublin, and paid to the women through their organisation, on a weekly rather than monthly basis, thereby removing the temptation for the women to foolishly spend a large sum of money all at once.\textsuperscript{129} ‘The Clergy, Police and our

\textsuperscript{128} ‘The Association was formed in February 1885, with the object of aiding the Wives and Families of men of all branches of the Army and Navy. It has been found that the want of any such organisation has been most felt when Troops are suddenly ordered on Foreign Service, and their wives and families in many cases become homeless; but, apart from the necessity of help at such a time, there is much for the Association to do in times of peace.’ General Circular no. 6, Soldiers and Sailors Families’ Association, n.d. [1910?]?

\textsuperscript{129} In addition to a suspicion regarding women’s incapacity to handle money there was a general fear that the working classes would use the emergency conditions of the war to exploit the government. In England, the Association’s Old Age Pensions Committee was used ‘as a tribunal before whom the dependants have to prove their case, namely that they were being supported before the war. Provided that is proved he or she will receive a very substantial grant from the government, conditional on allotment.’ D1071JH/3/1, PRONI: Special Report of the Soldiers and
Visitors report that the payment in advance, once a month, of the ‘Separation Allowances’ and allotments of Pay, amounting to over £2, to the wives of Soldiers and Sailors, leads to reckless expenditure, extravagance and drunkenness. The result being want and shortage of food for children in the latter part of each month.\textsuperscript{130} The plea was taken up by the Lord Lieutenant, Lord Aberdeen, and presented to the Prime Minister shortly afterwards. What is interesting about the issue is not merely that the recommendation regarding weekly rather than monthly payments was implemented, but that the decision over frequency, and the incorporation of voluntary agencies as distributors, was taken without the consent or involvement of the women concerned.\textsuperscript{131} Even before the war had broken out, the wives of army and navy men had been treated by the committee with a degree of suspicion; indeed a greater degree of trust in their charges was displayed by those organisations which dealt with criminals and prostitutes. If the SSFA women applied for negligible amounts of money or goods, their requests were minutely scrutinised, with an initial recommendation by one visitor being confirmed by another. In 1910 for example, at the Committee’s monthly meeting, a long list of items were considered and confirmed, such as Jane Cherry’s request for a petticoat (‘confirm petticoat given on Mrs. Edge’s recommendation’), or Mary Kelly’s ‘Boots for Jane [daughter] and under garment for herself’.\textsuperscript{132} There were thirty one such cases to be dealt with, all of which had required not only two visits from the committee members, but

\textsuperscript{130} Undated draft of letter from the Dublin County Division of the SSFA to the Central Committee, London. Inserted in the record book at September 10, 1914, D1071/J/H, PRONI.
\textsuperscript{131} See Appendix A for the full reply from Lord Aberdeen to the S.S.F.A. Committee.
\textsuperscript{132} Minutes of the Committee of the Soldiers and Sailors Families’ Association, January 20\textsuperscript{th}, 1910, D/1071/J/H, PRONI.
discussion at the committee meeting. The largest single sum of money involved in any of the cases was 10/-, and cash awards were made in only five instances, two of which were loans. The Association preferred to issue orders to the women which could be redeemed from various businesses in Dublin, so that cash was rarely handed directly to the applicants. The hostility displayed by the SSFA may stem from popular conceptions of army wives and camp followers from the nineteenth century, but it would appear that once again class considerations were paramount in formulating policy. The attitude displayed by the SSFA was, for example, in sharp contrast to that of the Association for the Relief of Distressed Protestants. The Jubilee Annuity Fund of the ARDP had been established to assist ‘aged and distressed ladies’, and the class implications of the term ladies are clear from the treatment meted out to them by the committee. Despite limited funds, in 1909 Rev. Mahaffy argued before the committee that loans from the Fund should be advanced to ‘respectable’ individuals, regardless of the purpose of the loan, as long as there was a ‘reasonable’ chance of the money being repaid. He narrowly failed to have this suggestion made into an official motion. In the case of this organisation, the committee were prepared to advance unsecured loans because the likely applicants were all ‘ladies’, while the women administered to by the SSFA could barely get the

133 One was the sum of 3/6, to be used to redeem bed-clothes which had been pawned, and the other was a grant of 10/- for groceries, 9/- of which was to be repaid to the Association.
135 The ARDP was concerned, as Martin Maguire has indicated, that applicants possess ‘a pious disposition’ above all else. The Dublin Protestant Working-Class 1870-1932: Economy, Society, Politics M.A., University College Dublin, 1990, p. 18.
136 Committee Minutes of the Association for the Relief of Distressed Protestants, Jubilee Annuity Fund, December 15, 1909, D1071/J/H/3/1, PRONI.
money they were entitled to by law.

The picture which emerges from the records of the POS is one of determination and resourcefulness on the part of women who found themselves in very difficult circumstances. They applied to the society only when in need, and usually for as short a period as possible. Their applications are ones of considered request, not helpless dependence. Their general willingness, and indeed often anxiety, to support their children and themselves is one of the most striking aspects. Part of the reason for this adaptability, which is lacking to a much greater extent amongst those applicants to the CWOS, is class expectation. Many of these widows had worked before marriage, and their children were expected by the society to be self-supporting from a relatively early age. As will be discussed below, those women who applied as widows and orphans to the CWOS had rarely contemplated a life of paid employment.

Clergy Widows’ and Orphans’ Society

The Clergy Widows’ and Orphans’ society was established in September, 1863, its intention being ‘to raise, by the joint exertions of the Clergy and Laity, funds in aid of necessitous Widows and unmarried Orphans of the Clergy of the Church of Ireland.’ Dues were collected from every clergyman, regardless of marital status, although this did not mean that all clergy families were entitled to assistance on the breadwinner’s death. The society never intended to act as the sole means of support for clergy families, although this was often the case: it merely aimed to provide a minimum allowance for immediate Clergy relations left without

137 Annual Report of the Church of Ireland Clergy Widows’ and Orphans’ Society for 1923.
income. For many of these families, application to the CWOS was the final stage in a life-long involvement with philanthropy. Clergy daughters in particular were veterans of the charity world. For those who attended the most important educational establishment for this group - the Clergy Daughters' School in Earlsfort Terrace, with its links to Alexandra College\textsuperscript{138} - there was a continual emphasis upon a solid academic education, and a thorough grounding in one's responsibilities towards others. Pupils were encouraged to consider work, paid and unpaid, outside the home. However the range of employment envisaged was rather narrow. Archbishop Plunkett for example, speaking at the college prizegiving in 1889, commented upon the value for clergy daughters in attending Alexandra through the CDS, as it would provide them with sufficient education to pursue careers as governesses.

During their time at the CDS, the girls were continually reminded of their duty towards other, even less fortunate, charitable objects. The school encouraged its pupils to produce an apparently endless procession of cakes, knitted clothes and home-made ornaments to stock the frequent mission sales held in Dublin. The 'Girl's Movement' - the junior branch of the Hibernian Ladies' Auxiliary of the Church Missionary society, for example, which included members at the school - raised £255.3.6 in 1921 for mission work in India.\textsuperscript{139} The girls were allowed to specify which area of missionary work they wished their money to fund, and, perhaps predictably, a significant sum was earmarked for the support of a female orphan. The enthusiasm of the CDS committee for raising the pupil's awareness of others even extended to expenditure of their slender resources. In 1912, 'It was directed that the

\textsuperscript{138} See Charity Administration Chapter for fuller details.
pupils should be taken to the Missionary Exhibition, the cost to be met by the friends of the society."  

One of the most important and popular organisations for the CDS pupils was the Girl Guides, which was started at the school in 1915. Apart from the Imperial connotations of the body, the organisation was regarded as a useful means through which the students could come into contact with distant co-religionists, and groups from schools such as Rochelle in Cork joined the CDS members on expeditions and charitable enterprises. The network of Protestant clubs allowed for coordinated demonstrations of philanthropic loyalty, and ‘in these ways, students were given a practical training in their social responsibilities.’ In 1919, the CDS Girl Guides ‘made themselves very useful at the Girl’s Friendly Society War Fete in the Mansion House’ , setting the seal on the productive war years for the organisation. The Clergy Daughters were also heavily involved in the many social and charitable groups organised from Alexandra College, in particular the Working Girl’s Club at the Greenmount Spinning factory. Originally started as a social club for the young female workers, it was gradually taken over by the students, who collected money for material for clothes, chased bad debtors, and regulated attendance. One of the most popular of the charities run by the girls from the CDS was the ‘Penny a Week’ club, which collected money for the support of elderly women who found themselves without incomes in their later years. This charity catered for ‘Women of gentle birth and education in reduced circumstances who were unable to maintain themselves

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140 Ms 357, CDS Committee Minutes, May 17, 1912, RCBL.
142 Ms 357, CDS Committee Minutes, November 22, 1919, RCBL.

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owing to old age or broken health, or other circumstances deemed sufficient by the committee. The aims of this charity reflected that of the CWOS, to which many clergy daughters were themselves to turn in their old age. A comparison of the Working Girl’s Club and the Penny a Week club indicates key attitudes towards charitable relief in terms of class distinctions, which directly impacted upon clergy daughters, themselves objects of assistance. The most important criteria for assistance was birth, and this in turn determined the type of assistance available. The Working Girls, and other working class charity cases attended by the pupils at Summerhill, were frequently visited and checked in terms of their economic and moral progress, but the ‘women of gentle birth’ were treated as the social equals of their assistants. Thus by the time clergy daughters left school, they had gained both considerable experience in the organisation and administration of charity, but had also absorbed the significance of class difference in terms of charity applicants. This experience may have made them less reluctant to turn to organisations such as the CWOS in their old age.

The Clergy Widows' and Orphans' Society maintained strong institutional links with the Church of Ireland through its collection of dues from members, and, obviously, because of its official preoccupation with Anglican dependents. The surviving records provide some interesting sidelights on that peculiar institution, the clergy family, who were to be an example to the rest of the congregation of an ideal Christian community. The pressures of conformity were particularly strong when applied to the families of clerics, and 'Church' women generally supported the rather

conservative ethos of twentieth century Anglicanism. When Eleanor Alexander (the unmarried daughter of the Archbishop of Armagh) addressed the 1910 Women's Meeting of the Church of Ireland Conference in Dublin,\textsuperscript{144} she was articulating an ideal Church representation of woman - supportive and accepting, rather than assertive and independent:

\ldots women should never, under any circumstances, engage in a duel between the sexes, since the one was created to be the helpmeet of the other...[women] were surely intended in a higher way to be the supplement of man...to form, by a combination of virtues essentially masculine and essentially feminine, the evenly-balanced character of a perfect humanity.\textsuperscript{145}

Accordingly, candidates for aid from the CWOS made strenuous efforts to fit themselves into this mould, at least as far as their applications were concerned.

Although many of these clergy daughters never married, they supported a value system which dictated that a woman's primary concerns were marriage and motherhood.

The CWOS was in most cases the charity to which clergy dependents first turned when in need.\textsuperscript{146} Of all of the various objects of charity in Dublin during this

\textsuperscript{144} The Church of Ireland hierarchy, despite opposition to an increased role for women on select vestries, nevertheless arranged women's meetings and conferences as part of the General Synod, and at other times of the year. The programmes did not however encourage radicalism. Even as late as 1919, the schedule ignored pressing issues such as the advancement of women in the church in favour of lectures on scripture and education. 'The programme of this Conference is now complete, and is very attractive. Lectures on the Life and Epistles of St. Paul will be given by Rev. E.J. Young, B.D., Dr. Hemphill, and Dr. McNeile, and addresses on educational subjects (followed by discussions) by J.M. Henry, F.T.C.D.; Dr.Kingsmill Moore, Rev. E.G. Sullivan, M.A., Mrs. Mansfield, B.A., and the Warden of St. Columbas. Rev. William Baillie and Rev. Denton Green will speak on Sunday School Reform, and a demonstration of the Reformed Sunday School will be given by Miss Hartford and her pupils. Social subjects will be discussed by Miss White, LL.D, Miss Harrison, Miss E. Cunningham, Charles Jacob, Esq., and Rev. R.M. Gwynn, F.T.C.D., and Christian Ideals in International Relations by Rev. R.H. Murray and Professor W.F. Trench.' Church of Ireland Gazette, June 27, 1919, p. 407.

\textsuperscript{145} Irish Times October 12, 1910.

\textsuperscript{146} Occasionally, applicants were already in receipt of allowances from other societies, but it was more often the case that the CWOS referred them onwards after their initial application.
period, such as distressed gentlewomen, unmarried mothers, widows and orphans of servicemen, and so on, clergy widows and orphans were of particular importance, since they embodied quite literally the dependents of the entire Church. Their treatment by the hierarchy was in itself a symbolic gesture towards the remainder of the Anglican community in Ireland. This explains the policy of the CWOS council, backed by the Representative Church Body Board, to extract compulsory dues from every Church of Ireland cleric, whether married or single\textsuperscript{147}. In exceptional cases of hardship, some ministers were permitted to become partial subscribers. This designation also implied a smaller allowance from the society's funds for eventual dependents, and of course there was no upper limit placed upon regular donations to the society. Although most Church members realised the value of contributions as a potential 'life insurance', others, particularly unmarried men on inadequate stipends, begrudged their involuntary donations. A short story published in the \textit{Church of Ireland Gazette} in May 1916 tells of an unmarried rector, Rev. Moriarty, with a life-long resentment against the R.C.B. for their 'theft' of part of his wages.\textsuperscript{148} On his deathbed, he marries his housekeeper, in the hope that she will recoup his losses. The widow, of course, goes on to live 'a great length of years'.

Although presumably not all clerics were quite as resentful as Rev. Moriarty above, there were regular complaints that even steady contributions to the society's funds did not guarantee an annuity for widows or orphans on a cleric's death. The council had to frequently and patiently explain that they were overwhelmed by

\textsuperscript{147} In the case of those clerics whose livings were paid directly by the Representative Church Body, contributions to the CWOS funds were deducted at source.

\textsuperscript{148} 'The Celibate' in the \textit{Church of Ireland Gazette} May, 1916.
requests for assistance from women who were practically destitute, so that only the
most needy cases received attention. However, the compulsory subscription policy
did serve to emphasise the responsibility which clerics faced to the Anglican
community in general, as well as allow widows and orphans to feel that they were
being maintained not by a charity, but rather by their household head, even after
death. Many women found the process of application traumatic, as it involved a full
disclosure of personal and financial circumstances, and an implicit admission of
failure at self-support on the applicant’s behalf.

However, some women displayed a curiously familial attitude towards the
society, appearing to find it rather less difficult to accept a pension from the Fund
than from the government. Perhaps this occurred because the association was a body
explicitly created to care for one religious group, and the sense that this was done as
part of a religious obligation, rather than a mass-based social welfare programme,
made the taking of support somehow more acceptable. This attitude comes into
 sharpest focus with the introduction of state old age pensions. The CWOS had great
difficulty in persuading some annuitants to apply for the old age pension, so that they
could free up funds for other applicants. There was a sense that not merely were
women entitled to support from the CWOS, because of dues paid, but that there was
a greater degree of humiliation attached to application for a state pension, despite
their equal entitlement. In one case, it was only after much debate, and a final
decision to cut her CWOS stipend, that one of the annuitants agreed to accept the
old age pension. However she made one last appeal to the committee: ‘A letter was
now read from Miss Young asking that she be allowed the Annuity in full 7/- per
week and forego the State Pension. It was decided unanimously that Miss G.A. Young be paid at the rate of 3/- per week from the 1st the same as other annuitants.\textsuperscript{149} As the pensions applications are concerned, this distaste may be attributable to a reluctance to reveal details regarding financial status to strangers, but in at least one case it had a rather more practical aspect. Application for a state pension required that all details of income be stated, something which the applicant below had neglected to provide to the association:

The Secretary reported that Miss Baker, one of the annuitants in Brabazon House, had up to the present refused to apply for the Government pension but was now willing to do so, but that he regretted to have to report that she had deceived the Committee and Mrs. Bolton as to her income as she was in receipt of a £15 grant from the Solicitors Breed Esq. since June 1908. After discussion the Secretary was directed to withdraw any payment from the Annuity Fund and to write and inform Miss Baker of that decision and to say that the Committee had learned the facts with surprise and regret, that she had incurred the severest censure of the committee, that they were seriously considering whether she should not be asked to refund some of the money paid her since she got the annuity and to instruct her to apply for the State Pension.\textsuperscript{150}

The treatment of this case is in marked contrast to similar attempted frauds made by applicants to the Protestant Orphan Society, where violation of the rules usually meant removal from the Society books. In the main, though, the applicants displayed a great deal of dignity and energy in maintaining themselves, and took pride in removing their names from the books if they could.\textsuperscript{151} Thus in 1902, for example, a Mrs. MacCarthy was elected, but wrote to the Society to say that she 'had got temporary employment to mind an old gentleman and did not wish to draw on the

\textsuperscript{149} Ms 464/6/3, CWOS Minute Book, December 5, 1909, RCBL.
\textsuperscript{150} ibid.
\textsuperscript{151} See education and work chapter for fuller discussion.
Charity until needed.\textsuperscript{152}

The mechanics of application to the CWOS were lengthy, and required an amount of determination and effort which was perhaps designed to deter the half-hearted. The applicants were either widows applying on their own behalf or their children’s behalf, or adult female orphans requesting assistance for themselves, but adult males never applied, although they could conceivably describe themselves as clergy orphans. The applicant first submitted a letter outlining her family history, including relevant details concerning her father's or husband's position within the Church, and a brief summary of her working life (in the case of female orphans) under the heading 'What applicant has done to support herself so far.' This question had originally been ‘Has applicant any near relatives who might be able to provide support?’ , but it was changed to place the responsibility upon the individual concerned in 1903.\textsuperscript{153} These letters were presented to the council at the monthly meetings, and decisions made as to suitability for election to one of the society's two funds. There were several factors that led to an almost automatic refusal from the council, the most common being the possession by the applicant of an income exceeding £50 per annum in the case of a single woman and between £60 to £100 for a widow with dependents. The Society did make awards up to the maximum amount, although such cases were infrequent, as most women had some additional income, however paltry. Thus the CWOS considered that clergy dependents required a good deal more money than similarly impoverished applicants to the POS. There was no age limit imposed upon widows, whose average age at the time of application was

\textsuperscript{152} Ms 464/1/5, CWOS Minute Book, June 4, 1902, RCBL.
\textsuperscript{153} Ms 464/6/3. Application Forms, 1891-1919, RCBL.
fifty-nine years, but attempts were made to impose the strict limit of a minimum of fifty years on the female orphans. However the impoverished circumstances in which many of the applicants presented themselves forced the council to be more flexible. Applicants in both groups ranged from women in their early twenties to those in their seventies, and the average age of single women was fifty one at the time of application. This gives some an indication of the extent of their necessity - almost as soon as they reached the minimum age of application (50), they submitted their cases for consideration. Widows on the other hand could submit a claim at any age: for the most part they applied within a year of their husband’s death.

When the applicants’ letters were read before the council, and were considered appropriate subjects for consideration, the women’s names were permitted to go forward for election. The system was certainly democratic, although its very scrupulousness caused huge delays in actually receiving aid. Eligibility to vote depended upon the subscriptions made to the society. Any concerned member of the Church could become a voter, a subscription of 10/6 secured one vote, £1/1/0 secured two, and so on. Twice a year, a list of the candidates was circulated amongst the voters, with a brief description of the circumstances of each applicant, and votes theoretically cast on the basis of the most deserving cases. While the women accumulated votes over a number of elections, what appears to have happened in most instances was that applicants proceeded through the system chronologically, with the latest additions to the list taking their turn through the laborious process.

The case summaries were such that it may have proved difficult to assess the

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[154 Based on information in letters of application, Ms 464/6/3 and Ms 464/6/4, 1891-1930, RCBL.]
worthiness of one case over another, but such a method of election caused long delays between an initial appearance on the voting register, and eventual election to the fund. For example, Susan Wicks applied to the council on October 29, 1903, and was accepted as a candidate. Her name went forward in successive elections collecting votes, until finally the council received a letter from her on March 30, 1905, saying that the Bishop of Cork had given her an annuity of £48/8/0. It was decided to remove her name from the list of candidates.\footnote{Ms 464/1/5: CWOS Minute book, March 30, 1905, RCBL.} No mention was made of how she supported herself during her seventeen-month wait, but the case was not unusual. Marion Millington applied for an annuity in October 1918, giving the following details: ‘She had been a nurse for 27 years and lately had fallen and had broken her leg.’\footnote{ibid, October 23, 1918.} She endured the lengthy election process, and was eventually successful in November 1920, just over two years later, when she was awarded the sum of £38 per year. The case of C.S. Groome was rather more startling. She first applied in 1906, and was then described as being ‘in a position as companion housekeeper, which she fears may have to be given up, as she is a great sufferer from rheumatism, and is sometimes unable to walk.’\footnote{ibid, February 14, 1909.} While in employment, she earned £24 per annum, and her keep. She was eventually successful in November 1914, and, after a wait of eight years, was awarded the princely sum of £10 a year. The funds of the society were such that it was a matter of distinguishing between those who were merely badly off, and those who were destitute, particularly when it came to the single women - there was little room for indulgence.
The reduced circumstances in which many of these women found themselves had several origins. One concerned the limited training and lack of job opportunities open to middle and lower middle class single women. Clergy daughters who applied to the CWOS were expected to produce evidence that they had supported themselves, and only severe illness was regarded as a reasonable excuse for failure in this field. However a striking difference between the employment policies of the CWOS and the POS lies in their treatment of widows. In the latter society, as indicated above, widows were expected to resume employment following their husband’s death, and were refused assistance if they did not attempt to find work. The middle-class CWOS widows were not required to even make a statement as to whether they had attempted to support themselves. The other difficulty for both widows and daughters following a clergy death was the lack of provision made for them. The disestablishment of the Church of Ireland would, it was feared by Anglican clerics, lead to a severe decline in the livings earned by ministers. However, a redistribution of funds, and rationalisation of Church assets, left most clerics with relatively comfortable allowances. The letters of application to the CWOS council indicate that at the time of death, the male household heads were earning anything between £110 and £600 (although the latter was an exceptional sum) per annum, with the average living being £235 a year. There was indeed an apparent decline in clerical stipends between 1870 and 1910, with the average annual salary declining from £323 per annum between 1870 and 1900, to £230 a year between 1900 and

158 See education chapter.
159 Ms. 464/6/3.
It is difficult to make comparative statements between clerical wages and those of other occupations, because although those in religious orders were classed as 'professionals' in the census and other official documents, their incomes were dependent upon a varying range of factors such as location, sizes of congregations and vocational ability, and as such there existed no minimum or maximum wage against which figures can be evaluated. Few of the men under examination had any private income, and illness or retirement in several cases led to the entire depletion of financial resources. Another significant factor determining the eventual lifestyle of many widows and orphaned daughters was the lack of a family home. In most of the cases presented to the CWOS, the Rectory belonged to the Church, and had to be vacated for the next incumbent upon death or retirement. Thus for many of the women, the option of taking boarders, so common with the widowed applicants to the POS, was not available to them. They were also in the position of paying rent for accommodation. During the lifetime of the wage-earner, the majority of the CWOS applicants were comfortably off. This made their subsequent impoverishment all the more difficult to cope with, and several had no resources. In 1909 for example Sarah Richey applied to the society. Although her husband had had a good private income of £450 a year, 'after his death money went to his brothers if living if not to their children. I was left £60 income tax off it £3 left £57 since my uncle the late Canon Sadlair died (he always helped me) my debts increased and now I have to give over my present income to pay all my debts so that I have none nor shall I for two years if

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160 ibid.
161 In any case the most accurate information available on salaries and wages in Dublin (in itself, as Mary Daly points out, 'not wholly satisfactory' - M. Daly, *Dublin: The Deposed Capital* Cork University Press, 1985, p. 67) applies to the skilled and unskilled working class, and are not applicable in this context.
I live and I am too old now to work."\textsuperscript{163} The applicant looked to the authorities to replace the male figures who had previously supported her - her father, husband and uncle - and was successful in her application.

Although clergy daughters had been generally in better financial circumstances than the POS applicants, the range of occupations open to them, on the death of a father, was even more limited. Where working class women could without loss of status take employment as factory workers or domestic servants, applicants to the CWOS were more rigidly defined as middle class women. As the unskilled employment options available were few, most of the women attempted to adapt their existing resources, in the form of houses and household skills. Class considerations also dominated the policies and consequently applications to other charities which catered for ‘gentlewomen’. The Incorporated Association for the Relief of Distressed Protestants established a Jubilee Fund to assist elderly women in financial difficulties. Like the women in both the POS and the CWOS who took in lodgers, the Jubilee Fund applicants drew upon their domestic skills to provide an income. Of the four candidates who stood for election in June, 1902, all indicated similar backgrounds. ‘Struggling to live by letting part of house. Sister, an invalid in bad state of health, who has an annuity of £30, lives with her’....’Entirely destitute and practically unable to work. Was Governess and Housekeeper.’...’No means. Lives alone. Has supported herself all her life as ‘Housekeeper’ etc.’...’dependent on friends for support. While able, maintained herself by letting lodgings.’\textsuperscript{164}

\textsuperscript{162} See Education chapter for discussion of provisions made by clerics for their daughters.  
\textsuperscript{163} Ms 464/6/3, CWOS letters of application, 1/12/1909, RCBL.  
\textsuperscript{164} Ms 485, Incorporated Association for the Relief of Distressed Protestants, Minutes of the Jubilee Annuity Fund Committee, June 4, 1902, RCBL.
The process of application to all of these charities, regardless of class, was humiliating, and women had to admit to practical destitution before they were considered eligible for support. In the case of the Clergy Widows’ and Orphans’ Society, even when successful, the women were in constant fear that their annuities would be reduced. Although there was no definitive cut-off point, a total income of £50 per annum was the maximum which the Society would allow to any woman on the books, and annuitants had to declare any increase in their incomes. Unlike the administrators of the POS however, the CWOS Board displayed a greater sensitivity towards the predicament of the women, and often allowed them to slightly exceed the £50 limit, particularly if they were elderly. Class considerations made it less acceptable for women who had previously enjoyed a reasonable standard of living to quibble over relatively small amounts: ‘A letter was read from Miss Tyrrell saying that her income had increased by £7 a year. It was decided that as she was over 70 her annuity should not be decreased.’165 Similarly in 1911 ‘A letter from Miss M. MacDonald was read saying that her sister Frances had been elected as an annuitant on the UKB. Society and now her income would account £58 and begging that her annuity of £25 from this society would not be reduced or if it was that her own annuity should be increased as now she had only an income of £45 a year.’166

Reviews of payments were made annually, and when a decision was made to reduce a payment, it was rarely revoked. The committee of the CWOS, like all other such bodies, was under continual financial pressure, so the niggardly attitude towards many of the annuitants had a very real basis. In 1915, for example, the auditors of the

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165 Ms 464/1/5, Minutes of the CWOS, November 24, 1910, RCBL.
166 ibid, March 30, 1911.
society found that total income to the Permanent Fund for 1914, which paid the bulk of the annuities, was £1751.10.8, while expenditure for that year was £2023.11.7.167

In addition, the Society had an overdraft of £995.15.6, which absorbed much of the proceeds from fund-raising fetes and sermons.

For many women, the acceptance of charity placed them in a greatly disadvantaged position, and forced them to recognise the relative lack of power they now had. One of the conditions placed upon annuitants of the Jubilee Fund of the Association for the Relief of Distressed Protestants, as with applicants to the Clergy Widows and Orphans Society, was residence in an approved home. Teams of inspectors, male as well as female, visited applicants and reported to the committee their opinions as to whether the accommodation was suitable or not. Only in exceptional circumstances were women allowed to remain in their own homes. The committee’s approach was that if one applied for assistance, one had to not merely accept the judgment regarding the amount of the award, but should also take the visitor’s advice regarding quarters. A reluctance to do so resulted in a refusal to consider the application:

The secretary’s letters to Miss Strype and her replies were read in which she stated that at present she could make no arrangements whether to give up her house or go into a home. It was unanimously resolved on the motion of Mr. Bolton seconded by Mr. Smyth ‘That Miss Strype be written to informing her, that she would be paid the Annuity when she had secured admission to a Home or had moved into suitable economic lodgings and on condition that same was done within four months i.e. before 1st September and provided her circumstances then required the Annuity in the opinion of the council.168

167 ibid, January 28, 1915.
168 Ms 485, ARDP Minutes, May 3, 1911, RCBL.
Apart from an understandable reluctance to leave their own family homes, the women were also fearful of the total dependence which moving to an association-approved home implied. It meant that the women were to be objects of charitable relief for the remainder of their lives, which could be some considerable time.

Between 1910 and 1915, the average age of applicants was 69.\(^{169}\) Thus successful applicants would in all likelihood remain in one of the society’s approved homes until their death, some years away. The association took complete care of the women on their books, even to the extent of burying them in their own plot,\(^{170}\) but for women who wished to retain a degree of independence, it could be a frightening prospect.

Although rule vi stated that ‘In a special case, which must be of a strictly exceptional character to justify them in so doing the Committee may sanction the residence of an elected Candidate to her own home, or in that of a suitable relative or friend’\(^{171}\), in practice applicants to the fund who wished to remain in their own homes were unsuccessful.

Given the differing attitudes towards applicants displayed by the SSFA and the CWOS, can one say that charitable organisation acted as a means of bonding the Church of Ireland community in Dublin, based on common misfortune? The answer must be a qualified ‘no’. There was certainly a strong and important consciousness of church membership, and gratitude towards those fellows who contributed to their support, but class divisions within the church remained strong. As has been indicated

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\(^{169}\) Based on ages provided by applicants to the Jubilee Annuity Fund, November 1910-May, 1915. This average figure includes an octogenarian and a nonagenarian - with these two removed from the figures, the average age is 67.

\(^{170}\) See association minutes, April 30, 1913.

above, the Church of Ireland was willing to remind wealthy members of their responsibilities towards the less well off. The often generous response of individuals shows that some at least recognised a common link through the church. Nevertheless, for most parishioners the belief that poverty for a certain sector was a fact of life, rather than a social problem which could be resolved, meant that no concerted effort was made to break class barriers.

So, how effective were the survival strategies of the Dublin Church of Ireland poor in this period, and did they evolve significantly in the early twentieth century? From the evidence of charitable organisations, it would appear that there was little change. Despite the many political and social shifts which occurred between 1910 and 1925, the overall profile of charitable need appears to have remained constant. There were of course temporary crises, and temporary improvements, in the conditions of the poor, but if one looks for evidence of increased need, for example in the creation of new organisations, one finds that this is not necessarily the case. Appendix A of chapter four indicates that by 1928 the profiles of existing charities had remained remarkably constant. They were still supporting the same numbers as they had in the teens of the century, but, more importantly, they were still receiving the same numbers of applicants. Between 1912 and 1928, six charities had closed altogether: however, their closure was not apparently related to the creation of the Free State, but to financial and staffing pressures during the First World War. A few new organisations were created which reflected the turbulent

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172 The Asylum for Penitent Females; St. Peter’s Parochial Male and Female Sunday, Daily and Infant Schools; the Dublin Prison Gate Mission; the Domestic Training Institute, and the Dublin By Lamplight Mission, and the Fishamble Street Mission.
times, one of which was the Irish Loyalists Defense Fund (established May 1920), and the other the Southern Irish Loyalists Relief Association, with which the ILDF merged in 1922. Both of these organisations were created to assist loyalists who had suffered during the Anglo-Irish and Civil Wars, and had close links with the Irish Unionist Alliance. However, they also represented a response rather more to high political developments than working-class crisis in Dublin, a fact which was reflected in the largely middle and upper class profile of both applicants and committee memberships (with the exception of the Royal Irish Constabulary members who were assisted). A principal concern of both organisations was the fate of the landowning Protestants whose estates were under threat, or who had fallen on hard times as a result of the withholding of rents from the late nineteenth century. Neither of these categories applied to working or middle class Protestants in Dublin. Similarly the establishment of the Compensation Commission, intended to recompense those injured or deprived as a result of the Anglo-Irish War, had little impact upon working-class Dubliners. The majority of cases brought to the Commission, and indeed those dealt with under the various initiatives which followed (the 1923 Damage to Property (Compensation) Act, for example, or the Commission headed by Lord Dunedin in 1925) related to the propertied classes. For most working-class Church of Ireland women and their families, if things did not get appreciably better, they did not get appreciably worse, and the difficulties faced by individuals in the early 1920s were more often a result of a general economic decline rather than

174 ibid, chapter 7: ‘Compensation’.
specifically religious or sectarian issues. Thus the survival strategies of women remained remarkably constant throughout this period, and they continued to depend intermittently upon church charity as they had done in the years before upheaval.

These years did see some extraordinary political developments which impacted, for better or worse, upon Dublin women of the Church of Ireland. In some ways, despite the difficulties of war, the situation of many improved in material terms. For those women whose sons and husbands joined the army, there was the comfort of a regular allowance, paid direct. This effected considerable numbers of women: as Martin Maguire has shown, ‘the military were one of the significant occupational groups within the male Protestant workforce’, comprising 21.4% of all occupied Protestant males in Dublin in 1911. Military spouses represented a significant proportion in Protestant working class marriages before and after Independence:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Military Groom</th>
<th>Non-Military Groom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1910-19</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920-29</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
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The women received a modest but dependable allowance, which was graded depending upon their circumstances, size of family, and relationship to the soldier. In addition, working class women enjoyed greater employment opportunities during the war, despite the fact that Dublin had neither conscription to forcibly remove men from the workforce, or large-scale munitions factories. Nevertheless, new

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175 The parishes are St. Jude’s, Inchicore; St. Matthew’s, Irishtown; St. Paul’s, North King St., and St. Kevin’s, Portobello.
176 Maguire, Dublin Protestant Working-Class, Figures taken from table 2.3, p. 55
occupations emerged, and the women had the comfort both of new opportunity, and the sense that they were contributing to the war effort. Indeed, the spirit of patriotism which swept over Dublin loyalist women was such that even middle class women volunteered for the unlikeliest of labour, thereby threatening working-class employment. In 1916, the Irish Suffrage Federation made an appeal to the press ‘to protest against the acceptance of inadequate wages for munitions work on the part of women of comfortable means’.

The existence of organisations such as the CWOS reflected the very real need in which many women without resources found themselves. Annie M.P. Smithson, writer of romance fiction in the 1920s and ‘30s, summed up the dreadful grind which women could face in old age. Miss Jane Dundon, a Protestant spinster governess recently dismissed from her post and with five pounds left to her, contemplates ‘spend(ing) some of her last shillings on one decent meal... After all, her five pounds would last such a little while longer, no matter how careful she was. And then what was to become of her? The Dublin Union?’

But the temptation - as she regarded it - was soon past. The habit of a lifetime was too strong. She was resolved to do her best. She would not give in until every penny was gone. Decorations are presented to men who do some heroic deed in a moment of excitement, with the noise of battle all around them. Why are there no decorations for women like Jane Dundon, whose heroism is of a far more enduring, far higher quality? There are no decorations, no awards for them in this world. Let us hope that recognition will be given to them - as it surely will - in the world to come.

177 Ms. 21196(1). Minute Book of the I.W.S.F., 1913-1918, April 15, 1916, NLI.
178 Annie M.P. Smithson, Margaret of Fair Hill Dublin: Talbot Press, 1944, p. 313.
179 ibid. pp 313-4.
Appendix A

Letter from Lord Aberdeen to Miss Ross, Committee Member of the Soldiers and Sailors Families’ Association.

Vice Regal Lodge
Dublin
September 16th, 1914.

Dear Miss Ross,

When in London I had the opportunity of a talk with the Prime Minister regarding the desirability of paying the Separation Allowances to wives of soldiers weekly, instead of monthly, and he asked me to call on Mr. Harold Baker M.P., Financial Secretary to the War Office, to discuss the subject as it affects Ireland. In consequence, I had an interesting interview with Mr. Harold Baker, and with Sir George Harris, who is in charge of this particular business.

I found them very much alive to the evils resulting from the monthly payments all over the country, and they quite decided that the system must be changed. They had hoped that it might have been possible for the Soldiers and Sailors Families’ Association, or for the Relief Committees, to deal with this subject, and to take over the responsibility of making the payments. With this end in view, they issued an Order which enabled either of these Organisations to administer the payments due to the women. At first, the consent of the woman was necessary for this administration to be carried out, but a further Order enables this consent to be dispensed with.

Further experience has however shown the War Office that it would not be possible for Voluntary Organisations to undertake this duty, and they are now in negotiation with the Post Office with the hope that they may be able to carry out the plan recommended in the Resolution passed by the Dublin Relief Committee a fortnight ago. It is not very easy to make arrangements for this change of system as quickly as could be desired; especially in view of the enormous increase of work that has been involved by the Government deciding to give the Separation Allowance, not only to women off the strength; but also to certain classes of dependents. As in many cases, the very existence of these persons is unknown, many claims have to be investigated, if wholesale fraud is to be avoided. Moreover, the War Office find there is a tribe of Money-lenders arising, who scheme to get the women to mortgage the Separation Allowances due to them, and these persons would be more difficult to deal with under a weekly than a monthly payment.

Mr. Baker enquired as to whether I thought the S.S.F.A., or the Relief Committees would be willing to undertake the weekly payments temporarily if obstacles arose in the way of the government’s intention being carried out immediately. I replied that I scarcely thought that these Bodies would care to create machinery for undertaking this duty for a month or two.

You will be glad to hear that the War Office intend to introduce also a system for paying the Army Pensioners weekly instead of quarterly as hitherto.

I thought it best to embody the results of my interview in a letter to be submitted to your committee. Will you kindly show this to Lady Holmpatrick and to Dr. Daly.

Yours very truly,
Lord Aberdeen
Chapter 4: Protestant Administrators of Charitable Relief
This chapter is concerned with the involvement of Church of Ireland women in public charity work in Dublin. It focuses upon the roles of women as administrators and active agents in philanthropy, and attempts to assess the broader significance of their work. The voluntary work of women in formal organisations was of a rather different order from that of individual responses to need, not least in the manner in which the former tended to be concentrated in urban areas. Although the motivation for charity work in either case was similar - the alleviation of immediate distress, and the presentation of positive examples, - the form which philanthropy took was different. In the cities, much charitable work operated on a large scale, and was highly organised. It drew upon women from a range of classes, and included former recipients of charity who had become in turn workers and administrators. Then, as now, charitable organisations used high-profile successes to publicise their work, and used detailed annual reports, and sophisticated advertising campaigns to attract support for their causes. In rural areas on the other hand, a good deal of women’s philanthropy was conducted by individuals, and remained closer to an earlier nineteenth-century model of charity administered to tenants of estates by upper class women.\(^1\) The traditional responsibility which female members of the aristocracy had towards their tenants continued into an era in which large-scale tenant ownership had become the norm. The realm of charity work in Dublin, however, was one where

\(^1\) A typical example of this type of individual charitable work was Lady Talbot de Malahide. Her son described her round thus: ‘...Isabel would often go into the village, driving herself in her pony-carriage, with the old groom sitting in the dicky behind, taking soup and tracts to 'poor people'. They were very poor in those days. If they were ill she would generally leave half a crown to 'help with the medicine'. Sometimes she would send her children with the soup and tracts, and thus train them to think of others.’ Samuel Gurney, *Isabel, Mrs. Gurney* London: 1935 p. 55.
the urban and rural uniquely combined. Several organisations, particularly the Girls' Friendly Society and the Dublin Training Institute, were established with the express purpose of protecting young country women from the perceived dangers of the city.

Frank Prochaska has succinctly described the personal motivation behind the establishment of charitable organisations in England. ‘When an individual has an enthusiasm, he or she buys a notebook, prints ‘minute book’ carefully on the first page, calls together some...friends under the name of a committee - and behold: a new voluntary society is launched.’ This type of organisation, a mixture of the formal and social, was characteristic of Church of Ireland charities in Dublin in the early twentieth century. Philanthropy was crucial in bonding together the community in the city, and creating a sense of shared identity based upon religion and work. The philanthropic activities undertaken in Dublin differed to a significant degree from those throughout the rest of the country. Other urban centres, including Cork and Galway, operated Magdalen Homes and orphanages, but in the rural areas a greater emphasis was placed upon assisting the population 'in situ'. The scope for drawing together large numbers of people with common concerns was clearly much greater in Dublin, and consequently the number of women in key administrative positions was also increased. The emphasis of rural relief, whether evangelical or otherwise, tended towards the provision of medical

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3 The most obvious illustration of how charity linked a diverse church community is committee memberships, and the links made between the committees of different organisations. Large numbers of women were active in several different organisations, and pooled both their resources and expertise to further their charitable work. See below for examples.
and educational assistance to remote communities, and was inclined to be more male-dominated. Protestant women featured principally as Sunday School teachers and medical assistants and, of course, as fund-raisers for particular causes and events. In Dublin however the nineteenth century saw a considerable rise in the number of charitable societies run by, and administering to, Protestant women. The two main decades of growth were the 1870s and the 1880s, when the majority of female-focused institutions were begun, with a particular concentration upon orphanages and training homes for young girls (see appendix A, end of chapter). This growth was partly linked to an increase in the city and county population generally, and partly to a related rise in the number of destitute poor which took place between 1861 and 1911, when the majority of the city-centre wards experienced an increase in population of between 9 and 26%. Mountjoy, site of what eventually became slum tenement housing, experienced for example a massive rise of almost 70%. The expansion of charitable work was also allied to an increase in the number of women for whom voluntary labour became a viable social occupation.

The growth in Dublin Church of Ireland charities in this period reflected a corresponding growth in Catholic organisations. The post-famine years saw an astonishing increase in the numbers of professed religious in Ireland, especially amongst nuns. In 1851 there were 1,500 throughout the country, but by 1901 this had increased to over 8,000. The orders worked in specific fields, such as

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6 Maria Luddy, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth Century Ireland* Cambridge: Cambridge
education, nursing and in orphanages, and by the early twentieth century constituted a formidable body. The numbers partly explain the lower rate of involvement on the part of lay Catholic workers in comparison with Protestant - the Catholic Church provided a ready-made philanthropic army through its various orders, which made further organisation by lay women largely redundant. However, it meant that in Dublin in particular Church of Ireland volunteers were frequently in competition with Catholic orders, as both targeted the same constituency of the poor. Tension between charities was not uncommon in England also, but in Ireland it was far more rancorous because of the issue of prosleytism. Both sides made the most scurrilous allegations of enforced conversions, imprisonment, and deception to denounce each others’ work (see for example the controversy surrounding the Dublin Prison Gate Mission, below), and established schools, refuges and missions alongside each other in Dublin, in order to entice the poor. Catholic agencies feared that Protestant organisations were heavily subsidised from England. However, while they made frequent complaints about what they claimed were large amounts of money being used to entice the Dublin Catholic poor to convert, there is little evidence to support these allegations.

In attempting to assess the number of Church of Ireland women involved in charitable activity in Dublin, one faces the obvious difficulty of differing sizes of

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organisations. These ranged from the single-figure enterprises such as Miss Carr’s Homes, which, although staffed by matrons and nurses, were originally conceived and maintained by one individual, through to the large-scale institutions such as the Girls’ Friendly Society, which had branches throughout the country. However, one may take an average of fifteen non-committee female volunteers who staffed the annual sales of work and bazaars in aid of the various charities, based upon the annual reports of the organisations themselves, and the lists supplied by newspaper reports of the events. 9 With approximately 108 largely Protestant female-centred organisations in Dublin between 1910 and 1915, this gives a figure of 1,620 women who gave regular support to various groups. A much greater number again contributed on a regular basis to a chosen charity. A representative example were the 685 women who contributed to the Dublin University Mission Society General and Ladies’ Auxiliary Funds in 1905. 10 The scale of Church of Ireland female charity activity may also be gauged from the number of general meetings, lectures and fund-raising efforts held on a regular basis throughout Dublin. In October 1910, for example, there were no less than 25 different meetings of charitable groups associated with church women in the city. Given that not all charity events were reported in the press, the actual number is even higher. 11 The level of Protestant female charitable organisation, both in terms of administration and fund-raising, was therefore considerable.

Church of Ireland female charity was characterised by a high

9 See appendix A.
10 Dublin University Mission Society Annual Report, 1906.
11 Irish Times October 1-31, 1910.
worker/subject ratio, and by the common practice of charities to cater for a range of individuals under one umbrella organisation. This strategy of interactive relief was highly labour intensive from an administrative point of view, and middle class Protestant women willingly filled the various positions created. An examination of the staffing levels required gives some indication of the scale of female labour involved. The Strand Street Institute, established in 1868, organised ten separate clubs and associations, most of which were run by female volunteers. They included a Sabbath-School, Total Abstinence Association, Young Women's Christian Association, Young Women's Sewing Class, Needlework Class and a Ragged School and Free Breakfast. The Institute's premises ran at least one, and often more, clubs every evening, and opened during the day to accommodate the Mother's Meeting Association and children's school. Although some volunteer workers supervised more than one activity, there appeared to be a regular female staff of about one dozen. Similarly, the Fishamble Street Mission organised an industrious eighteen clubs and societies, and the Mission to the Liberties, nine. The number of 'multi-function' missions and institutes in Dublin by 1910 reached at least fourteen - with an average of ten full-time paid and voluntary workers each. Other 'specialist' organisations, which catered for groups such as unmarried mothers, the destitute elderly, or orphans constituted another ninety-four, each of which had on average three full-time workers (a Matron, a

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13 Generally speaking, specialisation in charities applied only to women who had professional and semi-professional skills, such as trained nurses. Volunteer workers tended to be highly adaptable.
14 Established in 1862.
15 Established in 1874.
Lady Superintendent and an assistant). However, it is when one calculates the number of women who made up the Ladies' Committees and Associations attached to most of the Protestant organised charities in Dublin that the large scale of their involvement becomes apparent.

The numbers of women workers, full and part-time in each charity varied considerably from group to group, ranging from a 'high' of eighteen (two female superintendents and sixteen committee members) in the Ladies' Irish Association,\(^\text{16}\) to the nine women who comprised the committee membership of the Young Women's Christian Association Hostel.\(^\text{17}\) Female committee membership, whether organised as separate auxiliary groups, or part of a mixed-sex organisation, usually averaged ten members. However, at least two of these women generally held honorary positions and were consequently not necessarily involved in the day to day administration of the groups. For example the Dowager Marchioness of Dufferin, who was President for Ireland of the Girl's Friendly Society in 1910\(^\text{18}\), simultaneously organised the Countess of Dufferin's Fund\(^\text{19}\), which trained women as doctors and nurses as part of the British based 'National Association for Supplying Female Medical Aid to the women of India.\(^\text{20}\). There were in most societies a core group of usually five or six women who regularly attended the weekly, fortnightly or monthly meetings, and who coordinated the charity's strategies concerning fund raising and administration. This gives a figure of approximately 470-500 full-time voluntary charity workers. These figures


\(^{17}\) Established in 1882. Ms. 16066, Y.W.C.A. Hostel Minutes, January 4, 1910, NLI.

\(^{18}\) Established in 1877.

\(^{19}\) Established in 1884.

\(^{20}\) Established in 1872.
exclude those women who were paid employees of the various charities, as matrons, nurses, cooks, caretakers, and so on, as their work was not voluntary. Much more difficult to quantify, and yet making up the bulk of the women who gave a proportion of their time and money in support of charity work, were those whose involvement in philanthropy was occasional and erratic. So how may one explain the great draw of voluntary labour?

When attempting to create a typical charity worker profile, a key component is marital status. As has been widely documented in studies of British charitable relief, unmarried women made up the majority of active philanthropists, for a variety of reasons. The marital status of female philanthropic volunteers in Ireland was likewise largely single. In fact, unmarried women of the Church of Ireland dominated the charity world in Dublin. As in the English case, philanthropy gave meaning to life, especially if that life was single: 'Underpinning all women’s work was a sense of religious commitment. Single women of vastly different convictions felt consecrated in their work to a sacred cause. This devotion to others’ welfare was the highest expression of and validation for the idea of women’s self-sacrificing nature.' Charity work had another important purpose, however. It helped to prepare women for marriage and family life, instilling not only a sense of responsibility for the welfare of others, but a practical training in efficient organisation.

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23 Indeed, the involvement of women in charity work encouraged calls for women to be trained in social work at university. Such a training, it was argued in Alexandra College Magazine, would
The administrative skills required to organise a charity were believed to be compatible with those of running a household, and were therefore considered to be a useful preparation for marriage. In addition, charitable work was regarded as a suitable means for privileged women to spend their considerable leisure time. Patterns of involvement were determined by the nature of the work itself. Unmarried women predominated in educational and evangelical groups, but were less obviously engaged in rescue or rehabilitation work. One unusual exception was the Dublin Prison Gate Mission (DPGM), the majority of whose voluntary workers were unmarried women. Only the paid Matron and the female caretaker of the society's premises were married. This is a perhaps surprising finding given the nature of the work, which involved meeting newly released prisoners from jail, and rehabilitating ex-prostitutes and single mothers. Of the six female voluntary workers who attended committee meetings on a regular basis, five were unmarried. The society's annual sale of work produced a similar proportion of married and single helpers at the various stalls. However, the fact that the objects of the charity were themselves single may have encouraged this rather emblematic response. Frank Prochaska has indicated the attractions which this type of contact with an extreme corruption of traditional ideal of womanhood had.

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be equally useful inside the home and out: 'To fulfil the demands of their private, public, or professional lives women...need the highest education that the Universities can offer them in...the principles underlying the proper management of the home and of young children; in the hygienic and businesslike conduct of institutional life (which is in many respects only home life on a larger scale), and in the law and economic conditions affecting the administration of charity.' "The Professional and Civic Scope for Women of Sanitary Science and Applied Hygiene", June, 1909, p. 33.

Established in 1876.

Ms 263, Dublin Prison Gate Mission Minutes, 1910-1915, RCBL.
for some sheltered middle-class women. This may also apply in Ireland, although there is little substantial evidence to suggest that titillation played a significant part in a woman’s decision to become involved in rescue work. A rather more mundane explanation in the case of the DPGM lies with the Lady Superintendent. A moderately wealthy woman, she gave her assistance to the mission gratis, but wielded as a result quite an amount of power in terms of allied appointments. Many of the women with whom she worked were old philanthropic acquaintances, elderly unmarried women like herself.

Another significant influence upon decisions to undertake charity work was familial ties and traditions. One executive organisation which illustrates both this point, and shows the importance of marital status, is the Girls’ Friendly Society, whose organisation, particularly in rural areas, was heavily dependent upon formal Church of Ireland support. Thus for example, the report of the Ossory, Ferns and Leighlin Diocese of the Girls’ Friendly Society, indicates that fifteen of the thirty-six named members in all positions give Rectory addresses, and fourteen of these are married. Familial allegiances played an important role in the choice of charity work for young women. Many daughters followed their mothers into work in a particular charity, and on occasion, their fathers as well. This was particularly the case in prominent organisations which depended upon Church-wide support. Miss Poole, for example, was the head of the Ladies’ Auxiliary of the Dublin University Mission Society, and her father, H.R. Poole,

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28 Established in 1890.
was chairman of the Dublin University Mission Society 'proper'. Indeed, it was highly advantageous to any charity to involve 'clergywomen, meaning by that women who belong to clergymen, as their wives and daughters'. These women were both economical and flexible:

[They] do numberless acts of kindness for the sick and aged. They teach the young, and hold up a standard of manners to the uneducated. They help to take care of churches and their appointments. They find out deserving poor people and assist them, and do many other things which obviates the employment of additional curates. 29

Although both married 'clergywomen' and their unmarried daughters were equally involved in charitable work, in secular society motherhood took precedence over work outside the home. For single women though, philanthropy had a different function. The ratio of single to married women emphasises the importance which voluntary work played in the lives of single women, both as a means of enlarging their social worlds, and as a training for their presumed positions in society as adults.

One explanation frequently offered for single women's involvement in charity was the relative freedom it offered them to work, and even live, outside the family home. Women could experience a way of life quite removed from their own experience through residence in missionary settlement homes, while still maintaining high standards of respectability. The Fishamble Street Mission (FSM) was one of the few in Ireland to actually establish a settlement home for its workers. In order to maximise the impact of the mission, a settlement house was established in Fishamble Street, which allowed for a permanent staff presence in

29 *Church of Ireland Gazette* November 17, 1911.
the area. Settlement houses formed a routine part of philanthropic organisations in England, but were much less a factor in Irish movements. Part of the reason lay in the lack of large urban centres. English settlement houses were often built, ostensibly at least, because of the distance female mission workers had to travel to reach their homes, which were generally far from the districts in which they worked, late at night. Such geographical difficulties were considerably lessened, even in Dublin, the largest Irish urban centre.

Another reason lies in the religious profiles of the respective populations. English settlement missions consisted of Protestant staff catering for a predominantly Protestant clientele. Protestant missions in Ireland faced a much smaller 'target' group, even when they directed their attention towards the members of other Churches. The Catholic Church effectively established their own residential settlement houses, in the form of convents and hospitals run mainly by female religious orders, who dominated sections of the city. The FSM settlement house was established because of its geographical location, near the centre of the city, in a predominantly Protestant area which included Christ Church and some sections of the Liberties. The numbers of women resident in the settlement house is difficult to ascertain, as incidental references only are made to its existence in the official records. However, it would appear that it consisted of two Bible-women, one of whom was removed during the war, who had separate quarters, and between three and four women workers, as well as a female caretaker of the society’s premises. Some of the voluntary settlement residents were female Trinity

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College students, who participated in the organisation of several clubs, particularly the educational ones.

Class concerns also impacted upon decisions to engage in charity. The virtual monopoly which middle-class women exercised in the area of philanthropic work was strengthened by social and religious practice, which emphasised the obligations inherent in social privilege. Although very much a part-time occupation, this proto-social work was deemed a duty for young women - one which was brought to their attentions from school-going ages - and which also had the not unpleasing effect of reflecting favourably on the participant’s natures.

As Almya Gray wrote in *Alexandra College Guild Magazine*:

> Practically I think every woman who has any margin of time or money to spare should complete her life by adding to her private duties the noble effort to advance God's kingdom beyond the bounds of her home...even greater in importance is the strengthening and uplifting of our own personal character, so that we may fulfill the end to our creation, and be a help and blessing to those who are daily dependent on our love, care and companionship.  

Another significant attraction of charitable work were the links made with like-minded individuals, which frequently had a social as well as a practical aspect. Charity work allowed for a good deal of activity which was not necessarily centred upon the objects of charity themselves, and the frequent drawing room meetings, fêtes and bazaars which were part of the fund-raising effort, brought large numbers of women from varied backgrounds together. Each charity attempted to attract high profile members to endorse their work, through honorary

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31 *Alexandra College Guild Magazine*, June, 1910.
memberships and executive positions. Existing labourers created strategic plans with military precision to secure the most lucrative and prestigious supporters, and tailored their work to attract a more glamorous audience:

(Miss de Lasalle) mentioned a special effort to reach the uninterested women in the upper classes by holding 'salons' in good drawing rooms having really first rate speakers and also giving plenty of time for discussion. Those who became interested were then formed into reading groups conducted by capable ladies. It was found that educational work and medical work appealed most to this class.32

The Providence Home33 was highly successful in this regard, and boasted four titled women as Patronesses - The Countess of Erne, The Countess of Lanesborough, The Lady Iveagh and The Lady Hudson Kinahan. These women were not expected to actively participate in the running of the institution, but would write the foreword to the annual reports, open the annual fetes, and hopefully stimulate interest and donations to the charity’s cause. For the workers, contacts made on a more mundane level often led to collaboration in further charitable enterprises, and to a sharing of resources. The Providence Home (PH) shared its administrative premises with the Domestic Training Institute34 (DTI), and the two organisations employed the same Lady Superintendent. The honorary secretary of the PH was honorary treasurer of the DTI., and Lady Hudson Kinahan was Patroness of the PH, while also on the governing body of the DTI. Both of these organisations, constitutionally quite distinct, had close links with the Girls’ Friendly Society. One finds that charities which pursued the same basic

32 Ms 315, Hibernian Church Missionary Society [HCMS] Women’s Consultative Committee Minutes, January 3, 1913, RCBL.
33 Established in 1838.
34 Established in 1877.
object, whether it was the rehabilitation of prostitutes, conversion of the heathen overseas, care of the elderly, or child protection, tended for obvious reasons to work closely with one another.

The Fishamble Street Mission is a good example of how Protestant female administrators maximised their resources by associating closely with individuals and organisations sharing similar views and objectives. The advantages to be gained from allowing participation by non-members of the FSM in mission affairs could be considerable, especially in terms of financial support, but it was clearly important that autonomy be retained by the FSM executive. Thus in March 1914, ‘After some discussion it was decided to grant the use of the Mission Hall for the purpose of a sale of work to be held jointly by the G.F.S. [Girls’ Friendly Society] and St. Werburgh’s Parish…on condition that this not be taken as a precedent.’35

The value of such sales, and the participation of the mission in them, may be seen by the fact that the St. Werburgh’s Committee agreed to pay £25 to the Fishamble Street’s G.F.S., in return for the use of the hall. The proposal to co-operate on this occasion was the result of personal contact between female members of the FSM General Committee, and the executive of the GFS. The financial traffic was not always towards the mission, however. The charity had close associations with the Dublin University Mission to Chota Nagpur, and their GFS regularly raised funds for its support through sales and fetes.36

Other Protestant charitable associations in the Dublin area similarly made use of the facilities available to other groups, in order to expand their own range.

35 Ms 315, HCMS minutes, March 5, 1914, RCBL.
36 ibid.
The Dublin Country Air Association\textsuperscript{37}, whose object was ‘to provide rest and fresh air for the ailing members of the Dublin Protestant Poor’,\textsuperscript{38} leased a house in Bray for the use of its members. During 1916, although most of the other excursions usually organised by the FSM were canceled, one hundred women and girls were sent for ‘a fortnight’s holiday’ to the ‘Country Air Home’.\textsuperscript{39} In line with the general policy of the FSM, the majority (80) of the women financed the trip themselves, although they received a favourable rate, and their holiday fund was accumulated throughout the year. The remainder received assistance from the ‘Girls’ Friendly Society Sick and Weary fund’.\textsuperscript{40} The women were usually accompanied by a female volunteer worker from the mission. The Dublin Bible-Woman Mission\textsuperscript{41} was part of an inter-connected network of charitable endeavour, which depended heavily upon information and co-operation between the various organisations for its success: ‘The object of the Mission...is a very simple one. It seeks, by means of Bible-Women, Mothers’ Meetings, Trained Nurses, District Visitors, Temperance Association, and similar agencies, to make use of WOMAN’S WORK for the promotion of the Spiritual and Temporal Welfare of the Poor of Dublin...It carries on its operations in connection with the Church of Ireland, and seeks, as far as possible, to act in harmony with existing Parochial arrangements.’\textsuperscript{42} Women were encouraged to consider philanthropy as a normal part of their lives. As in Catholic schools, Protestant children heard talks

\begin{footnotes}
\item[37] Established in 1886.
\item[38] Thoms’ Official Directory, 1910. ‘Charitable and Benevolent Institutions.’
\item[39] 54\textsuperscript{th} Annual Report, FSM Dublin, 1916.
\item[40] ibid.
\item[41] Established in 1875.
\end{footnotes}
from missionaries home on leave, and from workers in the various local missions in Dublin. From the perspective of the missionaries these talks were crucial. The principal hope was that some of the girls might consider missionary work themselves, but on a more immediate level, such visits often resulted in donations of money, and the stimulation of fund-raising activities: ‘Addresses were given by Miss McComas in Norfolk College, Rathgar, and Malvern School, Upper Rathmines - in both these schools the girls are taking part in the annual schoolgirls’ sale of work, which we hope to hold in the beginning of next term.’

The co-operation described above, and the involvement of women of different classes in charity work, as administrators and workers, might suggest that charity acted as a means of drawing together members of the Church of Ireland, regardless of social background. This is certainly true in a literal sense. Philanthropy acted as a means of making the middle and upper class members of the church aware of the difficulties facing the working class. However, as the Protestant middle class moved out to the suburbs, they were increasingly ignorant of the difficulties faced by the working class they left behind. For example, ‘the Association for the Relief of Distressed Protestants‘ complained recurrently of the lack of awareness amongst well-off Protestants of the extreme poverty and distress which existed within the Protestant community.’ The Church of Ireland Gazette was forced to make constant appeals for funds on behalf of a range of charities, and to remind church members of their obligations to the poor.

44 Established in 1836.
46 See for example ‘Church Work’, September 23, 1910, pp. 770-1; ‘The Housing of the
Women responded willingly to these calls, but the relationships established through charity work strengthened rather than lessened class distinctions. As may be seen below, and in chapter three, most institutions catered for one class or another, or created separate facilities and funds for ‘gentlewomen’ so that even in poverty, status was secured. This policy was not unique to Church of Ireland charities, or to Dublin. In the early twentieth century, class difference was accepted by most, and even first-hand experience of hardship through philanthropy did not substantially challenge established social concepts. As Margaret Preston notes:

Reformers spent their days in the streets among the poorly fed, clothed and housed, but they went home each night to comfortable surroundings and a warm bed...While charity workers attempted to improve the conditions of the poor, the majority do not appear to have questioned the means which created this disparate social hierarchy. The private institutions, hospitals, missions, and other charity organisations relieved much misery and helped many, but rarely did they attempt to change the governmental structure.

Women of the Church of Ireland were aware of their obligations towards less fortunate church members, and some certainly worked to ensure that working class Protestants were not seen by Catholics to be neglected, but their duty for the
most part ended there.

In attempting to explain the varied attractions of charitable work for women, factors such as duty, religion, boredom, and the exercise of authority all play a part. However, one of the interesting aspects of philanthropy was the occasional disparity between what workers advised their subjects to do, and what they did themselves. The very decision to become involved in charity work, which demanded an active, extra-domestic commitment, was often a negation of the ideals of retiring femininity being advocated by the worker. This apparent contradiction between the statements and the actions of women engaged in public work was not confined to Ireland. Women across Europe extolled the virtues of home life, and the importance of house work, while at the same time leading lives devoted to active, public work. There are several explanations for this, the most obvious being the class of women to whom it applies. The contradiction which life in public and private spheres creates is relevant only to middle and upper class women, whose opportunity for choice, ironically, created the difficulty.

Ironically, some high-profile female philanthropists used very public forums to encourage women back into the spheres they themselves had left. One example was the President of one of the most important women’s organisations in Ireland, and indeed Britain - the Mother’s Union. With a large membership and voluntary workforce, the influence of the Mothers’ Union extended beyond its paid-up membership, in the form of pamphlets and books, based upon lectures given to the Branch members. Lady Talbot de Malahide, President of the Mothers’

49 Established in 1902.
Union Dublin Diocese, gathered together two collections of her lectures entitled *Foundations of National Glory* (1915) and *Golden Opportunities* (1916). Both collections are very much of their time and type; published during the First World War, they have a strong imperial and eugenist influence, in common with much of the pseudo-scientific literature published in England in this period.\(^5\) Malahide places mothers in the forefront of the nation’s struggle for supremacy. She writes of the responsibility of mothers ‘to build up a nation and produce a self-reliant, healthy sturdy race - a race ashamed to loaf through life, ashamed to live on the earnings of others, and ashamed to be dependent.’\(^5\) Being an organisation whose raison d’être was motherhood, there was obviously no accommodation granted to single women and their pre-occupations on these pages. The organisation was indeed hostile at times towards women who saw their lives outside the home, be they married or single, and there was no consideration of the married women who had to work, regardless of necessity. The family was viewed in simple terms, with a male breadwinner whose work kept him away from the family all day, and a female home-maker whose only excursion was, presumably, to her Mothers’ Union meetings. The organisation, although staffed by women of the same class, regarded the preoccupation of ‘leisured’ women with worldly affairs with a good deal of suspicion:

> This is such a busy, bustling age, and the question is being asked constantly: ‘What are you doing? - are you taking up politics? - or hospital work? - or committees? - or speaking in public?’ and most women eager to compete in the rush of life frequently put home work aside; to take up

the outside work that excites their nervous temperament. It is often much harder to sit still and do the homely things of life bravely and cheerfully, than to strive after the notoriety of public life and work.\textsuperscript{52}

The enthusiastic endorsement given by Malahide to the worthiness of domestic labour, and the unsuitability of women for roles outside the home, are undercut somewhat by her own list of extra-domestic occupations. As well as her Presidency of the Mother’s Union, she was head of the Dublin Branch of the Red Cross, Lady Grace of the Order of the hospital of St. John of Jerusalem, Vice-President of the Alexandra College Guild, committee member of the Irish Distressed Ladies’ Fund and the homes for Children, President of the District Nursing Association and a Lady Visitor at the Adelaide Hospital. Despite such a list of extra-domestic occupations, Malahide emphasised in her writings the need for mothers to devote all their attention to the rearing of their children. However, for practical purposes, this advice pertains to male children. Females are dealt with briefly through some moral advice, being warned that ‘if [they] will degrade themselves by bad taste and questionable doings, they are really putting themselves on a level with the poor unprincipled and unprotected streetwalkers.’\textsuperscript{53} It is implied that all manner of dire consequences will follow upon a mother’s failure to guide her children adequately. A mother’s influence, it is claimed, extends into all aspects of a child’s life, far into adulthood, and is the standard by which society rose and fell: ‘Kipling says in nine cases out of ten a man calls on his mother’s name at the hour of death. I cannot answer that this is

\textsuperscript{52} ibid, pp 46-47.
\textsuperscript{53} ibid, p. 71.
so, but if it be it is a glorious significance for motherhood.\textsuperscript{54} By laying blame for the lack of success in adult life at the door of the mother, a subtle pressure was exerted upon readers (or listeners) to attempt the ideal:

> During my life I have had the honour of receiving many confidences of mothers and others, and it has always struck me, when told some sad story of sin or sorrow, to ask immediately: What was the home like? What sort of mother had so-and-so? Little by little one unravels skein upon skein, and over and over again one puts one’s fingers on the real source of trouble - the failure of the mother to act wisely.\textsuperscript{55}

Despite the apparent power offered to women through their influence upon and manipulation of the children under their care - 'Men are what women make them'\textsuperscript{56} - a mother’s life and duties were to be confined to the home; although she might, according to Malahide, have formed the external world through her supply of carefully raised sons, her importance is secondary, they will be her representatives.

The Mothers’ Union was not the first, although it was probably one of the largest, movements against the extension of women’s rights beyond the domestic sphere. What makes it more significant than many of the others of its type is its predominantly female make-up, which lent it an authority on women’s affairs denied to male-ordered organisations. During the war the MU opposed the extension of the franchise to women, because of fears that it would threaten the structure of the family. It is perhaps significant that in the early teens of this

\textsuperscript{54} ibid, p. 35.
\textsuperscript{55} ibid, p. 77
\textsuperscript{56} Lady Talbot de Malahide, \textit{Golden Opportunities: Mother’s Union Addresses} London: 1916 p. 68.
century, the MU was one of the few organisations run by women in Ireland which did not offer some form of charitable assistance to distressed or 'fallen' women - the term 'Mothers' Union' meant a union of married mothers. The reasoning behind such an exclusion was simple - if mothers gave their full attention to the raising of their sons, society would be such that there would be no need for volunteer workers to deal with the consequences of their irresponsible actions: 'A man has much chivalry latent in his nature, but unless early cultivated and encouraged, it may be smothered and lost. If all our young men were truly and heartily manly - respectful to all women, because they are weaker than themselves and more led by emotion - our social and moral standards would be very different from what they are at present, and our pathetic 'refuge' homes would not be required.'

Women devoted considerable effort to the benefit of others. Was this great investment of time and energy rewarded, as far as female charity workers were concerned? The measure of success for any charitable institution was clearly the number of women who could be said to be 'rescued' and rehabilitated, and as such, the various missions were liable to exaggerate their achievements. Thus although the Dublin by Lamplight Mission (a society dedicated to 'the rescue and reform of the outcast women of society') declared that 'The conduct of the inmates is good, and not one per cent of those who leave return to their former evil life', the declaration by the editor of the Church of Ireland Gazette in 1911, in relation to the Prison Gate Mission, was probably more accurate: 'The writer knows of one

58 Established in 1856.
who passed in and out over three hundred times, and then proved that 'it is never too late to mend' for the Grace of God found her in this mission.  

**Imperialism and Evangelism**

The types of charitable organisations run by Protestants in Dublin make an interesting statement concerning Protestant self-perceptions, and priorities, at the turn of the century. Several charities were directed towards and emphasised imperial and unionist links, and acted as a means of asserting a particular aspect of Protestant culture in Ireland. In some cases, for example that of the Southern Irish Loyalists Relief Association, an explicit link was made between Protestantism and Loyalism, and the recipients of charity from this particular organisation were chosen for their embodiment of both of these attributes. In the eyes of some charitable workers, religion and politics were closely allied, with conformity in one sphere influencing the other. The Irish Society for Promoting the Scriptural Education and Religious Instruction of Irish Roman Catholics, Chiefly through the Medium of their Own Language, for example, claimed a demonstrable increase in loyalism amongst Catholics in the West of Ireland as a result of their Bible Reading: ‘The Society’s work has exercised a wholesome influence, even over those who may not have left the Church of Rome. From the several ‘agitations’ which of late have disfigured the historic annals of our country, the Bible-taught Roman Catholics have stood aloof, being remarkable, no less for their peaceful demeanour than for their loyal attachment to the Throne and Constitution.’

59 *Church of Ireland Gazette*, March 17, 1911, p. 223.
60 Established in 1922.
61 Established in 1855.
62 *Irish Society for Promoting the Scriptural Education and Religious Instruction of Irish Roman Catholics, Chiefly through the Medium of Their Own Language, Pamphlet, Dublin*: 1873.
Irish Society did not demand conversion as the price of their services, but they revelled in the fact that opposition to their work was based on the belief that Bible reading by Catholics would result in converts to Protestantism. Like the Ladies’ Irish Association for Promoting the Religious Instruction of the Irish People, Partly through the Medium of their own Language, and the Relief of Distressed Protestant Ladies and Others⁶³, who proudly declared in 1912 that the local parish priest ‘absolutely forbid his people to attend the classes, as the Bible was Read, but even against his wishes some of [the] Roman Catholic pupils continued to attend’⁶⁴, the Irish Society viewed opposition to their work by Catholic priests to be a measure of their success. Similarly, organisations such as the Irish Colportage Association, which funded missionaries to lecture and distribute bibles and tracts, and the Island and Coast Society ‘for the education of children and promotion of Scriptural truth in remote parts of the coast and adjacent islands’ faithfully recorded in their annual reports that ‘Great opposition is met with from the priests.’

However, charges of evangelism, particularly in rural areas, where the work of Protestant missionaries was more conspicuous than in Dublin, could be counter-productive. Protestants without an evangelical mission feared the negative associations made with their own work through the proselytizing of others. Many found the methods of some of the evangelical bodies distasteful, particularly because of their blatant system of exchange. Memories of the so-called soupers were easily evoked when missionaries used services such as medical dispensaries

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⁶³ Established in 1821.

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to spread their beliefs. In 1901 for example, Lecky, the M.P. for Dublin
University, commented upon the case of Dr. J. Long, a zealous proselytizer in
Limerick, who was facing increasing opposition to his work. While defending
Long’s right to offer both professional and religious services, Lecky commented ‘I
must honestly confess I do not like the mixture of theology and medicine...I must
disclaim any sympathy with the kind of Missionary work carried out by Dr.
Long.’65 In some senses, one could argue for a certain inevitability in the targeting
of Catholic subjects - in Dublin, the Protestant working class was in decline from
the mid nineteenth century, which implies a consequent drop in the number of
people in need of assistance from charity organisations.66

The association between religion and politics in Ireland exacerbated the
evangelical debate. Charity workers themselves made explicit links between
worship and nationality, and both sides consistently claimed that they were
winning souls for country as well as Christ, although which ‘country’ depended
upon individual belief. The most important point about the proselytising in Dublin
however is that it was undertaken by most in the sincere belief that individuals
were being saved from eternal damnation. ‘All philanthropists, whether Catholic
or Protestant, were intent on imparting their own religious views to their charges,
and amassing souls for God was seen as part of their duty.’67 There were some
differences in strategy between Catholic and Protestant charities, which ensured
that the latter were more open to charges of evangelism. The great majority of

[1910?].
66 Mary Daly, ‘Social Structure of the Dublin working class, 1871-191’ in Irish Historical
Studies vol. XXIII, 1982-83, p. 123.
67 Luddy, Women and Philanthropy p. 83.
Catholic poor in Dublin over Protestant inevitably led to work amongst Catholics by Protestant activists. The nature of Protestant charity was also different. Like the English models described by Prochaska, where lay workers actively sought out suitable subjects, Church of Ireland philanthropists established themselves in selected areas and contacted locals through home visits, the establishment of clubs, and publicly advertised meetings. Slum visiting was a characteristic feature of Protestant charity. Catholic female charity was often less interventionist, for two main reasons. One was that the bodies offering assistance, especially the convents, had houses of refuge attached, to which the girls made direct application. The other was that most Catholic female charity was administered by nuns, who worked within institutions rather than on the streets. When direct action was required, it was undertaken by lay women. In the case for example of the Dublin Prison Gate Mission, members of the Ladies’ Auxiliary of the Ancient Order of Hibernians actually confronted the DPGM workers outside the prison gates, but the women they ‘won’ from Protestant clutches went to a convent refuge. Moreover, Catholic charities appear to have had a less evangelistic strategy than their Protestant rivals. In discussing the explicit agenda of the Irish Church Missions to convert Catholics, Jacinta Prunty notes that ‘the Catholic records are no less definite about their intention to thwart these efforts’: they did not necessarily see themselves conducting an active campaign for the conversion of Protestants.

69 This type of pro-active engagement was typical of, for example, the Dublin Biblewomen Mission, the Dublin Prison Gate Mission, the Temperance Association, and others.
70 Luddy, Women and Philanthropy p. 84.
71 Prunty, Dublin Slums, p. 346.
Amongst the evangelical organisations which funded home biblereaders as well as traveling missionaries, there was a high female representation of workers as well as fund-raisers. The employment of volunteer and paid biblereaders opened opportunities to women for field work. This was a favoured policy for charitable groups who reasoned that women would arouse less antagonism amongst Catholics than Protestant clerics might. The long-standing tradition of female charity work provided evangelicals with a recognised route to the people, and the fact that the organisations often operated on a series of fronts meant that the groundwork for religious expansion could be covertly laid. While it is certainly true that women were at a lesser risk of physical attack when missionising than men, they nevertheless often endured unpleasant encounters. Evangelicals were urged to gain the confidence of their subjects on the common ground of femaleness/femininity. This presumption of a universal sisterhood, despite class differences, was the first step towards revealing to the subject the inadequacies of their religious belief.

If, however, an organisation clearly displayed its non-evangelical roots, to the extent of working with Catholic agencies in the same field, it tended to be permitted a more free hand. One of the reasons for the enduring success of Lady Dudley's Scheme for the Establishment of District Nurses in the Poorest Parts of Ireland72, apart from its obvious need in remote areas, was the fact that it was clear from any taint of evangelism, a charge which instantly aroused opposition to Protestant led philanthropic groups. Both Catholic and Protestant nurses were

72 Established in 1903. See below for fuller details.
supplied by the organisation, the Catholics training at St. Lawrence's and the Protestants at St. Patrick's Training Homes, and 'the Committee tries to arrange that the religion of its nurses shall, if possible, be that of the majority of their patients.' The early annual reports stressed the full cooperation received from local Catholic priests and doctors by reprinting letters of thanks and congratulation from remote regions. A similar strategy was adopted by Lady Aberdeen in her fight against tuberculosis. Sláinte, the magazine published by the Women's National Health Association, quoted the high level of co-operation received from the Catholic clergy in rural areas, and re-printed specifically Catholic stories for inspiration from the Irish Messenger of the Sacred Heart. Since alcohol was believed to weaken the body's defenses to the TB bacillus, the campaign went hand-in-hand with the Temperance movement, which was strongly supported by the corresponding Catholic movements. Local priests often spoke at the meetings held by the staff of the WNHA's travelling Health Caravans, and gathered the local people together for their addresses. The widespread public support for the WHNA may be gauged by the fact that an estimated 700,000 people visited the Health Caravan and allied exhibitions in just one year. Such a non-sectarian, apolitical group must have appealed to those who felt, like Lecky, that the activity of proselytising while engaged in providing a vital service was morally wrong. In sharp contrast to the open handed reception granted to Lady

74 Established in 1907.
75 See for example 'A Fight for Life'; 'Hobbies', or letters signed simply 'A Priest' in Sláinte vol. 1, nos. 1, 5 and 1, pages 14-16, 99-105 and 219 respectively.
Dudley's scheme were those groups who struggled to survive as charitable bodies. Those which received the least amount of public support tended to be the evangelical organisations of the minority Protestant Churches, who had a far smaller pool of supporters.

One area in which the twin strands of evangelism and imperialism intertwined was that of the overseas missions, and this was also an area in which Protestant women played an important role. Individual women had traveled abroad throughout the nineteenth century, both as independent volunteers to mission stations, and as part of the large scale efforts of the Church Missionary Society and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. Most received their training in England, at the CMS and SPG schools, and embarked upon careers as missionaries. In some ways, the choice of overseas mission work echoed that of Catholic missionary nuns, in that the Protestant female missionaries tended also to remain single, and to spend the whole of their lives at mission work, returning home to retire or to continue mission work in England or Ireland. Married women did constitute an important part of the missionary effort, for two main reasons. They provided an example of the ideal Christian family in the regions in which they lived, and they acted as a stable support structure for the male missionary, who might otherwise be drawn to non-Christian women. However the disadvantage for married missionary women was that they not merely had domestic responsibilities to fulfill which reduced the time they could devote to mission work, but because they tended to return to Europe either temporarily to have children, or permanently for their children's education. An
unmarried woman, on the other hand, was more likely to devote the whole of her life to mission work, and even on her visits to Europe on furlough, would continue her work through lectures and meetings at home. Male leaders within the missionary movement often favoured single women. Eugene Stock, active in the mission field in Japan, appealed specially for single female volunteers: 'Both in Nagasaki and in the Kiushiu out-stations there is a wide field for work amongst both girls and women, which can only be done by ladies without the home duties and cares connected with married life.' The case of Frances Hassard, who left for mission work in India in 1891, epitomises the career of the professional single mission worker. She was the first female volunteer for the Dublin University Mission Society’s settlement at Hazaribagh in Chota Nagpur, India. Her father was a Church of Ireland clergyman, and she had already worked for twelve years as a mission Nurse in South Africa. Before her move to India, she was working in a mission in Dublin. Hassard’s posting to Hazaribagh placed her at the head of the women missionaries there, and although she received no salary, she clearly viewed her work as essential. In fact, she became extremely reluctant to leave India, and worked on far past retirement. She died in 1911, and was remembered specifically for her contribution to ‘many other phases of women’s work - Zenana visiting, the Bengali Girls’ School, the Boy’s Orphanage, the Inquirers’ Home.’

The single women missionaries who traveled abroad did so in the knowledge that they themselves depended heavily upon charity for their eventual

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78 First Annual Report, Dublin University Mission Society, 1891.
79 *ibid.*
security. Both men and women in the DUMS worked without salaries - any money they earned from the treatment of patients was used to extend the work of the mission. However, all of the men were clerics, as it was believed that only ordained male workers, who could in turn baptise and minister to new converts, should be sent overseas. The Church of Ireland would therefore support them through a pension on their retirement. As women workers had no such automatic entitlement, the Ladies' Auxiliary in 1894 asked in their annual report for increased subscriptions, in order to start a 'Reserve Fund, which would enable us to provide for our Workers in cases of illness.'81 Special subscriptions were normally raised at the end of a missionaries career, in order to provide a small lump sum for retirement, but there was no automatic entitlement to a pension in return for a lifetime's voluntary work.

Those women who traveled abroad under the auspices of either the CMS or SPG were bound by the concerns and ambitions of the parent organisation. There were hibernian auxiliaries of both of these groups, but all policy decisions were made at headquarters in England. The Irish branches had extensive memberships, with regional organisations in Dublin, Belfast, Armagh, Cork and Galway, and several other groupings were affiliated to the Hibernian branch. Despite this high level of commitment on the Irish side, central control extended even to the selection of Irish missionaries. Although recommendations could accompany volunteers from Ireland, decisions regarding suitability were made in England.82

81 DUMS Third Annual Report, 1894.
82 'The Hon. Sec. reported she had forwarded two offers of service to Salisbury Square [H.Q. of 220
Overseas missions were of particular importance for Protestant Loyalist women in Ireland because of their specific links with the British Empire. Overseas mission work, of any denomination, included an element of cultural and political conflict, as the missionaries sought not only to convert the residents to Christianity but also to a modified western social system. The Bishop of Limerick summarized the motivation behind Irish Protestant participation in the foreign mission field thus: ‘Loyalty to our Empire, however, goes with love for one’s own native land, and patriotism, in its turn, rests on the sure foundation of love for one’s home....They [the Irish auxiliary members of the SPG] have done their work side by side with their English and Scotch brethren, for, like the Army and Navy, SPG is Imperial, not merely British.’83 The Irish women took their roles as soldiers in the Imperial Army very seriously, as mediums through which the British administration in India could consolidate its hold on the country.

It is by work such as this [the medical and educational occupations of the DUMS women] that the civilisation of our Indian Empire is advanced, and kindliness and sympathy promoted between the rulers and the ruled. It is by work such as this that India must be at last attracted into the brotherhood of Christian nations.84

At a time when the issue of Home Rule for Ireland was being vigorously debated in both England and Ireland, support for overseas mission work became a means of reaffirming links with the wider Imperial world. Of course, this was part of a

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wider international evangelical effort conducted by other branches of the Protestant Church in Ireland. Presbyterian missionaries adopted a similar approach to their overseas audience, stressing the common fellowship which could be found in religion: ‘There is, many think, a wide and impassable gulf between the British and the Indian, but that gulf has been bridged over by a common faith in Christ and loyalty to Him, and we are all one in Him, for ‘they shall come from the east and from the west, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.’

The object of a mission such as the Dublin University Mission Society was to convert people to Christianity. As such, the medical stations and the mission schools were part of a broader agenda, and one in which the barter system - medicine or education in exchange for religious instruction - was explicit and understood by both sides. There was of course a general impulse towards a merely Christian charity, in which the benefits of western advances could be shared with others, but the pressures of finance as well as ideology demanded that mission societies measure success in terms of numbers converted. However, unlike many other overseas missions, and indeed like the infamous soupers in nineteenth-century Ireland, the DUMS did not advocate a policy of accepting converts during periods of crisis such as famine or natural disaster. In this, they displayed an admirable humanism, tempered by pragmatism, for it was the experience of other missionary organisations that converts accepted as a result of famine rarely remained Christian once the crisis passed. The region of Chota Nagpur suffered from periodic famines, at intervals as frequent as every ten years from the 1890s

85 The Missionary Herald of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland no. 2, February 1922. p. 29.
onwards. After a number of particularly bad outbreaks had occurred, the mission station adopted a contingency plan which included the establishment of relief kitchens\textsuperscript{86} and the equivalent of the Irish famine public relief works: ‘We have dug a well, and built a small shed... We have lined the well with wood and the shed has mud walls, so almost all the money has gone to unskilled labour, which is the proper way to expend famine money.’\textsuperscript{87} They refused however to accept converts during the famines, having a realistic view of the motivating factors:

I have had several offers from people to become Christians, but all from worldly motives. So far as my small experience goes, a famine is a great hindrance to the best sort of evangelistic work, and increase of numbers of converts during or immediately after a famine is much to be suspected... We have received some offers of destitute parents to sell us their children... I don’t believe that Christianity can be really helped by taking advantage of people’s distress to get hold of children in hopes that they will grow up useful Christians. If the famine is to help us at all it must be by the opportunity of demonstrating a love superior to race and creed distinctions, a love absolutely disinterested and free from all suspicion of using the physical need of the people to swell our numbers.\textsuperscript{88}

This was not to say however that the missionaries neglected the opportunity the famine offered to sow Christian seeds. As the greatest rate of success occurred amongst children - mainly orphans whose relatives were either untraceable or who did not object strenuously to their conversion - female missionaries had the highest numbers of converts through their children’s schools. During the famines, the women set up schools where the education was

\textsuperscript{85} In the famine of 1897, 130 people were being fed daily at the Chota Nagpur kitchen, in addition to the children being fed at the ‘ragged school’ and the patients and their relatives at the hospital.
\textsuperscript{87} K.W.S. Kennedy’s Report, DUMS Magazine, July 1897.
\textsuperscript{88} ibid.
rudimentary but the children were given a meal. It was hoped that when the famine ended, the children would continue to attend the schools, and that the teaching they received would reap greater benefit later:

I have a very interesting school here every day in the house. These are hungry village children, some 36 or 40, who come every morning for a feed of suttu, of which they are very fond...After their feed they learn singing, the Ten Commandments, reading and writing, and the girls do needlework for two hours...I call them my ragged school, for they are all in utter rags, if they have anything at all; they are very wild and unsophisticated little creatures...They learn very quickly, and will have got a lot into their heads after the three months teaching I mean to give them, for the famine will last at least another two months.89

Partly as a result of their minority status in Ireland, and partly because of religious conviction, many charities, although not constitutionally directed to do so, conducted evangelical campaigns to convert Roman Catholics to Protestantism, thereby swelling the ranks of the Protestant churches. Only the Dublin Medical Mission and the Irish Church Missions90, who were in fact organisationally linked, specifically stated that their objects were, respectively, ‘to combine evangelistic teaching with medical work amongst the poor’ and ‘to adopt any measure that may tend to the conversion of the Roman Catholic population of Ireland by means consistent with the principles of the Church of England.’ Both organisations faced intense opposition to their work, particularly from the Catholic clergy, which took the form of boycotts of services to and from the mission workers.91 There were several other charitable groups, although ostensibly

89 ibid, Miss Collis’ Report.
90 Established in 1852.
91 Irish Church Missions, *A Year for Ireland* Dublin: 1913.
dedicated to purposes such as the education of the working classes, who pursued an active policy of evangelism and conversion. The principal bodies thus occupied included the many Scripture societies, but in fact the greatest area of conflict which arose, not merely between Protestant evangelicals and their Roman Catholic 'targets', but evangelicals and practicing Protestants, was in the realm of refuges for women and children. These were the principal targets for female philanthropists, both Catholic and Protestant. Male-centred charities were organised by men, as women, whether they were nuns or lay Church of Ireland women, could not respectfully cater for them.92

**Taking Refuge**

That there was a need for the types of homes supplied by such institutions as the Dublin Prison Gate Mission, the Asylum for Penitent Females, the Evangelical Rescue Mission, the Dublin by Lamplight Mission and the Dublin Midnight Mission and Female Home is clear from the numbers of women who applied for admission. The DPGM had an average of 108 women attending the mission in any given month, and the numbers never dropped below 99. Of these, an average of 65 stayed on the premises, in addition to 21 children in the mission's creche. However, it was felt that both the vulnerability of the persons involved,

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92 As Maria Luddy has noted with regard to Catholic charity: 'It would have been unacceptable to society and indeed to the nuns' own rule to engage in helping groups of destitute men on a large or organised scale.' *Women and Philanthropy* p. 51.
93 Established in 1835.
94 Established in 1856.
95 Established in 1862.
96 Examples of the numbers catered for in other institutions are: The Asylum for Penitent Females (35 residents); the Magdalen Asylum (25 residents); the Dublin by Lamplight Mission (40 residents, and a total of 214 were admitted throughout 1899); the Evangelical Rescue Mission (average of 132 residents in 1899) and the Dublin Midnight Mission and Female Home (275 applicants throughout 1899).
97 Numbers calculated on figures recorded in the DPGM minutes, 1910-1915, Ms 263, RCBL.
and the fact that they were for the most part resident in the institutions, and subject to rules which included compulsory attendance at Protestant Church services, led to situations where pressure could be brought to bear in terms of conversions. The Dublin Prison Gate Mission and its Lady Superintendent, Miss Mary Rice, became the objects of a sustained campaign of obstruction on the part of Catholics who denounced the strategies employed by the mission between December 1909 and November 1911. Opposition centred upon the mission's practice of detaining women who had entered the institution voluntarily, on the grounds that to release them 'would inevitably throw them in the way of companions and influences from which it is sought to shield them.' Despite the emphasis laid upon the fact that the women had agreed to this possibility before entering the home, and the statement that 'any one of these girls, as well as any of the other women, is perfectly free to leave the Home finally, whenever she may desire to do so', the mission became the subject of a detailed and protracted correspondence in the Dublin newspapers.

Controversy also centred around the policy of access to religious guidance for the inmates, which was routinely supplied by Protestant clerics. Despite the furor over this topic, and the continually reiterated statement that 'by far the greater number [of women residents] are entirely free to attend whatever Public Worship they please, or to consult any religious teacher they may wish', there appears to be only one reference in the records to a Catholic priest being summoned to the institution, on the request of a dying woman. The fact that it

98 Pamphlet bound with society minutes, n.d., RCBL.
99 Ms. 263, DPGM, July 14, 1911, RCBL.
was directed to be noted in the minutes indicates how unusual an occurrence it was. Publications generally supportive of Protestant efforts in the religious fields such as the *Irish Times* and the *Church of Ireland Gazette* shied away from any direct association with the controversial missions. In June 1910 the editor of the *Irish Times* refused to print a letter from the Lady Superintendent of the DPGM refuting the charges made against it in the Press, and various Protestant religious papers, including the *Church of Ireland Gazette*, declined to print a letter of appeal for funds on behalf of the mission.\(^{100}\) The society's activities were routinely covered by both publications, in terms of reports on Sales of Work, or the Annual General Meetings, but a determined effort was made to remain at an official distance from what could be interpreted as the evangelistic excesses of the mission.\(^{101}\) The furthest the *Church of Ireland Gazette* was prepared to go in support of the mission's activities was a general commendation of their work, and a side-swipe at the opposition of the Catholic clergy:

> The Mission is doing a splendid work among a class neglected by the community in general. Its sphere of operations has provoked a jealousy both of and to good works. We gladly see the Roman Catholic Church taking up prison work at last, but until it is able to cope with it would not the voice of criticism be better silent?\(^{102}\)

The difficulties faced by the DPGM reflected the experiences of other such voluntary groups. However, there were also tensions which were based less upon religious difference, and more upon the encroachment of amateurs in areas of charitable expertise. The non-professional status of charitable organisations

\(^{100}\) ibid, June 1, 1910 and June 12, 1914.

\(^{101}\) See Appendix B.

\(^{102}\) *Church of Ireland Gazette*, April 7, 1911 p. 282.
appeared to irritate government -funded bodies who regarded themselves as the field experts, and they were frequently unnecessarily obstructive. In 1910, for example, Miss Rice received a curtly worded warning from the clerk of the North Dublin Union over the movement of unmarried mothers from the DPGM to the workhouse:

"I am directed by the board of Guardians to inform you that they have received a report from the Master of the workhouse, drawing attention to the large number of unmarried women with children recently admitted to the workhouse from your institution, and to state that the board have adopted the following resolution in connection therewith, viz:-

'That our Relieving Officers and other officials be directed to admit no more applicants from Miss Rice's home, as such people cannot be considered as coming under the head of destitute poor." \(^{103}\)

Before replying, Miss Rice and the committee took legal advice, and declared 'such a resolution is ultra vires; and therefore, requests that it be reconsidered at the earliest possible opportunity. In case it is not rescinded the committee will be, reluctantly, compelled to appeal to the Local government Board in vindication of the rights of these poor people, who are entitled to seek the aid provided for them by the rates of Dublin." \(^{104}\)

Although the DPGM won this particular encounter, through a willingness to challenge the validity of the action, it indicates the often uneasy relationship between government agencies and voluntary bodies working in the same field. The state-funded organisations frequently objected to what they regarded as the intrusion of unprofessional women into their areas, and they were in particular

\(^{103}\) Ms 263, DPGM minutes. February 3, 1910, RCBL.
\(^{104}\) Ibid. March 11, 1910.

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hostile to the practice, common amongst voluntary groups, of selective admission
to their homes. The DPGM offered assistance mainly to women whom they felt
they had the best chance of reforming, and they had far less interest in those who
had been frequently imprisoned, or who were habitual prostitutes. Thus they were
leaving the cases which were most likely to be in need of permanent assistance to
the care of the government organisations. This was not an entirely selfish strategy.
If the DPGM were not able to produce the highest possible success and
reclamation rates, their public subscriptions would drop. Those unmarried mothers
mentioned by the Clerk above represented those whom the DPGM found very
difficult to either keep in the mission, because of an unwillingness on the women’s
part to conform to the strict standards demanded, or to place in positions outside,
because of their children. The DPGM conducted a masterly balancing act between
claiming great success for the mission, in order to encourage subscribers to make
repeat donations, and claiming an increasing need for donations, because of the
work still left to do. At times, this involved some manipulation of figures. The
flyer which advertised the mission’s annual sale of work in 1909 claimed that the
institution was largely self-funding, and that the £2,000 made in the laundry per
annum ‘supply[s] two-thirds of the entire cost of the Mission’. In fact, this was
a generous rounding up of the figures - in 1910 and 1911 the combined total
earned by the women in the laundry and workroom was £1719 and £1730
respectively and the statement made no mention of the large overdraft which
the mission had to continually service. This ran at an average of £978 per month,

105 Undated flyer bound with DPGM minutes [1909].
106 Based upon monthly returns submitted to the committee, 1909-1910.
and the proceeds of the annual sale of work went towards reducing this debt, rather than the direct support of fallen women, which was presumably the destination intended by the subscribers. On the other hand, the voluntary work undertaken by women eased considerably the burden placed upon government agencies, as far as responsibility and care for these people was concerned. Although not all of the women who were assisted by the various charitable organisations would require hospital or workhouse accommodation if the charities did not exist, there were a core group which certainly would. Until direct government intervention with regard to Old Age Pensions and National Insurance occurred in the early twentieth century, voluntary charities shouldered a considerable burden of care.

There were some 16 charities which catered only for widowed and single Protestant women, although the number of such women actually in receipt of assistance in this category was much greater, since the majority of Protestant charities, whatever their primary purpose, relieved the destitute female elderly as a distinct group in their area. Given the emphasis placed on the dependency of women upon male guidance and assistance, and the cherished notion that a society could measure its humanity by its treatment of the most delicate members, it is perhaps not surprising to find such attention being granted to Protestant women. What is surprising, however, is the neglect of equally destitute Protestant men. Male orphans were reasonably well catered for, since their education to assume suitable positions was considered of the utmost importance, but male homes of retirement and refuge formed a relatively small part of charitable
endeavour. There were a mere two mixed-sex retreats to which men could turn to for assistance, and even they were dominated by female applicants. Impoverished males were however often assisted by trade-associated organisations, such as the Soldiers and Sailors Families' Association.¹⁰⁷

Class Tensions and Influences

The attitudes of Protestant women who contributed towards the considerable philanthropic effort in Dublin with regard to poverty and its relief was often ambiguous. There is no doubt that the most strenuous efforts were made to alleviate misery where it was found, but the very undertaking of such work, and the limited freedom it allowed to the women involved, appeared to demand its perpetual continuance. One rarely finds statements by women which imply that an end to their labours was a desirable object: even in those cases where relative success had been achieved in terms of the reform of individuals, or education of the underprivileged, an emphatic emphasis was placed upon the continuance of the work, and its expansion into other arenas. One may particularly see this continual desire for growth on the part of women workers, and its frustration by male committee members, during the years of the First World War, when the ranks of male volunteers had been depleted through enlistment. Women willingly volunteered to assume male duties, but in most cases their offers were taken up with the greatest reluctance by the remaining male organisers, who appear to have feared a female take-over of the missions in the absence of men. Thus, although women from Trinity College and Alexandra College were

¹⁰⁷ D1071J/H/3/1, Special Report of the Soldiers and Sailors' Families' Association, December 3, 1914, PRONI.
permitted to teach in the Boy's Sunday School of the Fishamble Street Mission, it
was decided to cancel the Boy Scouts and the Boy’s Clubs for the duration of the
war. 108 Charities in other cities had the same experience. In Belfast, Bryson
House, a large multi-purpose organisation very similar to the FSM, also lost male
volunteers on the outbreak of war. In this case, women preferred to go into war
work, with the result that several children’s clubs closed. 109

It has been suggested that one of the effects of philanthropic work in the
early twentieth century was to find common ground for women of the upper and
working classes, through their interaction in charitable organisations. While it is
true to say that ‘since women were less identified with economic exploitation and
political power, they were more readily accepted into the homes of the working
class and the poor’, 110 there is little evidence, in the case of the Dublin
organisations at least, that class barriers were significantly breached. 111 Protestant
female charitable relief had as its object the alleviation of misery, and the
improvement of the deserving poor, but only within very restricted parameters. In
the first place, the emphasis in most of the charitable groups and, in particular, the
evangelical missions, was placed upon self-improvement on the part of the
recipients. Only in exceptional circumstances, such as the death of the family
breadwinner, was unearned financial assistance offered. Rather, the societies
preferred to extend aid in exchange for some manner of productive effort,

111 Exceptions to this very general rule include women such as Charlotte Despard and Constance
Markievicz, who turned to socialism as a means of bridging the perceived gaps between the
upper and working classes. Their conscious move from backgrounds of privilege were so
unusual, however, that they do not constitute any sort of a trend.

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however ineffectual. Thus organisations including the Fishamble Street Mission, the Strand Street Institute, the Dublin Central Mission\textsuperscript{112}, the Dublin Protestant Prisoners' Aid Society\textsuperscript{113}, the Mission to the Liberties, St. Patrick's Cathedral Mission, the Mill Street Mission and the Presbyterian Dublin City Mission, all organised clubs as a part of mission endeavour which required a commitment, in terms of labour or finance, from the participants.

In some cases, the charitable organisations made efforts to ensure that class structures remained in place, even when the objects of relief were theoretically placed on the same level. Although so-called 'fallen women' were required by the charitable groups to undergo some form of penance, usually in the shape of subservient manual work as mentioned above, this did not apply equally to all cases. The Rescue Mission Home, established in 1875, was created specifically 'for the reformation of a better class, socially, of young women than those in other homes.'\textsuperscript{114} It is one of the few refuge homes out of approximately ten administered by Protestant committees in Dublin in the early twentieth century which did not operate a laundry to contribute towards expenses, but instead employed the inmates 'at plain and fancy needlework', that is, tasks more suited to young ladies than working class women. This charity also expected parents and friends to contribute towards the expenses incurred by the women, and to take responsibility for them after the birth of their child. This implies that the home was used by women, with the knowledge and connivance of their

\textsuperscript{112}Established in 1878.
\textsuperscript{113}Established in 1881.
\textsuperscript{114}George D. Williams, \textit{Dublin Charities} Dublin: 1902.
families, for the duration of a pregnancy, and as such was not for that class of
women frequently described by charity workers as 'hardened'.

The presence of women as administrators and workers in reform homes for
ex-prisoners and prostitutes raises interesting points about gender assumptions in
Ireland in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. 'Rescue' work was for the most
part dominated by women, although men generally played a part on committees,
and clerics always attended the institutions to offer spiritual guidance. Indeed this
became an increasingly compulsory condition for acceptance to all of the Dublin
homes. It was clearly considered unacceptable for men to be seen to be too closely
associated with 'fallen women', with the result that the few lay male members of
committees largely occupied honorary positions. It was the female volunteer and
paid workers who actively pursued potential penitents, waited for the release of
short-term prisoners outside the prison gates, and approached prostitutes on the
streets. However, although women workers could be considered above reproach
with regard to the work they undertook, in a manner closed to many men,
strenuous efforts were made to distinguish the fallen from the virtuous. There was
little or no criticism of the economic, social or political factors which led these
women to prostitution, and the continually reiterated theme of rescue through
abasement and labour had the effect of apportioning blame to the women
themselves.

A conservative strain ran through many of the various rescue missions,
which, despite being managed by women, had a powerfully paternalistic style of
management. There was a good deal of reluctance on the part of many of the
important Protestant led missions to comply with the terms of the National Insurance Act of 1912\textsuperscript{115}, not merely because it cost the charities a good deal of money in terms of insurance payments, but because it removed a degree of dependency on the home from the inmates. One also finds that there is little discussion of the franchise issue by female members of charitable and particularly rescue institutions, although there did exist in Britain a body of female reformers who felt that if women had the vote they could use it to bring about moral reform in society.\textsuperscript{116} In other words, the female administrators were content to cope with the effects of class and economic structures, and ignore the causes which contributed to them. The emphasis placed upon respectability and conformity to rigorous social roles was, of course, instilled in women from an early age, and was maintained by practically every organisation with which they came in contact. The Girls' Friendly Society, one of the largest female organisations in Ireland, with branches in every large urban centre and an extensive Protestant membership, made 'respectability' a prerequisite for admittance: 'No girl who has not borne a virtuous character to be admitted as a Member; such character being lost, the Member to forfeit her card.'\textsuperscript{117} Similarly, the Dublin Providence Home, which was 'intended for Protestant girls of good moral character' excluded applicants who might conceivably influence others for the worse: 'No girl who has ever been in a workhouse is admitted.'\textsuperscript{118} The standards demanded of applicants were set by the female administrators themselves. In the case of the Providence Home, the all-

\textsuperscript{115} Including the Prison Gate Mission (see minutes, April 12, 1912) and the Magdalen Asylum.  
\textsuperscript{116} Prochaska, \textit{Women and Philanthropy} p. 218.  
\textsuperscript{117} The \textit{Central Rules, Constitution and Central By-Laws of the Girls' Friendly Society in Ireland} Dublin, 1902. Rule no. 3, p. 3.  
\textsuperscript{118} Pamphlet of the Dublin Providence Home (Dublin, n.d.)
female committee accepted the girls for a probationary period, and, once convinced of their characters, would recommend them for positions as domestic servants in Dublin. The function of the home was therefore rather curious. Unlike most other charities concerned with young women in this period, it did not offer any training or instruction to the inmates, but simply protected them from the corrupting influences of the city until suitable work could be found:

It is however, entirely a temporary refuge for the girls admitted; its object is to help them, indeed, so long as they need help, but on the very first opportunity to put them in the way of helping themselves, so that a girl is allowed to remain there no longer than is necessary to show as much of her character and disposition as shall enable those connected with the Institution to recommend her with confidence; and the home consequently provides; not trained servants, but good material from which trained servants can be made.

Residence in the Home prior to employment thus automatically implied a trustworthy individual, and encouraged support from subscribers. For the further inspiration of the inmates, girls of a higher rank were also offered assistance by the Home, but close contact between the two classes was discouraged: 'One room is set aside for young ladies, but most of the inmates belong to the poorer classes.'

Other organisations also made their class priorities explicit in their promotional literature. The Ladies’ Irish Association encapsulated the Victorian distinction between deserving and undeserving charity in their annual report for 1912. Class, in this instance, determined degrees of entitlement. Middle class

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119 The committee interpreted corruption in the broadest possible sense - rule 11 of the home declared 'No flowers or feathers can be worn by the girls, and their hair must be arranged neatly and plainly.

120 ibid.

121 ibid.
women fallen on hard times were automatically deserving of charity, whereas their 
working-class counterparts had to prove their ‘genuine’ need:

[The object of the Society is] to minister relief in money and 
clothing to many distressed ladies who, through no fault of their 
own SUFFER IN SILENCE. To such, timely aid is given in so 
delicate a manner that they can, as they say, receive it with ‘both 
comfort and pleasure’. This includes help to clergy families in 
poor parishes in remote places, with scanty means. 
To help the GENUINE poor of the lower classes. 122

Not all charity recipients were necessarily prepared to acknowledge the 
inferiority of their positions. The DUMS women workers found themselves in the 
rather surprising position of being rejected by the objects of their charity, for 
reasons of caste: ‘One certainly is not likely to think too much of oneself in this 
country, where the dirtiest, lowest beggar would rather die of hunger than eat the 
most delicious food you could prepare them, because you have touched it.’ 123

Closer to home, charity workers themselves considered that philanthropy could 
offer a means through which individuals could better their prospects and improve 
their class status. In 1922, a fall in numbers attending the various activities of the 
Fishamble Street Mission was explained in terms of an improvement of status:

‘The numbers attending the Mission have fallen off: but this is to some extent due 
to the fact that the tendency with our people is to improve their worldly position, 
and many have moved to more congenial surroundings.’ 124

Although many of the organisations to which Protestant women belonged 
catered for groups throughout the country, both Protestant and Catholic, they

123 1898 Annual Report, p. 29.
were for the most part coordinated from the capital, with funds, and more importantly group policy, originating in the city. One of the reasons for the concentration of such groups within the city and county borders was the considerable presence of Protestant co-workers within a relatively small area. Protestant philanthropy also possessed a strongly social side to its activities, and any charity or function which managed to secure the endorsement of members of the nobility was practically assured of success. However, the real value of wealthy patrons lay in the social appeal, not necessarily in the amounts of money they donated directly. As Jacinta Prunty has noted, the lower and middle classes in Dublin were the likeliest to give alms, and to give greater amounts, proportionate to their incomes, than the upper classes.125 It also broadened the appeal of the particular cause beyond specifically Protestant borders. A contemporary commentator wrote of the ‘social rows’ which existed in Ireland at the turn of the century, and defined ‘row D’ as the ‘Loyal professional people, gentleman professional farmers, trade, large retail or small wholesale’ who ‘formed useful cannon-fodder at Protestant Bazaars’.126 Irish charities eagerly sought permission to appoint nobility as honorary Presidents and committee members: failing that, clerics, from the highest ecclesiastic downwards, were acceptable. Some of the most successful organisations were those which were initiated or administered by conspicuous members of the upper classes in Dublin society. They had access to a great deal more ready money in terms of donations, and specialist advice and

125 Prunty, Dublin Slums, p. 211.
support from similar groups in Britain.

The experiences of larger parent organisations in Britain were applied to Ireland, as were the most effective means of raising funds and awareness of a group’s objects. The Church of Ireland Temperance Society\textsuperscript{127}, in common with many other organisations, attempted to enlist the assistance of the upper classes in their work: ‘Drawingroom meetings should be encouraged as much as possible as a means of reaching many influential church people who otherwise would receive little education upon Temperance questions. This cannot be too strongly urged upon all Diocesan secretaries when arranging for deputations.’\textsuperscript{128} Although the success of a temperance appeal to the Irish upper classes who prided themselves on a long tradition of exuberant living may have been doubtful,\textsuperscript{129} the drawingroom meeting was a popular means of pursuing support, and was undertaken by the majority of those charities which had a strong Ladies’ committee. The conjunction of the philanthropic and the social in these afternoon meetings operated for mutual benefit, given that many of these meetings were fulsomely reported in the newspapers. Similarly, many propertied ladies opened the grounds of their homes for fetes in aid of charities, or allowed outings to be made to their gardens by groups of children from the city.\textsuperscript{130} Lady Talbot de Malahide, for instance, held sales, bazaars and fetes in the grounds of Malahide Castle during the war, to raise money for prisoners and their dependents.

As the royal representatives in Ireland, the social and charitable activities

\textsuperscript{127} Established in 1862.
\textsuperscript{128} Church of Ireland Temperance Report (Dublin 1910) p. 10.
\textsuperscript{130} See the Sunday School Society for Ireland’s Annual Reports, 1912-1917.
of the Viceregal couple were of particular interest. In the latter part of the
nineteenth-century and the early twentieth, successive Vicereines had established
charitable bodies in Ireland which came to be associated exclusively with their
own personalities. Lady Dudley's Scheme for the Establishment of District
Nurses in the Poorest Parts of Ireland' was a typical example of the greater
success achieved by upper-class led groups. Begun in 1903 by the Vicereine of
Ireland, Lady Dudley, the scheme was a response to the appalling conditions of
those living in isolated rural areas, who had no access to formal medical care.
Dudley wrote to the papers calling for subscriptions to a national fund to train and
maintain nurses in remote districts, and within a short period of time had gathered
over £8,000. Using her extensive social contacts, Dudley mobilised a committee,
seven out of thirteen of whom were titled, and included H.R.H. The Duchess of
Connaught, The Countess of Mayo, The Countess Grosvenor, Viscountess
Castlerosse, Lady Arnott and Lord Plunkett. The Central Authority of Queen
Victoria's Jubilee institute for Nurses agreed to provide £180 per annum to form
the nucleus of a training fund for the nurses. When the first four nurses were sent
out, initially to the West of Ireland, it was decided that the scheme should operate
in conjunction with the Congested Districts Board, and by the early teens was
receiving some contributions towards expenses from the Local Government Board
and the Insurance Commission. By 1922 the scheme had twenty-eight nurses in
various districts throughout the country, at a cost of £200 per nurse, a

131 'Each Lord Lieutenant's wife had her own particular and pet charity. Lady Londonderry's
was Irish Industries. Lady Dudley's, a scheme for providing nurses for the poor, throughout
Ireland. Lady Aberdeen's, the war against Tuberculosis.' Elizabeth, Countess of Fingall, Seventy
considerable expense for a charity. The fact that Dudley was able, through her authority as the wife of the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, to not only galvanise public support and donations, but also ensure that the scheme was placed on an almost institutional footing through its associations with the Congested Districts Board and the Jubilee Nurses, contributed significantly towards its success. The scheme was still in existence, largely in its original form, as late as April 1974, when 'the thirty-three nurses of Lady Dudley's Nursing Scheme passed into the service of the Regional Health Boards.' Such avenues were not open to most of the other charitable organisers, who relied mainly upon Church and limited social contacts for success.

The relationships between the female administrators and the objects of their attentions appear for the most part remote. This was perhaps a necessity, given the relationship of dependency which charity work often implied. In the case of evangelical missions, however, the opposite was the case, and workers were encouraged to strike up the closest possible relationships with their subjects in order to ensure trust. Middle-class charitable workers were presumed to act as suitable examples for the working classes to follow, particularly with regard to feminine behaviour. They also shared their skills with other women, through broadly educational ventures which included instruction in sewing and homemaking, as well as reading and writing. Women were subsidised to produce garments in the many Dorcas clubs - sewing groups at which female volunteer workers instructed and supervised, with the end products sold to benefit the

mission - and were encouraged to join the Coal and Savings Clubs which instilled habits of frugality and thrift. As successful members of the middle classes, the female mission workers were presumed to foster such desirable habits in the women they supervised through their example, and share their household skills with the wider community. It is interesting to note that although the missions encouraged education in terms of bible reading and discussion, no texts other than religious were allowed to be used in instruction. Literacy was therefore linked to a thorough grounding in scripture. The object of the charitable societies was to offer the means through which the deserving population might improve themselves, or, in the cases of the reform groups, be offered another chance to regain their respectable status. Thus women's refuges, managed usually by a Ladies' Committee, emphasised the power of redemption through hard work. Most of the associations (including the Magdalen Asylum, the Asylum for Penitent Females, the Prison Gate Mission, the Dublin Female Penitentiary, the Dublin by Lamplight Mission and the Dublin Midnight Mission and Female Home) which dealt with prostitutes and ex-prisoners were residential bodies, with work facilities attached, usually a laundry. The laundries provided an important source of income for the missions, but were of equal importance to the administrators in indicating the required supplication and reversal to appropriate roles for women on the part of the inmates.

On an informal basis, much female philanthropic activity centred upon assistance to and from neighbours, and as such, does not feature in the official

134 Established in 1765.
135 Established in 1812.
records of charitable bodies. The 'verifiable' philanthropic activities focus then, necessarily, upon the middle and upper classes - women who had the leisure, and the financial resources, to devote to others. There were of course large numbers of working-class women who conducted charity work and were active on behalf of the various organisations. An interesting element in the participation of working-class women is that they most often appear, in the records of the Dublin societies at least, as paid workers. City-centre missions including the Fishamble Street Mission, The Dublin Medical Mission¹³⁶ and the Dublin Female Penitentiary, as well as many of the Dublin-based nationwide organisations employed local women to act as home visitors and Bible-women¹³⁷ on the grounds that not only would they know many of the families whom they visited, but also that their visits would arouse less resentment or hostility than those of particularly well-dressed or well educated women.¹³⁸ Other full-time workers also received payment, such as the Matrons of orphanages and homes. The pay for such a position varied but the wage offered, for example, to the Matron at the DPGM in May 1912 was £30 per annum, for a live-in position. This compares favourably with other areas of traditional female employment, such as the £12-20 with board and lodgings available to domestic servants in Dublin, or £10-20 for trained shop assistants.

¹³⁶ Established in 1891.
¹³⁷ The work of the bible-women was full-time, for practical purposes: "They are at their work for five hours every day except on Saturday. Their duty is to read the Bible to the poor, to induce those who are without Bibles to purchase copies, to invite the women to the Mothers' Meeting, and to report cases of sickness to the Superintendent of the Nurses' Home. The poor people value much the sympathy of the Bible-women in the hour of their trouble, and often send for them in their difficulties for the sake of a word of counsel." Report and Statement of Accounts of the Dublin Bible-Woman Mission Dublin: 1878 p. 8.
¹³⁸ See for example the search for Biblewomen by the FSM (57th Annual Report for the year ending June 30, 1911, p. 1) and that of the Dublin Prison Gate Mission for 'some respectable woman' to meet discharged prisoners at the gates. Ms. 263, Minutes of the Prison Gate Mission, October 10, 1913, RCBL.
However, these women were being hired in a professional capacity, and as such they differed from the Biblewomen and home visitors, who were conducting evangelical missions. Of all the women who were active in charitable work, only a small number actually sought to make careers from such work. Although women sought to professionalise the arena of Charity work, through the influence of the Charity Organisation Society, which offered courses in rudimentary social work, it was generally regarded as an occupation for which one required no more qualifications than free time and a willingness to undertake often unpleasant tasks. Since education by example was the key to many of the organisations ventures, the mere presence of industrious and virtuous women amongst the poor was believed to be an end in itself.

**Relationships with Male Administrators**

Formally organised philanthropic work produced hierarchies within institutions, and a complex series of relationships. A crucial area of concern, and one which required a good deal of negotiation, was the relationship between male and female charity workers in mixed-sex organisations. Masculine endorsement and support was necessary for many organisations to succeed, but there was a very real fear that men would dominate committees and dictate policy in arenas more suitable for women. One area in which the ambiguities of male-female relations in charitable work was particularly acute was in the work of the overseas missions. The Dublin University Mission Society, from its establishment in 1890, allowed only graduates of the University full Society membership. As women could not take degrees at Trinity College until 1904, they were therefore excluded.
from full membership. However the nature of the mission work undertaken by the DUMS in India and Japan was such that women were crucial to its success. Male missionaries were not permitted to visit upper caste Indian women, or to treat them at the medical missions, which meant that women workers were essential if the Christian message was to reach the whole of the population. The result was that a Ladies’ Auxiliary of the mission was established, to fund women mission workers. In terms of finances, the male society had no responsibility for the women workers, and indeed, made no contribution whatsoever towards their support. They did, however, play a decisive part in the selection of women missionaries, and had the right to veto any appointment made by the Ladies’ Auxiliary. The subordinate status of the Ladies’ Auxiliary continued even when women were permitted to graduate from TCD and were thus constitutionally eligible for full membership. The continuance of male authority within the DUMS as a whole is all the more surprising when one considers that women workers outnumbered men at a relatively early stage. When the mission began, there were five male workers to one female. In 1901, the figures were eleven to ten respectively, and by 1921 there were five men to thirteen women active in the mission to India. 139

Once out in the mission field, the distinctions between men and women lessened to an extent. Women were assigned a very specific task - to establish links with the Indian women in order to promote their religious message - but occupations which would ordinarily have had gendered implications were rather

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139 DUMS Annual Report, 1921.
more blurred. Owing to a shortage of missionaries, women were called upon to fulfill male tasks such as mission administration, and, more significantly, to conduct religious services in the absence of men. There was a belief that women should not go out on missionary lecture tours, as it was potentially dangerous. Indeed, even when women were successfully conducting missionary work in the field, their presence was not fully approved of. The fact that, constitutionally speaking, only full DUMS members were allowed to undertake missionising, and women assigned auxiliary roles, meant that the society lost some of its most useful members. For example, the organisation had a mission station at Ranchi in India, staffed by men and women. Throughout the teens, male missionary numbers had dropped steadily, and it was eventually decided to withdraw from the area:

The Bishop then urged that even if the men withdrew, the ladies who were carrying on such valuable work should be allowed to remain. The mission agreed to leave the Ladies’ Associate there for the time being. But towards the end of the year it was felt anomalous for them to be still associated with the Mission when there were no members of it in Ranchi, and yet the medical and educational work which Miss Poole and Miss Beatty were carrying on was realised to be of such importance that it was arranged that they should be permitted to retire from the Mission and join the Diocesan Staff under S.P.G. 140

Although many of the women who went to India with the DUMS were chosen specifically for their professional skills, such as Eva Jellett, who ran the women’s hospital at Hazaribagh, it was presumed that their roles would be both more restricted than those available to the men. As Bishop Kennedy expressed it:

140 Kennedy, Chota Nagpur p. 45.
overlook the fact that where so many are engaged for the greater part of the day in their several tasks there must be someone to do the housekeeping. It [the housekeeping] is one in which the most important help in missionary work can be given in a specially self-effacing way. The use of the phrase ‘self-effacing’ reveals a good deal about the perceived position of women workers, implying the importance of their work, as well as an imperative to conceal their part in it. In this way, the work of women in the DUMS resembles that of religious orders, where praise or publicity for work done by individuals should be disregarded.

With regard to the regular missionary work, women were expected to direct their attention only towards other women. The Ladies’ Auxiliary was created for the purpose of accessing female subjects, who were not approachable by men, but this restriction applied even in those situations where men were willing to hear the female worker’s message.

Male and female charity work stemmed from the same Christian impulse: to alleviate the sufferings of the poor, and to fulfill an obligation to do good where possible. ‘None of us liveth unto himself’, as the Rev. Canon Boyd declared in 1916, and this was a guiding principle for philanthropically minded individuals of both sexes in the Church of Ireland. However, there were certain distinctions between the kind of charitable work undertaken by men and women. Women, as noted above, worked largely for the support of other women and children.

Although clerics were involved in such work, especially as ministers to all female establishments, lay male workers tended to be associated with boys or young

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141 ibid, p. 74.
142 ‘A Call to Universal Service’ in The Church of Ireland Gazette, January 7, 1916, p. 15.
men’s clubs. This pattern may also be seen in other churches. The Belfast City Mission of the Presbyterian Church had a strictly gendered division of workers, with men organising the boys and men’s clubs, allowing for little interaction between male and female workers. Similar to the Belfast City Mission, the Dublin Fishamble Street Mission was divided sharply into male and female areas of activity, which were jealously guarded (see below). However, the desired outcome of male and female charity work was very similar, and an identical motivation fuelled both. For example, the policy of placing girls in Protestant-run establishments as apprentices described in the preceding chapter was also implemented by male organisations. This particular strategy was common to other religious bodies. In Dublin, where the nature of charitable work had become increasingly sectarian from the nineteenth century, Catholic agencies similarly ensured that those they assisted were placed in Catholic firms. Indeed, philanthropy in Dublin followed a remarkably similar pattern in terms of distinctions between deserving and undeserving poor, class bias within organisations, and limits placed upon female work, regardless of whether the individual organisation was Catholic or Protestant, male or female.

Within Church of Ireland charities, the type of public work undertaken by the male and female administrators tended to follow suitably gendered divisions of

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144 See Daly, _Dublin, The Deposed Capital_, p. 96.
labour, at least in very obvious ways. In the case of the Fishamble Street Mission, the mixed-sex General Committee in March 1910 discussed a forthcoming bazaar, which was to be held in conjunction with another philanthropic organisation.\footnote{147} Nominations for the various tasks were as follows: ‘Miss Colles was appointed Secretary to the Arts Stall, Miss Walls President of the Produce Stall and Miss Coppige Secretary to the Crafts Stall…Mr. Wheatly [the Honourary Secretary of the Fishamble Street Mission] was appointed to represent the Committee on the Committee of workers for the Bazaar.’\footnote{148} At the same meeting, the maintenance of the mission buildings was raised: ‘The Honorary secretary was directed to obtain estimates for the repair of same’, and a sub-committee was formed to make the necessary arrangements. This particular sub-committee consisted in total of five men. Unusually perhaps, men did not generally attempt to assume authority in areas which were organised by the women administrators, once it was clearly established as an area of female dominance. For example, it was an all-female sub-committee which negotiated rates for coal during the 1913 strike.\footnote{149} In those cases of ‘new business’ which appeared to demand masculine authority, however, such as building maintenance or the extension of society facilities, it was generally appropriated by men. However, the strategy of deferring to male authority, or accepting a gendered division of labour, may also be interpreted as a sensible response to the realities of early twentieth century life. Catholic female philanthropists made similar accommodations with male figures in order to

\footnote{147} Ms 453, FSM Minutes, March 3, 1910, RCBL.
\footnote{148} ibid.
\footnote{149} Ms 453, FSM Minutes, October 5, 1913, RCBL.
continue their work. Maria Luddy has shown how nuns maintained an apparent subservience to their bishops, while quietly conducting their own work: "Their seeming obsequiousness to bishops or members of the clergy is often a strategy of compromise which allows them to develop their work without undue interference." 150

In an organisation such as the FSM, which depended heavily upon a degree of flexibility from its workers, women could occasionally break out of constraining gender roles. One area in which women encroached upon masculine authority was in their occasional assumption of the duty of addressing the various clubs on religious matters. 151 In an association as conservative as the FSM, this was quite unusual, as such an intrusion on male authority in organisations affiliated to the Church of Ireland generally happened only in extreme circumstances, in this case as a result of the manpower shortage caused by the war. As mentioned above, the women workers of the Dublin University Mission Society conducted services when the men were away on lecture tours. That the mission was dependent upon the work undertaken by the female volunteers may be seen in the direction of responsibilities at committee level. For example, in 1913 the FSM decided to establish a Prayer Union in association with the mission. Requests for support were sent to ex-workers and patrons, as participation in a prayer union generally brought financial as well as spiritual returns. The response was however disappointing. "The Honorary Secretary reported that the Circular sent out in June asking former workers to join the Workers' Prayer Union had met with a poor

150 Luddy, Women and Philanthropy p. 27.
response. It was decided that an endeavour should be made to ascertain the whereabouts of former Lady Workers and the circular issued to them. Even when direct participation in the mission’s affairs had ended then, women could still be depended upon to support the work.

The leading male charity workers were clerics or evangelists, both of whose spiritual callings accounted for their participation in such a female-centred world. There existed a dramatic female supremacy in terms of numbers amongst voluntary lay workers, with ratios as high as 10:1 in some organisations. The main professional occupations of female workers were, in fact, general nurse and midwife. Otherwise, no specific formal skill or training was considered necessary, and this partly accounts for the lack of status accorded to voluntary work by women in Ireland, despite the large scale operations they conducted throughout the city and county. The extent of autonomy enjoyed by women workers in the organisations with regard to policy decisions varied considerably from group to group. In some cases, the mixed or all-male committee was content to leave the administration entirely in the hands of the women members, and met weekly, fortnightly or monthly merely to approve of action already taken, or offer support in the event of a dispute. In many cases, particularly those where male membership was limited to honorary positions, male input was negligible, but it was still considered necessary to seek masculine endorsement, even if restricted to printing their names and titles on the annual reports. Those organisations which enjoyed the greatest amount of administrative freedom were, ironically, the female

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152 Ms 453, FSM Minutes, November 6, 1913, RCBL.
153 Fishamble Street Mission General Committee: ten women, four clerics and one lay man.
offshoots of all-male groups from which female participation was excluded. Many of the prominent Protestant charitable organisations in Dublin, although administered by all-male committees, had ‘Ladies’ Auxiliaries’ and ‘Ladies’ Associations’ attached to their general operations. In fact, some of these women's groups were doubly 'auxiliaried', as their male parent organisation was, in many cases, itself an auxiliary of a British organisation. Thus all-female committees were created which enjoyed the support and authority of the male parent organisation but, since they were concerned with what were regarded as areas of female specialisation such as child care, rehabilitation of prostitutes, domestic education and nursing, they were largely left to their own administrative devices.

In England, the women's auxiliaries were very firmly placed in a subservient, largely fund-raising role, with little scope for the formulation of policy. In Ireland, the organisations which had female auxiliaries tended to be the largest and best funded, and as such were capable of supporting their 'minority' additions with relative ease. Those groups which appeared to exercise an authentic division of responsibility amongst mixed committee members were principally those organised by the Society of Friends. In keeping with their religious practice of full responsibility amongst members, whether male or female, women charity

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154 However, since in most of these cases, for example the Ladies’ Association of the Hibernian Auxiliary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, the Irish Society for Promoting the Scriptural Education and Religious Instruction of Irish Roman Catholics, Chiefly through the Medium of their own Language - auxiliary group the ‘Ladies’ Irish Association’; The Dublin University Mission Society - Ladies’ Auxiliary, and the numerous Ladies’ Committees which formed an integral part of most mixed-sex charity groups, emphasis was placed on the continuity between the two countries and their endeavours, and were regarded by the Irish women, as indicated above, as an important means of asserting their loyalty.

administrators played an equal part in policy formation. It is difficult to gauge whether there existed a degree of tension between men and women serving on the same committee, but it is clear that in most cases of disputes, either in terms of a disagreement concerning policy, or of a clash with bodies outside of the organisation, men tended to assume the dominant positions. The tendency to defer to male authority may be seen in more mundane ways, in the allocation of tasks within mixed committees. For example, in November 1913, Miss O'Neill, a committee member of the Fishamble Street Mission, proposed that a special supplement to the annual report be published, as 1913 was the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the mission. When a decision on the proposal was taken some weeks later, it was approved, but ‘it was decided that such a report should be drawn up by the Rev. R. M. Gwynn assisted by the following sub-committee viz Miss Wall, Miss Lawson, Miss O'Neill, (and) Mrs. Wheatley with powers of co-option.’ Thus although a woman initiated the plan for a supplementary report, a man was elected to head the operation, and the report was published under his name.

The function of charitable work was a continual source of debate in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with some arguing that if relief were needed, it should be provided by the government, as opposed to private concerns. As might be expected, the greatest support for the concept of private participation in philanthropic endeavours came from women, and women’s groups, since it was only through voluntary action that untrained and ‘unprofessional’ women could

156 Minutes of the FSM, December, 1913.
participate. The other factor governing the extent of female participation was expense. Female voluntary workers, who held the key roles in policy making, gave their services free. Indeed, some of the female administrators used this fact as a means of exercising uncontested authority. Miss Rice, honorary Lady Superintendent of the DPGM, came from a family tradition of military service. She inherited a government pension on the deaths of her father and brother in service, and so 'was enabled to devote her remarkable gifts and energies as an honorary worker to the Mission.'\(^{157}\) One needs to remember, however, that not all women who undertook voluntary charitable work were doing so out of frustration at being denied access to full-time paid careers. Most who were involved - some extensively - had no specific training for the tasks they undertook, and had neither the means nor the inclination to acquire such qualifications, should they become necessary. Women in the early twentieth century were effectively eliminated from sections of the workforce once professional standards were imposed, or when formal qualifications became a prerequisite for participation, resulting in increasing masculine dominance and a reduced or marginalised female role. Midwives, for example, who had traditionally held dominance in the field, were rapidly demoted and their work and practical experience disregarded, when medical advances created fields of professional specialisation for men.\(^{158}\) Thus women in charity work were 'permitted', and even encouraged, to fill roles and conduct campaigns which did not require academic qualifications, or confer professional status.

\(^{157}\) Miss 263, DPGM Committee Minutes, October 1, 1915, RCBL.

This did not mean however that women were ignorant of the work they undertook, or that it was less important than that carried out by male professionals. In some ways, remaining on the unqualified side of the professional barrier allowed women to retain control of certain defined areas. The success of Lady Aberdeen's campaign against tuberculosis, and the enthusiasm with which her work in the Women's National Health Association of Ireland (WHNA) was greeted may be partly attributed to her willingness to accede to masculine professional authority in medical affairs, while the female workers conducted the large-scale home visiting, nursing and consultations which made up the actual work of the WHNA. In 1908, 'a letter was sent on behalf of the Women's National Health Association of Ireland by its President to each of the ten Clinical Hospitals in Dublin asking that a representative of the medical staff should be nominated to act on a Committee to consider the whole question.' A committee was formed, of ten male doctors and Lady Aberdeen, and the work of the committee devolved, for practical purposes, on to the nurses of the WNHA. Thus, although advice was ostensibly sought from the male establishment, work was undertaken on the women's terms. Similarly, in her speech to the Royal Institute of Public Health in 1911, Lady Aberdeen was at pains to stress the divisions between professional health care, exemplified by the men she addressed, and domestic health care, crucial to professional success, but unthreatening and solely female-centred:

Doctors and men of science after deep research make discoveries of far-reaching beneficence which they make known in medical journals and apply to patients as they may deem desirable, but when these discoveries involve acceptance of certain principles and practices by the general public in order to

159 Sláinte vol. 1, no. 4, April 1909 pp. 68-9.
be efficacious, such as the facts that tuberculosis is not hereditary, but is transmissible and can be cured in its early stages, and can be prevented by proper building-up of resisting powers by good food and fresh air, then you have to secure the confidence of the housewives and their active co-operation if you wish for rapid and fruitful results.  

When the FSM was established in 1862, during the general growth of nineteenth-century philanthropic bodies, its objects were ‘to promote evangelistic, temperance, social and community work in accordance with the Church of Ireland.’ Although drawing heavily upon the work of women the administrative make-up of the mission followed, in its higher positions, the general structures of similar organisations, in that men dominated the senior, honorary echelons. The President in 1915 was the bishop of Ossory, the Vice Presidents comprised the Dean of Christ Church and a Fellow of Trinity College, the Rev. R.M. Gwynn, and there was a sole female representative amongst the Honorary Members, alongside five clerics and one layman. The functions of the honourary members were limited in the FSM to the dedication of an annual charity sermon in aid of the mission by the Bishop of Ossory, and support for fund raising events such as the annual sale of work, the charity bazaar, and later, the annual Gift Day. The annual sale of work was in fact abandoned in 1908, due to falling subscriptions. The intense competition for public interest, and, more importantly, funds, from other similar sales was the reason for its demise.

163 Ms 453, opening statement of FSM minutes, RCBL.  
162 This was not always the case. In other organisations, the assumption of an honourary position merely implied that that member did not receive a wage, but in fact were full-time workers. See for example the office of Honourary Lady Superintendent of the Dublin Prison Gate Mission, or the Honourary Matrons of the Magdalen Asylum.
However, when one examines the list of members of the General Committee, who attended the routine monthly meetings, and coordinated the efforts of the mission, the dominance of female workers becomes apparent. There were four clergymen, whose parish responsibilities overlapped with the area served by the FSM, one layman, and ten women. Of these women, seven were unmarried, reflecting the general ratio of single to married women in most charitable organisations during this period. But arguably women’s greatest impact was not merely through their direct efforts to alleviate poverty and distress, but as contributors and subscribers to organisations. Although various charities went in and out of favour, as new bodies were continually formed, female subscribers and collectors formed the mainstay of the Dublin charities, and without their efforts, most of the organisations would have been very short lived. The Ladies’ Irish Association for Promoting the Religious Instruction of the Irish People displayed a similar disproportion in terms of male and female contributions to its General Fund, with 45 female donors to 10 males. The women contributed a total of £51 4s 5d in 1912 against a male total of £9 5s 6d.¹⁶³

Women also exercised their discretion in allocating funds to their favoured charities, or indeed to their particular concerns within each organisation. One reason for a large discrepancy in gender donations may be that some men would have preferred to contribute to an allied male-administered organisation. The Irish Society for Promoting the Scriptural Education and Religious Instruction of Irish Roman Catholics, for example, had several distinct organisations under the one

administrative title, each of them catering for a particular interest group, and each
one targeting a particular sector of society for support. The gender imbalance was
particularly clear in the cases of the individual funds organised within the umbrella organisation. There were for example 38 female donors to the Medical Mission Fund in 1912, each donating an average of eight shillings, and only four male donors, giving an average of thirteen shillings each. The men provided a total of £2 12s 6d, the women £15 13s 11d. The following year the division was even greater, with female donations totaling £70 0s 10d, and male 11s. It is clear that when an area was perceived to be of specifically female interest, such as medical mission work, the men subscribers largely withdrew. The Ladies' Irish Association for Promoting the Religious Instruction of the Irish People themselves sought to delineate areas over which they retained exclusive control, and carefully phrased their appeals for funds in terms which laid stress on the suitability of female action:

'[The third object of the society was] a Relief and Clothing Department - This is a branch of the work for which a Ladies' Association is especially adapted; and there exist most interesting opportunities to go on with a wider range of ministration to the varied needs, not only of the poorer class, but of others who have known better days.'

The Ladies' Association, in common with many of the other charities, and in particular those charities which had their strongest support amongst the upper middle class, issued collecting cards as a means of raising funds. The fact that in the early twentieth century, many of the organisations actually published the

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164 ibid.
names not merely of subscribers to the funds, but also those who donated via
collection cards, meant that subscriptions were generally in respectable round
shillings or pounds, as opposed to pence. Children were invited to participate as
fund-raisers, and had their own collection cards, which they were encouraged to
display in prominent places at home to exert pressure on visitors to contribute. In
1880 a children's branch of the Irish Society was formed, for the express purpose
of raising funds. Although boys were encouraged to participate, it would appear
that the collections were raised exclusively by girls. The 'Bruey Branch', as it was
known, had its classically Victorian origins in the tale of a young girl who,
although dying of an unidentified lingering disease, collected money for the benefit
of the deprived and ignorant Irish Roman Catholics. The Bruey Branch issued
regular bulletins on the work of its juvenile supporters, as well as hints on how to
increase levels of donations. Those 'targeted' by the young collectors were
obviously wealthy, as 'hint number six' of the 1910 report exhorted children to
'Keep an eye to shillings, and even sixpences, as well as sovereigns.'\textsuperscript{165} The
advice offered to children depended upon some use of psychology, number eight
stating: 'Unless very sure of your ground, ask for a 'contribution' rather than a
'subscription' or 'donation'. The former is alarming, because it implies
continuance; the latter is objectionable, because it precludes asking next year.
'Contribution' neither frightens the contributor nor hinders the collector, and
nearly always results in a 'subscription' in course of time.'\textsuperscript{166} Other hints included

\begin{footnotes}
\item[165] Annual Report for the Irish Society for Promoting the Scriptural Education and Religious
Instruction of Irish Roman Catholics. Dublin, 1910 p. 33.
\item[166] ibid.
\end{footnotes}
marking Annual Reports and ‘turning down leaves at the more important or attractive pages, and using the pencil freely’ before lending to others in the belief that the reader will ‘seek out and read all your marked passages.’ Children were also advised to learn ‘striking facts and statistics’, and bring them up in general conversation. Charitable organisations in Ireland tended to enjoy greater success amongst young girls than boys (also reflected in the adult world), with many groups experiencing difficulties in galvanising male enthusiasm. The Dublin University Mission Society, for instance, had little difficulty in supplying the Indian children in their orphanage with dolls and girl’s toys donated by children in Ireland, but continually called for an increase in boy’s donations of unwanted games and playthings.

From an early age, girls were encouraged to think of the welfare of others. Along with the obligation they received through religious instruction to be dutiful, obedient and thoughtful, organisations such as the Girl Guides reinforced standards of cheerful self-sacrifice. Modeled on the Baden-Powell Boy Scouts, the Girl Guides were intended to teach practical skills which would prepare a child for all aspects of her life. Indeed, the aims were highly ambitious:

1. To make themselves of practical use in case of emergency or accident; to render first aid; to transport injured to hospital; to improvise ambulances; hospitals, etc.; to make hospital clothes; to light fires; to cook; to nurse, etc.
2. To prepare themselves for a Colonial life in case their destiny should lead them to such: including camp life, farming, gardening, housekeeping, cooking, and so on, teaching them Self-reliance, Energy and Thrift.
3. To make themselves generally more useful to others and to themselves by learning useful occupations and handiwork, and yet retaining their womanliness, and to improve their Physique.
The Dublin Girl Guide branches declared themselves open to all denominations, but they found that membership was confined to the Church of Ireland. The reason was, as Maud Taylor ruefully pointed out, the ‘so many clergy have seen in the Girl Guide movement a useful adjunct to their general work’, they encouraged a strong church sense of identity which discouraged others from joining. However, given the focus of the organisation, as described above, membership would in any case be self-selecting. The Girl Guides worked closely with other Church of Ireland groups such as the Girls’ Friendly Society during the war, to raise money for ex-soldiers. The Guides were open to all classes, but the compulsory weekly fee for membership meant that it was principally a middle class organisation. Indeed, parents were reassured by Guide leaders that their children would mix only with their own class, as each branch drew from their local community: ‘The difficulty of mixing girls of different social grades is seldom a real problem except in anticipation, for the circumstances under which a Company is formed generally determines its type.’

The Boy Scouts and Girl Guides were headed by single-sex committees. In mixed organisations, one often notes a sharp contrast between the attendance and participation of men and women which emphasises the importance women volunteers attached to their duties. The records of the Jubilee Annuity Committee, administered by the Incorporated Association for the Relief of Distressed

168 ibid, p. 34.
169 Ms 3 57, Clergy Daughters’ School Committee Minutes, November 22, 1919, RCBL.
Protestants, indicate that between 1909 and 1910 the weekly committee meetings were attended by an average of four women and one man\textsuperscript{171}, who usually took the chair. Similarly the minutes of the Fishamble Street Mission for 1910 show that women were the chief initiators of resolutions at the monthly committee meetings, at a ratio of 3:1.\textsuperscript{172} Despite this level of activity, and the experience inevitably gained, it was generally the male committee members who represented the organisations in any official capacity. For example, the male secretary of the Incorporated Association for the Relief of Distressed Protestants attended the annual conference of the Charity Organisation Society in England each year, despite a higher number of female workers within the society.\textsuperscript{173} Women were also more likely to be co-opted on to sub-committees, and be instructed to deal with compilation of information concerning the organisation. The males were generally prepared however to accept the advice and conclusions of the women, particularly in relation to those charities which dealt principally with women.

Support for the growing suffrage movement in the early twentieth-century indicated the inevitable pressure for the greater participation by women in public spheres not necessarily related to the question of the franchise. Female administrators were sought after for very specific purposes: because they could fulfill functions which were considered unsuitable for men, or because the particular area to which they were being granted access had been 'abandoned' by male administrators. The two main British foreign missions, the Society for the

\textsuperscript{171} Ms. 485, Minutes of the Incorporated Association for the Relief of Distressed Protestants, 1909-1910, RCBL.
\textsuperscript{172} Ms. 453, Minutes of the FSM, 1910, RCBL.
\textsuperscript{173} Ms. 485, ARDP Minutes, RCBL.
Propagation of the Gospel and the Church Missionary Society, had both attempted to exclude women from their overseas missions operations, but were forced to relent when their male missionaries had limited success in converting women, particularly in India.\textsuperscript{174} The Dublin University Mission Society learned from this mistake, and were careful to include women in their society, albeit in a subservient role. Where women's participation was invited by men, through necessity, it was generally circumscribed and limited.

The Fishamble Street Mission is a particularly good example of how power and responsibilities were divided between male and female workers. The Mission organised a huge number of activities from its premises in Fishamble Street, and various clubs and societies occupied the premises every day of the week, at different times. The groups included: The St. John's and Fishamble Street Temperance Society; the Needlework Guild; the Dublin Bible-woman Mission; Young Men's and Girls' Friendly Societies; a branch of the Dublin University Missions; the Dorcas Sewing Club; a Savings Club; Coal Club; Clothing Club; Men's Club; a Band of Hope; a Sunday School; Mother's Meetings; a Sewing Class and a Girls' Gymnasium Class. Women voluntary workers staffed all of the societies which had a female orientation, and contributed significantly to the other groups, although their assistance with those groups catering for men, such as the Boy's Club and the Boy Scouts (both of which were dissolved during the First World War), was always regarded as temporary, and was limited as far as possible.

\textsuperscript{174} Heeney, \textit{The Women's Movement} p. 59.
The emphasis, as far as the women were concerned, was firmly upon self-help, and they were most actively involved in those groups which allowed them to use their own domestic experience in managing household budgets for the education and benefit of the club members. The various clubs all stressed the necessity for commitment, in terms of finance or labour, from its members, and there were rarely any unearned donations in money or kind given. That this policy was fully endorsed by the female workers is indicated by the disproportionate weighting of funds in the female-controlled clubs. For example, in 1915, the Clothing Club had a turnover of £113 14s 4d, against a figure of £3 is 8d for the Young Men’s Friendly Society. The Dorcas Sewing Club realised £118 15s 4d, and the Coal Fund £125 9s 9d, all organised by the women workers. Much of the responsibility for the FSM’s finances lay with the women workers, with over three-quarters of the annual average turnover of £340 between 1909 and 1918 being raised or administered directly by the women workers, and they were scrupulous in their attention to lapsed subscribers, and repayment defaulters. If a commitment was undertaken to join the Coal Club, for example, a subscriber was allowed to defer payment for only two weeks, before entitlement to reduced fuel in the winter months lapsed.

Interestingly, the only occasion on which financial grants were made gratis was for emigration, or the assumption of suitable employment. Such funds

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175 FSM Annual Report, Dublin, 1915.
176 ibid, returns from individual clubs, 1909-1918.
177 Immediately after the war, many Church of Ireland members seriously considered emigration as a response to the unsettled social and political climate in Ireland. See the Church of Ireland Gazette for discussions on the opportunities available in Canada and New Zealand, such as ‘Clerical Emigration’, July 23, 1920, p. 476.
came from the 'Emigration, Loan, Outfit and Registry Branch' of the Mission, which was staffed by a committee of Ladies, on whom sole responsibility for the allocation of funds lay. Indeed, the ethos of the mission as a whole may be seen in their administration of this fund. In 1914, fifty-nine cases were dealt with, at least thirty-five of which were women, although the proportion of female applicants was probably much higher. The women workers granted loans and accepted subscriptions from mission members on a Thursday afternoon, after the Mothers' Meetings. The records show only female requests, either for assistance or admission to one or another of the clubs. Seventeen loans were granted in 1914, and four of these (sex not specified) were helped to emigrate. Eight women were provided with work in their homes, and a further twenty seven girls were either placed in situations or granted out-work. Only three men were provided with work, reflecting the lack of contact which the female administration had with possible sources of male employment, the priority they themselves gave to helping women, and the greater ease with which women could be accommodated in a flexible, poorly paid labour market. In 1917, the assistance offered was entirely to women, since during the war large numbers of men, both administrators and club members, had joined the army. A shortage of ready funds during the war years, when turnover fell between 1915 and 1916 from £566 to £388,178 meant that the assistance offered to girls was largely in kind: 'In many cases the girls have been helped to get clothes to go to service, otherwise they could not have gone to respectable places.'179 The majority of the girls who received assistance from the

178 Ms 453, FSM minutes, 1915 and 1916, RCBL.
FSM were helped to go into service, and the mission established a registry of suitable local girls who were available for domestic duties. The system was similar to that operated by the Good Shepherd nuns for the orphans in their care, as described by Frank O'Connor's mother. Prospective employers paid a fee to the mission for the service, but the girls paid nothing. The advantage of such a register lay in matching 'vetted' domestics with respectable employees, and keeping local girls in suitable stations.

Part of the reason for the success of the FSM, and its longevity, lay in its informal affiliations with non-charitable Protestant institutions, from which it drew a good deal of its support in both funds and volunteer workers. Close contacts through the women workers to Alexandra College and Trinity College resulted in volunteers to staff the Sunday Schools and Girls' Clubs, and offers of help from women in both of these institutions with the running of the Boy's Sunday School was accepted, albeit reluctantly, in the early stages of the war. The Committee felt that it was inappropriate for young women to participate in men's and boy's clubs, even when the activities were strictly educational. However, the committee did not accept aid indiscriminately. Because of the mission's long association with Trinity College, - apart from the students who undertook voluntary teaching in the mission's schools, academic staff, including John Pentland Mahaffy, regularly enrolled as committee members - TCD's Christian Union approached the mission when they wished to establish a Boy's Club, which they proposed to maintain at

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180 Often, the girls were not told where they were being sent, and the nuns would remove them from situations if they believed the other occupants of the house represented a corrupting influence. O'Connor, An Only Child p. 53.

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their own expense. The proposal was initially approved by the FSM at their December 4, 1913 meeting, although by January 5, 1915 they had changed their minds, and refused permission on the grounds that 'some of the Christian Union Workers would be non-conformists.'

The location of the FSM in the centre of the city, within easy access of other similar groups, and the anonymity provided by the larger population, caused a problem shared by many such organisations: the exploitation of the charity’s resources by semi-professional mendicants who applied for assistance from several institutions simultaneously. The women workers came into their own in the detection of such cases of fraud, as their visits to the homes of suspected cases were often carried out under the excuse of routine visiting. In 1918, however, the FSM was criticised for offering inducements to children to attend the mission’s schools and clubs. Complaints were received from the resident clerics of a number of parishes surrounding the mission regarding a decline in attendance at Church Sunday Schools due to the groups organised by the FSM women volunteers. A conference was held to discuss the problem, and was attended by members of the FSM committee (all male) and a number of local clerics, as well as representatives of the Religious Tract Society. Some delegates were in favour of the mission’s activities, since it was felt that the Protestant groups had a common objective, while others felt that the mission was exercising too strong a hold over their parishioners, and directing their attentions away from the home churches. What is particularly interesting is the timing of this conference. The problem of

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182 Ms 453, FSM Minutes, January 5, 1914, RCBL.
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overlapping concerns between charities and churches was not new. At the turn of
the century George Williams described the excessive numbers of charities which
competed with each other for 'custom', and hailed the establishment of the
'Association of Charities' as a positive step towards eliminating the abuse of
charitable resources by individuals. However the increased role of women in
public and private philanthropic work in the absence of men during the war
appears to have been interpreted as an undesirable development. The language of
the various clerics and male representatives suggests a regrouping of traditional
forces, and a return to the former, male directed, structures within the society. An
area of especial attention was the women's field of Sunday Schools. The Rector of
the parishes of St. Peter, St. Catherine, St. Mary and St. Paul declared that 'the
danger lay in the possibility of offering inducements to children to wander for the
sake of gaining larger prizes or more excursions or fetes', a direct reference to
the policy of a number of the women workers of funding the mission's summer
excursions during the war from their own resources, and the assistance of friends,
after decisions had been made at committee level to abandon them on the grounds
of expense. The conclusion drawn by the all-male conference could equally be
applied to the female volunteers: 'The clergy who recorded this experience stated
that in the case of such wanderers they found it difficult to obtain a proper
influence over the family, in which the spirit of reward-seeking was pernicious.'

From the mid nineteenth century, women had become a considerable force

183 Williams, *Dublin Charities*, p. 60.
184 Ms 453, Conference Report, FSM minutes, October 24, 1918, RCBL.
185 See for example the FSM minutes, June 4, 1914, Ms 453, RCBL.
186 ibid.
in terms of the disposal of their funds to charitable organisations, and it is in this area that the presence of women in the philanthropic field was truly significant.

Their contributions were important less because of their individual worth in financial terms, but in their regularity, and the fact that many women, as well as contributing regularly, took up collections on an individual basis. In the case of the FSM women constituted fourteen out of the total of sixteen collectors for the General Fund in 1915. Women outnumbered men as subscribers in the same year by 137 to 65, and although men tended to offer larger individual donations to the various funds than women (men contributed for example on average nine shillings to the General Fund in 1920, while women gave four), the total female donations exceeded those of men in every year between 1913 and 1920. In the FSM, particular attention in terms of donations were given by women workers and subscribers to those areas of especial feminine interest. Female administrators generally took responsibility for the funds within the mission with which they were specifically concerned, however; when new funds were established, such as a memorial fund for long term mission workers in 1911, responsibility for its allocation was made on the grounds of perceived gender suitability. A committee of women administered this particular fund, whereas an all-male committee took responsibility for the educational funds, and ultimately, the General fund.

The Fishamble Street Mission suffered a decline, both in terms of numbers of staff and financial contributions from 1914 onwards. In 1922, the annual

\[188\] Ms 453, FSM Minutes, May 5, 1911, RCBL.
turnover was down to £254 9s 1d, and the mission appears to have had great
difficulty in recovering from the effects of the war. Like many other missionary
groups in Ireland during this period, a proportion of the full-time staff were
English, and several of them returned to England to take up full-time war work. \(^{189}\)
Added to this was the loss of male volunteer staff killed during the war, and the
general decline in Protestant staff and club members remarked upon in the 1922
annual report. \(^{190}\) The remaining staff, the majority of whom were elderly, were
unable to mobilise new volunteer workers, and the mission appears to have closed
in 1924.

The political changes which occurred in Dublin between 1910 and 1925
did not significantly alter the nature of female Church of Ireland charities. The
numbers of individuals dependent upon assistance remained constant, and there
was no appreciable alteration in the numbers seeking help. Appendix A
demonstrates that only six out of the ninety-two organisations active in 1914 had
ceased their operations by 1928. \(^{191}\) Four out of these six were overtly evangelical
bodies, and their demise is a reflection of the changes in Church of Ireland
attitudes towards its prosletysing efforts after the First World War (see
conclusion). The war had of course brought about a change in direction for many
women, some of whom took on additional charitable responsibilities to further the
war effort, and others who abandoned their original cause for war-related work.

\(^{189}\) Losses to the mission in terms of staff were particularly heavy in early 1916 - see letters of
resignation in committee minutes for that year.
\(^{190}\) 60th Annual Report, Dublin, 1922.
\(^{191}\) These were St. Peter's Parochial Male and Female Sunday, Daily and Infant Schools; the
Dublin Prison Gate Mission; the Domestic Training Institute; the Dublin By Lamplight Mission;
the Fishamble Street Mission, and the Asylum for Penitent Females.
As in England, there was an initial rush to volunteer for nursing, although experienced hands warned that enthusiastic amateurs would do more harm than good:

I would strongly advise Southern Irishwomen to leave any organisation under the Red Cross alone until the war is over...Our doctors and nurses should be absolutely free now for their professional work. If women really desire to help, they would be much better to call themselves “Emergency Corps”, and should learn to scrub and clean and polish, so as to help in hospitals and homes, and should learn practical cookery for invalids and children. Their services will be far more useful in helping with tired and sick people in their own homes, and in visiting and cleaning the houses, and helping with the children of those who need help, especially among the families of those at the front, or those deprived of work through the war. 192

However, the glamour of nursing brave soldiers was attractive to many, and indeed enthusiasm for such work was stirred by women like Lady Aberdeen, who appealed through the Church of Ireland Gazette for Red Cross volunteers. In an address to interested parties, she described a nationwide network of Red Cross branches, based on existing voluntary nursing bodies. The language used captures the spirit amongst many members of the Church of Ireland, who, as R.B. McDowell wrote, regarded the war as ‘their finest hour’. 193

I am confident we may depend on the thousands of members of the first aid and nursing classes to assist in forming local Red Cross branches all over the country, as well as themselves forming voluntary aid detachments and submitting themselves to the further drilling and training which will fit them to be efficient units ready to be attached to the forces for the home defence of Ireland when they are fully organised. 194

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192 ‘Ulsterwomen’ Irish Times, August 17, 1914.
194 ‘Irish Red Cross Work’ in Church of Ireland Gazette, September 25, 1914, p. 789.
Even those who were unable to take an active part in nursing could share in war work, by knitting ‘comforts’ for soldiers. The Queen, via Lady Aberdeen, asked for 300,000 pairs of socks and 300,000 knitted belts from Ireland. The *Church of Ireland Gazette* obligingly printed patterns, and two charitable birds were killed with one stone by urging that ‘Irishwomen in distress or unemployment [caused by] the war, be employed as much as possible to make these articles.’ The speed with which women of the Church of Ireland rallied to the cause may be seen in the establishment of the Irish Women’s Association, which sent generous food parcels to prisoners of war. Begun in early 1915, the Association was just one year later sending fortnightly parcels to over 2,000 prisoners belonging to Irish Regiments. In addition, they were organising the distribution of all sorts of materials to soldiers at the front. The spiritual needs of the soldiers were catered for through the collection and distribution of ‘pocket scriptures’, much of the money for which was raised by women.

At the war’s end, women charity workers of the Church of Ireland faced

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195 'The Queen’s Appeal for the Troops', *Church of Ireland Gazette*, October 9, 1914, p. 821.
196 Each “parcel” consists of two boxes which contain always: - 4 lbs. hard biscuits, Ration biscuits and Cabins; 1 lb. tin of beef, 1 lb tin of vegetables, 1 lb tin of milk, 2 pieces of soap, compressed soup, Worcester sauce, 1 lb tin of fish, 1 lb tin of jam or golden syrup, or 1 lb tin of dripping, ½ lb each of tea and sugar, 1 tin of fruit or cocoa, coffee or cheese, 6 Captain’s biscuits, mustard, salt, 50 cigarettes or tobacco.” *The Work of the Irish Women’s Association* in the *Gazette*, January 7, 1916, p. 15.
197 The Association appealed for cash or donations in kind to send ‘woollen socks, shirts (which should be of flannel and either khaki or dark grey in colour), pants, vests and smokes are needed most of all; soap, chocolate, cards, magazines, matches and tinderlighters are also most acceptable.’ *Ibid.*
new and varied challenges. However, their response to the altered political landscape was to return to their pre-war work, perhaps encouraged by the knowledge that now, more than ever, their efforts to assist the needy poor of their church were more important than ever.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Aims</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>No. Resident and/or assisted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.F.D. Society in Ireland</td>
<td>‘To assist with grants the poor clergy of the Irish Church, and their wives and families.’</td>
<td>1884</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albert Retreat for Aged Females</td>
<td>‘To give a home to poor but respectable Protestant women who are past work.’</td>
<td>1831</td>
<td>40 (1910)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexandra Guild Tenement Company</td>
<td>‘To improve the dwellings and surroundings of the poor.’ Run by Alexandra College Students.</td>
<td>1897</td>
<td>5 houses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Saints’ Home for Girls</td>
<td>‘To provide a home for destitute Protestant orphans’</td>
<td>1884</td>
<td>12 (1910)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association for Discountenancing Vice, and Promoting the Knowledge</td>
<td>‘To prevent the spread of vice by promoting the knowledge and practice of the Christian religion.’</td>
<td>1792</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and Practice of the Christian Religion</td>
<td>‘To assist necessitous Protestants of good character’</td>
<td>1836</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association for the Relief of Distressed Protestants</td>
<td>‘For Protestant servants of good character who…are unable to continue in service.’</td>
<td>1809</td>
<td>12 (1910)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asylum for Aged and Infirm Female Servants</td>
<td>‘For aged Protestant women of a respectable class.’</td>
<td>12 (1910)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asylum for Penitent Females*</td>
<td>‘The rescue of fallen women and their reformation.’</td>
<td>1835</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bertrand Female Orphan School</td>
<td>‘To board and educate the orphan daughters of respectable Protestant parents.’</td>
<td>1872</td>
<td>31 (1911)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bethesda Female Orphan School</td>
<td>‘For the daughters of respectable Protestant parents.’</td>
<td>1787</td>
<td>25 (1911)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Sheils’ Charity</td>
<td>Mixed-sex charity for the ‘Respectable Poor’, administered by Anglicans</td>
<td>1888</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church Education Society for Ireland</td>
<td>‘The education of Protestant girls and boys in rural areas where Protestants are too few to obtain a separate National School Board…and too poor to maintain a school of their own.’</td>
<td>1839</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church Home</td>
<td>‘The education and training of respectable parentage’</td>
<td>1888</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of Ireland Auxiliary to the London Society for Promoting</td>
<td>To aid widows and unmarried orphans of the clergy of the Church of Ireland who are left in poor circumstances.</td>
<td>1863</td>
<td>63 (1899)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christianity among the Jews</td>
<td>‘For Promoting the Education of the Children of the Clergy of the Church of Ireland.’</td>
<td>1887</td>
<td>46 (1916)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of Ireland Clergy Widows’ and Orphans’ Society</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of Ireland Jubilee Fund</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Church of Ireland Rescue League
Claremont Institution for the Education of the Deaf and Dumb
Countess of Dufferin’s Fund
Cottage Home for Little Children
Cottage Home
Cripples Home
Damar’s Institute
Domestic Training Institute*
Drumcondra Road Boarding and Day School
Dublin by Lamplight Mission*
Dublin City Mission
Dublin Country Air Association
Dublin Female Penitentiary
Dublin Medical Mission
Dublin Midnight Mission and Female Home
Dublin Parochial Association
Dublin Prison Gate Mission*
Dublin Protestant Deaf and Dumb Association
Dublin Protestant Prisoners’ Aid Society
Dublin Providence Home

‘For the education of deaf and dumb Protestant children.’
Funded women training as doctors and nurses in Ireland and India
‘For the reception of the very young children of the industrious Protestant poor.’
‘To train Protestant girls for Domestic Service’
‘There is no religious test, but the children are trained in the Holy Scriptures.’
‘For the maintenance of poor widows.’
‘To provide training in Domestic Economy for Protestant Girls.’
Run in connection with the Protestant Retreat
‘The Rescue and Reform of the Outcast Women of Society.’
Joint Evangelical Churches Mission
‘To provide rest and fresh air for ailing members of the Dublin Protestant poor.’
Mission directed ‘to the religious and moral advancement of the women, and their advancement in habits of order and industry.’
‘To combine evangelistic teaching with medical work amongst the poor’
Reformation of Prostitutes.
‘Relief of the poor in Dublin…through the medium of Church of Ireland clerics.’
‘To help women and young girls leaving the City Short Sentence Prisons.’
‘To Assist Men and Women on their Discharge from Prison to lead a Respectable Life.’
‘For Protestant girls of good moral character of any rank, in need of a home.’

1812
1887
1884
1879
1882
1874
1724
1856
1860
1886
1812
1891
1862
1847
1876
1881
1838

45 (1910)
16 (1910)
70 boarders,
60 day pupils
40 residents
(1899)
12 missionaries
367
10,037 treated
4,290 visited
30 (1910)
275 applied
for admission
110 in
dormitories
39 assisted
(1900)
50 (1908)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dublin University Fuh-Kien Mission (Ladies’ Auxiliary)</td>
<td>Evangelical Magazine Fund</td>
<td></td>
<td>1793, 137 (1898)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Orphanage</td>
<td>‘To train up and educate young Presbyterian girls...They may be Presbyterians or Episcopalians on admission, but they will be brought up as Presbyterians.’</td>
<td></td>
<td>16 (1907)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Orphan House for Destitute Female Children who have lost their Parents</td>
<td>‘The children...besides being lodged, clothed and maintained, are provided with religious instruction, education and industrial training.’</td>
<td>1790</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Orphan House (Nth. Circular Road)</td>
<td>‘For Protestant orphan girls who have lost both parents.’</td>
<td>1790</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Orphan House (Harold’s Cross)</td>
<td>‘To train the orphans in the fear of the Lord’</td>
<td>1790</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishamble Street Mission*</td>
<td>‘To Promote Evangelistic, Temperance, Social and Community Work in Accordance with the Church of Ireland’</td>
<td>1862</td>
<td>15 different clubs organised in 1915.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fortick’s Alms-House</td>
<td>Home for aged respectable females of the parishes of St. Mary, St. George and St. Thomas</td>
<td>1724</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Huguenot Fund</td>
<td>‘To grant sums of money to aid destitute descendants of Huguenots.’</td>
<td>1716</td>
<td>7 (1902)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls’ Friendly Society in Ireland</td>
<td>‘To bind together...women and girls...for mutual help (religious and secular), for sympathy and prayer’</td>
<td>1877</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls’ Training Home</td>
<td>‘To protect young girls from the temptations of the city, to bring them under religious influences on Protestant principles, and to train them for service.’</td>
<td>1883</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governess Association of Ireland</td>
<td>‘The Promotion of Higher Education of Ladies’ as Teachers—the Collection of Funds for Endowments, and the Registration of Qualified Governesses and Teachers.’</td>
<td>1869</td>
<td>113 scholarships in 13 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hibernian Auxiliary Church of England Zenana Missionary Society</td>
<td>‘The union of all branches of the Christian Church in the effort to save the children, and their education in Bands of Hope and Day Schools in the principles which underlie the total abstinence movement.’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hibernian Band of Hope Union</td>
<td>Distribution of Holy Scriptures in English and Irish</td>
<td>1806</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hibernian Bible Society</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home for Aged Females</td>
<td>To provide a home for unmarried Protestant women over 50, with an income of at least 6s per week. Provided board and lodgings ‘for girls needing change or rest.’ Maintain Protestant foundation schools in Ireland, and offered limited scholarships to children.</td>
<td>1857</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home for Aged Governesses and other Unmarried Ladies</td>
<td></td>
<td>1838</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home of Rest, Dalkey</td>
<td></td>
<td>1836</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorporated Association for the Relief of Distressed Protestants</td>
<td></td>
<td>1885</td>
<td>24 for boys, 8 for girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorporated Society for Promoting Protestant Schools in Ireland</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish Auxiliary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish Church Missions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Irish Church Mission Schools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Irish Clergy Daughters’ School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish Distressed Ladies’ Fund</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ladies’ Irish Association</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ladies’ Union</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lady Dudley’s Scheme for the Establishment of Nurses in the Poorest Parts of Ireland</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magdalen Asylum</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mageough Home for Aged Females</td>
<td></td>
<td>1903</td>
<td>28 nurses p.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masonic Female Orphan School</td>
<td></td>
<td>1765</td>
<td>25 (1910)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercer’s Endowed School</td>
<td></td>
<td>1792</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midnight Mission House</td>
<td></td>
<td>1735</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Carr’s Homes for Destitute Children</td>
<td></td>
<td>1862</td>
<td>28 (1911)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘To afford immediate refuge by day or night to penitent females.’ ‘The children are trained and maintained in the principles of Evangelical Christianity’</td>
<td>1887-8</td>
<td>250 (1898)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Date of Establishment</td>
<td>Remarks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monkstown Protestant Orphan Society</td>
<td>For children who have lost one or both parents. Society accepted children of mixed marriages.</td>
<td>1830</td>
<td>34 (1898)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moravian Widows’ House</td>
<td>Home for widows or unmarried women, ‘members of the Moravian or other Protestant Church.’</td>
<td>1802</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Institution and Molyneux Asylum for the Female Blind of Ireland</td>
<td>‘A School for the young and a home for the aged Protestant female blind of Ireland’</td>
<td>1815</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleasant’s Asylum</td>
<td>For ‘the benefit of destitute female orphans of the Church of Ireland.’</td>
<td>1818</td>
<td>16 (1915)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant Girls’ Aid Society</td>
<td>‘To rescue some of the unfortunate unmarried girls who come to the Rotunda and other Dublin hospitals for their confinement.’</td>
<td>1898</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant Industrial School for Young Girls</td>
<td>‘To provide diet, lodging, clothing and Scriptural education for the destitute orphans one or both of whose Parents was Protestant.’</td>
<td>1828</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant Orphan Society</td>
<td>Each inmate had to be able to provide 5s per week for their keep</td>
<td>1805</td>
<td>10 widows, 10 boarders, 75 day pupils, 13 Retreat Hse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant Retreat for the Aged and Respectable Poor, and School for the Young</td>
<td>For the care of respectable Protestant Widows</td>
<td>1874</td>
<td>14 (1914)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant Retreat and Widow’s Home</td>
<td>‘To provide for respectable Protestant female servants a safe resting home while in search of situations.’</td>
<td>1874</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant Servants’ Home</td>
<td>‘To afford to the children of the poor a Scriptural and Secular Education, and induce habits of industry and self-dependence.’</td>
<td>1875</td>
<td>19 (1911)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ragged Schools</td>
<td>‘For the reformation of a better class, socially, of young women.’</td>
<td>1875</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rescue Mission Home</td>
<td>‘To provide for the Protestant poor a means by which, when their end on earth is near, they can be removed from uncomfortable surroundings and receive…spiritual help and consolation.’</td>
<td>1875</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest for the Dying</td>
<td>‘Founded for the Relief of Necesstitous Protestant Widows of Householders of St. Mary’s Parish, Dublin.’</td>
<td>1927</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal British Legion Women’s Section - Dublin Central Branch</td>
<td>Worked in conjunction with the Queen Victoria Jubilee Institute for providing trained Protestant nurses for the sick poor. Educated Protestant children in New Bride St., Camden Row, Leeson St. and York St.</td>
<td></td>
<td>60 children seen weekly in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Thomas’ Female Orphanage</td>
<td>‘To provide a comfortable home for the female children of respectable parishioners who become orphans through the death of either or both parents.’</td>
<td>1768</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singleton School</td>
<td>‘To Board, clothe, educate and train girls for domestic service.’</td>
<td>1780</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townsend Street Mission Schools and Girl’s Home</td>
<td>The Girl’s Home trained residents as domestic servants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* These institutions had closed by 1928.
The *Church of Ireland Gazette*, although reluctant to engage directly with the issue of the Dublin Prison Gate Mission’s prosletysing, did publish this article by the Rector of St. Mathew’s Parish. The DPGM is not named, but the location of the author, the date, and the subject matter place it at the heart of the controversy.

'A Principle at Stake: Charitable Work amongst Roman Catholics'

[After a lengthy dissertation on biblical imperatives]... In every Protestant Institution, of which I know anything, which exists for the purpose of helping those in affliction whether they be Roman Catholic or Protestants, and which is carried on on religious lines, there is a perfectly clear understanding that all who come in there are coming to be helped spiritually as well as temporally, that Rome shall have no footing therein in any shape or form. It is open, frank and above board. They who come in, come with their eyes open. They know that at any moment they are free to leave; but if they live or die there they will be in the loving spiritual care of those who long for their highest and eternal good. We are told that this is taking an unfair advantage of affliction. But whose advantage is it? Is it not wholly and solely the advantage of the afflicted? How then can it be called unfair? How then could it be right to admit a Romish priest to minister to a dying person within such an institution, no matter how the dying desired it. It would be wrong on the part of the person who made the admission, because it would be an easy way out of the difficulty obtained by the sacrifice of scruples. It would be bad for the dying because it would be an utter deception - a quieting of his fears by a false peace. It would be bad for the others in the house who would regard it as an act of weakness in denying a system and yet admitting it.'

Rev. William Baillie.

May 30, 1910.
Chapter 5: Women and Politics
The late nineteenth century saw a vigorous movement by European women into the public political arena, and their engagement took many forms. As Maria Luddy has commented, women’s political activity requires a broader definition than merely mainstream politics.\(^1\) Although it is something of an exaggeration to claim that all activity outside the home is inherently political, there is a case to be made for reading much late nineteenth and early twentieth century women’s involvement in a broad range of organisations as laying the basis for subsequent mainstream political participation. As chapters three and four have illustrated, philanthropic endeavour could be linked with a set of explicitly political positions. However from the mid nineteenth century onwards women in Ireland were increasingly involved in efforts to enter mainstream political life.

**Entering Politics**

The large-scale movement of women into mainstream politics in the twentieth century sprang directly from philanthropic and reformist activities in earlier centuries. From the eighteenth century the pattern of women offering assistance to other women and to children was well established in Ireland.\(^2\) This was also the case in England and America where similar presumptions regarding appropriate behaviour for women determined their participation in voluntary Christian charity.\(^3\) From this type of work it proved a short step to more

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\(^1\) Maria Luddy, ‘Women and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Ireland’ in Maryann Gialanella Valiulis and Mary O’Dowd (eds.) *Women and Irish History* Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1997, p. 90.

\(^2\) Rosemary Raughter has noted this pattern in Ireland as far as philanthropic work is concerned. ‘A Natural Tenderness: the Ideal and the Reality of Eighteenth-Century Female Philanthropy’ in Valiulis & O’Dowd, *Women*, pp. 73-4.

\(^3\) The so-called ‘cult of true womanhood’ which developed in the nineteenth century decreed that the home was the legitimate sphere of activity for women. See Barbara Welter, ‘The cult of true womanhood, 1820-1860’, *American Quarterly* 18 (1966) and Nancy F. Cott *The Bonds of Womanhood: Women’s Sphere in New England, 1780-1835* (Yale University Press, 1977) for an
mainstream political activity. For example the well co-ordinated campaign against
the Contagious Diseases Acts of 1864, 1866 and 1869 was undertaken by middle-
class women who had a good deal of experience in voluntary work such as Harriet
Martineau, Josephine Butler, Isabella Tod, Anna Haslam and Florence
Nightingale. Philanthropy acted as the basis from which high public profiles could
be launched, and the often detailed statistics and commentaries produced by such
women in support of their causes strengthened their claim to be serious political
and economic commentators. Indeed, social and scientific enquiry by women was
highly rated in the mid nineteenth century, with Irishwomen making important
contributions to societies such as the National Association for the Promotion of
Social Science. On the basis of experience gained in such organisations, women
actively sought political change, not necessarily for themselves, but for the benefit

early analysis. However, although this attitude implied a narrow field for women, the emphasis
upon religious observance, responsibility and duty made the progression of women into the world
of charity work a natural one. See Frank Prochaska for a detailed discussion of how women
actively used the ‘cult’ to embark on lives of public work. Women and Philanthropy in

A recent article on the opposition to the Contagious Diseases Acts suggests that some of the
activists, and in particular Josephine Butler (described as ‘self-obsessed, histrionic and wilfully
uncompromising’), were involved in the campaign in order to gratify their egos, rather than
protect vulnerable working-class women. This may be partly true, but the writer’s assertion that
the acts may have protected women by detecting disease (possibly true), and that in any case the
‘briskly coarse and roughly good-humoured’ compulsory inspections did not distress the
prostitutes (highly questionable) undermines the case. F.B. Smith ‘The Contagious Diseases Acts
Reconsidered’ in Social History of Medicine 1990 vol. 3, part 2, pp. 211 & 208.

Nightingale turned her Crimean experiences to good account by producing detailed statistics for
the British army regarding hospital construction and supply, as well as her better known
recommendations for improving nursing standards. The charitable impulse was in these cases a
means of strengthening a public profile, while remaining within the strict bounds of propriety.
Kathleen McCrone, ‘The National Association for the Promotion of Social Science and the
Advancement of Women’ in Atlantis vol. 8, no. 1, (1982), pp. 45-6. Englishwomen such as
Harriet Martineau and Anne Plumptre, who conducted social and scientific surveys of Ireland in
the nineteenth century, show how important this sort of activity was in the establishment of a
female intellectual tradition. See Martineau’s Letters From Ireland, London: John Chapman,
1852, for an exhaustive assessment of the country and its inhabitants. Anne Plumptre’s Narrative
of a Residence in Ireland, London: 1917, similarly presents a scientific evaluation of the country.
See Glenn Hooper, ‘Anne Plumptre: An Independent Traveller’ in M. Kelleher & J. Murphy
(eds.) Gender Perspectives in 19th Century Ireland: Public and Private Spheres, Dublin: Irish
of others. For example, from the 1830s Irishwomen were active in the anti-slavery movement, and although they joined the various societies in relatively small numbers, they were able to galvanise significant degrees of support. In 1838, for example, 'an anti-slavery petition presented to Queen Victoria was signed by 75,000 Irish women'.

Women’s reformist impulses were clearly gendered. Demands for change were based upon an acceptance of 'separate spheres', and activists argued that even though their work took them into the public arena, it did not represent a challenge to domesticity. Only those who took part in violence were condemned for unfeminine behaviour, and even in these cases their sex made retaliation by opponents somewhat less likely. As long as women’s activity was ostensibly directed towards the protection of the home, or their writing supported rather than challenged gender norms, they enjoyed a reasonably broad range of public life.

The late nineteenth century in Ireland saw an increasing movement of women into previously all-male political environments. This was the result of a series of factors, many unrelated to each other. One of the most important was the new educational opportunities available to women, especially the middle classes, through the Intermediate Education Act of 1878 and the Royal University Act of 1879, which opened new career prospects to women. An increasing confidence

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accelerated campaigns for greater representation of women on local boards and councils. Women’s work as asylum, prison and workhouse visitors and inspectors, and their experience in the organisation of philanthropic bodies, allowed them to argue forcefully for official recognition of their efforts through election to Poor Law Boards. Emily Dickson (whose impressive list of qualifications and fellowships - M.B., B.Ch., B.A.O., R.U.I., F.R.C.S.I., L.R.C.P.I. - added a good deal of weight to her assertions) was careful to stress that women’s work would not interfere with that of men, but made the point that some aspects of the Poor Law could only be implemented by women:

...the management of the workhouse is in a very large measure a matter of household management, such as every woman is accustomed to perform or supervise in her own home...It is no question of special professional training, it is a question of using the training and habits of home in a wider field and on a larger scale; the essentials are the same...what I wish to urge is the very great need for one or two women on each Board to assist and give advice in matters concerning the women and children and domestic affairs. And as I believe that nearly four-fifths of the paupers are women and children, this does not seem a very unreasonable proposal.10

The suggestion that women were best suited for work with women and children was enthusiastically endorsed by individuals such as Lady Aberdeen. Her work with the Irish Industries Development Association (IIDA),11 although derided by some nationalists (see below), strengthened the image of Irish goods abroad. It shared a rural self-help philosophy with the United Irishwomen (UI), a broad-based organisation which encouraged the equal participation of women with

11 Established in 1888, the Association sought to promote Irish industries abroad. It also trained young Irishwomen in lace-making, knitting and home weaving.
men in the workforce and beyond. The IIDA did not however insist upon sexual equality in the manner of the UI - George Russell’s belief, for example, that progress could only be made through equal participation was not necessarily shared by the executive of the IIDA: ‘Men and women have been companions in the world from the dawn of time. I do not know where they are journeying to, but I believe they will never get to the delectable City if they journey apart from each other, and do not share each other’s burden.’12 The Women’s National Health Association (WNHA)13, another initiative devised by the enthusiastic Lady Aberdeen, also focused on the women of rural Ireland.14 The Association attempted to combat tuberculosis through a national scheme of domestic education for girls, and succeeded in raising standards of hygiene and domestic economy throughout the country.

The agitation for an increased role in public bodies, as well as in the formation of public policy, continued throughout the 1890s. In 1896 the Philanthropic Reform Association was established, followed in 1897 by the Irish Workhouse Association, both of which sought the reform of the workhouse system through the equal participation of men and women. By 1896 women in Ireland were permitted to become Poor Law Guardians and in 1898 they were granted the Local Government Franchise.15 Many of the early activists were Protestant. Indeed, one of the key figures in Dublin, Lady Dockrell, who had been

13 Inaugurated on March 13, 1907.
14 See chapter four for more information.
15 Women in England had been technically eligible to serve on Boards of Guardians since the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, but the first presented herself for election only in 1875. The Poor Relief (Ireland) Bill of 1838 defined a guardian as, amongst other things, a ‘male person’, thereby automatically enshrining the exclusion of women.
elected an Urban District Councillor under the legislation of 1898, was concerned specifically with the role of educated Protestant women in the transformation of Irish local politics. Her comments, while not especially generous as far as those new to political power were concerned, are nevertheless interesting for their belief in the important role to be played by her own class and religion:

Ireland is in a transition state. The governing power in local affairs has passed from the unionist to the nationalists, from Protestants to Catholics, from the educated, cultured, leisured classes to the traders, small farmers, and, in many cases, even to the labourers; but the women who have been elected nearly all belong to the highly-educated class, and some of them are unionists and Protestants. From this hasty sketch it will be seen that the women who enter public life require a great deal of tact, patience, and what I must call a level-headed devotion to the public good; but I believe that this feminine element, particularly when allied with a certain masculinity of intellect and administrative ability, is destined to become a very potent factor in public life.  

Those in Belfast had already received the municipal franchise (1887), and agitation was growing rapidly for a logical progression from this local measure to a more significant goal - the parliamentary franchise. The history of the Irish suffrage movement has been well documented, and the work in particular of Cliona Murphy and Rosemary Cullen Owens has mapped the progress of women's demand for the vote. It is therefore unnecessary to discuss the general progress of the movement here, but what is of interest, and worth raising, is the manner in which the suffrage movement acted as a means of unifying diverse political elements in a single cause.


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on the one hand, and yet was envisaged as a means of pursuing entirely contrary political ambitions on the other. This apparent contradiction was characteristic of Protestant female political activity in Dublin in this period, and is reflected in the political careers of the nationalist women I will discuss below.

The Irish suffrage movement was from the outset characterised by both a non-Catholic leadership, and explicit declarations of interest other than attaining the vote. With regard to the first, although Cliona Murphy has argued that Protestant numbers amongst the suffrage leadership have been exaggerated, a glance at the backgrounds of the women reveals a predominantly non-Catholic majority. Edith Somerville, Martin Ross, Susan Day, Louie Bennett, Anna Haslam, L.A. Walkington and Isabella Tod were all non-Catholic, and amongst the earliest advocates of votes for women. This did not however imply a specifically Protestant agenda, or any political unity of purpose, beyond the extension of the franchise to women. In many cases, individuals wished to use their parliamentary franchise to achieve diametrically opposed political goals. The Conservative and Unionist Women’s Suffrage Association, headed by Lady Arnott, opposed universal suffrage and sought the vote for middle and upper class women in order to shore up support for the union. The Munster Women’s Franchise League, founded by Day, Somerville, and Ross was from the outset avowedly non-party, but had an increasingly unionist outlook, so much so that Mary McSwiney left it with the frequently quoted assessment that members were ‘Britons first, suffragists

18 Murphy tantalisingly states ‘...this predominance of the minority religion has often been exaggerated...On a closer look many who had been classified as ‘Protestant’ came from a wide section of Irish society.’ However she does not provide any names or figures in support. Women’s Suffrage Movement, p. 20.
second, and Irishwomen perhaps a poor third.' The Church League for Women’s Suffrage and the Irish Catholic Women’s Suffrage Society represented Anglican and Catholic interests respectively, while the Irish Women’s Reform League reflected the aspirations of trade unionists.

Indeed, trade unions, and especially the unionisation of women, was another area in which Protestant women were active. Women such as Helena Moloney, Louie Bennett, Helen Chenevix and Constance Markievicz were all eager participants. In its early days, the labour movement appeared to offer the possibility of cross-class and cross-political contact in Dublin, despite the hostility displayed towards union organisers in 1913. In late 1915, an Irish branch of the British National Union of Women Workers was established in the city, ‘to advance further co-operation among all women workers of every shade of opinion.’ Somewhat surprisingly, the women nominated as Vice Presidents were middle and upper class, and included Lady Fingall, Lady Arnott, Lady Wright, Lady Holmpatrick, Mrs. Haslam and Miss White. Despite their willingness to promote employment rights for women, they were perceived by the *Irish Citizen* as unlikely to promote change: ‘It does not look as if the aims of the new body to unite “women of every shade of opinion in Ireland” are likely to be accomplished, the Vice President and Committee chosen apparently being restricted to women of precisely the same shade of opinion.’

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21 Each of these women had been active in the organisation of women workers in such groups as the United Irishwomen, or were activists in the suffrage or further education campaigns.
willingness of women to become involved in a range of political movements in Dublin in this period.

All of the political activities described above were pursued by relatively small numbers of women, although they constitute a significant body if taken as a whole. If however one uses membership as the criteria for assessment, one of the largest female political movements in Ireland was that of unionism. For the most part ignored until recently by historians, the balance has begun to be redressed in recent years. Although the Ulster movement has received most attention, reflecting political developments after 1923, there was a vigorous organisation in Dublin and elsewhere, which began in the 1880s as a response to what was perceived as the growing threat of Home Rule. Women such as Somerville and Ross campaigned vigorously in England during the Home Rule debates, and brought the case of southern unionists forcefully home to voters in the 1895 general election. The size of female support for the union in Ireland may be gauged from the 103,000 women’s signatures on an 1893 anti Home Rule memorial to Queen Victoria from Ireland. A separate petition from Ulster had 145,000 signatures. The numbers involved, with regard to the national petition in particular, imply that the signatories were not exclusively Protestant. The Dublin

23 The key histories of Ulster unionism have ignored entirely, or inaccurately commented upon, the participation of women in the movement. See Diane Urquhart, “The Female of the Species is More Deadlier Than the Male”? in Janice Holmes and Diane Urquhart (eds.) Coming Into the Light: The Work, Politics and Religion of Women in Ulster, 1840-1940 Belfast: Institute of Irish Studies, 1994, footnote 4, p. 118.
24 Urquhart, ‘Female of the Species’. One of the earliest histories of women’s involvement in Ulster unionist politics is Nancy Kingham’s United We Stood: The Ulster Women’s Unionist Council 1911-1974 Belfast: Appletree Press, 1975. Despite its largely uncritical approach to the organisation, the book provides a useful introduction to the topic.
26 The Countess of Fingall for example was an active Catholic member of the Conservative and Unionist Women’s Franchise Association.

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Women's Unionist Club boasted 3,000 members in April 1914, a figure which it was claimed had risen to 4,000 by June of the same year, with Lady Dockrell foremost amongst them. The Home Rule crisis had galvanised unionist women into large-scale political action, and led to the formation of several new organisations, as well as the creation of female auxiliaries to existing male groups. What is noteworthy is that the women who mobilised so swiftly in defence of the Union had been mainly involved in local politics. This partly explains the rapid and large-scale organisation (and in some cases reorganisation) of Unionist associations. In Dublin alone in 1914 there was the aforementioned Dublin Women's Unionist Club, and the Women's Central Committee, both of which were part of the Dublin Unionist Association; the Irish Unionist Alliance, which had a substantial female membership, the Women's Unionist Association, which had a national membership, the Women's Unionist Committee, a long-standing but inactive body which was revived in 1911, and various local branches which were affiliated to the IUA, including the Kingstown and Dalkey, Glenageary, Monkstown, Lower Pembroke, and North and South Dublin branches.

28 Daily Express, June 11, 1914.
29 Margaret Dockrell, Vice-President of the Dublin Women's Unionist Council and urban district councillor, saw in nationalist demands for greater political control an opportunity to strengthen unionist interests. She was in favour of granting concessions, such as the election of nationalist members to urban district councils, as she felt this would undercut more radical demands for Home Rule.
30 Women's participation can be seen most obviously in the area of fund-raising, where they not only collected funds for the support of the organisations, but contributed heavily themselves. The collections listed in the Daily Express of April 4, 1914 in support of the fight against Home Rule indicate that women contributors in the Irish Unionist Alliance were in the majority, donating an average of £2 each.
Women unionists, especially the leadership, had a relatively uniform profile. Many of the senior committee members were titled, with a number of individuals belonging to several different organisations. Prominent amongst them were Lady Arnott, Lady Dockrell, the Countess of Pembroke, the Dowager Marchioness of Dufferin and Ava, Lady Holmpatrick, Viscountess Powerscourt, and the Dowager Countess of Longford. The rank and file were more socially varied, although the activists tended to be middle class. Their main work consisted of fund-raising, at which they were highly successful, not merely in soliciting donations from the general public, but in contributing significant sums themselves. In May of 1914 the Dowager Countess of Longford donated £50 to the cause, but even the less wealthy women contributed at least £1 each. In a letter to the *Irish Times* in 1914, ‘A Woman of Meath’ asked the ‘Irish Women Unionists of the Southern Provinces’ to send £5 each to the Unionist Alliance headquarters in Dublin, the sum indicating the likely economic status of many supporters. They were also active in voter registration, at a local and national level. Feminine charm was regarded as a useful political tool:

...[T]hey all knew what the ladies had done in connection with the Association... They had widened the basis upon which the society worked, and had drawn into sympathy and touch with them men who were Unionists, but who had never taken an active part previously in politics...[the Dublin Women’s Unionist Club] would be an immense power for the Association to have at its back whenever it was necessary to call on the women for

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31 Martin Maguire has shown that Dublin working class Protestant support for unionist politics, although constant, was not as coherent as in Belfast, and suggests that southern unionism failed ‘to adapt the Union to articulate populist Protestant concerns and attitudes.’ *The Dublin Protestant Working-Class 1870-1932: Economy, Society, Politics* M.A., University College Dublin, 1990, p. 200.
32 *Daily Express* May 30, 1914.
33 *Irish Times* April 8, 1914.
canvassing work and getting people to attend the revision courts, and getting voters to come up to the elections.\textsuperscript{34}

Similarly at a meeting of the Glenageary branch of the DWUC Mr. R.R. Smylie declared that 'women in elections could do a lot of work which men could not do, and could exercise great power over the voters.'\textsuperscript{35} The chair at this meeting, Miss Stronge, emphasised the importance of the domestic in declaring: '...all women in that district (South County Dublin) should try to influence even their next door neighbour in the subject of Home Rule, and show them it mattered a great deal whether they had Home Rule or not.'\textsuperscript{36}

All of the Dublin women's unionist groups had links with their counterparts in the north of the country. The contacts were especially close as far as the leadership was concerned, with the Dowager Marchioness of Dufferin and Ava being particularly keen to maintain a close association between the UWUC and the Dublin based bodies. Lady Londonderry was also a frequent guest speaker at Dublin Unionist meetings. However although all of the unionist organisations had worked together at the turn of the century, Ulster's increasing determination to exclude herself from any Home Rule settlement loosened the ties. Perhaps surprisingly, this did not lead to a total severance of relations. The southern male unionist response to Ulster's abandonment was one of pained disbelief, followed by anger at Ulster's willingness 'to sacrifice the welfare of Ireland and the empire for their own safety.'\textsuperscript{37} Martin Maguire has suggested that the Ulster unionists'

\textsuperscript{34} Report of the Annual General Meeting of the City of Dublin Unionist Association, \textit{Daily Express} April 1, 1914.
\textsuperscript{35} \textit{Daily Express} April 25, 1914.
\textsuperscript{36} ibid.
\textsuperscript{37} The Earl of Meath, quoted in Mc Dowell, \textit{Crisis and Decline}, p. 52.
desire, articulated by Carson, to ‘shed the dead weight’ of southern unionists came as a complete surprise to the southern body.\textsuperscript{38} The southern women’s unionist organisations offered very little criticism of their abandonment by the north, but continued to co-operate, especially in war work. Perhaps the militant stance of the UWUC, through their support for the UVF, satisfied some desire for radical action by proxy. In April of 1914 the Dublin women were praised for their contributions towards equipping a UVF ambulance,\textsuperscript{39} and they funded one ambulance and supported the UVF hospital in France until 1916.

Both the southern and northern women’s unionist groups had something more in common - despite the passionate political convictions of individual members, they were created as, and remained auxiliaries to, the male unionist organisations. Diane Urquhart has rightly argued that this should not be a reason for discounting their history,\textsuperscript{40} yet the subservient relationship of the women’s groups limited their ability to critique unionist policy. The records of the Ulster Women’s Unionist Council reveal disagreements with the male leadership, over the suffrage issue in particular, yet there was a reluctance on the part of even formidable women such as Theresa, Lady Londonderry, to open a potentially rancorous debate.\textsuperscript{41} Unionist women were constrained in their criticism because

\textsuperscript{38} Maguire, \textit{Protestant Working Class}, p. 189.
\textsuperscript{39} \textit{Irish Times}, April 28, 1914.
\textsuperscript{40} Urquhart, ‘Female of the Species’, op. cit., p. 94.
\textsuperscript{41} D2846/1/8/23. Letter from Marchioness of Dufferin and Ava to Lady Londonderry, dated September 16, 1913, PRONI. The all-male Ulster Unionist Council was declaring itself against the enfranchisement of women, in the event of the creation of a provisional government in Ulster, and the UWUC executive feared that this would break the unity of the women’s organisation. Thus it was privately decided that the issue would be buried as quickly as possible, necessitating some subtle manoeuvring on the part of Ladies Dufferin and Londonderry: ‘I ventured then to give a word of warning to the meeting. Namely, that our association started for one political question. That on Home Rule we are united, on every other question we are probably divided, and therefore it is all important that we should refrain from any expression of opinion on other
they were in the unique position of rebels ‘upholding a legitimate force’, as Roger Sawyer has it. From the outset, women in the UWUC were cast in a secondary role, since the basis for executive membership was the marital connections of its members to the already established Ulster Unionist Council. The draft constitution of the UWUC allowed for the democratic election of local representatives to the Council and, in article 4, also stated: ‘In addition, the wives of such Ulster Unionist Peers as have seats in the House of Lords and the wives of Ulster Unionist Members of Parliament (all these ladies being themselves, in the opinion of the Executive Committee, Unionists), shall be Members of Council.’ Although it was not an unreasonable presumption that the wives of Unionist Members would themselves be Unionist in their sympathies, it removed any sense of individual political participation or intellectual engagement with the question of Home Rule by presuming political affiliation through marriage. The sixteen Provincial Representatives elected at the first meeting of the UWUC were all married women, fifteen of them titled. The Council also reserved to itself the ‘power to co-opt from time to time distinguished ladies who have rendered, or are likely to render, service to the cause’, thereby appropriating in advance suitably ‘distinguished’ representatives, who would lend the required cachet to the organisation. The UWUC requested at the above meeting that the UUC elect a small committee to advise their members on political strategy, an act which placed the control of the

policies than that for which we are associated...for the meantime, I hope we may be able to ignore it.’ See Urquhart, ‘Female of the Species’, p. 103 for further discussion. 42 Roger Sawyer, ‘We Are But Women’: Women in Ireland’s History London: Routledge, 1993, p. 79. 43 D1098/1/3. Draft constitution of the Ulster Women’s Unionist Council in UWWC minutes, January, 1911, PRONI.
movement in theory in the hands of the male Unionist leadership. Although the corresponding nationalist women’s group, Cumann na mBan, was also constitutionally an auxiliary force to the Volunteers, there was more scope for individual political initiative. The nature of subversive political activity allowed women to assume prominent roles in the nationalist organisations, roles which, when that particular phase was past, were rapidly undermined.

By 1910, women were, as indicated above, involved in a varied range of political activities. Despite their exclusion from mainstream political organisations, they made their presence known through their campaigns to improve the status of women, and to secure broader political objectives, often at opposite ends of the political spectrum. For the most part, the activities of women in Dublin reflected the class and religious interests of their own backgrounds. Protestant middle class women were generally unionist in sympathy. Their Catholic counterparts were also often unionist, or moderate nationalists. However within these camps, there were some individuals who behaved contrary to type. I now want to turn to a group of Protestant nationalists whose political convictions set them apart from their own culture. In discussing the reasons behind their unusual political stance, I hope to shed additional light upon the general topic of women’s political activism in Dublin.

**Protestant Nationalists**

One of the most interesting and unusual moments of Irish female activism was the participation of a number of Protestant women in the nationalist

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44 Male input appears in practice to have been minimal, in that the UWUC executive formulated their own policy. The fact that they supported decisions already taken by the UUC, even those as
movement. This chapter focuses therefore upon several aspects of their involvement, including their motivations, personal and public responses to activism, and the religious tensions inherent in Protestant participation in a mainly Catholic organisation. However, the first section of the chapter will deal with the broader issue of female political activism in Ireland, in order to determine the extent to which public participation was an accepted part of women’s lives, and to explore how different, if at all, the experiences of the study group were from the majority. Those chosen for examination range from Gaelic Revivalists to radical republicans, and although they share a common middle to upper-class background, they range in age and political activity sufficiently to provide a varied picture of involvement. I have chosen a total of eighteen women. Although not all are mentioned in the text, their records supply the material for the general remarks I make in relation to Protestant Nationalism. The women are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Louie Bennett</td>
<td>Elizabeth Bloxham</td>
<td>Albinia Brodrick</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ada English</td>
<td>Grace Gifford</td>
<td>Muriel Gifford</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nellie Gifford</td>
<td>Sydney Gifford</td>
<td>Maud Gonne</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kathleen Lynn</td>
<td>Dorothy Macardle</td>
<td>Constance Markievicz</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helena Moloney</td>
<td>Nelly O’Brien</td>
<td>Annie Smithson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mary Spring-Rice</td>
<td>Alice Stopford Green</td>
<td>Dorothy Stopford Price</td>
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The examination of these women does not imply that Protestant nationalists may be classed as a specific historical or cultural grouping, or that these women, by virtue of their political beliefs, formed an homogeneous group. Rather it is an

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45 This spelling of Moloney follows the more modern form favoured by, for example, Margaret Ward, *Unmanageable Revolutionaries*, Diana Norman, *Constance Markievicz* and Anne Haverty *Constance Markievicz*, rather than the ‘Molony’ used by R.M. Fox in *Rebel Irishwomen*. Moloney herself used both forms in her correspondence.

46 The criteria used to select these women are: birth and/or long term rearing or residence in Ireland; baptism or raising as Protestant, with conversion to Catholicism in relevant cases taking place as adults; an explicit commitment to the Irish nationalist cause, expressed for example...
attempt to explore the origins and activities of a body of women who had in common a history quite distinct from the majority of those who engaged with nationalist politics. The city of Dublin was crucial as an organisational base, allowing even those women who were not permanently resident there to maintain contacts and contribute to the movement. In fact most of the eighteen, with the exception of Mary Spring-Rice, Albinia Brodrick and Ada English were city-based.

The motivations behind entering political life are as varied as the individuals who do so, but one particular factor may be personal gain. However, the first thing which could be said about these women is that their conception of an Irish nation, and their belief in the necessity for revolutionary change, had little to do with direct material gain. Although most of the women were not members of the land-owning aristocracy, or indeed of the substantial business community, they did not seek personal aggrandisement from the revolutionary state. Yet the question arises: what then drove them to become involved in politics? Of course, part of the answer may be found in the more generalised changes which were taking place in European society from the end of the nineteenth century. For example, attention has been drawn to ‘the apparent connection between widespread social change, declining economic sectors, and revolutionary

through personal statements, membership of nationalist organisations, imprisonment for nationalist activities, and participation in militant events. The selected eighteen represent what my research indicates to be the best documented Anglican activists.

47 Lack of access to the city curtailed the activities of women such as Alice Milligan, the Methodist nationalist. In an undated letter to Sinead de Valera (apparently written during the Treaty debates) she wrote: ‘Since the spring of 1919 I have been more or less of a prisoner, entirely secluded by circumstances amongst relatives entirely opposed to the Republican cause - first in England (Bath) and in Ireland. I have just managed to reach Dublin for two hasty visits, during the recent crisis - one day returning the same evening and on the next occasion staying only from Saturday to Monday. I have kept in touch with Lily O’Brien who knows my circumstances, and also what are my hopes of helpfulness.’ Ms. 18311, NLI.

48 See opening page for list.
fervour', and this is certainly applicable to female political participation. However, there were also more personal factors at work in the lives of the individual women which encouraged political activism in Ireland. For example, the prominence of Kathleen Lynn and Dorothy Stopford Price during the 1916 Rising and the civil war respectively depended upon their possession of medical degrees, which placed them automatically in positions of significance. As will be discussed below, the Gaelic Revival, so dependent upon Protestant patronage, led women into the sphere of public politics through its peculiarly romantic nationalism. In Europe as a whole the lengthy build-up to the First World War saw the rhetoric of violent confrontation and challenge become a common part of discourse. Within this context, revolutionary violence seemed to offer limitless possibilities for the overthrow of even great Imperial nations, with Ireland playing a key role. Maud Gonne’s association with Lucien Millevoye was intended to produce an independent Ireland as well as restore Alsace and Lorraine to France. Gonne’s account of their pact is typically melodramatic, yet it captures the contemporary belief in the possibility of radical change:

Millevoye continued: ‘Let us make an alliance. I will help you to free Ireland. You will help me to regain Alsace-Lorraine.’
‘But we have different enemies,’ I said. ‘How can we eat up England and Germany at once?’
‘They are not so different,’ he answered, ‘the Teutons and the Anglo-Saxons. England defeated Napoleon and his whole dream of a liberated Europe. England encouraged Bismarck in order to keep France and Germany at enmity. Germany is only the incidental, England is the hereditary enemy of France.’
I stopped and took both his hands. ‘Now we speak the same language. I accept this alliance, an alliance against the British Empire and it is a pact to death.’

50 Maud Gonne, A Servant of the Queen, Buckinghamshire: Colin Smythe, 1994, p. 65.
Within a relatively short period of time, it became clear to Gonne that Millevoye had little interest in Irish independence, and was unwilling to jeopardise his plans for France by becoming involved. However the fact that such an alliance was contemplated, with Gonne as a principal activist, indicates the extent to which traditional assumptions regarding women’s roles in politics were changing. In Ireland, with an ancient antagonism towards England providing a specific focus for a general discontent, the nationalist movement showed itself capable of encompassing even women. Thus despite the fact that Protestant female nationalists themselves drew upon images of an ancient Ireland, with powerful warrior Queens and pastoral idealism, theirs was at heart a particularly modern movement, firmly rooted in contemporary European developments.

Protestant female nationalism had however certain unique characteristics. David Fitzpatrick has noted that ‘Irish nationalism was above all a rural preoccupation’, but unlike the model for Irish male nationalism, of rural, emergent middle-class activism, these women were Dublin centred, and firmly middle and upper class. Although some had originally come from outside the city, none were from farming backgrounds. This may be partly explained by the fact that while most male activists came from traditionally nationalist backgrounds, 53

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51 Despite Gonne’s representation of their relationship as a meeting of political minds, the reality appears to have been less exalted. With the exception of Gonne’s trip to Russia to raise support for General Boulanger’s conspiracy against the Third French Republic, the alliance made little progress towards the achievement of either of their ends. See Margaret Ward, Maud Gonne: Ireland’s Joan of Arc, Kerry: Brandon Press, 1990, p. 17.


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Protestant female activists were an aberration within their circles. Thus their gravitation towards Dublin indicates both a logical move to a centre of political activity\textsuperscript{54}, and a reflection of their ability to maintain themselves in the city, through employment or independent means.\textsuperscript{55} Indeed, the centralisation of politically minded women in Dublin allowed these women to develop efficient networks of support and communication, strengthened by the fact that they were not solely based upon nationalist politics.\textsuperscript{56} In this sense their participation reflected the model of Dublin unionist politics, which was similarly grounded in the social and charitable networks of the city.

Margaret Ward has stated that after the Famine, ‘Irish nationalism moved from the democratic and secular ideals of the United Irishmen of 1798 and the less gender-specific idealism of the Young Irelanders of 1848 to what has become for many the determining characteristics of Irish nationalism - Fenianism, conspiratorial and male.’\textsuperscript{57} However, I would argue that this ‘conspiratorial’ structure lent itself more readily to female rather than male organisation. Secret societies such as the Fenians devised complex divisions of power and responsibility in cells and levels, making them particularly susceptible to infiltration by spies and informers. Women’s organisational structures were less formal, and based more

\textsuperscript{54} This had some disadvantages as far as maintaining efficiency in country areas went. Ada English, based in Ballinasloe, Co. Galway, found the organisation of women outside the city poor. As late as 1922, she reported a lack of communication between the central branch of Cumann na mBan in Dublin, and the regional branches in the west. Military Archives, Lot 33.

\textsuperscript{55} The employment which these women had - as journalists, doctors, actresses and paid organisers - largely determined their residence in the city, and their memberships of several organisations further encouraged it.

\textsuperscript{56} See chapter 5 appendix. This chart indicates some of the familial, social, political and organisational links between the women, and gives an indication of the extent of common interests.

often on personal contact, the Ladies’ Land League being an early example. The inefficiency of male conspiratorial politics is emphasised by the fact that until 1916, they were consistently unsuccessful. On the other hand, the formal and informal associations of women which operated in the period from 1910 to 1923 successfully maintained pressure for reform in nationalist, suffragist and labour politics, and never faced the problem of infiltration and exposure. But what is more important perhaps is their own conception of nationalism, and their generally thwarted attempts to access a self-consciously Catholic nationalism. Ironically, as Tom Garvin has pointed out, modern Irish republicanism stemmed from an anti-authoritarian and anti-Catholic eighteenth century tradition. While this is implicitly recognised and laid claim to by Protestant female nationalists in terms of their own political discourse (see below), by the early twentieth century they were certainly more conscious of the Catholic complexion of contemporary politics. The nineteenth century development of a Protestant nationalism based on a fear of Home Rule had little appeal because of its implicitly Imperial links. Thus unlike their Catholic counterparts, the Protestant nationalists were forced into declarations of identity. These women felt conscious of their positions in a movement which defined itself within Catholic and peasant parameters. Even the term ‘Irish’ was being contested, from a point at which ‘the Irish people [had]
meant the Protestants; now it means the Roman Catholics'. One solution was to evoke the history of Protestant participation in Irish nationalist politics, with the near-mythic figures of Tone and Emmet providing a unifying point of reference for Catholic and Protestant nationalists alike.

The first large-scale mobilisation of Irishwomen in nationalist politics centered on the issue of land ownership and occupation, an ironic beginning, given the paucity of female landowners in the country. Traditionally, their role in this arena has been interpreted as one undertaken with great reluctance, although evidence of the scale of their involvement would suggest that direct intervention in land disputes was welcomed by many. However, propriety demanded that women’s engagement in militant politics be seen both as secondary to men’s, and that they operate within rigidly defined parameters. Thus Anna Parnell, a woman who could hardly be described as self-effacing, couched her appeal to women to join the Ladies’ Land League in terms which served to reinforce the notion that women could only hope to act politically in dire emergency, upon the imprisonment of the real leaders, men: ‘Women of Ireland, you must do your duty whilst our countrymen do theirs.’ These duties, clearly separated, consisted largely of collecting money and ministering to the evicted tenantry in an unspecified, but implicitly feminine, nurturing way. It is only at the end of the appeal that she raises the possibility that ‘You will probably have to administer the

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61 See Te Brake ‘Irish Peasant Women’.
money collected’ (my emphasis), thereby placing any assertive action on the part of women in a negative frame. The members of the Ladies Land League actually went on through their ‘baptism of fire’ to advocate a more radical response to the threat of evictions than that proposed by the male activists. They were consequently suppressed by both the British authorities and by the male leadership of the Land League to whose assistance they had originally gone, and the acrimonious split between the two League branches had a particularly deadening effect upon radical female political activity, which was to last almost until the twentieth-century. However, an interesting paradigm had been established, with a privileged Protestant leadership and a Catholic rank and file, which shaped subsequent female politicisation.

**Motivation**

In turning to the twentieth century political mobilisation of Protestant women, problems of categorisation arise, since their levels of activity in and extremes of behaviour varied significantly. An application of, for example, Sean Cronin’s ‘five strands’ of nationalism to the women under survey leads to a division of the group into three of the lists - physical-force republicanism, radical republicanism and cultural nationalism - and often with more than one of them in a number of categories at any particular time. Given that theirs was an evolutionary experience, moving in most cases from cultural nationalism through radical republicanism to, often, physical-force republicanism, it is not surprising to find that their political hues often altered considerably. In the main, the bulk of the

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women under discussion fall into the category of 'radical republicans', since they attempted to achieve not merely independence, but an entire re-ordering of social and political structures which would allow for the full participation of women in the new state.

However, a question which inevitably arises in any discussion of female public activity during this period is that of the motivation of the participants. There were of course a variety of reasons for the involvement of Protestant women in nationalist politics. Some sought to reform political and social structures, while others saw them as an amusing distraction. Ida Jameson may well fit into the latter category. Attracted by the romance of the revolutionary movement, and inspired by Maud Gonne’s fiery pronouncements, she embarked on the following practical course: ‘Ida was eager to help; her family were Unionists. That afternoon, Ida went into town and ordered two gold rings with Eire engraved on them, which she said we must both wear.’64 Gonne’s own motivation was less simply explained, although there is little doubt that challenging convention and the excitement of intrigue played its part: ‘...her enjoyment of action, of dramatic tension, which with her courage, was what directed her into and made her so effective in the line of work she undertook, much of her strength being in the efficacy of her public demonstrations.’65 Others enjoyed the excitement of safely defying authority, particularly in the days before militant activity became the norm. Sydney Czira described her work for Bean na hEireann as ‘a sort of bloodless guerrilla war

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64 Gonne, Servant p. 88.

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against the British Empire. It filled our lives with excitement, gaiety and good comradeship.  

One of the difficulties which lies in attempting to select an over-arching motivation for female political involvement is the tendency for former activists to either play down the extent of their participation, or to become, as in the case of Stopford Price, Lynn and Moloney, so involved in subsequent campaigns that the later preoccupations took precedence over the past. Indeed, in the cases of Lynn and Moloney, nationalist activity ran parallel with longer-term work. In 1919, Kathleen Lynn opened St. Ultan’s Hospital for Children in Charlemont Street, in response to the dreadful mortality rate amongst infants in Dublin. Despite her radical political reputation, the Church of Ireland Gazette whole-heartedly endorsed the hospital, yet a comment reveals an anxiety about possible political orientation. In this period, even the most innocuous-seeming enterprise could be politically charged:

Some brave-hearted women have now banded themselves together to found…a hospital for sick infants, where, provided they are sick and under a year old, they can be taken in and every effort made to cure them. It is evident that round these tiny sufferers no question of politics or religion can arise. The only question is how to save innocent life.  

Kathleen Lynn’s continued efforts to improve the health of children finds echoes in the work of Helena Moloney and Louie Bennett, both vigorous campaigners for women worker’s rights. Moloney was a militant nationalist, a member of the Irish Citizen Army who supported a violent defence of Irish rights. Bennett was a

66 Sydney Czira, The Years Flew By: The Recollections of Madame Sydney Czira, Dublin: Gifford and Craven, 1974, p. 50.
67 ‘The New Dublin Hospital’ in the Church of Ireland Gazette, June 13, 1919, p. 375.
pacifist who defended Ireland's right to Independence, but was horrified at the
deterioration of the movement into what she saw as wanton slaughter. As the Irish
representative on the International Executive of the Women's League for Peace
and Freedom, she brought Ireland's case to a much broader audience than most
other nationalists.

Other reformist impulses had an impact upon the way in which politically
active women later assessed their roles. On reflection, many minimised or altered
to a certain degree the extent of their radicalism. For some this would seem to
stem from a perception that they had transgressed socially acceptable boundaries,
or that their earlier activities clashed with their current positions. This
retrospective stance often leads to a distorted picture of the actual level of
participation of women in ostensibly masculine arenas. Contemporary accounts of
events such as the establishment of Cumann na mBan give the impression that the
entire enterprise merely stumbled along, without the quasi-military structures
which gave credence to the Volunteers and later the IRA. When one compares the
memoirs of male and female activists one finds an apparent reluctance on the part
of many of the women to emphasise their roles in the shaping of a new political
force.\textsuperscript{68} Their diminution of the actual extent of their involvement, and their
official rendering in autobiographies of a reactive, almost passive part in nationalist
politics contrasts sharply with the aggressive, active histories presented by male
figures such as Dan Breen, Tom Barry and Ernie O'Malley. One of the founder

\textsuperscript{68} The form of male and female memoirs are quite different. Apart from Gonne's autobiography,
the documents left by women such as Sydney Czira tend to shy away from discussions of policy.
Even commentary upon major political developments such as the 1916 Rising or the Treaty focus
more upon how the author felt, rather than thought.
members of Cumann na mBan described the establishment of the organisation as being the outcome of a casual meeting between Jenny Wyse Power, Mary Colum and herself, during which they simply decided that women ought to establish their own political body, and merely appoint themselves executive members. 69 Dorothy Macardle’s history of The Irish Republic not only largely ignores the contribution of women to the various struggles but in fact effects the complete effacement of the author herself, despite her active role in nationalist politics, and her terms of imprisonment in 1922. Macardle’s prison letters provide a lively and intelligent insight into the tensions of prison life for women, 70 yet she barely mentions in her book the treatment female prisoners received, despite being herself involved in riots and protests. Women hunger striking in March 1923 are dealt with in one sentence, 71 while her letters vividly testify to the importance of the act. The book is far from being ‘the complete and authoritative record’ which de Valera claimed in his preface, 72 since in its concentration on the male-dominated politics of the day, it avoided tackling the perhaps problematic issue of female political participation, and their subsequent limitation after 1923.

69 Elizabeth Bloxham, Statement to the Bureau of Military History, p31, p. 5, UCD.
70 p48 (a)/371 (4), UCD. Macardle diplomatically avoided discussion of the issue of religion - in an account of debates held on current affairs, she proposed one on the Bishops, but gave way to objections from the deeply Catholic Nell Humphreys. In a letter to Mary MacSwiney, who had recently been released following a hunger strike, she wrote: ‘It is desolate we are after you - This has been for us a terrible, heart breaking, wonderful time. I think the inspiration you have given us all will last all our lives.’
72 ibid. De Valera further compounded Macardle’s own removal of self in his peculiarly limp assessment of her qualifications to write this book: ‘She lived through the period, took an active interest in affairs, was personally acquainted with a number of the principal actors and knew exactly where to look for the information required.’ pp. 21-2.
One possible explanation for the involvement of Protestant women might be higher standards of education, and it is true that many Protestant activists were reasonably to well educated, some of them having trained as nurses, others as doctors. This is certainly a factor in other areas of women’s activities, in particular the suffrage movement, and the campaign for the admission of women to universities. However, some of the most influential figures possessed little formal education. Although Annie Smithson pointed out that she was ‘taught well - according to the curriculum of the period’, she defended the lack of awareness of ‘grammar and style’ in her novels on the fact that her intermittent formal education ended at the age of fifteen. The academic careers of both Markievicz and Gonne consisted of a series of governesses equal in ignorance only to their pupils. Albinia Brodrick was 46 before she began her formal training, long after she became politically aware and active. However, what these women shared was the expectation that they would form the middle and upper class strata of Irish society, either through their own merits, or through marriage to eminently suitable males.

As such, they were prepared from an early age to assume prominent roles in society. The socialisation of girls in schools such as Alexandra College illustrates the extent to which girls were encouraged during this period to prepare themselves for lives of limited social service through College charitable societies.

Self-perception played a further part in motivating at least some of these women. In an environment in which history and mythology were integrated in everyday discourse into a narrative of praise or blame, some women viewed

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74 See education chapter.
political activism as a sort of penance. Albinia Brodrick had a hospital in Kerry built as reparation for what she interpreted as the wrongs committed against Catholics by her ancestors. A perceived sense of guilt was given added weight by the religious divide, and the apparently insuperable gulf which membership of the Church of Ireland placed between Catholics and Protestants. Yet for most women there was no single motivating factor, and in some cases, such as that of Maud Gonne, there was no clear familial or ideological history which made activism inevitable. Once again, it is the allied political and social interests of the women which offers the likeliest explanation. Independence offered more than a constitutional break from the United Kingdom, it also presented an opportunity to achieve other, equally important, goals.

It has been suggested that certain women were drawn to nationalist politics for the high profiles and excitement it offered them, and not for ideological reasons. Sean O’Casey described Constance Markievicz as ‘a spluttering Catherine-wheel of irresponsibility’ whose various causes ‘were no more to her than the hedges over which her horses jumped.\(^75\) Although an excessively sour assessment, it is clear that many of these Protestant nationalists had always intended public roles for themselves, regardless of their political interests. In this, they reflect the expectations of those women of their class who were active in unionist and charitable work. Out of a total of 18 women, 12 worked to support themselves, 6 as doctors or nurses, and the remainder principally as journalists. The other women had independent incomes, or lived with family. In other words,

\(^75\) Sean O’Casey, *Drums Under the Window: Autobiographies III*, 1945, p. 44.
politics was not merely an excuse to lead a public life; in many cases, the decision to become actively involved came at a later date.

There is also the more difficult question of whether Protestantism itself encouraged a more liberal attitude towards women's roles, which made political activity an acceptable option. Some contemporary Catholic commentators felt Protestant women lived more radical lives as a result of their religion, and the vision presented by individual Catholics such as Mary Butler of the role of women in the movement implicitly criticised high-profile militants such as Markievicz and Gonne:

Now, the women of our race are dignified and decorous; they shrink from mingling in a melee, and retiring into the inner courtyard, they leave the scene of strife in the outer world to the sterner sex... To most Irish people it is extremely distasteful to see a woman mount a platform and hold forth in public... It (the Gaelic Revival) is warfare of an especial kind, warfare which can best be waged not by shrieking viragoes or aggressive amazons, but by gentle, low-voiced women who teach little children their first prayers, and, seated at the hearth-side, make those around them realise the difference between a home and a dwelling.

Despite her own commitment to the all-inclusive policy of the Gaelic League, Butler's use of terms such as 'our race' implies a fixed, and Catholic, conception of Irish womanhood. In remarkably similar language, Katherine Tynan commented of politically active women:

But a whole nation of political women would be a nightmare, and that is what we have been seeing in Ireland of late years. Especially we do not want a nation of Amazons. It is a woman's office to give life and to foster it, not to take it. The making of bombs is not an ideal occupation for a woman. Politics there must be; but I wish the women and the little boys of Ireland

76 See Tynan quote below, footnote 35.
77 Mary Butler, *Irishwomen and the home language* Gaelic League Pamphlet no. 6, p. 2 (n.d.).
would turn their attention to sweeter and more pressing matters for a period.\textsuperscript{78}

The large numbers of Catholic women who participated in militant nationalism would seem to undermine the argument that Protestantism produced a greater degree of liberalism. However, it is striking that this collection of Protestant activists displayed a consistently more radical attitude to a wide range of issues, social as well as political, and that this radicalism continued after 1923. Only Albinia Brodrick displayed an unambiguously conservative attitude towards women's roles following Independence\textsuperscript{79}, whereas many more Catholic women who had been politically active moved towards a conservative stance.\textsuperscript{80} Irish Protestantism per se was not necessarily more liberal than Catholicism, particularly with regard to women, and despite doctrinal differences the two belief systems were and remain very similar.\textsuperscript{81} Rather than search for a religious explanation for Protestant radicalism, it is perhaps more fruitful to examine the backgrounds of these women, see how they first entered nationalist politics, and attempt to identify common characteristics which may explain the phenomenon of Protestant female nationalism.

\textsuperscript{78} Katherine Tynan, 'Trumpet Call to Irishwomen' in Fitzgerald (ed.), \textit{Voice of Ireland}, p. 172.
\textsuperscript{79} She co-founded Mna Na Poblachta with Mary Mac Swiney and Eileen Tubbert in 1933, because they felt that Cumann na mBan had become too socialist.
\textsuperscript{80} Maryann Gialanella Valiulis 'Power, Gender, and Identity in the Irish Free State' in \textit{Journal of Women's History}, vol. 6, no. 4, vol. 7, no. 1, (Winter/Spring) 1995, p. 17. However, the presumption that this conservative backlash stemmed from Catholic nationalism has been challenged by Joanna Bourke in \textit{Husbandry to Housewifery: Women, Economic Change, and Housework in Ireland, 1890-1914}, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993, chp. 8. She points out how the nineteenth century organisations devoted to improving standards of domestic labour, which were staffed and organised in the main by the Protestant middle and upper class, laid the basis for later attempts to justify women's restriction to the home. In addition, one needs to consider the broader picture of women's status throughout Europe in the late 1920s and 1930s, which suggests that economic difficulties produced a surprisingly uniform antagonism towards public roles for women.
Introduction to Political Life

The movement of a considerable number of Protestant women into nationalist politics, while never an organised activity, nevertheless raises the question of their initial introduction to nationalist politics. In addressing this question, the impact and significance of the Gaelic Revival, and specifically, the Gaelic League, must be considered. The League was the means through which many of the women moved into nationalism. It allowed for the legitimate inclusion in nationalist politics of an outwardly excluded grouping - doubly excluded by both gender and class - Protestant women. In order for Protestant women to be able to participate in such an apparently oppositional movement, it was necessary to remove specifically sectarian or political symbols. In this context one must take account of Douglas Hyde’s much reviled 1892 speech, ‘The Necessity of De-Anglicising Ireland.’ Although an apparently radical statement, especially coming from the son of a Church of Ireland cleric, it is significant in its omission of any reference to the question of religion in Irish affairs. Hyde declared instead: ‘...we must strive to cultivate everything that is most racial, most smacking of the soil, most Gaelic, most Irish, because in spite of the little admixture of Saxon blood in the north-east corner, this island is and will ever remain Celtic at the core’. For Hyde, like Yeats and many others of the Gaelic Revival, an ancient mythic past provided an unassailable point from which to launch a concerted 'attack' upon the evolving predominantly Catholic-based political structures in Ireland. In looking to a pre-Christian island, a much broader interpretation of what constituted the Irish Nation emerged. Thus they could legitimately lay claim to ‘Irishness’, since all that

distinguished Catholic and Protestant, Ascendancy and Peasantry, was avoided. This strategy was usefully employed by many of the Protestant nationalists under discussion, when they emphasised their common identity with Irish people, but avoided the contentious issue of religion.83

The Gaelic League was particularly important for politically aware, or as was more often the case, politically unaware but eager Irish women, for it enlisted them in what transpired to be a politically educative organisation. Not only did it allow these women access to a past that was not directly their own84, but it also presented a respectable front to their activities through its emphasis upon social and educational concerns. For this reason, the League drew large numbers of women to its ranks. Irish Protestant interest in and awareness of the country’s cultural heritage had of course existed before the Gaelic Revival, most particularly in the upsurge in interest in Irish antiquities which flourished throughout the nineteenth-century, but the Revival transformed it from an effete antiquarian exercise into a coherent cultural force. The deliberate manufacture of a new identity for Ireland in this period has many explanations, not least a response to the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland, the Home Rule movement and Catholic

83 Another means of affiliation without raising the issues of class or religion was to literally become the mouthpieces of the people, by utilising supposedly ‘Gaelic’ speech patterns and mannerisms. This approach had the advantage of allowing authors to articulate what they felt the ‘real’ Irish should be saying, whether that concerned politics or other affairs. Several of the above women made ventures into verse with this object in mind, while Annie Smithson turned it to particular advantage in her best selling novels (see especially her prize-winning The Walk of a Queen (1922) and The Marriage of Nurse Harding(1935)). The cult of the Irish peasant which found its expression in these books and poems had its origins in the Gaelic Revival.

84 The League, which had its origins in the Gaelic Union of 1880, offered opportunities for other interested parties to contribute to the debate, through its belief in a pan-Celtic identity which embraced ‘Scotland, Wales, the Isle of Man and Brittany’. This strategy was particularly attractive to men like Douglas Hyde, who, as Joep Leerssen indicates, was ‘singularly out of touch’ with later members of the League who saw cultural nationalism as an adjunct to political nationalism. Remembrance and Imagination: Patterns in the Historical and Literary Representation of Ireland in the Nineteenth Century, Cork: Cork University Press, 1996, p. 159.
nationalist dominance at local government level, and it was a movement which in the early days had broad levels of Protestant support. Terence Brown has attributed this to attempts by the ‘descendants of Anglo-Irish landowners, of professional men and the Protestant clergy, conscious to lesser and greater extents of the threat to their social standing from the increasingly self-assured and powerful majority, [who] sought to popularize a view of Irish identity that might soften the stark outlines of politics, class and sectarianism in the benign glow of culture.'

For this reason, and the fact that the Gaelic League, like Sinn Fein some years later, also allowed for the participation of women on equal terms with the men in its ranks, Protestant women joined and, indeed, led the Revival. Their involvement in the Revival, and particularly the Gaelic League may be explained in a number of ways.

Margaret O’Callaghan, in an essay on the links between language, nationality and cultural identity in Ireland suggests that, ‘The existence of an Irish language and the predominance of the catholic religion were the two most manifest features by which Ireland could be differentiated from external cultural influences.'

However, by this criterion, Protestant women were essentially prevented from being ‘truly’ Irish. Although an ignorance of the Irish language was not confined to Protestants by any means, Catholicism, with its specific penal and famine folk memories, not only excluded Protestants, but actually aligned them largely on the ‘wrong’ side. A self-consciousness of their participation by birth in a

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ignoble history permeated Protestant female nationalist activity. The women's memoirs and recollections reiterate the constant theme of a sense of deprivation at the British imposed ban upon their supposedly common Irish heritage. One said of her education in a Protestant establishment: 'It was a well kept secret in my old school that we lived in Ireland, or had any history of our own at all', while others told similar tales of deprivation. Their whole-hearted embracing of the nationalist cause did sometimes produce rather zealous converts, who saw straightforward resolutions to centuries-old political differences. Elizabeth Bloxham rather optimistically believed that all that was required for the Unionist population to throw off their loyalist chains was an education in Irish history, after which all Ireland would unite: 'On looking back I am inclined to think that a good deal of the Unionism in the West is largely due to an invincible ignorance of the history of their country and for that form of ignorance allowance is always made. The poorest and least educated Catholics had their symbols of nationality. At that time you rarely entered a house that had not a picture of Wolfe Tone and Robert Emmet. ‘Speeches from the Dock’, in its green paper cover, was well thumbed through by some member of the family. There was talk of the Land War and of ‘old unhappy far off things and battles long age’ and there was the telling of tales.

87 Czira, The Years Flew By p. 10. ‘The Board of Education at that time was wise in its generation in not allowing history - English or Irish - to be taught in National Schools, for if we had been taught Irish History it would have broken through the crust of our conventional Unionism and even if we had read English History some of us with enquiring minds might have wanted to know ‘the other side of the story’.’ Elizabeth Bloxham, Statement pp. 11-12.

‘English history was taught as if it were a rubber stamp, to be pressed on to your brain and give you a British trade mark - you learnt the dates when English Kings reigned, fought battles and died. As for Irish history - whenever I hear anyone singing ‘Who Fears to Speak of ’98?’ I feel that a great many of our generation could have answered that question by saying ‘Every single teacher in the school where I was taught.’’ Czira, Years p. 10.

‘I knew my English History well and liked it. Of Irish History I learned nothing, except when it was mixed up with English, such as the Anglo-Norman Invasion, and a passing reference to the
The Protestant mind had no such hinterland. The advent of the Gaelic Revival was an opportunity to share in just that missing hinterland.

In the late nineteenth-century, the Gaelic Revival exuded that most essential requirement for large-scale Protestant female participation: respectability. The public were quite familiar with authors such as Moira O’Neill (the poet of the glens, and Molly Keane’s mother), with her flowery peasant poetry, which despite a romantic sympathy for nationalism remained staunchly unionist. The melodramatic Speranza prepared the public psychologically to accept the notion that one could be Irish, and even a romantic nationalist, and still remain a Lady. Even the Vice-Regal Lodge was moderately ‘greened’ during the Revival. Lady Aberdeen held a garden party with guests attired in ‘a brave show of Irish linens, laces and embroideries, poplins and woolens....and the children dressed in peasant costume....The affair was a huge success, the newspapers issuing special supplements, and large crowds assembling to watch the guests. The transformation of Irish culture via the Viceregal Lodge into entertaining social spectacle reassured many of those who felt alienated by the huge popular response to the movement. Appropriated and domesticated in this way, the Irish language

various ‘rebellions.’ That my country had a history of its own, more wonderful and far older than that of Britain, I did not know until years later. ‘Smithson, Myself’ pp. 41-2.

88 Elizabeth Bloxham, Statement p. 11.
89 Alice Milligan’s family were initially supportive of her editing the Shan Van Vocht, as creative writing, even of a strongly nationalist hue, was nevertheless a suitable occupation for an educated woman.
90 Lady Wilde, nationalist author, mother of Oscar, and contributor to The Nation.
91 Lady Aberdeen, ‘Health and Happiness in the Homes of Ireland’ in Fitzgerald (ed.), Voice of Ireland, p. 434.
92 However, despite the fact that Lady Aberdeen undertook a tremendous amount of work in promoting Irish manufacture abroad, many nationalists were scathing of her efforts and intentions. Of the promotional parties, Bean na hEireann had this to say: ‘The...[British Government] sending over a lady with affable manners to play at promoting Irish industry at evening parties, would naturally be amusing if it had not its tragic side, and if it did not show how easily we can be made fools of....This souvenir (of the pageant) with the Irish trade mark
even seemed a harmless enough subject for study, particularly when channeled through the medium of Hyde’s specifically apolitical Gaelic League.93

The Gaelic League offered more than a socially acceptable environment in which to explore political possibilities; it also provided the opportunity for Protestant women to assume dominant roles as self-appointed spokespersons for Irish nationalism, especially through their enthusiastic contributions to various nationalist newspapers and journals. The importance of the uses of language during the French Revolution, and the issue of political articulation, have some parallels in the Irish case: ‘Because the normal relationship between society and politics has been disrupted, politics becomes a struggle for the right to speak on behalf of the Nation. Language becomes an expression of power, and power is expressed by the right to speak for the people.’94 The importance of the print media during this period should not be underestimated. A recent study of the Advanced-Nationalist Press in Ireland showed that there were some 388 separate newspapers in circulation for various periods between 1900 and 1922 throughout the country.95 Given that, as the author says, ‘...during the years of the Irish national revival, Irish people depended almost exclusively upon their daily or weekly newspapers to

93 There were of course those who remained suspicious of the League, recognising (as political nationalists did) it as something of a Trojan horse. John Pentland Mahaffy famously objected to the teaching of Irish as part of the national school curriculum, declaring in Wildean tones that ‘I am told...that it is almost impossible to get hold of a text in Irish which is not religious or which is not silly or indecent.’ Quoted in J.E. and G.W. Dunleavy, Douglas Hyde: A Maker of Modern Ireland, University of California Press, 1991, p. 173.
keep them informed on local, national and international developments’, those writers who articulated nationalist strategy were in a particularly powerful position to influence opinion. Interestingly, the tradition of female Protestant journalism was also well established in the late nineteenth century by writers such as Alice Milligan, whose specifically non-sectarian co-editorship of the Shan Van Vocht provided the precedent for non-Catholic participation in intellectual nationalism. Edited by two women, one Catholic, the other Protestant, the Shan Van Vocht also represented a departure from sectional nationalist politics, as the paper drew its support from diverse groups such as cultural nationalists, labour figures and agricultural co-operative advocates. In this way it could be described as the first practical application of the later inclusive policies of Sinn Fein, and it was no coincidence that it was named as an influential source by the majority of the eighteen activists under consideration.

A characteristic several of the women shared was the experience of having being introduced to nationalist politics by key journalistic figures such as Arthur Griffith. Griffith’s political strategy of all-inclusiveness appealed to a broad range of women, and accommodated both pacifists and militants. Elizabeth Bloxham described her ‘initiation’ into nationalist politics through her reading of a copy of Griffith’s United Irishman, given to her by neighbours. She later wrote: ‘It would, no doubt, be of interest if I could recall a struggle before accepting the outlook of such a paper. The fact is that I had no such experience...That one’s first loyalty is

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to one's own country seemed to me then, as it does now, to be unquestionable.98

Sydney Gifford similarly claimed Griffith as the seminal figure in her literary and
political career, and attributed his encouragement to the fact that she and others
became so closely tied to the movement. Her sister Nellie appeared to have had a
'hands on' education during her visits to rural areas as a teacher, and acquired
direct from the source the political 'hinterland' which Elizabeth Bloxham felt was
absent from Irish Protestant culture. The ease with which many of these women
appeared to move from often staunchly unionist backgrounds might suggest that
the gulf which lay between Catholic nationalism and Protestant loyalism was not so
wide as was popularly supposed. This may well be the case, especially for those
women who literally surrendered all other concerns for the movement,99 but the
experiences of many of these women suggest that participation in nationalist
politics was more often than not determined by other, allied concerns. In other
words, politics became the foundation on which they built the rest of their lives
work.

There were of course other routes to nationalism than either the Revival or
literary work. Louie Bennett for example came eventually to support the
independence movement because of the appalling disadvantages suffered by non-
unionised women workers in Dublin. Despite her own strongly-held pacifist beliefs,
she was prepared to support the nationalist movement because she believed that it
represented the greatest possibility for change in Ireland. Bennett was the most

98 Bloxham, Statement p. 3.
99 Several of these Protestant women converted to Catholicism, apparently for political rather
more than doctrinal reasons. See below for discussion.
sceptical of these eighteen women, and recorded frequently her disapproval of the subservient role accepted by women in Cumann na mBan (see below).

Protestant female nationalists, although relatively few in number, contributed substantially to the nationalist Press. Of the eighteen women under examination, sixteen wrote regularly for publication in several newspapers. This is a significant output, considering that the majority had no history of involvement in publishing or printing, in the way, for example, Arthur Griffith had through his early apprenticeship as a printer. After the Rising, with the increase in support for a more militant strategy against the British, one finds that it is largely these women who continue to articulate nationalist sentiment, while male political writing is significantly decreased. Clearly one of the main reasons for the dominance of women in this area is their lack of opportunity to participate in constitutional politics, with the result that they tended to be over-represented in those areas to which they did have access. The principal papers for which they wrote included: The United Irishman, Sinn Fein, The Irish Review, Shan Van Vocht, Claidheamh Solius, The Irish Volunteer, Eire, The Irish Citizen, The Irish Homestead, The Spark, The Worker’s Republic, and of course, Bean na hEireann. Although the public accepted the propriety of women’s writing in principle, it is interesting to note that when the writers were presenting a particularly radical proposal, they often took refuge in either favoured pseudonyms, or else allowed their articles to appear anonymously. This tended to be a more common strategy before the Rising, when political positions still retained a degree of fluidity, and the women were protecting themselves or their families reputations by shielding their radical sentiments. The identities of the writers were well known in political circles,
however. Pseudonyms were also adopted to confer the writer with a more authoritative personality, as in the case of Sydney Gifford, who adopted the persona of ‘John Brennan’ in the belief that the public would be more likely to take seriously the utterances of one who sounded like a ‘strong Wexford farmer’. When Gifford had made a name for herself in the organisation of Cumann na mBan in America she appeared confident enough to write under her own name. For the Protestant women who wrote regularly for Bean na hEireann, pseudonyms appeared to have been utilised to provide the impression of an extensive staff, as the same writers often appeared in the same issues under different names, even on a number of occasions debating with themselves on related topics.

The roles which Protestant women assumed in nationalist organisations did not appear to lead to conflict with Catholic members, at least on the basis of religion. Criticisms made of women in the nationalist movement were largely gender-based. There were some attacks on individuals, such as Sean O’Casey’s attempt to oust Markievicz from the Irish Citizens’ Army, but this was the result of a class rather than a religious difficulty. However, tensions did arise in the very arena which was intended to nullify such disagreements - over which religion should achieve dominance in the Gaelic League. The constitution of the Gaelic League stated: ‘Connradh na Gaedhilge shall be strictly non-political and non-sectarian’, with its primary concerns being the preservation of the language, and

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100 Similarly Elizabeth Bloxham implied masculine authorship in an article concerning the formation of the Irish Volunteers. She wrote: ‘To what degree can our rights as Irishmen (my emphasis) be attenuated without spoiling our illusion that we are a sane, responsible people?’ (Irish Volunteer vol. 1, no. 1, February 7, 1914). The entire article presents a ‘male’ perspective, and is signed ‘E. Bloxham’, giving no hint of the sex of the author.


102 The Constitution of the Gaelic League, as amended by the Ard-Fheis, July, 1912 p. 3.
the encouragement of Irish literature and industry. However, an organisation which attempted to mobilise the bulk of the population in the manner of the League invariably encountered difficulties, not least of which was the question of just who would lead such a large popular movement. Protestants within the organisation were anxious to avoid any suggestion that the League might be brushing close to party politics, and it was to figures such as Nelly O’Brien, with her close associations to both the emerging Sinn Fein movement, through her friendship with Arthur Griffith, and the apparently entrenched elements within Irish loyalism, that the task of reconciling the two positions within the movement fell. I will now examine briefly her role as a moderate Protestant nationalist in attempting to maintain the distinction between intellectual and militant nationalism.

The Gaelic League exercised an admirable policy of accommodating members of often entirely oppositional opinions within the organisation. As Mary Butler wrote in 1906: ‘.....no one should be excluded from the Gaelic League on the grounds of opinions expressed by him on matters unconnected with the Gaelic League, no matter how distasteful or offensive those opinions may be to fellow Leaguers or fellow Countrymen and women at large.’¹⁰³ The actual effect of the encouragement given by the executive to diverse elements, both political and social, led eventually to the sundering of the centre, as the original agenda was overshadowed by political developments. Throughout the difficult period between 1904 and 1915, as the League struggled to retain independence from political affairs, Nelly O’Brien assumed a leading role in preserving at least the semblance of political neutrality. Her correspondence clearly demonstrates the perception

¹⁰³ Ms 3454-6/331. Letter from Mary Butler to Rev. James Hannay, October, 1906, TCD.
amongst various interested parties that the Gaelic League was being targeted as a potentially powerful political force. In 1907, she failed to persuade T.W. Rolleston to support her own defence of League policy. He wrote: 'It is plainly impossible for me, knowing what I do, to preside at a meeting devoted to a discussion of the non-political character of the Gaelic League. I cannot champion it without saying what I know to be untrue; I cannot speak the truth without giving a berth to the enemy, and I cannot, on such a position, be colourless and neutral.' It is interesting that although O'Brien officially followed the League line in emphasising the non-political stance of the League, she was more conscious than many of the other Protestant members of the conflict, on a sectarian level, between the two religious bodies represented there.

O'Brien frequently found herself in the unenviable position of maintaining links between the Gaelic League moderates and the more radical Sinn Fein nationalists. A cousin of the militant Mary Spring-Rice, she was a close friend of Douglas Hyde, and largely followed his lead in defining the strategies of the League. Her correspondence with figures such as Rev. Hannay, Erskine Childers, Hyde, Susan Mitchell, J.P. Mahaffy, Padraic Pearse, Eoin MacNeill, Alice Milligan, Edward Martyn and Arthur Griffith indicates her desire to hold the various strands of the revivalist movement together, without allowing any particular faction to gain ascendancy. Her letters to Douglas Hyde during his American interlude in 1906 deal for the most part with the activities and in-fighting in the League, and her attempts to contain disagreements in order to allow the work of the revivalists to move on. Despite the animosity which existed between

\[104\text{Ms 3454-6/222. Letter from T.W. Rolleston to Nellie O'Brien, January 11, 1907, TCD.}\]
Hyde and John Pentland Mahaffy over Hyde’s University appointments, O’Brien still maintained contact with the latter, remarking to Hyde, ‘I believe he really at bottom of things knows he is a sinner or I would not trouble about him…(I) ended up by telling him to read the religious songs and he would understand a little of the meaning of the fight for the language. I was determined to have my conscience clear and to vindicate my loyalty to you and the Gaelic League.’

O’Brien’s political stance was perhaps unique amongst the women under examination in that she gave a great deal of thought to the position which ‘Gaelic Protestants’, as she termed them, should occupy in Ireland. She attempted to find a common ground for nationalists and unionists alike in the Irish language, as opposed to viewing it as a tribal badge. Although she moved closer to the aspirations of Sinn Fein in the late teens of the century, she did not endorse the campaign of violence, nor did she condemn it. Most of the other Protestant female nationalists regarded Protestantism as either entirely a private affair, with little connection to political matters, or else as something to be regarded with suspicion, given its connotations of political dominance in Ireland. O’Brien’s concern lay in avoiding the binary oppositions of Catholic and Protestant, Gaelic and English-speaking, and merging elements of each. This explains her anxiety to convince even hostile figures of authority such as Mahaffy of the necessity for teaching Irish in Trinity, since its marginalisation would only serve to emphasise the gulf which lay between such overtly Protestant institutions and the rest of the population. However, at times she felt the strain of balancing loyalties to both her perceived duty in preserving the language, and protecting her own Protestant Gaelic heritage.

105 Ms 18,252 (3). Letter from Nelly O’Brien to Douglas Hyde, January 13, 1906, NLI.
She felt strongly that influential Protestant mouthpieces such as the *Church of Ireland Gazette* should be as ready as herself to accommodate all aspects of Irish Protestant culture, including the expression of that culture through the Irish language. In 1906 she succeeded in having some Gaelic League lectures and verses printed in the *Gazette*, and in a letter dated February 9, asked Hannay’s advice on her suggestion that she make the printers buy Irish type, in anticipation of large scale involvement in Gaelic League affairs. A good friend of Hannay’s, she reported a successful ‘run-in’ with the *Gazette* editors over the printing of one of his (Hannay’s) articles to Hyde (‘I went on a campaign down to their office and a nice lot they seemed to me... Even you would be satisfied with the tone of authority I assume.’). O’Brien ended the letter however by saying ‘I hate the whole business,’ and her distaste for the often intense political and religious factionalism within the League is clear from her letters.

1906 proved to be a difficult year for O’Brien, with the Catholic clerical elements in the League apparently attempting to wrest control from the Protestant leadership. However she was less worried about the ultimate success of such a venture, and more concerned with its possible effects upon Hyde himself. O’Brien’s correspondence illustrates the gulf which existed between the articulated policies and opinions of the League, and the ‘behind the scenes’ (a favourite phrase

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106 The *Church of Ireland Gazette* was in fact quite willing to discuss these issues, and published a series of articles which emphasised the church’s important role in Irish affairs. See for example Rev. W.H.T. Gahan, ‘The Church of Ireland at the Cross Roads’ (October 1, 1915, pp. 727-8), which advocates the use of the Irish language by all, and G.A. Ruth, ‘The Irish Guild of the Church’ (March 30, 1917, pp. 231-2) which proposes the use of Irish in church services.


108 Ms 18,252 (3). Letter from Nelly O’Brien to Douglas Hyde, February 14, 1906, TCD.

109 ‘I am not afraid of the priests capturing the movement but I fear they will kill him’ (Hyde, who was looking unwell at a recent meeting). Ms 3454-6/336. Letter from Nelly O’Brien to Rev. James Hannay, October 14, 1906, TCD.
of O’Brien’s) manoeuvres of the interested parties. For O’Brien, the attempts of the Catholic Church to assume dominance would, if successful, lead to a stultification of the liberal and educational objectives of the organisation. Writing to Hannay from Italy in 1907, where she had gone to recuperate after the strain of bickering within the League, she remarked on the subject of the Royal Commission on education at which both Hyde and the Church gave evidence: ‘It will be a great triumph if the RC Bishops can be really got in to line and pinned down to something and after all the great thing is that the people should be educated somehow or other.’ This letter underlined one of the difficulties faced by the League, that of their perceived ineffectiveness by the radicals in the revivalist movement: ‘Dr. Hyde’s part of the evidence seemed to me a great appeal to the country at large, but I can imagine the sort of things Sinn Fein are saying. They little know how much is done quietly behind the scenes.’ In fact, charges concerning the ineffectiveness of the League continued well into the 1920s, when, at a lecture to the League members in TCD, O’Brien was still defending it against the same accusation. That she was in any measure successful in reconciling the warring factions illustrates the significant contribution made by some of the Protestant nationalists in less obtrusive roles than others.

**Common Characteristics**

Perhaps the most striking characteristic of the Protestant women nationalists was the self-confidence they displayed in public and private. This is often cited in the admiring memoirs of contemporaries who describe the occasions

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111 ibid.
on which these women challenged masculine authority, such as Kathleen Lynn and Annie Smithson demanding proper conditions for women prisoners during the 1916 Rising and the Civil War respectively\textsuperscript{112}, or Maud Gonne and Eva Gore Booth using their considerable contacts amongst prominent British and Irish social and political figures to secure favours. Albinia Brodrick, on hunger strike in 1923 after her imprisonment for assisting the IRA, reportedly welcomed her death for the embarrassment it would bring to her titled family: ‘She was quite cheerful and philosophic about dying. ‘An old woman,’ she said, ‘is not much loss, but my death will be sure to make a noise, because of that wretched little prefix to my name\textsuperscript{113}, and in that way my death may do more good for Ireland than my life could do.’\textsuperscript{114} In the social and political climate of early twentieth-century Ireland, it would appear that Protestant women tended to be permitted a greater degree of license with regard to their social and political activities simply because they were Protestant. Even as lapsed members of a once privileged and dominant class, they could transgress contemporary social mores without attracting the same criticism which might have been extended to their Catholic associates.\textsuperscript{115} Thus the unmarried Dorothy Stopford Price could, as quoted below, open her house to legions of men, and attract apparently little attention. Those women who were professionally qualified, particularly the physicians Stopford Price, Kathleen Lynn and Ada English, appear to have doubly distanced themselves from Catholic female standards. English became a local celebrity less for her election to the Dail and

\textsuperscript{112} Smithson, \textit{Myself} p. 264.
\textsuperscript{113} She was the Honourable Albinia Brodrick.
\textsuperscript{114} Margaret Buckley, \textit{The Jangle of the Keys}, Dublin: James Duffy and Co., 1938, p. 64.
\textsuperscript{115} It is significant that of all the female political activists, both Protestant and Catholic, only four women, all Protestants, received the popular honorary title of Madame - Maud Gonne, Constance...
more through her arrest by the Black and Tans for disguising men on the run as psychiatric patients in the asylum where she was a Resident Medical Superintendent.\textsuperscript{116}

Although the image of the socially domineering Lady of the Manor in fact applied to only a small percentage of Protestant women, still one finds that in an organisation which includes both Catholic and Protestant women, Protestants tended to assume the dominant roles, as committee members and organisers, while Catholics made up the rank and file. This is not to say that Catholics were not active amongst the leadership, but rather that given their minority status, Protestants tended to be disproportionately over-represented in leadership roles. While this did not appear to manifest itself as a real source of conflict between Protestant and Catholic activists, it was a factor of which both ‘sides’ were acutely aware. In some obvious cases, the social and political origins of these women became a positive advantage. Charlotte Despard and Maud Gonne, for example, were able to travel freely around the country with members of the British Labour Party Commission of Enquiry in 1920, because Despard was the sister of Lord French, Viceroy of Ireland.\textsuperscript{117} Markievicz became a crucial propaganda weapon, for both her sex and background, and her name was prominently displayed on posters calling for public support after the 1916 Rising.\textsuperscript{118}

\begin{footnotesize}
Markievicz, Charlotte Despard and Sydney Czira - a title which, while non-sectarian, emphasises their difference from mainstream activists while at the same time conferring distinction.\textsuperscript{116} On her release from Galway Goal she was presented with an illuminated address which praised her ingenuity as well as her patriotism.\textsuperscript{117} Margaret Ward, \textit{Unmanageable Revolutionaries: Women and Irish Nationalism}, Kerry: Brandon Press, 1983, p. 150.\textsuperscript{118} ILB 300 p 6, item 48, NLI.
\end{footnotesize}
Another factor which many of the these women shared was the experience of living abroad for significant periods of time. Markievicz, Gonne, Sydney Gifford, Stopford Price, Moloney, Bennett and others lived and worked in England, continental Europe and America, and although they were preoccupied throughout with the Irish nationalist cause, they gained not merely a greater degree of confidence from extensive public speaking, but, more importantly, adopted a more internationalist perspective on Ireland than many others who remained at home. Ironically, this willingness to place Ireland in a broader context may stem from their Protestant backgrounds. Unionists in Ireland looked by definition to Britain, and even further afield to the Empire, for a sense of identity. Protestant nationalists came from a culture where Ireland was only one part of the picture.

Protestant female nationalists contributed significantly to making Ireland's case abroad. Given the importance of the Irish-American audience, the best speakers were approached to conduct lecture tours and fund-raise in the United States. There was an interesting division between the types of Catholic and Protestant women who were asked to participate. Many of the Catholics were relatives of men executed in the 1916 Rising, such as Hanna Sheehy Skeffington and Nora Connolly, but the Protestant women, most of whom had no such connections, appear to have been asked because of the profiles they had established independently in Ireland. In November 1922, for example, Linda Kearns anxiously solicited a commitment from Annie Smithson to undertake a three month tour of America. Although the nature of the appeal was hardly subtle ('Mrs. Sheehy Skeffington must be back in Ireland for Xmas. She is a very clever
woman and it will be difficult to find a replacement\textsuperscript{119}, the letter indicated the importance of securing an articulate and confident spokesperson for the movement. Smithson was well known throughout Ireland for her patriotic novels, but at this stage had a limited reputation in America. Yet she was invited on her own merits, as opposed to her links with an heroic relation. Other Protestant speakers included Constance Markievicz, two of the Gifford sisters, Kathleen Lynn and Maud Gonne, and their comments on America and the position of women there reveal some of their expectations for Irishwomen. Describing American women as 'wield[ing] so much power in politics, industry and the professions',\textsuperscript{120} Sydney Czira believed that the policies of Sinn Fein would produce the same result at home. Her early political success in the States led her to believe that such progress was indeed possible. As a result of a casual invitation to address the Ladies Auxiliary of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, the first branch of Cumann na mBan was established in America: 'A large number of the AOH women were members of the professions, so that they proved very useful on the American front during our fight for independence.'\textsuperscript{121}

Perhaps this unbalanced element in the relationships between Catholics and Protestants may be described as something of a self-fulfilling prophecy. It was expected that Protestants would assume leadership roles, and not considered unusual when they did. In 1925 Katherine Tynan bemoaned the lack of initiative displayed by Irish Catholics in ordering their own affairs:

Let me add finally that we Catholic women of Ireland allowed the strenuous race of Anglo-Irish Protestants to carry on the

\textsuperscript{119} Lot 46 (i) (a) November 6, 1922, MA.
\textsuperscript{120} Sydney Czira, 'An American Interlude' Ms. 18,816 p. 3, NLI.
\textsuperscript{121} ibid, p. 4.
remedial and social work for more years than I like to think about. Theirs were the societies; theirs the civic and social spirit and citizenship. We left the organisation to them too, or to the priests or nuns. I believe we really thought that their activities were 'unfeminine,' if not actually indecent!'122

Protestantism in the minds of many of the Irish public was synonymous with radicalism, in public and private life. The Irish Catholic Womens’ Suffrage Society was established in order to mobilise Catholic women who were alienated both by the militant strategies of many of the existing suffrage societies, and by the fact that most of the suffrage societies then in existence, both militant and non-militant, were headed by Protestants. The circular of the ICWSS stated that ‘the existing non-militant Leagues are mainly led by Protestants’, and the aim of the new society was ‘to account for Catholic women who were afraid of militancy keeping outside the Suffrage movement altogether.’123

One factor which links several of the women under examination is the absence of dominant male figures in their lives. Many of them share the experience of having lost their fathers when young. This would appear to have had the effect of either removing potential social constraints or, more likely, allowing women early financial independence and more freedom to choose marriage partners, or even to choose to remain single. Out of the 18 women under examination124, fourteen either married late in life, separated from their husbands within a few

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122 Tynan, 'Trumpet Call', p. 74.
123 Ms 22,672 (i) Letter from M. Geoghegan, Hon. Sec. of ICWSS, to Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington, April 16, 1913, NLI.
124 The marital status of these women changed, in some cases, during the period under examination. These are in particular Maud Gonne (divorced and widowed between 1910 and 1916) and Muriel MacDonagh (widowed in 1916). The point to be made is that during the periods of greatest activism, the women were largely free agents.
years, were widowed young, or remained single. Of those women who did marry, and were not widowed, only two, Constance Markievicz and Dorothy Stopford Price, married men who had no connection with nationalist politics. So it would seem that a requirement for Protestant female nationalist political activity was a sympathetic husband, or no husband at all. This factor may be equally applicable to Catholic women, with economic independence being more important than religion in determining the degree of freedom allowed to women. It stands in sharp contrast to Irish unionist politics, where positions at senior level in women’s organisations were filled on the basis of marital status. The wives of unionist leaders were automatically placed at the head of female unionist organisations.

Perhaps as a consequence of their unmarried states, several of the female Protestant nationalists were accorded an honorary male status, in particular those with a high profile. Markievicz, for example, assumed a masculine identity through her insistence on wearing trousers for the 1916 Rising, and carrying the ultimate male accessory, a revolver. She was also remembered as one of the first women of note to bob her hair. On a more practical level, she distanced herself from the maternal arena to such an extent that she and her daughter failed to recognise each other in 1922. Dorothy Stopford Price scandalised Kilbrittain when she took to

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125 Louie Bennett (single); Alice Milligan (single); Helena Moloney (single); Ada English (single); Alice Stopford Green (widowed); Albinia Brodrick (single); Nelly O’Brien (single); Kathleen Lynn (single); Annie Smithson (single); Grace Gifford (widowed); Muriel Gifford (widowed); Sydney Czira (separated); Maud Gonne (widowed) and Constance Markievicz (separated).
126 For those who saw a life beyond that of home and family, incorporation into a cause which demanded such a level of personal sacrifice may have been a means of justifiably rejecting what was regarded as the suitable destiny of women. Certainly the type of professional and philanthropic work which many of these women carried out, and which in some cases was of greater importance to them than the strictly political, would not have been easily incorporated into a regular home life.
wearing trousers to do her medical rounds, but was reluctantly accepted by the older members of the population because of her professional qualifications. However, it is interesting to note that there remained in many minds a sense that in choosing this celibate, political path, some of the women were denying their own natures. Both Andrée Sheehy Skeffington and Hazel Smyth stress Kathleen Lynn’s fondness for children, and imply that she regretted having none of her own.  

Of the eighteen women in this study, fifteen rejected the Treaty. The roles women played in the Treaty debates and in the subsequent civil war have been examined to a limited extent by a range of historians, but what is quite remarkable is the unanimous presumption that the women, and particularly those who were anti-treaty, responded for the wrong reasons. Taking the losing side, and attempting to justify the awful horrors of civil war, has influenced some perspectives, and the fact that the anti-treaty camp under De Valera became increasingly conservative has hardened attitudes towards the women who voted against the Treaty. But why did women delegates to the Dail, and the majority of this study group, reject the Treaty?

Tom Garvin, in an uncharacteristically naive assessment of women’s roles in the Treaty debates and after, blames the female ‘anti’ vote on ‘aggression, hysterical energy and rage’, and suggests female ‘terrorism’ and a national

128 ‘[St. Ultan’s] had an ‘open day’ day every year, Dr. Lynn going from cot to cot, obviously knowing each patient well, occasionally lifting her latest success, glowing with love and pride, as if it were her own baby, which in a way it was.’ Andrée Sheehy Skeffington, Writers, raconteurs and notable feminists. Dublin: National Library of Ireland Society, 1993, p. 47. ‘In the spring of 1955 Kathleen attended her clinic for the last time. She was then eighty-one years of age and ill. A young mother remarked that the doctor held her baby as if he were the most precious thing in the world.’ Hazel P. Smyth, Kathleen Lynn, M.D., F.R.C.S.I. (1874-1955) in Dublin Historical Record vol. xxx no. 2, March 1977, p. 56.
129 Nellie O’Brien supported it, and Alice Stopford Green voted for it, and became a Senator.
130 Garvin, 1922, p. 96.
oedipal complex as reasons for male rejection of the Treaty. However, where this (possibly playful) thesis collapses is in the face of evidence that De Valera and the anti-treaty members entirely ignored the wishes and opinions of the women representatives, and the female deputies found themselves given short shrift if they disagreed with any line taken by the senior male leaders. This pattern was established long before the Treaty was negotiated, in for example the exclusion of women from the collection of guns at Howth, the attempts to oust Markievicz from the Fianna, the non-mobilisation of Cumann na mBan at the outbreak of the 1916 Rising, the lack of formal recognition of the organisation during the Anglo-Irish war, and the exclusion of Cumann na mBan in the decision to call a cease-fire to end the civil war. Given this record, it is difficult to support the claim that women were the driving force behind the anti-treaty side. To contemporary historians, the blood-sodden rhetoric of some of the women still provokes an unease that seems based more on gender assumptions than on the statements themselves. Men like Dan Breen, Ernie O’Malley, Liam Mellowes or Liam Lynch do not arouse the same irritated hostility, despite their practical part in maintaining the civil war. Nor is there any consideration of the women who supported the treaty; no suggestion there that wives, sisters and mothers bullied their men into taking what, with the benefit of hindsight, appeared to many to be the correct decision. In looking for reasons for the anti-treaty stance by Protestant female nationalists, one needs to consider the broader picture of their political involvements.

A multiplicity of interests characterises Protestant nationalist activity, with, in some cases, the issue of independence taking a secondary position. Kathleen Lynn,
for example, said that ‘she was drawn to Republican ideals through the Suffrage movement’\textsuperscript{131}, and Elizabeth Bloxham, a Protestant Domestic Economy Instructress from the west of Ireland, regarded the association between the advancement of women both domestically and politically as indisputable. Louie Bennett moved in the opposite direction - her interest in nationalist politics led her to a consideration of feminist principles.\textsuperscript{132} Margaret Cousins saw the cross-over of different interests as a source of strength, and one which promised to alter subsequent politics: ‘We were a very mixed lot, a cross-section of all the classes, political parties, religious groups, and avocations open to women in those days (1908-1914). The cause broke down all social barriers.’\textsuperscript{133} The suffrage issue was one of the strongest links, despite some differences of opinion over priorities.\textsuperscript{134} Labour politics also occupied the energies of many of these women, with Kathleen Lynn, Nellie Gifford and Constance Markievicz being members of the Irish Citizen Army, and Helena Moloney and Louie Bennett active in the organisation of the Irish Women Workers’ Union from 1915. Many of the others offered support through their participation in such events as the organisation of soup kitchens during the 1913 lockout. Muriel Gifford, Kathleen Lynn and Elizabeth Bloxham

\textsuperscript{131} Smyth, ‘Kathleen Lynn’ p. 51. Lynn used her professional skills to further the suffrage cause as well as the nationalist, examining and preparing a report for publication on the state of health of Miss Galdys Evans, the English suffragist who was imprisoned under the Cat and Mouse Act in Ireland in 1913. Ms. 21,649, item 5, NLI.


\textsuperscript{133} Margaret Cousins, with J.H. Cousins, *We Two Together*, Madras: Ganesh & Co. Ltd., 1950, p. 166.

\textsuperscript{134} Opinion was often sharply divided over the timing of the granting of the franchise, with women such as Dorothy Stopford Price campaigning for immediate action, even if this meant implicitly recognising the authority of the British government to legislate for Irish women. Others, including Sydney Gifford and Constance Markievicz, counselled delay, in the belief that the campaign for suffrage would weaken nationalist demands, and also, optimistically, declaring that women would enjoy equality in an independent Ireland.
were members of both the Irish Women’s Franchise League and Cumann na dTeachtaire, an organisation formed to combine the suffrage issue with nationalism, and Maud Gonne, Constance Markievicz, Helena Moloney, and three of the four Gifford sisters all worked together on the free school meals for children campaign. These women mobilised on a formal as well as informal level, establishing and joining groups as diverse as the Irish Citizen Army, the Irishwomen’s Franchise League, the Union of Women Workers, as well as Cumann na mBan. Unlike the majority of male nationalists, whose focus was extremely narrow, the women sought much broader changes which had implications beyond the Anglo-Irish relationship. The Treaty both failed to address the issues above, and held out little hope that any resulting constitution would be allowed enough scope to do so. Thus although the rhetoric used to denounce the Treaty was that of betrayal, as was that of the men, the Treaty represented an even greater disappointment to these Protestant women nationalists.

Some, however, had a less altruistic intent in joining several movements at once. Margaret Ward, in Maud Gonne, has pointed out that some of the more militant nationalists were prepared to lend support to a variety of causes in the belief that concerted unrest in many areas would be the most efficient means of overthrowing British rule: ‘Maud was never a suffragist, being far too much of a nationalist ever to consider giving absolute priority to women’s demands, but she wanted the franchise for women in a free Ireland and, in the meantime, the suffrage movement was challenging the government and therefore had her full support.’

While this multiplicity of interests diffused energies which might have been

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135 Ward, Maud Gonne p. 102.
combined for greater effect, it also allowed for the political survival of women after 1922. They may have been marginalised as far as mainstream politics was concerned, but they continued to pursue other agendas. Kathleen Lynn and Madeline ffrench-Mullen, for example, fought in the Irish Citizen’s Army in 1916, but they were realistic enough to accommodate themselves to the less than complete fulfillment of their expectations. Political pragmatism allowed them to carry out their ambitious plans for the expansion of a children’s hospital under the despised wing of the Free State. Helena Moloney continued her work in labour politics: ‘Our next move forward must be accompanied by a clear knowledge and determination to deal with poverty, unemployment and industrial servitude…our movement must stand finally on what it proposes to do for the mass of the people of Ireland.’

Gonne expanded her work with the Prisoner’s Defence Fund, just as those women who had remained in employment throughout the Anglo-Irish and Civil Wars, such as Ada English, Annie Smithson and Dorothy Stopford Price, continued to do so. For some, independence made little difference. Albina Brodrick allegedly still “ruled the roost” in Kerry local politics, much as she had done under the old dispensation. Thus women who had another political string to their bows remained politically viable even after the collapse of the anti-treaty alliance. Some did, of course, take part in and lend support to marginalised political bodies such as Cumann na mBan, and they all remained implacably opposed to the loss of the republican ideal; however they managed in this way to salvage something from the wreckage, and continued to provide the necessary

137 Quoted in Garvin, 1922, p. 86.
services for the inarticulate and deprived which otherwise would have been neglected.

In terms of familial responses to political involvement, Protestant nationalists frequently encountered opposition from close members of their families who did not necessarily share their political sympathies. The experiences of Albinia Brodrick indicate the difficulties faced by Protestant women who were sympathetic to nationalism, but who were, for one reason or another, limited in the extent of their involvement by male family relations. Brodrick, a sister of the Earl of Midleton, and from a staunchly Unionist background, became actively involved in nationalist politics only after the death of her father, but more than made up for her postponed beginning by embracing the most extreme form of radical republicanism. Although she effected the transition in a literal manner by adopting the Irish form of her name (Gobnait Ni Bruadair), she did on occasion enjoy pointing up the incongruity of her altered circumstances. When in prison in the North Dublin Union in 1923, she began a journal entitled ‘The North Dublin Union Invincible’, being ‘an attempt to float a chronicle of our Jail life.’ Although neither her brother nor any of her other friends or relations were in a position to read it, she signed herself ‘the Honourable Albinia Brodrick.’

There were occasions however when families could be a positive support to emergent nationalists. Relationships within the movement were often based upon familial as well as political ties. The four Gifford sisters - Sydney, Muriel, Grace and Nellie - supported each others growing sense of nationalism in the face of parental and social opposition. Nelly O’Brien and Mary Spring-Rice were first

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138 ‘Kilmainham Folder’, MA.
cousins, although O'Brien's politics were closer in fact to those of her Uncle, Lord Monteagle, than Mary's republicanism. Alice Stopford Green was an aunt of Dorothy Stopford Price, and she continually encouraged Dorothy to participate in Irish politics, although she did not anticipate the eventual extent of her niece’s involvement.

When one turns to the question of levels of political awareness amongst these women (Protestant nationalists), or the formulation of a distinct political strategy with regard to the specific issue of nationalism in Ireland, it is often difficult to firmly fix an ideological line. As the women were careful to avoid antagonising the male (predominantly Catholic) leadership, they often failed to provide a specific analysis of either the current state of political structures in Ireland, or of their projected ambitions for the New State. Pre-Treaty statements on particular objectives such as suffrage, workers' rights or specific social concerns tend to focus upon the failure of the British government to administer to Ireland in those ways, and as such are more likely to be interpreted as bald nationalist rhetoric than sustained political analysis. This had the often apparently contradictory effect of making the women political radicals while at the same time lessening the effect of their radicalism, through their apparent inability to launch concerted campaigns towards a single political end.

Despite their decided commitment to nationalism, and indeed a militant nationalism, not all of the women under examination were actually members of the main formal women's nationalist movement in existence between 1914 and 1922, Cumann na mBan. Markievicz was President, and three of the four Gifford sisters members, as were Elizabeth Bloxham, Ada English and Maud Gonne, but the
majority were not. While all of the activists were conscious of the necessity of presenting a coherent front, the restrictions placed on members of Cumann na mBan by its own constitution deterred several from joining. Louie Bennett, the trade unionist and moderate nationalist, was scathing in her assessment of Cumann na mBan during the civil war, claiming that membership acted to retard Irishwomen’s political development: ‘Cumann na mBan has drawn to itself most of the intelligent and high-spirited...women. Yet it is purely a fighting force, with no constructive ideals for nation or class...There was much that was admirable, much detestable, and much that was pitiful in the attitude of Republican women towards the recent civil strife in Ireland. They failed in sane, constructive thinking. Their ignorance of affairs outside Ireland is as unfortunate as their failure to appreciate the value of cultural and social influences.’

In a broad sense, Bennett correctly identified the limitations of a political movement which avoided committing itself to a specific agenda until independence had been achieved. Like the suffrage campaign for the vote, the fulfillment of a specific target severely curtailed the broader feminist movement. However, what Bennett ignored was the fact that the provision of a detailed social and political policy before 1922 would in all likelihood have eroded the general support base, and would certainly have curtailed levels of female participation. Even though the particular leanings of certain women were well known - Markievicz and Moloney’s socialism, for example - this appeared for public consumption to be secondary to the independence movement. Although the problems inherent in allowing diverse

139 Louie Bennett, ‘What the Workers can Do in the New Day’ in Fitzgerald (ed) The Voice of Ireland. p. 301.
interest groups to believe that their ambitions would all be realised became clear
from 1920 onwards, there was little that could be done to introduce a note of
realism, without alienating supporters. Thoughtful commentators such as Dorothy
Macardle recognised that independence could not fail to disappoint those who held
wildly opposing visions of a new Ireland:

To each one of us in the movement the Republic seemed the
Ireland of his desire. To some, the vision glowed of a liberal,
progressive State on friendly terms with the rest of the world;
others dreamed of a pious island, fortress of Catholic and Gaelic
traditions in a decadent and anarchic age; a release of individual
art and enterprise. By tacit consent, such differences were not
discussed. What importance had they, compared with the aim
which united us - to free Ireland from alien control?¹⁴⁰

Despite this inclusive view, concerns regarding the limited role of women in the
movement, as well as the group’s policy of deferring the question of suffrage until
the national question had been dealt with, caused many to hesitate.

There was, however, another element in this debate. For many women, the
fact that nationalism took precedence over the suffrage issue did not mean that
they were indifferent to women’s status. For some, Elizabeth Bloxham included,
national liberation was bound up with political advancement. In a review of United
Irishwomen, Bloxham identified the co-operative movement as a practical means
through which women could gain equality:

The feminist movement, which is simply a step in the evolution
of women - and therefore of the race - is felt none the less
strongly in Ireland because it does not express itself in the same
manner as in other countries. The woman suffragist who wishes
to make a point in favour of her cause, and at the same time in
favour of her country, can call attention to the booklet under
review. In it men of experience and intellect acknowledge that

pp. 3-4.
their movement, well-planned, and carried on as it is with enthusiasm, cannot succeed without women's help. The appeal for help coincides with the awakening of civic consciousness in women. In a country where many things happen strangely the women question seems likely to be solved without wrangle or contumely.  

Constance Markievicz claimed in a letter to her sister that militant political involvement led women to demand legislative equality, so that feminism fed off the nationalist movement rather than the other way around. Typically, she presumed that the women, if enfranchised, would use their vote to reject the Treaty: 'The register is a farce; Griffith is afraid that if it is revised he will be beaten. None of the volunteers are on and we brought in a bill to enfranchise women under 30. Quite spontaneously the demand arose here. Women everywhere through the country suddenly finding their positions to be humiliating and it was the fight that did it! They say they must have a say as to the treaty and that if they were good enough to take part in the fight they are good enough to vote.'

One surprising feature of Protestant female nationalism was its strong links with both socialist movements, and more broadly-based labour organisations. The association is surprising given the backgrounds of most of the women. Of the eighteen, only Smithson actively campaigned against what she described as the evils of socialism, and her objections were based upon her religious beliefs rather

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142 The associations between nationalism and suffrage were sometimes fraught. Jenny Wyse Power left the Irishwomen's Franchise League in 1912 because she could not agree with their suggestion that members should not support candidates for parliament who were against women's suffrage. (*Irish Citizen* June 1, 1912) Constance Markievicz also came in for criticism for what one suffragist perceived as her lack of commitment: '...Madame Markievicz lukewarm (on suff) never active, more anti-British and therefore military (sic)... more for men's company than ours tho she did what she thought she should do.' Notes written by Maire Johnson on her involvement in the suffrage movement. Ms21194 (I), NLI.
143 Constance Markievicz to Eva Gore Booth, n.d. Ms. 21,816, NLI.
than class. The early lives of the Protestant nationalists - their lack, as they saw it, of a nationalist history, and some reservations regarding Catholic conservatism - led them towards James Connolly and the Irish Citizen Army, as an organisation which promised practical political action, and an agenda beyond the narrowly nationalist. The most prominent women in this organisation were also Protestant, and included Bennett, Markievicz, Moloney, Lynn and Nelly Gifford. Connolly appeared capable of forging close relationships with the leaders of most of the different strands within Protestant nationalism - suffragists, republicans, United Irishwomen, and free school meal advocates. The Irish Citizen Army's Labour and socialist base made it a unique organisation in early twentieth-century Ireland. The constitution of the body allowed for the inclusion of members with diverse political views, but in an environment in which the public were accustomed to rhetorical demands for political independence, it was clearly perceived to be more effective to campaign for members on that basis, rather than depending on sophisticated ideological argument. That there was a relatively small membership of the ICA is perhaps surprising, given the large potential 'pool' of unionised and non-unionised workers in Dublin city alone. However, as Frank Robbins points out, 'the workers, while trade unionists, were not by any measure socialists. For the workers to respond rather to the call of the Volunteer Organisation was more likely because of the years of popular agitation for national freedom.' Another more basic reason may be the perception of many that its socialist principles were in opposition to the Catholic Church. The Ancient Order of Hibernians has been described as 'second only to the employers leader William Martin Murphy (in

144 Frank Robbins, Under the Starry Plough: Recollections of the Irish Citizen Army, Academy 343
being) the Unions' greatest enemy', and as a body was reflective of much contemporaneous Catholic opinion concerning the ICA. Although Connolly was anxious to avoid antagonising the Church, and representing the ICA as a body hostile to the dominant influence of Catholicism in Ireland, it would appear that the organisation's heady mix of socialism and non-sectarianism exercised a powerful attraction for politically active Protestant women. Many of the women under examination joined specifically secular political organisations, in the sense that although all were Protestant, and most were suffragists, none joined the largest Church of Ireland suffrage organisation. Instead they tended towards those marginalised political groupings which allowed them the maximum freedom to pursue their own agendas within the 'protection' of a political body.

One of the most significant aspects of the structure of the ICA, and of Connolly as leader, was the intellectual and practical segregation of socialism and religion. In his reply to the Rev. Fr. Kane's 1910 denunciation of socialism in a series of Lenten lectures, Connolly wrote a pamphlet entitled *Labour, Nationality and Religion*, in which he made the significant (and accommodatory, given his Marxist beliefs) distinction between the origins and basis of socialism and religion. Socialism was described as strictly a political and economic issue, and as such had no conflict with religious belief. Although the pamphlet was written with the intention of reassuring Catholics who associated socialism with Godlessness, it would appear that it also had the effect of drawing Protestant female support to the organisation.

Press, 1977, p. 34.
145 ibid.
Traditional female networks of support based on familial ties, friendships, and organisational networks were extended into the realm of politics. Moreover, informal contacts were employed to lend support to a variety of movements in a manner which contrasted sharply with male forms of organisation. When one looks, for example, at the structures in the IRA, the most obvious characteristic is a strict hierarchy, with each member assigned a function, title and position within a chain of command.\(^\text{147}\) Although Cumann na mBan partially appropriated this kind of structure\(^\text{148}\) most of the other female groups did not, and followed instead a fluid organisation within which women lent support to causes that they might not necessarily have supported but for personal contact. Thus one finds a trade union activist such as Louie Bennett agreeing to speak at nationalist rallies, despite the fact that her principal concerns lay with the Women’s Workers Union, a body with internationalist rather than nationalist links. However, there was a danger that such public figures might be misrepresented, and individuals forced into compromising their key positions. Thus Bennett was obliged to lay down certain parameters before agreeing to speak at a suffrage meeting. She asked Hanna Sheehy Skeffington to ‘arrange that all controversial topics in connection with the war—such as pro-Germanism, recruiting, etc. may be ruled out of order at your Tuesday meeting if I speak? I don’t want to be unreasonable in my requests but I am very strongly of opinion that our personal bias on these questions should be as far as possible submerged when we come forward as suffragists. I should much dislike to

\(^{147}\) This was partly a result of the fact that the structures within the IRA mirrored established military procedures, so that positions of directors, captains, generals and so on had to be filled.\(^{148}\) It is interesting that the women followed the masculine example in situations where they were under the closest scrutiny, especially in prison. See for example Buckley’s *The Jangle of the Keys* for an account of how military organisation was seen to be essential to maintain standards in prison.
be drawn into futile arguments. Constance Markievicz, perhaps the most enthusiastic joiner of organisations of them all, combined membership of and support for groups including Cumann na mBan, the Irishwomen’s Franchise League, the Irish Socialist Party, Sinn Fein, and so on. A striking feature of this multiplicity of memberships is the fact that it allowed for the mobilisation of diverse elements of the female population.

Protestant nationalist activity has to be placed in the context of the late nineteenth-century rise of female middle-class public activity, which could be said to have begun with events such as Florence Nightingale’s campaign to respectabilise the nursing profession as a viable occupation for genteel single women. Martha Vicinus and Pat Jalland, amongst others, have documented the enthusiasm with which middle-class women undertook often highly visible positions in social reform movements, once they had been deemed appropriate activities for that class. However, this decision to lead a high-profile life of political activism was not lightly undertaken, although the memoirs of public female figures rarely commented upon the clashes caused by this decision. Nevertheless it remained a problem, especially for those women who had children. Attempts to combine often radical occupations with traditional roles caused some difficulty. That some prominent figures failed to come adequately to terms with it may be seen in the letter written by Maud Gonne to Stanislas Markievicz, Constance’s

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149 Louie Bennett to Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, March 1915. Ms 22,672, NLI.
150 Experiences gained in area of public activity were often applied in another. Thus the committee of the Irish Independence League was ‘arranged on old ‘Suf’ [suffrage] plan - one respectable Chair and two others.’ Lot 57, (captured documents) MA.
step-son, after Markievicz’s death, in which she explained that Markievicz’s prolonged absences from her daughter Maeve as a result of her political activities did not imply a lack of concern for her child:

Constance loved children and it was a great sacrifice when she sent Maeve to be brought up by her mother because life’s evolution had made things too strenuous for the child at home. I have heard people criticise Con for this and speak of her as being a neglectful mother. Nothing could be falser than that, but she was so unselfish she sacrificed everything for Ireland, and in this case did what she thought best for the child. 152

Although this was written ostensibly to reassure Maeve and Stanislas, it may also be interpreted as an attempt on Gonne’s behalf to justify her own erratic record as a wife and mother. 153 It is true that the kind of life Markievicz led was unsuitable for any child, but it must be remembered that her daughter Maeve was born in Lisadell in 1901, some seven years before her mother began any involvement in political affairs. When Markievicz and her husband set up home in Paris in 1902, they left their baby in Sligo in the care of her grandmother, Lady Gore-Booth, who for practical purposes raised her. While Markievicz merely followed the customs of her class, albeit to an extreme, in entrusting the care of her child to her mother, governesses and nurses (Casimir Markievicz similarly left his son in Poland after his second marriage), the abdication of such domestic responsibilities allowed her to move within a wider arena than that provided by the strictly domestic. It was left to her supporters to subsequently place a more favourable gloss on her activities.

152 Marreco, Rebel Countess p. 125.
153 Gonne was conscious of the threat of scandal as far as her children were concerned, as a result of her own past, which led her to insist on the clearly unsuitable and early marriage of her illegitimate daughter Iseult to Francis Stuart. The impulse towards respectability backfired badly. 347
Religion

The issue of religion, with Protestant activists participating in a predominantly Catholic movement, remained an undercurrent in the revolutionary movement. The position of Protestant nationalists within the movement appeared superficially unproblematic. However, consciousness of their 'difference' from the bulk of those who constituted the movement throughout the country was expressed in a number of ways. Lynn Hunt has discussed the significance of language for revolutionaries where certain words are used to emphasise ‘adherence to the revolutionary community’. Indeed it is interesting to note the rhetorical devices employed by Protestant female activists in attempting to mobilise popular support for their causes, while at the same time protecting themselves from possible charges of 'hi-jacking' a cause which was not historically theirs. For example, the female staff members and regular contributors to Bean na hEireann (the magazine of Inghidine na hEireann) were predominantly Protestant, and included Constance Markievicz, Maud Gonne, and Sydney Gifford, the paper being edited by Helena Moloney. In 21 consecutive issues of the magazine, out of a total of 37 politically centred articles written by these women, only one (an editorial by Helena Moloney on the revised Coronation Oath taken by King George on his accession) actually appeals to, or more specifically mentions, Catholic nationalists. Moloney wrote:

No doubt great attempts will be made to create a wild enthusiasm amongst Catholics when the ‘Declaration’ amended and bowlerised passes his sacred lips. But why should this be a subject for rejoicing for the Irish Nation? Why should an Irish

155 Bean na hEireann Vol 1, nos. 6-25.
Catholic Nationalist mind what an English Protestant Monarch swears or declares?

This was the only point at which the magazine made any connection between the bulk of the Catholic population of the country and the question of national politics. What is also striking about the rhetoric employed by contributors in Bean na hEireann is the number of times that the figures of Tone, Emmet and the 1798 rebellion are evoked. These historical moments, so identifiably Protestant, act as a means of substantiating the author’s right to participate in nationalist politics, as successors to that Protestant revolutionary heritage. On the other hand, a significant omission is the entire lack of attention given to specifically Catholic moments of historical trauma, such as the Famine, which form the mainstay of other Catholic nationalist publications.

Although not all of the Protestant nationalists converted to Catholicism as part of their integration with the movement (see below), there existed a good deal of hostility on the part of the women’s families towards this intimate association with a Catholic movement. The sense of betrayal felt by some Protestant associates and relations upon involvement in Nationalist politics was expressed in actions such as Grace Gifford being banned from her home by her parents in 1916156, or Elizabeth Bloxham’s dismissial from her post as domestic economy Instructress in Newtownards after her sympathy for the rebels became known.157 Crucially, it would appear that the hostility often stemmed more strongly from the perception that these women were forging explicit links with Catholicism, either through

156 Fox, Rebel Irishwomen, p 43.
157 Bloxham, Statement p 24.
actual conversion, or simply allying themselves with what was viewed by Unionists as being irredeemably Catholic. Thus when Annie Smithson announced her conversion to Catholicism, which in her case was not initially related to political activity, she was shunned by the majority of her family, including a favourite aunt who, in traditional Victorian outrage, cut her out of her will and never spoke to her or acknowledged her in any way again. This was not always the case - some Protestants were prepared to accommodate their co-religionists’ nationalism, as in the case of Dorothy Stopford Price. But an obvious means of bridging the gulf which some of the women felt existed between Catholic and Protestant lay in conversion to Catholicism, an option which a number of women took.

Throughout this period, it would appear that Unionists, both within and without the converts families, were more deeply offended by a conversion to Catholicism than overt nationalist activity. Jack White has defined conversion as ‘a social lapse, a weakening of the tribe, a desertion from the post of duty’, emphasising the intimate link between class, politics, and religious affiliation in Ireland. Smithson related her surprise as a child on discovering that distant cousins ‘were Roman Catholics, and actually went to ‘chapel’ like the servants.’ Sydney Gifford, writing of the ‘mixed’ household in which she was raised (the twelve children were raised according to the ‘Palatine Pact’ - the boys following the father’s Catholicism and the girls their mother’s Protestantism) said: ‘...(the) sons and daughters...were like what present-day politicians call ‘splinter parties’, for we had amongst us Fabian Socialists,...ardent Sinn Feiners,...and a few half-hearted

159 Smithson, Myself p. 25.
Unionists, who remained such chiefly because they knew that all who did not conform to this political belief were ostracised in the tennis club.\textsuperscript{160} Many loyalists in Ireland believed themselves to be under assault from the Catholic majority; as such they were prepared for it. However when the supposed ‘attack’ came from within ones’ own ranks the sense of betrayal could be overwhelming. A renunciation of Protestantism meant, they were assured by the \textit{Church of Ireland Gazette} and the lurid stories which were the mainstay of many Church of Ireland missionary pamphlets, instant subjection to the whims and dictates of Catholic Priests, whose superstitious rituals stood in sharp contrast to the liberalism of the Protestant ministers. More importantly perhaps, it was believed that conversion signaled a rejection of the Union between Britain and Ireland, a belief which was given support by the fact that many of those who converted did actually turn ‘Rebel’ also. In fact, one finds that it is more often the case that an interest in nationalism precedes an interest in Catholicism, although to hostile Protestant observers the effect was just the same. Elizabeth Bloxham represented nationalist politics as an irrepressible force over which individuals had no control: ‘That the Irish Volunteer movement is the spontaneous and instinctive expression of an attitude of mind is the most hopeful thing about it, is indeed its one great justification.’\textsuperscript{161}

However, it was not merely the often unsympathetic reaction received from staunch loyalists with which Protestant nationalists had to deal for, as Sydney Gifford recalled of the Rathmines of her childhood, it was no great surprise to

\textsuperscript{160}Czira, \textit{The Years Flew By} p. 19.
\textsuperscript{161}Elizabeth Bloxham, ‘Need of Solidarity and Discipline’ in \textit{The Irish Volunteer} vol. 1, no. 1, February 7, 1914.
provoke an adverse reaction from the ‘castaways... (of the) stronghold of British Imperialism.’ Rather it was the attempted exclusion of Protestant activists by Catholic nationalists which proved most difficult to counter. In fact, influential opponents of Protestant activists, such as D.P. Moran, were more difficult to tackle. The mythic Ireland he evoked was identical to that of the Protestant nationalists, but granted greater authority since it could appeal, on a sectarian level, to the majority of the population. The question of Protestant conversions to Catholicism, in the context of a shift in political allegiances, is central to an understanding of the motivation of a number of women. From the late nineteenth century onwards, the quite distinct issues of national identity and political allegiance became increasingly associated. To designate oneself ‘Irish’ implied Nationalism and Catholicism, while ‘British’ indicated Unionism and Protestantism. Within this dichotomy there was some limited room for manoeuvre. Indeed both ‘sides’ attempted to validate their positions through the acquisition and public display of atypical members. As one commentator rather sourly remarked in 1907: ‘One curious element in the situation [the rise of Sinn Fein, and the public rows over religion and the Gaelic League] is that while the priests are holding out their hands to the powers that be Sinn Fein and the Gaelic League are holding out theirs to the Protestants. They make up to them incessantly in countless little ways.’ A deliberately integrationist policy did have the effect of broadening the support base, and allow both factions to claim to be

162 Czira, The Years Flew By p. 6.
164 Letter from Rosamund Stephen to her mother, June 22, 1907. RCB Library, Ms. 253/4.
representative of the nation. However, within these bodies there was a continual anxiety to demonstrate authenticity and allegiance, which raised certain difficulties. On the British side, affinity could be easily signaled, through enlistment in the army for example, or support for Imperial efforts abroad. However, membership of the Irish nation was a more difficult proposition. Before 1916 there was no Republic, however theoretical, and before 1918 there was no legislative body which might require support, and no representative national body which might be appealed to. A sense of national identity, therefore, depended upon a mixture of aspiration and actuality; that is, what the prime movers defined as Irish, and what the bulk of the population actually were.

In this context, Protestant advocates of nationalism were placed in a rather ambiguous position. Because the galvanizing rhetoric of nationalism depended heavily upon appeals to Catholicism, in terms of its connotations of historic grievance in Ireland, Protestant nationalists had to accommodate themselves to a movement which reflected the experiences of the majority, and implicitly excluded them. However, one means of integrating with the majority, taken by several of the women, was conversion to Catholicism. Although Maud Gonne was to claim in her autobiography that she was always destined to become a Catholic - to the extent that the chapter dealing with her reception is entitled ‘The Inevitability of the Church’ - she revealed rather more of its political motivation in a letter to Yeats:

I am officially a Protestant and supposed to look at it from another and a much narrower [point] which is moreover the

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165 Those who converted include: Grace Gifford, Muriel Gifford, Maud Gonne, Constance Markievicz, and Annie Smithson.
166 Gonne, Servant, p. 332.
English one. I prefer to look at truth through the same prism as my country people - I am going to become a Catholic...I do feel it important not to belong to the Church of England. You say I leave the few to mix with the crowd while Willie I have always told you I am the voice the soul of the crowd.

Interestingly, Ella Young, herself a Presbyterian, advised her against becoming a Catholic, on the grounds that her liberty to work for Ireland would be curtailed by priests. Gonne however claimed that being a Catholic would give her the freedom to tackle the church in a way she could not as a Protestant: ‘I have often longed to denounce the priests and could not because I was a Protestant, but now I can.’ What Gonne did not admit publicly as a consideration, and yet which appears to have been a major factor, was her impending marriage to John MacBride. Her autobiography, notoriously unreliable as regards dates and orders of events, manages to imply that she became a Catholic some time before she met MacBride. In fact, she was received into the Church just a few days before her marriage.

Others converted for similarly pragmatic reasons. Muriel and Grace Gifford both became Catholics as a result of their marriages, to Thomas MacDonagh and Joseph Plunkett respectively. Annie Smithson converted following a crisis of faith brought on by a failed relationship with a married doctor. Constance Markievicz claimed to have converted because of the inspiration offered

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167 Letter from Gonne to Yeats, February 10, 1903, in Jeffares and MacBride White (eds.) *Always Your Friend*.
170 Other converts found the process less easy. Elizabeth Hamilton described in her autobiography how she felt a perpetual stranger in her Catholic church, and only at home in the Protestant church which she had attended as a child. ‘...today if I go into the [Catholic] Chapel, in so far as I feel any emotion at all, it is one of surprise that I should be here - an inability to realise that, where I have no feeling of belonging, here in reality I belong.’ *An Irish Childhood*, London: Chatto and Windus, 1963, p. 122.
by Catholics praying during the 1916 Rising. However, her unwillingness to undergo any formal instruction, and her ready acceptance of the strictures of the Church, suggest that what she sought was an emblematic union with the people, as opposed to the Church itself.\(^\text{171}\) As the political environment in Ireland altered from the optimistic Republicanism of the early teens to the disillusionment of the 1920s, so too did Markievicz’s attitude towards religion undergo a change. In a letter written to her sister in 1923 she noted: ‘For every Church and every sect is but an organisation of thoughtless and well meaning people trained in thought and controlled by juntas of priests and clergy and used to do all the things Christ would have most disliked.’\(^\text{172}\) Even in the early days, however, Markievicz’s strategy of assimilation through conversion failed to convince everybody. An undated pamphlet entitled ‘The Dublin Martyrs of 1913’ singled out Markievicz for attack, using an implicitly sectarian weapon: ‘Belfast Catholics should ask MADAME MARKIEVICZ what part she played in Dublin at the time of the deportation of the poor Catholic Children, when Larkinism and Liberty Hall tactics brought the Working People to the verge of Starvation! Does Sinn Fein support the proselytizing of Irish Catholic Children?’\(^\text{173}\) As a high profile activist, who was clearly different from the bulk of the other members (even up to her death, friends commented on how exotic Markievicz seemed), she provided an easy target.

\(^{171}\) ‘I can’t understand Countess Markievicz at all [Father McMahon told Hanna Sheehy Skeffington after one session]. She wants to be received into the Church, but she won’t attend to me when I try to explain Transubstantiation and other doctrines. She just says, ‘Please don’t trouble to explain. I tell you I believe all the Church teaches. Now Father, please tell me about the boys.’’ Quoted in Diana Norman, *Terrible Beauty: A Life of Constance Markievicz*, Dublin: Poolbeg, 1988, p. 167.

\(^{172}\) MS 21,816. C. Markievicz to Eva Gore-Booth, 1923, NLI.

\(^{173}\) ILB 300 p. 10 (item 3), NLI.
It is arguable that the conversion of a number of these women to Catholicism was a symptom of a deepening crisis within Irish Anglicanism. Just as the Gaelic Revival allowed for a degree of intellectual and cultural freedom of expression for Irish Protestants, political uncertainty likewise impacted upon religious allegiance, to encourage a radical non-conformism. The late nineteenth century trend towards alternative structures was especially acute in Ireland. The suffrage movement, militant nationalism, the rise of socialism, all contributed towards a millennial outlook. As far as the Ascendancy in Ireland were concerned, certainties seemed less sure, a sense which had been aggravated by the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland in 1869. Successive Land Acts and the promise of a Home Rule Bill further undermined confidence in the state. What first emerged was a pointed interest in spiritualism and psychic phenomenon on the part of those who were also attracted to nationalism, at least prior to 1916. Maud Gonne claimed that a vision of Ireland personified as a queen, glimpsed out of a train window between Mayo and Dublin, caused her to embark on Ireland’s cause. Gonne also famously achieved spiritual union with W.B. Yeats in a joint out-of-body experience, and regularly received warnings regarding her health and her marriage from dead relatives. More poignant perhaps was her hope that the soul of her dead son could be embodied in another child. None of these aspirations or beliefs sat comfortably with regular Church teaching, either Catholic or Protestant.

174 Spiritualism had a broad appeal. Charlotte Despard was a Theosophist. Alice Milligan regarded her ‘dream visions’ not as allegories, but as literal previews of political events. In an extraordinary letter to Sinead de Valera, Milligan recounted a series of dreams and visions, not all her own, which as early as 1894 foresaw the civil war. As evidence of their authenticity, she wrote: ‘I wish to reiterate that I have never on a single occasion witnessed a spiritualistic seance, or sought consultation with a medium - messages came to me generally from the very relatives who seek to restrain me, and detain me from the Irish movement.’ NLI Ms. 18311. 175 Gonne Servant p. 24.
Constance Markievicz had a somewhat less radical belief in the spirit world, but nevertheless communed psychically with her sister Eva when in prison. For Markievicz, Catholicism’s affinity with supernaturalism made it all the more attractive: ‘The ritual and the ceremonies, the music and the beauty of the Catholic church, its art and cultural background attracted the mystic in her.’ Annie M.P. Smithson recounted several visitations and visions throughout her life, and used such devices frequently in her fiction. Part of this intense interest in spiritualism may be attributed to class, and reflects the general late nineteenth century flirtation with seances and the spirit world. Madame Blavatsky and her teachings were well known in Dublin in this period, and a belief in the supernatural was not uncommon. However, it was publicly articulated by Protestants in the Irish case rather than Catholics, despite the attribution of such psychic powers to the Irish peasantry by Protestant revivalist writers. What these activities reflect is a sense both of crisis and opportunity on the part of Protestant activists, with spiritualism acting as a bridge between a dogmatic Protestantism and a more elemental Catholicism. The attraction towards the Catholic occult on the part of Irish Protestants has been described as a mixture of repulsion and envy, but for Protestant female nationalists it helped to provide a rationale for their involvement. Political commitment on the part of many of these women is often expressed in terms of

176 Marreco, Rebel Countess p.227.
179 By 1909, as R.F. Foster has indicated, Yeats had ‘decided that the Protestant mind was readier to accept magic [than the Catholic]’, ascribing Catholic ‘intellectual timidity’ to stultifying education. ‘Protestant Magic’ in Paddy and Mr. Punch: Connections in Irish and English History, London: Allen Lane, 1993, p. 220.
180 ibid.
forces beyond rational control. Like Catholicism itself, activism was expressed as a matter of faith, not of logic. The spiritualist influence also had the effect of validating a possibly unpopular political choice, as it implied that the chosen subject was a mere tool of unseen, powerful forces.

Those women who remained Protestant were even more careful in their dealings with Catholic fellow-members, being wary of criticising Catholicism even when justified. Nelly O’Brien’s attitude towards the Catholic clergy, and their apparent power over their followers is expressed less in an overt challenge to their authority - which, as a Protestant, could easily be construed as a sectarian attack - than in her exasperation with the blind acceptance by Catholic members such as Mary Butler, a cousin of Edward Carson, of that authority. She said of Butler:

‘She won’t open her eyes to the shortcomings of the Bishops and convents etc. till carried along by the full force of public opinion and then she will fall in all right.’

After the question of the non-political stance of the League, the most difficult issue to resolve was the necessity to balance the numbers of Catholic and Protestant members, especially in the Coisde Gnotha (the executive committee). In 1904 the Rev. James Hannay was invited to stand for election to the executive, and was assured that the initiative had wide popular support:

We all feel very strongly - and this feeling is shared equally by Catholic and Protestant Gaelic Leaguers from the President down - that your presence on the executive committee will be a tower of strength to the movement....we think it would be well to have a Protestant clergyman on the governing body of the

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182 Ms 3454-6/391, TCD.
League. The fact would help to prove that the League is really and truly non-sectarian and more Protestants and non-Catholics might be induced to join our ranks which would be very desirable.\textsuperscript{183}

The propagandistic use to which the novelist was to be put backfired somewhat when he became embroiled in a dispute with a Catholic priest some years later, but the impulse behind his election clearly demonstrated that there were reservations on the part of both Catholics and Protestants to joining the League, based upon fears of too close an identification with one or another religious group. Similarly, after Hyde’s resignation from the Presidency of the League, and the overtly political stance taken by the executive, O’Brien’s efforts to convince Protestants of the all-inclusive nature of the Gaelic League were dissipated.

Although there was no such being as a typical Protestant female nationalist, there were, as indicated above, certain common characteristics in terms of background, motivation and political experience. The careers of these eighteen women differed greatly from the majority of their class and caste, as described in the opening pages of this chapter. Yet there were many similarities. The willingness to assume responsibilities, and take leadership roles, reflects their counterparts in the unionist organisations. Extensive use of social contacts is also shared by both, as is an appreciation of the broader political context for their activity. Both, in very different ways, could be described as integrationists. Unionist women upheld a political philosophy which required Ireland to submerge her interests in the larger world of Empire, Protestant female nationalists sought

\textsuperscript{183}Ms 3454-6/153. Letter from Mary Butler to Rev. James Hannay, December 9, 1904, TCD.
the inclusion of the minority within the Irish nation. By 1925 neither could say that they had achieved their goals, but their efforts were nevertheless admirable.
Chapter 5: Appendix

Louie Bennett
Ada English
Nellie Gifford
Kathleen Lynn
Helena Moloney
Mary Spring-Rice
Elizabeth Bloxham
Grace Gifford
Sydney Gifford
Dorothy Macardle
Nelly O’Brien
Alice Stopford Green
Albinia Brodrick
Muriel Gifford
Maud Gonne
Constance Markievicz
Annie M.P. Smithson
Dorothy Stopford Price

Keys:
* = sisters
† = converted to Catholicism
# = wrote regularly for Bean na hEireann, or other nationalist papers
□ = member of Inghinidhe na hEireann or Cumann na mBan
⊙ = member of the Irish Citizen Army
♀ = suffragist
♂ = unmarried, widowed, divorced or single
① = first cousins
② = distant cousins
③ = aunt/niece
Conclusion
The years between 1910 and 1925 saw dramatic changes for the whole of Ireland. The First World War, the creation of the Free State, the War of Independence, and the Civil War had altered irrevocably the old political and social structures in Ireland. Regardless of religion, the Irish population had felt the effects of over a decade of political wrangling and physical confrontation. But what impact did these events have upon the Church of Ireland community in Dublin, and in particular on the women of that community?

It would be flippant to declare that these events made little difference to them, yet this would appear superficially to be the case. There was an obvious decline in numbers, which was most marked in Dublin, but was actually apparent across the whole country. Between 1911 and 1926, the total population of Protestants in the area which became the Free State dropped by over 100,000.\(^1\) However, the most dramatic decline occurred in Dublin city, where the Protestant population fell from 45,896 to 27,506, a loss of 18,390, or 40% of the total.\(^2\) Interestingly, as Martin Maguire has indicated, the loss amongst the Protestant population was not evenly spread across social classes, but concentrated heavily amongst the working class. Table 1 provides comparative population rates in city centre wards between 1911 and 1926. Although the loss is obvious in almost every ward, there were some few instances where Catholic numbers also declined. However, the figures for both years refer to a total Protestant decline, as separate figures for the Church of Ireland are not available for the 1926 census:

\(^1\) The exact figure is 105,025. *Census of Saorstat Eireann for 1926*, vol. III, part I, table 1a.
\(^2\) ibid, Report, p. 48.
Table 1: Protestant Population Decline, 1911-1926

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward</th>
<th>1911</th>
<th>Prot. %</th>
<th>1926</th>
<th>Prot. %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arran Quay</td>
<td>5,057</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2,246</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clontarf E</td>
<td>1,141</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>1,039</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clontarf W</td>
<td>2,269</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1,727</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drumcondra</td>
<td>2,165</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1,729</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasnevin</td>
<td>3,454</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>1,847</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inns Quay</td>
<td>2,033</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>1,116</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountjoy</td>
<td>2,809</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1,495</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North City</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Dock</td>
<td>3,152</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2,081</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotunda</td>
<td>1,667</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>912</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitzwilliam</td>
<td>2,967</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>2,339</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mansion House</td>
<td>1,490</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>872</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchants Quay</td>
<td>3,511</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>2,050</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Kilmahinham</td>
<td>2,234</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>854</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Exchange</td>
<td>1,223</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>607</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South City</td>
<td>617</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Dock</td>
<td>2,119</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>1,299</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinity</td>
<td>1,308</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>790</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usher’s Quay</td>
<td>3,111</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2,156</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood Quay</td>
<td>2,999</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>1,812</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Protestant working class lived for the most part in the city centre, where the drop in numbers was sharpest. The decline of middle class Protestants, assessed by place of residence, was far lower. The Church of Ireland population in the middle class areas of Dalkey, Pembroke, Blackrock and Howth remained high at between 20 and 30%. Rathmines and Rathgar were also largely unchanged at over 30%.

There are several reasons for this class-specific phenomenon. One of the most important is the fact that the working class were disproportionately lost as a result of the

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3 Calculated from Census of Ireland for Year 1911, Dublin City, table xxix, and Census of Saorstat Eireann, vol. III, Part 1, table 12.
4 The Protestant Dublin County population declined by just over 10,000.
5 This is almost unchanged from 1911. See chapter 1 for details.
6 Census of Saorstat Eireann for 1926, Report, p. 48. Rathmines and Rathgar had a Protestant population of 33.2%, almost identical to the 1911 figure.
First World War. Described as one of the most decisive events in modern Irish history, the war impacted particularly heavily upon the Protestant population. Participation by Irish Protestants in the Great War has been calculated at 45% of all recruits [to Irish regiments] but this figure, high as it is, is not an accurate return of all Irish Protestant soldiers. Many Irish Protestants joined British regiments to which they had a familial attachment, or a tradition of service. Army families, although popularly associated with the aristocracy, also existed in the middle and working classes. The Church of Ireland Gazette's 'Roll Call of Honour' highlighted the tradition of army service amongst the clergy, and their incidental articles also emphasised the generational nature of service within working class Protestant families. As has been documented, Irishmen had a long tradition of enlistment in the British army, from an extraordinary peak in 1830, 'when 42.2% of the British army were of Irish birth' to a still significant figure of around 117,000 in the 1914-18 war. Protestants were disproportionately represented in these figures.

The deaths of Church of Ireland males had obvious repercussions for the women of that community. One was the loss of husbands and bread winners, the other was the decline of potential marriage partners. In the first instance, if one leaves aside the considerable emotional suffering, there was the financial loss associated with the death of the principal wage earner. However this impact was softened by the entitlement to an

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9 By 1916, it was estimated that 21,000 members of the Church of Ireland had volunteered. Alan Acheson, *A History of the Church of Ireland 1691-1996* Dublin: The Columba Press, 1997, p. 228.
10 See for example January 7, 1916.
11 See for example September 25, 1915.
13 Boyce calculates that around 40% of these men were Protestant. ibid.
army widows’ pension. For young single women, the loss of men in the First World War had a direct impact. As has been indicated, military bridegrooms accounted for 63% of the total marriage partners in certain working class Dublin parishes between 1910 and 1919. Taken as a whole, the picture of First World War Protestant losses was considerable. The aristocracy also suffered, especially through the loss of eldest sons and heirs. As Douglas Hyde wrote to a friend:

Nearly everyone I know in the army has been killed. Poor Lord de Freyne and his brother were shot the same day and buried in one grave. The MacDermot of Coolavin, my nearest neighbour, has had his eldest son shot dead in the Dardanelles. All the gentry have suffered. Noblesse oblige. They have behaved magnificently.14

Although the impact of the war was great upon the whole church, there was broad support for it, expressed directly through enlistment, and through the creation of new organisations dedicated to the assistance of soldiers and their dependants. As the war progressed, however, and death rates amongst Church of Ireland men increased, publications such as The Church of Ireland Gazette became increasingly worried about the loss of husbands, and prospective husbands. Consequently, and in an unusual step, the journal began advising young women to consider their career prospects, given that marriage might no longer be an option:

The fact is that we have at last come to regard the woman not as an intruder into man’s sphere, but as an ally in his work. And not only so, but we have come to recognise her right to be economically independent. Marriage and the joy of motherhood will now be withheld from a larger number of women than before the war...Nothing but disaster can follow the policy of shutting our eyes to this fact; and it is well that we should consider it now, so as to form a just judgement before we are called upon to act.15

15 ibid.
During the war, women of the Church of Ireland had played key roles in maintaining both a sense of pride, and a sense of identity, in British war efforts. They had volunteered for war work, raised funds for the support of war widows and orphans, made and dispatched clothing and food to men at the front, and trained as nurses to minister to soldiers on active duty, and as convalescents at home. Once the war ended, they reassessed their positions, in the light of a changed Ireland. The *Gazette* was at the forefront of discussions about possible new roles for Church of Ireland women. During the war, contributors had raised the question of what was to become of those women who might not marry as a result of war, and were extremely glum about their prospects:

> An old maid. Oh! what a horrid fate! And, but that it comes gradually, and hope dies slowly, it would be hard indeed to bear. And after this ghastly war there will be so many of them!...Many of these unmarried ones might have been happy wives and mothers. 16

As far as the church was concerned, one practical solution was to give women an increased role in the administration of the church. They were duly elected to Select Vestries in 1920, after an intense campaign of over twenty years.

But were Church of Ireland women really facing a desperate spinsterhood, as these articles state? The figures suggest not. Although women outnumbered men in the Church of Ireland in 1926, the disparity was not alarming. More importantly, it was concentrated in the older age bands, as table 2 indicates:

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Table 2: Church of Ireland Age Profile, Dublin City and County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Cof I F.</th>
<th>Cof I M.</th>
<th>M. &amp; F. total</th>
<th>F. % of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-19</td>
<td>7,541</td>
<td>7,624</td>
<td>15,165</td>
<td>49.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-34</td>
<td>6,758</td>
<td>5,309</td>
<td>12,067</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-54</td>
<td>8,493</td>
<td>6,461</td>
<td>14,954</td>
<td>56.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-74</td>
<td>5,745</td>
<td>3,870</td>
<td>9,615</td>
<td>59.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75+</td>
<td>1,397</td>
<td>608</td>
<td>2,005</td>
<td>69.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For women contemplating marriage, the prospects were not especially bleak, and were certainly better than for those in post-war England.  

Although many Protestant loyalists were understandably fearful of what the constitutional break with Britain might mean for them, the reality was not so bad. There were indeed some sectarian murders after the Truce, about sixty in total, and many others were intimidated or boycotted. However the impact in Dublin was slight, and there was no attempt made to seize Protestant goods or property in the manner that had been feared in the heady days of 1916. Banking, the legal profession, large business, all these remained in Protestant hands. Thus many of the activities undertaken by Church of Ireland women before the war - in charity, education and training - continued in the post-war period. Female admissions to Trinity College increased in the 1920s, indicating a faith in

17 Census of Saorstat Eireann for 1926, table 14, pp. 102-3.  
18 Over 15% of the female population over the age of 45 were unmarried in 1921. Martha Vicinus, Independent Women: Work and Community for Single Women, 1830-1920 London: Virago, 1985, p. 27.  
19 'Compared with the thorough methods for dealing with unpopular minorities developed during the twentieth century in eastern and central Europe and elsewhere, the harassment of the Southern loyalists was not noticeably severe.' R.B. McDowell, Crisis and Decline: The Fate of the Southern Unionists Dublin: Lilliput, 1997, p. 135.  
21 In the years after the war, women constituted over 25 per cent of the student population. R.B. McDowell and D.A. Webb, Trinity College, Dublin 1592-1952: An Academic History Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982, p. 352.
their employment futures. Moreover, the Church of Ireland Teacher Training College continued to educate women teachers for Protestant schools, registering by their actions a determination to ensure a Protestant future in Ireland.\textsuperscript{22} As has been indicated in chapter 5, political activists continued to campaign for the rights of women and children, as they had done before the war. Protestant\textsuperscript{23} women continued to participate in the labour market. For example, in 1911, Protestant women constituted 15\% of women in the professional class. In 1926, they were 11.7\%. The percentages for each of the categories\textsuperscript{24} are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>1911</th>
<th>1926</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class I (Professional)</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class II (Domestic)</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class III (Commercial)</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class IV (Agricultural)</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class V (Industrial)</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class VI (Indefinite &amp; Non-Productive)</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Despite all the changes, for many Church of Ireland women, life continued much as it had done before. Brian Inglis’ grandmother, for example, simply ignored political change: ‘But the struggle for independence...made surprisingly little difference to Grandmother and the Unionist set...in everyday matters, the fact that an Irish Free State

\textsuperscript{22}Part of the CITC response was, as Susan Parkes states, an attempt to ignore uncomfortable changes: ‘Like much of the Protestant community in the south the college withdrew into itself, continuing its life much as before, and attempting to ignore the political and social changes taking place outside it.’ Kildare Place: The history of the Church of Ireland Training College 1811-1969 Dublin: CICE, 1984, p. 145.\textsuperscript{23}This includes Church of Ireland, Presbyterian and Methodist, because the occupational data for 1926 does not distinguish between the Protestant churches.\textsuperscript{24}Based on Census of Ireland for the year 1911, table xx, and Census of Saorstat Eireann, 1926, tables 17 & 17. pp. 112-129. The 1911 categories have been used in order to make a true comparison.
did exist was hardly noticeable.25 In Dublin, where a reasonable Church of Ireland community remained, this policy was practicable. In rural areas, however, the consciousness of minority status was made more acute. Lionel Fleming, writing of his upbringing in an isolated rectory in Co. Cork, declared:

We found ourselves thrown back on our own resources. These were confined to the big rectory and its grounds, our own company (fortunately, there were five of us), a small number of our own sort in the neighbourhood, and a circle of relatives further off. The nearest of our neighbours lived a couple of hundred yards away, but as they were in a cottage that did not count - in fact, nothing counted for about three miles on any side of us because there were no Protestants until then.26

In some ways however, the creation of the Free State strengthened ties with Britain. One could argue that many Church of Ireland Dubliners accepted the new constitutional arrangements with good grace, while still maintaining the right to a distinct identity. The old declarations of loyalty remained, in some cases with the support of the new government: ‘Between 1919 and 1931 Armistice Day was celebrated throughout Southern Ireland’.27 The Irish Times reported that on Poppy Day in November 1922 the poppy sellers were ‘literally besieged’, and that ‘stocks were cleared and replenished time and time again’.28 The British national anthem continued to be sung wherever possible, as an assertion of identity:

The emergence of the new Ireland grated mainly when it touched old sentiment. We hated to stand for the Irish National Anthem, ‘The Soldiers’ Song’; and at private dances we always asked the band to omit it, and play God Save the King instead; and whenever God Save the King was played in public - say, to greet the English army riders at the

26 Lionel Fleming, Head or Harp, London: Barrie and Rockliff, 1963, p. 36.
27 Boyce, Sure Confusing Drum, p. 18.
28 ibid.
Horse Show - we sang it so lustily that the government had to put a ban on it.29

The new Irish administration was for the most part content enough to allow these expressions of loyalty. The government had no desire to alienate those who had in many cases the expertise and, more importantly, the business interests which were crucial to the state's survival. Thus Michael Collins was quick to reassure a Church of Ireland delegation of the government's good intentions towards the minority, and its ability to protect them from sectarian attack.30 Public declarations were made on the rights of Protestants in the Dail:

These people are part and parcel of the nation, and we being the majority and strength of the country...it comes well from us to make a generous adjustment to show that these people are regarded, not as alien enemies, not as planters, but that we regard them as part and parcel of this nation, and that we wish them to take their share of its responsibilities.31

Once the civil war was over, Protestants continued to be 'courted' by the government, who valued both their professional expertise, and their importance as symbolic indicators of Irish liberalism.32

Although there were significant changes in economic terms for Protestants in Dublin between 1910 and 1925, for the most part these were determined either by long-term factors which originated in the nineteenth century,33 or developments in the late

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29 Inglis, West Briton, p. 29.
30 McDowell, Crisis and Decline, p. 135.
32 See McDowell, Crisis and Decline for brief discussion on Protestant appointments by government, pp. 165-6.
33 Martin Maguire has shown that the Protestant population had been falling steadily in Dublin city and county since 1871. Protestants comprised 18.8% of the city population in 1871; 16.5% in 1901, and 8.7% in 1926. The figures for Dublin county were 27.5%; 27.6% and 19.4% respectively. Thus the post-Independence loss had been building for some time. Dublin Protestant Working Class, p. 2.
nineteen-twenties and thirties. In the first instance, changes in economic status across the Protestant classes had begun in the 1880s. On a national level, the Land Acts had altered the fortunes of the Ascendancy, and the traditional Protestant power structures had been reversed. In Dublin, the dominance of the Protestant working-class in skilled manufacture was in decline from the late nineteenth century, and the stagnant state of the local economy in Dublin from the turn of the century ensured that they did not significantly revive. Post-war recession, exacerbated by increases in income and capital taxes, slowed economic growth in the 1920s. However, despite some dramatic fluctuations within various economies, the country was relatively stable by 1925. For example, the Dublin stock market, despite a slump in 1921, remained stable for the years 1919-1924, indicating that national political developments did not cause an economic recession.

It is moreover clear that the hierarchy of the Church of Ireland had been considering these long-terms trends, and possible responses to them, long before the Treaty. In 1917 the *Church of Ireland Gazette* ran a series of articles on ‘The Future of the Church of Ireland’, which outlined the difficulties faced by the church through declining numbers and political change. The timing of these pieces indicate that attitudes towards the changing social and political environment were under review before the

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36 Tony Farmar, in his *History of Craig Gardner & Co.*, has shown that professional fees for example dipped sharply from mid 1922 to mid 1923, before recovering to rise steadily until the early 1930s, and the economic war. Thus the middle class in Dublin suffered only a temporary decline in standards as a result of the civil war. Dublin: 1988, p. 26.
Anglo-Irish and civil wars. The Rev. Canon Lyster wrote a lengthy piece in January of that year which lamented the distance which existed between the Church of Ireland and the rest of the population:

The fact that she was the Established Church, the Church of the Government, led the mass of the Irish people to regard her, not as the Church of Ireland, but as the Church of England in Ireland. If we had only been disestablished in the reign of Elizabeth instead of Victoria, I think we should have been in a much stronger position to-day.38

As matters stood, not only was the church distant from the Catholic population, but declining numbers meant that church members themselves were increasingly isolated, especially in rural areas. Rev. Lyster painted a dire picture, based on the present rate of decline: 'by 2011 the Church of Ireland in Co. Wexford would be extinct...The consequences of the falling off in numbers in our Church population are very serious. Our people in many places are isolated from their co-religionists. They are forced to associate more than formerly with their Roman Catholic neighbours, and are therefore in greater danger from mixed marriages and absorption.'39 In a response to Lyster's article, the Rev. J.R. Goff, Dublin Superintendent of the Irish Church Missions, argued that an evangelical revival would lead to a church resurgence: 'I have in my possession a record of nearly 350 adult converts from the Church of Rome, who, after careful instruction and preparation, have been admitted into the Church of Ireland in the Mission Church, Dublin.'40 But the conversionist route was increasingly regarded by other Church leaders as a lost cause.

Within the evangelical bodies themselves, there was reluctance to support overtly proselytising strategies. In late 1917 the Irish Church Missions, one of the most vigorous

38 Church of Ireland Gazette, January 26, 1917, p. 54.
39 ibid.
40 'The Future of the Church of Ireland' in Church of Ireland Gazette, February 9, 1917, p. 95.
of the proselytising groups, admitted that it had difficulty in attracting church members as workers: ‘...[T]he bulk of educated Evangelical opinion has moved away from the original position of the Society; the Society has not kept in touch with the development of thought even of those whose general sympathy with the Evangelical tradition would naturally draw them to it; and the Society is narrower than the Church.’41 This decline in the evangelical commitment has been noted in the post-war years by Maguire,42 and represents another long-term trend. As Acheson has stated, ‘Evangelicals withdrew gradually from situations which they felt unable to influence, and associations which they no longer controlled.’43 In the new Ireland, the old fashioned rhetoric of the saved and damned appeared inappropriate for a church which was attempting to establish itself anew, without the comfort of the British administration.

For the many women who had been active in evangelical charities, the 1920s was a time in which their roles were reassessed. However, the genuine need which existed for philanthropic work did not decrease in 1918: in many ways, it became greater.44 The nature of charitable relief changed for the Church of Ireland, becoming ‘less of a class problem and more a problem of age. The emphasis in Protestant charity in independent Ireland switched to care of the elderly.’45 Middle class women therefore continued their efforts to support their fellow church members, remaining as occupied with philanthropic

42 p. 203.
43 Acheson, History, p. 220.
44 As R.F. Foster has noted: ‘the new regime believed in ’strong’, not to say ruthless, government. Any ideas of a social welfare utopia were rigorously dismissed; the old-age pension was actually cut by a shilling a week in 1924.’ Modern Ireland, p. 519.
relief after 1924 as they had been before.\textsuperscript{46} It is significant that so few charities ceased their operations between 1918 and 1923, and that the small number which did were for the most part active proselytists. The records of the charity organisations are remarkable for the lack of attention given to the years governed by war and disruption. For example, up until its closure in 1924, the Fishamble Street Mission referred to the Civil War as the ‘present disruption’,\textsuperscript{47} and commented on it only when supplies of coal to the Mission were interrupted.\textsuperscript{48}

As noted above, the Dublin Protestant charities did not report a significantly increased application rate in the post-war years: the real financial difficulties appear in the 1930s, when economic decline effected the whole population.\textsuperscript{49} For example, the Southern Irish Loyalists Relief Association, established in 1922 to assist distressed Loyalists, indicate that after an initial rush of applicants the numbers fell steadily.\textsuperscript{50} Because of rises in the prices of goods during the war, women already on the books of charities received temporary increases in their stipends and allowances. The Widows’ and Orphans’ Fund of the Church of Ireland gave increases of between £3 and £8 to widows as a ‘War Temporary Increase’, as well as making over irregular sums from the Supplemental Fund,\textsuperscript{51} but these allowances ceased after the war.

\textsuperscript{46} A comparison with reports of charitable meetings in the Irish Times for October, 1924 with the same month in 1910 reveals an increase, despite other pressing concerns. In 1910 there were 25 separate meetings. In 1924 there were 28.
\textsuperscript{47} Minutes of the Fishamble Street Mission, September 25, 1922.
\textsuperscript{48} Maguire has noted a similar response by the Conservative Workingmen’s Club: ‘It is remarkable that there is no sense of panic or even crisis in the club records right through the period of the war for independence or the civil war.’ Dublin Protestant Working-Class, p. 202.
\textsuperscript{49} D1071/J/H, Soldiers and Sailors Families’ Association Reports, 1928-1935.
\textsuperscript{50} D989B/1/4 and D989B/2/3/A. The Association had little to do after about 1928, and it was found that ex-servicemen and their families who were in need tended to deal directly with the British Legion in London.
\textsuperscript{51} Church of Ireland Gazette, October 25, 1918, p. 713.
There were of course certain groups who suffered more than others. One such was the clergy of the Church of Ireland and their families. From the turn of the century, increasing concern had been expressed regarding clerical incomes. By the outbreak of the war, with the temporary increase in the costs of goods, an intense debate was conducted in the pages of the *Gazette* which exposed the poor standards endured by clerics and their dependants. The principal problem, echoed by the middle class women who applied to philanthropic organisations, was maintaining a respectable station in life with an inadequate income:

A bare maintenance is the most to be hoped for by him who takes up the sacred calling...The trouble is that he is expected to live like a man with four times his income. He generally must keep up an expensive house, is not supposed to send his children to the national school, or to have free hospital treatment if he is ill. His whole system of household expenditure is required to be regulated on a basis far above the means he is supplied with...He is the life-long victim of "genteel poverty"; of keeping-up appearances; of unceasing struggle with debt.  

The plight of the clergy did not improve in the immediate post-war years. With the drop in Protestant numbers after the war, the Church of Ireland was in a less prosperous financial position itself, although it did what it could to ease difficulties. In 1919 the General Synod created an emergency fund and authorised the payment of a war bonus to clergy, but longer term measures were clearly needed. In 1920 therefore the Minimum Stipend Act was passed, which fixed basic rates of pay for clerics. These were £400 for incumbents, and £200 for curates, which, while certainly not overly indulgent, represented a respectable standard of living.  

52 *Church of Ireland Gazette*, November 17, 1916, p. 820.
54 R.B. McCarthy, *A Short History of the Church of Ireland, Ancient and Modern* p. 54.
The difficulties over clerical incomes was symptomatic of a need for retrenchment within the church as a whole, however. The Representative Church Body had been involved since the war’s end in a national investigation of the church, and it recommended a radical series of reforms. In 1920 the RCB presented its report, which contained the most drastic reforms since disestablishment. Between 1921 and 1926, on the basis of the recommendations made in the report, the number of incumbencies was reduced in the twenty-six counties from 1,114 to 974, with a corresponding reduction in clergy from 1,361 to 1,162.\(^{55}\) Dublin was largely unaffected, in that there were few changes in church structures, but the psychological impact was more significant. The visible reduction, which was a necessary response to the changing Protestant demography, was difficult for many.

Yet the problem of poverty amongst clergy families had been growing for some time. In 1919, ‘An Indignant Churchwoman’ wrote to the *Gazette* to complain about how clergy families, themselves the administrators of so much relief in Ireland, were forced to become the objects of charity: ‘That some of the clergy and their families receive parcels of left-off clothes from charitable persons is only too true. It is a burning shame that it should be true; and needless as shameful.’\(^{56}\) The letter called for increased donations from parishioners to support the active clergy so that ‘there will be money enough to give every clergyman such a Bonus as will allow him and his family to take their needed holiday without care, and in *new clothes*, and to put his salary on a level suitable to his work and position.’ Again and again the burning issue was one of parishioners and society at large


\(^{56}\) *Church of Ireland Gazette*, March 21, 1919, p. 191.
expecting certain standards from the clergy, which their incomes would not support. In the post war years, the impoverished state of the clergy appeared emblematic of the church itself, and there was considerable alarm at the decline in the numbers of sons following their fathers into the church: ‘They [Church of Ireland members] had a ministry to-day, but he was beginning to doubt if they would have one to-morrow. Clergymen’s sons were becoming very slow to become clergymen themselves...Young men of spirit, young men of natural human instincts, were not going to face the anguish, the indignity, the crampedness of clerical life, as too many of them had seen it in their father’s house.’

For a few short years (1917-1920), it appeared that the church was in danger of annihilation.

One of the options open to impoverished clerics with few prospects in Ireland was emigration. In an unusually frank editorial from July 1920, emigration was presented as a solution to the church’s ills, but more importantly, it indicated a significant reorientation of church focus. In some senses, the religious battle was over in Ireland: the evangelical campaigns which had been an integral part of church life when the political culture was still fluid, were now largely redundant. However, emigration to the colonies and to Canada in particular, offered a new field for the ministry, as well as a better standard of living than Ireland, with its significantly reduced congregations.

Already some of our clergy, under the impending menace of bankruptcy, have left our shores to take up work in the colonies and in England...We had recently the opportunity of consulting a prominent clergyman from Eastern Canada on the possibility of placing some of our superfluous

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57 ‘The problem would be a very much simpler one if the clergy might live as they liked and where they liked. But their parishioners expected of them that they should live in a gentleman’s house, and that they should maintain something of the position of a gentleman.’ ‘Clerical Incomes’ by the Archbishop of Dublin, Church of Ireland Gazette, October 29, 1920, p. 664.

58 ibid.
clergy in Canadian dioceses...At the present time clergy are greatly needed in these Eastern and well-established Dioceses. The Church there has been largely built up by Irish clergy who have stamped their impress upon Church life, and have established a tradition....And we know this, that no Irish clergyman to whom we have spoken, who has gone to work in Canada, would return to Ireland.59

Emigration also offered clerics a renewed chance to spread the word, which was now in question at home: ‘It is a bad thing for the Church we love to have too many clergy in Ireland and too few in the great Dominion which holds the future of so many of our race and faith.’60

The decline in Church of Ireland numbers has, as Maguire states, been wrongfully attributed to ‘a reaction by Protestants to the triumph of Catholic nationalism’.61 The real explanation lies elsewhere. In the long term, the decline lies more in the willingness of Irish Protestants to intermarry with Catholics, and to raise their children as Catholics. Once again, this was not a development consequent on the establishment of the Free State, but was well established from the late nineteenth century. Thomas Keane believed mixed marriages were the exception rather than the rule62, but this has been proven not to be the case.63 There was a surprisingly high rate of intermarriage in Dublin, especially amongst the lower reaches of the working class. Maguire has calculated that in certain parishes, between 14 and 15 per cent of Protestant males married Catholic women in 1901.

Although this figure may not be startling in itself, what is more important is the fact that of

60 ibid.
61 p. 209.
63 Maguire, Dublin Protestant Working Class, p. 59.
the two hundred and eight children born of these marriages, almost 80% were raised as Catholics. The Church of Ireland community was not failing to reproduce itself in a literal sense, but the children of mixed marriages were in the overwhelming majority of cases being raised as Catholics. These figures are supported by evidence from the Protestant Orphan Society, where out of a total of 44 applications refused, withdrawn or abandoned, 14 were for children of mixed marriages. The Society’s reluctance to accept the children of mixed marriages may partly stem from a suspicion that these children were highly likely to be raised as Catholics, despite a profession of Protestant intent on the part of the parent. Maguire found that the majority of mixed marriages occurred between Protestant males and Catholic females, but the POS records present an almost equal division of eight Catholic wives to six Catholic husbands. In these cases also the children were more likely to continue to be raised as Protestants - the parent having applied first to the POS because of a commitment to the Church of Ireland.

The issue of mixed marriages, and the struggle over which religion the children should be raised with, had a long history. As noted in earlier chapters, the issue of conversion and evangelism was a fraught one, with both major religions seeking advantage in the battle for souls. However it was the Ne Temere decree, promulgated in 1907 by Pius X, but effective from April 19, 1908, which caused the greatest degree of bitterness in church circles. In Ireland, the decree had four main points: ‘(1) that there would be no interference with the religion of the Catholic partner; (2) that the Catholic party would endeavour in every way to bring the non-Catholic to the True Faith; (3) that all children of the marriage would be baptised Catholic and be educated in Catholic schools; and (4) that

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64 1045/5/4.
the couple would not either before or after the Catholic marriage ceremony present themselves for a similar ceremony before the minister of any other religion. In fact, as the records of institutions such as the Protestant Orphan Society show, the decree was not faithfully implemented. Nevertheless, it was rightfully interpreted by the Church of Ireland as a coercive measure, designed to both limit rates of intermarriage, and ensure that any children of such marriages were ‘restored’ to the Catholic church. The response of individuals within the Church of Ireland is interesting. Almost to a man they registered their own suspicion of mixed marriages, and advised their parishioners to avoid becoming embroiled in potentially disastrous relationships. In 1910, the infamous McCann case opened public debate on the topic. A Protestant woman with a Catholic husband had refused to be remarried in a Catholic church, in accordance with the decree. Her husband had taken their two children and disappeared, telling her she could see them again only if she agreed to the ceremony. The case was taken up with vigour by the Church of Ireland, and in January 1911 a mass meeting was held to protest against the decree. Speaker after speaker denounced the Catholic church, but stated their own opposition to mixed marriages:

For my part, I disapprove of mixed marriages quite as much as the Church of Rome does - perhaps more. A husband and wife ought to be of the same mind, especially in the high region of faith. There cannot be a cordial unreserved union between them otherwise. The difficulty is not met, but rather aggravated, by a surrender on one side - one of the two consenting without any conscientious change of conviction, to conform to the religious observances of the other for the sake of outward harmony. Such conformity is dishonest, and a union based on dishonesty must result in disaster. In either case, therefore, mixed marriages are ill-advised.

66 Rev. John H. Murphy, Supplement to the Church of Ireland Gazette, January 13, 1911, p. 41.
Despite the high emotion generated at the meeting, there was one sobering moment, which pointed towards an increasing distance between church and state. A petition protesting against the decree had been sent to the Lord Lieutenant, but did not receive even sympathetic consideration. There were boos and groans from all parts of the hall when the name of His Excellency was mentioned. Rev. William Watson... said he was loyal to King George, but he doubted his loyalty to His Majesty’s present representative in Ireland. The statement was received with applause.67

However, regardless of partition, the Church of Ireland remained an all-Ireland institution. Links between the north and south remained strong, and despite the political implications of partition, the church did not recognise the border. In this sense, despite the often token gestures made by nationalists in the 1920s and ‘30s, and indeed later than that, the Church of Ireland remained the one true 32 county institution on the island.

67 ibid, p. 43.
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