

Women Becoming Professionals: British Secular Reformers and Missionaries in Colonial
India, 1870-1900

by

Elizabeth Clemo
BA, Mount Allison University, 2010

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Supervisory Committee

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Dr. Elizabeth Vibert, (Department of History)
Supervisor

Dr. Lynne Marks, (Department of History)
Departmental Member

Abstract

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This paper discusses the means by which some British women created professional roles for themselves out of their philanthropic work in India between 1880 and 1900. I examine the development of these roles in the missionary and secular philanthropic communities and how these women used periodicals as a space to implicitly demonstrate their competence and explicitly argue for their status as educators and medical workers. Colonial India provided a particular context of imperial ideals and gendered realities: Indian women were believed to be particularly deprived of learning, medical care and “civilisation” by custom and culture, and Englishwomen could call on the rhetoric of imperial duty to legitimise their care of these disadvantaged women. I argue that India provided the means for British women to demonstrate their capabilities and to involve themselves in the ongoing nineteenth-century project to incorporate women into previously masculine professional societies.

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Introduction

The opening to an 1878 article in the *Journal of the National Indian Association* stated that “English philanthropy has done battle with many an evil genius of this country [India].”¹ The effectiveness of these battles is debatable, but the metaphor evokes the attitude of British reformers in nineteenth-century India. They firmly believed in the need to reform Indian society from its “state of wretchedness and despondency,”² and in the ability of their charitable work to do so. The terrible conditions in which Indian women were believed to live roused British sympathy and reforming impulses, and British women in particular led charitable projects for the supposed benefit of Indian women.

British women were generally in India as part of the imperial project. Missionaries had taken advantage of new trade routes and arrived with the East India Company (EIC) in the late eighteenth century. After the 1857 Indian Uprising and the transfer of rule from the EIC to the British Crown, missionaries remained and were joined by secular reformers, some of whom were associated with the Indian Colonial Service (ICS), India’s new government, and some not. The British believed Indian women remained always at home in the zenana (women’s quarters), refusing visits from unrelated men, but that they would allow women to visit them, and English women were ready to assume their place in the ‘civilising mission.’ There were debates in reforming circles about the form that philanthropic visiting would take, but, by the 1870s, British women were assured of their ability to enter Indian women’s homes and believed they could effect much good thereby. My contention is that British women in India after the

¹ B.M Malabari, “The Indian Mother-in-Law” JNIA, 1878, Dec, 497. *The Journal of the National Indian Association* was renamed *The Indian Magazine* in 1886.

² K. Abdul Ali, “The Condition of the Indian Musalmans” IM, October 1886, 508

1870s were increasingly able to use this kind of work, the prevailing conditions in India, and their certainty that they could not be replaced by men to construct professional identities for themselves. They used these professional identities as a means to enter into what Elizabeth Prevost calls “new spaces of [public] authority.”³

If I am to effectively discuss professional identities, I will also need to define the term *profession*. I draw here on the work of Anne Witz, who argues that “the successful professional projects of class-privileged male actors at a particular point in history and in particular societies [are taken] to be the paradigmatic case of profession.”⁴ Witz suggests that “professional projects” should include all attempts to establish the boundaries of particular professions and advocates a model that takes into account the “gendered politics” that surrounded these projects and materially altered the ability of women to establish themselves as full-blown professionals.⁵ I define *profession* and *professionalism* here to indicate occupations whose practitioners were attempting to take on themselves the generic characteristics of the “new model profession.”⁶ These characteristics were “a formal qualifying and disciplinary association, specialized knowledge, [and] a self-conscious professional identity.”⁷ The philanthropists I describe here were defining themselves as a distinct body, subject to broader standards, and I argue that this was a key

³ Elizabeth Prevost, “Married to the Mission Field: Gender, Christianity and Professionalization in Britain and Colonial Africa, 1865-1914,” *Journal of British Studies* 47, no. 4 (October 2008): 813. Antoinette Burton describes the same interest in “public authority” in *Burdens of History* (Antoinette Burton, *Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women and Imperial Culture, 1865-1915*, (Chapel Hill & London: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 33-4.)

⁴ Anne Witz, *Professions and Patriarchy*, (New York: Routledge, 1992), 39. For a broad look at successful professional projects, see Leonard Schwarz’ “Professions, Elites, and Universities in England, 1870-1970” (*The Historical Journal* 47, no. 4 (December 1, 2004): 941–962). For specific examples, see Daniel Duman’s work on the Bar in England (“Pathway to Professionalism: The English Bar in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries”, *Journal of Social History* 13, no. 4 (July 1, 1980): 615–628), M. Jeanne Peterson’s *The Medical Profession in Mid-Victorian London* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978) and Christina de Bellaigue’s ‘The Development of Teaching as a Profession for Women Before 1870’ (*The Historical Journal* 44, no. 4 (December 1, 2001): 963–988.)

⁵ Witz, *Professions and Patriarchy*, 39.

⁶ Duman, “Pathway to Professionalism,” 615.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 615.

feature of their self-presentation. Following Witz, I contend that it is useful to view women who were attempting to partake in professional characteristics as nascent professionals, even if we are aware that they did not ultimately succeed in establishing themselves as a wholly separate profession.⁸ I argue that the three characteristics of Duman's definition of professionalization are present, in varying degrees, in the writings of the women I study here. Some of them are included only in an incomplete form: many philanthropists refer to the training and preparation that they undertook to do their work, which seems like an attempt to establish both a specialised knowledge base that the work required, and a concept of credentialing, even if the credentials in question were variable. I would also add that these women were also obliged to argue for their capability to do philanthropic work at all, and that their presentation of their successes and competencies as reasons why female philanthropists should be allowed to continue in the work can also be seen as an argument for seeing philanthropic women as a profession unto themselves. While some of the terminology of professionalism is anachronistic, and nineteenth-century Englishwomen might not have used the words 'professionalism' and 'philanthropy' with these precise meanings, I contend that these terms accurately identify important trends and that by thinking of these women as trying to create a professional philanthropic community, it is easier to understand many of the ways in which they carried out their work.

British women philanthropists in India worked in a variety of employments and under various banners, but as a group, they shared a broad commitment to the

⁸ Witz, *Professions and Patriarchy*, 39. Female doctors did end up professionals, but this was by incorporating themselves into the male medical profession; missionaries continued to be seen as temporary volunteers as did philanthropic workers who did not fall neatly enough into the categories of educator or medical worker.

professionalization of philanthropic work. Although these philanthropic women were often at odds with one another, there was a certain unity of intent and methodology in the work all of these women did. Missionaries and secular reformers clashed on religious grounds, but were each working towards professionalization in their own way.

Convincing others of their professional legitimacy was not a straightforward endeavour. The specific conditions prevailing in India granted British women a certain amount of license, but all philanthropists found themselves walking the fine line between coming across as too career-oriented and therefore insufficiently feminine, or insufficiently professional and therefore incompetent to do the job. The differing contexts in which various types of philanthropists worked demonstrate how these self-representations were partially shaped by outside pressures. The religiosity of missionary women shielded them from accusations of unfeminine interest in remuneration so they tended to get away with more visible employment, but were also required to stay within the boundaries of mission domestic ideology. Secular reformers were often more independent, but were more vulnerable to charges that they were exceeding the bounds of appropriate female behaviour. Both groups nevertheless exhibited a nascent professionalism, drawing on ideas such as formal qualifications and specialised knowledge to differentiate themselves from other workers.

The story of Englishwomen in India is not necessarily one of great professional successes. The period under consideration here is circa 1870 to 1900, the heyday of the Raj.⁹ These debates over professionalism continued through the long decline of the

⁹ The Raj was the period of direct British rule in India (1858-1947), after the British East India Company transferred their rule to the Crown in the person of Queen Victoria and before the Partition of Indian into the Union of Indian and the Dominion of Pakistan. During this period the Indian government was run by the Viceroy and the Indian Civil Service (ICS)

Empire, which decreased British involvement in India. There were also never very many Englishwomen in India. There were several hundred female missionaries and probably less than a hundred secular reformers at any given time.¹⁰ Debates over women's work in India were, however, to have a disproportionate impact on the development of women's ability to claim professional identities in Britain. The specific conditions of the empire lent these claims additional weight in India and the example of competent women in India reflected back on Englishwomen at home. These connections between British women in India and British women in England also demonstrate the entanglement of nation and empire in British imaginations and lives in this period.

Historiography

Another community into which these women fit is the broader community of women in the empire. One of the earliest academic works to raise the issue of women's active involvement in the work of the British Empire was Margaret Strobel's *European Women and the Second British Empire*. A short work, but one that took in a wide range of geographies, women and activities, this monograph provided an overview of some of the more common types of activity women pursued in the colonies and positioned itself as a starting point to encourage conversation about and study of women in the empire in a

¹⁰ Jeffrey Cox, *Imperial Fault Lines: Christianity and Imperial Power in India, 1818-1940*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 48. Rhonda Anne Semple, *Missionary Women*, (Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2003), 237-250. Jennifer Morawiecki, "The Peculiar Missions of Christian Womanhood: The Selection and Preparation of Women Missionaries of the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society, 1880-1920," (DPhil dissertation, University of Sussex, 1998), 86. Emma Raymond Pitman, *Heroines of the Mission Field* (London: Cassell, Petter, Galpin & Co., 1880), 7. The precise numbers of missionaries in India are difficult to come by as there were so many mission societies and they tended to under-report their female presence. Secular reformers were even more scattered and less likely to have been counted. Some impression of the numbers involved may be obtained from the limited number of names listed in the Journal of the National Indian Association, the incredibly small beginnings of the Dufferin Fund which employed only eleven female doctors in the first three years of its founding (1885-1888), and the number of British female doctors who emigrated to India listed in the *Englishwoman's Review*. As of 1889, fifteen out of the seventy-two women who had ever qualified in England went to India: a large proportion, but a small number ("Registered Medical Women for 1889" EWR, February 15, 1889, 65-69.)

more nuanced mould.

Strobel's work was by no means the first to touch on the presence of women in the Empire, but her approach focused more evenly on both the actions of British women in colonial contexts and their motivations and conceptions of their work. This contrasted with earlier work – particularly on memsahibs¹¹ in India – that emphasised their negative impact: what Margaret Strobel refers to as the myth of the “destructive memsahib”¹² who personally ruined Anglo-Indian¹³ relations through her insistence on maintaining the colour line and behaving as though she was still in England. This myth tended to take its tone straight from Kipling's *Plain Tales from the Hills*, which satirised the memsahibs in particular and Anglo-Indian society in general as self-involved, lazy and useless.

Margaret MacMillan's 1988 *Women of the Raj* and Marian Fowler's 1987 *Below the Peacock Fan: First Ladies of the Raj* both employ this faintly derisive tone and primarily discuss the idea of the memsahib, the details of the world she inhabited or, at best, give anecdotes about individual women conforming to stereotype.¹⁴ Less specifically female-focused histories of the Raj such as Kenneth Ballhatchet's *Race, Sex and Class Under the*

¹¹ Memsahib literally means the ‘master's woman’ or ‘female master’ and was applied to all white women in India, but particularly the wives and female relatives of officials in the Indian Colonial Service (ICS) and the Indian Army.

¹² Margaret Strobel, *European Women and the Second British Empire*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), x and Chapter 1 *passim*.

¹³ Anglo-Indian will be used here to indicate specifically the British who were resident in British India, as opposed to the offspring of mixed relationships (who were more likely to be termed “Eurasians”) or temporary visitors who were merely ‘British’ or more specifically ‘English,’ ‘Welsh’ and so on. It was the term they used most often for themselves and they did so in an explicitly exclusionary way that defined it as the solely the members of government, military and business circles who all socialised together, leaving out all other British residents in India who did not conform, such as missionaries. It indicated residency, but was not limited to the children who were born to British parents in India and was even used to encompass very new residents, provided that they intended to stay.

¹⁴ For more recent works on the subject see: Mary Anne Lind, *The Compassionate Memsahibs: Welfare Activities of British Women in India, 1900-1947*, (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988); Elizabeth Buettner, *Empire Families: Britons and Late Imperial India*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); and Mary A. Prociada, *Married to the Empire: Gender, Politics and Imperialism in India, 1883-1947*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002).

*Raj*¹⁵ also describe memsahibs primarily in terms of their negative impact. Ballhatchet's work is focused on the sexual relationship between members of the Indian Colonial Service (ICS) and the British army in India, and the local women. *Race, Sex and Class Under the Raj* argues that this relationship was better in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, before it became common for ICS men and army officers to bring their wives with them when they were posted to India.¹⁶ These wives are supposed to have attempted to replicate English society under colonial conditions and thereby prevented the previously free intercourse between the locals and the officials. The decidedly unpleasant racial stratification within the Empire is therefore assumed to have originated from these women. Strobel, on the other hand, argued that the arrival of the memsahibs merely

coincide[d] with other developments in colonial society: intensified appropriation of indigenous land and/or labor, a heightened racial prejudice, the growth of evangelical Christianity... and the increased numbers of women *and* men.¹⁷

She also discussed the “travellers, writers, scholars... administrators... missionaries [and] reformers” who existed outside of the narrow world of the memsahibs.¹⁸ While her work was necessarily broad in scope rather than deeply focused, she offered the experiences of these women and their peers as interesting avenues for further study. Given the frequency with which she is cited by later historians, it seems only fair to describe her as successful. There is always more work to be done, but Strobel successfully introduced into the larger discourse the idea that women in the British Empire occupied a variety of roles, and

¹⁵ Kenneth Ballhatchet, *Race, Sex and Class Under the Raj: Imperial Attitudes and Policies and their Critics, 1793-1905*, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980.)

¹⁶ Ballhatchet is by no means the only historian to have come to this conclusion, but his formulation of it is one of the most cited.

¹⁷ Strobel, *European Women and the Second British Empire*, 2.

¹⁸ Strobel, *European Women and the Second British Empire*, v.

provided an entry point for a number of other scholars.

The follow-up collection of articles that Strobel edited with Nupur Chaudhuri, *Western Women and Imperialism*, also engaged with the complications of the position in which European women in the colonies found themselves. Subtitled *Complicity and Resistance*, these articles complicate the picture of British women by acknowledging individual negotiations of imperial ideologies as well as the way that women could be at the same time in a position to see some of the hypocrisies and injustices of imperialism, and to find that these injustices gave them a freedom in the colonies that they lacked in the metropole. Even resistance itself must be complicated from within: for instance, individuals are far more likely to only push against one aspect of a hegemonic discourse such as imperialism than to reject it entirely. Women such as Flora Shaw (later Lady Lugard) could travel alone through the Empire for her journalism, but only by keeping to a strictly conservative and imperialist perspective that reassured her readers.¹⁹ Missionary women could actively resist their relegation to the private sphere by going abroad as missionaries, and might even extend this resistance to their Indian congregations, while still propping up the larger imperialist structure that encouraged them to impose their own culture on the locals.²⁰ Women opposing the Ilbert Bill,²¹ for instance, found the impetus to venture into politics in their desire to preserve the status quo.²² Awareness of the problematic aspects of women's Empire work aside, this scholarship could also be

¹⁹ Helen Callaway and Dorothy O. Helly, "Crusader for Empire: Flora Shaw/Lady Lugard" in *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance*, ed. Nupur Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 79-96.

²⁰ Leslie A. Flemming, "A New Humanity: American Missionaries' Ideals for Women in North India, 1870-1930" in *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance*, ed. Nupur Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 192.

²¹ The 1883 Ilbert Bill granted Indian judges in India jurisdiction over British subjects. It was vigorously opposed because it would give Indian men legal power over white women.

²² Mrinalini Sinha, "'Chathams, Pitts, and Gladstones in Petticoats': The Politics of Gender and Race in the Ilbert Bill Controversy, 1883-1884" in *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance*, ed. Nupur Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 98-116.

celebratory of women who pushed certain boundaries, and does at least demonstrate the existence of actively involved women where there had previously been supposed to be none.

Work such as Strobel and Chaudhuri's also helped the study of women in the colonies expand to include women who did not fit into either the mode of settler or incorporated wife – women with work obligations that are an unofficial, but required part of their husband's job²³ – which had previously been the primary nexus of work done on women in the Empire. Their work primarily brought attention to travellers, philanthropists and missionaries, as well as a few British women who had married local men or 'gone native' for religious or personal reasons. These women were often particularly appealing to feminist historians for their independence and the way that they did not fit into the typical role of Empire wife.

On the subject of British women philanthropists specifically, two books stand out. Kumari Jayawardena's *The White Woman's Other Burden* and Antoinette Burton's *Burdens of History* take different approaches to the study of British women's philanthropic efforts in India and nicely encapsulate the two main directions in which the study of this subject has been taken.²⁴ Jayawardena focuses more heavily on the activities of individual female philanthropists. Burton is more interested in how these activities were mentally slotted into contemporary gender ideologies. Both titles echo Kipling's

²³ The term 'incorporated wife' seems to have been first used by Hilary Callan and Shirley Ardener as the title for their 1984 collection of sociology papers on jobs that women are shoehorned into by dint of their husbands' profession – for example, diplomatic hostess – that entail serious amounts of actual work, but offer limited to no official recognition or compensation. Many historians of Empire have adopted this terminology to discuss the wives of colonial officials who were often placed in this position.

²⁴ Antoinette Burton, *Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women and Imperial Culture, 1865-1915*, (Chapel Hill & London: University of North Carolina Press, 1994). Kumari Jayawardena, *The White Woman's Other Burden: Western Women and South Asia During British Rule*, (New York: Routledge, 1995).

‘White Man’s Burden’ of ‘uplift’ in the colonies and discuss the ways that this ‘burden’ was and was not extended to white women.

Antoinette Burton’s *Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women and Imperial Culture, 1865-1915* provides an insightful look at how British feminists in this period understood the form and function of their philanthropic work in India. Burton argues that, despite the “fragmentation, multiple constituencies and various trajectories” of the British feminist movement, “the cause of Indian womanhood apparently unified British women reformers in cases where even... the vote could not.”²⁵ Burton argues further, however, that these united feminists were chiefly using ‘the Indian woman’ to make a point about their own struggles for suffrage or to further British women’s employment opportunities. The quintessential Indian woman as she appeared in the publications of these organisations was a Hindu woman trapped in “the dark recesses of the Indian home”²⁶ and thereby deprived of employment, education and contact with the outside world. This depiction was primarily a rhetorical device rather than an accurate representation of Indian women’s lives. Actual activity aimed at ameliorating their problems lagged far behind the verbiage expended on the subject. It was, nevertheless, one of the central assumptions of nineteenth-century British feminist discourse that British women were not only demanding a place in public culture, but in an Imperial public culture with all the attendant duties of Empire. Two of the primary justifications offered up by British feminists as to why they deserved the vote were that the work that had been done by women in various fields provided evidence that they were suitably competent to be trusted with the vote, and that they needed that vote in order to carry on

²⁵ Ibid., 9.

²⁶ “Medical Education of Women” *Women and Work* August 7, 1875, 3.

doing such work.²⁷ The existence of the zenana – Burton’s “dark recess” – made philanthropic work with Indian women a favourite example. Since male philanthropists were not permitted to see Indian women in this setting, female philanthropists were therefore able to argue that they were the only ones capable of spreading the gospel and assorted other accoutrements of ‘civilisation’ among Indian womanhood. The end result of all this rhetoric was to construct a public image of Indian women that focused on their helplessness and their absolute need for the assistance of British women. Burton’s focus is on women’s rights campaigns within England that drew on the ideology of Empire for domestic purposes, and were most interested in refitting the Empire to allow them access to its privileges, rather than fighting it. In this thesis, I examine the extent to which similar discourse pervaded the writings of women who were actually abroad in the Empire.

Kumari Jayawardena’s *The White Woman’s Other Burden* offers a different approach to British women in India. She focuses on a number of individual women, grouped into categories such as missionaries, social reformers, and converts to Indian religions. Jayawardena discusses these women’s “different perceptions of the East,”²⁸ how these differences affected the work each woman did, and the ways that these variable perceptions fitted into a broader picture of the Raj. She acknowledges the widespread use of India as a political tool that Burton identifies, but argues that British women approached the subject of India in diverse ways. One distinction she draws in particular is between the earlier, primarily evangelical, work of missions, and the later growth of work that was more closely linked to social reform movements in England,

²⁷ Burton, *Burdens of History*, 172.

²⁸ Jayawardena, *The White Woman’s Other Burden*, 4.

such as Mary Carpenter's work in education in Britain and India. I contend that the movements themselves may have been growing separately from each other, but much of the underlying ideology informing the movements was shared.

Women in Britain

The philanthropists discussed in this thesis were unusual in certain aspects of their working careers – particularly that they possessed something more akin to a professional career than many women of their era – but they were nevertheless still part of certain trends in women's work. In order to more clearly demonstrate why their unusual formulation of their labours is deserving of study, it is necessary to first lay out the context in which they were working to determine how much of their work was within acceptable boundaries for their time and place. Professional women were unusual, but female workers and philanthropists were not.

To begin, it is necessary to talk about where these philanthropic women stood in English society. Philanthropy was primarily an occupation of the upper and middle classes. It has become increasingly obvious through historical research that even the poor were donating to charitable causes and performing generous acts within their own communities, but they were not participating in the same structures of wide-spread visiting, donation and fund-raising.²⁹

Discussing these women's class status does, however, demonstrate the problems with modern class formulations, particularly as applied to the Victorians. As Amanda Vickery argued in her *Gentleman's Daughter*, Georgian and later Victorian formulations of class were not as strictly tied to the upper-middle-working formula as they are often

²⁹ F. K. Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century England*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 42-3.

considered to be today.³⁰ This is instantly visible in the records of the various missionary and philanthropic societies when they had to choose women to send to India who were most concerned with an applicant's status as a "true lady."³¹ The term 'lady' could have a variety of meanings, but generally these were women sufficiently steeped in Victorian middle-class values who "represented the pinnacle of British/English civilisation and so were the most qualified for work as agents of an evangelising civilisation."³² The designation 'lady' unceremoniously disqualified women from the labouring classes, but could also be used as a means to exclude women whose financial and family circumstances made them solidly middle class, but who were perceived to lack the personal qualities that would make them 'ladies'. Conversely, however, it could be used to include women suffering under a certain amount of financial embarrassment who were still considered to have the appropriate upbringing and personal qualities.³³ Class could further be complicated by the jostling for degrees of middle-class-ness that occurred within philanthropic circles. Missionaries categorised their applicants based on their perceived class status and were keen to accept only the highest status women they could find, yet missionaries were perceived by many women to be at the lower end of middle

³⁰ Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Victorian England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998.) Vickery argues that what we tend to identify as the late eighteenth century 'upper middle-class' identified themselves as "polite" or "genteel" only. This was a broad swathe of people, including everyone from the landed gentry to merchants and professionals (p. 13). She further argues that this persists into the Victorian period and that those individuals who were defining themselves as middle-class in opposition to aristocracy or labourers were just the most vocal members of a less sharply delineated class that blurred into clerkships at the bottom, and landed gentry and minor aristocrats at the top (p. 14).

³¹ Jane Haggis, "A Heart that Has Felt the Love of God and Longs for Others to Know it': Conventions of Gender, Tensions of Self and Constructions of Difference in Offering to Be a Lady Missionary," *Women's History Review* 7, no. 2 (1998): 178.

³² Judith Rowbotham, 'This is No Romantic Story', 20-1. Cecillie Swaisland, "Wanted – Earnest Self-Sacrificing Women for Service in South Africa: Nineteenth Century Recruitment of Single Women to Protestant Missions," in *Women and Missions: Past and Present*, ed. Shirley Ardener, Fiona Bowie and Deborah Kirkwood, (Providence: Berg Publishers, 1993), 71.

³³ Morawiecki, "The Peculiar Missions of Christian Womanhood," 156.

class.³⁴ Mary Frances Billington's journalistic account of women in India, both British and Indian, expresses distaste for the missionaries on the grounds that they were lower middle class and were teaching these 'low' tastes to the ladies they are educating.³⁵ British philanthropists in India were expected to impart British culture to the Indian people, but it was specifically a middle-class British culture.

The issue of finances was important to Victorian charitable work. Middle-class women, who did the majority of this work, did receive money for writing, teaching or other genteel occupations, but it was considered to be a threat to their class status if that money was necessary to their self-support. Pin money was no such threat, however, so there are many examples of middle-class women doing a great deal of work with the complete support of their families. M. Jeanne Peterson's study of one community of Victorian women reveals a number of comfortably middle-class women doing different kinds of work (one taught piano, another did entomological work and many wrote poetry, fiction, and essays), but all were supported by their male relatives and would have considered it a substantial downgrade to have to live on their own earnings.³⁶ Anne Summers describes a similar phenomenon of women distancing themselves from their work by explicitly adding the modifier 'lady-' to any occupation they might take up, and either working without a salary or going to "extreme lengths" to work "without the appearance of one."³⁷ Peterson also argues that the stigma of work was heavily related to its incompatibility with the social duties required of a middle-class woman: one could not

³⁴ Indrani Sen, "Between Power and 'Purdah': The White Woman in British India, 1858-1900," *Indian Economic Social History Review* 34, no. 3 (1997): 361.

³⁵ Mary Frances Billington, *Woman in India*, (London: Chapman & Hall, 1895), 190-1. See also Seton, 58-9.

³⁶ M. Jeanne Peterson, *Family, Love, and Work in the Lives of Victorian Gentlewomen*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 120-3.

³⁷ Anne Summers, *Female Lives, Moral States: Women, Religion and Public Life in Britain, 1800-1930* (Berks: Threshold Press Ltd., 2000), 17.

participate in the necessary rounds of visits and parties if one was obliged to hew to someone else's schedule.³⁸ Philanthropy was therefore eminently pleasing work for these women as it involved a fair amount of occupation, which was what was wanted, but without the lowering stigma of a living wage; it could be done in spare moments, much like writing; and it served Christian charitable impulses. Elizabeth Langland agrees and goes even further to argue that one of the reasons that Victorian women's philanthropy took the shape that it did – visiting the poor in person to dispense charity and give improving lectures – was because such practises were compatible with the Victorian social round of at-homes and morning visits.³⁹ This is not to argue, though, that the Victorian Christian impulse to charitable work was not often genuine. Women “mighty in the scripture” and “constant in prayer” who took up work among the disadvantaged did so because this “*duty* was to [them] a pole-star” and they saw the responsibility as divinely assigned in answer to their prayers.⁴⁰ Presumably the fact that philanthropic work could offer religious satisfaction and increased personal autonomy simultaneously lent it particular appeal.

Philanthropy

Philanthropic work expanded rapidly in Victorian England. David Owen's 1963 *English Philanthropy 1660-1960*⁴¹ was one of the earliest to attempt to describe the full scope of English philanthropic work. Owen partially created the periodization of such work that is still used today, albeit modified by race, class and gender analysis. He argues that the shift over the course of the eighteenth to twentieth centuries from local charitable

³⁸ Peterson, *Family, Love, and Work in the Lives of Victorian Gentlewomen*, 120-1.

³⁹ Elizabeth Langland, *Nobody's Angels: Middle-Class Women and Domestic Ideology in Victorian Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 56.

⁴⁰ Pitman, *Heroines of the Mission Field*, 243.

⁴¹ David Owen, *English Philanthropy, 1660-1960*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1964).

work to the modern welfare state correlates with growing urbanisation. The kind of charitable work that relied on personal knowledge of the needs of the recipient was no longer feasible in the city, so organisations were developed that took on the role of determining who deserved or required charity, leaving individuals to simply donate to these charities. This also meant that charities were required to become larger than they had previously been in order to deal with increased demand and the associated increase in bureaucracy. It was therefore relatively straightforward for the government to incorporate some of these long-established institutions into the welfare state as their size and heavily formalised structure were equally well suited to government bureaucracy.

Women were absent for a long time from this increasingly organised image of philanthropy. The male tradition, as described at length in Owen's work, was very much about donations and organisations. The standard philanthropist in this model donated funds towards the expenses of a school, dispensary or other public enterprise. At most they might have involved themselves in the establishment of such an enterprise, drawn up the regulations or served on a decision-making board. Women were not considered a prominent part of this tradition; even where they did make bequests or donations these were often obliged to be anonymous for the preservation of their reputations.⁴²

In the 1980s, historians, such as Frank Prochaska who wrote *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century England*,⁴³ began to focus specifically on women's distinct experiences of philanthropic work and ideology. Prochaska looks at the same growth in philanthropic work and the shift towards professionalization, but as it applied

⁴² For a fascinating theory on the foundations of this gendered split in charitable Christianity, which goes back to the late Roman period, see volume 1 of Ariès and Duby's *History of Private Life*.

⁴³ F. R. Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century England*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1980).

to the women who are conspicuously absent from Owen's narrative. He argues both that women were present and participated in this explosion of charitable fervour, and that in order to involve themselves, as many felt strongly called upon to do, they were often obliged to construct their own philanthropic traditions.

Many of the women involved in Victorian philanthropy were ill-equipped to follow in the male tradition of generous donation, so they were obliged to come at philanthropy from a new angle. The philanthropic work of women was therefore constructed as a personal effort to be conducted on a face-to-face basis with individuals, rather than as a matter of donations to be applied to the poor by others. Many women visited the poor, while others gave lectures and classes, or participated in bigger projects such as soup kitchens or ragged schools.⁴⁴ The common theme here is hands-on, personal activities. Women did make financial donations, but were not generally regarded as great philanthropists for that alone, whereas men were primarily identified by the size of their financial contributions; on the flip side, men certainly did participate in home visiting as well, but it has been remembered as women's work.⁴⁵

Philanthropy could also take the form of social reform. Many of the women who ran schools or soup kitchens or who visited the poor thought of themselves as part of a broader movement of social reform that was to improve the lower classes both morally and physically and raise them to higher standards, though not higher social strata. One of their primary goals was the promotion of "Christian family life" – i.e. a middle-class Anglican lifestyle – which many social reformers thought would ameliorate many of the

⁴⁴ Langland, *Nobody's Angels*, 56.

⁴⁵ F. David Roberts, *The Social Conscience of the Early Victorian*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 250.

criminal and moral social ills that they believed pervaded the lower rungs of society.⁴⁶

Significantly, hands-on philanthropy, particularly with this kind of Christian impetus, was widely acceptable women's work. The Victorians believed strongly in the separation of women and men's work into 'separate spheres,' with men in charge of public life and women relegated to, but supposedly in charge of, private life.⁴⁷ As Eleanor Gordon and Gwyneth Nair argue, however, "the gendering of 'proper' spheres of activity for men and women is not *necessarily* the same as equating the female with the domestic."⁴⁸ Clare Midgley describes a 'social sphere' that women constructed for themselves between the 'separate spheres' of the home and the working world that included charitable work and other non-remunerative activities.⁴⁹ As long as something was suitably defined as women's work, it was not necessary that it be undertaken in the home. Charitable visiting rested comfortably in this category. From this wide acceptance of one type of women's work it is easy to see how doing related work in a colonial setting was not such a leap.

The need to travel to India, and the separation from one's family that this entailed, was more of a hurdle to clear. One of the things that made philanthropic work in England acceptable was that it could be incorporated fairly simply into a middle-class lifestyle.⁵⁰ Going out to India, however, was a substantial disruption that had to be justified. This is why much philanthropic work in India began with either the memsahibs or the wives of

⁴⁶ Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century England*, 134.

⁴⁷ For a more substantial look at this ideology in theory and practise, see Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850*, (London: Hutchinson, 1987.)

⁴⁸ Eleanor Gordon, and Gwyneth Nair, *Public Lives: Women, Family, and Society in Victorian Britain*, (London: Yale University Press, c2003), 234. Italics in the original.

⁴⁹ Clare Midgley, *Feminism and Empire: Women Activists in Imperial Britain, 1790-1865*, (New York: Routledge, 2007), 43.

⁵⁰ The archetypal example of the woman who does take it too far and is therefore neglectful of her domestic duties being, of course, Dicken's Mrs. Jellyby.

missionaries who had the social excuse of their husbands' work to become resident in India and from there could proceed as if they were in England.⁵¹ Still, clearly many women did manage to justify their migration to India in order to fulfill their sincere desire to work there, and the general acceptance of female philanthropy in England removed one possible set of objections.

Zenanas

As both Burton and Jayawardena discuss, one of the reasons India was perceived to be a particularly fertile ground for female philanthropy was because of the zenana/purdah system, or at least the way the British understood it. Indian women were constructed as the secret power in Indian households who would have to be converted first or else would reclaim any converted family members. Drawing on the Victorian assumption that women were the earliest spiritual and moral teachers of their children, the English in India called Indian mothers “the real ruler of India” because they were “ever the most devout upholder of Hinduism,” instilling “superstition” into their children.⁵² In one mission account of a girls' school, the missionary related how a ten-year-old girl was removed from the school because she had reached marriageable age. The blame for this removal was placed on her female relatives who demanded that her father bring her home. He was “intensely anxious... that she should remain [at the school] to complete her education,” but these women insisted “for weeks and even months” until his “comfort... health... and very life [were] in jeopardy” and the girl had to return home.⁵³ Such examples were offered as proof that the women absolutely had to

⁵¹ For further discussion of missionary women in India and how they negotiated societal permission to emigrate, see Chapter 1.

⁵² Irene H. Barnes, *Behind the Pardah: The Story of C.E.Z.M.S Work in India*, (New York: Crowell, 1897), 53.

⁵³ “Our Work and the Workers” IFE, Jan 1872, 35.

be reached in order to either convert or uplift a civilisation. Male missionaries and reformers bemoaned their inability to interact with upper-class Indian women who did not figure publically in Indian society. British women could not only fill this perceived gap, but argued that they were irreplaceable in the role.

These “melancholy holes which are all that ordinary Hindu women have to call home”⁵⁴ were also described as “sad and doleful prisons”⁵⁵ from which Indian women would have to be released in order to convert them – and out of sheer “Christian sympathy.”⁵⁶ Because they were “cribbed, caged and confined within the four walls of their zenana prison-house” Indian women were “the most miserable drudges on the face of the earth... all their curiosity is nipped in the bud, and all enjoyments of life are proscribed to them.”⁵⁷ British women therefore would have to enter these “dark homes”⁵⁸ as the only ones who could bring Indian women the light of religion and civilisation.

British rhetoric aside, the zenana⁵⁹ was simply the woman’s quarters in a Hindu house; purdah (or purdahnasheen) was the Muslim equivalent. In the nineteenth century, elite Indian women generally did not interact with males who were not family members; what interaction did exist was mediated through veils and screens. Of course, as this only applied to elites, the zenana/purdah system was by no means as widespread as the British made it out to be. It was never universal, largely for the simple reason that it was

⁵⁴ “Sowing and Reaping; or Labour in the Field” *IW*, October 1880, 25.

⁵⁵ H. Lloyd, “The Zenana and Its Inmates” *IFE*, Jan 1872, 43.

⁵⁶ Richard Stothert, “Female Education in Bombay” *IFE* July 1872, 111.

⁵⁷ “A Christian Woman’s Census Thank-Offering” *IW*, March-April 1881, 62.

⁵⁸ “Sowing and Reaping; or Labour in the Field” *IW* April 1881, 67.

⁵⁹ I intend to use the term zenana throughout for simplicity’s sake and because this is consistent with colonial usage, which generally did not make a distinction between zenana and purdah, except in the context of the debates described above over ‘correct’ Indian custom. It was even possible to refer to “Mohammedan and Hindu zenanas” (“Our Work and the Workers,” *IFE*, October 1893, 164.) To refer to the practice of this kind of gender segregation as the purdah or zenana system is also a relic of British India, but there does not seem to be alternative English terminology or a better English translation of any of the Indian languages that do have terminology for it.

impossible economically. To sequester the women of a family in the house and prevent them from engaging in agricultural labour was straightforwardly impossible for most peasant families who relied on the productivity of all working members.⁶⁰ Even for women in the zenana, doctors were often considered a natural exception to rules about strange men.⁶¹ Both English women and men, however, were united in their belief that Indian women, or those worthy of attention at least, were all cruelly confined and would need to be rescued, preferably by British women.

Philanthropy in India

The British presence in India was partially thought of by its participants as having the overall purpose of ‘civilising’ the Indians, but individuals also proposed a number of specific campaigns against things they felt were particularly damaging to Indian society. There were official, that is, governmental, campaigns and more populist ones. The official English in India were strongly in favour of maintaining the Indian system of government, only replacing their highest authority with the British Crown, in the hopes that the continuity would keep the people satisfied and prevent rebellion. Therefore, as much as many officials objected to indigenous practices, they were constrained in their ability to reform except along certain lines. The principle campaigns in which the Colonial Government participated were over sati (widow burning), child-marriage, thuggee (ritual murder), widow-remarriage (which was forbidden by Hindu custom), education and medicine. Missionaries and other reformers were also interested in these interventions, but with more of an emphasis on religious conversion and rooting out

⁶⁰ Maneesha Lal, “The Politics of Gender and Medicine in Colonial India: The Countess of Dufferin’s Fund, 1885-1888,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 68:1 (1994:Spring): 40-1.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 40.

specific religious practises which were believed to be particularly cruel.⁶²

The government possessed the power to make legal changes, but was often unsuccessful in changing social mores. Widow-remarriage was legalised in 1856, but even male Indian reformers were reluctant to marry widows in the face of social disapprobation. Secular reformers focused on subjects such as education, and occasional writing campaigns to government about other social issues. Missionaries went further in terms of both attempted conversion and criticism of Indian religious ritual and practise. The government was also more cautious in the aftermath of the Indian Uprising of 1857. There was a widespread impression that one of the causes of the Uprising was Indian resistance to Christianity and Anglicisation.⁶³ With this in mind, the government in India took steps to distance itself from explicitly Christianising groups, such as missionaries, and focus more on supporting more overtly secular reforms.⁶⁴

By the 1870s, sati had already been banned, widow-remarriage was legalised, and education was an accepted value, though it received a boost in prominence in the 1860s with Mary Carpenter's trip to India⁶⁵ and her subsequent publicising of India's 'need' for further western-style education. The most vigorous debates were therefore on the subject of medicine, particularly the involvement of British medical women, and child-marriage, which had been brought particularly strongly to the attention of the public through the

⁶² Jeffrey A. Oddie, "Missionaries as Social Commentators: The Indian Case," in *Missionary Encounters: Sources and Issues*, ed. Robert A. Bickers and Rosemary Seton (Surrey: Curzon Press, 1996), 203. The practises in question involve several kinds of ritual mortification for spiritual merit.

⁶³ This resistance was likely a contributing factor, but the actual causes were more wide-ranging and complex than this simplified picture. For more information, see Biswamoy Pati, *The Great Rebellion of 1857 in India: Exploring Transgressions, Contests and Diversities*, (New York: Routledge, 2010), and Shaswati Mazumdar ed., *Insurgent Sepoys: Europe Views the Revolt of 1857*. (London: Routledge, 2011), among many others.

⁶⁴ Thomas R. Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 140.

⁶⁵ Carpenter was a prominent social reformer in Britain and India; see Chapter Two.

Rukhmabai case.⁶⁶

In this study I look primarily at British women's philanthropic activities in the realms of education and medicine. The education of Indians was no longer controversial in this period, except in as much as it was feared, at times justifiably, by the local population to mask attempts at conversion or Anglicisation. It was certainly accepted by the European population in India and therefore women's accounts of their work in education are useful as demonstrations of their settled status as professional educators. The medical profession in Britain had only begun to professionalise in the early nineteenth century so many male doctors found women particularly threatening as their own respectability was only tenuously established. Medical women had a long fight ahead to be accepted and were therefore obliged to make their arguments in favour of their own training and discipline explicit. These women's explicit justifications are invaluable as demonstrations of why the kind of professional positioning I am arguing for existed, as well as exposing the rationale they gave for these professional identities. Medical women's quotidian accounts also provide details of how they put their medical training and professional ideology into practise. These accounts can also be fruitfully compared to the educators' accounts, which lack the same explicitness about their underlying argument, but share values such as the importance of training.

⁶⁶ In 1884, a Mr. Dadaji brought a suit against his wife, Rukhmabai, for refusing to live with him (the case was technically for "restitution of conjugal rights") after he had permitted her to remain with her family for a decade after their wedding when she was 11. The case was particularly fraught because it would decide whether marriages made with children too young to consent were to be regarded as legal marriages and highlighted the inconsistencies of the legal system in British India which had attempted to amalgamate British, Hindu and Muslim law into one body. When Rukhmabai decided she would rather go to prison than live with him – the choices offered by the judiciary – she received a great deal of support in England and became something of a cause célèbre. For more information see Antoinette Burton, "From Child Bride to 'Hindoo Lady': Rukhmabai and the Debate on Sexual Respectability in Imperial Britain," *The American Historical Review* 103, no. 4 (October 1, 1998): 1119-1146.

Medical Women

Even in England, the existence of female doctors was intensely fraught in the mid-nineteenth century. The 1858 Medical (Registration) Act did not specifically ban women from obtaining medical licenses, but required all applicants to possess qualifications from institutions that did not accept female students. Elizabeth Blackwell, the first registered female doctor in England, qualified under a loophole that recognised doctors with foreign licenses (she had obtained her medical degree from the University of Geneva in 1849). Elizabeth Garrett qualified in 1865 in England after studying privately and taking the public examination of the Irish Society of Apothecaries. After 1865 foreign licenses were no longer accepted and private study was no longer considered sufficient pre-requisite for the final examinations, which effectively barred women from medical practise as they were still unable to study at medical schools.⁶⁷ After concerted political effort, the University of Edinburgh was opened to women and the earliest class of women medical students⁶⁸ began its studies in 1869. Their work was interrupted several times as the debate as to whether they were legitimate students raged back and forth.⁶⁹ By 1878, Mary C. Tabor could write in the *Englishwoman's Review* that women were now able to qualify as medical doctors – although even this was still contingent on their willingness to jump through the hoops of taking the licensing examination of the Irish college of Physicians, since the equivalent English and Scottish licenses were still closed to women though English and Scottish schools were increasingly willing to accept female applicants. Tabor was, however, still unsure if the twenty-four women who were

⁶⁷ Witz, *Professions and Patriarchy*, 86-7.

⁶⁸ That is, the first class that entered medical college together as a group to take the same lectures as men.

⁶⁹ Some of these hindrances were institutional – for example bans from specific classes – and some were the resistance of many male students who physically barred them from entering classrooms. (Witz, *Professions and Patriarchy*, 90-1.)

enrolled at the London Medical School for Women “qualifying themselves for a remunerative career”⁷⁰ would actually be able to pursue it effectively. She was entirely in favour of medical women and brought up the “successful and increasing practice” of the few who already existed, but she did acknowledge the uncertainty about whether “such a career is in reality open to women and whether the demand for their services will be sufficiently great.”⁷¹

Female Educators

Over the course of the nineteenth century, increasing numbers of women were being formally educated and the quality of that education was rising, but education remained unstandardized and extremely variable. The role of female educators changed over the course of the nineteenth century in tandem with increased interest in the education of girls. Women adapted the earlier model of the female governess or dame-school mistress⁷² into a more professional role rather than creating a new job altogether. As it became more and more common for middle-class girls to attend formal schooling, both the demand for and availability of teachers with recognised qualifications increased. The 'decayed gentlewoman' was no longer considered qualified to be a governess by the simple fact of her birth. Parents began to expect that girls' schools would offer a more structured curriculum and that their teachers would possess some kind of credential, although the precise nature of these credentials would vary widely until well into the

⁷⁰ Mary C. Tabor, “Medical Women” EWR, April 1878, 147.

⁷¹ Ibid., 47.

⁷² Until the mid-nineteenth century the majority of middle-class girls in England were educated at home by governesses, while those working-class girls who were educated had attended dame-schools. The proprietors of dame-schools taught basic literacy and domestic skills and were generally not qualified beyond that. Governesses were more likely to be middle-class and to have had more education, but this could mean anything from multiple years at a girls' school or having only had the most basic lessons from her own governess. Ellen Jordan, “‘Making Good Wives and Mothers’? The Transformation of Middle-Class Girls' Education in Nineteenth-Century Britain”. *History of Education Quarterly* 31, no. 4 (December 1, 1991): 449. See also: June Purvis, *A History of Women's Education in England*, (Bristol: Open University Press, 1991), Chapter Two: “Education and Working-Class Girls.”

twentieth century.⁷³ By the end of the nineteenth century, the majority of teachers in England were women, but over half of them were uncertified.⁷⁴ Even so, by the 1880s there were forty-three residential training colleges and a number of day schools for teachers, some of which were affiliated with universities, and all of which were intended to produce the increasing numbers of qualified teachers that the ever-growing numbers of schoolgirls would require.⁷⁵

Despite the large numbers of lower-class teachers entering the profession and attending the day-schools, class remained an important factor for women attempting to enter the teaching profession. Middle-class girls (or their parents) attempted to preserve their class status while acquiring reputable credentials by attending girls' schools or even women's colleges and studying a broader liberal arts curriculum, rather than taking specialized teaching-training classes, which were more accessible to lower-status women.⁷⁶ Some qualification was increasingly required, but standardization was still a long way off and having had an education was equivalent to having had specific teacher training. As Christina de Bellaigue argues throughout her *Educating Women*, however, many girls attended school with the explicit purpose of being "educated for a governess."⁷⁷ The majority of middle-class girls were expected to marry after their schooling, but girls whose families had had financial difficulties and would be unable to support them as adults were often educated to be teachers as a fall-back financial

⁷³ John Roach, *Secondary Education in England, 1870-1902: Public Activity and Private Enterprise* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 232-4.

⁷⁴ Linda L. Clark, *Women and Achievement in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), 180.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 180. This figure does not include missionary institutions which were intended to train missionaries and offered educational training as only a portion of their curriculum.

⁷⁶ Christina de Bellaigue, *Educating Women: Schooling and Identity in England and France, 1800-1867* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 113-4.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 48-9.

strategy.⁷⁸

Furthermore, as June Purvis and other historians have discussed, the reformation in teaching was part of a larger women's movement. Education was considered a cornerstone in the fight for women to have more opportunities including paid employment, improving their every-day lives, and a larger place in the public sphere.⁷⁹ Teaching was considered by some to be "the foremost among the learned professions"⁸⁰ that could be opened to women due to the pre-existing female presence. Despite the variation in the specific qualifications that such a teacher would require, women still began to conceive of themselves as a self-conscious profession of, albeit a profession based less on shared training than on shared vocation and shared professional networks. Among such formal networks were the Manchester Board of Schoolmistresses and its sister organisations in London, Bristol, Leeds, and Newcastle.⁸¹

Indian Philanthropy

British women and men were not the only philanthropists in India. There were many Indians who were attempting their own social reforms and distributing their own donations to good causes. Some even used philanthropy as a means to alter the power dynamic between themselves and their colonisers. Lady Minto enjoyed telling the story of a nawab (Indian nobleman) who had donated to the Minto Nursing Association, and who, when she "reminded him that the Sisters only nurse Europeans and that Indians do not benefit under the scheme," replied that "Europeans constantly assisted Indian charities, and he did not see why Indians should not equally help a European

⁷⁸ Ibid., 50.

⁷⁹ Purvis, *A History of Women's Education in England*, 75.

⁸⁰ Frances Buss, quoted in de Bellaigue, *Educating Women*, 108.

⁸¹ De Bellaigue, *Educating Women*, 110-111.

organization.”⁸² Mary Procida quotes this story as an example of Indian awareness that donations to the pet causes of their rulers were often an effective form of indirect bribery, but the nawab’s response can also be read as a reminder to Lady Minto that they were both of the same class and could therefore both participate in this kind of overt generosity. While many of these efforts overlapped temporally with the work of the women this study covers, they are outside the purview of this paper since there is insufficient space to fully engage with Indian traditions of charitable giving and British influence on these traditions.

In any discussion of the British in India, the question of the local population is incontestably important. The British were not merely ruling in the abstract, they were ruling over a large number of people on whom they had an enormous, if variable, effect. The stories of the Indian women who were the main focus of all of this philanthropic attention are important, but cannot be dealt with in this paper as they require far better access to their documentation, particularly when so much of it remains untranslated. It is important to note that however difficult it is to know exactly how local peoples interacted with the philanthropists and no matter how positive some of their responses may have been,⁸³ this does not absolve the philanthropists from having had imperial designs or unconsciously reinforcing imperial privilege.

Lata Mani’s *Contentious Traditions* outlines a middle road for criticism of the methodology and intentions of imperialist behaviour, leaving room for acknowledgement that the local practices targeted by particular imperialist programmes are certainly not

⁸² Quoted in Mary A. Procida, *Married to the Empire: Gender, Politics and Imperialism in India, 1883-1947*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 173.

⁸³ Robert Eric Frykenberg, “Christian Missions and the Raj,” in *Missions and Empire*, ed. Norman Etherington, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 129.

immune to critique themselves.⁸⁴ Her particular focus is on the campaign to end sati (widow-burning), which she argues is criticisable through an indigenous feminist framework that has its own analysis of the patriarchal attitude towards women prevalent at the time and productive of a great deal of female suffering. We therefore do not need to waste time praising the Europeans for agreeing that sati was unpleasant and can directly proceed to critique of the means by which they attempted to ban sati and the ways that their justifications for doing so were a complicated mixture of cultural imperialism and ethical concern.

Conclusion:

In this thesis I specifically examine how missionaries and secular reformers involved themselves in two of the largest philanthropic enterprises of the day: education and medical care for women and children. These issues nicely complement each other, since women's educational work was widely accepted by this period, whereas their role in medical work was still the source of pitched battles. The rhetoric of education is therefore a rhetoric of acknowledged competence, whereas the debates over medical care demonstrate how, in the late nineteenth century, women still had to actively legitimise their work in the eyes of the world. The first chapter describes women's mission work in these two fields, focusing on the ways these women wrote about their work. The second chapter deals with secular reformers and analyses the rhetoric of the best-known reformers as well as the response made to the lesser lights of reform – the teachers and doctors hired by better-known philanthropists. The third chapter compares the approaches of these two groups, both their specific responses to one another and internecine conflict,

⁸⁴ Lata Mani, *Contentious Traditions: The Debate on Sati in Colonial India*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

and the similarities and differences in the way each group described their own efforts.

I am particularly concerned with the way these women portrayed themselves in the British periodical press. Missionaries and reformers published a variety of specialised publications as well as contributing to journals with a broader focus.⁸⁵ I draw particularly on the many personal accounts of experiences in India that were written for these magazines. These provide both surprising intimacy and odd anonymity. A woman such as Miss Fallon of the Bombay Zenana mission could become a prominent missionary, write quarterly reports for more than twenty years, and describe years of her life in a mission station in detail, and still be referred to in these periodicals only by her surname and honorific, a usage I have reproduced here.

Terminology:

The word ‘philanthropy’ itself has complicated antecedents. In the nineteenth century, it was most commonly used by evangelicals, whereas other types of societies were more likely to refer to their work as benevolence, charity or reform.⁸⁶ Nevertheless, I use ‘philanthropy’ with its modern connotations of any kind of charitable work or organisation. I also retain the original language of my sources when discussing problematic terms such as ‘civilisation’ or the “notion that the West is the future that non-Western societies will eventually encounter and that Western women are the prototypes into which all female Others will eventually evolve,” which had such an effect on the direction taken by philanthropic work in India and other colonies.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ See Terry Barringer, “What Mrs Jellyby Might Have Read Missionary Periodicals: A Neglected Source.” *Victorian Periodicals Review* 37, no. 4 (December 1, 2004): 46-74; Maria DiCenzo with Lucy Delap and Leila Ryan, *Feminist Media History: Suffrage, Periodicals and the Public Sphere*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); and Philippa Levine, “‘The Humanising Influences of Five O’Clock Tea’: Victorian Feminist Periodicals,” *Victorian Studies* 33, no. 2 (January 1, 1990): 293-306.

⁸⁶ F. David Roberts, *The Social Conscience of the Early Victorians* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 243.

⁸⁷ Burton, *Burdens of History*, 95.

For clarity's sake I have regularised the spelling of non-English words such as zenana, Hindu and sati throughout. I have left untouched the creative English spellings of those nineteenth-century Indian place names that are better known to the historiography under these names than their more recent appellations.

Chapter One: “A Call for Christian Sympathy from a Hundred Million Women”:⁸⁸ Missionaries in India

In 1876, one call for volunteers for the mission fields of India demanded of its readers:

upon whom does the duty of winning India for Christ so justly and so imperatively devolve as upon those members of the Church of Christ who dwell upon her soil? What branch of all the Church of Christ throughout the world is so manifestly intrusted with that duty as ours, to whose nation and sovereignty God has given India for a dependency?⁸⁹

The missionary women who arrived in India in the late eighteenth century were some of the first British women to come to India for charitable purposes. Their first priority was evangelism, but they were also heavily involved in philanthropic work with Indian women and children, particularly the provision of education and medical care, as women were not permitted to proselytise directly. As many other historians have discussed, mission work offered women opportunities for both spiritual service and temporal autonomy.⁹⁰ Although many would have agreed with the missionary who explicitly described her priorities as “1st, The Missionary Work, 2nd, The Professional Work,”⁹¹ the professional work was a secondary, but not non-existent concern. On the temporal side, the roles of educator and medical worker allowed missionary women to construct themselves as professional women with jobs rather than informal charitable helpers. In their reports to their respective committees, missionary women were able to demonstrate that they were performing in a professional manner and argue that their professional

⁸⁸ Richard Stothert, “Female Education in Bombay” IFE July 1872, 111.

⁸⁹ “Volunteers” IFE, Jan 1876, 8.

⁹⁰ See Ruth Compton Brouwer, *New Women for God: Canadian Presbyterian Women and Indian Missions, 1876-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990); Patricia R. Hill, *The World Their Household: The American Woman's Foreign Mission Movement and Cultural Transformation, 1870-1920* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1985); and Jane Hunter, *The Gospel of Gentility: American Women Missionaries in Turn-of-the-Century China*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984).

⁹¹ Quoted in Brouwer, *New Women for God*, 118.

performance entitled them to new responsibilities. They leveraged the more acceptably feminine aspects of their work to assuage concerns about their unwomanly vocation, while using the fact of their successful work to demonstrate that they could perform in extra-domestic contexts. In this chapter I examine the writings of female missionaries and analyse their complex use of professional and domestic coding in their discussions of mission work. I argue that three of the defining characteristics of a profession – specialised knowledge, formal qualifications, and a self-conscious professional identity⁹² – all appear to some degree in missionary texts, as do elements such as training and success rates that can be interpreted as intermediary steps toward these goals. Furthermore, I identify arguments for women’s missionary professionalism as one of the many purposes of missionary writing.

British missionaries had been at work in India since the late 1700s and the early days of the East India Company’s rule. They were never officially a part of either the East India Company or the Indian Colonial Service when India officially became a British possession, but, by virtue of their common origin, missionaries were generally assumed by the local populations to be involved with these imperial organisations.⁹³ The missionaries came to preach, teach and ‘civilise’ and were originally a largely male community. By the end of the eighteenth century, it was no longer uncommon for male missionaries to bring their wives and families with them, and by the 1860s, single female missionaries began to join their male counterparts in large numbers to take over zenana

⁹² Daniel Duman, “Pathway to Professionalism: The English Bar in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries”, *Journal of Social History* 13, no. 4 (July 1, 1980): 615. Anne Witz, *Professions and Patriarchy*, (New York: Routledge, 1992), 39.

⁹³ The commercial and governmental sides of the white community in India never considered the mission communities to be their equals and were often disparaging about them, but they were still willing to consider them allies in their efforts to maintain their prestige as a minute European ruling class.

visiting, and the educational and medical work done for Indian women.⁹⁴

Christian missions to India were not all British. Over the course of the nineteenth century, large numbers of American missionaries and smaller, but still significant numbers from Canada, Germany, Switzerland and other European countries all ventured to India. I intend to focus on British Christians, and specifically evangelical Anglican missions. There were more sects, both Catholic and Protestant, involved in Indian missionary work, but I have chosen to look at the officially non-denominational Protestant, but predominantly evangelical Anglican Zenana Bible and Medical Mission (ZBMM), and the Church of England Zenana Mission Society (CEZMS). The ZBMM was particularly large and prolific in its publications, and the CEZMS was its explicitly Anglican offshoot that maintained several of the same mission stations after breaking off to become its own independent organisation. These two societies also provide the best comparisons with the secular reformers of the next chapter who shared similar visions of Christianity.⁹⁵ Although mission societies did vary in their practises, there were still some

⁹⁴ Whether the idea of the single female missionary previously existed in the popular consciousness is a subject of some debate, much of it centred around Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847). One side argues that St. John Rivers' rejection of Jane's proposal to become a missionary and work with him as a sibling indicates that single female missionaries could not have existed; the other side points out that Jane seems to see this as a possibility so it can't have been entirely impossible. It is safe to say that such women were rare until mid-century and they continued to be opposed in some quarters until quite late. (Clare Midgley, *Feminism and Empire: Women Activists in Imperial Britain, 1790-1865*, (New York: Routledge, 2007), 92-3.) Elizabeth Prevost dates the rise in single missionary women to the 1860s (Elizabeth Prevost, "Married to the Mission Field: Gender, Christianity and Professionalization in Britain and Colonial Africa, 1865-1914," *Journal of British Studies* 47, no. 4 (October 2008): 800.)

⁹⁵ Generally, British missionaries in India were working in the full knowledge of their place in the flagship colony of the British empire and female missionaries were participating in dialogues about their place in the Empire as well as British society at home. There were doctrinal and practical differences between Anglican, congregationalist and Baptist missions, but it makes sense to examine them together because they emerged from similar elements in British society and there were many similarities in the way that they handled mission work. These societies were themselves very willing to bury sectarian differences in the name of Christian understanding and to accomplish their goals. Accordingly, their own documentation focuses less on these doctrinal details and more on the differences between Christianity and indigenous religious practice, and there were many multi-denominational mission societies. British Anglicans and Baptists were also quite willing to extend this religious co-operation to their international kindred and maintained close and friendly links with missionary societies based in other countries, but a full comparison of international missionary reports with due attention paid to their sectarian differences would be out of place here.

strong similarities between them, which make the ZBMM and the CEZMS representative although not comprehensive examples.

In addition to religious motivation, British missionaries often justified their work with reference to the Empire. P.J. Marshall argues that “the possession of the British Empire was seen by British Christians as a unique spur and challenge to missionary endeavour.”⁹⁶ Lord Kinnaid, one-time President of the ZBMM, described the Empire as having been “given to us to evangelize,”⁹⁷ and missionaries added Christian instruction to the widely believed-in moral duty to improve India politically and economically.⁹⁸ This issue was particularly strongly visible within the Church of England, which considered itself the official church of the Empire as well as the country and therefore with much the same responsibilities to the inhabitants.⁹⁹ Judith Rowbotham argues that “it was generally left unclear whether that empire [the one women were working for] was Christ’s, Victoria’s or both [and] [i]n many ways, they were popularly implied as being interchangeable.”¹⁰⁰ Missionaries did not only use the empire as justification for their

⁹⁶ Marshall, P.J. “Imperial Britain.” *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* vol. 23, no. 3, (September 1995), 381.

⁹⁷ Kinnaid, quoted in “Annual Meetings,” TZ, June 1898. 123.

⁹⁸ Other missionary groups also believed in the civilising mission, but English missionaries were often thought to be overdoing their equation of civilisation with English, custom. An unnamed missionary at the 1910 Edinburgh World Conference on Missions is reported to have said, “You English-speaking people act as if the Lord had said, “Go ye into all the world and teach *English* to every creature.”(Quoted in Judith Rowbotham, *This is No Romantic Story’: Reporting the Work of British Female Missionaries, c.1850-1910*, Position Paper 4 in the North Atlantic Missiology Project Seminar (Cambridge: University of Cambridge, 1996), 18.) There was criticism from within the English mission community as well, as one instructional pamphlet reminded missionaries:

Do not Anglicise your converts. Remember the people are foreigners. Let them continue as such. Let their foreign individuality be maintained. Build upon it, so far as it is sound and good; and Christianise, but do not needlessly change it. Do not seek to make the people Englishmen. Seek to develop and mould a pure, refined and Christian character, *native to the soil*. (Quoted in Andrew Porter, ‘*Cultural Imperialism’ and Missionary Enterprise*, Position Paper 7 in the North Atlantic Missiology Project Seminar (Cambridge: University of Cambridge, 1996) 12. Emphasis added.)

Still, this kind of advice implies that such anglicising tendencies were widespread, if they required this kind of correction.

⁹⁹ Rowbotham, *This is No Romantic Story’*, 18.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 27n.

work, but also found it difficult not to conflate Anglicisation and Christianisation. In the aftermath of the Indian Uprising, the government withdrew its support from missions, citing them as one of the English influences the mutineers had been opposing, but early missions had been strongly supported by the government and that sense of involvement in the imperial project never left many of them.

Although there has been debate about the complicity of missions in the grander scheme of empire, many mission historians now agree that:

missions are necessarily imperialistic, not necessarily in a crude political sense, but rather in that they are in principle about the attempted persuasion of some group of non-believers of the correctness of opinions held by believers, usually from a foreign country-and historically generally from a more powerful one.¹⁰¹

Missionaries were obliged to adapt their messages in order to make them appealing to their listeners: they were not simply able to establish wholesale cultural dominance over their congregations.¹⁰² Nevertheless, it is generally agreed that missionaries were attempting to use the gospel to civilise and that their ideals were, inevitably, developed using the “post-Enlightenment, industrialised West, and... Victorian society as perceived by the religious middle classes” as a model.¹⁰³ As this thesis is primarily concerned with the self-perception of missionary women, it is therefore more fruitful to concern ourselves with this part of the debate. The impact of missionaries on their listeners is a fascinating subject in its own right, but there is simply not space here to integrate it into the main argument with the nuance needed to do the subject justice.

The literature on women in mission work has been characterised by the discussion

¹⁰¹ Robert Ross, review of *Blood Ground: Colonialism, Missions and the Contest for Christianity in the Cape Colony and Britain, 1799-1853* by Elizabeth Elbourne, *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses*, vol. 32 no. 3 (September 2003): 373.

¹⁰² Porter, “‘Cultural Imperialism’ and Missionary Enterprise”, 12.

¹⁰³ Brian Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag: Protestant Missions and British Imperialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Leicester: APOLLOS, 1990), 171.

of women's motivations for undertaking this enterprise.¹⁰⁴ Jane Hunter's *Gospel of Gentility* discusses the spirituality of mission women as well as their desire for adventure, novelty or useful work. Ruth Brouwer concurs, and adds that some missionary women were drawn to mission work by not only the opportunity to do useful work, but the desire to do so semi-autonomously.¹⁰⁵ Of the work done on British women's missions to India, the focus has tended to be more on the specifics of evangelical society within Britain or the gender roles that individual missionary societies explicitly propounded. Women's activities were judged by their ability to be categorised as domestic, which meant an emphasis on work with women and children, education and textiles, both for the mission women and for their congregants.¹⁰⁶ Women's missionary work was strongly influenced by these ideas about women's domesticity, but I contend that these female missionaries were also drawing on the changing picture of women's work in British society and not restricting themselves to the domestic work offered by their particular brands of Christianity. As Jane Hunter argues, "mission service offered women many of the gratifications of purpose, status, and permanence associated with the developing professions, without requiring the bold assault on female conventions demanded of the

¹⁰⁴ A small sampling of this field includes Adele Perry's "Metropolitan Knowledge, Colonial Practice, and Indigenous Womanhood," in *Contact Zones: Aboriginal and Settler Women in Canada's Colonial Past*, ed. Katie Pickles and Myra Rutherdale, 109-130, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005); Mary Taylor Huber and Nancy Lutkehaus' *Gendered Missions: Women and Men in Missionary Discourse and Practice*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999); Fiona Bowie, Deborah Kirkwood, and Shirley Ardener's *Women and Missions: Past and Present*, (Providence: Berg Publishers, 1993); Ruth Compton Brouwer; Jane Hunter; and much of the work of Jane Haggis and Susan Thorne; and many others. I draw on this literature for its broader picture of mission work as an international movement of mutual influence and it does reflect the gendered and imperial impulses that were common to mission societies in general, although it does not necessarily touch on the specifically Indian context. For work on India, see: Eliza F. Kent's *Converting Women: Gender and Protestant Christianity in Colonial South India*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Rhonda Anne Semple's *Missionary Women*, (Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2003); Catherine Cowan's "Western Women Doctors in an Eastern Land: The Work of Female Medical Missionaries in India, 1870-1947" (Master's thesis, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1998) and Maina Chawla Singh, "Gender, Thrift and Indigenous Adaptations: Money and Missionary Medicine in Colonial India," *Women's History Review* 15, no. 5 (November 2006): 701-717.

¹⁰⁵ Brouwer, *New Women for God*, 160.

¹⁰⁶ Perry, "Metropolitan Knowledge, Colonial Practice, and Indigenous Womanhood," 122-3.

new “professional” women.”¹⁰⁷ This observation sheds new light on the ways that these women who did not see themselves as radicals were gently expanding their professional sphere and incorporating these changes into their self-image without personal dissonance. Whatever their motivations may have been, my argument is that the women discussed here were all using certain kinds of professional coding in their writing.

The first female mission workers to arrive in India were the wives of male missionaries in the late eighteenth century. They were not generally recognised as missionaries by the bureaucracy of their mission societies, but expected to participate in missionary work. It was unofficial and unpaid work, but assumed to follow naturally from their married state and therefore required no further acknowledgement. At first, mission wives were primarily expected to set an example of appropriate middle-class feminine behaviour for the local women and to undertake the kind of parish work that ministers’ wives did in England.¹⁰⁸ Between 1850 and 1860, these wives began to be drafted into the zenana mission when male missionaries realised that men had no access to elite Indian women.¹⁰⁹ As mission women’s work outside of the home became more central in the mid-nineteenth century, the societies decided that more women would be useful, particularly single women who would not have to spend as much time on domestic responsibilities as mission wives did. It was also increasingly recognised that specifically trained women would be more useful than missionary wives simply doing the best they could.¹¹⁰ Missions began to hire women in their own right for their own

¹⁰⁷ Hunter, *The Gospel of Gentility*, 36.

¹⁰⁸ Jeffrey Cox, *Imperial Fault Lines: Christianity and Imperial Power in India, 1818-1940*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 72.

¹⁰⁹ “Our Work and the Workers” IFE, January 1872, 35-6.

¹¹⁰ Margret Elmslie, “Correspondance” *Medical Missions*, April 01, 1879, pg. 60

salaries, rather than acquire them as adjuncts to male workers.¹¹¹

Between 1870 and 1890, the number of recorded female missionaries in the Punjab rose 421% and women jumped from just over half the foreign agents (28 women to 56 men) to over one and a half times as many as the men (146 to 91).¹¹² The Punjab had particularly large numbers of missionaries, but these proportions were fairly consistent across India, and may even be underestimations as women tended to be poorly reported in official mission statistics since the wives and female kin of male missionaries were considered to be adequately represented by the inclusion of their male relatives. There was also a substantial growth in the women's side of mission work with the opening of new zenana missions or schools, a task that "few mission men... found sufficiently heroic,"¹¹³ and therefore left to women with little complaint.

This does not mean that female missionaries were accepted without question even in the late nineteenth century. As Jeffrey Cox argues,

although the progression from "women's work" to "women's professional work" appears in hindsight to be seamless and in some way natural, it is important to keep in mind that women missionaries were fighting on several rhetorical fronts. They were required to defend not only education for women, but also education for Indian women, which mixed together gender and racial/imperial anxieties about the transgression of recognized boundaries.¹¹⁴

There was a conservative element within missionary society that supported purdah and other conservative aspects of Indian society because they believed these practices to be consonant with Christian modesty and gender roles, and opposed female missionaries'

¹¹¹ Semple, *Missionary Women*, 99.

¹¹² Cox, *Imperial Fault Lines*, 50.

¹¹³ Patricia Grimshaw, "Faith, Missionary Life and the Family," in *Gender and Empire*, ed. Phillipa Levine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 266.

¹¹⁴ Cox, *Imperial Fault Lines*, 157.

attempts to ‘free’ Indian women from their ‘prison,’¹¹⁵ but not all missionary societies considered this work transgressive and female missionaries often rejected outright any accusations of transgression. Emma Pitman, a popular mission writer, argued that “it is not unwomanly to do such work” as “no one who engages in [zenana visiting and teaching] steps out of her proper sphere in the slightest degree.”¹¹⁶ In particular, mission women defended their vocations by reference to the sacred call of mission work; “in recasting women’s social and moral responsibility as a consecrated vocation, [missionary women] collapsed the binary between masculine rationality and action and feminine emotionalism and passivity.”¹¹⁷

Female missionaries were also frequently accused of feminine frailty that would unfit them for the task at hand. Mission work was believed to require a certain amount of mental and physical fitness to compensate for the heavy work, the mental strain of having to deal with ‘heathens’ and the assumed rigours of a tropical climate. Women, as Monier Williams helpfully pointed out, possessed “four ounces less brain than... a man [which] must not be strained beyond its proper feminine compass and calibre.”¹¹⁸ Additionally, women were supposedly “more emotional and less controlled, more anxious minded, more easily worried,”¹¹⁹ less physically capable, and more lacking in the force of will that enabled their male counterparts to go alone into hostile territory and forcibly convert the unbelieving.

Women, therefore, had to legitimise their very involvement before they could

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 157.

¹¹⁶ Emma Raymond Pitman, *Heroines of the Mission Field* (London: Cassell, Petter, Galpin & Co., 1880), 4-5.

¹¹⁷ Prevost, “Married to the Mission Field,” 804.

¹¹⁸ Monier Williams. “Co-Ordinate Education in its Bearing on the Present Condition of Women in India.” Jan 1, 1880, 5-6. Williams was a scholar of Sanskrit and Indian culture.

¹¹⁹ World Missionary Conference 1910, quoted in Prevost, “Married to the Mission Field,” 825.

discuss their professional goals. Mary Weitbrecht, a frequent contributor to mission magazines, used her series “Female Missionaries in India” in the *Female Evangelist* in the 1870s to lay out her defense against the criticisms levelled at female missionaries.

She noted in her opening that:

the fact of many [single female missionaries having worked in India] during the past twenty-five or thirty years with success and blessing, has modified the views of Christians at home and missionaries abroad very considerably.¹²⁰

Weitbrecht implied that the debate should perhaps be considered put to bed by now, but did go on to counter the typical claims that women supposedly lacked emotional and physical strength,¹²¹ self-motivation,¹²² and were “very much under the influence of feeling, particularly liable to be led astray by it, and thus to form wrong conclusions, guided by impulse rather than principle,”¹²³ all of which made them unsuitable for missionary life. Weitbrecht emphasised the existence of women of “no common character”¹²⁴ who did not possess these traits and would therefore make good missionaries. She stressed the fact that women were already working in missions, and that “in this blessed work of missions female piety has in several instances [already] recover[ed] and display[ed] anew the glory which it won [in scriptural examples].”¹²⁵

While the first two portions of her three-part series were devoted to the attributes of the ideal female missionary, the last is on the necessary training. Weitbrecht was clearly attempting to remain conciliatory with those who have low opinions of women: she rarely actively contradicted the critics who argued that the ‘female character’ is unsuited to mission work. She therefore began by noting that, with a solid educational background

¹²⁰ M. Weitbrecht, “Female Missionaries in India: Part I” *IFE*, April 01, 1873; pg. 259.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 262.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 260.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 259.

¹²⁴ Weitbrecht, “Female Missionaries in India: Part II” Tuesday, July 01, 1873; pg. 298.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 306.

and reasonable personal health and vigour, only the “smallest preparation” would be necessary before embarking on mission work: the acolyte needed a course in scriptural reading and theology as well as training in the local language of the area in which she will work.¹²⁶ The amount of work required for what Weitbrecht saw as the “smallest preparation” is indicative of her high opinion of women’s capacities, given that she described this as the level anyone can rise to, if they try.

These details dealt with, Weitbrecht returned to the subject of the exceptional woman, which it is clear she regarded as the true state of the female missionary, and whom she described as a worker with specialised training, if not a full-blown professional. Weitbrecht claimed that exceptional women could handle a great deal more training and would in fact benefit from it considerably. These women should, according to Weitbrecht, take a year or two in a course of appropriate reading and then another couple of years to study educational methods to improve both their teaching in schools and their zenana instruction.¹²⁷ She also advocated having further training homes established in England that would not only provide a place for these women to receive instruction, but would push them harder than self-study and provide teachers to judge the results so as to determine whether they would truly be good missionaries.¹²⁸ The conjunction of these two factors is critical for the development of professional identity. It is not just about training or thinking oneself good enough; it is about training in order to come up to a specific standard. Weitbrecht was not going so far here as to demand

¹²⁶ M. Weitbrecht, “Female Missionaries in India: Part III” *IFE*, April 01, 1874, 50. An ‘educational background’ means elementary education, although precisely what this included beyond reading, writing and arithmetic could vary wildly as standardised education would not arrive for decades. That Weitbrecht regards this preparation as small is in contrast to the extended programme she devises for exceptional women, and in terms of general expectations for missionary training, which always involved some years of study.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 50.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 51.

credentialing bodies, nor is there any indication that she would be interested in doing so, but her advocacy of systematised training and some degree of standardisation in the preparation of missionaries can be interpreted as stages in that process.

Missionary education was intended to improve missionaries' ability to impart the religious teachings they were supposed to be disseminating. It is clear that quite a lot of training was put in place to achieve this goal. The periodicals are full of hints and tips for engaging congregations and explaining Christianity to the 'heathen'; the schools set up for the explicit purpose of training missionaries and the organisations' high valuation of such education when they were deciding who to send abroad all attest to the importance of education and training to the missionary societies.¹²⁹ Unlike secular reforming societies, however, missionary women used a model of discourse that emphasised the hand of God in all that they did. This has the effect of downplaying their other methodologies. 'A Local Secretary' in a periodical aimed at women involved with missionary societies wrote a list of ways to encourage local interest in mission work and means of effective fundraising. It begins with instructions for sending out publications and interesting people in lectures or informational meetings, but ends with "the greatest help of all," which it defines as prayer.¹³⁰ It does not sound like an affirmation of professional skill to assert that the most important workplace methodology is faith in deities. Nevertheless, I argue that in this context, the secretary was attempting to demonstrate her competence at her job. Missionaries throughout the nineteenth century were not claiming that they constituted a profession, except perhaps in the sense of a

¹²⁹ Missionary education for women consisted largely of courses of reading of the kind that Weitbrecht recommended, undertaken either privately or in multi-denominational Protestant training institutions, ideally accompanied by teaching experience in Sunday schools or similar volunteer positions (Morawiecki 173-5.)

¹³⁰ "How to Work an Association", TZ, April 1894, 93.

profession of faith. They might have thought of themselves as preachers or doctors, which were considered careers, but their mission work was a vocation or a spiritual calling, which transcended the boundaries of any particular type of job and compelled them to involve themselves with missions in any way possible.

In the late nineteenth century, many missionaries, particularly women, attempted to distinguish themselves from the earlier missionaries who had the same reliance on the spiritual side, but were not as shored up on the temporal side with external training. The accounts of missionary wives tend to describe their mission work as occurring whenever they had a moment, while the female missionaries emphasise their organisation and scheduling; the wives tend the sick with the skills they learned in their own homes, while the female medical missionaries point to their up-to-date medical kits and their formal medical training. Missionaries were sincere in their appreciation for what they saw as divine blessings, but certainly believed in supplementing them with work. E.C. Pollen called on her readers to “bless and praise the Giver” for Miss Luce at the Sultanpur orphanage who possessed the “wisdom, strength and love required to meet the constant and varied calls upon the Superintendent of such a Home,” but this encomium also served as praise for Miss Luce and her “simple economical plan” by which she runs the institution, which is a practical endeavour, even if her capabilities are divinely inspired.¹³¹ I argue here that this form of presentation is consistent in the following accounts of missionary labours. The richly complex and widely varying motivations that drew them to India in the first place aside, when it came to the execution of their work missionary women tended to consistently present it in terms that could be seen as professional, although this was not the only intention of their texts.

¹³¹ E.C. Pollen, “A Visit to Sultanpur”, TZ, July 1900, 137.

Female missionaries also emphasized the desperate need for their talents and skills in the “dark pictures”¹³² they drew of Indian women’s home life. Descriptions of life in Indian homes were enormously popular, providing vicarious thrills, but also heart-string tugging arguments for the need for (female) missionaries to enter Indian homes and relieve the darkness within. Given this portrayal of need, it therefore becomes doubly significant that missionaries such as Weitbrecht were so strongly in favour of training. If the need was so desperate, surely any help would do? Yet female missionaries often answered no, and argued that the desperate need meant that the proffered help would have to be particularly skilled in order to effectively handle the problems in question. As we will see, this was an argument that medical missionaries were obliged to revive.

Female missionaries made extensive use of periodicals as forums in which to argue their case or demonstrate their fitness for the work. Missionaries were all expected to write reports home to their societies, both factual for the benefit of the administration and entertaining for the purpose of publication or informal distribution in order to raise funds or interest in the mission. In addition to these goals, missionaries tended to describe their work in ways that could be interpreted as professional or at least interested in some aspects of professionalism. The work described in mission periodicals is of several kinds: there was zenana work, school-teaching, informal teaching outside of the zenana, and medical work. Although different kinds of work, as well as the necessary differences in the routines established by stationary and itinerant missionaries, mean that mission reports varied a great deal, there were also common features that united them. One of these was the emphasis on organisation, routine and training. Training was obviously a

¹³² Weitbrecht, “Condition of Women as It Actually Exists in Bengal and North-West India”, IFE, Jan 1, 1875, 199.

part of nascent professionalism, but I would argue that organisation and routine can also be read as demonstrations of specialised knowledge – in this case, the knowledge of how to be an effective missionary.

Mission reports, particularly the portions that made it to publication, were meant to be entertaining as well as edifying. Individual success stories and depictions of day-to-day routines at particular missions were the most common type of article, but were often supplemented with travelogue-style geographical and cultural details. Missionaries seem less professional by the standards of modern humanitarian workers when they suddenly drop into the role of cultural tourist commenting on the ‘bizarre’ habits of the locals they are dealing with, but that was one of the conventions of the genre and would not have been understood to indicate lessened commitment to extensive training and organisation, particularly given the careful inclusion of statistical data on student numbers, or zenanas visited. The main ways in which the missionaries demonstrated their professional commitment were references to their previous or current training, discussion of their organisational and teaching methods, and careful depiction of their success rate as an ongoing process that was incrementally improving the locals.

Although I concentrate on the descriptions of mission work that female missionaries wrote, these magazines were supposed to be more than an exercise in self-expression for their contributors, they were also intended to entertain, educate and inform. As Judith Rowbotham has argued, the kind of entertainment that missionary periodicals were explicitly invested in providing was a serious, truthful kind of entertainment.¹³³ A more sensationalist missionary literature existed and was a massively popular genre in Victorian England, but actual missionaries were very rarely involved in

¹³³ Rowbotham, *This is No Romantic Story*, 4.

its production.¹³⁴ Missionary-written literature did, however, respond to this competition by attempting to appeal to the public on more than strictly moral and improving grounds. Patricia Hill argues that, furthermore, the writing of missionary materials was an explicit act of professional separation. Although missionaries were encouraged to include personal details in their work, there was an acknowledgement in mission circles that the private woman and the public missionary did not have to be the same person. Missionary writings were intended to represent the public missionary who was sincere in the personal feelings she shared, but was not required to share everything with her readership.¹³⁵

The four periodicals that form the basis of this discussion of missionary self-image are *The Indian Female Evangelist* (hereafter *Female Evangelist*); *The Zenana: or Women's Work in India* (hereafter *The Zenana*); *India's Women*; and *Medical Missions at Home and Abroad* (hereafter *Medical Missions*). These were all fairly major periodicals with a wide and often multi-denominational audience and were the main forums for some of the debates discussed here. The *Female Evangelist* was a non-denominational magazine. It began publication in 1872 originally under the auspices of the Indian Female Normal School and Instruction Society, an interdenominational society mostly comprised of Baptists and Anglicans. When this society split in 1880 into the Zenana Bible and Medical Mission (ZBMM), which remained non-denominational, and the Anglican Church of England Zenana Missionary Society (CEZMS), the *Female Evangelist* remained with the ZBMM. Publication continued until 1893 when it was cancelled in favour of *The Zenana*, a “brighter and more lively” account of the work, that it was hoped

¹³⁴ Ibid., 3.

¹³⁵ Hill, *The World Their Household*, 107.

would reach more readers than the more staid *Female Evangelist*.¹³⁶ The *Female Evangelist* was more concerned with certain details than *The Zenana*. Its reporting on the home committee was more thorough and gave more explicit budget details; it published the minutes of the meetings rather than just a general overview of what happened. The *Zenana*, by contrast, was intended to be a more entertaining paper to appeal to a more casual audience. Still, this does not necessarily make the *Zenana* less professional. The accounts of individual missionaries in the *Female Evangelist* were always intended to entertain as well as inform. The CEZMS began to publish its own journal, *India's Women*, in 1880 after its split with the ZBMM. *India's Women* published accounts of missionary work in a more formal style akin to that of the *Female Evangelist*.

Medical Missions is an outlier here. Published by the Medical Missionary Association (MMA), it was non-denominational, open to medical missionaries from a wide range of mission societies, and intended for a chiefly male audience. *Medical Missions* was also concerned with medical missions all over the world, not just in India, unlike the other magazines here, which had a narrower geographical focus. It did publish a few female writers, however, and participated in the debates over allowing female medical missionaries to practice.

Reports of mission work from the *Female Evangelist* were heavily structured. These are the reports from "Our Work and the Workers," a column that appeared in every issue; more exceptional reports were printed as their own article. In each issue this column contained updates from the stations associated with the non-denominational

¹³⁶ C.D., "A Farewell," *IFE*, October 01, 1893, pg. 162. *The Zenana* is often written about as if it was merely the *Female Evangelist* with its name changed, but I would argue that C.D. here, and by extension the editorial staff they speak for, describe it as a "little sister" and intend it to be a new sort of magazine to cover the same issues, rather than only a rebranding of the old one.

ZBMM, as well as carefully tabulated statistics about the work each station was engaged in. These statistics included the number of workers, houses visited, schools run, and so on for each individual station. The reports also printed lists of workers and each worker's individual responsibilities. These numbers were followed up by several reports from the missionary stations, each written by the missionaries stationed there, or by excerpts from said reports surrounded by editorial commentary giving context or further details. Each issue would feature different stations with one set turning in its yearly reports in January, another in April and so on.

A typical example was the January column of 1883. It began with the report from the Lahore Christian Girls' School by A.R. Keay. She had nothing "very stirring or sensational to relate," but emphasised the "steady progress" of the past year.¹³⁷ She also discussed organisational plans for teaching girls: division into different classes, the introduction of pupil teachers,¹³⁸ and plans for dormitories. These details not only emphasised the women's organisational skills, but also indicated their success rate; the new dormitory space is necessary because the women have acquired more pupils, while their pupils' ability to help others stems from the women's own teaching prowess.¹³⁹

Next in the same column was the report from the Benares mission, which again emphasised steady, regular progression. The account described the 141 pupils who are "taught regularly twice a week" except for those whose "teachers have so many houses that it is not possible to go to them more than once a week."¹⁴⁰ This confession managed to be both a boast about organisation and about success rates in one; the missionaries

¹³⁷ A.R. Keay, "Our Work and the Workers", *IFE*, January 1883, 25.

¹³⁸ Pupil teachers were older students who were given the responsibility of helping to teach younger students. They were a common feature of small British schools that had only one or two teachers in charge of a wide range of ages.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 26-7.

¹⁴⁰ Miss Patteson, in "Our Work and the Workers", *IFE*, Jan 1883, 28.

depicted themselves as being able to teach regularly despite the press of demands on their time. Miss Patteson wrote more generally about the mission and her dispensary, and Miss Gaunt, Miss Harrison, Miss Mackenzie, Miss Dickson, and Miss McIntosh about their own specific work. Miss Gaunt was a new arrival to the Benares mission so her paper was most concerned with passing her language exams so that she might be qualified to teach in the Hindi zenanas and praising the work her colleagues were doing. Miss Harrison talked about her nineteen zenanas; how she was able to visit some twice a week and some only once; and how she structured the visits around the pace of each student. Miss Mackenzie did the same, but with twenty-five zenanas. Miss Dickson wrote about her Bengali school, which had six classes and was progressing well with the larger proportion of students attending regularly; and Miss McIntosh described her schools and zenanas, which she taught in rotation.

As well as these organisational details, the bulk of these reports was made up of the most interesting stories from each woman's work. These followed similar formats: children who were learning the Bible stories told to them, and women who were being "improved" by the Bible including one student "who seems to have got brighter since she has learnt a few verses of the Bible, as she has begun asking questions, which she used not to do before."¹⁴¹ These stories demonstrated achieved and potential successes. They also indicate some of the difficulties of mission work, since they cover the sad stories of cases where "the master of the house objected to the women receiving religious instruction"¹⁴² or similar 'tragedies.' M. Brennan of the Sagra Church Missionary Female Normal School in Benares spoke of her teaching work in terms of numbers of students

¹⁴¹ Miss Dickson, "Benares" in "Our Work and the Workers", *IFE*, Jan 1883, 35.

¹⁴² Miss Gault in "Our Work and the Workers", *IFE*, Jan 1883, 31.

and scholarly progress, though she also mentioned the “motherly care” given by Mrs. Treusch, the wife of the male head of the school, a description that is both complimentary and yet dismissive of her as a missionary worker, presenting her exclusively as a domestic figure, in contrast with Brennan’s more professional work.¹⁴³

The “Our Work and the Workers” column from October 1881 contained reports from Nasik, Bombay, Madras, Ahmednagar, and the associations at home, but with more editorialising and excerpting. Miss H. Schwartz in Nasik reported on the modest beginnings of her new station. She had one house she visited regularly and was making efforts to meet more Indian women who would, she hoped, permit her to teach in their homes.¹⁴⁴ She organised a Sunday school in the villages and made further weekly visits in which she detected slow progress: although the locals still regarded the missionaries as “*seducers*, and want to know whom we are going to take away next,” overall “the reception we get, and the attention, are much better, on the whole.”¹⁴⁵ This was followed by some editorial comments on the progress of the Bombay mission, mixed with quotations from the reports of the missionaries stationed there, which are brief, but contain commentary on both the “remarkably well qualified” new missionary, Miss Fallon, who “had gained the entire confidence of the women,”¹⁴⁶ and the important and “necessary experience”¹⁴⁷ possessed by the old hands, Mr. and Mrs. Daimler. Mrs. Theophilus reported from Madras, where she ran schools and organised zenana visits. She expounded on the desirability of regularity and organisation in these endeavours, as well as the need to balance structure with their original mission to spread the Word in any

¹⁴³ Miss Brennan, “Benares Church Missionary Female Normal School” *IFE*, Jan 1883, 36.

¹⁴⁴ Miss H. Schwartz, “Nasik” in “Our Work and the Workers,” October 01, 1881; pg. 170.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 171. Italics in the original.

¹⁴⁶ Mrs. Daimler, quoted in “Our Work and the Workers,” October 01, 1881; pg. 173.

¹⁴⁷ Unattributed quotation in “Our Work and the Workers,” October 01, 1881; pg. 173.

way possible. The fees for her teaching were “paid very irregularly” but “I have not pressed the matter as our object has been more to get them to learn... than to make a profit.”¹⁴⁸ She referred to organisation and regularity as her ideal, but was willing to compromise in order to achieve the other goals of the mission.

Another characteristic example of the missionary report is Miss Fallon of the ZBMM’s annual report from Allahabad in May 1898, published in the “Jottings from the Mission Field” column that appeared in most editions of *The Zenana*. She began by stating that she would like to tell “all that the Lord has done for us in this Mission during the past year” and spent a few paragraphs attributing their successes to Him, but then moved into details of the organisation of the work in four parts: “(1) Converts’ Home; (2) Zenana Visiting; (3) Schools; (4) Village Work.”¹⁴⁹ She gave details of these activities primarily in the form of stories of the most interesting of the local participants: Mrs. Roy and Amda Bibi, widows escaped from their confinement at home to join the converts’ home and become Bible women; Akbaie, a Muslim woman who had not yet converted to Christianity, but who was reading the Bible despite criticism from her friends and who was hoped to be on her way to accepting the tenets of Christianity;¹⁵⁰ and other similar individuals. These accounts were intermixed with notes on the numbers of women in their homes and schools (sixteen new converts, and marriage or work found for fourteen others; and at least three schools with several children in each);¹⁵¹ how many villages were being visited regularly (eighteen);¹⁵² and how the missionaries at that station were

¹⁴⁸ Mrs. Theophilus, quoted in “Our Work and the Workers,” October 01, 1881; pg. 175.

¹⁴⁹ Miss Fallon, “Allahabad” *TZ*, May 1898, 99.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 101. Bible women and men were native converts employed as a sort of under-missionary. They had less status in the mission and generally worked under the supervision of European missionaries, but were valued for their willingness to accept lower wages and their facility with the local languages.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 100-102.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 102.

organising their time to fit in all of this visiting, school-teaching, home-teaching, orphanage running and famine relief. One missionary, Miss Tulloch, is described as working three days a week in zenanas, two days in village visiting, and supplementing this with assistance in the mission's famine relief projects. Her colleagues had similar schedules with varying proportions of the different types of work.¹⁵³

The accounts of the individual women being helped in Miss Fallon's station also underline the organisational skills of these missionaries. Several are reported to have received this kind of visit regularly for years, and their 'progress' towards Christianity is described as a matter of regular steps that consistent teaching would ensure culminates in conversion. We see this again in Miss Wauton's plea for the people of Batála who needed "something better" than the "stray visits" that occurred when missionaries from other stations could be spared from their regular work. If only the work were carried out "vigorously [and] continuously," it would effectively reach the "10,000 souls" who were not receiving enough regular personal attention to make a difference.¹⁵⁴

Miss Clay's report for the CEZMS' publication, *India's Women*, describes a different kind of missionary encounter. In 1881, Miss Clay spent a fortnight in Fattigarh in the Punjab traveling through the surrounding villages. Her account does not contain the same kind of emphasis on routine or continuities with previous work because these were villages that had not been previously visited, but the way that missionaries structured these kinds of visits, which they undertook regularly, is visible. Each day Miss Clay made a trip to one or more of the nearby villages where she visited as many zenanas as would admit her, and held an open-air meeting for whoever else would like to hear her

¹⁵³ Ibid., 102.

¹⁵⁴ Miss Wauton, "Our Work and the Workers", *IFE*, January 1876, 21.

speak. In two weeks she visited nineteen villages, including Fattigarh, entered several zenanas, was turned away from a few more and spoke to more people than she could count. The organisation put into these visits is clearly visible, all the more so when one recalls that travel between the villages was accomplished by doolie and bearer and so required organising a large entourage in advance.¹⁵⁵ There were also clearly pre-existing plans for how to structure these kinds of visits: Miss Clay mentioned the pictures she used to entertain the people (and perhaps make up for her weak Punjabi), and described how she divided the work between herself and her (female, British) assistant in order to separate the men and women at the outdoor meetings and give her a chance to teach the women alone.¹⁵⁶

The tone of these reports is often flowery and indicative of these women's religious orientation, but even if they, like Miss Fallon, spoke of each new pupil as "a fresh cause for thanksgiving, that the Lord in His mercy has brought them out of darkness into His glorious light," they were still careful to record that there were sixteen of these fresh causes.¹⁵⁷ The religiosity was heartfelt; these women were generally in India because of their strong convictions, but, within that overall religious motivation, they were concerned with other things, such as the professional quality of their work.

Religious and professional vocations could be easily intertwined.

Each of these reports exhibits an interest in organisation, training and success.

¹⁵⁵ A doolie is litter, carried by bearers. The term palanquin is better known, but would have implied a more comfortable and expensive version to Miss Clay and her peers. There was no real system of roads in many places in India at the time so wheeled conveyances were often unable to reach remote areas and human labour to carry persons and baggage was much cheaper than horses.

¹⁵⁶ Miss Clay, "Amongst the Villages of the Punjab", *IW*, May-June 1881, 137-142. Miss Clay's attitude to Indian men varies: sometimes they are clearly the force keeping her out of the zenana, which she obviously regards as evidence of heathen ways, but she is willing to compliment "a grand-looking old Sikh," who, moreover, permits his wife and family to sit and listen to her talk, and to praise the boys from the mission school who recognise her pictures as bible stories.

¹⁵⁷ Miss Fallon, "Allahabad," *TZ*, May 1898, 99.

These women tell stories of individual encounters with Indians, but there are many more mentions of the numbers of women or children taught and the regularity with which these women were able to visit students. Success is also sometimes counted numerically, not necessarily in successful conversions, but with other measurements such as Miss Clay's enumeration of the number of zenanas she had successfully entered. Success and organisation are less direct evidence of professionalism, and can be interpreted as interest in the functionality of missions alone, but the emphasis on methodology does resemble professional knowledge, and certainly none of it is out of line with the other indicators of professionalism.

The fact that these women were all trained to do their job is less overt, but there are indicators of concern about language skills and missionaries praise one another for being qualified: Miss Fallon's superiors commented that she is "remarkably well qualified",¹⁵⁸ and newcomer Miss Gaunt was strongly complimentary about the achievements of the senior missionaries at her station. Missionary educators did not refer to their own training in educational and Christian work in depth, which they might have thought would have demonstrated insufficient humility, but they did refer to the need to train in the local languages and to give advice to other missionaries (who were also potential readers of these magazines), which is a kind of training in itself. Training was especially important to single female missionaries. The status of unofficial adjunct, which was the lot of mission wives, might not have been ideal, but it was at least thoroughly legitimised within existing mission structures and required no explanation. Single female missionaries, by contrast, found it necessary to demonstrate their qualifications explicitly. A course of specialised training was a solidly acceptable credential that demonstrated not

¹⁵⁸ Mrs. Daimler, quoted in "Our Work and the Workers," October 01, 1881; pg. 173.

only willingness to work, but proven ability, and was a factor that was easily quantifiable by examining boards.¹⁵⁹ Missions required applicants to possess a sense of personal duty as well, but agreed that such a sense was difficult to examine for and were willing to “let the candidate humbly and honestly face the matter alone with God” and then take her word for it.¹⁶⁰ It is also likely that such courses created bonds between missionaries, particularly those who attended training academies together. Unfortunately there are very few remaining records or accounts from those academies, even in mission archives.¹⁶¹

All of these missionary women can be clearly seen to represent themselves as working women. While the nature of their employment as missionaries prevented them from complaining about their jobs, which they were supposed to consider vocational, they emphasised the quantity of the work and its difficulty. This move was partially related to the alternate purpose of these accounts – to play on the sympathies of their audience and thereby raise money for the missions – however, descriptions of the volume and challenges of the work also reinforce the women’s competence and skill when they are able to relate successes that have occurred in spite of many barriers. They also emphasised their learned skills with their discussions of their own training. A number of missionary women discussed their efforts to pass language exams,¹⁶² and the absolute

¹⁵⁹ Jennifer Morawiecki, “‘The Peculiar Missions of Christian Womanhood’: The Selection and Preparation of Women Missionaries of the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society, 1880-1920,” (DPhil dissertation, University of Sussex, 1998), 151-2.

¹⁶⁰ Quoted in *Ibid.*, 151.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹⁶² The Misses Tod in Ellore, and Miss Coleman in Trichur (*IW*, Sept-Oct 1881, 243-4 and 256); Miss Clay in Jhandiala (*IW*, July-Aug 1881, 189); some unnamed missionaries on their first voyage out in 1873 (*IFE*, April 1873, 279), four unnamed women working in the Punjab in 1873 (*IFE*, July 1873, 326); Miss Tucker (the famous A.L.O.E: A Lady of Empire, her pseudonym) in Amritsar (*IFE*, July 1876, 131); Miss Featherstone in Barrackpore (*IFE*, Oct 1877, 366); and many others.

necessity of such study, whose “importance... it is impossible to over-estimate.”¹⁶³ These women often subtly defined themselves as something more than female adjuncts to male missionary work by emphasising that certain stations run exclusively by women were doing very well. In such cases, the mission reports above all listed the entirely female workforce of each station and then go on to talk about successes; the conjunction could not have gone unnoticed.

The missionaries’ success stories defined success as a matter of gradual improvements. Missionary women were very aware of their inability to proselytise directly and therefore generally considered their mission work as a slow process, ideally leading to minor improvements in the lives of Indian women. With the option of direct conversion through preaching closed to them, a failure to convert quickly on this basis was not the same kind of disappointment for women missionaries as for their clerical colleagues. Female missionaries expected from the start a prolonged and uphill effort.¹⁶⁴ The hope was always that their Christianity would show in everything they did and would provide a useful example to the locals: one hopeful wrote of female doctors that they “could not even feel a pulse without doing it like a Christian” and would, by thus associating the good work of her medical care with her religious convictions, convert the ‘heathen’ without needing to say a word about religion.¹⁶⁵ This kind of gradual process could be planned for in a way that on-the-spot conversion could not. Missionaries therefore used these descriptions of taking systematic steps toward conversion to

¹⁶³ “On the Study of Living Languages,” *IFE*, Jan 1876, 3. “Our Work and the Workers,” *IFE*, Jan 1873, 226, praises language learners, as does a later article about the importance of studying Indian languages and offering advice on how to do so (“On the Study of Living Languages,” *IFE*, Jan 1876, 3-8.)

¹⁶⁴ Geraldine Forbes, “In Search of the “Pure Heathen”: Missionary Women in Nineteenth Century India.” *Economic and Political Weekly* 21, no. 17 (April 26, 1986): 6.

¹⁶⁵ “On Female Medical Missions for India” *IFE*, January 01, 1873; pg. 193. If the situation permitted it, of course, missionaries were by no means reluctant to say a great many words about religion, but many Indian women were not interested in direct proselytization.

demonstrate that they were professionals with achievements to demonstrate, even when they lacked converts to enumerate precisely. They counted those who “believe in their hearts, though they cannot confess with their mouths,”¹⁶⁶ and related cases such as the woman in Lucknow who told a missionary that “I do believe in these words [the Bible],” and the girl in Punrooty who “could hardly tear herself away [from Miss Reade’s Gospel stories] and we believe that in her heart she truly believes in Jesus,”¹⁶⁷ although neither of these women were baptised or publically confirmed their faith. Missionaries also called attention to “the difficulties that an Indian woman has to encounter before she can avow herself a Christian”¹⁶⁸ and considered the “thousands of women and girls... taught to read the gospel” to be “quite as much as we could reasonably expect.”¹⁶⁹ Overall, they were positive about the efficacy of slow progress. As one report said of a particular missionary: “she was no meteor blaze that came upon one suddenly, tried to put everything right and disappeared almost as soon as it appeared... [rather, she] was the steady starlight and moonlight that influenced the darkness and the night.”¹⁷⁰

Gradual religious instruction was, then, a better kind of success than was considered to be achieved by the unofficial labours of missionary kindred. In Mirat, a new missionary enterprise was hoped to achieve “*good* results [by] the labours of our missionaries among the unreached women,” in contrast to the work “more or less...done” by the wife and daughters of the local male missionary.¹⁷¹ The tone of these articles was not always this antagonistic towards unofficial mission women and many were accorded

¹⁶⁶ Miss Marshall, “In the Zenanas” TZ, March 1899, 67.

¹⁶⁷ “Punrooty Mission” IFE, April 1877, 253.

¹⁶⁸ “Is It Faith?” IFE, April 1874, 61. Including “a young convert... who had been made to stand in *boiling oil* by his own father, until the skin had been burnt off the poor lad’s feet in order to disable him from going forth to join the Christians” (A.L.O.E. “Our Work and the Workers” IFE, April, 1876, 85.)

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 60.

¹⁷⁰ “Our Annual Meeting” TZ, June 1903, 118.

¹⁷¹ “Mirat,” *IW*, May-June 1881, 127.

a place in the magazines to write about their own experiences and opinions of mission work, but neither was this kind of condescension unusual.

Missionary women's success stories also indicate the utility of their methods, which they had to defend against the more direct preaching that male missionaries were empowered to do. Depictions of Indian women learning slowly of Christianity in the zenana implicitly reminded everyone that, without female missionaries to enter women's spaces, these women could not be reached at all. These stories also demonstrate that conversion, or at least religious instruction, could happen slowly and subtly without a female proselytiser overstepping gendered boundaries about preaching. The former point is underlined by the constant discussion of which zenanas a given missionary was allowed in in any given week and how this varied depending on the mood of the pupils' male kin. A typical example is Miss Wilson in Girgaum's note that "the Mohammedan girl who was in the boarding school has been taken away to the Punjab by an uncle who feared she would become a Christian," although Wilson was comforted by the knowledge that another missionary is still "allowed to visit her there."¹⁷² Female missionaries emphasised their ability to provide continuity, despite setbacks, and their particular privileges: the unnamed girl Wilson was talking about may have been taken out of formal schooling, but could still be reached in private by women. This is, to be sure, less a professional argument than one attempting to legitimise the presence of female missionaries, but legitimising their involvement was necessary before stronger professional arguments could be made, and does not remove professional interest as a potential reading of missionary reports.

It must also be recalled that the attempts many of these women were making to

¹⁷² Miss Wilson, "Girgaum Girls' Highschool," TZ, Aug 1904, 148.

structure their work were made extremely difficult by the nature of the work, particularly in the case of home teaching. The missionaries would generally have liked to visit their zenana pupils on a regular schedule, but, as one missionary complained, “it is quite impossible to tabulate Zenana work.”¹⁷³ Missionaries’ access to Indian homes was contingent on the approval of their pupil’s male relatives, who often objected to attempts at conversion. Access could be easily interrupted by relocation, either of the family or when a pupil married. Even when missionaries were granted entrance, a visit to any given home could mean having to teach a different group of women than on the last visit, since Indian women gathered in one another’s houses to be taught as a group, and women joined and left the group at will. The missionaries attempted to find regulars whose progress they could track; they do seem to have succeeded in many cases from the number of stories in the magazines that are prefixed with “our old friend” or references to pupils’ appearance in earlier issues of the magazine.¹⁷⁴ Miss Clay also complained that “a district visitor in England would think she had a large district if it contained half as many houses as an itinerating missionary has towns or villages to visit.”¹⁷⁵ This kind of geographic spread made the work so much harder because each village received so few visits a year. A follow-up visit could find the missionaries’ previous audience gone and require them to begin again with new listeners. Even with women who could be visited at moderately regular intervals, Indian women were not on the same schedule as the missionaries – who considered their pupils’ “numerous holy days, the visits to relatives,

¹⁷³ “Our Work and the Workers”, *IFE*, October 1893, 164.

¹⁷⁴ In one brief report on “Our Work and the Workers” from the *IFE* (October 1893, 162), we see “our old friends Alpunna and Sodapunna,” “Yasoda, the Sikh woman for whom prayer has often been asked,” “Mizran, for whom prayer was asked in December” and several other women and children whose individual progress is specifically remarked on. Miss Lorbeer writes in the *Zenana* that “the first house I visited this morning I have often mentioned before” (*TZ*, Sept 1904, 170).

¹⁷⁵ Miss Clay, “Amongst the Villages of the Punjab”, *IW*, May-June 1881, 141.

the cooking, the marriages, the deaths, and the births” to be “hindrances to steady learning.”¹⁷⁶

Missionaries also emphasised the ideals they were upholding with their work. A particularly prominent example is the importance they ascribed to neatness. Missionary women attempted to maintain neatness in their own homes and places of work, and ‘neat’ was one of their favourite terms of praise for their pupils or patients.¹⁷⁷ They kept their hospitals as clean as hospitals at home,¹⁷⁸ as well as keeping their houses as neat as any English housekeeper would keep hers.¹⁷⁹ As Reina Lewis argues in her analysis of the critique of orientalist art in Brontë’s *Villette*, the “white and Western” femininity of this period is strongly correlated with a domestic space which is to be tidy and organised. Lucy Snowe, the protagonist of *Villette*, views the paintings of Cleopatra and the seraglio with the eye of a housewife, deriding for its poor housekeeping the standard orientalist boudoir with its stereotypical abundance of things tossed every which way.¹⁸⁰ Although missionaries were not housewives – as, indeed, neither was Lucy Snowe – they still made use of in those constructions of femininity, in the same way that, as discussed above, female philanthropists drew on women’s ‘traditional’ domestic and nurturing work as justification and staging for their charitable efforts. Tidiness was a key part of female domestic coding, but could also be put to professional ends.

As Mary Poovey argues in her *History of the Modern Fact*, neatness and organisation were also a feature of Victorian business practise and considered to be

¹⁷⁶ “Our Work and the Workers,” *IFE*, Jan 1883, 29.

¹⁷⁷ One pupil is described as wearing “clean clothes, just like a Christian.” *IFE*, Jan 1881, 26.

¹⁷⁸ Elizabeth Beilby, “Medical Mission,” *IFE*, April 1881, 86.

¹⁷⁹ *IFE*, June 1882, 293.

¹⁸⁰ Reina Lewis, *Gendering Orientalism*, (New York: Routledge, 1996), 36-7.

exceptionally praiseworthy.¹⁸¹ Men were expected to conduct their bookkeeping in an orderly fashion, just as women were supposed to keep clear household accounts. Many of these mission reports, particularly those in the *Female Evangelist*, include the financial details of their missions and praise competent bookkeeping. One report from the *IFE* in July of 1874 prints the monthly disbursements and credits of the quarter and praises individual missionaries for raising funds to keep the books suitably balanced.¹⁸² Maina Chawla Singh argues that women missionaries particularly used their financial competence as evidence of their professionalism. Missionary projects were framed in terms of ‘feminine’ fundraising – e.g. the results of door-to-door campaigns and flea markets – but serious financial management was needed to ensure day-to-day functioning and plan for the long-term continuation of mission institutions. Under the cover of their respectably feminine mission work, female missionaries were therefore able to enter the more serious “‘male’ domains of finance and administration.”¹⁸³ Context is important: missionary women were carefully balanced at a point that would allow them to construct their neatness as both an affirmation of gender roles that assuaged concerns about their unwomanly vocation and as an assertion of their ability to perform in the context of extra-domestic work.

The same kinds of emphases are also visible in the medical missionary literature and the magazines discussed above included many columns on mission hospitals and dispensaries with attendant statistics, and stories of successful operations performed by

¹⁸¹ Mary Poovey, *A History of the Modern Fact: Problems of Knowledge in the Sciences of Wealth and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), xvii. Admittedly she is talking mainly about the introduction of double entry bookkeeping and the subsequent rise in standards of organisation, but the point that organisation came to indicate so many positive things to the Victorians remains.

¹⁸² “Our Work and the Workers,” *IFE*, July 1874, 127-9. This is not the only example, though it is a particularly well-laid out one.

¹⁸³ Maina Chawla Singh, “Gender, Thrift and Indigenous Adaptations: Money and Missionary Medicine in Colonial India,” *Women’s History Review* 15, no. 5 (November 2006): 705.

skilled medical workers. Female medical missionaries were still sufficiently controversial in the period, however, that the periodicals not only included implicit depictions of their value, but explicit explanations of how they helped in ways no other group could. Female medical missionaries argued that they needed the formal medical training offered to male doctors, and presented themselves as a self-conscious group of experts.

Official female medical missions seem to have emerged in the late 1860s. The earliest ones were along the lines of the 1867 medical mission in Lucknow, which comprised a male medical missionary, a trained nurse who may or may not have been a missionary, and several native assistants, rather than a full female medical staff.¹⁸⁴

Over the course of the next few years the idea of female medical work in the zenana was drawn to the attention of the public more vigorously by such luminaries as W.J. Elmslie, who was a prominent medical missionary himself. He wrote a paper for the *Indian Female Evangelist* in 1873, which argued that education was not sufficiently appealing to Indians to grant missionary teachers an entrance into all zenanas.¹⁸⁵ Medical women would be considered by the Indian population to be less likely than teachers to attempt evangelisation, as well as useful in light of the limited nature of the pre-existing medical system.¹⁸⁶ From Elmslie's point of view female medical missionaries would be ideal because they would "unobtrusively, but nevertheless effectively, deposit the all-pervading leaven of the gospel in numberless hearts and homes."¹⁸⁷ Accordingly, for Elmslie, the most important qualification of the female medical missionary was a strong sense of personal religion. Still, he followed this up with the assertion that a course of

¹⁸⁴ "The Delhi Female Medical Mission," *MMaHaA*, January 1879, 47-8.

¹⁸⁵ W.J. Elmslie, "On Female Medical Missions for India." *IFE*, January 1973, 192-3.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 193-4.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 200.

medical training was entirely necessary, if made somewhat more difficult by the perceived impossibility of mixed-sex medical education. He instead proposed specialised schools to teach female medical missionaries, or at least courses of private study until such schools were available.¹⁸⁸ His projected courses of study were no mere first-aid training. While he did not see the need for an official diploma, Elmslie required specialised knowledge in obstetrics, “diseases peculiar to women and children,”¹⁸⁹ diseases of the skin and eye (as the women would have no surgical knowledge and would therefore be obliged to confine themselves to external treatments), and some others. With such training, female missionaries would be able to most effectively evangelise by treating patients in the most receptive mood – for “pain and sickness are the best softeners of the human heart.”¹⁹⁰

Female medical missionaries became more common as the 1870s progressed, but they were by no means straightforwardly accepted. By that point unmarried female missionaries had been normalised and there was little resistance to the idea of a woman with previous medical training becoming a missionary; the question was whether all the female medical missionaries truly required serious medical training, rather than first-aid training, and if it should be implemented along with other training that female missionaries received before they were permitted to go abroad. What is most obvious in the debate is that the split was largely along gendered lines. Men tended to argue that

¹⁸⁸ The Zenana Medical Mission Hospital and Training School in London which was to train women as zenana medical missionaries would only be founded c.1880.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 202. What these diseases are supposed to be exactly is unclear. They probably included specifically gynaecological problems, but also medical issues that would not necessarily be differentiated in the same way today.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 204. The training Elmslie described was as opposed to men’s medical schools, which offered four year courses of lectures on all medical subjects, and examinations at the end under separate licensing boards that would license the students to practise medicine. Students taught under Elmslie’s plan would be receiving fewer lectures on a smaller number of subjects and were not subject to examinations and credentialing requirements. Neither group was expected to receive extensive clinical training.

training was all very well, but it wasn't really *necessary*. They emphasised "the importance of setting to practise in a limited way" students who had only taken instruction in physiology and general hygiene "although their knowledge was small."¹⁹¹ Indians were, according to these doctors, still trying to "cure affectations of the eyes by plastering the organ with mud or something worse," so even the "little knowledge" of British women with limited training was "a most beneficial agency," even if it was not as good as the more complete knowledge of a fully trained doctor, because they supposedly knew more than Indian doctors.¹⁹²

Women, particularly women with some experience trying to do medical work with limited training, tended to argue that women needed to be trained in order to do the work properly. In 1881, Elizabeth Beilby resigned from the Zenana Mission in order to return to medical school and get a formal four-year degree. She had previously trained as a medical missionary in the kind of private course that Dr. Elmslie recommended, and sailed for Lucknow in 1876. She spent the next six years working in its hospital and zenanas. With this experience, Beilby began to write extensive critiques of the typical training of medical missionaries and re-invigorated the continuing debate. Her original paper, "Zenana Medical Missionaries," was published in the *Female Evangelist* and summarized in *Medical Missions* and many other places. It asserted, on behalf of herself and "all others who have been engaged in Zenana Missions," that "it is wrong for any woman to call herself a Medical Missionary unless she has a full and thorough knowledge of her profession and has proved she has such a knowledge by passing the

¹⁹¹ "The Decennial Conference on Missions in India" MMAHaA, April 1883, 313.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 313.

requisite examination.”¹⁹³ She maintained that the female medical missionary should not be thought of as an unexpected bonus: “it is not ‘something’ or ‘some relief,’ the Zenana lady or her friends want when the Medical Missionary is sent for; but it is *everything*.”¹⁹⁴ Female medical missionaries were given a doctor’s job to do, and it was “cruel and wicked” to tell her that her training was enough and put in her in that position if she was not actually qualified to render whatever care might be required.¹⁹⁵

Many agreed with Beilby. The Scottish branch of the ZBMM passed a resolution in 1883 agreeing that:

to be really successful, ladies devoting themselves to this work must be educated up to the standard required for a degree, or license to practise medicine and surgery, and that they ought to possess such legal qualifications [and] partially trained ladies should refuse the designation “Medical Missionaries.”¹⁹⁶

Others were less appreciative. In 1885, *Medical Missions* gave its official opinion to be that “it is altogether out of place to claim the full medical curriculum from the great majority of those who desire to engage in this department of mission work.” Their reasoning was that many women “have no desire at all for a professional degree” and they “refuse to believe” that two years’ training would not render most women competent to deal with the majority of medical scenarios that would arise.¹⁹⁷ The editors were not entirely hostile to the idea of qualified women. In the June, 1887 issue, they printed instructions for obtaining medical certification specifically aimed at women, and an article refuting the idea that four years of medical training would somehow sap women’s

¹⁹³ E. Beilby, “Zenana Medical Missionaries,” *IFE*, July 1882, 297.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 297. Italics in the original.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 298.

¹⁹⁶ “Dr. Lowe’s Address,” *IFE*, April, 1883, 63.

¹⁹⁷ “The Month” *MMaHaA*, December 01, 1885; pg. 28.

religious fervour more than a man's.¹⁹⁸ Nevertheless, they followed up these instructions with an assertion of the utility of un-credentialed workers, provided that they possessed a small amount of training and maintained that women need not go further. The authors admitted, however, that, pursuant to current trends, the majority of female medical missionaries would in a few decades possess medical degrees.¹⁹⁹

The standards Beilby wished to work at – “a full and thorough knowledge of her profession” and proof of such knowledge provided by “passing the requisite examination”²⁰⁰ – indicate precisely the kind of professional ideals that philanthropists began to develop in their work during this period. A profession is differentiated from a job by its specialised training and formal qualifications, particularly if its qualifications are determined by external bodies that create standards for all members. Medical missionaries were given the job of doctor to do and then developed these standards for themselves. They were not, obviously, uninfluenced by their awareness of the secular medical profession and its standards and competencies in treating patients, but still applied these to themselves even when they were told by many voices that the medical care they were already offering was sufficient to the need. They also considered these standards in terms of learnable skill sets and credentialing. It was not sufficient for medical missionaries to pick up the job as they went; Beilby and others argued that this type of study was simply never going to produce the same standard of worker as formalised schooling. They needed formal learning, to have it attested to by an external body, and then they could be trusted to apply their training in a manner that would

¹⁹⁸ “Women’s Medical Missions” *MHaA*, June 1887, 259-260. The idea that training might sap women’s religious fervour never gained universal traction, but it does appear occasionally in anti-female missionary discourse.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 261.

²⁰⁰ E. Beilby, “Zenana Medical Missionaries,” *IFE*, July 1882, 297.

achieve expectations.

The conditions of empire permitted this kind of rise in standards as well. While there were female doctors engaging in training back home in Britain and fighting for their right and ability to learn a full medical curriculum and achieve the highest standard of competence, they were always vulnerable to the charge that their work was unnecessary since they could be replaced by male doctors. Prevailing belief in the impenetrable zenana – that is: impenetrable by men – and the practical limitations on the density of medical workers in India – a large country with a massive local population being ministered to by a scant few European medical workers – it was easier for female medical missionaries to demonstrate their value. Female medical missionaries were often the only European medical workers in a given area, which shielded them from the possibility of replacement by an expert male doctor. Such an expert male would have simply not been present in many areas and, even if he had been in the neighbourhood, would not have been allowed to see female patients.

There was a fascinating claim in the female medical missionary debate that training women to be fully qualified doctors was a waste because they would only take that training and abandon the missionary project to get a real job in England. G. de Gorrequer Griffith, who was involved with the Zenana Medical School, wrote in to *Medical Missions* to argue for the utility of the limited training the Zenana Medical School provided on several grounds: that limited training was more efficient, any help was good help, and that religious fervour was more important than secular skill.²⁰¹ These were not new claims. His contention that more female doctors will prefer to settle down in private practise at home is peculiar because it was generally accepted in other circles

²⁰¹ G. de Gorrequer Griffith, “Correspondance” (October 01, 1880), 157.

that women doctors were far better able to make their way in India because they were still considered so unconventional at home.²⁰² Slightly over one in four of the women trained in England did end up or intended to end up in India²⁰³ and several completed their studies in India because they were eligible to take the exams there long before they were permitted to do so in England.²⁰⁴ These kinds of concerns also arose in the debates over secular medical women for India, who did have to think in terms of an income as they were not supported by mission societies.²⁰⁵

Medical missionaries wrote the kinds of descriptions of their work that missionary educators did. Elizabeth Beilby, prior to her separation from missions on the grounds that they were persuading women to forgo training that she believed necessary, wrote an account of her typical day: “I have “my moonshi [local language teacher] from six a.m. to eight; see out-patients from eight till ten; see in-patients from eleven till one” after which she spent the rest of the day in letter writing and studying medicine.²⁰⁶ In another article on the medical mission in Lucknow she wrote that “[her] hospital is kept just like an English one – patients nursed with the same care and kept as clean. I would not have a

²⁰² This is not the same as the ongoing debate about how philanthropic medical women are to support themselves financially, which will be dealt with later as it was more relevant to the secular doctors who lacked the support of a missionary institution, which also argues against supporting oneself in private practice being the easier option.

²⁰³ *The Englishwoman's Review* published a “List of Registered Medical Women” yearly after 1880, which listed all the women who were licensed to practice in England and their places of work, organised by the year in which they had obtained their licenses. By 1889, of the 72 women licensed to practise, 19 of them were located in India (and several more were living in other colonies).

²⁰⁴ The first female doctors in England had all studied in Ireland, which did allow women to take the exams, although there were still major roadblocks in the way of women trying to obtain medical education which are not strictly relevant here. For more information see Catriona Blake's *Charge of the Parasols* or Sophia Jex-Blake's writings.

²⁰⁵ For further details, see Chapter 2.

²⁰⁶ E. Beilby, “Medical Mission Work in Lucknow,” *MMaHaA*, April 1879, 58. This is a fuller day's schedule than it looks, the British in India generally agreed that it was impossible to leave the house in the afternoon heat and it was typical to have the scheduled part of one's day before one, or in the evening, if one was part of the social circle in British India, which most missionaries were not.

hospital if I could not do this.”²⁰⁷ Beilby’s comparison to an English hospital is also significant because it emphasises her participation in male professionalism. Although women were present as nurses in English hospitals, the administrators and doctors she is emulating were qualified men. Not every medical missionary was in a position to keep to Beilby’s standards and many were obliged to make house calls and deal with whatever conditions they found there, but increasing numbers of mission-trained medical women were trying to keep up English standards and present themselves as qualified medical workers whose professionalism would be acceptable anywhere, not just in India.

When female medical missionaries had reached a point where they were regularly able to obtain the degrees they desired, this becomes a point of pride in mission literature. Francesca French’s account of Edith Brown’s hospital in Ludhiana dates from the 1950s, but reads more as a mission-style hagiography of Brown, and spends two full pages at the start outlining her qualifications for her position at the hospital.²⁰⁸ The building of the hospital itself during the 1890s is also presented as Dr. Brown’s own search for a way to pass on these values. The original dispensary and medical mission to which she was sent was too small and understaffed to undertake the type of medical work she had in mind. Brown therefore proposed a larger edifice with full surgical facilities, and an attached school to train the staff she needed to engage in multiple types of work at once.²⁰⁹ This conception of herself as a professional who was qualified to set and maintain these standards and the assumption that equally trained professionals were required in order to undertake and continue such work continued throughout medical mission society. Dr.

²⁰⁷ Beilby, “Medical Mission,” *IFE*, April 1881, 86.

²⁰⁸ Francesca French, *Miss Brown’s Hospital: The Story of the Ludhiana Medical College and Dame Edith Brown, D.B.E., its Founder* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1954), 5-7.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 28-29.

Brown's hospital is a particularly good example because she was able to push forward her plans so effectively, acquired a larger hospital and founded a medical school. The other, smaller, dispensaries and surgeries whose doctors and nurses wrote to the *Zenana* or *India's Women* echoed this desire for appropriate spaces and practises and justified it with reference to their training. It was their training, they argued, that qualified them to determine if their facilities and assistants were up to snuff and what best practices should be going forward.

These professional ideas also appear in other places in the missionary periodicals, which, it must be remembered, contained a variety of kinds of articles. Another type of organisational mission work is represented in the column "How to Work an Association" which appeared in *The Zenana* and gave advice on running a branch office for the Zenana Bible and Medical Mission. This kind of work on the home front was an important part of many missions and, while not precisely the same as the more hands-on kind of work that forms the bulk of this paper, was still considered important to the organisation at the time. It is therefore interesting to observe their continued desire to present themselves to their readers as an organised and professional model for others to follow. This column covered topics such as how to raise money and did so in very practical terms, describing how to network and find like-minded individuals who might also be interested in the cause or giving tips such as issuing more invitations to an event than one expected guests.²¹⁰ *The Indian Female Evangelist* also included the "Association Proceedings" in their "Our Work and the Workers" column to much the same effect, implying that professional standards were upheld throughout the various mission organisations.

Women missionaries considered themselves to possess a vocation and to be

²¹⁰ "How to Work an Association", TZ, April 1894, 92

volunteers rather than employed in the sense of paid employment; nevertheless they developed an understanding of their vocation that was based around learned skills and external standards rather than only religious fervour. Different kinds of missionaries employed different explicit justifications for their presence in India, but they all emphasised their skilled, organised, and useful labour as implicit reminders that they were workers. The religiosity of mission workers and the structure of the mission lifestyle – living expenses paid by the mission, but unimpeachable volunteer credentials – also helped to reassure critics that female missionaries were not pushing the boundaries of gender roles too far: both religious fervour and being supported by others were quite acceptable female behaviour. Secular reformers, as will emerge in the next chapter, used some of the same memes about professional behaviour, but were required to engage more thoroughly in the debates over the relationship of paid labour to charitable work and whether female independence was mitigated by the appropriately gendered nature of philanthropic engagement.

Chapter Two: “Improving their Condition by Acts of Kindness and Skill”:²¹¹ Secular Women Reformers

In addition to missionaries, a small number of philanthropists came out to India to do similar work under a secular banner, and without the protection of a missionary organisation. Although less overtly religiously motivated, these women shared certain ideas with missionaries including the perceived need to uplift the Indians and the beneficent power of the British Empire. They were less unified in their efforts, but, despite their lack of a cohesive structure, secular reformers upheld similar ideas about the value of a professional approach to reform and philanthropy. This can be seen in the way these women carried out their education and medical work and the manner in which they argued for its value.

Secular reformers do not predate the very earliest missionaries, but there were a number of efforts made in the direction of secular reform in the first half of the nineteenth century. The heyday of the secular reformers, however, was after the Indian Uprising, when the British government began to support secular philanthropists in preference to missionaries. Queen Victoria’s Proclamation of November 1858, which was intended to establish the new status quo for post-Uprising India, declared, among other things, that:

Firmly relying ourselves on the truth of Christianity, and acknowledging with gratitude the solace of religion, we disclaim alike the right and desire to impose our convictions on any of our subjects. We declare it to be our royal will and pleasure that none be in anywise favoured, none molested or disquieted, by reason of their religious faith or observances, but that all alike shall enjoy the equal and impartial protection of the law; and we do strictly charge and enjoin all those who may be in authority under us that they abstain from all interference with the religious belief or worship of any of our subjects on pain of our highest displeasure.²¹²

²¹¹ Dr. C.R. Francis, “How to Preserve Health in India, with Reference to Medical Women” IM, June 1886, 313.

²¹² House of Commons, Great Britain. Parliament. *Accounts and papers of the House of Commons*. Volume XVIII. Ordered to be printed, 1859. 13-4.

This directive was followed up by a withdrawal of official support from missionary societies in India and a renewed interest in secular reform groups, which were less vulnerable to accusations of proselytization. The secular reformers also became more prominent after Mary Carpenter's well-publicised 1866 visit to India and subsequent founding of the National Indian Association (NIA), which united a variety of reformers.

Victoria's formulation of the Christian influence on reform in India is important because it established a template that other secular reformers would use. For the most part, British reformers were Christians themselves and it is important to remember that, however much they promoted secularism in their reforms, they did not drop their reliance on the superiority of Christianity and Christianised European culture. However, most of the reformers discussed here agreed that excessive proselytization was one of the causes of the Indian Uprising and were therefore wary of overtly promoting Christianity in case it again provoked retaliation. They were also, particularly if they were involved with the NIA, often in contact with Indian elites and the reforming element in Indian society. These Indian elites were very aware that they were being judged by European standards. They responded by arguing that indigenous religion and custom, such as Brahmoism with its "pure Theism and lofty morality,"²¹³ could support the same kind of social progress as Christianity. British reformers were willing to admit that Indian texts "testify... to the existence of a somewhat high standard of feeling in regard to many questions of right or wrong" even if the British were unnerved that these moral principles seemed to "have no

²¹³ A.S. "England and India. Lectures by S. Sathianadhan M.A., LLB. (Cantab)." IM December 1886, 633. Brahmoism was a particular sect of Hinduism that emerged in the nineteenth century that was more Deist than Theist. Brahma organisations were heavily involved in social reform and nationalist movements.

connexion with religion” for the Hindus.²¹⁴ Reformers were also aware that, to a resistant audience, secular reform would be a great deal more appealing than proselytism.

Nevertheless, their adherence to Christianity and their tendency to assume that its values were superior and that it would be essential to the creation of the kind of society they were aiming for does colour the work the reformers did. Like Victoria, they promised not to let it matter too much, but they still felt compelled to continue to talk about the subject. Most importantly, British secular reformers supported reforms that sought to push Indian society closer to a Victorian Christian ideal.

The goals of secular reformers were varied. Here, I focus on two particularly prominent campaigns: for girls’ education and for women’s medical care. The British assumed the desirability of an English-style education, although what precisely constituted an English education was debatable, and there was disagreement about how ‘English’ an education would be appropriate for Indian children. Similarly, the advantages of Western medicine were assumed to be substantial; the debate was over the means of dispensing it and whether this could be done without disruption to British control. In this chapter, I discuss the educational campaign in terms of the professionalism of its participants and their co-workers and employees, and the debate over women doctors that formed the basis of the medical campaign.

The distinctions between education and medical campaigns and the others embarked on by reformers should not be thought of as too sharply defined. Female education, for instance, was considered to be tied up in the same project of ‘uplift’ as raising the age of consent and banning sati. I choose to focus on education and medicine, however, because those provide the best fields for comparison. Medicine and education

²¹⁴ G.U. Pope, “Ethics of Modern Hinduism,” IM, February 1895, 92.

were also areas in which British women were able to work separately from their male philanthropic counterparts, which makes separate analysis of women's work possible.

Secular reformers were less unified than mission workers, who tended to be working for specific societies. What reforming societies did exist tended to be like the NIA, whose primary aim was to promote mutual understanding between England and India, and supported direct intervention such as schools and hospitals as a secondary charge. Secular reformers are also more difficult to refer to collectively than missionaries. I have chosen to use the terms 'secular reformer' or 'secular philanthropists'²¹⁵ because the primary distinction between these reformers and the missionaries was that the reformers attempted to maintain religious neutrality. The term 'secular' is problematic for its implications that these reformers were not religiously influenced and that missionaries were not reformers and philanthropists, neither of which are true. With these caveats in mind however, I will continue to use these terms as they provide the clearest differentiation between missionaries and non-mission-based reformers.

Available writings on and by secular reformers are more varied than the publications of the ZBMM and the CEZMS. The *Journal of the National Indian Association*²¹⁶ was the organ of the National Association in Aid of Social Progress and Education in India (more commonly referred to as the National Indian Association, hereafter NIA). The NIA was the largest philanthropic society specifically devoted to Anglo-Indian relations. It undertook to promote reforms in Indian society and educate the peoples of India and England for better mutual understanding. The JNIA printed pieces

²¹⁵ I am here following the lead of Kumari Jayawardena who also uses these terms to refer collectively to this category of European women in India, a usage which is not standardised, but which Jayawardena's influential *White Woman's Other Burden* (New York: Routledge, 1995) has made increasingly visible in the scholarship.

²¹⁶ Hereafter JNIA or *Indian Magazine* (IM). The JNIA began publication in 1871 and was renamed the *Indian Magazine* (IM) in 1886.

on the NIA's own efforts, but also served as an aggregator for articles and notices on relevant topics from other periodicals as well. This need for aggregation indicates the fragmented nature of secular reform movements. While the missionary papers discussed in the previous chapter were also fond of reprints, they were mainly reprinting from other mission periodicals, whereas the *Indian Magazine* collected pieces printed in more general interest periodicals. The *Englishwoman's Review* also performed this useful function, although Indian women were only one of its many feminist concerns. The number of articles available to be aggregated in this manner does demonstrate that the subject of philanthropic work in India had a great deal of popular appeal in Britain, but it makes very difficult the effort to be thorough in analysis of the relevant writings.

The question of female education in India involved two groups of British women. The first group were the self-acknowledged experts in the field. These women ran schools, and drew up plans for education systems. Specifically, this next section examines the careers of Mary Carpenter, Annette Ackroyd Beveridge and Sister Nivedita. These three women were all well-known philanthropists who each left behind substantial bodies of writing that make this analysis of their work more straightforward. These women's overt depiction of their own expertise enabled them to claim professional respect, as well as creating a model that allowed for the professionalism of less expert, but still trained and qualified teachers. I then turn to the professionalism embodied in the work of the schoolmistresses who were employed by girls' schools to engage in this philanthropic work. These women have left fewer records of their own experiences, but I intend to examine the way that their professionalism and necessary qualifications appeared in the broader debates on the topic, in the work of the 'expert' philanthropists,

and in the JNIA.

Mary Carpenter is the best known of the English reformers in India. Her work in England establishing ‘ragged schools’²¹⁷ and championing reform of prison conditions had made her an acknowledged expert on social reform. After several Indian reformers visited England, Carpenter decided to visit India herself in 1866 to examine Indian social institutions (prisons, schools, and so forth) and see if she could apply her English expertise to their betterment.²¹⁸ She spent the six months between September 1866 and March 1867 traveling all over India, visiting schools, prisons and hospitals, and giving lectures. This visit provided material for her book, *Six Months in India*, which was a travelogue and the earliest expression of her reforming ideas in regards to India. This book kindled a great deal of popular interest in Britain in the secular reforms that were being introduced. After her return to England, Carpenter founded the National Indian Association in 1870 with Keshub Chunder Sen, a prominent Indian social reformer. The NIA aimed to encourage female education in India and promote mutual understanding between the British and the Indian elite. This organisation published the *JNIA* and held lectures and meetings in England to assist visiting Indians and acquaint Britain with Indian culture and the progress of Indian movements for social reform. Carpenter’s ideas about the running of social institutions were used as a template for many years, even after her death. These ideas were not entirely unique to Carpenter. She developed them out of

²¹⁷ Ragged schools were schools for impoverished children who could not afford fees and were not covered by denominational schooling. These were established by various philanthropic organisations and were not necessarily connected except in as much as they were collectively referred to as ragged schools. They constituted a precursor to state education as they effectively demonstrated that there was a demand for education among the poor and were often incorporated into the state system when it began. Carpenter’s interest in ragged schools partially stemmed from her Unitarian background. The Unitarians emphasised rationalism in religion and society and believed that education was a means toward this end. They also encouraged a strong sense of public duty. (Ruth Watts, *Gender, Power and the Unitarians in England 1760-1860*. (London: Longman, 1998), 42-3.)

²¹⁸ Jayawardena, *White Woman’s Other Burden*, 70.

the current paedogogical wisdom of her day as well as the recommendations of her Indian friends, but she received much of the credit and her own biases and beliefs were to have a disproportionate impact on the development of social reform in India. In her discussions of the reform work she believed would need to occur in India, Carpenter consistently presented herself as a professional and expert, and encouraged the assumption of professional status by other reformers.

Carpenter's status in India was somewhat uncertain and definitely unconventional. She was technically visiting as a private citizen: she stayed with friends, and toured the institutions that interested her. However, people were quite willing to accord her expert status on the grounds of her previous experience. The Governor of Bombay gave her letters addressed to the heads of various government departments instructing them "to furnish Miss Carpenter with any statistical or other information on subjects connected with her enquiries which your records may supply, and afford her every facility to visit and inspect the institutions under your control."²¹⁹ Such an introduction also established her credentials, admittedly not by referring to her training, but certainly by discussing her substantial experience with English social institutions, and explaining that her "opinion has, for many years past, been sought and listened to by legislators and administrators of all shades of political opinion in England."²²⁰ Carpenter reproduced these letters in her book. She explained their inclusion by saying that these letters demonstrate why she expanded the scope of her investigation since she could not refuse to meet people to whom she had introductions without being rude. She could not, however, have been unaware that the letters would have much the same effect on her

²¹⁹ Letter from the Secretary to the Government on behalf of the Governor of Bombay. Quoted in Mary Carpenter, *Six Months in India*, vol. 1, (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1868), 23.

²²⁰ Quoted in *Ibid*, 23.

readers as on their intended recipients. These testimonials would have assured her readers that she knew what she was doing and established Carpenter as an expert whose word was to be trusted.

The language Carpenter used about her visits to institutions attests to this expertise and quasi-official position. She, and the Secretary to the Government who wrote the letter quoted above, referred to her visits as inspections. Carpenter consistently described her visit as a fact-finding mission, but she was often treated by the schools as if she were a government inspector. Although there was no unified system of state schools in the 1860s, private schools in India frequently received inspection from the government to ascertain that they maintained appropriate standards.²²¹ Despite her unofficial position, Carpenter was invited by the founder of one school in Ahmedabad, a wealthy Indian woman, who “desired that it should have the advantage of Government inspection” to come and examine the students.²²² Carpenter was therefore not merely researching for her own work, but was considered by others to have the expertise to inspect, and a close association with the professional government bodies in charge of social institutions. Carpenter herself must have agreed as she included this incident in her book as a reasonable and intelligent thing for this woman to have done and noted that the “English ladies” on the school’s managing committee “were much pleased to induce their native friends [on the committee] to act thus with them” and were agreed on the utility of the founder’s action.²²³ The founder and the committeewomen were also demonstrating their professional approach to education through their acceptance of external standards, in this case those of the Indian Government’s education department. This school was a

²²¹ Ibid., 118.

²²² Ibid., 53.

²²³ Ibid., 53.

charitably funded school – Carpenter specifically stated that it neither had nor wished “pecuniary help from the public funds”²²⁴ – but the founder and the committee clearly agreed that charitable school should not mean lesser school and it could still live up to official education standards.

The role Carpenter created for herself was unlike the more hands-on approach that female missionaries were permitted. She believed that there was ““more to be done by the influence she could exert at headquarters’ in Britain than by ‘personal work in India itself””²²⁵ and she devoted her efforts to publicising her causes: primarily education and prison reform. In her book, after the receipt of her official letter, Carpenter depicted all of her subsequent interactions with the institutions she visits as inspections of some kind, generally falling somewhere between official inspection for the government and the kind of inspection *of* the government she had undertaken in British prisons. Her interactions with Indian women in groups also sometimes come across as inspections rather than social visits. She mentioned a number of zenana parties and visited several zenanas, but she was often there as a visiting lecturer or “accompan[ying] a lady who takes an active part in this [visiting] work”. Carpenter said of one visit that “it was interesting to observe the warm and affectionate greeting given to the visitors by the Hindoo ladies,” as well as their other interactions, but she did not mention these ladies’ response to her presence or any interaction she has with them aside from observation.²²⁶ Carpenter was not averse to interaction with Indian women. She spoke feelingly of how one can “divine feelings

²²⁴ Ibid., 53.

²²⁵ Quoted in Jayawardena, *White Woman’s Other Burden*, 71. This decision was taken after her 1868 visit to India to establish a girls’ school was a failure, but the attitude was present even in her earlier writings and the establishment of the school never seems to have been intended to supersede the public aspect of her work; she was not intending to teach personally.

²²⁶ Carpenter, *Six Months in India* vol. 1, 188.

without the aid of words”²²⁷ and thereby pleasantly visit with people who do not share one’s language. She also encouraged Indian women to learn English so that conversation can take place. Nevertheless, the job she envisioned for herself was not helping the women directly, but raising awareness at home and recommending policy for their benefit. She saw herself as “endeavour[ing] to excite the sympathy of my countrywomen for [Indian women]” rather than personally attending them. She consistently identified the purpose of her visit to be obtaining material for such publicity, rather than attempting to directly benefit individuals.²²⁸

Her desire to provide formulae for solutions rather than implement such solutions herself is also visible in the second volume of *Six Months in India*, which was largely devoted to analysis of the conditions she reported in volume one and recommendations based on this analysis. While she included other expert opinions on the topic and draws on specific papers and lectures she has read and seen, she emphasised her own experience in England and her personal observations of India. She began by attempting to dispel British stereotypes of India and Indians, arguing that, as was “very evident to me from all I saw and heard while in the country,” India was not a land of foreign dangers and antipathy, but the potential source of a productive partnership, provided that England and India could learn more about each other.²²⁹ Carpenter also drew on her experience in England to make her criticisms and offer suggestions for improvement. Interestingly, she asserted repeatedly that there is no reason to think that English methods are misplaced in India because Indian women could be “in every way equal, and in some respects superior,

²²⁷ Ibid., 253.

²²⁸ Ibid., 247.

²²⁹ Mary Carpenter, *Six Months in India*, vol.2, (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1868), 56-9.

to those in our own country,²³⁰ which stands in contrast to more racialised depictions of Indian women that depicted them as inherently inferior,²³¹ and also pre-emptively countered the potential argument that her recommendations and expertise were not relevant in this different context.

Carpenter's assumption of expertise is visible in the rationale she gave for her trip to India. She traveled to India in the hopes of learning more about the specific conditions in Indian institutions so that she could make recommendations for their reform, but the only knowledge she represented herself as lacking is of exactly what flaws were present in Indian social institutions. She consistently represented herself as an expert on the running of schools and other social institutions on the basis of the expertise she had acquired in England. Every recommendation she made is explained, but only as to why it is necessary in Indian schools. She objected to the practise in infant schools of teaching very young children in the same way as older children, and proposed replacing the rote learning with "lessons adapted to their childish comprehension" in the style of the "entertaining system of infant-training adopted in England."²³² She remained confident that the introduction of this "entertaining system" is all that would be required: she was already expert on children's training and needed only to transplant her methods into India rather than come up with more specifically Indian-focused programmes.

Six Months in India informed people of Carpenter's plan for India and reinforced her status as an expert on these kinds of issues, but it was not the only venue in which she

²³⁰ Ibid., 143.

²³¹ Clare Midgley, *Feminism and Empire: Women Activists in Imperial Britain, 1790-1865*, (New York: Routledge, 2007), 23 and 77.

²³² Ibid., 143.

presented these plans. Carpenter distributed a series of “memorials”²³³ to various government officials including the viceroy, several of which she reprinted in *Six Months* – which minor name-dropping would have served as an effective means of demonstrating her political influence. Carpenter’s attempt to reform Indian education was not limited to these recommendations, though they were quite important and the conclusions she drew there were to influence all of her efforts in India and her large number of admirers. Carpenter’s role was to draw attention to her causes and develop policy, but there were also women working for these same causes in a more personal way. Several women began schools and, of course, there were the women who came from England to teach.

One woman who was involved in popularising the cause of Indian women was Annette Ackroyd. A member of the same socially progressive Unitarian community as Carpenter, Ackroyd was inspired by Keshub Chunder Sen’s 1870 visit to England and sailed for India in 1872 to establish a girls’ school in Calcutta. Although her school closed in 1876 because of her marriage to Henry Beveridge and the difficulties she faced in interesting Indians in female education – especially given the fees she charged²³⁴ – the way that she managed the school for its brief existence was very much in a professional vein. In a lecture given at the College of Men and Women, she described her aims for beginning her Hindu Mahila Bidyalaya (Hindu Ladies School) and its regular functioning. Ackroyd intended her school to be an explicitly secular venue for female education. The focus on secularity was meant to appeal to Bengalis who were wary of the Christianising tendencies of mission schools. Her description of her school emphasises

²³³ Carpenter, *Six Months in India* vol. 2, 10, 11, 247, 252. Carpenter consistently uses this word to describe her missives to government officials, which took various forms, including petitions with multiple signatories or more informal memoranda.

²³⁴ Jayawardena, *White Woman’s Other Burden*, 73. Pupils paid £20 yearly for education and board, which was well beyond the reach of many and unlikely to appeal to those who could afford it (Annette Beveridge, “The Hindu Mahila Bidyalaya,” EWR, Feb 1876, 51).

the orderliness and scheduling she was able to impose. She begins with the official schedule: “the pupils rise at 5, breakfast at 8.30, and dine at 5. The lesson hours are from 10.30 to 1 p.m., and from 2.30 to 4.30 p.m., with preparation time in the morning and evening.”²³⁵ Even when she becomes more descriptive, she continues to underline the structure according to which the school works:

By seven o’clock everyone in the school is busy. The sound of the piano is heard... some girls sit in class-rooms writing, others carry stools to distant corners where they may indulge in the loud repetition which they believe must get any lesson into their memories; there is certain to be a committee on an English lesson in the verandah.²³⁶

Her facility was designed to accommodate Hindu students in matters of caste, but she emphasises the introduction of tidiness in the form of English-style beds and cutlery.²³⁷ She also discusses the organisational abilities of the (English) headmistress. This model woman gets her housekeeping done “between breakfast and lesson time”²³⁸ – in spite of the “special worries and work” of dealing with an Indian household and Indian servants.²³⁹ She was therefore able to devote the rest of her time to her professional work, at which she is depicted as more than competent. Ackroyd’s descriptions of students “darning stockings... without fault”²⁴⁰ and learning to “cook, dust and arrange the class-rooms for lessons” “like English girls”²⁴¹ imply that the school was successful in its aims and its mistresses efficient in their accomplishments. Ackroyd leaves her own role in the school’s creation rather vague and describes herself as merely familiar with the school

²³⁵ Annette Beveridge, “The Hindu Mahila Bidyalaya,” EWR, Feb 1876, 53.

²³⁶ Ibid, 53.

²³⁷ Ibid, 53 and 55.

²³⁸ Ibid, 55. Housekeeping, of course, is here defined to mean directing servants and creating budgets rather than active cleaning, cooking, shopping or similar.

²³⁹ Ibid, 55. The “special worries” are partially to do with things like negotiating the unfamiliar question of caste-appropriate work in giving orders to the servants, but do also include the assumed inherent intractability of Indian servants.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 56.

²⁴¹ Ibid., 55.

and students. This changes on the very last page of her lecture, where she mentions having been a teacher there. This seems to be a very careful positioning of herself as both reformer and worker. She speaks of her knowledge of the school as though an observer, until the final moment when she does admit to having been a teacher (and having significant professional experience as such in Britain). She then carefully reminds the reader that “it is a source of great happiness to be able to help [her pupils].” She recasts herself in the philanthropic mould by reminding us of the “less happy circumstances” of the girls – implying the well-known tragic condition of Indian womanhood – and how the school is primarily intended to help them.

Another woman who founded a girls’ school was Sister Nivedita. Born Margaret Noble in Ireland, she converted to Hinduism under the influence of Swami Vivekananda in 1898, and began her philanthropic work, which was to include education, plague-relief, and work in the cause of Indian nationalism. Her school was begun in 1898 and was intended to provide education to women who were deprived of it for financial or social reasons.²⁴² Nivedita’s intentions were explicitly charitable and she framed all of the work she did as part of her service to the Indian nation and her Swami, but her service was to employ her own professional expertise for the benefit of India. She wrote in one lecture about her work in India:

What a little thing it would be to any of us to die for one whom we really loved!... It is such love as this that makes it possible to live and do great service. It is such a falling-in-love that India demands of English men and women who go to her to work.²⁴³

After her own “falling-in-love” with India, Nivedita worked tremendously hard for the

²⁴² The Ramakrishna Sarada Mission Sister Nivedita Girls’ School is still running today in the same location, although the street is now Nivedita Lane, and continuing Nivedita’s original mission of female uplift. (<http://sisterniveditagirlsschool.org/alumni.html>)

²⁴³ Nivedita, *The Complete Works of Sister Nivedita*. vol. II, (Calcutta: Advaita Ashram, 1982), 440.

cause of Indian reform. She was an accomplished lecturer with five volumes of lectures and articles to her name (published posthumously, but given in lecture halls all over India during her lifetime). The bulk of her writings were on Indian life, history and philosophy, but she was also an established name in education. She wrote not only on the social need for education in India, and particularly for Indian women, but on educational theory. Her experimental school was an “expression of [her] gratitude”²⁴⁴ to India and intended for the benefit of the forty little girls who attended. It was equally a means for her to “arrive at a clear knowledge of the practical difficulties and practical potentialities of a useful school.”²⁴⁵ Her lectures on education were delivered from the point of view of an experienced teacher and she assumed without question her right to speak on “Practical Education”²⁴⁶ or “The Educational Method.”²⁴⁷ Her essay, “The Educational Method”, began with the question “what *is* education?” Nivedita clearly considered herself competent to answer. With all the weight of paedagogical theory behind her, she responded that education is a “trained power of attention and concentration, an ability to think connectedly and inquire persistently about a given subject, and a capacity for willing rightly and efficiently.”²⁴⁸ She also was clearly comfortable enough in her expertise as an educator to run her schools along these theoretical lines, and to teach students personally, despite her limited Bengali, in order to ensure that her ideas were carried out.²⁴⁹

Nivedita’s writings consistently depicted her as an expert in her own field of education. The high level of personal expertise she assumed on the subject of education is

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 443.

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 444.

²⁴⁶ Nivedita, *The Complete Works of Sister Nivedita* vol. V, (Calcutta: Advaita Ashram, 1982), 41.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 51.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 51.

²⁴⁹ Nivedita, *The Complete Works of Sister Nivedita*, vol. II, 444.

particularly obvious when these writings are compared to her writings on India itself, particularly *The Web of Indian Life*. This was her first book, and she described it in a letter to a friend as written “in Swami’s name” and with the express intent of disseminating Vivekananda’s views and the information on India she had learned from him.²⁵⁰ In contrast, her educational writings were more likely to contain her own observations or her own analysis of other theorists’ findings. Where she did sometimes draw on other educators, such as Fröbel’s plan for kindergartens, Nivedita incorporated them into her broader philosophy.²⁵¹ Her discussion of Fröbel’s observations of German children converged with her insistence that an Indian kindergarten would have to “be the result of the observation of Indian childhood, and must reflect Indian life and express Indian ideals.”²⁵² Her own teaching attempted to do just this, as in her plan for teaching Indian history, which was based on trying to interest children in the events and people in Indian history they find most compelling and then slowly adding more facts and a chronology to these original stories.²⁵³ Nivedita’s pedagogical theory was different from Carpenter’s or Ackroyd’s because of its strong Indian influences, but she was equally committed to her status as a professional. She drew heavily on specialised knowledge that made her particularly qualified to teach – in this case the combination of her awareness of European paedagogical trends and the insight into Indian culture and history that she acquired through her association with Vivekananda. Nivedita used this knowledge to

²⁵⁰ Quoted in the “Editor’s Preface to the First Edition” by Pravrajika Atmaprana, Nivedita, *The Complete Works of Sister Nivedita* vol. II, xii.

²⁵¹ Nivedita, *The Complete Works of Sister Nivedita* vol. V, 54. Fröbel was a German pedagogue who invented the kindergarten in the mid-nineteenth century.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, 54. The importance of ‘Indian-ness’ to Nivedita was partially the result of her involvement in the Swami’s nationalist movement, which was also attempting to create a self-determined India.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, 48-50. This idea as a method for the teaching of history sounds rather less innovative now than it did in Nivedita’s day, but when she wrote that it was relatively unusual to suggest that Indians be taught Indian rather than European history and to begin with something other than chronology and dates. She was not unique, but she was in the vanguard.

present herself as a self-conscious expert, writing extensively and accepting many invitations to lecture on the subject.

Not all British teachers in India were as prominent as Carpenter, Nivedita or Akroyd, or as able to present themselves as high-level experts. Still, they and their supporters maintained that they could, and should, strive for professionalism in the work they did. Carpenter's discussion of teachers emphasises their need for training and qualifications. Her primary criticism of Indian schools was that they were disorganised and badly managed; she argued that this could be remedied by the introduction of English-trained superintendents and head teachers.²⁵⁴ These women were largely described in terms of their training and gender, which are assumed to make them capable of bringing an Indian school up to standard. Carpenter complained of the "undesirable system [of] the instruction of young girls by male teachers"²⁵⁵ which lacked the additional "development of [the pupils'] physical and moral nature, as can be given only by trained female teachers."²⁵⁶ She did agree that Indian teachers would be quite acceptable if trained in English style normal schools, but noted that they would not be available "until a sufficient number of years have elapsed to enable [Indian women] who may desire it to train for the purpose of becoming efficient teachers."²⁵⁷ In their absence, "this preparation [of schoolgirls] must be made through the medium of English ladies."²⁵⁸ Furthermore, Carpenter argued that "the training of female teachers can be effected only by Englishwomen."²⁵⁹ In her memorial to the Secretary of State for India in which she laid out the need for education in India and the means by which it is to be achieved,

²⁵⁴ Carpenter, *Six Months in India* vol. 2, 145.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 154.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 156.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 156.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 156.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 156.

Carpenter was specific about the desirability of female education, the lack of and need for female teachers, and the difficulty of obtaining Indian women teachers.²⁶⁰ The English teachers she proposed as the solution, however, are merely described as “English certificated.” It is clear that, for Carpenter, English training was all that would be necessary to render her teachers appropriately professional and that England possessed a large pool of such trained applicants.

The status of English teachers in India as philanthropists is uncertain. These women were employees, hired by the philanthropists that Carpenter often directed her attention toward. Under those circumstances, these teachers were depicted as members of a readily available labour pool who may be “obtained from England” at 150-200 rupees per month.²⁶¹ On the other hand, she occasionally addressed these women directly or at least discusses how they are to be persuaded to embark for India. In these moments they were seen less as mere employees than as participants “giv[ing] themselves heart and soul to the great work.”²⁶² These women were encouraged to partake in the work for its own sake; although Carpenter was asking the government for funds to bring these teachers across and official sanction for her project, the incentive was never substantial financial compensation. Carpenter framed government involvement as matters of “whatever... is needed for a respectable household”²⁶³ or as the bare minimum needed to compensate for the “difficulties and dangers [the teachers] would have to encounter in a distant and tropical country.”²⁶⁴ The compensation would not have to be substantial, Carpenter claimed that there were “many women... who would gladly avail themselves

²⁶⁰ This letter is reprinted in *Ibid.*, 157-162.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 145.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, 156.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, 160.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 157.

of such an opening” if at least some of the practical details were taken care of.²⁶⁵

Lady Anna Gore Langton published a circular in 1877 that complained of “the want of *educated and trained female Teachers*” in India and called on “Englishwomen in England... to help in this work, *by associated effort*... and thus prove... the sympathy of Englishwomen with their Indian sisters.”²⁶⁶ The idea that Englishwomen should feel sympathy and perhaps sisterhood with Indian women was a common trope of Imperial rhetoric, but the service Langton required of these sympathisers turned out to be assistance in “select[ing], prepar[ing] and send[ing]” women doctors to India rather than in teaching itself, although she wanted her volunteers to promote this training to English women.²⁶⁷ Again, the impression is that the teachers would be doing good works in the service of India and the Empire, although Lady Anna was specifically gunning for the philanthropic instincts of the women doing the hiring. The NIA did the same. One of the NIA’s calls for support described “the work of female education in India... as a work of English philanthropy,”²⁶⁸ and cited lack of teachers as one of the first problems to be rectified. Yet the solution is framed as a matter of donating funds in order to support the education of new teachers, and it isn’t clear how these newly educated teachers were to be approached: as teacher-philanthropists or simply as new hires?

Elizabeth Anne Friend’s unpublished Ph.D. dissertation provides an excellent analysis of the ways that young women would have been exposed to the idea of service in the Empire. She analysed the records and magazines of several girls’ schools and women’s colleges in England to determine the amount of information made available to

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 162.

²⁶⁶ Lady Anna Gore Langton, “Education of Women in India” reprinted in “Events of the Month” in EWR, June 1877, 284. Italics in the original.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 284.

²⁶⁸ “The National Indian Association and Female Education in India” EWR, Feb 1890, 59.

educated women about work within the Empire and how the idea of such work was presented. Friend argues that these institutions provided information about Empire work and used the rhetoric of Empire in noticeable ways. All of the school magazines she looked at contained articles on teaching and medical opportunities in the Empire, mainly in the form of reports from old girls, and many of the institutions also hosted lectures, some of which were on Empire topics.²⁶⁹ These sources tended to represent the Empire as exotic and interesting as well as a worthy cause. The tone was one of work to be done and responsibility; one old girl wrote a letter to the school magazine to call on her peers for “help to develop a people for whom we as a nation have made ourselves morally responsible.”²⁷⁰ Friend found a few examples of these magazines and lectures promoting the idea of professional work and even a couple that explicitly promote the Empire as a less crowded venue where it would be easier to find the professional work that was discouraged in England.²⁷¹ Of the 1%-10% of these schoolgirls who did make their way out into the Empire, only about 30% of those ended up in India specifically.²⁷² Still, Friend’s analysis is useful here because it does demonstrate that young women were told about the work that women could do in the Empire. This work was framed as a service to country and Empire rather than a solely practical undertaking, even if it was the kind of professional work that required a qualification. Friend argues that “women who elected to work in the Empire had very personal reasons for doing so.”²⁷³ She is able to name a long list of such reasons, including family, compassion and the promise of excitement and adventure, so not all girls were interested in the promise of professionalism and the

²⁶⁹ Elizabeth Anne Friend, *Professional Women in the British Empire 1880-1939* (PhD Dissertation, University of Lancaster, 1998), 47-59.

²⁷⁰ Quoted in *Ibid.*, 63.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 65.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, Appendix A, 399. The precise numbers varied between colleges and decades.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, 396.

Empire itself, but it was still a major component of the rhetoric to which Friend's subjects were exposed.

The other difficulty with discussing English teachers in secular schools is that the number of non-Christian schools in India was increasingly rapidly and there was a lot of competition for students. European ladies often sat on the boards of these schools,²⁷⁴ and many schools had one English mistress among several male teachers,²⁷⁵ but Englishwomen had difficulties running their own establishments. The school that Carpenter had a hand in establishing during her second visit to India failed, as did Annette Ackroyd's. Such schools were generally more expensive than schools run by Indians as a result of English teachers' higher salaries and the English-language teaching materials they required. Many Indian parents also regarded English-language education as unnecessary and often excessively Christian. Secular schools might forgo divinity lessons or mandatory prayer, but they still tended to promote Victorian Christian values, particularly in lessons such as sewing and cooking, which were intended to turn Indian girls into good, moral Victorian middle-class housekeepers. Elite Indian parents – the only people who could afford the school fees – were often uninterested in this kind of moral training and were more concerned with whether or not their daughters were going to be able to keep caste appropriately, which not all English schools were careful about. Frances Billington, a reporter from the *Daily Graphic* who reported on Indian issues, particularly those concerning women, wrote that the influence of mission and European-run schools was noticeably higher in areas that did not have large numbers of local schools, but that when local schools were established, there was a substantial drop in the

²⁷⁴ Carpenter, *Six Months in India* vol. 1, 53.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 248.

number of Indian families willing to put up with the Victorian Christian influence they found permeated English schools.²⁷⁶

Overall, women such as Carpenter, Ackroyd and Nivedita were prominent figures in the debate on female education and were generally unchallenged as education professionals. Carpenter was particularly feted and, after her death in 1877, eulogies praising “the work and glory of her philanthropic life”²⁷⁷ abounded. Trained female teachers were also assumed to be both available and desirable. These women embodied both philanthropic values and careers as educators, but were still fairly well integrated ideologically into Indian reform circles, even if they were never as numerically rich as missionaries.

Female educators also no longer had to fight for the same kind of recognition of their qualifications as medical workers did. There were therefore far fewer impassioned pleas about the work they were doing, its viability and their ability to do it. The big reforming societies moved on to the question of finding these educated women that they wanted to hire rather than debating whether women were qualified to teach at all. Carpenter is an example of this; she presented herself as an educational expert and was supported in this by the government and her many admirers. Even women with much less impressive credentials who opened schools were rarely questioned, although they might be condescended to by male reformers.²⁷⁸ Ackroyd’s school began shakily: “some of [the

²⁷⁶ Mary Frances Billington, *Woman in India* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1895), 29.

²⁷⁷ “Miss Carpenter” *JNIA*, Oct 1877, 251. There were other eulogies in the *EW*, (“Mary Carpenter” Saturday, July 14, 1877; pg. 295), *Capital and Labour* (“The Late Mary Carpenter” June 20, 1877; pg. 334), *The Shield* (“Miss Mary Carpenter” June 30, 1877; pg. 182), *The Journal of the Women’s Education Union* (“The Late Mary Carpenter” July 15, 1877; pg. 99) and elsewhere. Her influence in her chosen fields had been tremendous.

²⁷⁸ Reports from the *EW* and the *JNIA* about schooling in India tend to mention the teachers only briefly and are generally in favour of women acting as heads of schools, although they are quite likely to refer to them

pupils] had to be induced, by means of scholarships to attend... and it was then very much doubted whether it would be wise to keep up an institution, which received so little support from the Hindoo[sic] community,”²⁷⁹ yet she was lauded in the *Englishwoman’s Review* and other publications for trying.

Female medical workers often had to make their expertise more explicit. Medical work, as these women wished to practise it, required specific qualifications. In the next section of this chapter I discuss some of the earliest proponents of a secular female medical service for India and the way that they were obliged to root their claims for the need for such a service in their experience on the ground and the specialised knowledge this afforded them, as well their arguments in favour of setting standards for women medical professionals. I then turn to Lady Dufferin’s women’s medical fund. The way the Fund operated demonstrates that when women had achieved some measure of success in promoting the cause of female doctors, they maintained their professional principles and continued to present themselves as a self-conscious profession defined by its standards and its specialised knowledge of medical matters and the Indian context.

Female missionary doctors had been working in India for a decade or so by this point, but interest in secular medical attention for Indian women grew after Elizabeth Beilby’s famous visit with the Maharani of Punna, a wealthy Indian noblewoman. In April 1881, before she returned to England to complete her medical degree, Beilby visited the Maharani, for whom she had served as physician, and was asked to make her a promise. The Maharani reportedly said to Beilby:

You are going to England and I want you to tell our Queen and the Prince and

largely in terms of their charitable purpose or alternative reasons to be in India (e.g. having been widowed) than their professional qualifications as an educator.

²⁷⁹ “Progress in Bengal During the Last Thirty Years” JNIA, Feb 1896, 64-5.

Princess of Wales and the men and women in England, *what the women in the Zenanas in India suffer when they are sick.*²⁸⁰

She further insisted that Beilby swear to deliver this message in person to the Queen.

When Beilby protested that “the Queen could not *make* lady doctors, or *order* them to go out,”²⁸¹ the Maharani replied:

Did you not tell me our Queen was good and gracious, that she never heard of sorrow or suffering without sending a message to say how sorry she was, and trying to help? Did you not show me a picture of a train falling into the sea, where a bridge broke, and did you not tell me how grieved our Queen was? Well it was very sad those people should have been killed, but our condition is far worse; if you will only tell our Queen what we Indian women suffer when we are sick, I am sure she will feel for us and try to help us.²⁸²

Queen Victoria did eventually meet with Beilby and received the message. The queen reportedly responded that “we should wish it generally known that we sympathise with every effort made to relieve the suffering state of the women of India.”²⁸³

This message was the queen’s official opinion on the matter, but was not a policy statement in the sense of a proclamation to be abided by. Nevertheless, the conversation between the two queens became an important focus of the campaign for medical women. The anecdote contained many features that appealed to Victorian sensibilities. The image of the Maharani asking the Queen for help consolidated prevailing British opinion on Indian women and the relationship of the British to their colonised subjects. They already believed that Indian women were passive sufferers trapped in the zenana and the Maharani supposedly abasing herself as a supplicant to the Queen confirmed them in that belief. The Maharani’s message may have been a calculated political statement – she certainly aimed her missive impressively accurately – but she was presented in the British

²⁸⁰ E. Beilby, “Royal Sympathy, or the Three Messages” IFE, Oct 1881, 3. Italics in the original.

²⁸¹ Ibid, 4. Italics in the original.

²⁸² Ibid, 4.

²⁸³ Ibid, 2.

press as “that delicate suffering inmate of the Punna palace, who pleaded with tearful eyes the cause of her Indian sisters.”²⁸⁴ Not only did she appeal to their sympathies by talking about the suffering of Indian women, she also appealed to their ideas about their own queen. The Maharani justified sending the message to the Queen by saying that she had learned from missionaries that Queen Victoria was particularly sympathetic and good, which was exactly the kind of thing the British liked to hear as it was both a compliment and a validation of their belief that the Indians were pleased about the British empire. A footnote appended to the Maharani’s message was emphatic that the way she referred to the Queen in her original statement translated as “*our* Queen.”²⁸⁵ The Maharani was also specifically criticising the lack of female doctors in Indian society; she was firm that her message was not meant to be read as a critique of the zenana system or the colonial government. Going to Queen Victoria for assistance, despite the fact that this issue was not technically a colonial matter, indicated that India was accepting its place as a part of the Empire.

The Queen’s message in return was not only appealing because it demonstrated her sensibilities and womanly sympathy, but because it was so vague. She did not specify that her response was about medical care, thus her statement could be seen as extending implicit approval to any effort that could be even vaguely described as “reliev[ing] the suffering state of the women of India.”²⁸⁶ This was an important endorsement for female doctors to fall back on when they were being criticised, as they inevitably were. It was not quite enough to silence all critiques, but it did retain a certain amount of power,

²⁸⁴ “The National Association for Supplying Medical Aid to the Women of India,” *The Calcutta Review*, October 1 1887, 231.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 3n. The Maharani most likely wrote in Marathi, although her translators are unspecific, except to say that she spoke/wrote in her native tongue.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 2.

particularly because of “the ideals of womanhood which [the] Queen’s life and character present[ed].”²⁸⁷ The Queen’s reputation as a ‘true woman’ also helped female reformers use this incident to promote female philanthropy. If the Queen could be called upon to help foreign sisters then so could any other woman without endangering anyone’s femininity. As both Antoinette Burton and Maneesha Lal have argued, the queen’s image as “empress-mother” that emerges from her encounter with the Maharani’s message was to have a profound impact on the development of women’s medical care in India.²⁸⁸

One of the earliest voices calling for a secular female medical service was Dr. Frances Hoggan. In January of 1882, she wrote a piece for the JNIA entitled “Women Doctors in India.” In it she argued that the British were, or should have been, aware that Indian women required medical attention and were not getting it because of the low quality of native doctors and their inability to see a male European doctor. Moreover, if everyone was aware of this deficiency, then why was it only being remedied by missionaries, who were doing it for the wrong reasons? Hoggan attacked the training given to female medical missionaries as insufficient and as intended to provide only a minor addendum to the real project of conversion or Christian instruction. Hoggan quotes missionaries themselves saying that their purpose was “to train ladies to be missionaries, and *at the same time* to give them a fair knowledge of medicine, so that, while carrying the good news of the Gospel to women and children, they will be able to minister to the wants of the body.” Missionaries wished to “alleviate much suffering, but, in so doing, gain an influence among their patients which would greatly aid toward their conversion

²⁸⁷ Isabella Fyvie Mayo, “Victoria – Mother and Wife,” IM, June 1887, 329. An article which consisted of five pages of praise of the ‘Empress-Queen’ and her ability to perfectly display all the domestic virtues.

²⁸⁸ Antoinette Burton, *Empire in Question: Reading, Writing, and Teaching British Imperialism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 162. Maneesha Lal, “The Politics of Gender and Medicine in Colonial India: The Countess of Dufferin’s Fund, 1885-1888,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 68:1 (1994:Spring): 33-4.

to Christianity.”²⁸⁹ Hoggan objected because the missionaries’ attitude prioritises missionary training to the detriment of the medical. She argued, firstly, “that the woman's body is not more simple in its structure, or easier to treat in its derangements, than the man's, but rather the contrary.”²⁹⁰ The complexity of women’s bodies meant that women’s doctors need to be even more competent than men’s. Secondly, she argued that female doctors:

will have at first and for a long time to come to act, for better or for worse, without the advantages generally enjoyed in very serious cases by doctors practising in England, of consulting with some older and more experienced member of their profession.²⁹¹

She therefore concluded that:

If... illness and accidents of all kind are to be treated by women, if the many dangers incident to childbirth are to be successfully met—if, in short, medical practice is not to stultify itself and become a laughing-stock in India, the women doctors who are sent out must go out furnished with a full and complete medical education.²⁹²

There was simply too much work of too serious a nature for unprepared individuals to take on, and lack of preparation would reflect badly on practitioners and those who let them try. She supported this contention with descriptions of the quantity of work there was to do and the complexity of it, which demanded something better than ill-trained workers. Women doctors, according to Hoggan, needed to be trained, and required to meet and maintain appropriate standards as set by external bodies or the licensed medical community as a whole. Treatment of women could not be left to individual variation and capability.

²⁸⁹ The Zenana Medical Mission and the American Board of Foreign Missions, quoted in Frances Hoggan, “Women Doctors in India,” JNIA, Jan 1882, 23.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 26.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 27.

²⁹² *Ibid.*, 26.

Besides the sheer practicality of finding well-trained workers who would be able to deal with all medical issues as they might arise, Hoggan also framed the need for professional training as a part of Britain's duty to its colonies. This duty came in two parts: the duty to provide for their new subjects to the best of their abilities, and the duty to keep up appearances and prevent Britain from becoming a "laughing-stock." The suffering of Indian women, as she saw it, was "a disgrace to our boasted 19th century civilization."²⁹³ Now that medical science had advanced such that such suffering could be eliminated, it should be. This would be both beneficial to the Indian women in question and to the British who would thereby secure their position as the enlightened civiliser ruling India for its own good.

Hoggan's scheme was not merely to have professional female doctors in India, but to create a fully female-run and patronised medical system: "It ought to be organised by women, officered entirely by women, and responsible only to the Secretary of State for India or some other high official authority."²⁹⁴ This arrangement reflected the wholly female clientele of the system and also encouraged the kind of professional work that Hoggan approved of for women. She was also aware that these women would not go unopposed:

It would obviously be out of place and prejudicial to [a female medical system's] success to place it under the control of any existing body of medical men, for it would be hardly possible to find one which did not number amongst its members many who were unfriendly to the cause of medical women.²⁹⁵

This is an interesting assertion to make in a periodical that possessed a majority male readership and can be taken as evidence for the very progressive slant of the NIA.

²⁹³ Ibid., 31.

²⁹⁴ Ibid., 32.

²⁹⁵ Ibid., 32.

Hoggan was also very explicit about the benefit offered by her proposed all-female staff, which is listed – along with lack of religious bias, and freedom from missionary societies – as one of the things that will make the system “work well and prove efficient.”²⁹⁶

Again, professional women were, to Hoggan, not merely a necessary evil for the functionality that they provide, but a feature that will bring efficiency and functionality to the whole enterprise.

Hoggan did not envision the existence of these extremely useful professional female medical staff as a happenstance result of this scheme, but as one of its intended benefits. She considered “the impulse that the creation of such a service would give to higher education, by opening up a new career, with prizes worth striving for, to the women both of England and of India” equally important.²⁹⁷ Not only did Hoggan imply here that female professionals were an unmitigated good and that new careers should be made open to them, but that she thinks her readership will agree. She did comment that the legions of unattached women who were assumed to be taking up space in Britain in the late nineteenth century could find a life purpose in such a medical career, which is another argument as to why female professionals are necessary. Still, given that the more typical suggestion was to ship ‘surplus’ women to colonies with large populations of single men, Hoggan’s solution is also supportive of female professionalism as an end in itself.

In a second article, Hoggan discussed the existing medical system in India. The main flaw she identified was that it was an offshoot of the military medical system and therefore retained that structure, despite attempting to serve a new function. As a military

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 31.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 31.

medical system it was entirely constructed to the advantage of the troops, which meant that its provision for civilians and particularly female civilians was unaccommodating at best. Hoggan noted that only 2.29% of the population in Bengal ever called on the medical service and that only one quarter of these applicants were female; this in a province with a significant British presence.²⁹⁸ She attributed this non-attendance to the fact that the service was not prepared to deal with local custom, particularly Indian women's presumed reluctance to consult male practitioners. Hoggan considered this absence a failure on the part of the existing medical service and cited the conversation of Beilby and the Maharani as evidence that Indian women would appreciate and make use of a female medical service. She also cited the opinion of Surgeon-General Balfour, who agreed that many Indian women did not appear in public or before men, but still required skilled medical attention. She argued that if the British government was willing to extend the medical service as far as it had, then it had no reason to refrain from extending it to women "in the only way in which, admittedly, it can be done, through medical women."²⁹⁹ Her final recommendation was for "a new Medical Department, as a part of the public service in India, managed by women and responsible only to some high officer of State, working in harmony with the existing civil Medical Service, but co-ordinate and not subordinate to it."³⁰⁰ She adds that "women alone, highly trained, efficient, with the ready sympathies of their sex, can rightly inaugurate and carry out such a beneficent reform."³⁰¹

Here, as elsewhere in the rhetoric of this debate, it becomes very clear how these

²⁹⁸ Frances Hoggan, "Medical Women for India" JNIA, Oct 1882, 573.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 577.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 578.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 578.

women reformers were extrapolating from a fact that was considered irrefutable at the time – that all Indian women were enclosed in zenanas – to a complex argument in favour of women’s special competencies. While it does follow logically that female medics would be necessary to extend medical service to women who were forbidden to see men, and it was taken for granted at the time that this group comprised the majority of Indian women, the other elements are more of a stretch. At the time Hoggan and those like her were writing, there were very few British female doctors, and exceedingly few in India: by 1889 there were only 72 qualified British women doctors and only 15 of them had made it to India.³⁰² These few women doctors already practicing in India and at home were certainly used as examples of the achievements and ability of women, and to demonstrate that women were not incapable of that kind of learning; the fact remains that they were few and far between. Hoggan marshals the examples of secular women medical professionals to the best of her ability, but there were simply not enough of them at the time to create a broad base of evidence for women’s capabilities at this task.

Because of the belief in the impenetrable, all-encompassing zenana, however, Hoggan was able to claim firstly, that women doctors are necessary because Indian women have no access to male physicians; secondly, that these women doctors will be called upon to perform complicated medical tasks; and from there that these women doctors will need to have the formal training that will allow them to perform these tasks effectively. Hoggan supported this argument with details about the medical problems these female doctors will be called upon to deal with – and the claim that, with the proper training, “the best achievements [of female doctors] will be far beyond the present

³⁰² “Registered Medical Women for 1889” EWR, February 15, 1889, 65-69.

average of medical and surgical work in India”³⁰³ and there can therefore be no reason to deny them employment.

With this firm basis for the need for female doctors and the fact that, under these peculiar circumstances, there was simply no substitute for women practitioners, Hoggan was better able to argue for equality in the treatment of women medics. Aware that many members of the medical establishment opposed female physicians and that they had a great deal of support,³⁰⁴ Hoggan formulated her plans for a female medical service to demonstrate how the incorporation of men would prevent her service from reaching its full potential. Hoggan argued that a functional women’s medical service would have to be “co-ordinate, but not subordinate”³⁰⁵ to the existing system so that male doctors who opposed female doctors would not be able to stymie the latter’s work by outranking them and contradicting their medical orders. In a climate that was largely opposed to female doctors, Hoggan could not simply say that opponents were not entitled to such views or the power to enforce them on women. It therefore seems logical that her papers consistently make the need for women doctors thoroughly understood and taken for granted, before confronting this opposition, which she frames as detrimental to the project, rather than ethically dubious.

Hoggan did turn out to be quite correct about the possible dangers of a subordinate scheme, which is what was eventually implemented. Medical women who

³⁰³ Ibid., 580.

³⁰⁴ There were voices on each side of this conflict. Hoggan and women like her had supporters, but they were also aware of the vicious protests launched against female doctors, including descents into violence. Professors and students were not merely unwelcoming; they locked doors against female students, heckled them, threw things at them and staged walk-outs to protest their inclusion in classes. This was not universal behaviour, or even universally respected, but it was still permitted in many places (Catriona Blake, *The Charge of the Parasols: Women’s Entry into the Medical Profession* (London: The Women’s Press, 1990), passim.)

³⁰⁵ Frances Hoggan, “Medical Women for India” JNIA, Oct 1882, 578.

were obliged to work in hospitals under the jurisdiction of the Civil Service generally found that, although women's hospitals were supposed to maintain purdah for the benefit of their female patients, they had no authority to prevent their male superiors from breaking it.³⁰⁶ Although women's wards and surgeries were supposed to be female-only spaces, male surgeons were often indifferent to their patients' concerns and insistent that their own authority as administrators or senior staff allowed them to enter any room or perform any surgery. Seclusion was never as much of a priority among most Indian women as the British assumed it was, but for the minority who practised it, it remained important. Some women really were willing to patronise only those hospitals that could assure them accommodation that did not force them to break caste rule and seclusion. When male doctors were unwilling to make those assurances or refused to honour their female subordinates' promises, some Indian women did refuse to use the service.³⁰⁷

Hoggan's recommendations were never fully enacted by the government, but she was the most cited expert on the subject in secular circles and many people supported the scheme as she outlined it here and elsewhere. There were criticisms made and the *Indian Magazine* printed several editorials critiquing her plan for being too expensive,³⁰⁸ and for slowing the introduction of women doctors to India,³⁰⁹ but they also published her rebuttals, as well as supportive letters from Indian luminaries. Beilby, whose own critique of the existing Indian medical service was almost equally well-known, also vocally supported Hoggan. By the mid-1880s the idea of female doctors in India was gaining traction.

³⁰⁶ Maneesha Lal, "The Politics of Gender and Medicine in Colonial India: The Countess of Dufferin's Fund, 1885-1888," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 68:1 (1994:Spring): 65.

³⁰⁷ Margaret Balfour and Ruth Young, *The Work of Medical Women in India* (Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1929), 44-5.

³⁰⁸ Losain, "A Native View of Lady Doctors for India," *JNIA*, April 1882, 237-9.

³⁰⁹ A Rámkrishna, "Medical Women for India," *JNIA*, Sept 1882, 544-5.

The result of these debates was the 1886 National Association for Supplying Medical Aid to the Women of India, more colloquially known as the Countess of Dufferin's Fund, after its founder. The Queen, inspired by the Maharani's message, asked Lady Dufferin, as Vicereine, to investigate the possibilities for providing medical care to Indian women.³¹⁰ She determined that the best plan was:

to form a National Association, with a Central Committee and a Central Fund, with branches in all parts of India, managed locally, to promote Female Medical Tuition, Medical Relief, and the establishment of Hospitals for Women all over the country.³¹¹

Although she possessed a position in the official colonial hierarchy as the wife of the Viceroy, Lady Dufferin's fund was more of a philanthropic than an official project. This was not only because of her personal relationship with the project, but because of her plans for funding it, which centred around collecting subscriptions from the wealthy in both England and India, with limited government involvement in the finances. Although involvement in the Fund was never mandatory for female doctors in India, the advantages of its backing were such that the Fund employed the majority of the non-missionary British female doctors in India.

The Fund was run as a non-governmental charitable operation, but a highly professionalised one. The formal structure of the organisation was heavily regimented with various branches under one central authority and every effort made to structure and record these relationships. The reports produced by the Fund are extremely detailed and well-organised. Each one outlines the activities of each branch of the Fund: how much they raised in funds and from where; any new hiring; and the progress of the work itself,

³¹⁰ Lal, 34.

³¹¹ Harriot Georgina Rowan-Hamilton Blackwood, Lady Dufferin, *Our Viceregal Life in India: Selections from My Journal, 1884-88*, vol 1 (John Murray, London, England, 1889), 163.

either teaching or in dispensaries and hospitals. Although this detailed reporting was not unusual for philanthropic organisations at the time, it is still significant here because the Fund was primarily a women's organisation. Men were certainly encouraged to donate money and their generosity was praised in the regular reports of the meetings, but Lady Dufferin (whose name remained stuck to the Fund) was its founder, its employees were mainly women, the patients all women, and Dufferin emphasised the involvement of female donors, such as the Begum of Bhopal.³¹² These attempts to reach professional standards therefore say something about how the women of this organisation wished to be seen, and, whatever their reasons, they were aware that the message they were sending was one about women.

Professionalism was also emphasised in the Fund's position as a medical service for women that was intended to parallel the existing service for men. Dufferin legitimised her organisational scheme by comparison with the male equivalent. Her medical staff were organised in the same way as the Government Medical Service (GMS) and her applicants were required to have the same qualifications as for the GMS.³¹³ The Fund was not only professional for its own benefit, but also for the benefit of the women it employed. Its mission was not only to provide medical care, but to work toward increasing the availability of medical services in all parts of India, to which end it began several medical schools and arranged funding and opportunities to encourage women, both British and Indian, to take up medical education in India. This was aimed at the greater good of Indian women and the noble end of improving the availability and quality

³¹² "The countess of Dufferin's Fund" IM, May 1887, 239

³¹³ Harriot Georgina Rowan-Hamilton Blackwood, Lady Dufferin, *A Record of Three Years Work of the National Association for Supplying Medical Aid to the Women of India: August 1885 to August 1888* (Calcutta: Thacker, Spink and co., 1888), 16.

of medical attention, but Dufferin was also aware that it would have the side-effect of giving women paying jobs and assured her readers that women would see the appeal of “a useful and honourable career.”³¹⁴

Lady Dufferin and Dr. Hoggan could recommend the immediate introduction of large numbers of medical women into practice in India, but where were such women to be found and how were they to be induced to undertake the work? As noted, there were limited numbers of qualified medical women as yet, and all were aware that the work was difficult and living conditions less than ideal, by English standards. Missions attempted to call on people who felt they had a vocation for the life; could secular reformers provide an equivalent ‘call’? The call to serve the Empire did go out in the same way that it did for teachers and through the same channels, but there was always the option of providing financial incentives. Could female doctors be paid enough to not only compensate for the disadvantages of emigration to India?

Interestingly, the issue of financial remuneration for philanthropic services rendered only became contentious when it came to female doctors. Teachers were called upon to serve the Empire and help to enlighten the masses, but also paid a decent wage. There was no critique of schools paying teachers, or of the teachers themselves for accepting a wage. Individual schools might be judged for setting fees that were too steep, but it generally seems to have been accepted that teachers would require payment. Medical staff were a different matter. Male medical staff were assumed to be paid staff, particularly as the existing Government Medical Service was an extension of the military, which had always been a paid job. Female doctors were a less clear-cut issue. As they appeared to be following in the footsteps of philanthropists and missionaries, it was

³¹⁴ Ibid., 46.

unclear how they were to support themselves or if this was anyone's concern except their own. If they were to be paid, it was also uncertain who was to do it. These women were unlikely to be independently wealthy, as most people involved in the debate knew, so the practical choices came down to payment from the government, through external organisations or by the patients.

Payment by the patients was a particular point of contention. Many people who said that a woman could not make a living treating Indian women said so not because she should not charge meaningful fees for her services, but because they believed she could not do so and expect to receive Indian custom. This view returns to the British stereotypes of Indian home life, which pictured Indian women as abused victims in the zenana and therefore assumed that Indian men would not spend the money to heal them as they clearly considered them to be so worthless. This point was also raised by a number of Indian men, though they disavowed such indifference on their own behalf. There were also concerns about the ability of the poorer classes in Indian to pay. It was recognised that these women were in need of medical attention and could not afford to pay for it.³¹⁵

If patients who could afford to pay were assumed to be unlikely to do so, and those who couldn't afford it still part of the mandate of these women, then the question came down to fundraising or government support. Hoggan herself had to admit that the "Government is no more bound to provide gratuitous medical aid for those who are able to pay in India than in England."³¹⁶ She understood that people might find her proposal

³¹⁵ Interestingly, no one seems to have raised the point that it was only wealthy women who could afford to remain in seclusion, and therefore poorer women were less likely to need the specialised services of a lady doctor, perhaps because it would have damaged the arguments of the supporters of women doctors.

³¹⁶ Frances Hoggan, "Women Doctors in India," JNIA, Jan 1882, 27

that the government provide even some of the funding to be “startling.”³¹⁷ Still, she continued to press for government funding for at least some costs and even went so far as to lay out pay scales for female doctors. She argued for a combination of the two: government paying for the care of the impoverished, and those who could pay doing so.

The eventual compromise recalls the narrative of Victorian philanthropy that David Owen described in *English Philanthropy*. He argued that Victorian philanthropy contained the seeds of the welfare state. The growth in size and complexity of benevolent institutions made them so necessary to society that the government was increasingly drawn into their maintenance. This growing belief that the government should be involved in activities such as education and medical care developed into the welfare state as we know it today.³¹⁸ The Indian government in the mid-1880s was in favour of the existence of a female medical service, but was not willing to pay for it. The Fund resolved this issue by making women’s health services a charitable matter, but the way that the Fund’s eventual financing developed has a whiff of taxation about it. They were primarily financed by Indian donors and investments. A small English Fund was established to pay for the education and travel expenses of English doctors who were to come out to India, but Lady Dufferin and her colleagues were proud of the national character of the movement³¹⁹ and that “not a single rupee subscribed in India has been sent out of the country.”³²⁰ This was not only seen as evidence of the good will of the Indians who made donations, but as part of their duty as local elites. Colonial officials expected Indian “merchant classes and ruling chiefs” to take on the same philanthropic

³¹⁷ Ibid, 30.

³¹⁸ Owen, *English Philanthropy*, passim.

³¹⁹ Dufferin, *A Record of Three Years Work*, 32.

³²⁰ Ibid., 35.

roles as their British counterparts.³²¹ There was no official tax on these elites to pay for the Fund, but it was hoped that they would find contributions to be well-nigh obligatory as part of their social standing.

As much as the government wanted Indian money to remain in India, it also wished to keep the British government's money at home. During the latter half of the nineteenth century, England was decreasing its financial support of the colonies, while attempting to increase the range of its colonial influence. The idea was that India should support itself, and, while this was most obviously demonstrated in the growth of taxation, it was also visible in the way that colonial officials pushed for Indian philanthropic contributions because the wealthy of India should support services to the poor.³²²

The question of payment was also very much about the precise sum involved. One of the questions raised was whether payment should serve as an honorarium for women who were there out of charitable motivations, or whether it should be a fully capitalist wage that reflected the number of women doctors as compared to the demand and compensated for the disadvantages of moving to India. The debate was divided along unsurprising lines. Hoggan and her supporters continued to argue that even women who come out to India for compassionate reasons should still be able to demand a reasonable salary. Her opponents, particularly those who believed that full medical training was unnecessary as a medic with partial Western-style training would still be better than any indigenous doctor, tended to think that, with compassionate motives, any kind of salary

³²¹ David Arnold, *Colonizing the Body: State Medicine and Epidemic Disease in Nineteenth-Century India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 269.

³²² *Ibid.*, 269. This is not to say that there were no philanthropists among Indians in the absence of British pressure. There was equally a long tradition of Indian charitable donation that was easily funnelled into this new scheme, although it had taken a different shape before. Indian elites were also aware that their donations to this cause put them in good standing with the colonial government, which was to their advantage (*Ibid.*, 270).

should be acceptable and women should be more aware of the difficulties in raising any kind of money.

Hoggan was in favour of a substantial wage that would compensate women for the disadvantages of moving to India and provide a comfortable living. Others agreed with her. Henry Acland, the Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford and a prominent figure in the reformation of the English medical profession, wrote that he and his colleagues believed that English medical women in Indian towns should expect “a suitable and honourable professional maintenance”³²³ simply because of the quantity of work they could expect. A ‘suitable’ maintenance would make it worthwhile for these women to settle in India. Ameer Ali, a prominent Indian lawyer and political figure, agreed, though he also proposed that women could begin their Indian medical careers by attaching themselves to local hospitals so as to receive salaries from municipal governments until their private practices were suitably established.³²⁴

Hoggan had several critics, however, who argued that women doctors should be grateful for the opportunity, and recognise that neither the government nor the people had vast amounts of money to spend on women’s health. Surgeon General Francis emphasised philanthropic ideals and “hoped that many would be induced to go for other motives than the accumulation of money.”³²⁵ The poor of India, many argued, did not have the money to pay for highly qualified attention and either medical women should accept lower fees or accept the existence of less qualified, but cheaper, medical practitioners. One critic said:

As people dress not according to their needs but according to their means so

³²³ Henry Acland, “Letter from Dr. Acland to the Editor of the *Times*” June 1882, 341.

³²⁴ “Medical Women for India” JNIA, Jan 1883, 27.

³²⁵ “Medical Women for India” JNIA, Jan 1883, 29.

in the matter of medical assistance also; it is means that regulates the kind and quantity of it. A footman would not have the same kind of dress or the same medicine as his master, not because he wants them less than his master, but because he cannot afford to pay for them.³²⁶

Accordingly, Hoggan's doctors paid at European wages would be "quite out of place"³²⁷ in India as no one there could afford their services, even if they needed them. There were also the typical complaints that women did not require career-level wages or pensions because they were unlikely to stick with the work and would only get married and move on.³²⁸

The question of payment was also related to the paternalistic elements of British philanthropic motives toward Indians. Even when British reformers took the recommendations of Indian elites seriously, they regarded most of the rest of the population as children needing to be taught how to behave in the modern world. The idea of paying for medical treatment was one of these lessons. Indians were to be taught that women's lives and health were valuable and that doctors deserved compensation for their labour. Indian resistance to these 'lessons' was visible in a few doctor's accounts. The philanthropists' emphasis on their Christian charity could be easily turned against them. A few patients responded to doctors' requests for money by arguing that the patients were in fact doing the doctors a favour by allowing them to obtain spiritual merit through their labours.³²⁹ It also seems likely that the poor were not so much unaware that their doctors would like payment as pretending not to notice, because they knew that the British doctors would treat them anyway.

³²⁶ Losain, "A Native View of Lady Doctors for India," JNIA, April 1882, 235-6. This comment is also indicative of the typical attitude toward the poor's right to medical attention, which was that no such right existed. Philanthropists were therefore seen as useful and a positive force, but not *necessary*.

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, 236.

³²⁸ Margaret Balfour and Ruth Young, *The Work of Medical Women in India* (Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1929), 57.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, 85.

The eventual financial compromise reached was the 1886 Dufferin Fund, with a very small minority of unaffiliated women doctors in private practice. The Fund was primarily a charitable entity. Its main source of income was fundraising and donations from its wealthy supporters – mostly Indian, but a few were English. It was officially separate from the government, although it attempted to take on some of the functions of a national health service by providing free health care to the population over as broad a geographic area as possible. The Fund did pay standardised fees to the women it employed and these fees were equivalent to male salaries in similar jobs, but it was required to compromise on other issues. Due to lack of funding, the number of European female doctors the Fund hired remained small so that each could receive a substantial wage. Liberal effort was put into training Indian women who would work for less. Overall, the Fund upheld the ideal of the professional British women, but succumbed to the practical difficulties of its execution.

Secular educators and medical workers developed specialised skills and knowledge, means of quantifying these competencies, and self-conscious awareness of themselves as professionals and experts. These women used these qualifications to demand to be treated as professionals who could demand liveable salaries and a measure of control over their work. They were also strongly in favour of increased professional opportunities for women and structured their projects with expanding those possibilities in mind. They were generally sincerely interested in the problems, as they perceived them, of Indian women, but they were not unaware that the specific context of Indian women's lives provided an easy excuse for their involvement.

Chapter Three: “Godless Rule”³³⁰ or “Properly Trained Non-Proselytising Medical Women”?:³³¹ Reformers and Missionaries Together and At Odds

Missionaries and secular reformers were very much aware of one another’s presence, even if they did not work together. The history of this relationship is tenuous and contentious; as often as these two groups recognised that they had shared goals, they ended up squabbling over how to enact them. Nevertheless, there are some very visible similarities in tone and content in each group’s narratives about their own work. Although their conflicts can mask these similarities, their mutual reliance on the same underlying justifications of professionalism – specialised competences and knowledge, and formal qualifications – makes these broader currents in women’s struggle to enter the working world more obvious.

The lack of explicitly religious justification for the projects of secular reformers caused a great deal of conflict between them and the missionaries. Secular reformers, with a few exceptions such as Sister Nivedita, were generally Christians. Yet they attempted to keep explicit religion out of the work that they did, educating and providing medical care without providing evangelism along with it. This led to conflict as many mission societies felt that secular reformers were failing in their ‘Christian duty’ to evangelise, while many secular reformers felt that missionaries were too focused on Christianity to be effective in their other work.

The debate between Lady Dufferin and several missionary groups is one of the most obvious instances of conflict between reformers and missionaries. When Lady Dufferin proposed her medical scheme in 1885, she made it clear that, as a semi-official

³³⁰ “A Woman’s Christian Medical School for N. India,” *MMAHaA*, Feb 1894, 73.

³³¹ Frances Hoggan, “Women Doctors in India” *JNIA* January 1882, 26.

arm of government, it would have to be completely free of proselytising. Staff would be free to practise the religion of their choice, but not to attempt to convert others. Mission groups were originally in favour of the scheme as they believed its main purpose was to train indigenous women as medical staff, which would have left the majority of Christian women doctors in mission hospitals where they could continue to proselytise.³³² By 1887, however, missionaries were coming to realise that the Fund would necessarily employ many European Christian workers as well and were horrified by the bearing the proselytization ban would have on these new workers' "Christian freedom."³³³ An article by the editor of *Medical Missions* accused Dufferin of specifically persecuting Christians with the Association's rule that "no employee of the association will be allowed to proselytise or interfere in any way with the religious beliefs of any section of the people."³³⁴ He accused Dufferin and the other administrators of the Fund of intending this rule only for Christian applicants and insisted that it was designed to thwart their "natural Christian desires and aims"³³⁵ as well as infringe upon their "rights" as Christians to spread the gospel.³³⁶

Lady Dufferin responded that "our officers are appointed on exactly the same understanding as... any other Indian official;" namely that they are "not... allowed to use [their] offices for the purpose of proselytism."³³⁷ This would not, of course, prevent them from being Christian or expressing their beliefs in other contexts. Missionary writers continued to argue that Christians could not hold back from promoting Christianity

³³² MMaHaA, Nov 1885, 15 and July 1886, 107.

³³³ "Lady Dufferin's Scheme: Its Bearings on Christian Freedom," MMaHaA, Oct 1887, 5.

³³⁴ Quoted in *Ibid.*, 5.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*, 6.

³³⁷ "Lady Dufferin's Scheme: Its Bearings on Christian Freedom," MMaHaA, Jan 1888, 52-3.

without denying their absolute Christian duty to do so.³³⁸ “The thing was impossible, and must be impossible to every loyal Christian soul” wrote the editor of *Medical Missions*; he expected that no Christians would sink to involve themselves with the Fund.³³⁹ A later mission writer would note sadly that “one very grave drawback to the Dufferin scheme has been the godless rule,”³⁴⁰ which is rather fascinating in light of earlier mission claims that Christian doctors “could not even feel a pulse without doing it like a Christian,”³⁴¹ which would seem to argue for the utility of even the silent Christian doctor.

The reverse kind of criticism also occurred. As previously mentioned, one of the reasons that Dr. Hoggan began to push for a secular medical service was that she was dissatisfied with the quality of care offered by medical missionaries. She not only criticised them for the way they expressed their religion, as the missionaries did to Dufferin, but for the way that this affected their ability to be professional doctors. “Women doctors who are sent out must go out furnished with a full and complete medical education,” she insisted. Mission doctors were too often encouraged to take the specialised medical missionary training, which did not offer the same level of medical knowledge.³⁴² Mission training was two years instead of four and was carefully centred around items that were thought to be particularly useful to women: infant care, midwifery, and external medicine as women were not trained in surgery. This truncated training rendered these women ineligible to take the licensing examinations.

Missionaries and secular reformers were not always at odds. Carpenter’s visit to India took her to mission schools as well as government and private ones and she often

³³⁸ Ibid., 54, see also “Lady Dufferin’s Scheme” Feb 1888, 69 and “The Lady Dufferin Scheme and Christian Freedom” June 1888, 137.

³³⁹ “The Lady Dufferin Scheme and Christian Freedom” MMAHaA, June 1888, 138.

³⁴⁰ “A Woman’s Christian Medical School for N. India,” IM, Feb 1894, 73.

³⁴¹ “On Female Medical Missions for India” *IFE*, January 1873, 193.

³⁴² Frances Hoggan, “Women Doctors in India,” JNIA, Jan 1882, 26.

had complimentary things to say about the missionaries, particularly mission girls' schools. In Poona, she visited the boys' normal school and the girls' day school (both run by missionaries) and concluded that the girls' school was the "more agreeable visit"³⁴³ as well as a better run school. Although she was in favour of government schooling for girls, Carpenter was very willing to extend praise to "the superior mission schools"³⁴⁴ she thought were being run on the right lines of "strict economy," "good [lady] teachers," "apt scholars" and lessons in "cooking and housework," as well as English and maths.³⁴⁵ On the other hand, there were missionaries who objected to Carpenter's proposal for female normal schools, which would compete with their religious ones,³⁴⁶ and who resented her riding "roughshod over everybody"³⁴⁷ in her willingness to critique missionaries and government schools alike and assert the superiority of her educational ideas.

Despite these critiques of one another's competence and motivations, when it came to their own work, both missionaries and secular reformers took pains to demonstrate their professionalism. The elements of professionalism that are most visible in the work of both groups are training, organisation and standardisation. Both missionaries and secular reformers overtly and self-consciously demonstrated their abilities in this regard and endorsed these traits as criteria by which to judge performance.

Secular reformers and missionary women all shared an interest in demonstrating their success through the number of women they educated. All the missionary reports

³⁴³ Mary Carpenter, *Six Months in India*, vol. 1 (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1868), 113.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 55.

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 113-4.

³⁴⁶ Kumari Jayawardena, *The White Woman's Other Burden: Western Women and South Asia During British Rule*, (New York: Routledge, 1995), 71.

³⁴⁷ Quoted in Barbara N. Ramusack, "Cultural Missionaries, Maternal Imperialists, Feminist Allies: British Women Activists in India, 1865-1945," *Women's Studies International Forum* 13, no. 4 (1990): 311.

discussed in chapter two were specific about the number of students they taught, and many were equally committed to enumerating their successes. Secular reformers were equally interested in this quantification of their ability. The *Englishwoman's Review* frequently published updates on female education in India. These updates included numbers of female students, schools or both. As of 1875 there were approximately “1,640 girls' schools in British India, with 57,000 girls receiving some sort of education”³⁴⁸ and “1500 native ladies under daily instruction in their own homes” in Bengal.³⁴⁹ Although these figures included a wide variety of schools, and not only secular schools run by British women, missionaries and reformers visibly emphasise that it was women who were achieving all of these things when women-run schools are mentioned. One article describes both the male-run Madras Medical College and the Female Training College at Ahmedabad. The medical college is praised for admitting women students, but the writer does so impersonally, without assigning credit to any individual. The Female Training College, by contrast, was “progressing satisfactorily under Miss Mitchell, who is a hard-working, zealous and able teacher” and whose pupils are described as “*her* pupils.”³⁵⁰ The students' success is attributed directly to the quality of her teaching.³⁵¹ Another article in the *Englishwoman's Review* reported on three girls' schools in Bengal saying that

all three schools were working satisfactorily, and... in one of them, the Chundunwady School, into which... the system of female teachers has been introduced, the young girls show much more vivacity and higher attainments

³⁴⁸ “Foreign Notes and News,” EWR, Jan 1875, 46. It is unclear whether the 57,000 girls tallied are only those in the 1640 schools, though that seems most likely. In addition, “the Viceroy stated, in his speech at Allahabad, that there are now about 500 girls' schools in the Western Provinces” (EWR, “Foreign Notes and News” April 1874, 157).

³⁴⁹ EWR, “Foreign Notes and News,” Jan 1874, 66.

³⁵⁰ “Foreign Notes and News” EWR April 1875., 189. Italics added.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 190.

than boys of the same age.³⁵²

The pleasure at being able to point to female teachers as more successful is palpable.

Both missionaries and reformers emphasised that they were particularly qualified to be teachers. This professional standard was important to both even as they displayed it in different ways. One major distinction is the degree to which each group felt the need to justify their presence. Missionaries, even female ones, were catering to an audience of missionaries and mission supporters who did not need convincing of the basic “utility [and] necessity... of missions” which were “to all thinking, reading Christian minds... admitted facts.”³⁵³ They were working in the imperial context of Victorian Britain, which was generally sympathetic to missionary work. Their evangelical necessity was not in doubt and they were already there for the specific purpose of entering the women-only spaces where their male counterparts could not go. In addition, the accepted method of evangelism toward the resistant Indian population, particularly the women of the zenana, was to sneak subtle religious messages in with the more popular secular instruction, such as by using biblical stories in their set texts. Missionaries, therefore, had less need than secular reformers to justify their *presence* as teachers, but were more interested in demonstrating that the teaching they did was up to professional standards.

Missionary women demonstrated their competence by emphasising the orderliness and regularity with which they ran their schools, as well as their success rate. Regularity could describe the progress students made in classroom work or the general routine of the entire school. Miss Snelson described her girls’ school as follows: “it is not often that anything happens to disturb the quiet everyday routine of our life at the Normal

³⁵² “Foreign Notes and News” EWR, Jan 1874, 66.

³⁵³ Emma Raymond Pitman, *Heroines of the Mission Field* (London: Cassell, Petter, Galpin & Co., 1880), xiii.

School, Sigrā. Day follows day, and week follows week with almost startling rapidity.” Although this is a prelude to discussing disruptions in the routine, they are all regular interruptions: things like the “Half-Yearly Test Examination,” and teachers’ birthdays, which were celebrated according to the traditions of the school with a hymn and a holiday, all carefully planned well in advance.³⁵⁴ Edith Fellows in Panchgani also praised the routine of the school at her hill station, and goes on to discuss the students’ success, as attested to by the government inspector and their results in the Trinity College Examinations, with eight passes in the practical, ten in the theoretical and three students matriculating.³⁵⁵ Such criteria for measuring success are also interesting because they show a clear interest in validation by external standards. This kind of testing would not have made sense for all students, particularly adult women who were more interested in literacy skills than graded education. Nonetheless, when students did take such tests, the way that missionaries write about them indicates their eagerness to assure themselves and others that their educational work was not compromised by their missionary interests. As Leonard Schwarz argues, “the professional society [of the nineteenth century] was an examining society, its educational system requiring ever finer methods of categorizing its output.”³⁵⁶ This interest in examinations for students can be seen as part of this wider interest in the examination as a tool for determining fitness, which reflected these philanthropists’ desire for external validation of the legitimacy of their professional work, both in their requests for external bodies to assess their successes, and their use of the methods of these bodies.

³⁵⁴ Miss Snelson, “A Peep Behind the Scenes at Sigrā” TZ, Sept 1903, 165-6.

³⁵⁵ Edith Fellows, “Panchgani”, TZ, October 1903, 182-3.

³⁵⁶ Leonard Schwarz, “Professions, Elites, and Universities in England, 1870-1970,” *The Historical Journal* 47, no. 4 (December 1, 2004): 943.

Missionaries taught Sunday schools, they taught in formal schools, they taught in zenanas and they taught anyone who would sit still long enough, but the secular education movement was more strictly focused on formal schooling. Even where accommodations were being made for secluded women in zenanas, the model was still that of a school with grades and structured lesson plans, rather than informal tutoring. Reformers established schools that would permit women to keep purdah by employing only female teachers and providing covered transportation between the schools and the pupils' homes. Where this was not feasible, "private teaching in zenanas form[ed] an important feature in female education."³⁵⁷ Under the aegis of these more official schools, female educators had to demonstrate that they were qualified to teach because that was to be their only work, whereas missionaries were assumed to be qualified by virtue of their mission training.

Missionaries also established formal schools. These were, however, an extension of earlier attempts to interest the population in Christianity through Sunday School literacy or the kind of zenana teaching reputedly begun by Mrs. H.C. Mullens, who was supposed to have "opened the zenanas at the point of her embroidery needle" in the early nineteenth century.³⁵⁸ Training in needlework formed a substantial part of many girls' schools' curricula, but, in the form of sewing circles, it was also considered an excellent way to establish casual social contact with Indian women, which missionaries hoped

³⁵⁷ These were very similar to missionary teaching in homes, but tend to be identified in reformer literature as more along the lines of private tuition in specific subjects than the more general missionary social-teaching visit. Mrs. Bayle Bernard, "The Position of Women in India" EWR, July 1868, 476.

³⁵⁸ Quoted in Geraldine H. Forbes, "In Search of the "Pure Heathen": Missionary Women in Nineteenth Century India," *Economic and Political Weekly* 21, no. 17 (April 26, 1986): 3. The story that was told in many mission sources was of a missionary's wife who so impressed an Indian gentleman with the slippers she had embroidered for her husband that he permitted her to visit his wife and teach her needlework, when she, and other female missionaries, had previously been banned for their overt evangelism. Many name Mullens as this woman, other sources give different names or leave her anonymous; all agreed that an event of this type was the beginning of zenana visiting.

could be turned toward evangelical ends. Missionaries also desired to cast their net as widely as possible, so they were more likely to make uninvited visits as well as their regular ones.³⁵⁹ As discussed in Chapter 1, however, when these sewing circles met or when these missionaries dropped in unannounced, they attempted to follow set plans. Miss Clay in Fattigarh visited whatever villages would accommodate her, but she had Sunday school plans and set lectures to give at each of them.³⁶⁰ Missionaries, therefore, seem less concerned with the format of their teaching ventures than with making their various formats as professional as possible, whereas secular reformers were more interested in formal schooling, although they were willing to conduct formal lessons under a variety of conditions.

By the turn of the century, when Fellows was writing, mission schools were more strongly established and thus able to command better attendance, with predictable results. Early mission schools – particularly those concerned about the “exceeding brevity of the average period of [the pupils’] attendance,”³⁶¹ or focused on adult literacy or domestic skills – were less able to demonstrate success through passing their students into higher education. The mission school examinations of the 1830s and 40s were “creditable,”³⁶² but followed no kind of centralised system, so exams could be on any text or subject with some students reading “a Bengali tract on female education (the work of a learned

³⁵⁹ This is particularly apparent in the common ‘village tours’ that missionaries undertook outside of their regular school teaching. These were primarily evangelical in nature, but could have an educational purpose as well. One excellent example is Miss Mount’s article “Gorakhpur.” Miss Mount defines “the only object of our visit” as “to teach the people about God,” but later speaks of “teach[ing] the women” as well. This visit is also an example of the problems inherent in uninvited visits. Mount is rarely made welcome, is suspected of bringing plague and has dogs set upon her. By the end of her fortnight’s perambulations “the unrest and suspicion in the hearts of the people increasing, so that in the end, we found to our sorrow, that even in villages where before we had been well received, we were no longer welcome.” (TZ, Aug 1903, 152-3.)

³⁶⁰ Miss Clay, “Amongst the Villages of the Punjab”, IW, May-June 1881, 137-142.

³⁶¹ Alexander Duff, “The Early Rise and Progress of Female Education in Calcutta from 1819 to 1830,” IFE, April 1872, 65.

³⁶² Weitbrecht, “Personal Reminiscences,” IFE, April 1872, 69.

native); others a book of fables and Watts catechism.”³⁶³ The broad focus of mission education meant that these miscellaneous examinations never disappeared, but missionaries formalised the schooling they offered when possible and aimed for schools like Fellows’ where students took the formal Trinity examinations or other established tests.

Secular educators such as Annette Ackroyd and Sister Nivedita demonstrated their personal fitness as educators by their knowledge of the paedagogical theory of their day. Ackroyd assures her readers that the girls at her school learn “all the ordinary requisites of a fair education” including “English history, some natural science, and the elements of the laws of health, besides the grammar of their own and our language.”³⁶⁴ She also makes much of the exercise she encourages her pupils to take, which was something of a paedagogical innovation, particularly for Bengali girls who were “incredulous” that they are capable of walking three whole miles “with [their] very own feet.”³⁶⁵ Nivedita makes much of her kindergartens, which were cutting edge in the 1860s.³⁶⁶ Discussion of kindergartens and similar new educational systems was widespread in these reforming circles in the late nineteenth century.³⁶⁷ These women’s emphasis on their awareness of new educational methods would have overtly indicated that they were qualified to teach. It would also have demonstrated their overt involvement with the imperial project of ‘civilising’ India. Schools, and particularly kindergartens,

³⁶³ Alexander Duff, “The Early Rise and Progress of Female Education in Calcutta from 1819 to 1830,” IFE April 1872, 65.

³⁶⁴ Annette Beveridge, “The Hindu Mahila Bidyalaya’ EWR, Feb 1876, 56.

³⁶⁵ An unnamed student quoted in *ibid.*, 57.

³⁶⁶ Nivedita, *The Complete Works of Sister Nivedita* vol. V, (Calcutta: Advaita Ashram, 1982), 54-6.

³⁶⁷ The JNIA alone mentions kindergartens more than 300 times in the 15 years between 1886 and 1901. A number of these instances were related to female British reformers, but Englishmen and Indians of both genders also discussed these new methods. The EWR was less specifically interested in education, but still contains nearly 100 articles that refer to “The Kinder-Garten System” (EWR, Jan 1873, 1), although this is obviously not confined to its application in India alone.

were emblematic of the English modernity that many British believed India required desperately.

Carpenter and her supporters also agreed that the most important element in any plan to reform the Indian education system was to acquire teachers qualified through study at normal schools or training colleges in England. Part of Carpenter's scheme for reforming education in India was a Female Normal School in India for the purpose of training the locals and thereby providing the Indian educational system with a convenient source of such qualified teachers.³⁶⁸ The other part, however, was to bring over already trained Englishwomen to seed the fledgling system with the teachers needed at the moment. She asserted that "the training of native women can be effected only by Englishwomen" and that the government would be obliged to import Englishwomen as teachers in the normal schools.³⁶⁹ Much emphasis was placed on the qualifications of these teachers. Carpenter specifically referred to these teachers as "educated women" multiple times and emphasised their further willingness to undertake lessons in Indian vernaculars so as to become even better qualified to teach Indian women.³⁷⁰ It seems likely that "educated women" was also a coded reference to these women's class and racial qualifications. These British women had the specifically educational training, but also the background of middle-class whiteness that would make them particularly effective at 'uplifting' Indian women by teaching them 'appropriate' domestic behaviour alongside literacy or mathematical skills. British women's professional identities are at the forefront throughout. Carpenter described them as "anxious to commence the undertaking" for the good of India, which implies philanthropic motivation, although

³⁶⁸ Carpenter, *Six Months in India* vol. 2 157-160.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 156-7.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 157.

Carpenter does expect the government to pay them and compensate them for the inconveniences of emigration.

Female teachers also emphasised the fact of their respectable femininity, arguing that femaleness in conjunction with training was particularly effective. Many of these women argued that female teachers were necessary to instil not only literacy, but domestic virtues. One article on Ackroyd's school in Calcutta, arguing for its general utility, noted that the "object of the school is to give thorough instruction in Bengali and English," but also felt the need to mention that "great attention is given to the training of the pupils in practical housework, and to the formation of neat and industrious habits."³⁷¹ Drawing this association between their particular skillset and the exceptional success of their work would have helped establish their legitimacy as female teachers who could not be replaced by men. As well, tempering their unconventional behaviour – teaching in India – with these displays of 'appropriate femininity' of a distinctly middle-class kind would have reassured their critics that their educational achievements were not excessively transgressive.

The need to educate Indian women in appropriate domesticity also illustrates the racial tensions underpinning all of this philanthropy. Indian girls were not merely learning to be suitable adult women; they were learning to be English-style middle-class white women. Popular books, such as Mary Frances Billington's 1875 *Woman in India* or Dr. Armstrong-Hopkins' 1898 *Within the Purdah*, created and traded on the image of an adult Indian woman as a degraded figure trapped in a cruel system. On entering Indian homes, the British were "struck, as a rule, by the entire absence of all that constitutes to

³⁷¹ "Foreign Notes and News" EWR, April 1874, 157.

our ideas the complement of a room”³⁷² and Indian homes were depicted as “gloomy, dirty, and devoid of every comfort.”³⁷³ This lack of industriousness and attention to domestic order was partially depicted as the result of “cruel custom”³⁷⁴ which deprived Indian women of their rights as housekeepers under vicious mothers-in-law. More fundamentally, these deficiencies were also racialised as an attribute of “this most barbarous people.”³⁷⁵ This absence of domestic virtue was a problem that could be solved, but only white women of appropriate training and social status who naturally possessed these advantages could “rais[e] the degraded daughters of India from their debased condition.”³⁷⁶

The same kind of gradual progress that can be seen in the development of missionary education marks the introduction of female missionaries into medical work and differentiates them from secular medics, who overtly defined themselves as professional right out of the gate. Medical work could be integrated into female missionaries’ work slowly throughout the 1860s as male medical missionaries were already well established and female missionaries had already been in place since the 1840s as the kind of charitable workers who were expected to offer any kind of assistance they could, provided it would aid in the ongoing conversion process. This included certain kinds of medical attention. First aid or health training was an adjunct to teaching sanitation, which was considered to be an important element of ‘uplift.’ Many missionaries agreed with Miss Lore, a medical missionary, that “Castile soap” was “a

³⁷² Mary Weitbrecht, *The Women of India, and Christian Work in the Zenana* (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1875), 105.

³⁷³ *Ibid.*, 106.

³⁷⁴ S. Armstrong-Hopkins, *Within the Purdah: Being the Personal Observations of a Medical Missionary in India* (New York: Eaton & Mains, 1898), 70.

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 70.

³⁷⁶ Weitbrecht, *The Women of India*, 159.

most excellent remedy for many Indian ills” which she ascribed to lack of cleanliness in their personal habits.³⁷⁷ Several women also acted as assistants to male medical missionaries and might “spen[d] mornings in dispensing medicine”³⁷⁸ or “personally attending those stricken with fever and cholera.”³⁷⁹ From these humble beginnings, female missionaries were able to acquire more responsibilities until they began to demand medical training in the 1860s, even if it was, at first, only the barest bones of a medical curriculum.

Secular doctors, on the other hand, as they emerged in the 1880s, were either attempting to gain acceptance for their practice in India or trying to expand medical care to the greater portion of the Indian female population. They wanted to establish their own medical practices across India and this simply could not be done by anyone other than licensed doctors.³⁸⁰ They had to come out strongly from the start as the kind of doctors they wanted to be; there were no intermediate steps to take.

Yet missionaries in the 1880s did begin to openly push for their need to be equally qualified and fully licenced, even if many of them did wish to remain within the mission framework unlike Beilby, who expressed her public disapproval of medical missionaries and moved into the secular medical service. Despite her popularity among medical missionaries, many of her supporters did not follow her lead entirely and would come to dominate female medical missions as they received medical degrees in increasingly large numbers. They were clearly not indifferent to the value of full medical

³⁷⁷ Quoted in William Arthur, *Women's Work in India* (London: T. Woolmer, 1882), 85.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 68.

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 84.

³⁸⁰ Reformers were also interested in introducing qualified female nurses and hospital attendants, even into largely male-run hospitals, which could be counted as a step in between unqualified volunteers and fully qualified doctors, but as these nurses and attendants were also expected to have qualifications, albeit of a more loosely defined nature than those of doctors, I would argue that these fit more closely into the professional paradigm.

degrees, so it seems plausible that they professionalised slowly because the conditions of mission life both permitted them to do so and restricted them more severely than secular reformers. It was more straightforward for missionary women to take on medical work as part of their original objective, but they were later than their secular counterparts in fully professionalising: within missions the argument could be made that women were already sufficiently useful with only limited medical training. These arguments did not hold for secular doctors – it was a question of whether to bring in trained women or none at all – so they were obliged to fight the battle of training from the outset. Nevertheless, missionaries and secular doctors clearly both desired professionalism, given the way that they pursued it through better training and higher standards. It was only the contexts in which they operated that resulted in the different expressions of this desire.

There were also similarities in the broader justifications of mission and secular reform work. Both sets of women made abundant use of their ‘Indian sisters’ in the zenana, framing these women as helpless victims who required the assistance that only they were capable of providing. This image of the zenana and the assumption that only women could provide this kind of service was essential to getting female philanthropists in the door at all, as well as contributing to a part of their professional project. It allowed them to demand certain kinds of training because they could not be replaced by even the most highly trained male workers. Although missionaries and secular reformers did disagree on the ultimate function of their medical work, both groups positioned their medical workers as the only doctors their female patients were likely to see; by the 1890s both groups were arguing that these doctors would therefore need to be trained to the highest standard. Their effective monopoly on these visits also permitted these doctors to

construct their zenana work as monopolised knowledge of the kind typical to professions. Although their extensive writings on the “lamentable condition”³⁸¹ of the zenanas dispersed this knowledge into the public consciousness, these writings also demonstrated their possession of this kind of insider knowledge and the means by which they obtained it. Female doctors were not only the only doctors allowed in the zenana, but made up a sizable proportion of all eligible visitors. They alone among English people had the opportunity to learn exactly what conditions were like inside and to make recommendations about how to fix them.

The example of the zenana also highlights how specific the case of India was. There were missionaries and secular reformers in other British colonies, but India was a special case. The relatively high level of control the British were able to exercise in India³⁸² – which is to say, not very much, but more than in other colonies – combined with the specific social circumstances made India a more fertile ground for this kind of philanthropic project.

As Antoinette Burton has argued about reformers in England itself, the contrast that British women were able to draw between their own circumstances and those of Indian women in zenanas were essential to the way that first-wave feminism developed. Jeffrey Cox argues that the image of the downtrodden inmate of the zenana was particularly common in missionary texts because the earliest female missionaries were actively competing with their male counterparts for placements and had to argue that women’s mission work in any given station was of sufficient import to compensate for

³⁸¹ Weitbrecht, *The Women of India*, 141.

³⁸² This is not to say that British were able to exercise total control over Indian geography and peoples, but they were particularly assiduous there in their efforts to make their colonies “legible” to the state apparatus in order to be able to effectively exercise their government functions (James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 2).

the loss of men's work.³⁸³ This may well be true, but the secular reformers were not far off in their own concern about the inhabitants of the zenana, quoting the Maharani on "what we Indian women suffer when we are sick" at every opportunity.³⁸⁴

The quest for public authority that Burton identifies as an under-explored demand of the suffragists,³⁸⁵ seems equally relevant to these nascent professionals. Suffragists were particularly interested in the ability to participate in the political process, but the women's movement as a whole was attempting to assert that women should be able to involve themselves in other aspects of public life, including Empire work.³⁸⁶ Missionaries and reformers were clearly putting themselves forward in that way. Not only were they writing in these public venues and putting themselves out there as citizens of Empire, their content was often equally imperial. One writer wrote in the JNIA that, by visiting Indian women, "Englishwomen would do more to reform native society *and consolidate the Empire* than any number of statesmen can."³⁸⁷ The *Female Evangelist* was even more overt, arguing that:

the *strength* of the claim of *this* Society [the Zenana Bible and Medical Mission] is that it... has chosen India, which is part of our own Empire and... every appeal to help that benighted land had the force of a home claim.³⁸⁸

India was particularly important to these women as a part of the Empire, a place where they could demonstrate their important service to the larger polity. Mission women did

³⁸³ Jeffrey Cox, *Imperial Fault Lines: Christianity and Imperial Power in India, 1818-1940* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 67.

³⁸⁴ Originally printed in Beilby, "Royal Sympathy, or the Three Messages," IFE, Oct 1881, 4. The article, or parts from it, including the Maharani's speech, were reprinted in a variety of sources, including the EWR (which described it in 1888 as the "now celebrated interview" (EWR, "Present Condition and Future Prospects of Medical Women in India" Nov 1888, 483.)) JNIA, *Life and Light for Women, Woman's Work for Women*, and many other periodicals.

³⁸⁵ Antoinette Burton, *Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women and Imperial Culture, 1865-1915* (Chapel Hill & London: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 33.

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 35.

³⁸⁷ M.A.T., JNIA, July 1886, 375. Emphasis added.

³⁸⁸ "Our Work and the Workers" IFE, April 1872, 86.

not only have a religious duty to work in India, but a patriotic and neighbourly duty.

In addition to asserting themselves as the professionals they wished to be, philanthropists positioned themselves to defend against their critics. Several secular reformers depicted the introduction of women into paid careers as an advantage to a female medical service. Nevertheless, they often had to contend with assertions that female doctors would only marry and thereby waste their training and the effort of the government to import them to India.³⁸⁹ They were obliged to counter this claim with assertions of their philanthropic devotion to the cause. British women emphasised that they were in the work to ameliorate the condition of Indian women. Dora White, a doctor in Hyderabad, wrote that due to the poverty of her patients “a lady doctor must be prepared to give up a great deal of her time without prospect of remuneration, or else she will forgo all opportunities of doing any real good.”³⁹⁰ Accordingly, “every medical lady coming out to India should have a certain fixed income guaranteed to her”³⁹¹ through some agency such as the Dufferin Fund. White does note that there are wealthy women in India who would pay substantial fees for medical services. A doctor could not make a living off them, however, as such a women would be there for the purpose of “doing real good” – rescuing Indian women and children from the “inefficacious and often barbarous and cruel treatment practised by their own hakeems and dais (as native midwives are called).” This doctor would therefore feel compelled to treat the impoverished as well as the wealthy.³⁹² The implication is that while these female doctors were professionals who could command real fees, they also possessed a philanthropic calling. This calling helped

³⁸⁹ Margaret Balfour and Ruth Young, *The Work of Medical Women in India* (Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1929), 56-7.

³⁹⁰ Dora White, “A Sketch of Zenana Medical Work in Hyderabad, Deccan” JNIA, Feb 1887, 70.

³⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 70.

³⁹² *Ibid.*, 68.

to protect them from claims that they were attached to the profit motive in ways that were not respectable or unfeminine.

As noted, female mission workers could also be charged with wasting their training by marrying. Many did marry their male counterparts, but the outcome was more complicated than it was for secular reformers since mission wives continued their work in the mission circle. It caused tensions between mission wives and single missionaries for, as one missionary complained, “if a young lady is sent to do the work she receives a handsome salary. If my wife does it, we are landed in extra expenses, with no extra help.”³⁹³ Female missionaries countered the complaint by asserting that they would not abandon their vocation for secular happiness.³⁹⁴ Miss Good in Barrackpore recounted a meeting with a pupil who asked why she did not marry and wished her marriage to “some great person,” to which Miss Good responded that she “had no wish to be great in this world,” only to serve her God and “do good works.” The implication was that she would not leave mission service.³⁹⁵

Examining both secular and mission sources allows each to illuminate some of the gaps in the other. The missionary educators discussed above were trained more systematically than secular experts such as Mary Carpenter, but were expected to emphasise their training less than the Normal School educated women whom Carpenter supported. Missionaries did praise one another, particularly for skill in foreign languages, but the years that most missionaries spent training in England were not written about to the same degree as their work in the field. This is presumably related to their religious

³⁹³ H. Coley, quoted in Rhonda Anne Semple, *Missionary Women*, (Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2003), 99.

³⁹⁴ It must be remembered that, although mission wives did continue to serve their mission societies, they were not official mission workers or considered to have the same kind of vocation as their husbands.

³⁹⁵ Miss Good, “Our Work and the Workers” IFE Jan 1875, 234.

insistence that the divine compulsion to evangelise “and the unspeakable power given by God the Holy Ghost to those who go forth commissioned by Him”³⁹⁶ should be accorded primacy as the motivator and enabling factor in their abilities and successes. One mission report from 1872 runs through the numbers of students helped, a variety of success stories, and a description of the “commodious and delightful”³⁹⁷ station, but ends with the clarifying assertion that “it is not by numbers alone that we must judge of success. We have received many tokens that God is working with us, for which we desire humbly and thankfully to praise Him.”³⁹⁸ Another was “astonished at what has been accomplished, but we had to remember that back of this commission lay Jesus Himself.”³⁹⁹ M.O. Hamilton “felt that Jesus was ... a very present help indeed.”⁴⁰⁰ Still the fact of their training, and that it was required by most missionary organisations, indicates that it was more important than it may appear from their texts. Missionaries and secular reformers believed in the same kinds of education; their mutual recognition of one another’s capabilities – save in the matter of religion – indicates that.⁴⁰¹ It is therefore reasonable to assume that the attitudes that secular reformers made explicit – that only trained Englishwomen were suitably competent and organised to undertake this educational work – were also present in missionary circles. Such attitudes and expectations explain the

³⁹⁶ “Our Work and the Workers” IFE, Jan 1881, 41.

³⁹⁷ “Our Work and the Workers” IFE, July 1872, 139.

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 140.

³⁹⁹ “Our Valedictory Meeting” *TZ*, November 1900, 3.

⁴⁰⁰ M.O. Hamilton, “The Story of Our Mission Work at Lucknow,” July 1873, 312.

⁴⁰¹ Carpenter herself praises many mission schools that she visited on her 1866 tour, and missionaries were willing to accept in turn that she was “an amiable, gifted and benevolent lady” (“Miscellaneous Intelligence” IFE, April 1875, 286) leading “well qualified ladies [with] all the necessary mental endowments”, even if they bemoaned “the Government system, which... compelled them to exclude from the education they gave all moral training and culture and all religious knowledge and light!” (“Our Work and the Workers” IFE, July 1874, 133.)

level of training which missionaries were required, and prepared, to undergo.⁴⁰²

Missionary teachers are the least overt about professional interests, as compared to medical missionaries, secular doctors, or secular teacher. There are alternative readings of their interests in statistical data, or the efficacy of their work; it is certainly true that demonstrating their successes would have been useful in their fundraising efforts, and they were genuinely sincere in their philanthropic aims. Nevertheless, the similarities of mission teacher reports to the writings of the other philanthropic women here indicates that they could be examined as part of this broader trend as one of many potential analytical lenses.

The reports that missionaries gave of their experiences running girls' schools are far more numerous and detailed than the equivalents for secular establishments. The underlying similarities in their educational philosophies however, would indicate that there were substantial similarities in the day-to-day running of both. This is borne out by descriptions of Annette Ackroyd's secular school, which numerates the same kind of lessons in cooking, needlework, and basic literacy and numeracy skills as offered by the mission schools, with a similar overall emphasis on appropriate domestic femininity.⁴⁰³

Missionaries and reformers were not the only British women engaged in philanthropic work in India. Memsahibs – the wives of ICS officials – also participated, although their example highlights the distinction between their work and that of the more professional missionaries and secular reformers.

Memsahibs primarily engaged in zenana visiting and fundraising. The zenana

⁴⁰² Missionaries were also learning to evangelise along the lines preferred by their various societies, but, particularly for female missionaries, this was in itself a form of educational teaching.

⁴⁰³ Foreign Notes and News" EWR, April 1874, 157 and Beveridge, Annette. "The Hindu Mahila Bidyalaya" EWR, Feb 1876, 53.

visiting of memsahibs tended toward ‘purdah parties’⁴⁰⁴ like the ones described by E.A. Manning, the editor of *India’s Magazine* from 1877 to 1905, who visited India in 1888. Manning praised the hostess for her “tact and kindness” and noted that “it is greatly through [the hostess’] influence that other ladies at Bombay have organised purdah parties”, but remained vague about the expected results from these parties, except to say that they were “extremely enjoyed.”⁴⁰⁵ The implication is that these parties were intermittent social gatherings that might, ideally, have some positive influence on Indian women. This inconsistency stands in contrast to the regular visits of missionaries, which could also be social, but were seen as an organised process.

Similarly when memsahibs engaged in medical work, they did so on a strictly part-time and amateur basis. Flora Annie Steel, the noted author, “did no little doctoring” in the village in which her husband was stationed, dispensing “castor oil, grey powder [a concoction of mercury and chalk], rhubarb and ipecacuanha”⁴⁰⁶: all household medicines. Minnie Wood wrote to her sister in 1857 about having supervised children’s vaccinations done under the auspices of her husband’s work in his district (he was a lieutenant colonel in the Bengal Army). The vaccinations themselves were performed by a native doctor.⁴⁰⁷ Neither Steel, Wood, nor their compatriots were interested in taking further steps and developing a full medical career. Another memsahib reported enjoying her public health visits to Indian villages for the “friendly feeling between them and us,” and appreciated the locals who “tried to improve their conditions at least for the sake of our visits and

⁴⁰⁴ In the latter half of the nineteenth century British women in India began to host parties to bring elite British and Indian women together in a social setting. So that their guests could keep purdah, the guest lists were exclusively female. They called these ‘purdah or ‘ladies parties.’

⁴⁰⁵ E. A. Manning, “My Tour in India” JNIA, May 1889, 221-3.

⁴⁰⁶ Flora Annie Steel, *The Garden of Fidelity: Being the Autobiography of Flora Annie Steel 1847-1929* (London: Macmillan, 1930), 57.

⁴⁰⁷ Jane Vansittart ed., *From Minnie, With Love: The Letters of a Victorian Lady 1849-1861* (London: Peter Davies, 1974), 66.

[who] always welcomed me with a smile.” This could have been serious public health work – she was attempting to teach them about sanitation and disease vectors – but she had no particular training and was not fluent in the language of the villagers she was attempting to help. Even when she had to discontinue her visits, “owing to my ignorance of the Oriya language,” she stopped going rather than attempting to learn the language.⁴⁰⁸

Although the work that memsahibs did was often difficult and they were serious about it, their lack of interest in the professional side makes the professional elements of mission and secular reform work seem more obvious. The hostesses Manning praised were hostesses, throwing parties on a social level, not visiting at regular intervals to check up on their cases. The regularity of missionary visits, although they also served a social function, indicates that missionaries had more specific goals in mind and a plan of action. Missionaries also began their medical work in much the same way as Steel, but eventually decided that it could be better done if they were fully trained, whereas Steel or the unnamed memsahib in Procida’s book never took that final step.

Memsahibs also help to highlight that missionaries and reformers were pushing, however gently, against societal constraints. Memsahibs performed the acceptable face of women’s philanthropy and were more often asked to justify their lack of interest in causes⁴⁰⁹ than to justify their work. Carpenter wrote repeated admonitions to these women, remarking that when Indian women wish “some lady would often visit them, and take an interest in the improvement of the children, truly it is strange that none do so!”⁴¹⁰

Another newspaper pointed out that:

⁴⁰⁸ Quoted in Mary A. Procida, *Married to the Empire: Gender, Politics and Imperialism in India, 1883-1947* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 168.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 187.

⁴¹⁰ Carpenter, *Six Months in India* vol. 1, 79.

if... there was an increasing tendency on the part of English ladies in every city and station to visit the native ladies around them and, above all, to learn their language so as to win their hearts, Englishwomen in India would in half a century do more for its civilization than all the machinery of Government.⁴¹¹

There was work to be done in India and many thought that memsahibs were the women to do it.

Reformers and missionaries, conversely, were often required to justify themselves or felt compelled to prove their worth. All the preceding accounts of the reformers and missionaries demonstrate this through their evocations of zenana conditions and their emphases on the success and value of the philanthropic work undertaken. This split illuminates the necessity of the domestic coding displayed by reformers. There is no evidence that reformers wished to overthrow the gender roles of their culture entirely and a great deal of evidence that missionaries were very much invested in those roles as part of their faith. Nevertheless, they did wish to undertake work that some people objected to on the grounds of their gender and therefore mobilised such coding to defend themselves. This does not necessarily mean that their only use of domestic rhetoric was entirely cynical, but the fact that it was necessary demonstrates that such signifiers did not detract from – but rather buttressed – their professional aims.

Neither women missionaries nor women secular reformers fit perfectly into the typical model of a professional. They were not aiming to create a closed shop of philanthropists or to establish their own credentialing system, but rather to partake in some of the benefits of such types of systems. As Anne Witz argues, however, it is not the success that matters, but the actions that women took toward that goal. These philanthropic women were attempting to create that body of specialised knowledge and

⁴¹¹ “Good Work in the Zenana” *Friend of India* October 2, 1873, 1099.

the recognition of their specialised skill sets that would put them on the way to a professional identity.

Conclusion

As these women complained, the success rate of all the philanthropists discussed in the preceding chapters was “quite impossible to tabulate” precisely.⁴¹² Nevertheless, they all made attempts of various kinds to describe or explain their success – for example, by giving what numbers they did have at their disposal and relating particularly touching anecdotes, or by arguing for women’s particular utility as domestic exemplars. As Anne Witz argues, attempts at professionalism should be defined by the attributes of the profession that the subjects were attempting to take on themselves, rather than their ultimate success at securing incontrovertible professional standing. The typical characteristics of a profession are generally considered to be specialised knowledge, a formal qualifying organisation and a conscious professional identity.⁴¹³

Missionaries and secular reformers were consistent in their claims that they possessed specialised knowledge that allowed them to be effective at their chosen tasks. Medical workers demanded to be allowed to learn the specialised knowledge of medicine, while secular educators such as Carpenter and Nivedita demonstrated their mastery of contemporary paedagogy. Each of these groups further argued that their unique access to Indian women granted them specialised knowledge that increased the utility of their work beyond what one could expect from trained workers who lacked experience of India, or male workers who could never know Indian women personally. Respectable middle-class Englishwomen also considered themselves qualified simply by dint of being respectable middle-class Englishwomen, which supposedly gave them the training they needed to judge the appropriate behaviour that they attempted to encourage

⁴¹² “Our Work and the Workers”, *IFE*, October 1893, 164.

⁴¹³ Anne Witz, *Professions and Patriarchy*, (New York: Routledge, 1992), 39. Daniel Duman, “Pathway to Professionalism: The English Bar in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries,” *Journal of Social History* 13, no. 4 (July 1, 1980): 615.

in Indian women. As to qualifying organisations, doctors are the obvious example: women such as Hoggan and Beilby were explicitly arguing for women's right to be examined by the pre-existing medical licensing boards. Carpenter and educators like her were less interested in having their own qualifications formalised, but they did expect other teachers to have formal training, hence Carpenter's emphasis on establishing Normal Schools in India and only hiring graduates of such institutions.

The conscious professional identity was also variable among the women of this study, but was certainly present in doctors, and the extreme attachment of all these workers to the elements they considered vital to their professionalism – training, organisation, success – implies that it was present, if sometimes unspoken. The example of the memsahibs demonstrates the difference between an unspoken professional identity and a non-existent one. Memsahibs were generally not trying to achieve the same level of legitimacy as their professional counterparts – their legitimacy came from their marital status – and their indifference to professional standing shows in their relative lack of interest in the structure and goals of their philanthropic efforts, no matter how hard they may have worked at their individual tasks.

Except for the unifying factor of their presumed personal knowledge of Indian women, British philanthropists certainly did not exist as a singular unified profession. Nevertheless, as a group they mostly became professionals of one kind or another over the period between 1860 and 1900. These philanthropists may not have completely fulfilled all the criteria for a stable professional identity, but they are visibly making inroads toward all of them. They did run successful schools and hospitals, they did achieve, if not a separate women's medical profession, then at least a firmly established

place within the male medical hierarchy. They had their success stories: vast numbers of women taught or healed, and many more visited. Englishwomen in India, then, seem to be an excellent example of a nascent ‘professional project.’ Describing their work as this type of incomplete professional project brings together the various arguments that these women were making about why they deserved respect and creates a broader picture of the type of respect they wanted – namely the respect granted to professionals at work, rather than mere appreciation of their work. Their professional aspirations were also one of the reasons why this small group of women was so interesting to their readership in England. Certainly there was interest in the work they were doing and the exotic appeal of their location, but the *Englishwoman’s Review* and other feminist periodicals were posting lists of women doctors in the Empire because they were making a broader argument for women’s abilities in the workplace. Working women in India were excellent examples of feminine success in professional spheres, not just sources of exciting and exotic stories. Overall, the rhetoric of British philanthropists was more influential than their actions, but the idea of professional identities was useful for some women personally, and formed an important part of the debate over professional women back in England.

India is also important because it bolstered so many of the professional arguments these women were making. British imperial discourse positioned European women as the only ones who could teach or heal secluded Indian women. Indian women were also supposed to be particularly in need of British women who were repositories of ‘appropriate’ behaviour and domestic standards, as can be seen in the kinds of lessons that philanthropists offered Indian schoolgirls.

The ways that the existence of supposedly beleaguered Indian women

strengthened British philanthropic arguments indicate some of the ways in which working women were vulnerable to criticism in England. Primarily, British philanthropists emphasised the fact that they could not be replaced by men in the Indian zenana, whereas female teachers and doctors could always be replaced in English schools and hospitals. This was also part of the debate over women's medical training that was occurring in England, but there the argument for women's hospitals had to be built from the ground up because Englishwomen were generally willing to see male doctors; the reluctance of Indian women to do the same was assumed. India was also so sparsely populated by doctors and teachers that it was impossible for their opponents to argue that female employees were stealing men's jobs. India seemed as though it could accommodate as many British workers as Britain cared to send.

The professionalism that female British philanthropists managed to establish for themselves in India did not necessarily guarantee long-term success. The social and political climate of India had been of great utility to them, but events were beyond their control, and by 1900, when the philanthropists had established their competence in most people's eyes, the political climate was no longer as favourable for the practical extension of their schemes. When Lord Dufferin's tenure as viceroy ended, so did Lady Dufferin's involvement in her Fund and it was obliged to wait for another interested Vicereine. The rise of Indian nationalism after the 1890s also made the position of these philanthropic women more difficult. Indians were asserting the value of Indian teachers and doctors and questioning the necessity of importing Europeans to do these jobs. Indians training in the medical schools established by the Fund were imbibing the same ideas about the importance of professionalism, but they were doing so in the new context of nationalism.

Even as British women argued that they were competent to run schools and hospitals, Indian reformers were making the same argument on their own behalf. Combined with the ever-present funding problem of the Empire, as the 20th century progressed the British were increasingly willing to let the Empire take control of itself.⁴¹⁴

Another factor in the eventual fate of all of these reformers was their relationship with the Indian people they were there to help. The example of non-European workers also indicates some points of tension in the respective models of secular reformers and missionaries. Both groups employed them, often in relatively high level positions. Secular reformers established normal and medical schools for Indian women with the intention of developing a native pool of qualified teachers and doctors who could be more easily deployed within India and would be more affordable than Englishwomen, who expected English wages and compensation for the inconveniences of emigration. After 1900, when several of these schools were well established, the reformers generally lived up to their word and hired the qualified Indian women. The qualification here becomes a more important factor than the Englishness of these women, although it did not entirely eradicate the claims that European women were still more 'advanced' than their Indian sisters and therefore still best fitted to provide 'uplift'.

Mission societies kept fairly clear divisions between foreign missionaries and local converts. Even when they employed converts as preachers and Bible women, these were distinctly auxiliaries to the main focus of the mission, even when the European

⁴¹⁴ This is a simplification. There was a great deal of political and social conflict and hard work by Indian reformers that had to occur before the ICS was willing to grant India its independence, but the move toward a government that could rule itself was occurring before that, even if completely giving up control turned out to be less appealing in the end. For more detail on Independence and general Indian history see Stuart Corbridge and John Harriss, *Reinventing India: Liberalization, Hindu Nationalism and Popular Democracy* (Cambridge: Polity, 2006) or the relevant volumes of the New Cambridge History of India Series, among others.

missionaries acknowledged that the locals could be far more effective. Secular societies were less able or inclined to limit the use of their local counterparts. In general, secular reformers were dealing with Indian elites whom the British were far more likely to respect than the poorest classes who comprised the majority of Christian converts. Reformers who were trying not to antagonise elites and who were not as overtly wedded to the Christian conversion of Indians were therefore more accommodating of Indian customs and interested in Indian participation in their work.

Understandably, there was a lot more support among Indian elites for secular reforms than for missionary work. It is therefore more difficult to talk about such reforms without talking about the Indian elites who involved themselves, because they were so much more likely to participate on the administrative and benevolent end rather than being mere recipients of these efforts. This raises the interesting question of the degree to which British reformers were willing to acknowledge the professional efforts of Indian women and men. The Normal Schools that Carpenter proposed were to teach Indian women to be teachers and Lady Dufferin's Fund paid for medical training for both Indian and British women. There is much room for further investigation into how British philanthropists managed to make the idea of Indian reformers coexist with their ideas about the depths of depravity to which Indian civilisation had sunk. There is also research to be done on the responses of Indian reformers to their inclusion in philanthropic projects and the British professional ideal.⁴¹⁵

The different approaches of missionaries and reformers have affected the

⁴¹⁵ For more on this subject, see Mrinalini Sinha's "Refashioning Mother India: Feminism and Nationalism in Late-Colonial India," *Feminist Studies* 26, no. 3 (October 1, 2000): 623-644 and the work of Partha Chatterjee.

visibility of the success of these two groups. The eventual goal of the NIA and similar groups was to effect some degree of Indian independence, so in that sense they succeeded, but their success on that front meant the end of their operation. Missions were to some degree concerned with creating an Indian Christian church, but rarely permitted Indians into their hierarchy, which meant that missions continued to be a visible group of Europeans in India for much longer. Missions were also not as overtly linked to the colonial government, which meant that Independence did not indicate that their responsibility to the Indian people as citizens of the Empire ended when the Empire did. Many missionaries had seen the Empire as a Christian project, which melded missionaries' duties as Christians and Imperial citizens to the Indian people, but the Christian project was considered to persist in the absence of Empire.

British women never became more than a minority of medical and education professionals in India: as their professional interests grew, England's interest in maintaining a British presence in India declined and Indians took over their own medical system. Nevertheless, India was an important ground for British women to demonstrate their capabilities and create their own professional identities, or at least involve themselves in the ongoing nineteenth century project to incorporate women into previously masculine professional societies.

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