CHAPTER 6

PEOPLE MEETING

MOST OF THIS BOOK is about people meeting, in one way or another—to grow food or make goods, to buy or sell, to punish or be punished. People are drawn to meet by work, profit, or the action of government. Here we are interested in a different sort of meeting, where people chose to come together specifically to be with others of their own kind, and to display what kind of people they were, or hoped to be. All these meetings attracted certain kinds of people and discouraged others. To consider a range of them is to see the divisions and inequalities in the Australian colonies in 1838, as well as what they shared.

William Grant Broughton. Undated lithograph by J.S. Prout of a sketch by F.R. Nixon.
DIXSON GALLERIES

Colonial Australians came together in forms and fashions imported from Britain, and saw each other in ways determined by imported ideas about white and black, male and female, worthy and undeserving. Much of what they did together was intended to recreate old habits in a new land. Many saw the land as corrupted already by British criminality. In this view New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land needed purging by a more recent British import—respectability. A few welcomed the prospect that the new society of all four colonies might encourage new kinds of association, a prospect that might or might not be a comfort to the respectable.

On a sunny day in the mild winter of 1838—'one of the most delightful even at this delicious season of the year', observed a newspaper reporter—Sir George Gipps spoke about knitting together old associations in a new land. He was addressing the inhabitants of Cook's River, six kilometres out of Sydney. Governor Gipps, Bishop Broughton, and a party of ladies and gentlemen had driven out in the sunshine to claim a piece of bushland for British civilisation by laying the foundation stone of a church. The new governor told the gathering that their land was in need of reformation: 'in no country in the world is there a more ample scope for the labours of those who are ready to engage in the great cause of religion and morality'. The church they were building would be a seedbed for the growth of a new morality. In its congregation people would feel both devotion to God and love for their fellows: to 'learn his social duties, man must mix with his fellow men and come with them to the worship of his Maker'.

Tempe on the Cook's River, New South Wales. *Watercolour by James Clark, 1830s.*
NATIONAL LIBRARY

But Gipps went further and tackled the contradictions between religion and morality, the individual and the social, the natural and the civilised. In the sunshine he was moved to see the Australian landscape as a fit home for the 'truly contemplative mind'—'the only truly religious one'—which 'may find more ample scope for its devotion in the solitude of the forest'. He cited Wordsworth: '"To sit on rocks and muse o'er flood and fell" may be to many minds a more salutary discipline than to tread the thronged pavement of a Cathedral'.

Bishop Broughton had lived in New South Wales for almost nine years. On his arrival he too had pronounced the colonial enterprise to be of 'great promise' in God's work. He had told his first congregation that they should consider themselves placed in Australia not accidentally, but by providence, 'to bear our part in the execution of that eternal purpose which was laid in Christ Jesus before the world began'. Bound up with 'that eternal purpose' was an historical purpose: 'the exaltation of the English nation, and its gradual extension of power to the limits of the habitable world'. By 1838 his message had grown less urgent, but the themes were the same. He now spoke of the value of imposing the names of saints on places of worship, thus linking the bushland at Cook's River with the ancient traditions of the Christian Church.

The gathering was pervaded with a sense of triumph that order had been imposed on a wilderness. The newspapers reported that after the speeches the company retired to enjoy a *déjeuner à la fourchette*—a buffet dinner—under 'an extensive awning in a green spot, opposite the site of the Church, and surrounded by oaks'—meaning native she-oaks. 'The interior was tastefully decorated by a profusion of evergreens and flowers, which Australia affords, even in the depths of winter. One vase was filled with boughs from the small Mandarin orange, in full bearing, which was much admired.' Nature then was most admirable when bounded, shaded, arranged and even imported.

The arrangements for the *déjeuner* reflected ideas of social order. Gipps had nominated as one of the virtues of churchgoing that in church all stood equal in the sight of God. But all were not equal at the buffet. There were three separate

settings. First came those who had arrived by carriage—the governor and the bishop, the Sydney guests, and those local men of standing who had contributed land or money for the church. When they had dispersed, the people of the neighbourhood took their turn: small farmers and their families who had walked in to see the fine folk from Sydney. Finally the tables were spread again to entertain the workmen building the church. Women decorated the tables, prepared the food and, like the wildflowers, graced the occasion with their presence, but they retired to leave the men to the formalities of toasts and more speeches.

Regaling the lower orders with food and drink was an old custom of the British landed classes. Landowners saw it as an occasional duty to play host to their tenants and workmen. The landless accepted such munificence as a right. In receiving it they confirmed the ordinary state of affairs, by which it was the duty of the landless to labour, and the right of the landed to live by the fruits of that labour.

Colonel Gawler Hosts A Dinner For The Aborigines

In British eyes the Aborigines were among the landless. Perhaps they had some vestigial right to the soil, but such a right could not survive the providential destiny of the British to control the country. In the spring of 1838 the British settlers who had recently taken symbolic possession of the broad 'waste lands' of South Australia staged a dinner for their local blacks, the Aborigines of the Adelaide plain. It was intended to convey to the Aborigines just that set of moral principles—the duties of the landless, the rights of the landed—thus awakening a proper gratitude. But the Aborigines still believed themselves to be the controllers and guardians of the land, and the British their debtors. Being invited guests in their own land was only the first oddity in an event intended to carry meanings strange to the Aborigines.

About two hundred of the Kaurna people gathered at Tarndarna, a place often used for their own meetings on the banks of the Karrauwirraparri—or in the settlers' language, at Adelaide on the Torrens.

The families met in an area newly enclosed with a crude paling fence, shoulder high, of a kind becoming common around the British settlement. Inside the fence stood twelve roughly built huts of the same split timbers, single-roomed and half open in front, and a cottage with the beginnings of a garden. The area was familiar to most of the Aborigines present. A dozen or so families and some of the single men had been persuaded by the white men to live in the huts when they were completed, a few months earlier. In the warmer weather, however, most chose to return to temporary shelters beside the rivers or nearer the coast. Families from along the coastal plain were used to coming irregularly for rations of coarse brown biscuit, given daily to all who asked for them, and a few families stayed more or less permanently at what was called 'the location'.

The founders of South Australia had been full of good intentions. They had pledged themselves to make colonisation 'a blessed work' to the Aborigines, rather than the curse already visited on the native peoples of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land. They had promised the Colonial Office in London that they would protect the Aborigines 'in the undisturbed enjoyment of their proprietary right to the soil, wherever such right may be found to exist', though the settlers commonly ignored the possibility of rights when it came to the point. The founders had also said that they would provide subsistence to all Aborigines voluntarily ceding their lands, and promote among them the 'spread of civilization, and the peaceful and voluntary reception of the Christian religion'.

Kaurna families in their summer haunts. Undated hand-coloured lithograph by J.W. Giles, after George French Angas.
ART GALLERY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

First encounters were resolutely friendly on the white side and trusting on the black. William Williams, surprising a man and a boy in the sandhills near Glenelg, advanced deliberately laughing and holding out a biscuit. The Aborigines laughed back and embraced him. James Cronk went seeking Aborigines on the coastal plain carrying seven kilograms of biscuits and three kilograms of sugar. He spent several days with the family group he met, hunting and feasting on possums. Despite the women's fear at the sight of the tall ships, he persuaded them all to come back to camp for more biscuits and sugar. Visiting Aborigines were dressed in coats and cocked hats, and shown such marvels of white technology as mirrors and magnifying glasses. A young man named Utinai was brave enough to board a ship, where he danced to a flute and piano. And always the newcomers gave presents—food, clothes, knives.

The Kaurna received all the gifts politely, discarding unwanted items only when out of sight. They called the newcomers *pinde meyu*—men from the grave—and appeared to accept them as the ghosts of their ancestors returning with gifts. Such powerful beings were to be treated with respect. When the visitors did not go back to their ships and sail away, belief in their supernatural origins may have faded. In 1838 the term *pinde meyu* was still used to refer to the white invaders, but perhaps only as metaphor.

Whatever their origins, the invaders' presence offered both opportunities and restraints. Their huts were clustered at the site the Kaurna called Tarndarna, leaving the bulk of the Kaurna lands on the coastal plains untouched. At first Aborigines moved easily around the Adelaide settlement. The main restriction was the colonists' insistence that clothes be worn in sight of their women and children. Numbers of Kaurna chose to work from time to time for the settlers, cutting wood and drawing water in return for money or food. Cronk and other opportunists paid well for skins and feathers.

The Aborigines most affected by the invasion were the family groups whose estate included the Adelaide area. By 1838 lands surveyed there had been sold and solid slab fences were being built beside the Torrens. Extensive parklands remained

unalienated around the township, and open to their original owners. A visitor wrote mockingly of meeting there the leader of this group, whom he called 'King John'. He 'sat in state under a gum tree, his subjects sleeping around him'. But these resources were used only on British sufferance. In September the Aborigines were forbidden to cut wood on the parklands, either for their own use or for sale to the colonists.

Leading colonists believed that they owed compensation to 'the people whose territory they [had] usurped'. Some members of the committee appointed to advise the governor on Aboriginal affairs were persuaded 'that the Natives have such a moral right or interest in the Soil as fairly entitles them to a sufficient provision for their maintenance and support'. When the newly appointed protector of Aborigines, Dr William Wyatt, moved in January to erect huts and supply food 'for the different families of Natives usually frequenting the immediate neighbourhood', he wanted both to support and to instruct 'these interesting fellow creatures to whom we owe so much'. Other colonists were quick to deny that 'the blacks have any *exclusive* property in the soil'. In their view that right belonged only to those who, like the British, would labour to transform the land, 'to make the wilderness and the desert place to blossom as the rose'. The British did not know that the grassy slopes around Adelaide had actually been fashioned by centuries of Aboriginal firing.

Aboriginal chief Kertamaroo (King John). *One of his Aboriginal names is Mullawirraburka, meaning 'The dry-forest man'.*

Aboriginal woman, probably Mocata wife of Kertamaroo (King John). *Wax medallions by Theresa Snell Walker, née Chauncy.* ART GALLERY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

For their part, the Kaurna made a clear claim to the land. A correspondent to the *Southern Australian* reported in June that 'the more intelligent part of the natives themselves have often asserted that the land, for instance upon which Adelaide is situate, belongs to the "black fellow"'. Those accepting rations at the native location took them in recompense for the continuing use of their land. One who knew the Kaurna language explained their understanding thus: 'the Europeans had taken and driven away their food, and ought now to give them other food'. Further, the Aborigines saw themselves as equals in that relationship, 'accustomed to live independently and to be their own masters'. When the rations were insufficient for their needs they did not hesitate to take—in white terms to steal—more. Nor did they ever accept the white notion that 'gifts' should be earned by hard labour. Wyatt soon decided that nothing he could offer the Kaurna—'whether it be clothing, the luxuries of food' or 'comfortable habitations' could 'stimulate them to that degree of industry necessary for acquiring such advantages'.

The only way to make the Kaurna industrious, Wyatt believed, was 'to teach them the simple and sublime doctrines of Christianity'; 'to begin by any other method is truly to commence at the wrong end'. The preparations for Gawler's feast were observed by two young German missionaries who had come to South Australia in order to convert the Aborigines. Christian Gottlieb Teichelmann and Clamor Wilhelm Schürmann had been sent by the Dresden (Lutheran) Missionary Society and had travelled from England on the same vessel as Governor Gawler, who had replaced Hindmarsh in 1838, and his suite. Their ardent faith barred them from service with the official German missions or the Church of England societies serving in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land. So they had accepted with delight the patronage of George Fife Angas, one of the English nonconformists prominent among the founders of South Australia, to carry Christianity to the Aborigines there.

The Germans were well equipped for their mission. Their university studies had included Latin, English, Greek and Hebrew, and had given them a scientific, comparative approach to language. 'The vocabulary of barbarians', they believed, 'was a list of their ideas'. They believed that all races had enjoyed the same level of civilisation after the Fall from Eden, but that by God's mysterious will some had

progressed while others had declined into material and moral decay. Their faith also taught them that as missionaries they were the humble agents through whom the Aborigines could be restored to perfection. Then the Lord Jesus Christ would 'receive the heathens of Australia for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the Earth for his possession, according to the divine promise'.

Schürmann and Teichelmann hoped to reach the Kaurna through their own language, which they saw as a broken instrument to be 'sharpened, tempered, and repaired', for a high moral intelligence must go hand in hand with 'a well-ordered grammar'. During their first few weeks in South Australia they had taken every opportunity to converse with the Aborigines and to learn the names of objects and actions. They were not impressed with the manners of James Cronk, Wyatt's official interpreter. They disliked the former sailor's easy familiarity with the Aborigines, especially the Aboriginal women. While the methods of Governor Gawler were rather more sophisticated, they too must have seemed clumsy to these learned Germans.

The Aborigines dressed up for Gawler's feast as for any festivity. The young men began by mixing together red ochre and fat and smearing their heads until their hair stood out in single ringlets, forming 'a perfect red head of hair'. Then, rather than binding a *mangna* or strip of possum skin around the forehead and weaving kangaroo teeth (*wowudeyadla*) and emu feathers (*karriwoppa*) into their hair—proofs of their skill in hunting—the men bound up their heads with scraps of coloured cotton given to them by Cronk and Williams. And instead of decorating their bodies with stripes and dots of ochre and pipeclay, the Kaurna put on gifts presented for the occasion—woollen shirts and moleskin trousers for the men, blankets and lengths of cloth for the women.

At government house—locally known as the government hut—George Gawler was also dressing up. He prepared for his conference with the Kaurna by donning his full dress uniform as lieutenant-colonel in the 52nd Light Infantry—blue dress coat and trousers with white facings, and a cocked hat with a fine white plume. Uniforms were rare among the gentlemen capitalists of Adelaide, and not popular. People said, perhaps mockingly, that the Aborigines admired Gawler's finery and called him 'Cockatoo Gubbernor'. Certainly his plume recalled their own *wito wito*—a tuft of white cockatoo feathers worn upright in the hair. Maria Gawler was putting on a gown and poke bonnet in the latest London fashion, though less to impress the Kaurna than to shine among the ladies and gentlemen whom she had invited to a luncheon after the feasting. Mrs Gawler had already formed a low opinion of Adelaide society. She wrote of her first levee: 'it required the greatest exertion to keep myself from laughing at the extraordinary figures and gestures of many of the visitors'.

Gawler had already met the Kaurna a week before, when some had been marched from Adelaide down to the landing place at Glenelg to form part of the governor's retinue when he entered the capital. After his swearing-in Gawler had addressed this group, speaking as if to children:

> You must love the Queen of Great Britain and all the people of Great Britain. You must behave well and quietly; you must learn to read—and read the Bible. You must fear God who made heaven and earth, and you and we then shall be happy together.

Perhaps the Aborigines' blank faces, and Cronk's complaint that this was untranslatable, persuaded Gawler that he should take time to spell out his message.

In the event it all went off superbly. By noon many colonists were strolling on the domain east of government house, waiting to see the historic meeting.

Governor Gawler's feast, 1 November 1838. Watercolour by Martha Berkeley, wife of Captain Charles Berkeley of the 40th Rifles, who had emigrated to South Australia in 1837. With her sister, Theresa Snell Walker, also trained in printing, drawing and modelling, Martha was one of a small group of artists taking an aesthetic and scientific interest in landscape and Aborigines.
ART GALLERY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Governor Gawler arrived first, as host. Then Wyatt, Cronk and Williams paraded the Kaurna up from the location in fine order. The crowd received the party with three hearty British cheers and the Aborigines replied in kind. This convention resembled their own greeting etiquette, by which visiting groups repeatedly 'stamp very loudly, clatter their shields, raise them above their heads, hold up their spears, and shout'.

The Kaurna were also used to speeches. At meetings of the tribes the elders would formally introduce any strangers, giving a full description of their country and lineage. But Gawler's speech made no such explanation of his right to be present; it aimed to instruct. He declaimed as follows, in a most impressive style:

> Black men—
>
> We wish to make you happy. But you cannot be happy unless you imitate good white men. Build huts, wear clothes, work and be useful.
>
> Above all you cannot be happy unless you love GOD who made heaven and earth and men and all things.
>
> Love white men. Love other tribes of black men. Do not quarrel together. Tell other tribes to love white men, and to build good huts and wear clothes. Learn to speak English.
>
> If any white men injure you, tell the Protector and he will do you justice.

Wyatt then translated, more confidently than Cronk had done the earlier impromptu version. But there were still observers who believed that the audience did not understand.

The Aborigines were formed into a circle on the ground, and served large quantities of baked beef, rice and biscuits, and sweet tea. They ate heartily, as always at such gatherings. But as they smiled and waved to familiar faces in the crowd, it must have seemed incongruous to the Kaurna that their new friends just watched, and did not eat with them, as would have happened at a traditional feast. Then more presents were distributed—rugs, blankets, woollen frocks, caps, tin dishes and cups—and Mrs Gawler ordered some Aboriginal children to be dressed in old clothing her children had worn on the voyage out.

What followed may also have seemed strangely unequal to the Aborigines. Gawler had not eaten with the blacks, despite giving them gifts and food, and now he permitted only a few select whites to share his table. As the Aboriginal feast ended, the Gawlers and a number of ladies and gentlemen retired to a convenient marquee to enjoy their *déjeuner à la fourchette*, leaving the rest of the whites to find refreshment where they could.

The colonists were further entertained by a spear throwing exhibition, enacted but not organised by the Aborigines, who complained that the targets were too far away. Several Aborigines tried their luck without success which brought derisive laughter from the bystanders. At this King John became very excited. He suddenly stripped off his red woollen shirt and moleskin trousers, gave a tremendous yell, and flung two spears through the centre of the target. Turning naked to the spectators, who hurried to get out of his way, he pointed to the target and shouted 'varey goodey,' and then, shaking his fist at his clothes on the ground, 'no goodey.' Gawler's party led the embarrassed retreat.

A fireworks exhibition and bonfire were arranged in the evening and the day finished with a display of Aboriginal dancing. Meetings between Aboriginal groups usually ended with dances to confirm agreements made by the participants. The British understood something of this, but they misread the Kaurna's intention as simple gratitude. Mrs Gawler wrote home:

> the interpreter tells us that all their songs or noises had some meaning and that they were then describing the first ship arrived in Holdfast Bay and the landing of the good white men—and another the good biscuit they got in Adelaide.

*Kaurna warrior decorated for fighting, and armed with shield (*wocalte*), spears (*unwinda *and* kutpe*), throwing stick (*midla*) and club (*wirris*). Watercolour by George Fife Angas.*
SOUTH AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM

The Kaurna were trapped as the receivers of gifts in a system that yielded power and authority to givers. In their eyes they had established an exchange with the British—they gave access to the land's resources and the British gave food. Some of the invaders understood the justice of this arrangement. But most could not believe that the Kaurna controlled the land or had anything to give.

In the next week some young Kaurna men set out to share more of the white men's *paru* by spearing sheep and cattle from the flocks and herds that were beginning to overrun the foothills and coastal plains. At the natives' location, Schürmann and Teichelmann, out of a sense of propriety, persuaded the dancers to wash and to cut the remains of the red ochre from their hair.

PROTESTANTS APPROACH THEIR GOD

When British inhabitants of Adelaide joined in public ceremonies in 1838, they did so most often within a church. Many of the active Christians in the little settlement understood their emigration as a search for religious liberty. In the colony they looked to express that liberty as a freedom to differ. Each group, Wesleyan Methodist, Congregationalist and Baptist, and the body from which these denominations 'dissented'—the Church of England—set about erecting a separate place of worship that was at once a symbol of freedom and a re-creation of England.

The entrepreneurs who founded South Australia held out the hope of religious liberty to dissenters, believing them to be pious, sober, hardworking and altogether good material for building a colony. But as in England, most of the powerful people were members of the Church of England. The colonial Church of England was never 'established' as the church had been in England and Wales. For more than a hundred and fifty years the church had claimed spiritual authority over all English and Welsh people, and the state had denied full citizenship to any who refused to be members of the Church of England. The last decade in Britain had seen a struggle between Anglicans and dissenters for the removal of some of the civil disabilities laid on Catholics and dissenters.

In New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land the Church of England had from the beginning been given sole responsibility for administering religion and education to the people, and as late as the 1820s had the promise of exclusive government funding. But the endowment was inadequate, and in 1836 the New South Wales government responded to English developments by committing itself to aid all religious groups without discrimination. Van Diemen's Land followed in 1837. In Western Australia the exclusive rights of the Church of England had never been seriously questioned. South Australia, by contrast, was pledged from its foundation to a policy of religious tolerance. But the official colonial chaplain was an Anglican, as were the chief government officers.

Thus it was Captain John Hindmarsh, the first governor of South Australia, who laid the foundation stone of Trinity Church in North Terrace, Adelaide, in January 1838. After Hindmarsh had cemented the stone with its inscription, 'The Lord of Heaven he will prosper us, therefore we his servants will arise and build', the chaplain, the Reverend Charles Howard, preached and prayed that God would bless the religious community in South Australia.

The Reverend Charles Beaumont Howard, the first colonial chaplain of South Australia, preached the sermon at the laying of the foundation stone for Trinity Church, Adelaide. Undated wax medallion by Theresa Snell Walker.

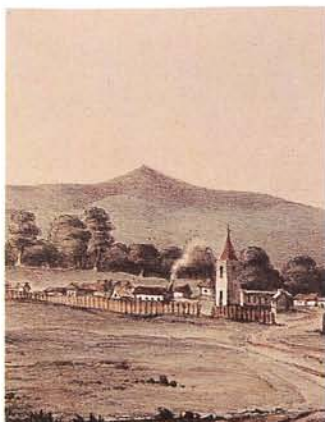
ART GALLERY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

The placing of this stone had been long delayed. Subscriptions for the erection of a place of worship for the Church of England in South Australia had been opened in London when the colony was founded in 1836. Religion—even an *established* religion—was sometimes seen as a necessary part of colonisation:

> The object of the founders of South Australia is not to place a scattered and half barbarous colony on the coast of New Holland, but to establish there, and gradually extend, civilized society. This then is a case in which a colonial religious establishment would be eminently useful. In a colony to which, not men and women merely, but *society* shall be transplanted, there will religion, which is an attribute of society, take immediate root, and exert all its happy social influence.

Soon the South Australian Church Society announced that it had received £811 6s for the purchase of a wooden-framed building. The society proclaimed the duty 'at the first planting of a Colony, of providing Christian Instruction for all its members', and determined to 'sustain in the colony the doctrine and the discipline of that church which is established in the mother-country'. But the cost of exporting an ancient institution had been underestimated: the wooden building sent out was too flimsy for colonial conditions. The colonists set about building in stone with a tower, bell and clockface, equal to any village church in England.

On 21 July the first service was held at Trinity Church. Fittingly, it included a baptism. As the priest held up the infant daughter of J.H. Fisher, a leading official, workmen on the roof peered down on the elite of Adelaide in the pews below. By October the congregation had outgrown the building and additions were made to seat another three hundred worshippers. In November Schürmann and Teichelmann commended Trinity's 'pretty stone church building' as a credit to settlers, most of whom were still living in tents.



The spire of Trinity Church rises beside North Terrace. Detail from an undated colour lithograph by Anne Glidden.
NATIONAL LIBRARY

Interior of old St David's, principal church of Hobart Town. Soldiers sat in the galleries and convicts below them at the back. In the nave, box pews of cedar were rented to worshippers. St David's is 'a plain but handsome edifice, built of brick, and stuccoed without. It boasts a very good organ choir, and numerous sittings (the lieutenant-governor's among the number,) and is greatly frequented'. (David Burn, A picture of Van Diemen's Land, *Hobart 1839, p 43.) Undated watercolour by Henry Gritton.*
TASMANIAN MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY

The Wesleyan Methodists had begun meeting in their own chapel in Hindley Street about a month before Hindmarsh laid the stone at Trinity. They met between four walls but without a roof. A tarpaulin was stretched across the walls to keep out the summer sun. The chapel was officially opened on 18 March. It cost £370 to build and seated two hundred people. The Wesleyans reflected proudly that they were the first to hold a service of worship in the colony and the first to build in stone.

Neither the Wesleyan chapel nor Trinity Church was an extravagant building. Both were built of sombre limestone quarried from the banks of the Torrens River. Sydney and Hobart Town boasted more assertive testaments to faith. At Sydney the roofline of St Mary's Catholic Cathedral rose in opulent splendour. Church of England taste tended less to soaring ceilings and more to great towers to call the faithful. At Hobart Town the belltower of St David's affirmed the Church's prominence. Its interior was awe-inspiring, with grand windows above the communion table. This emphasis on the communion table was unusual in the Church of England, which in 1838 offered communion at few of its services. The interior of St John's, Parramatta, was more to the tastes of evangelical colonials. What dominated it was a commanding three-decker structure combining a pulpit, reader's desk and clerk's desk. The significance of the word far surpassed that of the sacrament.

Why did people gather in chapel and church? It could be a matter of religious duty. Some went to find peace or consolation; others to reassure themselves that the civilisation of the old world could indeed be transplanted in the new. Some agreed with Governor Gipps at Cook's River that it was hard to live six days in the world without going to church on the seventh. In South Australia Robert Cock found communal worship a necessary support to personal faith. He told James Backhouse, the visiting Quaker, that he had seen 'many instances of persons that bore a religious character in their native land, who being broken off from their old connexions, and coming to stand more alone in this colony, have sustained ... much loss, ... having departed from that to which they had attained'. Cock admitted that he and his family had not kept up the practice of daily Bible readings in South Australia. Perhaps 'the truly contemplative mind', in Gipps's phrase, could find God more easily outside church walls. But most colonists sought a church or chapel to learn of their God and his purposes for humanity.

The understanding of God varied with creeds and ministers. People who attended the Church of England service could recite and hear intoned the beautiful words of the *Book of common prayer*. Their God was an 'Almighty and most merciful Father' to whom they came as penitents, miserable offenders unable to keep his holy laws. Through the rituals and sacraments of the church, however, repentance and restoration offered a weekly opportunity to reaffirm the faith and rededicate themselves.

In the morning prayer worshippers asked a merciful God to forgive them. They were lost sheep who had followed the desires of their own hearts rather than his holy laws, they confessed, 'and there is no health in us'. But they trusted the divine promise to spare those who confessed in penitence, and prayed God to help them live 'a godly, righteous, and sober life'. Then priest and worshippers asked a regal God—'High and mighty, King of kings, Lord of lords, the only Ruler of princes'—to bless their sovereign lady, Queen Victoria, with heavenly and earthly gifts and to strengthen her to overcome her enemies. The language bore disquieting hints that the God who was a merciful sovereign was also the God who would judge the quick and the dead, but the prayers were shaped to comfort.

It was in the sermon that ministers played most upon the spiritual unease of their

hearers. Most Church of England ministers and dissenting ministers in the colonies tended to a calvinistic understanding of the relations between people and God. Calvinist evangelicals believed in the total depravity of human beings, and all evangelicals preached that humanity could be redeemed only through faith in Jesus Christ as revealed in the New Testament. The purpose of the evangelical sermon was to move congregations primarily to faith and secondarily to moral action, both worldly and otherworldly. The Reverend Henry Stiles told the Church of England congregation at Parramatta that they could not take their Bibles in hand and deny they were sinners. No-one could escape God's condemnation.

> You cannot affect to believe or profess, that you do really believe in Christ, and therefore can hope to be saved by faith, unless with a renewed heart, and a sanctified spirit, you are living a *new life*, following the commandments of God, and determined henceforth to walk in his holy ways.

The Reverend Charles Howard, Church of England chaplain in Adelaide, was an active young man and, Backhouse believed, a pious one, but he was no orator. The most powerful addresses were those delivered by the Reverend Thomas Quinton Stow at the newly built Independent, or Congregational, chapel. Stow had been an Independent minister in Essex before he received the call to come to South Australia. On the journey out his fellow travellers listened to his sermons with awe, and he took the dissenters at Cape Town by storm. In Adelaide he was feted by his congregation and envied by others who feared to lose their members to his eloquence.

Stow loved to confront his hearers with the promise—and the threat—of eternal life. His imagery persuaded and his logic intrigued, tugging both the emotions and the minds of 'wayward sinners':

> If the sufferings of Christ be not a sweet smelling savour to us, they will be a savour of death. The triumphant path of the Roman conqueror was strewd with flowers. They were fragrant and pleasant to the victors. But they were the savour of death to the enchained and miserable captives. They graced the path and regaled the senses of the exulting masters in war; but they were loathsome and sepulchral to the wretched men who looked upon them as the mocking and cruel symbols of the torture and death which awaited them. The death of Christ is a grateful savour to the man who believes; but Oh! how different the savour to the disobedient and unbelieving! ... The Christian finds in the gospel all his salvation and all his desire. The unbeliever finds, nay *creates* in it, his 'greater condemnation', his treasured wrath, his more than Sodom's doom, his 'sorer punishment', his deeper hell.

Meeting house of the Society of Friends (Quakers) in Macquarie Street, Sydney. Etching by John Carmichael in J. Maclehose, Picture of Sydney, *Sydney 1839.*

When Stow preached at the opening service at the Wesleyan chapel on 18 March, he told his congregation that man was God's building force on earth, the agent of his spiritual kingdom, and that it was therefore right to build places of worship for God's people in this new British colony. The church's business was not merely to save souls but to create and sustain a Christian community on earth.

A personal change of heart was clearly enjoined on all pious Protestants, but they were less sure about the desirability of social change. Clergymen argued that the salvation of souls was best achieved in an orderly society. Hugh Blair was a spokesman for Presbyterianism, the established Church of Scotland, and his published sermons were widely read in Australia. Blair declared that

> Order is friendly to religion ... It represses the spirit of licentiousness and sedition. It inculcates the duty of subordination to lawful superiors. It requires us *to fear God, to honour the king, and not to meddle with them that are given to change.*

St James Church, Hyde Park, Sydney, from the rear. Hand-coloured lithograph after Robert Russell, 1836.
MITCHELL LIBRARY

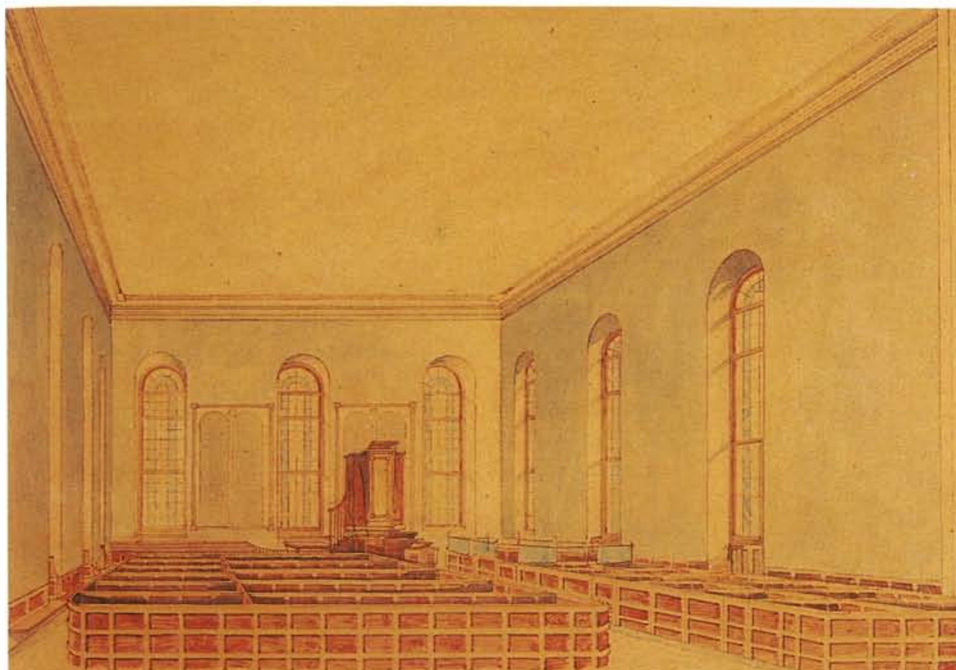
Blair's readers were promised that worldly prosperity grew out of 'order, frugality and economy', which were 'the basis on which liberty, independence, and true honour must rise'. John Angell James of Birmingham, a famous Congregational preacher whose sermons were also familiar to colonists, presented a similar message urging the poor to 'christian contentment' with their lot and warning them against 'the insinuations of those persons who would ... stir them up to turbulent discontent and insubordination'. But James also told his readers that one could strive to be wealthy and gratefully accept offers of advancement in this life. People who sat in church pews were offered not merely life eternal, but basic grounding in the ways and means of worldly success. In a well-ordered society people could still rise above their inherited place.

Belief in providence—the active intervention of God in human affairs—affected the personal and public lives of colonial Protestants. Human will must be subdued to God's. Individual crises such as sickness were expressions, however perplexing, of God's intent, and larger public crises likewise. In November ministers of all creeds prayed to God before their congregations to end the drought in New South Wales. At the opening of the Wesleyan Methodist chapel in Adelaide, Stow congratulated the people on the providential arrival of their new minister, the Reverend William Longbottom. The vessel carrying Longbottom to Western Australia had been wrecked on the South Australian coast, and he was persuaded to stay in Adelaide. Stow detected the hand of God:

> You prayed long and earnestly, and in a manner you least expected, [God] sent you a minister—yea, the very winds and waves were made of a truth to do his bidding, and he cast upon your shores a minister to carry on his work among you.

The Wesleyans in Perth, by the same logic, would have accepted the hand of an inscrutable providence in their own disappointment.

The Wesleyans had less urgent need of ministers than other dissenting congregations. John Wesley had developed a tradition of religious self-help among



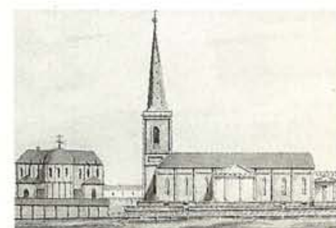
Interior of St James Church, Hyde Park. Enclosed pews were for rent. Watercolour by William Bradridge, 1831.
NATIONAL LIBRARY

his followers, in which lay preachers took Sunday services, and members at weekly class meetings members told each other of 'true Christian experiences'. The chapel building in Adelaide was entirely a lay achievement. But the appointment of a minister left church members with more time for their growing businesses.

Adelaide in 1838 was remarkable for the loving kindness that still prevailed among its congregations. We have just noticed Stow, the Independent minister, preaching to the Wesleyans. Dissenting ministers moved easily between pulpits, and congregations with buildings completed readily lent them to others less organised. In 1837 the temperance preachers, Backhouse and Walker, found hospitality among Christian families of all denominations, and Schürmann and Teichelmann had the same experience.

In New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land, however, clear divisions ran both between and within denominations. Decades of effective 'establishment' had roused other groups against the Church of England, leaving durable suspicions. More recently, government attempts to subsidise the educational and religious activities of all denominations had united Church of England and dissenting congregations against Catholics. Internal dissension was especially bitter among Presbyterians, one faction of whom was led by the self-confident, dogmatic John Dunmore Lang, who had provoked a split by objecting to an act of the legislative council regulating the holding of church property. The dispute exploded into a complete separation of camps and Lang's proclamation of the Synod of New South Wales as the ruling body among his own adherents.

The very enthusiasm of religiously minded immigrants helped transplant dissension and schism. Lutheran Germans, on their way to South Australia in 1838, battled over the conduct of their services before they even reached the land of religious freedom. Services were held three times daily on the open deck, until cold weather forced a division into two meetings held under cover, one forward and one aft. The ship's captain reported that to begin with those who met aft let the others have their service first, but they insisted on being first next day. The two elders, however, belonged to the congregation that met forward.



The Church of England operated as an informal 'establishment'. Here the parish church of St James commands the northern end of Hyde Park, Sydney, its elegant grecian spire towering above the supreme court (left). Built in 1819–22 of colonial brick and Sydney sandstone, the church was often so well attended that strangers had difficulty finding seats. Watercolour by Joseph Fowles, c1842–45.
MITCHELL LIBRARY

Scots Church, Sydney, spiritual headquarters of the Reverend Dr John Dunmore Lang. Watercolour by Joseph Fowles, c1842–45.
MITCHELL LIBRARY

> They had taken the lead in the services and had acted as preachers so long that they took no notice of those in the rear. The outcome was that the services were held [simultaneously] at both ends of the ship with a keen competition to outdo the other party. One can easily imagine the noise when about ninety persons in each party competed against each other in melody and song.

Adelaide remained free from sectarian strife both because it was small and new and because its ministers chose to work together. Perhaps, too, the devout men and women in Adelaide believed they were an elite surrounded by a hostile or at best indifferent majority. Stow wrote to an English friend:

> You will be anxious to know what aspect the moral field presents to me as the future labourer. You will be grieved to learn that this new position of human nature has made fresh disclosures of its folly and degeneracy. We are minded of Heber's line, 'Every prospect pleases, and only man is vile'. Sottishness prevails over the lower orders, and irreligion over the mass.

The foundation stone Hindmarsh laid at Trinity Church was a small contribution to the building of a greater Australian church. It declared that Christianity should be a central enduring feature of the new society. But there was a long way to go.

THE MUSIC OF CATHOLIC PIETY

St Mary's Catholic Cathedral rose monumentally on the hill above Sydney, 'a vast and lofty pile, in the pointed Gothic style of Architecture, extremely plain . . ., yet imposing from its situation and magnitude'. The Irishman Father John Therry, architect of its high windows, had planned the church as a statement of the Catholic presence in New South Wales, and nobody could mistake its bold affirmation. But in 1838, after seventeen years of building, St Mary's remained unfinished. The roof still gaped and much of the interior was unplastered. St Mary's testified to the devotion and sacrifice of the Catholics of Sydney, but also to their poverty and to their lack of influence over the distribution of government money.

The Catholic Church claimed the allegiance of more than a quarter of the New South Wales population, and the Irish convicts and ex-convicts who made up the great majority of the Catholic people were more devout than their fellows among the Protestant majority. But the Protestant communions embraced convict and governor alike, while there were not many Catholics among the officers and gentlemen. Few prosperous immigrants of the 1820s and 1830s were Irish Catholics, and except for a few prosperous Irish Protestants, the Irish born among the assisted immigrants of the 1830s were poor and humble. Some Catholic Irish men and women had prospered in the colony, as small shopkeepers, publicans and farmers, and their contributions of cash and labour had enabled Therry to begin his grand project. But it proceeded slowly, and only with halting aid drawn from a reluctant administration.

The work had moved more quickly in the last five years owing to the efforts of the English Benedictine priests, Father William Ullathorne and Bishop John Bede Polding, and to Governor Bourke, who was more sympathetic than his predecessors. When the Benedictines arrived to take charge of the church in Australia they had found the walls of St Mary's standing much like the ruins of an ancient English abbey. Polding recalled 'the bareness of . . . the walls, its roof just sufficient to protect the altar, and the congregated multitude around it from the elements, its generally desolate appearance'. He had instituted high mass on Sundays, complete with choir, a portable organ and the borrowed services of the

The Catholic chapel near Hyde Park, Sydney, partly obscures St Mary's Cathedral, which it adjoins. Coloured lithograph, after Robert Russell, published in 1836—but not entirely from observation. Only in 1838 did St Mary's receive its roof.
MITCHELL LIBRARY

regimental band, and had pressed on with roof, flooring and decorations. By 1836 the Sunday congregation had usually numbered more than fifteen hundred, and by 1838 there were two services at the cathedral every morning and over five hundred people took the sacraments every month.

The two morning services appear to have been deliberately segregated, the earlier session being only for uniformed convicts and their guards. Polding had organised a special mission to all Catholic convicts newly arrived in the colony. The governor permitted Catholics to be assembled and held at the Sydney barracks for a week or ten days before assignment, during which time they came to the cathedral every day. The convicts were divided into groups according to their knowledge of doctrine, and counselled collectively and individually. Some were restored to hope in God and a sense of personal dignity, and the priests believed that few of their flock fell back into the ways of crime. On their pastoral rides Polding and his priests would sometimes meet men they had prayed with at St Mary's—on road gangs, on assignment, even with a little property or business of their own.

A different kind of segregation took place in regular services. The floor plan of St Mary's was shaped like a cross, 37 metres in length, 12 metres wide and 17 metres between the transepts. The large central area before the great altar was clear of furniture. Here the poor gathered, mostly on their knees. Behind them the better-off occupied pews with high backs and doors, for which they paid an annual rent—a custom also followed by other denominations. The Church of England generally allotted benches to the poor, or allowed them to stand at the back. The congregations might 'stand equal in the sight of God', but they did not sit that way.

St Mary's provided more than a spiritual centre for the Catholic community. Several times during 1838 public meetings were called in the adjoining chapel after Sunday mass. There members of the church rallied together, Catholic identity was proclaimed, and opinions were expressed which could be shared through the press with distant members. Laymen joined with clerics in discussions and resolutions on matters of common interest. Such a meeting was called in July. It was provoked by a remark of Mr Justice Willis, passed at a meeting chaired by the Church of England bishop, Broughton, which seemed to describe the Catholic conduct of the mass as idolatry. Certainly to churchmen like Broughton and Willis the Catholic belief in transubstantiation—the transformation of the consecrated bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ—was mere superstition. Polding believed that the public statement of such an opinion by a judge of the supreme court threatened to deny what the Church Act of 1836 had proclaimed: that there was no exclusive religious establishment in this country. Besides, how could a judge so prejudiced be impartial in a court of law?

On 29 July Polding summoned his congregation to St Mary's to discuss the affair and to pronounce on the doctrine of the Eucharist. He also complained vehemently to Governor Gipps about the insult and to Catholic members of parliament in London. He would have gone further, but two eminent laymen, one of them the attorney-general, John Hubert Plunkett, advised him to let the matter drop.

The laymen's caution was understandable. Catholics had been relieved of major civil disabilities in Britain only ten years earlier, and many Protestants still equated the Catholic Church with sedition, or at least with indifferent loyalty to the crown. The lieutenant-governor of New South Wales, Sir Maurice O'Connell, who had studied long ago in Paris with an eye to the priesthood, had been obliged to become officially Protestant when he turned to a military career. That Plunkett and other Catholics now held office under the crown showed that conditions had improved since the days of O'Connell's youth, but professional men, businessmen and large landowners were still scarce in the cathedral's congregation.

Some Catholics saw themselves as citizens of the world, and the training of their priests reflected a cosmopolitan tradition. Polding and the young men whom he had brought with him in 1835 had been trained exclusively in England, but the colony's Irish Catholic leaders represented more varied backgrounds. James Alipius Goold had studied in Rome and Patrick Bonaventure Geoghegan in Spain. John Brady had served for over a decade in French-speaking Reunion Island, and the most senior priest, John McEncroe, had been a vicar-general in America. Their different experiences had bred different methods and ideals. McEncroe, for example, had imbibed a respect for democracy, and he knew better than some how to manage within the jostling variety of faiths that colonised the new world.

There were more direct links between Sydney and the universal Catholic Church. Having returned to the colony towards the end of the year, William Ullathorne told an audience at St Mary's of his search throughout Europe for funds for the diocese. On his way there he had written a long pamphlet, *The Catholic mission to Australasia*, and on arrival had 75 000 copies printed, in English, French, German and Italian. These he distributed on a preaching tour through Britain, France, Italy, Austria, Germany, Belgium and Holland. Everywhere Catholics gave generously; 'it was sufficient to know you were Catholic, and in want of aid', Ullathorne testified, 'to obtain the co-operation of the faithful'.

His words were calculated to create a sense of solidarity between his listeners and Catholics overseas. A minority they might be in Australia, but the rituals and mysteries and structure of the church united a struggling local congregation with a vast, worldwide fellowship of Catholics. Ullathorne assured his flock that

> When on the Feast of the Pasch I mingled with the 150 000 men of Rome, who blended with 60 000 strangers gathered together from every spot of the earth within the arms of that vast portico, which seems to invite and embrace the world, and when that venerable figure of the sovereign pontiff arose with uplifted arms to bless the city and the world, you then knelt in me and prayed through me that, 'as the odors of a full field,' so might the blessings of God come down in their plenitude upon you.

Ullathorne brought his audience back to the cathedral complex around them. Just as Stow had told the Wesleyans in Adelaide, he reminded the Catholics of New South Wales that they were building not for themselves only. Let them remember that in their faith and their cathedral they were leaving the most noble monument of themselves.

> Here will your children be purified at the font, here will they receive the light of heaven, here will they be united in holy bands, here will be brought your greatest sorrows, that you may leave them, and hence you will carry your greatest joys. And when the grave closes over your bodies, when every other monument and remembrance of you have decayed and disappeared, the children of your children's children will be praying in this place, and enkindling the fervour of their religion by that spirit which, whilst it animates with life this temple, will recall the piety and self-sacrifice of those ancestors who, through many difficulties, raised it up for the service of the Living God.

Bishop Polding shared the vision of a living church and a stone cathedral together encompassing and transcending time and space. He loved the spectacle of clergy robed in richly ornamented vestments, moving in slow procession around the sanctuary. Especially he loved to accompany such ritual with music. He had hoped to revive the Gregorian chant—'chaunt', he liked to call it—partly as a heritage of the medieval liturgy, partly out of nostalgia for a regular feature of monastic life in the English Benedictine monastery which had been his home for most of his life. But the colony had no feeling for such an ancient past. Settlers with any taste for church music preferred the masters of the eighteenth century.

Catholics and Protestants alike were therefore delighted by the 'oratorios' that Polding organised in support of the cathedral building fund in 1836 and early in 1838, with selections from Handel's *Messiah*, Haydn's *Creation* and other works. Music became an essential part of cathedral services. 'Under the care of Mr Bushell our Choral Department shines brightly', Polding wrote in June 1838. 'We have Mozart's or Haydn's music every Sunday.' He asked an English correspondent to order for the cathedral a grand new organ, with power 'fit for the splendid Edifice': 'Let me have an Instrument full of dulcet honey, and loud as the Ocean roars when the Blasts from the East drive its waters into Bondi Bay'.

By the end of the year the roof of St Mary's was finished, and much of the internal decoration. Ullathorne had brought back eleven priests and nuns from Ireland, and one new priest wrote of their delight on first sharing in a service 'in this splendid structure'. He was struck with both the grandeur and the 'delicate minuteness' of the ornamentation, the great arched window set with stained glass over the altar, and the quality of the music: 'We never heard the celebrated Gloria of Mozart, No 12, to greater advantage'. It was a moment of great strength and unity of purpose for the Catholic Church in New South Wales.

PUBLIC

MEETING

OF

CATHOLICS.

The CATHOLICS of the New Colony of South Australia are particularly requested to meet

ON TUESDAY, JUNE 12, 1838,

AT SHEPHERD'S HOTEL,

AT SEVEN O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING,

To take into consideration the best means of erecting a CHURCH, and following the Instructions lately received from the Right Rev. Dr. POLDING, Catholic Bishop of Australasia.

WM. PHILLIPS.

Glenelg, June 5th, 1838.

PRINTED BY A. MACDOUGALL, RUNDLE STREET.

MITCHELL LIBRARY

Yet all was not quite well. Ullathorne had won his band of Irish recruits at the cost of assuring the Irish bishops that the church in Australia was 'but an appendage of the Irish church'. His statement was literally true in terms of membership—of priests and people alike. But Ullathorne's very success in Ireland filled him with misgivings, especially as the recruiting efforts he had made among English Benedictines had failed outright. Both Polding and Ullathorne cherished a plan to establish St Mary's as the centre of an abbey-diocese, rather than a cluster of parishes served by local priests on the Irish model. Their aim was to make the church accessible to people not of Irish birth and to promote the monastic ideal against the pastoral thrust of most of the local clergy. Ullathorne's hopes for an English rather than an Irish church in Australia were dashed by the failure of the Benedictine monasteries to supply the necessary resources. For this and other reasons Ullathorne had resolved to look for some more agreeable field of labour.

But none of this disturbed the harmony in St Mary's. Isolated tensions continued, including the trouble with Mr Justice Willis, but the Catholic Church in New South Wales seemed at peace both within itself and in its dealings with the wider community. The government was generally sympathetic, and many Protestants came to the cathedral to enjoy the music. Polding welcomed their participation in the aesthetic traditions of a church much older than the English–Irish conflict, just as he offered to his Irish congregation the hope of a new Australian identity which might transcend that conflict; we are all, he declared, Australians now. The English-born bishop, dignified in bearing and confident in his authority, was the ideal mediator between a poor and despised minority and a powerful Protestant majority.

MRS BROUGHTON GOES VISITING

Churches were buildings designed for meeting, for ritual, for the display of social rank and for the affirmation of beliefs. Their architecture and their ornament—sometimes down to the smallest detail—showed precisely how they were meant to fulfil their purposes. That was true of many other buildings in the colonies, from the most public to the most exclusive, such as ladies' drawing rooms.

When two carriageloads of elegantly dressed women rounded the semicircular drive of Lyndhurst, the Sydney residence of Dr James Bowman, one April afternoon, they found a carriage already standing by the porch. The monogram on the carriage door showed that Mary Bowman was entertaining Lady Gipps, wife of the governor of New South Wales. Lesser callers would have been deterred. But these visitors were ladies of rank in New South Wales society—Mrs William Grant Broughton, her young daughters Mary Phoebe and Emily, her house guest Mrs Anna Josepha King, and her friend and neighbour Mrs Robert Lethbridge, and Mrs Lethbridge's four-year-old daughter Harriet. Mrs Broughton was returning a visit paid her by Mrs Bowman a few weeks previously. The party presented their visiting cards and waited to be received.

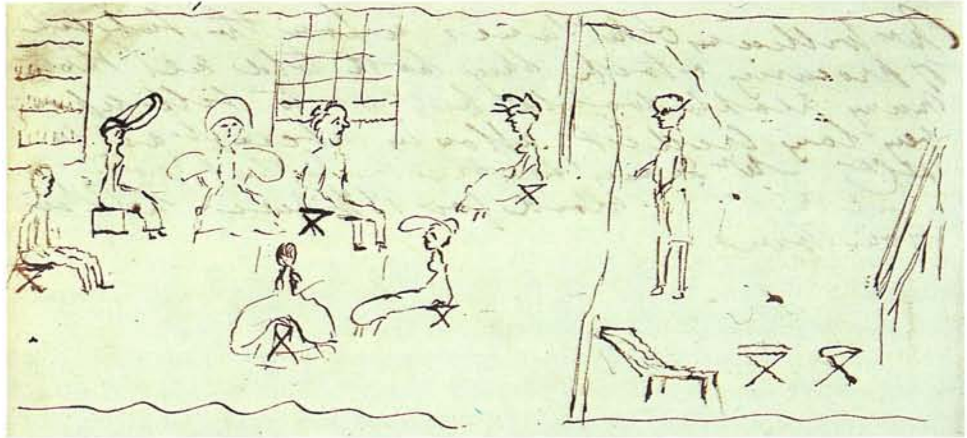
Morning visiting dress: the fashions in England, 1838. The lady's robe-redingote is of silk, its bodice has silk buttons, and lace trim stands up around the top. This season's sleeve style is called 'Victoria'. The skirt is trimmed with flounces. The hat is of velour, its round brim descending almost to the chin, its inside trimmed with tulle and knots of ribbon 'in a very novel style'; plumed flowers adorn the crown. The young lady's dark green cloak is of satin, the bodice trimmed with swansdown braided at intervals. The bonnet is of satin, ornamented with feathers. The ladies' cabinet 1838 of fashion, music and romance. MITCHELL LIBRARY

Mrs Broughton and Mrs King stood at the summit of the small world of polite Sydney society. Almost their only peer was Mrs Elizabeth Macarthur, widow of John Macarthur and Mary Bowman's mother, and Mrs Macarthur preferred to avoid the visiting round. As a bishop of the Church of England, Sarah Broughton's husband stood third in the colonial order of precedence—a rank he guarded jealously. Anna Josepha King was the widow of a former governor. Her son and her son-in-law, Hannibal Macarthur, were both members of the highly exclusive legislative council. At 73, Mrs King was energetic arbiter of the colony's manners. Mary Lethbridge was younger, the mother of small children, and her husband was of less consequence. Robert Lethbridge was a retired army officer, a substantial landowner with a grand mansion at Woolloomooloo, and a relative by marriage of the Kings and the Macarthurs. Calling alone, Mary Lethbridge might still have chosen to send in her card to Mrs Bowman without waiting to be received in person. But in such company, she could afford to wait.

The visitors had much to admire. Lyndhurst was one of the grand houses of Sydney. Recently completed, it had taken four years to build. It was designed by John Verge, a fashionable architect whose work closely copied contemporary English trends. The broad rolled lawns and gardens were laid out in the style of an English estate, though the trees and shrubs were barely grown. The front faced east, with four Tuscan columns supporting an entrance porch flanked by decorative cast iron verandahs. Two sets of shuttered French windows with finely detailed mouldings led to the drawing room and library on either side of a wide central doorway. James Bowman had been for many years principal surgeon to the government in Sydney and he employed many convicts on his country estates. Some said that his large fortune had been made at public expense. Scandals early in his career had denied him a town allotment at Woolloomooloo, Sydney's most select area. Lyndhurst was his answer to the critics.

Mary Bowman quickly decided that she was 'at home' to the new visitors, and had them ushered in. They passed through an entrance hall furnished with french-polished cedar chairs, a brass stand for umbrellas and hats, and a lamp table, and were received in the drawing room on the left. The room was large—about five and a half by nine metres. All the downstairs rooms at Lyndhurst, designed for receiving visitors, were lavishly furnished. Much of the furniture was imported; some had been especially made for the house from Australian cedar and mahogany. The drawing room boasted a large central table carrying a highly ornamented oil lamp, and ten Trafalgar chairs with outward-curving legs and carved backrests. More comfortable seating was provided by two chintz-covered sofas with matching pillows. There were also a low chiffonier with marble top and folding glass doors, a treble nest of tables and two covered card tables. The appointments were more elegant than those of the ageing government house, though Lady Gipps might have consoled herself that chiffoniers were quite out of fashion in London.

Mrs Anna Josepha King. By an unknown artist, undated. MITCHELL LIBRARY



Tea-time caller. A whimsical look by Anthony Beale in a diary sketch, 1840, at the social situation created by a caller (on verandah) during a ladies' tea party.
LA TROBE LIBRARY

Mary Lethbridge, corkscrew curls held in place with a comb. Undated ink sketch by Robert Lethbridge King.
MITCHELL LIBRARY

Introductions were unnecessary. Had the ladies not already met, Mrs Broughton would never have brought her party into the presence of Lady Gipps. It was the height of rudeness to introduce people without consulting both parties beforehand, especially when they were of different rank. Men and women of inferior rank would always want to meet their superiors, but not the other way around. The system of calling cards and formal visits was designed to prevent unwelcome introductions. Formal introductions could rarely be made in a public place. Ideally they took place at home, through a trusted intermediary or after a proper exchange of cards, allowing credentials to be scrutinised. Without a formal introduction one could not presume upon an acquaintance.

Newcomers found colonial society more punctilious about the rules of acquaintance than similar circles in London. One visitor told of a ship's captain who innocently said 'Good morning, Mr–' to a lawyer to whom he had been casually introduced a few days before. 'The man of the law, however, recoiled as if a toad had tumbled in his path, and ejaculated with a stern frown, "Upon my life, I don't know you, sir".' The captain was amused, but acquaintance was a privilege worth guarding. Much business in the colony could not be done without it. Preferment in the civil service, government contracts, access to credit, land and legal favours—all depended on acquaintanceship.

Barred from formal introductions in public, men made new acquaintances only at business, or in private clubs or homes. Women met women only at home. The private club was a novelty out here—1838 saw the inauguration of three at the top level of society: the Australian Club in Sydney, the South Australian Club and the Melbourne Club. There were already Union Clubs in Hobart Town and Perth. All were formed with a determination to limit their members to 'gentlemen'. Ideally, gentlemen were men with aristocratic connections in England and the leisured way of life guaranteed by large landed estates. Failing that—and most failed—members were to be of good education, passable manners, and financially successful in an occupation that allowed the appearance of leisure.

Manual labour was normally considered very ungentlemanly. But squatters who dirtied their hands shearing, dipping and docking could present their country labours as merely 'managing their estates' when they rested in their clubs. Even buying and selling were permissible, provided they were done in the privacy of a counting house, by means of ledgers, pen and ink, and not over a shop counter with hands constantly touching money. Merchants were prominent among the organisers of the Australian Club, making up about a tenth of the founding members. Some merchants who hoped for invitations to Governor Gipps's first

levee in February did not get them. This invitation was the certificate of respectability in the colony, guaranteeing entry to government house thereafter. The levee list was dominated by the officials of the colony—soldiers, judges, clergy and administrators—and by the older landed families whose pedigree in the colony extended beyond one generation.

Young British entrepreneurs such as Alexander Brodie Spark and Stuart Alexander Donaldson—merchants and squatters—were active in the foundation of the Australian Club, partly because they wanted to challenge the official establishment in Sydney. In the other capital towns and in Melbourne the official establishments were too small to provide a convivial centre for local gentlemen. The clubs had been formed to fill the gap and as an alternative means of defining 'good society'.

Women presided over introductions at home, but that gave them little real power. They could not change the rules of the game, determined in New South Wales largely by male status and by the needs of male careers. The order in which Lady Gipps made her round of calls in Sydney during April, after a month's sickness, was decided not by her personal preference, but by the rank of her husband's officers. Mrs Broughton, the bishop's wife, was visited early in April; Mrs Bowman, the wife of the colonial surgeon, late in the month. On Mrs Broughton's return visit to government house she was entirely her husband's wife, taking two clergymen's wives to meet Lady Gipps.

Like their husbands, colonial ladies were punctilious about the outward forms of meeting and greeting. Their clothes were ostentatiously fashionable. Jane Synot wrote from Launceston to her aunt in Scotland:

> I dare say that you do not think the good people do not care for dress here but I can assure you they are as fashionable and more so than at home. The ladies walk every day in black and the lightest satins thro the streets and in church their dresses are superb.

Four categories of hats recommended in 1838. The ladies' cabinet 1838 of fashion, music and romance.
MITCHELL LIBRARY

Such attention to detail expressed the exclusiveness of polite society. *Hints on etiquette and the usages of society*, originally published in London in 1836, was reprinted in Hobart Town in 1838. Its definition of the subject took a new urgency in the colonies, for 'etiquette' was

> the barrier which society draws around itself as a protection against the offences which the 'slight' cannot touch,—it is a shield against the intrusion of the impertinent, the improper, the vulgar,—a guard against those obtuse persons, who having neither talent nor delicacy, would be continually thrusting themselves into the society of men to whom their presence might (from the difference of feeling and habit) be offensive, and even insupportable.

Henry Cavendish Butler, an Irish aristocrat and brother-in-law of Colonel Henry Dumaresq, certainly found it so. He wrote in 1838 of this 'strange land':

> The aristocracy of wealth is looked up to with a veneration which the most sanguine 'Parvenu' could hardly hope for in other countries. Parties whose birth, parentage and education would forever preclude their being admitted into any society but of the lowest caste at home ... hav[e] jostled themselves into even being recd. at Govt. House.

Others agreed that even the best colonial society was a little vulgar. 'All the officers were there', Jane Synot wrote of an official party at government house; 'theirs is a very nice regiment and they are our constant visitors (for Mama does not admire the colonists at all)'.

New money was not the only problem. Some of the parvenus were further tainted by convict blood. Gother Mann, a penniless lieutenant from the Bombay Horse Artillery, had been educated in England with the governor's private secretary and was readily introduced into Sydney society by friends from India. He improved his fortune by marrying a close friend of Mary Phoebe Broughton, the bishop's daughter, but he wrote sourly of his adopted society:

> everyone is rich and many of these wealthy people were and are convicts, one living next door to where I am lodging, Mr Lyons, was transported but now living comfortably on his £7000 a year!! This is but one instance of hundreds that can be mentioned.

Mann exaggerated. But money, education and an appropriate marriage could carry even a convict's children into polite society, despite the distaste of its guardians. How little power women enjoyed in the face of social convention was demonstrated when Lady Franklin, wife of the governor of Van Diemen's Land, had to apologise to her sister in England for giving her address to a family whose mother was 'said to have been transported to Sydney for horse stealing'. The family was unexceptionable on other counts: two daughters had been sent 'to England for education and are well married', and a granddaughter was married to a nephew of the previous governor, Colonel Arthur. Jane Franklin wrote that the granddaughter,

> a native of the Colony, or what is vulgarly called a 'Currency lass', is a very pretty young woman and has that quiet and modest demeanour which distinguishes most of the young females in the Island. Yet not withstanding her beauty and her father's riches, I cannot conceive how the Arthur family can have been satisfied with the match.

By the 1830s convict ancestry was only one factor among many in the struggle for respectability and power, and even a governor's wife could not withhold recognition from the winners.

What did women talk about in their formal encounters? Custom decreed that they be brief. Mrs Broughton and her daughters often made four or five formal calls in a single afternoon. The common topics of men's conversation—business, news from overseas, affairs of state—were not generally permitted. Jane Franklin, who took an active interest in her husband's administration, felt the disapproval of the matrons of Hobart Town; she explained wryly that

> if a Governor's wife is 'very clever', & is known to sit much in her own room, & does not exhibit her fancy works, & has travelled on 3 continents & is suspected of writing a book, why if she does not overturn the state, or keep it going, it is not because she has not the means.

None of the ladies at Mary Bowman's considered themselves to be 'very clever'. Unlike Lady Franklin, all were mothers. The main topic of conversation was probably their children. Mary Lethbridge had brought her four-year-old daughter, Harriet, to play with Mary Bowman's little girl Isabel. In London, children were usually excluded from such calls, but Sydney mothers, having to employ convict nursemaids, were used to keeping their children with them. Mrs Broughton was probably interested in the scholastic progress of young Dicky Macquoid, the son

of a family friend, who had just started lessons at government house with eight-year-old Reginald Gipps. Emily and Mary Phoebe Broughton could talk about their 'fancy works'—wax fruit and shell flowers—and the ball next month at government house, at which both girls were to 'come out'. Lady Gipps and Mrs Broughton may have discussed the last meeting of the committee for the Female School of Industry, which both had attended, but even that might have seemed too weighty a matter for the occasion.

Not all the Broughtons' calls were so formal. Mary Phoebe Broughton's diary meticulously lists all the callers to their home during the year—there were 248 visits—and all the calls they made themselves. The diary was intended to record calls so that they might be properly returned. The pattern suggests several circles of friendship. Of 39 families visited, all received more than one visit, fourteen were called on twice, and five more, including Mary Bowman, received three visits. Seventeen families were visited between three and seven times, making a total of 87 calls. The remaining eight families, who were clearly very friendly with Mrs Broughton and her daughters, received between them 162 calls.

Public promenade dress. Jaconet muslin, embroidered around the border in feather stitch in a very light pattern; the robe of pale straw-coloured peau-de-soie, *is open in front, rounded at the corners, and trimmed with a flounce edged with Valenciennes lace.* Manche à Volans, *the Volans edged with lace.* Ceinture *of straw-coloured ribbon. The headdress is a drawn bonnet of rose-coloured crape, trimmed in a very novel style with ribbons and flowers. Peruvian parasol of white ostrich feathers shaded with green.* The ladies' cabinet 1838 of fashion, music and romance.
MITCHELL LIBRARY

Return visits followed a similar pattern. All who were visited only twice—the distant acquaintances—came at least once to visit the Broughtons, but rarely more than three times. Most of those visited about half a dozen times returned exactly the number of visits received, two exceptions being the clergymen's wives, Mrs Steel and Mrs Wood, who each made twelve visits to Mrs Broughton's seven. It is notable that in the 'inner circle' Mrs Broughton was similarly placed in relation to Lady Gipps, wife of her husband's superior; Mrs Broughton made sixteen visits which Lady Gipps returned only twice.

Mapping Mrs Broughton's calls and callers tells us much about the social geography of official Sydney. Apart from Lady Gipps, all the women of the inner circle regularly visited by Mrs Broughton lived on Woolloomooloo Hill, considered the 'West End' of Sydney. During the 1820s, the governor had granted the prime allotments along the eastern shore of Woolloomooloo Bay to leading civil servants and merchants, imposing certain conditions on houses built there. Owners had been obliged to submit their plans to the governor for approval, to erect their buildings facing the town, and to spend at least £1000 on their construction. Here the elite of Sydney could live uncontaminated by the near residence of the lower orders, with 'all the refinement and elegancies then procurable in Australia'. The Broughtons rented Tusculum, a mansion erected in a hurry by Alexander Brodie Spark to avoid losing his grant. It was within easy walking distance of the homes of most senior government officials, and these families and those of a few wealthy settlers were the Broughtons' most intimate friends. Visits to them were often for a specific purpose—to borrow an ornament for a party, or to see a new baby.

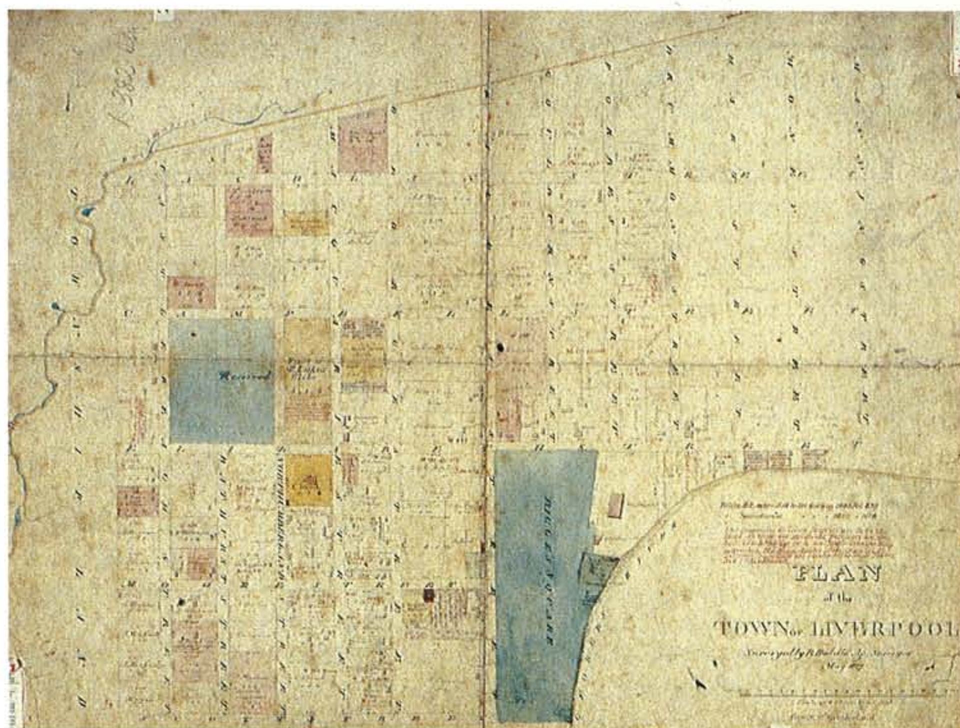
Beyond Woolloomooloo, friends were visited by carriage, and calls were made less often, though at more regular intervals, and were more strictly returned. Again the circle was determined largely by the husband's occupation: no less than thirteen of the seventeen families visited only once were connected with the civil service, the other four were those of Church of England clergymen. The fourteen acquaintances receiving two formal visits a year were more mixed, the wives of medical men, merchants and landowners and an occasional judge and civil servant. Personal preference doubtless played some part here, and a woman whose company Mrs Broughton enjoyed might well find herself elevated from mere acquaintance to distant friend, visited half a dozen times a year.

'Breeding' in the English sense very few could aspire to; even governors and bishops came from obscure families unlikely to be received at the royal court. But breeding of a different kind did add another factor to polite social interaction—a factor more open to feminine influence. The carriages that clicked through the streets of Sydney commonly carried not single ladies of fashion, but pairs. Sometimes the women were close friends, like Sarah Broughton and Mary Lethbridge. Often they were mother and daughter. A call recorded by Mary Phoebe Broughton as 'Mrs Macleay, Mrs W. Dumaresq, Mrs Onslow' was in fact Mrs Alexander Macleay of Elizabeth Bay House and her two married daughters, Christina and Rosa. Mrs F.A. Hely, widow of the principal superintendent of convicts in New South Wales, was invariably accompanied by her daughter Mary Mann and often by her son-in-law Gother Mann.

Marriages bound together what Mann described as 'the very nice families' of New South Wales, and a well-chosen union was the surest way for an ambitious young man to rise in the civil service or find a wealthy business partner. The game was the men's, but mothers and daughters could sometimes call the matches.

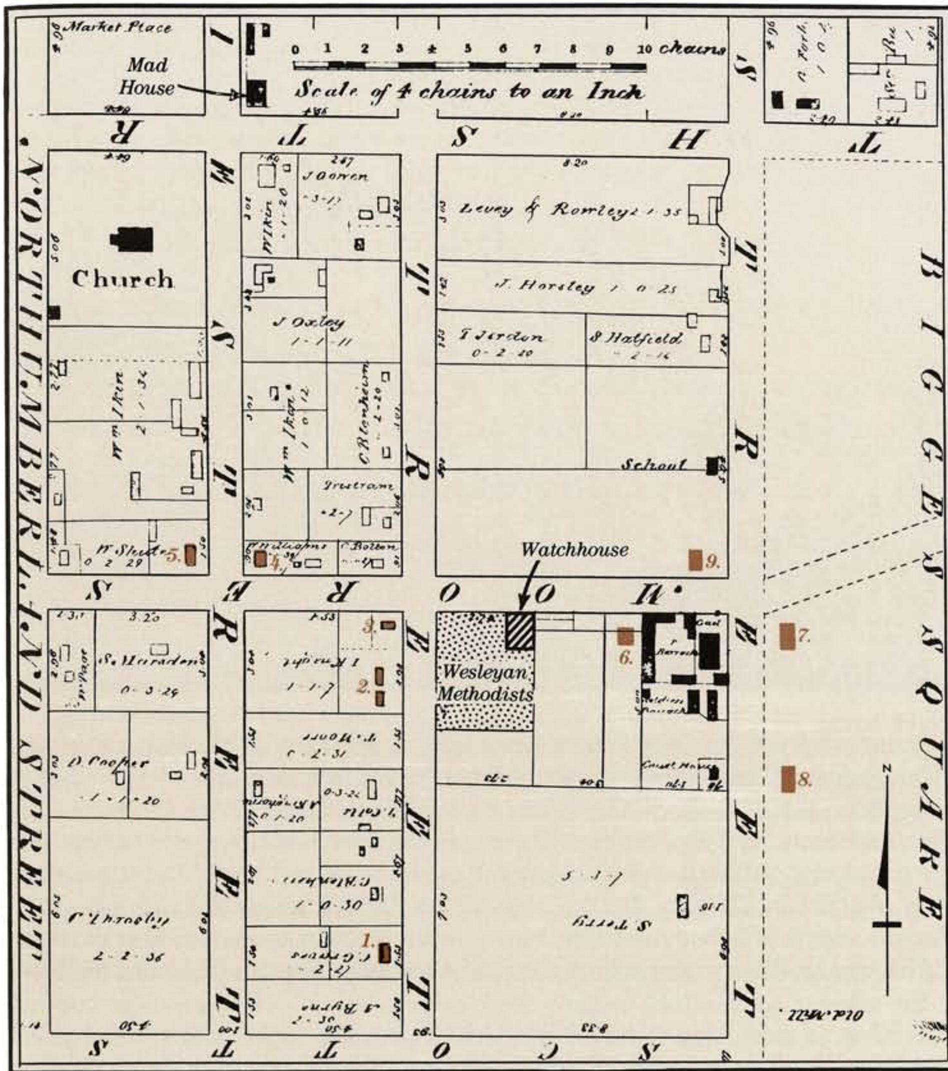
JAMES ANLEZARK FOMENTS A RIOT

About seven o'clock one Monday evening early in June, George Nicol of Liverpool, butcher, acting chief constable, and licensee of the public house Cottage of Content, investigated on hearing a great shouting and found, as he said, 'the Military pulling my fence down'. The soldiers were arming themselves with palings in order to fight a number of citizens of Liverpool, ranged along the opposite side of the road. Prominent on the military side were a Private Lockett and his wife. Nicol reported that Lockett, drunk, swore 'he would fight any man of the natives'—by which he meant Australian-born Britons—and his wife 'that she would not go home till she had her satisfaction of the bloody Natives, Sons of Whores, and other words to that effect'.



Plan of Liverpool, surveyed by R. Hoddle, 1827. The enlargement on the opposite page shows the scene of the riot in greater detail.

ARCHIVES OFFICE OF NEW SOUTH WALES: G. SWINTON, MONASH UNIVERSITY



Public Houses
1. *Blue Bell*
2. *Coach & Horses*
3. *Cottage of Content*
4. *The Ship Inn*
5. *The Wheelwright's Arms*
6. *George Nichol's house (not a public house)*
7. *The Hope*
8. *The Union Inn*
9. *The Rock of Cashill*

G. SWINTON, MONASH UNIVERSITY

As acting chief constable, Nicol attempted to stand between the parties, asking them to disperse. But the Locketts came on with stones, bricks and palings. The inhabitants defended themselves with palings from the fence opposite and Nicol had to flee. It was at this point, said Nicol in his sworn statement, that he met James Anlezark, a fellow publican, coming from his house, the Hope, with several other people. The crowd grew—one witness said to about a hundred people—and 'the inhabitants' beat 'the military' back to their barracks.

In court, civil witnesses confirmed most of Nicol's evidence, and military witnesses denied it. The main point at issue—other than who hit whom first with what—was the role of James Anlezark. The soldiers swore that he had led a mob from his public house in an attack on the barracks, crying 'Turn out the bloody soldiers, and anything with a red jacket,' and 'anything that is red will do, go it, the bloody soldiers.' But Constable John Flinn, who was on duty that evening near the Hope, confirmed most of Nicol's story, and four men who had been drinking in the Hope swore that the innkeeper had walked up with them to see the fun well after the riot had started. Nevertheless the magistrates committed Anlezark and three others for trial on a charge of 'Assault and Battery in a riot'.

Soldiers in Sydney. Hand-coloured lithograph by Augustus Earle, 1830.
NATIONAL LIBRARY

Some evidence was not sworn before the magistrates at all, but sent to the attorney-general in Sydney by the officer in command of the detachment at Liverpool—the 80th Regiment—in a successful attempt to counter Nicol's and Flinn's evidence. Colour Sergeant Thomas Darbyshire was not present at the riot, but his captain believed that Darbyshire's evidence would 'establish the previous animus' of the inhabitants. The sergeant reported that at about half past six on that Monday evening he had passed the Hope. Seven or eight people stood at the door, and he was on the opposite side of the road. One asked another 'if he had seen two of the soldiers committing sodomy (or words to that effect) around the corner?' The other replied 'That is nothing—I saw 3 or 4 the night before.' Darbyshire considered that this was said to draw him into a row. He said nothing and walked on, turning into a public house called the Union Inn. While he was in the bar, four young men came in and passed through to the kitchen. The landlady left the bar and followed them. She returned immediately and told Darbyshire that they were four natives who swore they would murder some of the soldiers that night. He replied, 'If that is the case, the sooner I get to the Barracks the better.' At that moment they came into the bar and called for a gill of rum, and while drinking it one of them struck the wall with his fist three or four times just over the sergeant's head—which Darbyshire believed was done to provoke him. They remained a very short time. Five minutes after they had left Darbyshire dared to leave too, and he returned to the barracks to find his men defeated.

A strange tale had been told to the Liverpool magistrates only a few days earlier that may have prompted the confrontation at the Hope. A man claimed to have been robbed and badly beaten by two men whom he knew, one of them Anlezark's servant. He said that after failing to get help from either the constable or the hospital he joined his assailants in the back kitchen at the Hope and sat with them most of the night, and before six in the morning successfully roused a sergeant of the 80th regiment to arrest them. The magistrates believed him, but the inhabitants may have had their doubts.

All the action in the story took place in or around public houses–the Hope, the Union Inn, the Cottage of Content—and the same is true of many episodes reported to the supreme court in 1838. The Liverpool riot was most likely planned in a public house, most of the crowd probably turned out of public houses to join in, and some of the participants were certainly drunk. Alcohol appears to have been a catalyst in many of the encounters that brought men and women before the courts, and James Anlezark may well have mixed slanders against the military with spirits served across the bar at the Hope. The Liverpool magistrates certainly thought so.

Yet public houses did not create crime and disorder. They are prominent in court records, in newspapers and in legislation in 1838 because many unmarried working men passed most of their non-working hours there. Public houses provided food, drink, shelter, warmth, light, lavatories, sometimes a bed and, above all, company to the many left homeless by itinerant work and absence of family. Even those with a home met in the public houses to talk, sing, dance, dice, play cards and plan most of the other activities of common life in the colonies. Horse and foot racing, cricket matches, regattas, wrestling, dogfights, cockfights, but also friendly societies, masonic lodges, trades unions, debating societies, trading companies and even banks, were all planned in Australian public houses—as well as robberies and riots.

The publicans aided and abetted most of these activities, both in pursuit of profit and because their job required it. The owner of a public house automatically became a public person and found leadership thrust upon him. Ownership of a public house was a reasonable goal for ambitious men of small means and strong personality. James Anlezark was the son of a convict and, like most of the native born untrained in any trade, had been a labourer in his early twenties. Yet he was running a public house at 32. He was 'like all his caste a freehearted fellow, very easy to scrape acquaintance with'.

Whatever his part in the riot, Anlezark's prominence in accounts of the proceedings is witness to his standing in the town, and the readiness of even police witnesses to defend him testifies as much to the solidarity of the drinking public in

The public house was the main centre of entertainment and recreation for many colonists. Engraving from Sporting magazine, *London 1830–31.*
MITCHELL LIBRARY

Liverpool as it does to the unpopularity of the military. There was solidarity among publicans, too. In Hobart Town, and probably elsewhere, small groups of merchants, brewers and publicans shared the burden of the £50 sureties that all publicans had to find to support their licence applications. Business followed background, with ex-convict helping ex-convict and immigrant helping immigrant; perhaps their customers were similarly divided. In Liverpool, George Nicol of the Cottage of Content possibly perjured himself on Anlezark's behalf, and George Graham of the Wheelwright's Arms went bail for him; Thomas Weller of the Union Inn, where the colour sergeant drank, may have been less sympathetic to the native born.

Taking on even a small public house required substantial funds or good credit. A lease cost between £50 and £100 a year and a publican's licence £25, with a bond of £100 as personal security. Most intending publicans could raise this kind of money only through business connections, especially with men supplying alcohol. Anlezark may well have entered the trade with the help of the victualler William Wilson, who had employed Anlezark's sister Sophia as a housemaid during the 1820s. Clients themselves of much richer men, the publicans were substantial figures in their own neighbourhoods. Country employers commonly paid workers by cheques drawn on banks in the distant seaports. In remote parts only the publican had the ready money to cash a timbercutter's or a stockman's cheque and buying a drink at the bar was the normal way to convert it.

A good publican was vigilant as well as powerful and influential. One Monday evening in April, John Lewis walked into Nathaniel Conolly's public house at Bathurst and handed him a cheque from a local employer, asking 'Is this good in the bar?' He was doubly unfortunate. The publican recognised the signature as a forgery, and a constable who happened to be in the bar immediately 'apprehended him and lodged him in Gaol', ignoring Lewis's protest 'that he had got it from a Mate of his'.

The useful service supplied to working men by the publicans as money changers and even as bankers has been obscured by the picture often drawn of them as 'fleecing' poor silly workers of their hard-earned wages. One much-told story describes a party of free men returning, well paid, from shearing upcountry, and pausing at a grog house 'with the full intention (as free men under such circumstances always have) of having "only one half-pint" of rum and then going on'. But one drink led to another and another,

> and so on till the count was lost in the unfathomable obscurities of a publican's conscience ... in short, to use the expressive simile of the class, after 'earning their money like horses they were spending it like asses'.

This picture may well have been overdrawn or given a spurious generality. Despite the complaints of colonial reformers, men in Australia generally drank rather less than men in England in 1838. Critics may have been less outraged by absolute drunkenness than by the public display of noisy and sometimes violent enjoyment.

The myth of the 'fleecing' publican and his debauched customers also owes a lot to the testimony of men interested in employing those customers. Take the self-consciously dramatised account by a young station manager of his venture into a Melbourne public house in search of bush workers. He described a long room filled by a long narrow table and benches, the table crowded with bottles and glasses, the benches with 'some thirty men in every stage of intoxication'. Some were drinking, some singing, some quarrelling, some staring vacantly, some smoking or trying to smoke, some 'trying to dance' to a fiddle played by a resident musician. The author represents the scene as uncivilised and less than human,

observing that the musician's 'bestial face was a study in itself'. 'Another burly ruffian', busy 'flattening a pewter-pot with his fingers', met the would-be employer with 'What the ... devil do you want, bloke, eh?' 'A bullock-driver,' replied our hero bravely. The company greeted this with 'a roar of laughter, with oaths, yells, and imprecations', cries of 'Bonnet him, Tom; bonnet him', 'Break his back', and 'Come on, young 'un, have a drink'.

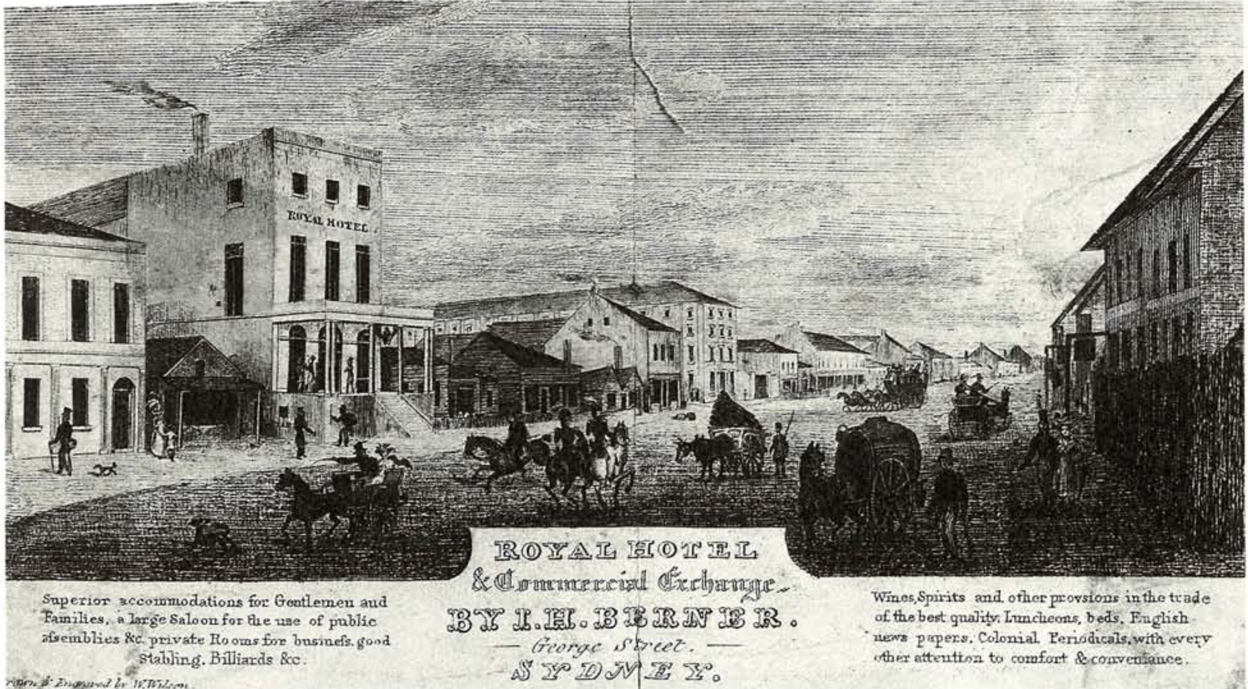
The fellowship was as threatening to the young man as the insults. 'Astonished and disgusted', he was rescued from the 'pandemonium of debauchery' by the innkeeper, who 'bundled out for my inspection, into a dingy back parlour, some six or eight men, whose money being spent, were no longer of any use to him, and only remained on the premises on sufferance'. Needless to say, they made impossible employees—'fastidious and outspoken' and too democratic by half. This account clearly misrepresents the purpose of the public house as a 'house of call', a sort of labour exchange in which, given the high demand for labour, colonial workers could briefly have the upper hand.

Public houses were a mixed blessing to those attempting to control Australian society. They were a necessity for all travellers, rich and poor, and for this purpose the government encouraged them. In June the police magistrate at Port Phillip was instructed to foster the establishment of 'houses of entertainment' on the new road to Sydney 'by selling small lots of land ... in convenient situations, and by the issue of licences at a reduced rate'. Many of the more expensive houses catered almost entirely for well-to-do travellers—peripatetic officials, rural landowners travelling to town, city families escaping the city. The splendid furniture of Mrs Dillon's Bathurst Hotel at Kelso, near Bathurst, included:

> Spring, Horsehair, and other Sofas, Loo, Pembroke, Dining, and other tables, Beds and Bedding, Mahogany Horsehair Chairs, Cane-bottom ditto, Drawing and Bed room ditto, rich Chimney, Pier and Dressing Glasses, Paintings and Pictures, Time-pieces, elegant cut Glassware, Chandeliers and Lamps, Plated Goods, a quantity of Store Goods, Kitchen Utensils of every description, about five hundred Illumination Lamps, with Designs ...

The effect of all this, together with the elegant verandahs, was to delight 'the respectable Families who continually sojourn there from the fatigues of a town life, at the same time having all the comforts of a retired home'. Or so Mrs Dillon said, in an attempt to find a buyer for her business. Even the most humble houses, licensed only to sell beer and wine, could be required by the local magistrates to contain at least two sitting rooms, as well as two bedrooms 'actually ready and fit for public accommodation', and not occupied by the publican's family. Gentlemen, if forced to stay there, could expect at least a little privacy.

Melbourne shows the middle and lower range of accommodation. The fast-growing settlement existed almost entirely to service the expansion of settlers and their flocks into the hinterland, and public houses were prominent among the collection of 'huts embowered in the forest foliage and peering at itself in the river stream'. A flattering visitor found the best of them comparable with the inns of Piccadilly: 'the fittings are certainly less costly, but on the whole, there are two or three houses in Melbourne capable of entertaining noblemen'. He exaggerated. Even the best could not come near the better inns of Sydney or Hobart Town, either in service or in architecture. The largest public house in Melbourne, the Angel Inn, boasted 'three upstairs rooms' in 1838 and a taproom 9 metres by 3.5,



One of the better inns in Sydney. Drawn and engraved by W. Wilson, undated.
NATIONAL LIBRARY

with assorted outbuildings including a detached billiards room. The Lamb Inn in Collins Street was similarly sprawling. From a little wooden edifice built of assorted pieces of mainly second-hand timber in 1837, it was enlarged during 1838 to 32 rooms, with a parlour and coffee room instead of a taproom for working men. Fawkner's Hotel in Market Street was more compact, but no more beautiful—one and a half storeys of wood and brick, with shared sleeping quarters full of fleas in an upstairs room 'something like a barn loft' with a 'quaint, pyramidal roof, bearing some resemblance to a half-open umbrella with the whale bone slightly out of order'.

John Pascoe Fawkner, a convict's son, had himself been convicted of fraud and of engineering the escape of prisoners in Van Diemen's Land. Self-educated, a voracious reader and bush lawyer, he offered to the patrons of his public house both a handwritten newspaper and what a recent arrival from England discovered to be 'an excellent reading room and library'. At dinner Fawkner was a peremptory host, dealing out portions of the roast and political opinions with an equal disregard for his guests' tastes and opinions: no fare for noblemen.

But for all the fleas and politics, Fawkner's house was preferable to some others. The squatter George Russell sent his men to Michael Carr's Governor Bourke Hotel. Carr's and three other licensed Melbourne houses were small buildings of sod or wattle and daub, probably catering exclusively for working men.

The public houses expressed the spirit of the age in being common to all who could afford them. But the fastidious young employers of the Port Phillip district grew dissatisfied with even such limited equality. In November, after a cricket match in which 'the Gentlemen Civilians' played 'the Military', the players assembled at the officers' quarters and resolved to form a club exclusive to gentlemen, self-defined, which would provide all the facilities of an inn without the embarrassments attendant on a public house. So the Melbourne Club was born.

Gatherings of working men were a threat to the men and women who employed them. In manner the working men were disrespectful and uncouth, and they were quickly moved to violence. The authorities sought to control them outside working hours by containing their leisure activities within public houses and making the publicans responsible for order. Public drinking was restricted to licensed premises by the summary closure of any unlicensed grog shop noisy enough to draw a complaint. Three kinds of licences were issued: a 'publican's general licence' to sell all kinds of alcohol; a 'wine and beer' licence only; and a 'confectioner's licence' to sell 'ginger beer and spruce beer'. A local magistrate issued and revoked these licences, and publicans were responsible to him for any breach of order. They had to keep restricted hours, opening at four on summer mornings and at six in winter, for many men ate breakfast in public houses, and working hours were set by the sun. They closed at nine at night, they could not admit convicts, either as employees or as customers, nor supply them with liquor.

Nor could a publican supply Aborigines with sufficient alcohol to make them drunk, serve alcohol to any intoxicated person, or 'permit any person to become drunk'. He or she could not keep in or about the house 'any Skittle Ground or Ball Court, or any Dice, Cards, Bowls, Billiards, Quoits, or other implements used in Gaming', nor allow anyone else to do so—a direct assault on long-established English practice, but one enforced more with an eye to the gaming than the games. Above all the publican was required to 'maintain good order and rule in the said house and premises'. The meeting of interest between publican and magistrate is neatly symbolised in the lamp which the publican was required to keep burning over his door—at once lighting streets otherwise dark, and drawing in the thirsty traveller.

James Anlezark enters the historical record in 1838 not only as a rioter but also as a bridegroom. On 3 February at St Luke's Church of England, Liverpool, he married Matilda Hawthorn, a seventeen-year-old girl who had come free to New South Wales twelve years earlier. Anlezark was a widower. His first wife, Elizabeth, had died in 1837 aged only 22, giving birth to her fourth child. So Matilda Anlezark was taking on the care of several small children as well as the duties of service in the taproom.

Women appeared rarely in public houses, and then more often behind the bar than breasting it. Even in England the strongly masculine world of the taproom was tending to exclude women as customers—thus encouraging men to enjoy better living standards than their wives. In Australia a preponderance of unmarried men would have made the public houses largely male anyway, but few wives drank with their husbands in public. One observer noted in a Sydney taproom 'here and there a woman, apparently the wife of a settler'—but he added that unlike their intoxicated husbands 'the few women were all sober and quiet'. Polite opinion during the 1830s increasingly demanded sobriety from women. Drunkenness in a man was reprehensible if it led him to cheek his master or neglect his family. Drunkenness in a woman unsexed her entirely. Governor Gipps was to tell a temperance meeting: 'There is no object of disgust or horror that so offends the sight of God or man, so entirely loathsome as a drunken woman'. George Nicol of the Cottage of Content was no temperance advocate, but the sight of poor drunken Ellen Lockett, driven by taunts of 'Soldiers' Moll' to seek 'her satisfaction of the bloody Natives, Sons of Whores, and other words to that effect', clearly moved him to an emotion like the governor's.

The demand that all women, and not just rich ones, be sober, submissive and private creatures, bore heavily also on the women behind the bar. In the early years of New South Wales women often ran public houses in their own right whether

or not they were married. In 1821 about a quarter of the licensees in and around Sydney were women. By the 1830s the proportion had fallen to barely 5 per cent. It appears that licences were no longer issued to women and even widows inheriting licences seem mostly to have chosen not to go on alone. Material factors told against the single woman publican: the increasing expense and complexity of the establishments, the difficulty of finding credit and business connections.

The issue was still more complex. A publican needed a wife. The law admitted this in exempting from those provisions excluding convicts from public houses the convict wives of publicans, who were allowed to serve behind the bar while still under sentence. The forms to be filled in by applicants for licences assumed them to be male and married. Accounts of Melbourne suggest a more even-handed and dictatorial administration of the law by local magistrates: 'No bachelor or spinster could obtain a licence, and ... such applications were postponed to afford parties (male or female) an opportunity of tying the nuptial knot'. A publican needed a wife because in making his house public, he made it no less domestic; the needs of his guests required the domestic skills that only a wife could offer. The management of a public house looked back to the domestic industries of earlier centuries—baking, spinning, weaving—in which men and women shared different aspects of the same task. But new patterns of industry and accompanying public attitudes, while elevating women's domestic role, denied them the right of public action. By 1838 few magistrates would commit to a woman alone the duty of maintaining 'good order and rule' in a public house.

Nevertheless, women did not stand aside from the rough and tumble of the public bar. Two of the seven public houses licensed in Melbourne in 1838 were run by women, in fact if not in name: Catherine Bulger, wife of Michael Carr, ran the Governor Bourke Hotel while her husband tried unsuccessfully to dry the alcohol out of his system on a station upcountry, and Mrs Pender conducted the Shamrock while her husband took his bullocks carting. But public moral opinion was that women of property, such as they were, should have finer aspirations.

Sir George Gipps Signs The Pledge

The evening of 8 June saw a gathering in Sydney which the *Australian temperance magazine* judged was 'worthy of an imperial dependency for its loyalty and good order, and would have done honor to a republic for its freedom and simplicity'.

The old courthouse building in Castlereagh Street was 'perfectly crowded' with gentlemen and, 'notwithstanding the unfavourable state of the weather', a good number of ladies. They came to be part of the first public meeting in the colony at which a governor had presided. Governors usually kept away from popular campaigns, fearing to compromise their dignity by taking sides. But Sir George Gipps believed that his official dignity had a moral foundation. He had become patron of the Temperance Society of New South Wales, in order, he said, to call for the 'moral reformation' of the colony. The governor believed that legislation could abate some aspects of the 'march of intemperance', and he spoke at the meeting about the measures he had recently introduced into the legislative council to prohibit wages being paid in alcohol and to license all wholesale dealing in spirits. But he stressed that real reformation depended on 'the exertions of individuals'. He came before this assembly to set an example which he hoped fathers would exhibit to sons and masters to servants. In a solemn moment the governor proved sincerity by adding his own signature to the pledge:

> We agree to abstain from distilled spirits, except for medicinal purposes, and to discountenance the causes and practice of Intemperance.

His example was immediately followed by other public figures, led by the chief justice, Sir James Dowling, a recent convert. The *Australian temperance magazine* rejoiced:

> When the ruler of the land gives a tone to public feeling on the side of virtue, by patronising a voluntary reformation of manners, he confers a lasting benefit on his country, and obtains a permanent renown. A good example universally followed will renew the world.

The 'voluntary reformation of manners' seemed especially urgent in the two convict colonies: the Quaker missionaries James Backhouse and George Walker had begun the first colonial temperance society in Hobart Town in 1832; the Sydney society and one at Launceston had been formed very soon afterwards. But a campaign for temperance had been widespread in the English-speaking world since 1820. As a movement for moral reform in the United States of America temperance ranked second only to the crusade for the abolition of slavery. In Great Britain, temperance preachers of various shades of opinion and styles of enthusiasm were at work in the new industrial towns of the midlands and the north, and some influenced the thinking of government through the evangelical movement centred on Exeter Hall. Respectable emigrants carried to the colonies the new ideas of self-restraint and moral improvement, and officials, moved both by personal belief and official policy, were happy to support the temperance societies. Governor Hindmarsh chaired the inaugural meeting of the temperance society in Adelaide in 1837, and, like Gipps, went so far as to join up himself. William Lonsdale, the police magistrate at Port Phillip, had given his active approval to the founding of a society there in October 1837. Sir John Franklin gave his blessing in Hobart Town. In January 1838 Western Australia became part of the empire of temperance when a society was formed there, too, at a meeting chaired by the commandant of the forces.

Temperance began as a call for moderation in the drinking of alcohol, especially of spirits. The poor commonly drank spirits, especially rum, gin and brandy, in urban Britain and even more so in Australia, where spirits were relatively plentiful and beer was expensive and hard to come by. Wine, drunk mainly by the educated classes, was less often condemned by temperance advocates. The motto of the *Australian temperance magazine* distinguished nicely between safe and unsafe alcohol: '*Temperance* is *moderation* in things innocent, and *abstinence* from things hurtful'. The reformers themselves were men and women of respectability, and they and their friends preferred wine. Thus the manners whose reform was demanded by temperance reformers were unlikely to be their own.

Sir George Gipps set the tone of the Sydney meeting by assuming that he addressed only the respectable, those with 'a character to lose, or an interest to maintain'. Succeeding speakers agreed that the problem was not here, among the 'worthy and honorable men who composed the Society', but in the streets, where 'nothing is more common than to see a drunken ruffian stagger along ... almost unheeded'. It was in the gaols, the Sydney dispensary and the benevolent asylum, where drunkards and their families were looked after. And above all it was in the grog shops and the public houses. James Anlezark would hardly have recognised himself in the vituperative picture painted of 'The general mass of publicans':

> they hear so much, they see so much, they know so much of sin and guilt, their doings of death and woe are so palpable, that they are past the reclaim of reason; they are vultures who will not be scared from their prey.

Drunkenness was more than a wicked habit among the poor. It was a nuisance

to the rich: it was a burden on the public purse; it offended the eye of the lady in the street; it reduced the efficiency of labourers and servants. Gipps pointed to the happy conjunction of economic interest and religious duty:

> It is to the advantage of every master in the Colony to make his servant a temperate man, for that which is perdition to the servant cannot but be disadvantageous to the master.

Others agreed that sober servants were profitable servants, and with souls to save—'however low and degraded those we are accustomed to in this Colony, however humble the tenement may be, still they have an immortal spirit'.

The only speaker to raise a contrary view did so in rhetorical fashion. 'It was often asked,' he said, 'before requesting the poor to give up their spirits, why do not the rich give up their wine?' But this had nothing to do with the question, which was 'whether or not spirits do harm to the poor?' He explained: 'the poor are not asked to give up a comfort, but that which is a positive injury.' However, the rich were not asked to give up anything. Though their voices were not raised at the Sydney meeting, already there were some townspeople who maintained that the rich, too, must make their sacrifice. They pledged themselves to a position more rigorous and overtly political: they would never drink and would work for the legal suppression of both the sale and the consumption of all kinds of alcohol. The first teetotal society was formed in Sydney in September 1838.

However, even temperance might be made a bone of contention between the rich and the poor. The meeting in January that led to the formation of a temperance society in Perth saw some angry debate about the practice of farmers and landowners paying their men in rum. Backhouse and Walker were present. According to the *Swan River Guardian*, during a speech by Backhouse:

George Fletcher Moore, advocate-general of Western Australia. Undated watercolour.
BATTYE LIBRARY

> Robert Minson, a poor but honest labourer came forward and said 'It is impossible for a labouring man to belong to a Temperance Society in this colony. Look at an act of the Legislative Council which forces a Labourer to take one third of his wages in grog. I take an order from a Farmer or a storekeeper in Town here, and if I want a shirt I can't get it. If I want a loaf I can't get it; *but I can get plenty of grog!*

George Fletcher Moore, the advocate-general, stood up and explained that the law did not force men to take their wages in alcohol. (In fact, its wording was at least ambiguous on this point.) When Moore had finished, another labouring man got up and said, 'Let's have out our yarn Mr Moore. We know *you* very well! You are paid for your duty.'

Backhouse himself delivered final judgment: 'those who forced Spirits on their servants in lieu of wages, would on the same principle commit a Highway Robbery if they could do so with impunity'. Such a statement, in which sins of the rich and the poor were laid together in the balance, came readily from a man with the serene moral confidence of a temperance reformer.

As a new political movement temperance attracted new types of people into the cause of social reform. Its buoyancy expressed the profound shift in social forces that was occurring in those English-speaking communities affected by the great commercial and industrial changes of the previous two generations. Temperance was one of the movements that challenged the traditional regime of nobility, high

officials and landed gentlemen, most of them Church of England, for the right to pronounce on the morals and manners of society. Members of the old elite regarded the poor almost as another nation. Some had little interest in reforming the habits or morals of their inferiors, being content merely to punish proven crime. In this the hard discipline and summary justice of the penal system was their main weapon. Other men and women of rank took up charitable works in order to make the poor more dutiful and industrious. Many philanthropic bodies had already been established in the Australian colonies, both to spread the gospel and to provide institutional care in hospitals, schools and refuges. In particular, clergy and lay gentlemen of the Church of England set up schools for the children of convicts, for they considered education of the right kind to be a most powerful means of instilling a sense of duty.

Support for temperance became a proud boast among colonial religious bodies, especially those from English nonconformist traditions. Pictured here by W. Harris is the Reverend John Saunders, a keen temperance advocate, minister in the Baptist Chapel, Bathurst Street, Sydney. Undated.
MITCHELL LIBRARY

These philanthropic institutions were headed by men, though they did provide prominent public responsibilities for select women. After 1820 women of the first rank in colonial society established charities in which they dominated the management. These institutions offered charity to poor women and children and trained them to become domestic servants. They were especially numerous in the two oldest colonies, New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land, where there were more ladies to do the work and the convict presence provided more work to be done. They included the male and female orphan schools, the Female School of Industry and the Female Refuge in Sydney, the female factories and the Dorcas societies, which concentrated mainly on getting destitute women through childbirth.

The temperance movement represented a sharp break with an old approach to controlling the poor. People accustomed to traditional forms of authority were rarely sympathetic to the methods and ideals of the movement. The names of prominent women who had been associated with the fashionable charities of an earlier day were largely missing from the early lists of subscribers to temperance. Those who did appear mostly gave only a few shillings, a sum beneath the dignity of ladies of the first rank. Moreover, the practice of such ladies was to publish their names beside those of their husbands or fathers. In temperance subscriptions, the names of the few top-ranking gentlemen appeared on their own. Similarly, while governors supported the movement, their ladies failed to follow their lead.

Traditional methods of control were closely and exclusively associated with the Church of England, as the established church in the mother country. The temperance movement, however, was largely controlled by Quakers, Congregationalists, Baptists and Methodists. Even Catholics were welcome. Bishop Polding was listed to speak to the June meeting in Sydney, although he had to withdraw at the last minute. Bishop Broughton was absent from the colony. No Church of England clergyman took his place, and Mrs Broughton and her daughters chose to spend the evening at a birthday party.

Membership of the older philanthropic committees and organisations had been principally by personal recommendation and recruitment, and records of these charities mention the same small circle of names over and over again. Temperance, by contrast—a movement rather than a mere charity—welcomed anyone who applied. It spoke to all ranks and recruited as members people of all respectable backgrounds.

Temperance was potentially radical. Its influence could extend far beyond the control of drunkenness, linking the control of alcohol with political issues such as prison reform, cruelty to animals, capital punishment, duelling and the convict system. The new zealots were interested in education, as old philanthropists had been, but they took a broader view of what it could do. Putting their faith

especially in public libraries and mechanics' institutes, they hoped to increase the numbers of respectable skilled craftsmen and small businessmen, rather than dwelling merely on the instruction of domestic servants and labourers. Moreover, they were keen to instil thrift in the lower orders by developing savings banks, building societies and the freehold land movement.

The advocates of temperance were also radical in their taste for democratic forms of political agitation. They produced newspapers and journals that aimed at large circulation, such as the *Australian temperance magazine*, which first appeared in July 1837. They were prolific in writing and distributing tracts and pamphlets. They proselytised from the public platform at huge meetings and even in the streets. Moreover, they encouraged participation by women, unprecedented in the colonies.

The founders of the movement in Australia, the Quakers James Backhouse and George Washington Walker, had always exhorted women to join the cause, advertising in the newspapers that seats at their meetings would be specially 'provided for the ladies'. The Parramatta Temperance Society resolved in 1838: 'so far from females being excluded from participation in this noble work, they are most cordially invited to give their most valuable co-operation'. At this meeting the Baptist minister John Saunders advanced a theme that gave women a particular responsibility in promoting the cause:

> It was his duty to appeal to the ladies, and if anything could influence their minds he thought nothing so likely as pity for the wives and children, perhaps he might say widows and orphans, of drunkards; pity also for the unhappy victims of vice of their own sex. Virtuous feelings are majestic in man, but they are sublime in woman ... Let the ladies then mark their own interest in this society, and exert their powerful influence for its establishment and promotion.

Women responded both by subscribing to the movement and by joining societies. Female temperance workers crossed boundaries that had barred their predecessors. They did far more than supervise from a distance. The most active worked among the squalor and vice they hated. Even more significantly, they put to the test their new-found authority as virtuous women and offered support to helpless alcoholic men. They challenged assumptions about the purpose and place of women.

Temperance meetings became female affairs at which tea had an almost sacramental character. During one gathering at Port Phillip, some observers pretended shock that several women had substituted one excess for another by consuming up to sixteen cups of tea.

Critics of this new enthusiasm were no match for its propagators. A book by Backhouse, which described his first journeys with Walker throughout the Australian colonies, had been published in 1834. It was the first of a series. By the end of 1838 three more had appeared and the first had gone into a third edition. In these volumes Backhouse recorded idealised case histories, long standardised in Britain, of success by temperance workers. Sarah Crouch of Hobart Town had persuaded a local joiner named Wainwright to give up drinking and to stop beating his wife. 'Domestic peace' was restored and they became a 'loving couple'. This may be the Wainwright whom we found in chapter 4, in charge of the building of Richard Dry's mansion in the district of Westbury. If so, his reform had material rewards. Virtue, moreover, was contagious. One of Wainwright's lodgers, a man named Yates, had been a drunkard for nineteen years, but gave up the habit after reading a temperance tract called *The Outcast* given to him by Mrs Crouch. He was said to have joined the local temperance society.

Women like Sarah Crouch were the wives and daughters of artisans and

Barrels being unloaded from horse cart to replenish stocks in the Whaler's Arms at the top of Windmill Street, Miller's Point, Sydney. Watercolour by John Rae, 1842.
DIXSON GALLERIES

shopkeepers. They had no access to the visiting round and charities of the Broughtons and the Franklins. In temperance meetings, at the bazaars and festivals and concerts held to raise money for the cause, in temperance benefit societies and temperance hotels, such women found a culture of their own.

Temperance reformers worked also at changing the culture of the poor, and in directions that, as it happened, benefited small businessmen and self-employed tradesmen. The town employer wanted reliable, punctual and productive labourers and a community of thrifty customers; his wife wanted efficient and trustworthy servants. Alcohol, the reformers believed, dissolved all these qualities. The public house, moreover, that special domain of the poor, not only stole the working man's money but also lured him away from the family hearth. Recruits to the temperance crusade moved readily from attacking the drink to putting down any other pleasures and vices of the poor which they perceived as enemies of family life. They campaigned against profane observance of the Sabbath. They opposed bawdy amusement on any day of the week. Their concern for the family was exhibited in attempts to curb prostitution. George Walker founded a society called the Van Diemen's Land Asylum for the Protection of Destitute and Unfortunate Females, of which Sarah Crouch was a committee member.

Prostitution was especially hated because women were considered to be mainly responsible for social purity, especially within the family, where they were seen as the natural teachers of their children. A resolution from one of the earliest meetings of the temperance society in Sydney declared:

Mrs Mary Reiby. Sydney's most successful businesswoman and a constant supporter of temperance. Watercolour miniature on ivory, undated and by an unknown artist.
MITCHELL LIBRARY

> The influence of the female sex in favour of Temperance Societies would have a highly salutary effect upon all classes in the Community, especially upon those who are the hope of future generations—the youth and children ... [women] would do much to perfect and perpetuate the whole family.

It was women's duty to save the family from destruction, to save marriages from breakdown, and to prevent the havoc that alcohol wrought on women and children. The new responsibilities they were asked to assume might even give them a kind of authority over men, including their own husbands, whom society usually assumed to be their natural superiors.

DR CROWTHER LECTURES AT THE HOBART TOWN MECHANICS' INSTITUTION

On 8 May Dr William Crowther delivered his second lecture on geology to the Hobart Town Mechanics' Institution. He illustrated his talk with diagrams and some beautiful samples of fossiliferous rock collected on the Macquarie Plains in the midlands of Van Diemen's Land. First he explained the order of the rock strata as they formed in the earth's crust and identified the types of fossils found in each stratum. Then he demonstrated how these parallel strata had been tilted and shifted—'upheaved'—by volcanic action. The *Hobart Town Courier* remarked that the practical value of this well-attended lecture lay in its demonstration that

> the seeming disorder and confusion of the elevated and contorted stratas and rocks of the earth were evidently a part of the order and harmony of the universe; a proof of design in the structure of the globe, and one of the progressive steps by which the earth was prepared as a fit habitation for man.

The *Tasmanian* also approved. Listeners who acquired a taste for this 'most engaging science' might enrich themselves, and the colony, by discovering useful and valuable minerals, as well as advancing scientific knowledge. And, far from encouraging irreligion, geology was a 'potent auxiliary to revelation, by exalting our conviction of the power, the wisdom, and goodness of the Creator'. The *Tasmanian* was here quoting the Reverend Dr William Buckland, distinguished not only as canon of Christ Church, Oxford, but as a man of science.

The *Tasmanian*'s editor, Frederick Maitland Innes, an active member of the Mechanics' Institution, was accustomed to defending popular education from charges of irreligion. The previous year he had taken as his authority Francis Bacon: '*All knowledge is to be limited by religion*'. The diffusion of knowledge among all classes of society, Innes argued, should and would improve people morally as well as mentally, make them happier as well as wiser. Similar arguments had been advanced for years by the supporters of popular education. Innes, however, went further than most in his insistence that governments had a duty to contribute to this great work. Given the peculiar moral circumstances of Van Diemen's Land this was even more imperative, yet

> The *only* Institution which embraces the intellectual improvement of all classes of our community has been hitherto allowed to struggle, without receiving *one* expression of approbation or concern from the Government.

The Hobart Town Mechanics' Institution had not originally been intended for the improvement of *all* classes. It had been founded in 1826, only a few years after its first British prototype, in Edinburgh in 1821. It was begun by a small group of mechanics—or artisans—as a mutual instruction society; but lack of funds, as often

in Britain, quickly caused them to lose control. By mid-1827, critics were claiming that the institute had become 'an Institution of and for *Gentlemen*; that is Public Officers and rich men, merchants and others, *exclusively*'. Governor Arthur had consented to be patron and had apparently promised land and aid for a building. Eleven years later there was still no building; the 1838 lectures were given in the court of requests room.

The *Rules* printed in Hobart Town in 1828 echoed those of similar British institutions, whose original object had been to elevate labour by science. Skilled working men, it was believed, if properly instructed in the scientific principles underlying their trades, might make useful discoveries and would in any case be more contented with their lot. So there were plans in Hobart Town for a library of reference and circulation; a museum of machines, models, minerals and other objects of natural history; an experimental workshop and laboratory. Lectures were to be given in natural and experimental philosophy, practical mechanics, chemistry, literature and the arts, and elementary schools established for teaching arithmetic, algebra, geometry and trigonometry, and their different applications, particularly to perspective, architecture, mensuration and navigation.

In 1838 the plans still outran the means. The library had acquired some three hundred volumes, but since many of them had been donated by members, it was far from being a systematic collection of works on science and mechanics. The museum also consisted mainly of donations, chiefly of native birds, animals and minerals, with a few purchased mechanical models and some chemical apparatus. The institution had been equally dependent on goodwill to carry out its programs of lectures and classes, with even less satisfactory results. In the years between 1827 and 1837 it had survived mainly through the efforts of Dr James Ross, the Scots editor of the *Hobart Town Courier*. He was the most regular lecturer and, from 1833, allowed the institution to use his new reading rooms in Collins Street. Ross's lectures were directed at young men already enjoying some education. His critics claimed that he saw the institution's functions as 'promoting the study of mechanics, in conjunction with the rest of the sciences, and not for the meeting of the labouring mechanics'. And what artisan could afford an annual subscription of a pound a year, paid all at once?

James Ross retired to his farm late in 1836, and the newspapers rumoured that the newly arrived Governor Franklin intended his private secretary, Alexander Maconochie, to reorganise the institution. The radical *True Colonist* hoped that the Mechanics' Institution

> would be no longer confined to the limited meridian of a few school boys, and excluding, of course, all *real* talent from its cognizance, but [would become] a congregation of individuals zealously co-operating for the public good, and engaging heart and hand in the glorious and god-like work of disseminating knowledge.

During 1837 and 1838 some of these hopes were achieved. Under the patronage of Sir John and Lady Franklin hundreds of new members joined, and lectures were more numerous and better attended than ever before. But the report for 1838 suggests that, despite its new management, the institution still saw itself as educating the children of the educated classes rather than adult mechanics. Its committee was gratified that so many young persons, of both sexes, had attended the 1838 lectures and were looking forward to the next series, 'as an occasion of rational amusement and instruction'. It regretted that funds had not been available for a series of lectures on arts and sciences designed for the young, particularly as these were not available elsewhere in Hobart Town.

LIST OF LECTURES.

1 On the Benefits and Advantages of Scientific and Useful Knowledge.—Rev. Henry Carmichael.
1 Landscape Gardening.—The late Mr. Thomas Shepherd.
1 On Banking.—Mr. Hipkiss.
1 On Intemperance.—Mr. Kemp.
2 Introductory to a Course of Natural Philosophy.—Rev. Henry Carmichael.
1 On the Application of the Sciences.—Dr. Charles Nicholson.
1 On Eotany.—Dr. Charles Nicholson.
1 On Animal Physiology.—Mr. Robert Band.
2 On the Steam Engine.—Mr. W. J. Edwards.
2 On Natural History.--Dr. John Lhotsky.
3 On Geology.—Dr. Charles Nicholson.
4 Philosophy of the Atmosphere.—Mr. Robert Band.
1 Strength of Colonial Timber.—Mr. Edward M'Donald.

Lectures presented in the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts in 1838, listed in the School's Sixth annual report, *Sydney 1839.*
MITCHELL LIBRARY

By 1838 there was growing concern in both the older colonies that colonial youths were more interested in improving their bodies than their minds. Reviewing James Martin's collection of verse, *The Australian sketch book*, the 24-year-old William Woolls congratulated the eighteen-year-old Martin for the example he set to his peers:

> instead of endeavouring to attain celebrity by their superior skill in horse-racing and boating, let them labour, with all their might, to secure their moral and intellectual improvement.

The publication of Woolls's own *Miscellanies in prose and verse* had recently occasioned an even stronger denunciation of the sad want of taste displayed by young men in New South Wales. Intent only on making money or gratifying their animal natures, they had no interest in scientific or literary pursuits. Indeed, they tended to deprecate the efforts of the mind.

In Van Diemen's Land, Governor Franklin planned to counter these tendencies by establishing a college, an Eton of the south. He was warmly supported by Frederick Innes, through editorials in the *Tasmanian* and in a Mechanics' Institution lecture, 'The Importance of Collegiate Institutions to the Future Interests of Van Diemen's Land'. Innes disagreed with people who argued for something more practical, such as an agricultural school. He regretted the tendency of the age to stress the material and the physical, 'to the neglect of the important field of moral speculation and intellectual philosophy'.

Innes also resisted attempts to restrict the lectures at the Mechanics' Institution to its original object, the teaching of the physical sciences. He agreed with Alexander Maconochie that

> The supporters of the Institution are not *all* mechanics ... the term *Mechanic* is rather employed for its comprehensiveness because it intimates the opposite of exclusivism.

Even if all the members *had* been mechanics, they could still benefit from the study of man, a study 'best calculated (under religion) to purify and to elevate'. The rules of the institution, revised at a special meeting on 5 October 1838, still stated its object to be 'instruction in the principles of the arts, and in various branches of Science and Useful Knowledge'. Yet for influential members like Innes, these aims were insufficient; moral improvement was the real goal.

The founders of the British institutes had believed that teaching science to mechanics would be an ideal way of promoting social harmony, with the possible bonus of useful technical improvements and discoveries. By the 1830s the error of this belief had become apparent. Few mechanics were in a position to derive much practical benefit from scientific knowledge, and mechanics' institute lectures were an imperfect method of teaching it. As in Hobart Town, the formal aims often remained unaltered while in practice the emphasis of the institutes shifted away from science and mechanics to historical and literary subjects; even novels were allowed into libraries. If the institutes were not, after all, to produce a race of James Watts, they might still ensure that there were fewer Bill Sikeses. In tandem with the temperance movement they would attract workers away from gross and sensual amusements to respectable and rational ones.

The Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts, founded six years after the institution in Hobart Town, took from the beginning a wider view of its objects, 'the diffusion of scientific and other useful knowledge as extensively as possible throughout the colony of New South Wales'. One of the 'mechanics' on the first committee of management was the locally born Horatio Wills. In 1832 his newspaper, the *Currency Lad*, had regretted that the contemporary British fever for founding literary and scientific institutions had not so far successfully infected Australia, meaning New South Wales. A number of attempts had been made in Sydney from the 1821 Philosophical Society onwards, but they had either been exclusive in their membership, or else short-lived.

Wills, who had himself had little formal education—he was employed in the *Sydney Gazette* office from the age of twelve—could compose a striking statement of the current belief in knowledge as *the* force for moral and social betterment:

> Mankind begin to feel that they are born for some nobler purpose than mere animal existence, and that they are possessed of minds capable of expansion to an almost illimitable extent. The scenery of the moral and intellectual world is, in consequence, undergoing a mighty change. Fertility succeeds to barrenness; and the stagnant waters of ignorance, which formerly sent forth the pestilential vapours of crime and misery, have now given place to those fountains of knowledge, which issue their almost boundless streams to fertilize, enrich, and bless the world.

Another with a strong belief in the power of knowledge was Richard Hipkiss, a skilled tradesman from Birmingham, and chairman of the committee that called the meeting to establish the Sydney School of Arts on 22 March 1833. In contrast with Hobart Town, the organisers in Sydney decided that two-thirds of the membership should be mechanics. Hobart Town also had a larger executive, with seven vice-presidents, usually government officials and clergymen. In Sydney, the

superintendent of public works, Major George Barney, who was president, was the only government official on the executive. The sole vice-president was the Reverend Henry Carmichael, a Scotsman, who had acted for the governor in founding the school of arts.

The varying effectiveness of government patronage created another difference between the societies in Sydney and Hobart Town. Governor Arthur had promised but not delivered a land grant for the Hobart Town institution. The Colonial Office had refused Governor Bourke's request for land for the school of arts, but Bourke had arranged instead for an annual grant of £200 from local funds. Early in 1838 Governor Franklin was urged to follow Bourke's precedent. He obtained a vote of £150 from the legislative council but then discovered that the money could not be paid without approval from London. So at the end of the year there was still no money and no definite prospect of a building in Hobart Town.

The Sydney School of Arts now had its lecture room, museum and library of over 1700 volumes safely housed in a plain brick building next to the Independent Chapel in Pitt Street. Its membership list had almost doubled in the year since the building had opened. How many of these six hundred members were mechanics, it is impossible to tell. When Carmichael delivered the first lecture in 1833, he had repeated the standard rationale of science for mechanics. But he had also referred to more general educational aims. Like Innes and others he affirmed the moral value of disseminating knowledge, particularly in a convict colony, and he wanted to persuade colonial youth to cultivate the mind as well as the body. Within two years the *Sydney Monitor* declared that the school of arts had failed in its primary object, since few mechanics attended, but allowed that it had succeeded surprisingly well in 'the instruction and recreation of young men, who prefer science, and the arts, and knowledge in general, to taverns, and theatres, and cigar-smoking, and the billiard-room'.

From the beginning the school of arts had been directed less towards science and mechanics than had the Hobart Town and earlier British institutes. In 1836 the Sydney committee had justified the purchase of Sir Walter Scott's popular Waverley novels for the library on the grounds that a taste for reading had to be formed before works of a more philosophical character could be appreciated. Some lectures on English literature were similarly defended: 'a knowledge of science, however profound, if unembellished by the graces which literature supplies, is stripped of half its advantages'. The highlight of the 1838 lecture season was a series on English poetry and drama given by the lawyer William a'Beckett. Again the committee defended an acquaintance with the literary glories of Britain as enjoyable, ennobling and potentially philosophical. A'Beckett was a talented and popular speaker who knew the value of entertaining his audience as well as instructing them.

By now two other mechanics' institutes had been established in Australia, with newspapermen and clergymen again prominent in their growth. One was started in Newcastle in 1835 by its scientifically minded clergyman, the Reverend C.P.N. Wilton. After two years it had 77 members and a library of about four hundred volumes. As these included the Waverley novels and the *Bridgewater treatises* on God as manifest in creation, it appears that Wilton also approved of mixing literature with a kind of science. The South Australian Literary and Scientific Association had been founded in 1834, by prospective colonists who had not yet left England. Its stated objects were very similar to those of the Sydney school of arts—'the Cultivation and Diffusion of Useful Knowledge throughout the Colony'. Initially, however, it was more exclusive, with an annual subscription of two guineas, and it did not prosper. On 7 July 1838 the *Southern Australian* called for its reformation,

drawing attention to the 300 volumes brought from England, mouldering unread after being damaged in a shipwreck. A week later it announced that the provisional committee of the Adelaide Mechanics' Institution would meet at the *Southern Australian* office on 16 July. The officeholders of the Literary Association declared the society defunct, and gave the damaged goods to the new Mechanics' Institution.

A number of other library associations, book societies and subscription libraries were also operating in Australia by 1838. A book society had been established in Perth, and several country areas in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land had similar groups. They testified to the widespread thirst for knowledge, but also to the desire of like to mix only with like. The long-established Australian Subscription Library in Sydney set the pattern, with high subscription rates and jealously guarded membership. The exclusiveness of the Hobart Town Book Society, founded in 1826, had probably encouraged the spread of small reading associations throughout the colony. During the 1830s book or library societies were organised at Bothwell, Richmond, Campbell Town, Norfolk Plains, New Norfolk and Pontville. In 1836, after years of mismanagement and factional squabbles, the Hobart Town Book Society became the Hobart Town Public Library. Although the entrance fee and annual subscription still put it beyond the resources of most, it was no longer possible for prospective members to be blackballed.

Exclusiveness was not confined to the capital towns. Although the Parramatta Book Society had been congratulated in 1837 for its 'broad and liberal principles', another account a year later noted sarcastically:

> The terms of admission to this Institution renders it exclusive, (being £5 per annum) the very few and select Persons comprising it, render it exclusive. The very secret manner in which it is conducted makes it exclusive, and above all, one of its members a very great man, (at least in his own estimation), but occupying a very small compass—in space and denominations declared it was exclusive at the formulation of the Institution, and said that the few respectable and highly gifted individuals to whose brilliant talents, this precious piece of consummate human wisdom would owe its origin, were determined that, nothing impure, should enter their hallowed sanctuary:—The Emporium of the wit, wisdom, and learning of the far famed town—Parramatta.

Specialist scientific associations established in these years were also exclusive. They, too, were often attacked and laughed at in the press, especially the more radical papers. A mock set of minutes had been published 'for the advantage of the votaries of Science!' making fun of the Van Diemen's Land Society in 1829. Seven members spoke, revealing that their only hunger was for supper, to which they speedily adjourned. In 1838 there was similar fun at the expense of Sir John Franklin's new Tasmanian Natural History Society:

> NATURAL SOCIETY—At a meeting of the *Naturals* of this society, held at the *gallery*, Collins Street, *it was moved* by Capt Brimstone, and seconded by Dr Doolittle, that a humble Petition be drawn up and presented to His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor, praying that His Excellency would be pleased to pass an act for the importation of Linnets, Bullfinches, and other small birds, in order to destroy some of the myriads of bushels of *Thistle* seed, with which this island is overwhelmed. Carried nem. diss. Capt Brimstone had a vote of thanks!

Given this history of literary and scientific societies in Van Diemen's Land and elsewhere, it is easy to see why Frederick Maitland Innes was careful to define a mechanics' institute as a non-exclusive society rather than as one intended only for mechanics. We can identify the occupations of about two-thirds of those who were members of the Hobart Town Mechanics' Institution in 1838. The unidentified third may have been mechanics or, at least, not gentlemen. Another third were officials, professional men or clergy, and would have been regarded as gentlemen. The rest were clerks, storekeepers, publicans and a few artisans, men who would not have been accepted into a more exclusive society. A few were convicts or ex-convicts. James Alexander Thomson, an architect and engineer transported for theft in 1825, had received a conditional pardon ten years later, but in 1838 was still awaiting his full pardon. So was Frederick Piguenit, who was midway through his fourteen-year sentence, and working as a clerk in the convict department.

Thus the Hobart Town Mechanics' Institution was certainly not an exclusive society. It also cut across denominational barriers. The leading Presbyterian, the Reverend John Lillie, was a vice-president, and most other Hobart Town clergy were members. Exceptions were the Wesleyan Methodists and the more conservative clergy of the Church of England. As in all mechanics' institutes, discussion of 'politics' and 'religion' was forbidden. Mechanics' institutes were, ideally, places where men of all classes and creeds would meet in harmony, with all partisan and sectarian bitterness forgotten. At the 1838 annual general meeting, another vice-president, Adam Turnbull, had been quick to challenge a political reference by the chairman, Alfred Stephen. A few months later the management committee resolved to instruct all lecturers 'carefully to abstain from every thing calculated to hurt the religious or political feelings of members, who are of various denominations'.

This ruling was not intended to prevent the Reverend Mr Beazley lecturing on 'The Historical Evidences of Christianity'. Nor did it stop Dr Thomas Richards discoursing on 'The Objects of the Creation'. Their lectures dealt with general truths, which all Christians could accept. The basic agreement among the gospel writers demonstrated the historical reality of Christ; the natural world, now increasingly opened to human understanding through the efforts of science, testified to the existence of its creator. The admirable adaptation of means to ends, illustrated in Dr Richards' lecture through the structure and function of animals, was but one sign of God's wisdom. Dr Coverdale, discussing the progress of chemistry, saw as one of its strongest recommendations its power to display the ways of beneficent providence. Mr Lewis also, in a lecture on entomology, observed how forcibly the study of insect life illustrated the close and wonderfully interwoven network of existence, in which exquisite provision is made for the maintenance and benefit of all. Geology may have offered the newest evidence of the creator at work, but all science testified to the wisdom and goodness of God.

A Benefit Performance At The Royal Victoria

Early in the evening of Thursday, 13 September some hundreds of people strolled, rode or were driven towards the Royal Victoria Theatre in Pitt Street, Sydney. They were going to a performance whose proceeds would benefit two members of the Victoria's company, then near the end of its first season. Some were regular theatregoers, eager to applaud Cordelia Cameron, the first truly professional actress to appear in Sydney. Some who were freemasons may have been making their first visit to the Royal Victoria, to help her husband, a fellow member of the Masonic lodge, Brother Samson Cameron. Others were going to sell oranges, ginger beer or themselves.

From almost the beginning of white settlement in Australia, theatrical performances had served as meeting places for people of diverse manners, morals and interests. A performance of George Farquhar's *The recruiting officer*, given in honour of the King's birthday in 1789, allowed convict performers and officers among the audience to reaffirm jointly their British heritage. Later, opinion was divided as to whether the theatre was truly beneficial for the colony. Some saw it as providing an opportunity for civilised recreation and a unifying factor in a faction-plagued society. Others, often clergymen, saw it as just another gathering place for the corrupt. They argued that theatres encouraged voluptuous pleasures and false sentiments, and gave prostitutes and pickpockets a chance to ply their trades. One opponent claimed to know of thirty girls under sixteen who had become streetwalkers as a result of going too often to the theatre.

Under the Distinguished Patronage
OF
MAJOR TURNER,
AND
The Officers of the 50th Regiment.

THE Ladies and Gentlemen of Launceston and its vicinity, are respectfully informed, that Mr. MUNYARD, of the Theatres Royal, Surrey, and Pavillion, in London, and the Victoria Theatre, Sydney, intends giving an Entertainment on SATURDAY Evening, the 28th instant, after the style of
"MATTHEWS AT HOME,"
at Mr. Evans's long and beautiful Room (corner of St. John and Brisbane-streets), who has kindly granted the use of it for this occasion, when Mr. M. trusts that the Entertainments selected, and the respectable manner in which they will be conducted, will ensure the patronage which he now takes the liberty of soliciting.
Further particulars in a future advertisement.
July 21, 1838.

Cornwall Chronicle,
21 July 1838.

By 1838, however, the fight to establish professional theatre was over. Regular performances had been given for several years in both Sydney and Hobart Town and occasional ones in other centres. The question was no longer whether theatres should exist but how their social advantages could be maximised and their disadvantages minimised. Or, as the *Sydney Gazette* put it, how to make it possible for a gentleman to bring his wife and daughters to enjoy an evening's rational amusement without the risk of their coming into contact with persons of disreputable character.

The most feared contact was between respectable women and prostitutes. Auditoriums remained fully lit during performances and prostitutes commonly roamed in search of customers. A story published in the *Australian magazine* in January 1838 shows that theatres were popular places for assignations. The author pours scorn on the hypocrisy of a gentleman who attends the theatre with his fiancee but, after seeing her into her carriage, goes home with a prostitute. The story concludes on a moral note as another fallen woman, having failed to find a customer either in the theatre or in the less favourable conditions of the streets, throws herself into the Thames. The setting is London, but Australian theatres followed the English pattern in almost everything.

It would have been difficult, and financially unwise, for theatre proprietors and managers to ban prostitutes from their premises. They would merely have shifted to the saloons and refreshment rooms that always adjoined theatres, taking some of the audience with them. Instead, proprietors tried to confine unaccompanied women to areas of the theatre not favoured by other patrons. Early in the year Sarah Levey, left to run Sydney's Theatre Royal after the death of her husband, Barnett Levey, ordered the doorkeepers not to admit into the 'dress boxes' any female of bad reputation. The 'dress boxes', intended only for persons in full evening dress, were the most expensive and, in theory, the most exclusive parts of the theatre. But families could be certain of privacy only if they took a whole box for themselves. Even then, the passage leading to the boxes was so narrow that contact with all sorts of people could not be avoided.

Joseph Wyatt, proprietor of the new Royal Victoria Theatre, had once leased the old Royal from Barnett Levey and so was well aware of its deficiencies. Unlike Levey, Wyatt had no sentimental attachment to the stage and was a successful businessman. He had built the Royal Victoria as an investment and was concerned to attract wealthier patrons. 'Every precaution has been taken', he assured them, 'to ensure good order and the maintenance of proper regulation in all parts of the house'.

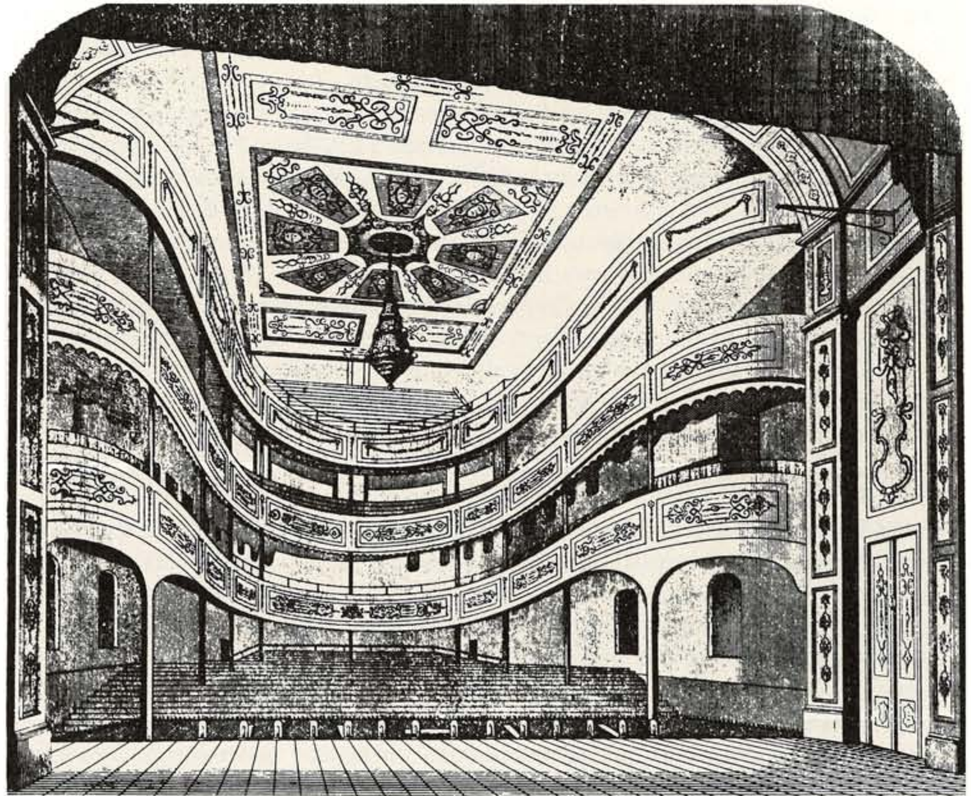
The arrangement of the Royal Victoria—pit, boxes and gallery—reflected prevailing social distinctions. The most advanced feature of its design was a total separation between pit and boxes, with the pit extending under the first tier of

boxes. This tier was divided into 26 boxes, each holding at least nine people, who paid 5s each for this exclusivity. Wyatt hoped that his provision of cloak, bonnet and hat rooms would encourage ladies and gentlemen to grace these 'dress boxes'; and he provided special entrances for box patrons, with passages leading directly from the street into a gallery wide enough to avoid any rubbing of shoulders.

For 4s people less concerned to avoid contact with others could sit in one of the four larger upper circle boxes. This tier also contained two side-slips intended 'for the reception of that class of females who generally cause so much annoyance to the rest of the audience, when allowed to mix with and consequently interrupt it'. In setting aside a particular section of the theatre for prostitutes Wyatt, as in most other matters, was following standard English custom. The old Theatre Royal had not been large enough to attempt such segregation.

Given a choice, women of questionable virtue would no doubt have preferred a two-shilling seat on the bare, wooden benches of the pit, the area of the theatre most frequented by young single men. Similar benches were to be found in the gallery, making up the third and highest tier of the theatre. Here up to five hundred people could enjoy what they could see and hear of the activities on the stage, at a cost of 1s each.

On the night of the Camerons' benefit there appear to have been more people in the pit and boxes than in the gallery. The freemasons were lending their patronage and Cordelia Cameron, unlike some of her fellow actresses, had carefully preserved her reputation in both domestic and theatrical spheres. She and her husband had arrived in Van Diemen's Land from England towards the end of 1833. Since 1826 occasional concerts had been given in Hobart Town by J.P. Deane and his musical family, but regular theatrical performances were initiated by the Camerons on Christmas Eve 1833 with August Kotzebue's popular and senti-



The interior of the Royal Victoria Theatre, Sydney. This view of the auditorium from the stage, though distorted in perspective, clearly shows the four distinct areas of accommodation and the separation of pit from boxes. Engraving by F. Nansell, after J.Fowles, published in Fowles, Sydney in 1848, *Sydney 1848.*

Almost immediately after first settlement, Port Essington had a makeshift 'Theatre Royal'. The play is Cheap living. *Watercolour by Owen Stanley, who painted the sets, 1839.*
MITCHELL LIBRARY

mental play, *The stranger.* 'Mrs Haller', fallen but repentant, was one of Cordelia's favourite parts, and her 'powers in the tragic scenes were such as to draw tears from many both male and female'. Samson Cameron was congratulated then for issuing tickets only to respectable people, a necessity since performances were given in a room at the Freemasons' Tavern where there was scope for little architectural separation. The success of the Camerons' first season in Hobart Town led to the opening of a public subscription fund to build them a proper theatre. Although a number of subscribers immediately came forward, the theatre was not completed until 1837.

By then the Camerons had initiated theatre in Launceston, again in a converted hotel room. The Launceston *Independent* for 3 May 1834 drew Cameron's attention to the need 'to observe three distinct and separate compartments—a pit—dress—and undress boxes' since 'the good folks of Launceston will not undiscriminately meet'. Here was a clear statement of the paradox of theatres as meeting places. They were attended by all classes; yet like preferred to sit only with like and managers ignored the fact at their peril.

The problem of catering for a diverse audience extended from the seating arrangements to the repertoire. A full evening's entertainment consisted of two plays and several interludes, usually songs and dances. A patron could get in for half-price after nine o'clock, and the lighter items, farces and burlesques, were usually played last. In their 1834 seasons in Hobart Town and Launceston, the

Camerons had drawn their main plays almost entirely from a very respectable repertoire: Shakespeare and eighteenth-century comedies and tragedies. This was their own choice, for there was no restriction on what they could perform. Governor Arthur had not introduced theatrical licensing laws into Van Diemen's Land as Governor Darling had done in New South Wales. Perhaps he thought that if authority ignored theatres, they would go away. And for a time they did. In contrast to the Sydney theatrical world during the 1830s, where first Levey's Theatre Royal and then Wyatt's Royal Victoria ran without competition, Hobart Town saw intense rivalries, ending in financial disaster for all. In 1835 both Samson Cameron and J.P. Deane, who had extended his concerts into full-scale theatrical performances at the Argyle Theatre, were imprisoned for debt. According to one newspaper critic, Cameron had catered too much for the aristocracy, Deane too much for the common people.

Given the prevailing depression, more than a change of program would probably have been needed to save Deane and Cameron. Both retreated to Sydney, though the Camerons returned for the opening of the Theatre Royal at Hobart Town in March 1837. Once again they met with fierce competition, this time from John Meredith at the Argyle Theatre. For a time both theatres even produced the same plays on alternate nights. The two companies eventually joined forces but too late to save Cameron from further severe losses. He and Cordelia again returned to Sydney, while John Meredith struggled on in Hobart Town. The Theatre Royal's second season ended in March 1838, when several of the remaining principals went to join Wyatt's new company in Sydney. Those who were left played a short season later in the year. An attempt to establish a theatre in Adelaide in May 1838 was equally unsuccessful. Nobody tried in Perth.

Sydney, then, was the only source of theatrical work for most of the year. Wyatt, with the best actors, musicians and technicians from both Sydney and Hobart Town, had enjoyed a successful first season at the Royal Victoria. So he was happy to let the end-of-season benefit nights extend from 13 August to 27 September. Benefit nights were traditionally held at the end of each theatrical season to tide actors over while the theatre was closed for cleaning and repairs. They also gave audiences an opportunity to reward favourites and punish past favourites. Normally the actor or actors taking the benefit chose the program, met all the expenses of the performance and kept the profits. So novelties, packed programs and lavish advertising were all employed to attract the biggest audience possible. Often, as evidently happened with the Camerons' benefit, the performance fell far short of the promise.

After their losses in Hobart Town the Camerons needed a bumper benefit. Their program for 13 September seemed well designed to please: something old, something new, plenty of spectacle, song and dance. Nothing blue; the newspaper critics, upholders of respectability, would not stand for that. Its mixture of dramatic styles and range of exotic settings were not unusual at a time when theatres set out primarily to entertain.

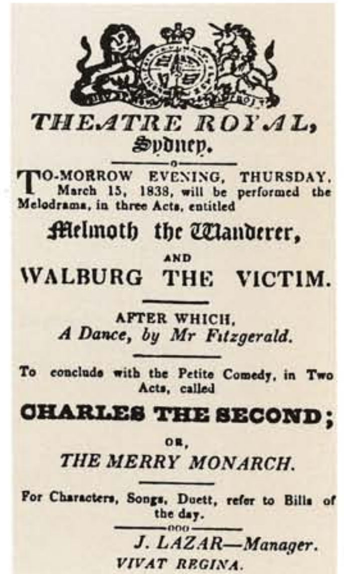
The first, and main, item combined popular appeal, novelty and spectacle without losing respectability. Audiences were offered a completely new play and a new performer, both with distinguished pedigrees:

> the grand historical and classical drama of the Massacre of Jerusalem, or the Warrior Kings: drawn from events previous to the destruction of Jerusalem and massacre of the Jews, as recorded by Professor Millman, Just. D'Pinner, Basuage,

> Raphael, Abby, Gregoire, &c., founded on the festival of the Dedication of Lights. Licensed by E. Deas Thomson, Esq., Colonial Secretary, and performed in the Theatres Royal, London, with distinguished success; from the pen of Mr M. Phillips, author of Ahasuerus, Fidelio, &c., who will have the honor of making his first and only appearance on this occasion.

Morris Phillips showed his versatility by also contributing a burlesque on Mlle Duvernay's celebrated Cachouca dance, then all the rage in London. There followed a typical gesture towards the evening's patrons, with a song 'Hail Masonry, Thou Craft Divine' and a highland fling danced by the son of a mason. Presumably it was not just Scottish patriotism that inspired Cameron to end the program with *Rob Roy*. This musical drama, based on the novel by that most popular and respectable of authors, Sir Walter Scott, was a favourite in both Britain and Australia. Cameron had also played it at his benefit in Sydney in 1836.

Unfortunately for Morris Phillips, historical themes were not always a guarantee of critical success. The Sydney reviewers agreed that *The massacre of Jerusalem* was a failure, though they differed as to why. The *Sydney Gazette* was the most damning. Phillips was no use at all as an actor. His play was utterly without plot or design and full of high-sounding and meaningless verbiage. Even worse, 'the repeated allusions to the distinguished abilities of the Jewish people in populating the earth, were absolutely disgusting'. For several months the *Gazette* had been conducting a campaign against John Lazar, the Jewish 'acting manager' of the Royal Victoria.



THEATRE ROYAL,
Sydney.

TO-MORROW EVENING, THURSDAY, March 15, 1838, will be performed the Melodrama, in three Acts, entitled

Melmoth the Wanderer,

AND

WALBURG THE VICTIM.

AFTER WHICH,
A Dance, by Mr Fitzgerald.

To conclude with the Petite Comedy, in Two Acts, called

CHARLES THE SECOND;

OR,
THE MERRY MONARCH.

For Characters, Songs, Duett, refer to Bills of the day.

J. LAZAR—Manager.
VIVAT REGINA.

Sydney Monitor, 14 Mar 1838.

The *Commercial Journal*, not sharing the *Gazette*'s anti-semitism, thought the play's dialogue chaste, classical and poetical, and attributed the failure solely to poor performance and production. The scenery was inappropriate, the stage machinery badly handled, the actors did not know their lines. And indeed, most performances at the Royal Victoria were badly produced. The company lacked experience, particularly backstage; a town the size of Sydney required frequent changes of program; and that meant little time for preparation and rehearsal. As the *Gazette* had predicted on 11 August, the even greater demand for novelties during the benefit season made everything worse.

Morris Phillips also caught some of the hostility to an abysmal performance given by a certain Charles Faucit at Mr Grove's benefit the previous Saturday. Faucit and Phillips were both billed as having recently arrived from the Theatre Royal, London. Neither had. Perhaps Grove had had some excuse for his false advertising since, as a junior member of the company, he had been allotted a Saturday, when most people never went to the theatre. Monday was the most popular night, followed by Thursday. So there was some resentment when Joseph Wyatt chose to keep for himself most Mondays during the 1838 benefit season. Exceptions were made only for Joseph Simmons, formerly Wyatt's partner at the Theatre Royal, and the managers John Lazar and Thomas Simes. As acting manager Lazar decided which plays should be performed, allocated the parts, provided the slight direction then customary and disciplined actors who misbehaved. The *Gazette* charged Lazar with abusing his power by giving too many prominent roles to himself. Simes, as well as carrying out the duties of a modern stage manager, had to oversee the day-to-day running of the theatre. The allocation to Lazar and Simes of the best benefit nights—the first and second Mondays—was the traditional reward for their additional duties.

Samson and Cordelia Cameron were given the fourth Thursday, a fair reflection of their status in the company. To compensate them for being put on so late in the season they had the patronage of the freemasons. This was one reason why so many

Campbell Street, Hobart Town. *One of Hobart Town's principal meeting places. In front of the treasury building (centre, left) is the marketplace. A public house (left foreground) stands opposite Hobart Town's Theatre Royal. Undated sketch by Thomas Chapman.*
ALLPORT LIBRARY AND MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, STATE LIBRARY OF TASMANIA

actors became masons or joined other fraternal and friendly societies such as the Oddfellows. Cameron had drawn on his masonic connections for patronage during his first season in Hobart Town in 1834; on that occasion, too, 'Hail Masonry' had been sung. Sometimes, however, the masons got more than a choral tribute from their association with the theatre. On 11 May 1837, Brother Levey had donated the use of his theatre and Brother Simmons his services for a performance in aid of the funds of the Lodge of Australia No 548. The evening had begun with a masonic address by Brother Jones, who appeared on stage surrounded by other lodge members in their masonic costumes.

While the freemasons did not make such a spectacular contribution to the Camerons' benefit, no doubt they helped to ensure the crowded house mentioned by reviewers. The most popular part of the evening's entertainment, applauded and encored, was Morris Phillips' burlesque dance. The *Commercial Journal* thought this highly graceful and amusing. The *Sydney Gazette* and the *Herald* were appalled by its vulgarity; condemnation from these sources was almost a guarantee of an item's popularity. On 12 September the *Herald* observed that during the benefit season

> A mass of vulgar buffoonery and impiety, called 'Jim Crow', has been sung several times, but we trust the managers will not allow the ears of decent people to be annoyed by it any more.

The minstrel melody had reached Australia. Theatre traditions derived from London had given place—momentarily—to something uncomfortably new: the manager of the Theatre Royal had confronted the people of Sydney, sitting in their segregated ranks, with a taste of raw and democratic America.

HOBART TOWN ENJOYS A REGATTA

Saturday, 1 December dawned fine and sunny in Hobart Town. At eight o'clock many of the townspeople were already out and about when a gun boomed from the battery on the southern headland of Sullivan's Cove. The gun confirmed what the weather promised: the first Hobart Town Anniversary Regatta was to go ahead as planned.

There had been regattas on the Derwent before 1838, but each had been loosely organised and had only a few events. Some had attracted large crowds, with about five thousand people attending one held in February 1834. It was left to the present governor, Sir John Franklin, and Lady Franklin, to decide that Hobart Town should have an annual regatta to celebrate the anniversary of the discovery of the island by Abel Tasman in 1642. As we have seen in chapter 1, they hoped to make Tasman a larger figure in the island's history and to replace the name Van Diemen's Land, and its ugly convict associations, with 'Tasmania'. Lady Franklin was organiser, enlisting leaders of the civil, military and naval establishments. The whaling industry provided the competing boats and crews.

Hobart Town, and indeed Van Diemen's Land, was a small society, prone to petty rivalries. Its society and economy were based on convict labour and autocratic government. There was little hope of freer institutions as long as the convict system continued. Supporters of the government insisted that no advance towards an elected legislature could be made until contending sections of society overcame their disagreements. The opposition customarily blamed any dissension on the interference of the governor and his lady, but the Franklins hoped that events such as the regatta would unite the warring factions in a common loyalty to the colony.

Lady Franklin hoped to promote Tasmanian pride by inventing a floral emblem both for the regatta and for the colony: the wattle blossom in association with the British oak. By eight o'clock on the morning of the regatta her fourteen-year-old stepdaughter, Eleanor, had already been up for hours tying wattle blossoms and oak leaves with blue ribbons. By ten o'clock large crowds thronged around Sullivan's Cove. People dressed in their finery began to form groups along the New Wharf and on the opposite side of the cove towards Macquarie Point where two bands of the Scots Fusiliers took turns playing popular tunes. At around ten o'clock the sixty or eighty gaily decorated boats formed themselves into an orderly flotilla. Headed by the governor's barge, they set out for Pavilion Point.

Pavilion Point was part of the Domain. This area of open bushland stretched in a rough oval shape from Macquarie Point three kilometres northwest to the racecourse near New Town Bay. The Derwent River formed half its boundary and a fence with gates at regular intervals enclosed the rest. The Domain was a place for family outings but also had a reputation for amorous assignations. Strolling families were said to be shocked by courting couples entwined in the grass. Other activities also annoyed the respectable. Two boys scandalised the governor's family by playing marbles in the Domain on a Sunday. Cricket, pitch-and-toss and other gambling games were often played in the Domain on Sundays, though the law forbade common Sabbath sports.

Legal sporting was the province of the rich, partly because they had time to play during the week. Organised cricket and golf were restricted to gentlemen. Hunts, race meetings and country shows were held on weekdays when ordinary people had to work, though some were prepared to forego their wages. A journalist estimated that at one three-day race meeting 'there were about 5000 persons on the race ground on Monday, and about 4000 on each of the subsequent days'. The only organised sports in which a worker could participate were regattas and ploughing matches, both of which turned working skills into exhibitions gratifying both workers and their employers. By declaring the First Anniversary Regatta a public holiday, the Franklins intended to bring together all sections of the population.

As the flotilla of little boats passed alongside the Domain the crowds followed on foot, leaving the town almost deserted. An early sea breeze carried the sailing boats past the slower oar-driven craft. Competition to be the first boat at Pavilion

Whaleboats starting in the Tasmanian Anniversary Regatta. Coloured lithograph by unknown artist, 1838.
MITCHELL LIBRARY

Point threw the procession into disarray. The governor's barge, which had started out at the head, glided on slowly and came a stately last. It was not the only time today that high spirits disrupted the planning.

As the governor's party disembarked, cheers of welcome rang out from the banks. The official party made its way to the pavilion, which, according to the *Colonial Times*, was

> ornamented with festoons of oak leaves and black wattle blossom, with the inscription in front of 'HAIL TASMANIA', made of roses. Several tents and booths were also ornamented, some with oak leaves, and others with wattle blossoms, while various poetical (!) incriptions, composed, we believe, by the late Poet Laureate of the Trumpeter, were fixed upon the trees, and in front of the booths, of which our well known charitable disposition forbids us to speak more particularly.

In addition to the pavilion and the public refreshment stalls, there were the many well-to-do family groups who had marquees to entertain friends and to provide shelter from the heat and dust, and the possibility of rain. Almost every booth, tent and tree was adorned with wattle blossoms and blue ribbons, or hung with sheets of 'poetical' fancies and mottoes.

At half past ten boating began. Mr G. Watson's *Wallaby* won the four-oared gig race from three other contenders, to take out the prize of fifteen sovereigns. The

grand whaleboat race, which came next, was the main event. The *True Colonist* reported:

> we never saw a more beautiful sight than the start of the sixteen whale boats; previous to starting they all hung onto a warp, one end of which was made fast to a wattle tree on shore and the other to a boat moored in the river, the force of the sea breeze and the flowing of the tide bent the line into a perfect crescent, which had a most beautiful effect, when the starting gun fired the several boats flew off like arrows.

George Frankland, surveyor-general and secretary of the regatta committee, had acted as Lady Franklin's agent in shaping the regatta. Describing the race anonymously for the *Hobart Town Courier* four weeks after the event, Frankland matched the *True Colonists'* account: 'ninety oars at the instant, dash their blades into the water, and the whale boats, with the many coloured noses, dart forward as from a bow'. From praising the competitors, gallantly fighting home against a stiff breeze, Frankland's pen moved to his patrons. Prizes, he wrote, 'were distributed by the Governor, who stood with Lady Franklin, in front of the awning surrounded by all the elite of the colonial society'.

When Lady Franklin wrote home describing the scene she returned the compliment. George Frankland, she said:

> was in his glory, on the Regatta ground, leading up, bareheaded, to Sir John who stood under a canopy of flags, the winning boats–crews to receive their prizes, the military band playing 'Rule Britannia' and the crowd of spectators forming a large circle round an arena of green sward in the midst of the wattle trees which was hemmed in by the squatting boys and girls of the orphan schools, with their silken banners.

The winning boat was aptly named. Eleanor Franklin was in the pavilion with her father when the winning crew collected the prize. 'The winner was the Tasman', she wrote later, '& its crew were most exemplary & never drank spirits. For which Papa commended them'.

The whaleboats were followed by two races for sailing boats. Seventeen boats took part altogether and there was some fine sailing in the stiffening sea breeze. Then all the losers of the great whaleboat race went around the course a second time for the honour of a silver cup. Happily, Mr Harper's *Lady Franklin* came in first. The last race was for dinghies. The crowd laughed and shouted as the men worked their boats down the course, propelling them with one oar over the stern.

The races over, the attention of the crowd swung from the sea to the shore. Several reporters noted the rare mixing of classes: 'high and low, rich and poor, were commingled together apparently intent only upon the enjoyment of the animated and bustling scene before them'. But George Frankland's description shows how social distance was maintained, for all the 'commingling':

> you beheld the different coteries spreading the luxuries which their picnic baskets had in store, some on their camp tables, others on Persian carpets in the shade, while those in the humbler spheres of life, sought equal enjoyment in some of the numerous eating booths and confectioners' stalls which were spread over the park.

Real mingling occurred willy-nilly. A tight circle of spectators was formed to allow Maoris among the whaleboat crews to perform their 'celebrated war dance', with 'ladies and children' seated on the grass and men standing. The pressure of those behind broke the circle, 'the mass rushed in, and in an instant the arena was

overwhelmed and the spectacle broken up'. But those who picnicked on Persian carpets probably did not venture into such a throng.

Hobart Town brewers distributed free beer and, though the crowd was generally well behaved, the Franklins were troubled by the amount of alcohol consumed. Lady Franklin wrote to a friend that though the occasion was a success, 'Many things may be mended in it next year & particularly the publicans booths which must be removed to a distance if it is necessary to suffer them at all'. She expressed an optimistic view of the new society, however, maintaining that there was 'as little noise and disorder as could be expected when such complete liberty was allowed, & much less than as many collected thousands in England would have exhibited'.

Estimates of just how many thousands had attended varied from five to twelve. Several commentators agreed that the number approached ten thousand, as did young Eleanor Franklin in her diary. Assuming that this was not an exaggeration, and given that since the total free population of Hobart Town and its surrounding district was only about twelve thousand, a crowd of ten thousand must have included a large number of assigned convict servants. Perhaps these men were present with the permission of their masters. But they were unwelcome to many, and certainly they were not supposed to share in the free beer.

Some observers objected in principle to people enjoying themselves in public. The Reverend Mr Sutch of the Melville Street Wesleyan Methodist Chapel denounced the 'devilish conduct' of the spectators and the Domain itself as 'the devil's ground'. The crowds did not see it that way. The beer had lightened their spirits, and they finished the day with a sack race which was a hilarious affair for competitors and audience alike. As the crowds began to leave the Domain someone struck up a tune on a fiddle and led hundreds of people jigging back to town.

People, Classes And Communities

Many of the activities that people in the Australian colonies chose to enjoy outside their hours of work were understood as a means of uniting a divided community. Governor Gawler's dinner for the Kaurna and Lady Franklin's regatta were intended to bring disparate groups together. Church congregations understood themselves to be uniting people before God. Managers of institute lectures saw themselves as promoting social harmony. The supporters of temperance who watched Governor Gipps take the pledge hoped that their crusade would unite all the classes in sobriety, self-discipline and hard work.

Yet these activities were usually organised so that different classes did not actually mix. Colonists saw no contradiction in simultaneously celebrating the 'commingling' of the classes and, like the elite of Hobart Town, separating themselves from the throng by retreating to marquees and Persian carpets on the grass. Church congregations divided into people with status and money enough to rent high-backed pews, and people who knelt on the floor or sat on benches at the rear. Theatres segregated their audience by purse and reputation, providing separate entrances so that the patrons of their most expensive seats could avoid rubbing against poor people and prostitutes.

Everyday activities were restricted to people of one's own kind. Those with real power in society, officials and landowners and their families, used the calling card and the snub to turn away from their homes and social gatherings anyone lacking in gentility. Younger and less influential gentlemen, often without families, set up exclusive clubs providing bed, board, companionship and a base for making new money and creating new kinds of power. Working men used public houses for similar purposes and resented the presence there of gentlemen and employers.

The belief in different ranks or orders of people had been transplanted almost unchallenged to the Australian colonies. As many had emigrated with hopes of bettering their station, there was much jostling on the social ladder. But few contested the idea that the ladder was necessary and appropriate. There were enough visible differences in ways of life and manners between rich and poor, educated and uneducated, landowners and labourers, to make it easy to see them as different kinds of people. Clothing, cut of hair, bearing, manners, accent and even the weathering of the skin distinguished a poor working man from a gentleman employer. Educated observers tended to dwell on the lack of restraint on the part of the poor: their voices were louder, their gestures larger, their tastes cruder. Their conversation was stained with profanity and sexual allusion. They were quick to violence, especially when drunk. The efforts of the rich to distance themselves from the poor—as at the Hobart Town regatta—contained an element of fear, fear of the ungovernable energy of the lower orders.

But the Hobart Town regatta also shows how this view of social relations was becoming obsolete. For all the Franklins' qualms about the provision of alcohol to the crowds—and especially to the convicts indistinguishable among them—they reported to English friends that the people were remarkably orderly.

The well-dressed crowds at the regatta—as at any colonial gathering in 1838—included many families who were neither rich nor poor, neither rough nor gentle. Their callings were humble. They were labourers, artisans and small businessmen. Their manners were quiet and restrained. Some were recent migrants who had learned their self-discipline in churches and chapels in Britain. Others were the children of prosperous convicts, or had been convicts themselves. All found in the colonies a strong demand and good return for their skills and labour. People such as these could be allowed a 'complete liberty' not permissible to the ungoverned poor, for they coveted respectability and were determined to better themselves through self-help.

These newly respectable men and women offered no collective challenge to the officials and landowners who still controlled the Australian colonies. They were useful allies. Sir George Gipps's conversion to the cause of temperance could be seen as sealing an alliance between government officials and small employers, combined to create a sober, self-disciplined workforce. At another level respectability did challenge the old order by making it harder to distinguish between one class and another. *Hints on etiquette and the usages of society*, which first appeared in Hobart Town in 1838, expressed the disquiet of the elite. It specifically warned 'shopkeepers and retailers' that 'people are respectable in their own sphere only and that when they attempt to move out of it they cease to be so'. But the shopkeepers and retailers of the Australian colonies turned deaf ears to such exclusive notions.

Picnic at Port Phillip. All hands jogged away to the Picnic and were comfortably accommodated in the Cart ... When arrived a fire was made, ... [the baby's] milk was warmed in a bottle, afterwards a pot of potatoes was boiled. *Anthony Beale's diary, 1840.*
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Convicts work on the road over the Blue Mountains, behind Sydney. Prisoners, most of them in yellow jackets, are guarded by two soldiers. In the foreground one has his hair cut and the cook prepares a meal. A free settler, left, watches public enterprise. Watercolour by an unknown artist, 1832.

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