The Orphans' Home

1851–1926


TORONTO, CANADA WEST.
From the top of the Jail

Toronto 1850

The dazzling autumn sunrise set the surface of the lake ablaze. From his nest in the hayloft, Tom shielded his eyes and squinted down upon the broad, dusty back of the dray horse, whose stable he had secretly shared the past few nights. Twin plumes of breath from the horse's nostrils told Tom there had been another frost, the second one this week and it was only mid-September. He rubbed his bare feet together in a vain attempt to restore feeling. After several seconds there was still no sensation, so he drew his knees up to his chest and began to knead his feet vigorously. When feeling at last returned, it brought searing pain, which drew tears and soon gave way to the fierce itch of chilblains that no amount of scratching would ease.

The boy cursed himself – in so far as a ten-year-old innocent, abandoned by a drunken brawler of a father whose wife had run off, is capable of cursing himself – for having been too proud to have accepted the battered but stout pair of brogan boots offered to him two days before by a farmer's wife. The woman and her husband had seen him prowling barefoot down by the wharves at the foot of Yonge Street when they had brought their wagon into town to deliver produce to market.

It was not the first time the couple had noticed the boy. He'd kept to himself, never associating with the dozens of other wharf rats and waifs who wandered the waterfront and streets of Toronto – many of them the orphans of Famine Irish immigrants who'd come to the Canadas in the late 1840s. Neither was it the first time Tom had noticed them. But they'd never been accompanied by children. Perhaps, thought Tom, they had none.

On this particular day, the woman had nudged her husband's elbow and spoken a furtive word in his ear. He had responded immediately by bringing his team to a halt. She had climbed down from the wagon and, smiling encouragingly at Tom, who stood several yards away, held out the rough, hobnailed boots to him.

"These is for you, boy," she had called. "Mister Sykes and me thinks it an awful sin you haven't any boots."

"Don't need none, missus," Tom had lied, before scrambling on top of a long row of barrels and pretending to give his full attention to a steamboat easing into the wharf.

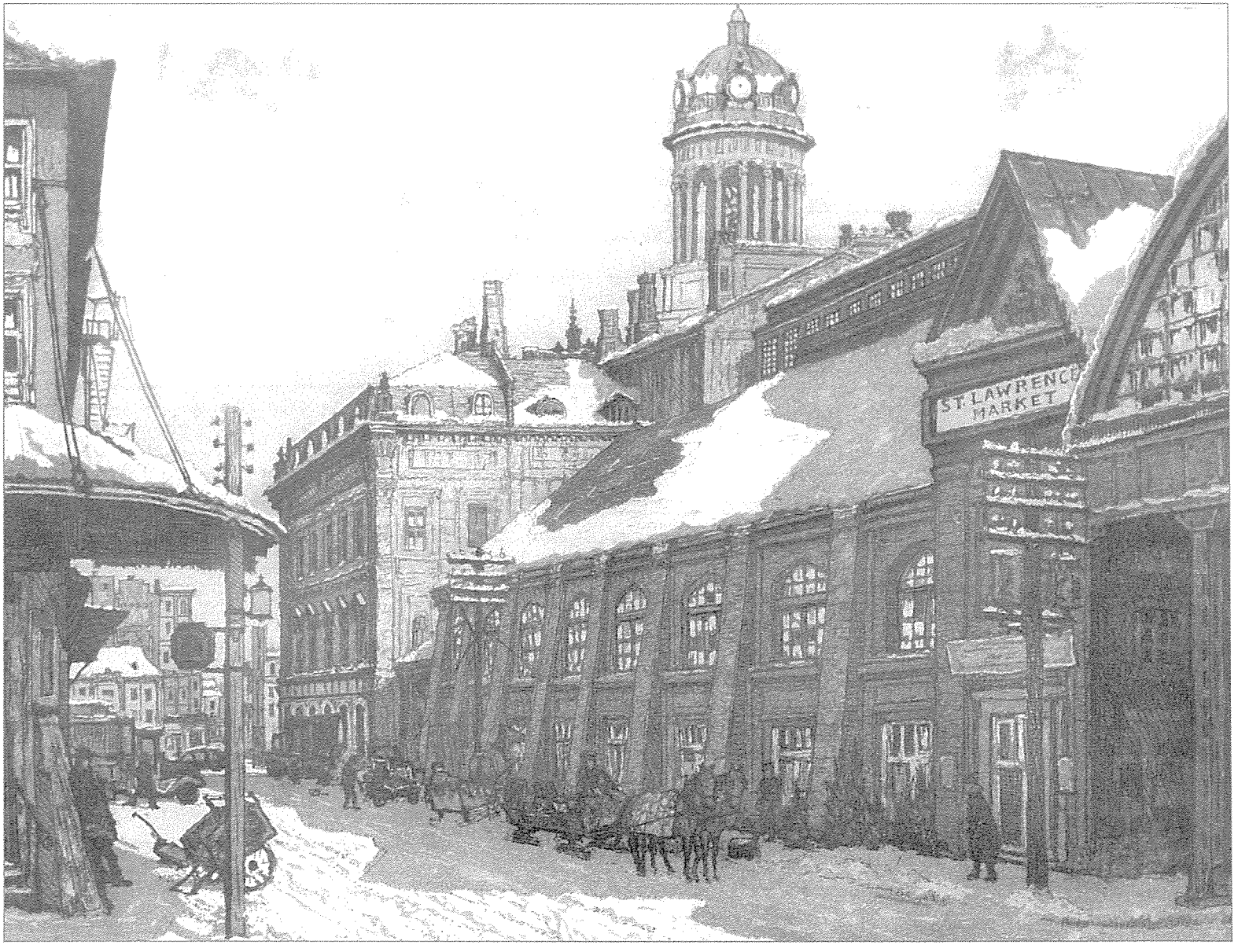
He had chanced a quick glance over his shoulder in time to see the motherly look of concern on her face. In lieu of the boots, she had set two apples on the rough wooden planking of the wharf, before climbing back onto the wagon beside her husband. When they had driven a safe distance away, Tom had jumped down, run to the apples and snatched them up. He had devoured one immediately and tucked the other inside his tattered, homespun shirt. He would eat it later that day with an egg he would find in the hayloft. Raw eggs made him retch, but at least they could still the pangs of hunger that constantly gnawed at his stomach.

Now, Tom longed for those boots on this frosty morning as he rolled out of his nest in the hay and slid noiselessly to the ground, taking care to avoid startling a hen roosting a few feet away. If he accidentally set her to squawking, he might alert the drayman who owned the horse and stable and lived with his wife and four small children in a clapboard house not thirty feet away. As a trespasser, Tom would most certainly be in for a beating, if he were caught.

On tiptoe, to avoid detection and to preserve what little warmth he'd managed to coax back into his feet, he picked his way through the muck and manure until he stood shivering beside the gatepost in the shadow of the horse. Carefully, he reached through the fence, lifted the lid on a bin that stood beside the gate and scooped out a handful of oats, which he held up to the horse. When his small hand was clean, the boy scratched the animal's soft muzzle then scooped up another handful, which he stuffed into his mouth. Bits and pieces of the coarse grain caught in his throat and he had to stifle the urge to hack and cough. A third handful went into one of the pockets of his coarse woollen trousers. From another pocket he withdrew a fat carrot that he'd pilfered from someone's backyard garden the day before. He snapped it in two, offered half to the horse, and began to nibble on the other half. It was not much of a breakfast, but it was all he had. He might find better pickings at the market later that morning, but he'd have to be careful, for the boys who ran errands for the merchants kept a sharp eye out for strays like Tom. If they caught him, they wouldn't hesitate to fetch him a kick before handing him over to the constable. And that would most certainly mean jail, where he could expect to be locked up with petty thieves, drunkards and hardened criminals.

Mid-morning found Tom loitering about the bustling market on King Street, near City Hall. Though the morning sun had burned off the frost, there was still a bite to the air and shivers seized the boy.

Just inside the open door of the market someone had placed a tin pie plate containing cow's milk straight from the udder. Stray cats that haunted the market were eagerly fighting over it. It had been many weeks since Tom had tasted milk. His rumbling stomach got the better of him. Ignoring the grit and bits of straw that the wind and careless feet had kicked into it, the boy dropped to his knees and, scattering the cats, picked up the plate and began to guzzle.


ST LAWRENCE
MARKET

Noblesse Oblige

There have always been two Torontos, one for the haves and another for the have-nots. The story of Family Day Care Services begins when young Tom roamed the streets and the wharves of mid-nineteenth century Toronto. Owing to the benevolence of the women representing some of the city's leading families and churches, the two Torontos met, changing forever the lives of some of the city's poorest children, many of them orphans.

To understand the lasting importance of that encounter, it is first necessary to place it in its proper historical context. For the first half of the nineteenth century, Toronto lagged behind Kingston, Montreal and Quebec as a commercial centre. A depression had occurred in 1837. By the 1850s, however, Toronto was coming into its own. The economy of Ontario – that portion of upper Canada occupying the land adjacent to the easternmost Great Lakes – began to shift from primarily agricultural to industrial capitalism. People drifted away from farming communities to the United States, the Canadian West, or to Ontario's larger towns and cities. Many came to Toronto and swelled the ranks of the labour force. Despite another depression in 1857, the 1850s were a decade of rapid urbanization and industrial growth during which textile mills, metalworking, farm implement and machinery factories sprang up around the city. Toronto's economy boomed and it became a transportation and manufacturing hub. Many of the city's ninety streets were macadamized, downtown was gaslit, and King Street, a main thoroughfare, was planked for two miles. There was even a rudimentary network of wooden water mains in some sections of the city.

But not all of the city's thirty thousand inhabitants shared in the prosperity. Thousands were doomed to live in poverty, the seeds of their misery having been sewn years before and far away, on the other side of the Atlantic. Over the course of the next few decades,

the sweatshop system would dominate industrial Toronto and compel legions of working-class men, women and children to toil for mere pennies a day in poorly ventilated, inadequately heated and gloomily lit lofts and cellars.

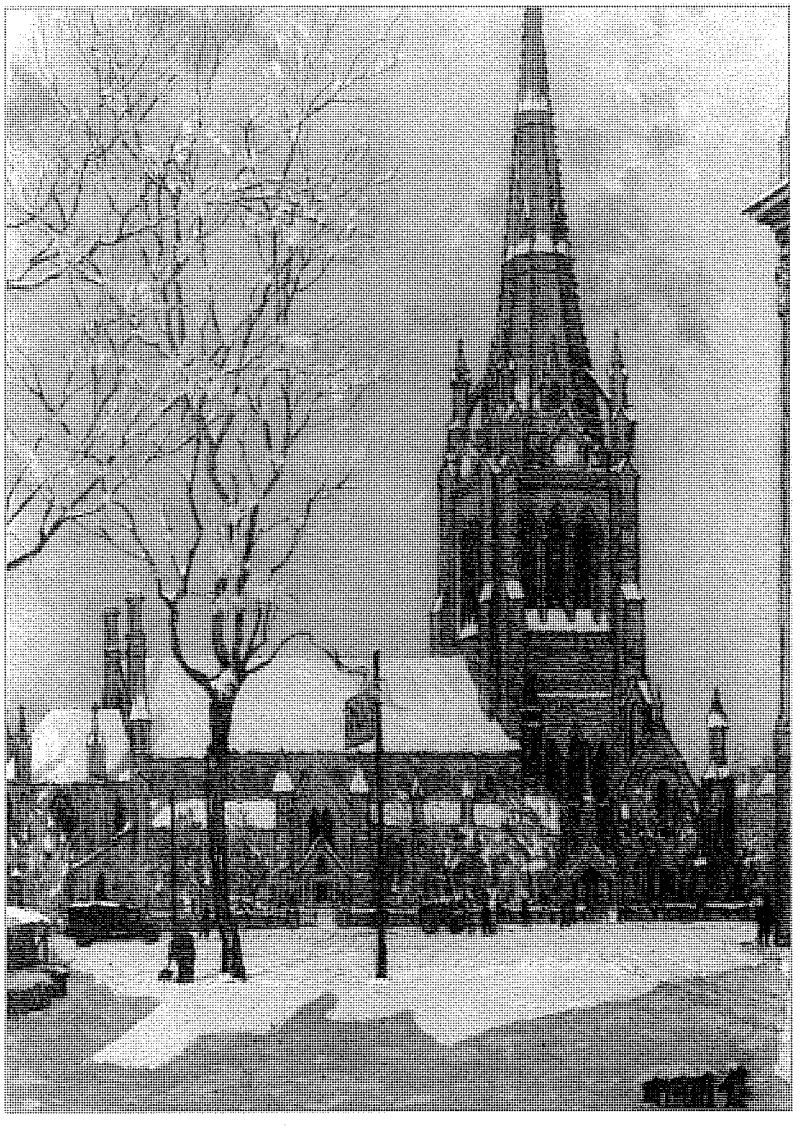
Between 1832 and 1835, successive waves of English and Irish immigrants sailed to Canada. Most of them were desperately poor and illiterate, the victims of crop failures and economic recession. Cholera and typhus decimated their ranks. Those who did not die aboard ship were quarantined at Grosse Ile, situated in the St. Lawrence River, 25 miles downstream from Quebec City. During those years, the quarantine station examined more than 100,000 immigrants for disease.

Ten years later, in 1845, reports of a potato disease in Ireland began to circulate. The following year, the potato crop failed again, resulting in famine and yet another outbreak of cholera and typhus. Hardest hit were the cottiers – peasants who farmed less than an acre of rented land. In the years to follow, between one and a half and two million were driven out of Ireland by their English landowners. More than half a million Irish immigrants were exiled, starving, sick and penniless, to British North America. And while a large proportion of them moved to the United States, many stayed in Canada. Like their kinsmen who had come before them, and like the tens of thousands of impoverished English immigrants from the slums of Liverpool and London, they were crammed like cordwood below decks aboard leaky, rat-infested boats that were rife with disease and which came to be known alternately as the "fever fleet" and the "typhus ships." Tens of thousands of these miserable folk – enough to populate a small city – never completed the crossing; they died en route. A few words were said over their fetid bodies before they were dumped overboard into the cold, black waters of the North Atlantic. Most vulnerable on these sad journeys of several weeks were the very young and the very old. The majority of those who survived settled in either Montreal or Toronto, providing cheap labour willing to work for starvation wages, and

thereby helping to fuel the economic expansion of both cities over the next two decades.

By 1851, the population of Upper Canada approached one million. Most immigrants came from the British Isles. Roughly 20 percent were English and 20 percent Scottish. Though many had lived as paupers in the old country, a significant number were farmers and skilled craftsmen of one kind or another. Among them were ex-military officers, professional people, successful merchants, school teachers, and clergymen. The latter represented Britain's desire to reproduce the English class system in North America. They would compose the political elite of Canada. The overwhelming majority of the remaining 60 percent of immigrants were Irish. Within 25 years, they would become the largest ethnic community in every Canadian town and city outside Quebec.

The "Famine Irish" who came to Toronto in the late 1840s and early 1850s in search of a new life were hated. There was a severe shortage of adequate housing. The situation worsened when, in 1849, a fire destroyed St. James Cathedral and a number of surrounding dwelling houses. Of course, the influx of more immigrants placed an additional strain on critically low housing stocks. Feelings toward the newcomers hardened even more when outbreaks of typhus and cholera occurred in 1849, claiming the lives of more than 500 people. They were stigmatized as unclean and illiterate and forced to live in slums. Life for them in their adopted city was hardly better than it had been back home. Confined to the rougher precincts of the city, they were forced to rub shoulders with, and all too often join the ranks of beggars, prostitutes, drunks, and street gangs. Frequently, they came to the attention of the police. When they sought employment or lodging they met with hostility. Signs read "No Irish Need Apply" and "No Irish or Dogs." And it didn't matter whether the Irishman was Roman Catholic or Protestant – "Mick" or Orangeman, as they were labelled – the prevailing attitude harboured by the majority of the English and Scots was that all Irishmen were the same – no good!



St. James Cathedral.

" Taught by that power which pities me, I learn to pity them."

ORPHAN'S HOME AND FEMALE AID SOCIETY,

Under the Patronage of Her Excellency the Countess of Elgin and Kincardine.

A PERMANENT ASYLUM for the relief of ORPHANS in Upper Canada, based on principles of pure philanthropy, cannot fail to merit the patronage of a liberal and discerning Public.

The sufferings of the most helpless of their sex, the *Female Orphans* especially, must interest the sympathies of the Ladies of Toronto ; it is therefore proposed to establish in this City an "*Orphan's Home*" and to unite therewith a "*Female Aid Society*"—the whole to be under the exclusive management of Ladies.

Original Prospectus
drafted June, 1851

With regard to the *Orphan's Home*—the establishment will be Protestant—there being already a Roman Catholic Asylum, and although it is impossible to ascertain the *exact* number of Protestant Orphans who are objects of charity, the number must be considerable, as the Roman Catholics have seldom less than 40 and at one time had upwards of 50 orphans of their persuasion under proper care. The Orphan's Home now to be established will be open to the whole county of York, and the orphans will be fed, clothed and instructed, up to the age of 12 or 14 years, when they will be apprenticed to respectable persons.

With regard to the *Female Aid Society*—it is grounded on the principle that "prevention is better than cure," for there is little doubt that poverty and destitution are the precursors of immorality and crime—Numbers of young and innocent Females are annually driven from the path of uprightness and purity, into the vortex of iniquity and irrecoverable degradation, in consequence of being unable to procure *immediate* employment either as Seamstresses or Servants—In the city of Toronto alone during the year 1850, out of 1608 apprehensions for crime, 499 were females, who if they had had a place of refuge instead of being a disgrace to themselves and a burden upon the Public, might have become useful Members of Society.—Of course *great care* will be taken in this Institution, to select such Females only as are properly recommended, who, during their stay in the house, will be placed under the influence of Christian privileges and instruction, independently of having a comfortable home, and possessing the advantage of the kind and judicious counsel of the Ladies Committee.—A registry of the inmates will be kept to enable Families to obtain domestic servants.

The Ladies of Montreal and Quebec have set a noble example—In the former City, lately was held the 29th Anniversary of *their* Protestant Orphan Asylum, and the annual Report then read, fully proves the great and numerous benefits which that Association have bestowed.—Their report concludes with the following impressive remarks, "And now to the care of that Beneficent Providence, who has so eminently blessed the exer- "tions of those who have undertaken to supply the Spiritual and Temporal wants of the orphan, the Directresses "confidently commit the future welfare of their charge, praying that *He* who has vouchsafed to say 'That who- "soever shall receive one of such children in *His* name receiveth *Him*,' will be graciously pleased to inspire "the hearts of the faithful, 'That they be rich in good works and ready to distribute, laying up in store a good "foundation against the time to come.' "—The total number of orphans benefitted in Montreal during the year 1850 amounted to 45.

The Ladies of Quebec, also, have recently celebrated the 22nd anniversary of *their* Female Orphan Asylum—The neat, healthy and happy appearance of the Children, who were present to the number of 26, was an evidence of the care and kindness bestowed upon them, and was an ample testimony of the persevering zeal of the Ladies of their committee, as well as of the conscientious manner in which the Matron and Assistant discharged their duties.—The total number of orphans admitted since the foundation of that asylum, amounted to 116.

Is there not as wide a field for the charitable exertions of the Ladies of Toronto within their district, as the Ladies of Montreal and Quebec have found in their's? Beyond all doubt there is, and it is confidently hoped that the Ladies of Toronto will at once come forward to rescue their unfortunate fellow creatures from penury and misery.

"The Orphans' Home and Female Aid Society of Toronto" is proposed to be supported by the following means—

1st—By the ordinary Annual Grant from the Legislature,—in amount the same as similar institutions in the Province.

2nd—By voluntary subscriptions from Heads of Families—not exceeding one pound per annum each.

3rd—By Donations and Legacies, and

4th—By an Annual Musical Festival or Bazaar.

In addition to which, it is expected that residents in the Country Districts will contribute in the shape of produce &c.

Two Gentlemen have already generously given a valuable site for the buildings and grounds, in the neighbourhood of Saint George's Square, and plans for the Edifices have been gratuitously offered; all that is required now is the organization necessary for raising the Funds, and settling the system of management.

Application will be made during the present Session of Parliament, for an Act of Incorporation, and when the Act is obtained, Her Excellency the Countess of Elgin and Kincardine has most kindly consented to become the Patroness of the Institution.

The first meeting for the formation of the Society will be held on Monday next, the 16th instant, at 3 o'clock P. M., in the Mechanics' Institute, Toronto. The Reverend Dr. Lett, (as clergyman of the locality in which the building is to be erected), has consented to be Chairman, and the support of the *Public generally* is most earnestly solicited, in order that this truly charitable work may be accomplished.

Should a personal attendance be inconvenient, a note expressive of approval of the charity, addressed to the Chairman of the meeting, may be posted, directed to Box 307 in the Post Office, which will enable the Committee to make their further arrangements without delay.

Toronto, 9th June 1851.

From 1851 to 1926 The Orphans' Home produced a poster-sized document each year, acknowledging the Officers, Patron(s), Lady Managers and other notable persons.

These documents are kept at Family Day Care Services' head office.

Orphans' Home and Female Aid Society.

OFFICERS FOR THE YEAR 1851.

PATRONESS:

Her Excellency the Countess of Elgin and Kincardine.

FIRST DIRECTRESS:

Mrs. WIDDER.

SECOND DIRECTRESS:

Mrs. DRAPER.

MANAGERS:

Mrs. ROBINSON, *Beverley House.*
" BOULTON, *The Grange.*
" DRAPER, *York Street.*
" MACAULAY, *Wykeham Lodge.*
" WIDDER, *Lyndhurst.*
" H. SHERWOOD, *John Street.*
" CARTHEW, *St. George's Sq.*
" LETT, *St. George's Square.*
" GURNETT, *King Street.*
" J. RIDOUT, *Bay Street.*
Mrs. MOFFATT, *Peter Street.*
" J. L. ROBINSON, *Peter Street.*
" GRASETT, *Adelaide Street.*
" C. HEATH, *St. George's Cottage.*
" McCUTCHON, *Church Street.*
Miss BALDWIN, *Spadina Avenue.*
Mrs. CUMBERLAND, *Duke Street.*
" O'BRIEN, *Church Street.*
" G. M. JARVIS, *Bay Street.*
" E. BALDWIN, *Duke Street.*

TREASURER:

Mrs. LETT.

SECRETARY:

Mrs. J. RIDOUT.

CHAPLAIN:

Rev. STEPHEN LETT, LL.D.

MEDICAL OFFICERS:

Drs. HALLOWELL, MELVILLE, BADGELEY, and BETHUNE.

CONSULTING PHYSICIAN.

Dr. HODDER.

MATRON:

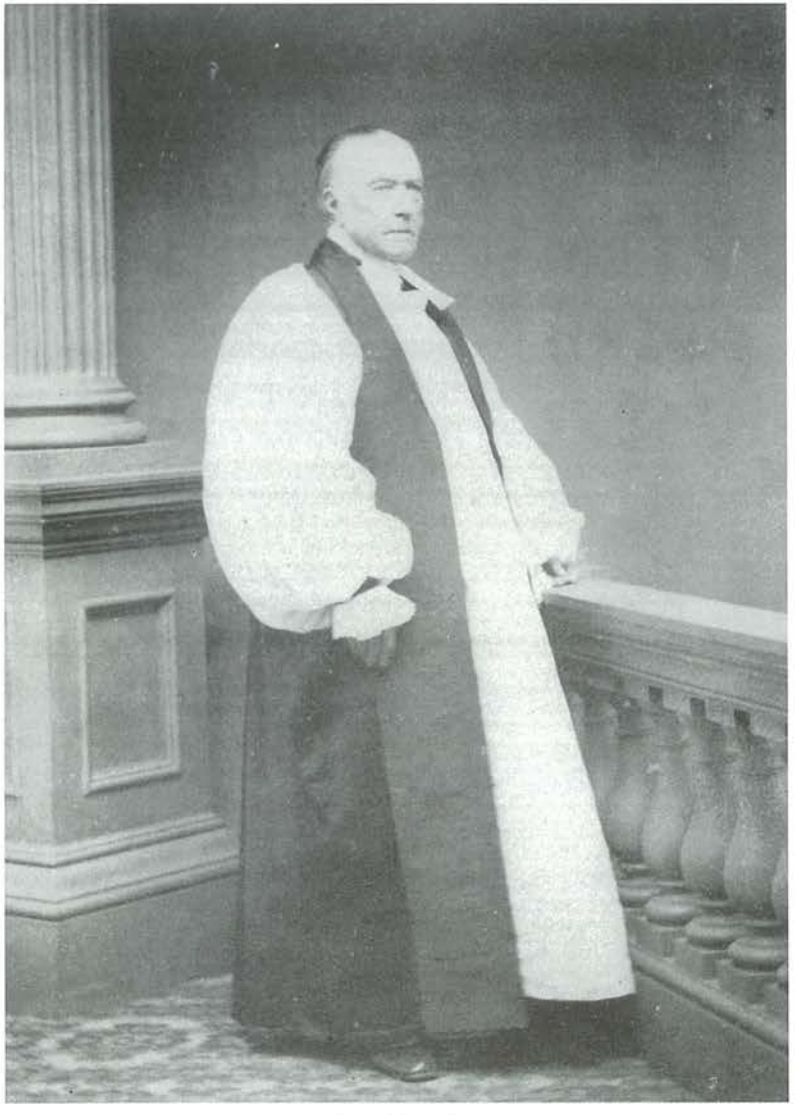
Mrs. MARY HOLMES.

In 1850, in his annual report to the mayor and city council, Chief Constable George Allen, who kept statistics recording the country of origin of all offenders, provided an insight into the lives of Toronto's Irish community. Of the 1,612 people arrested that year for various offences, 1,048 were Irish men and women – 65 percent! In fact, more than twice as many Irish women were arrested that year than English men.

In an age when public hangings were commonplace, indeed were occasions for general amusement, even the lower end of the sentencing scale was harsh. In 1850, of the 435 people sent to jail for one to thirty days for minor offences, thirty of those locked up were children. Not until 1857, when the provincial government passed an Act to Provide Gaols for Young Offenders, were convicted "infants," children under twenty-one years of age, segregated from hardened criminals and housed in separate institutions.

Some influential members of the middle and upper classes believed it was their responsibility to rescue the poor. They were motivated primarily by religious convictions, as evidenced by the fact that virtually all relief efforts were associated with specific church congregations. They saw the endowment of social welfare purely as a function of the church and of benevolent societies that were established in the 1830s. Among them were the Saint George Society, which provided relief to the English poor and the Saint Andrew's Society, which cared for destitute Scottish immigrants. The Irish Protestant Benevolent Society was established in the 1870s for the same purpose. Churches and benevolent societies were aided further by organizations such as the Odd Fellows, the Orange Lodge, and the Sons of England, all of which contributed money for the relief of the poor.

In the 1840s and 1850s, impoverished black refugees from the United States, who had been spirited north by means of the Underground Railroad, received help from the Queen Victoria Benevolent Society, a group composed of women who attended a



Bishop Strachan
(Strachan, John 1778–1867)

number of local black churches. The Society received further aid from members of Toronto's Anti-Slavery Society and other influential Toronto families, who held benefit concerts to raise money.

Because voluntary organizations dispensed aid to the poor, all governments absolved themselves of virtually all responsibility. Only during times of severe economic hardship did it occur to upper class Victorian Toronto to lay some of the responsibility for the care of the poor at the feet of their elected representatives.

In a letter dated November 30, 1857, Bishop John Strachan urged Mayor Hutchison to consider instituting a small tax increase in order to generate funds with which to "strengthen and encourage" the relief efforts of the city's churches. Toronto, said Strachan, had become a haven for indigent people from all parts of the province. The ranks of the destitute had swollen to the point where voluntary welfare could no longer carry the load alone. But the government remained deaf to such pleas. Ultimately, it was the sense of noblesse oblige, which was felt by the upper class, and the overriding British imperialist determination to bring civilization to the colonies that led to the establishment of the city's first charities.

Nevertheless, the moral obligation and generosity of spirit felt by the haves did not extend to all of the have-nots – only to the young, the old, and the infirm; the "deserving poor," as they were regarded. All others, regardless of circumstances – economic depression, famine, and wholesale displacement, for example – were seen as the "undeserving poor." In the minds of so many who had attained a level of comfort and security in the young city, the onus for poverty rested exclusively on the shoulders of those who suffered it. The privileged classes believed slums were "immoral" and so were those who inhabited them. The undeserving poor got nothing more or less than they deserved.

Christian charity aside, a strong element of self-serving pragmatism was inherent in much of the social rescue work undertaken in Victorian Toronto. It was motivated by fear of the

ever-growing pauper class, which, some believed, might rise up one day and overthrow the economic system that subjugated them. So it had to be admitted that some people were prodded to action more by a desire to maintain the status quo than they were by a desire to comply with the "great commandment" to love their neighbour as themselves. Better to be seen rendering help to a few than to risk the wrath of many and the possibility of revolution.

The depression of 1837 spawned even more beggars than already plied the streets of Toronto. It compelled the City to convert an old house on Richmond Street into a House of Industry, or workhouse, at which the "industrious poor" might give up begging and contribute to society – men by breaking rock for public roads, and women by knitting clothing for sale, the proceeds going to support the institution.

The House of Industry also took in neglected children. Many as newborns, were left in baskets provided for that purpose on the porch of the workhouse. Children lived at the House of Industry until they were old enough to be apprenticed. Most, however, were "boarded-out" to homes both in Toronto and throughout the surrounding rural areas.

Impoverished children were by far the worst off. Their lives were tragic and in many cases, brief. Their parents, if they were alive, seldom could afford to feed or clothe them. They were shunted from the home of one relative or friend to that of another, or delivered as unpaid servants to people occupying much higher rungs on the economic ladder. Often in such circumstances their masters mistreated them, and with impunity, because there did not yet exist any sort of formal supervision over such arrangements. Many children whose parents had died or were no longer capable or willing to care for them ended up on the street having to fend for themselves.

Cramped living conditions and poor sanitation permitted common childhood diseases like measles and whooping cough to claim the lives of untold numbers. It has been estimated that one in

seven children born alive (there were many stillbirths) died within the first twelve months, and that of those who survived the first year, one in seven would not see their seventh birthday. Ill health and poor nutrition conspired to prevent working-class boys from reaching their full adult height until their mid-twenties.

Generally speaking, children were valued primarily for the work they did. They were a ready and inexpensive source of labour – an economic asset and nothing more. To reinforce this commonly held notion, the Orphans' Act of 1799 bound orphaned children to indentured lives – girls until they were 18 and boys until 21.

Yorkville 1850

Katherine draped the rug over the fence and began to flail it with the carpet-beater. With each blow, the beater raised a heart-shaped welt on the rug that turned her stomach. How she hated this weekly chore, for she had seen the same heart-shaped welts on her mother's thighs and back. Striking the rug with the same weapon that had injured the only person she had ever truly known and loved was almost more than the girl could bear. She let the carpet-beater fall from her hand and, sagging against the fence, dropped to the ground where she sat staring at the angry, red fissures on her fingertips. Though she was only 13 years old, Katherine already had the rough, raw hands and sallow complexion of a middle-aged charwoman. As had happened to her mother before her, days of drudgery begun in pre-dawn darkness that ended close to midnight, had already robbed Katherine of her childhood and now sucked the rest of her adolescence from her.

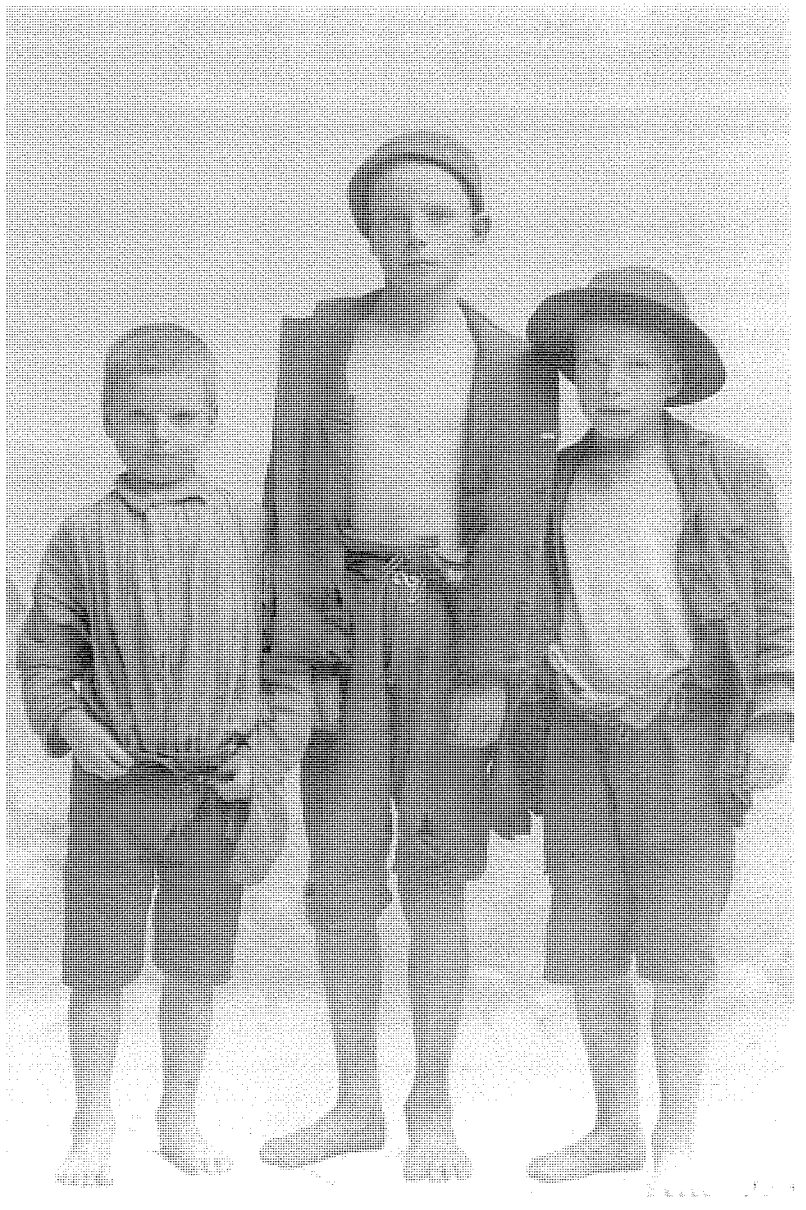
Since the age of six, Katherine had been in the service of the miller and his family. She'd been indentured to them the very day her mother had been shut away in the insane asylum, suffering from hysterics – or so the miller's wife had claimed.

Katherine's mother's name was Grace. As she sat hunkered against the fence, Katherine was appalled to realize that her mother had never in her entire life heard her own name uttered in the spirit of love or friendship. Katherine had naturally called her "mother." The miller and his wife had tarnished the beautiful name by turning it alternately into a command or an expletive.

"She's weak in the mind, your mother, and full of wild stories," the miller's wife had hissed the day Grace was taken away. "Don't know why it was we kept her so long, for she never earned her keep."

Though Katherine knew otherwise, she held her tongue for fear that the carpet beater might be used on her. There was no doubt that the miller's wife had worked poor Grace, first as a child and then as a woman, like a rented mule. Nor was there any doubt that the miller himself figured

The lives of impoverished children were tragic and in many cases, brief.



prominently in her mother's misery. His cruel visits to the servant girl's room late at night, even in Katherine's presence, had contributed to a wretched state of mind that had driven Grace, at the age of 27, to try hanging herself from the lintel over the scullery. She had failed, and Katherine couldn't decide if that was merciful or not.

Angered by the inconvenience, the miller's wife had taken the cost of Grace's transport to the asylum out of her wages.

In 1851, the passage through Parliament of the Apprentices and Minors Act represented an early attempt to protect children from the exploitation many suffered at the hands of unscrupulous employers. The realization was widespread that large numbers of children were in serious need of protection from all manner of abuse and neglect. This coincided with the Victorian belief that moral rectitude could be inculcated in destitute children if they were afforded the opportunity to live in a clean, well-regulated environment.

Over the next 60 years, a large number of religiously affiliated organizations would set up asylums to rescue the waifs of the city.

In the spring of 1851, Doctor Rees, Captain Charles Jones and a businessman named Tynman, all of whom occupied offices in the vicinity of the post office on Toronto Street, became concerned by the presence of dozens of homeless children who played each day in the street beneath their windows. To be sure, these little "street Arabs," as they were then called, were a nuisance, a major source of annoyance. But they were also pitiable, and in need of protection.

Aside from their youth, these waifs had nothing in common with the children of the upper classes with whom the three gentlemen were acquainted. Shiny tin soldiers and ringletted dolls with crinolines were far beyond the reach of ragamuffins such as these. Their toy box was the street. For amusement, they had to make do with whatever they could scavenge – a discarded bottle or

piece of cork, the broken spoke of a wagon wheel or a rusty barrel hoop. Their clothes, all hand me downs, hung in tattered layers upon their unwashed little bodies. Even the secondhand clothing worn by middle class children would have been often, but expertly, patched; frugality and skill with the needle being highly regarded virtues. But it had been a very long time since the rough woolen breeches and threadbare smocks worn by the street children had seen a needle and thread, for there was no one to do the mending. Nearly all of the waifs were barefoot, and even the hobnailed boots that a few were fortunate enough to have obtained were too badly worn or too poor a fit to provide comfort or protection.

Gangs of older boys were commonplace in mid-nineteenth century Toronto. For safety, the urchins ran in packs of half a dozen and more, following one or two leaders – the oldest, the toughest, or the most experienced, depending upon the brand of mischief being hatched or the tactic needed to acquire food, shelter, or to escape from danger. Their language was the coarse, often profane, vernacular of the drayman and the wharf rat. How could it have been otherwise? Many had no parents at all, but of those who did, perhaps a mother had been widowed and left destitute, or a father had found himself unable to raise a brood of children on his own, his wife having died, run off, or been caged up in the city's insane asylum. Left to their own devices, the waifs lived a catch-as-catch-can existence. They ate whatever their own craftiness and the occasional kind heart provided.

There were numerous reasons why these children had taken to the streets, but the overriding reason for their presence beneath the windows of Messrs. Rees, Jones, and Tynman, was the unremitting poverty imposed upon their class. Unless something were done to protect them, they might never survive it. The three men took the plight of the street children to Dr. Stephen Lett, Pastor of St. George's (Episcopalian) Church and to George Gurnett, Mayor of Toronto, who agreed that something had to be done.

Dr. Stephen Lett
Reverend Doctor Stephen Lett was determined to help Toronto's homeless children.

The Lady Managers

A few weeks after the three men brought the plight of the homeless children to the attention of Dr. Lett and Mr. Gurnett, a circular appeared in the city appealing to "the sympathies of the ladies of Toronto" to become involved in the establishment of a Protestant Orphans' Home and Female Aid Society, which would offer "relief and support to friendless orphans and destitute females" to whom would be given "religious and moral instruction." It would be run "under the exclusive management of ladies."

In part, the petition said:

"With regards to the Orphans' Home, the establishment will be Protestant, there being already a Roman Catholic Asylum and although it is impossible to ascertain the exact number of Protestant orphans who are objects of charity, the numbers must be considerable as the Roman Catholics have seldom less than forty, and at one time upwards of fifty orphans of their persuasion under proper care. The Orphans' Home now to be established will open to the whole county of York and the orphans will be fed, clothed and instructed up to the age of twelve or fourteen years when they will be apprenticed to respectable persons."

The circular announcing the Protestant Orphans' Home and Female Aid Society lauded the efforts of the women of Montreal who were celebrating their orphanage's twenty-sixth anniversary. And it set before the women of Toronto a challenge:

"Is there not as wide a field for the charitable exertions of the ladies of Toronto within their districts as the ladies of Montreal and Quebec have found in theirs? It is consistently hoped that the ladies of Toronto will at once come all forward to rescue their unfortunate fellow creatures from penury."

The new Society's motto would be, "Taught by the power that pities me, I learn to pity them." In the minds of the authors of the circular, the souls of those unfortunate people who lived in penury were in peril:

"...*for there is little doubt,*" the circular went on to say, "*that poverty and destitution are the great precursors of immorality and crime.*"

The women hoped to ensure the financial viability of their enterprise by applying for an annual operating grant from the legislature of Ontario. They would charge the parents of children brought into care a modest and voluntary annual subscription fee of not more than one pound per year. Donations and legacies would of course be encouraged, as would gifts of farm produce. The ladies would also conduct fund-raising events like bazaars and musical festivals.

Though the names of the Honorable William Cayley and the Honorable Robert Baldwin, the Reform leader and supporter of responsible government in Canada, did not appear in the circular, it was announced that two men had made an offer of land on which an orphanage could be built, and that architectural plans had also been offered free of charge. An application would be made to Parliament for an Act of Incorporation. On the expectation that the charter would be granted, Her Excellency the Countess of Elgin and Kincardine had consented to become the first Patroness of the institution.

A public meeting was called for the afternoon of Saturday, June 14, 1851 at the Mechanics Institute of Toronto, which, like the Institutes in other Canadian cities, was the forerunner of the public library system. Because the proposed orphanage would be built in his parish, the Reverend Dr. Lett was asked to chair the meeting. It was well attended, and of the forty-nine nominees to the board of the Protestant Orphans' Home and Female Aid Society, thirty were elected. Control of the new institution was granted to "the ladies of the city." They would come to be known over the long history of the Society as "the lady managers." While the ladies assumed the responsibility of the day-to-day running of the Home, the gentlemen who joined them in an advisory capacity, as members of a Committee of Council, many of whom were their husbands or fathers, took charge of all financial and legal matters relating to the institution.

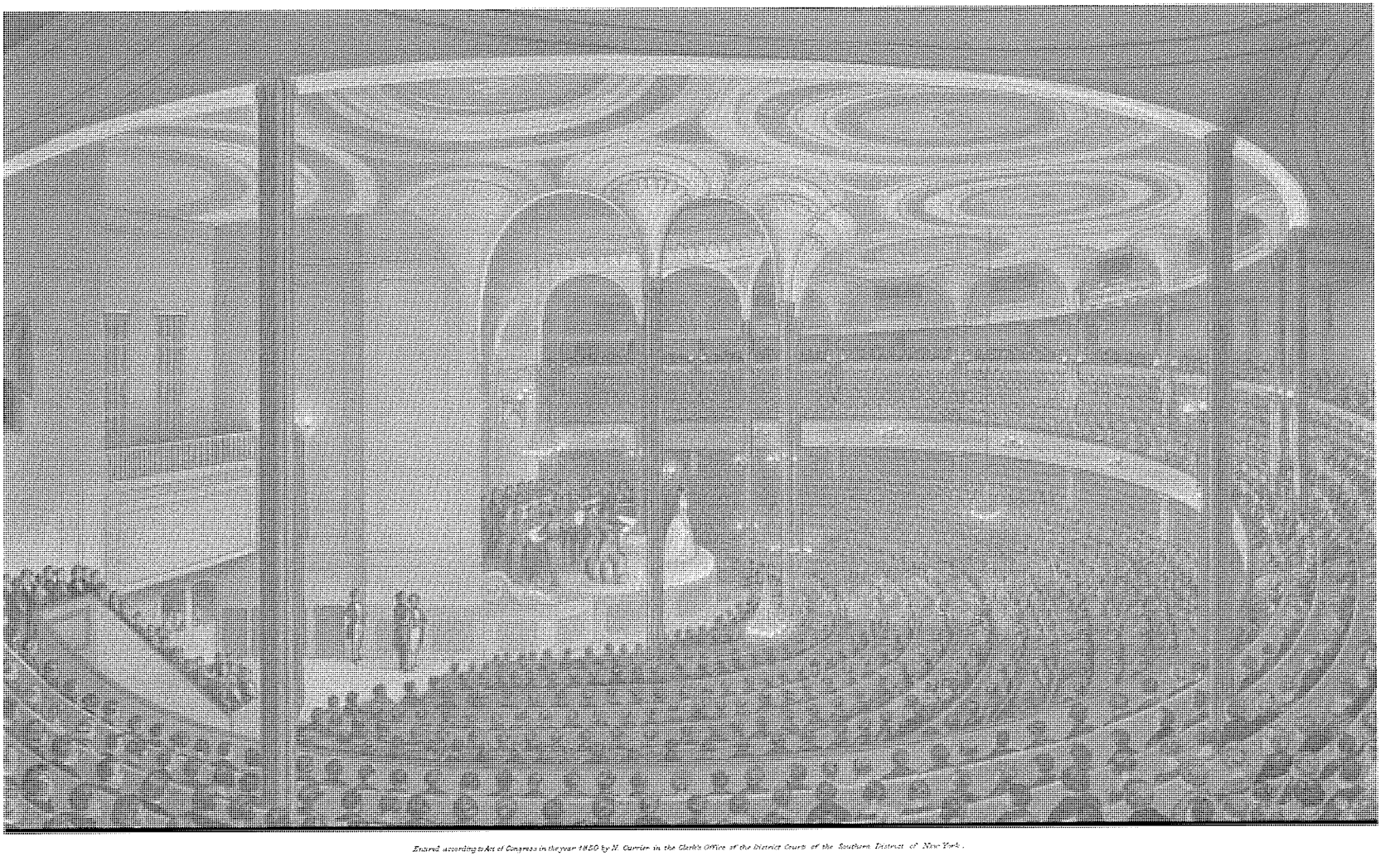
Mrs. McCaul
One of the Founders of this Institution
Rested from Her Labours July 1, 1896.

Decades before Canadian women won the right to vote or hold public office, and in an era when men believed their womenfolk ought to be spared exposure to both the underside of society and the rigours of running any enterprise, let alone an asylum for dependent children, the Act of Incorporation gave the Lady Managers full authority to conduct the affairs of the orphanage independent of their husbands. The Protestant Orphans' Home was among the few charitable organizations of the period that did not follow the rule of male administration. The wives and daughters of "old money" Tories, representing the Family Compact, and those of "new money" reformers, representing Toronto's burgeoning mercantile and middle class, sat on the original board of the Protestant Orphans' Home and Female Aid Society. The first register of the Society's Committee of Council and the roster of Lady Managers bore some of the most prominent names of the era: Robinson, Boulton, Widder, Gurnett, Ridout, Baldwin, Cumberland, and Jarvis.

The likelihood of acquiring donated land in the near future, a board composed of members of some of the most influential families in Toronto, and the patronage of the Countess of Elgin and Kincardine, assured the Society of a successful inauguration. All that remained for the enterprise to become a reality was to raise the money required to construct a proper building.

The Society's fund-raising campaign received a welcomed boost in October of 1851 when soprano Jenny Lind, who was billed as the Swedish Nightingale, staged a series of three concerts in Toronto. She devoted the proceeds of her final performance to charity. The money was turned over to the city clerk who identified a number of charitable organizations amongst which it might be divided. He advised Dr. Lett that the fledgling Society would receive two hundred pounds if its supporters raised an equal amount. The money from the Jenny Lind concert was turned over when, after only a few hours, Dr. Lett had succeeded in doing just that. The donation represented Toronto's first matching grant.

Cornerstone for the Sullivan Street Orphanage.



Entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1850 by N. Currier in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the Southern District of New York.

FIRST APPEARANCE OF JENNY LIND IN AMERICA.
At Castle Garden Sept.r 11.th 1850.

Jenny Lind's first concert in America.

Proceeds from one of Jenny Lind's 1851 Toronto concerts were divided amongst several Toronto charities, including the Protestant Orphans' Home and Female Aid Society. It became the city's first matching grant.

Toronto, October 21, 1851

William's hand trembled as he held out his ticket to the usher. He had never before been to the St. Lawrence Hall, never been amongst so many finely dressed people, and never in his life felt so ashamed of his coarse woolen suit and thick-soled boots. But no matter, for he would gladly endure the disdainful stares of those around him for the chance to hear Mademoiselle Jenny Lind, the greatest soprano of the age. It was for this once in a lifetime opportunity that William had saved up enough money for two nights' stay in one of the city's humbler hostelries and coach fare from Port Credit, where he scratched out a meagre living teaching school in rented rooms near the harbour.

His hopes had nearly been dashed the day before the concert, for when he had gone to Nordheimer's music store on King Street to purchase his ticket he was met by a mob. Everyone was clambering for tickets, including a number of rough looking characters who were purchasing large numbers of them for later re-sale at inflated prices in front of the Hall. Push eventually came to shove and of course a few bloody noses. The police had to be called out and the front door of the store barricaded. William had been lucky enough to have purchased one of the few remaining tickets. It had cost him four dollars, the equivalent of several days' wages. But it was worth it.

Now in the dimly lit hall his heart raced as he waited to be captivated by the angelic voice that had conquered all of Europe and would, before the evening ended, own every heart in Toronto.

First, however, the preliminaries would have to be endured – a fantasia by clarinetist Signor Belletti, then an aria by tenor Signor Salvi, and finally something from Handel's Messiah played by violinist Joseph Burke. These performances proved adequate and each was followed by restrained applause. William was clearly not the only member of the audience of several hundred people impatient to see and hear the famous soprano.

Enough! He hadn't come all this way, nor spent every last penny, to feign pleasure in this lot of buskers.

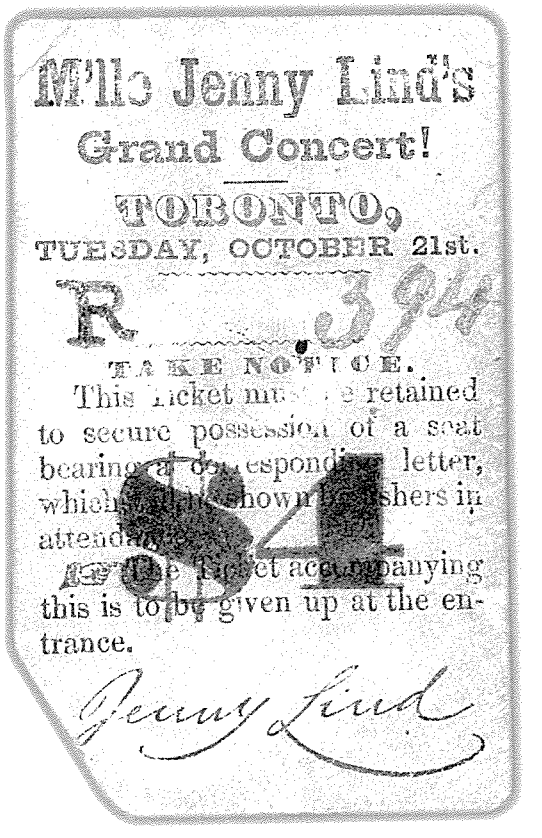
Then there was a brief moment of silence followed by tumultuous applause as there glided onto the stage a breathtakingly beautiful woman with long dark braided hair, and an oval face of such utter perfection that William's heart ached. She wore the costume of a peasant girl, which revealed ivory shoulders and a long graceful neck that required no adornment. She carried a nosegay which she held for an instant to smiling lips before curtsying demurely – first to the audience and then to her conductor and accompanist, Mr. Otto Goldschmidt.

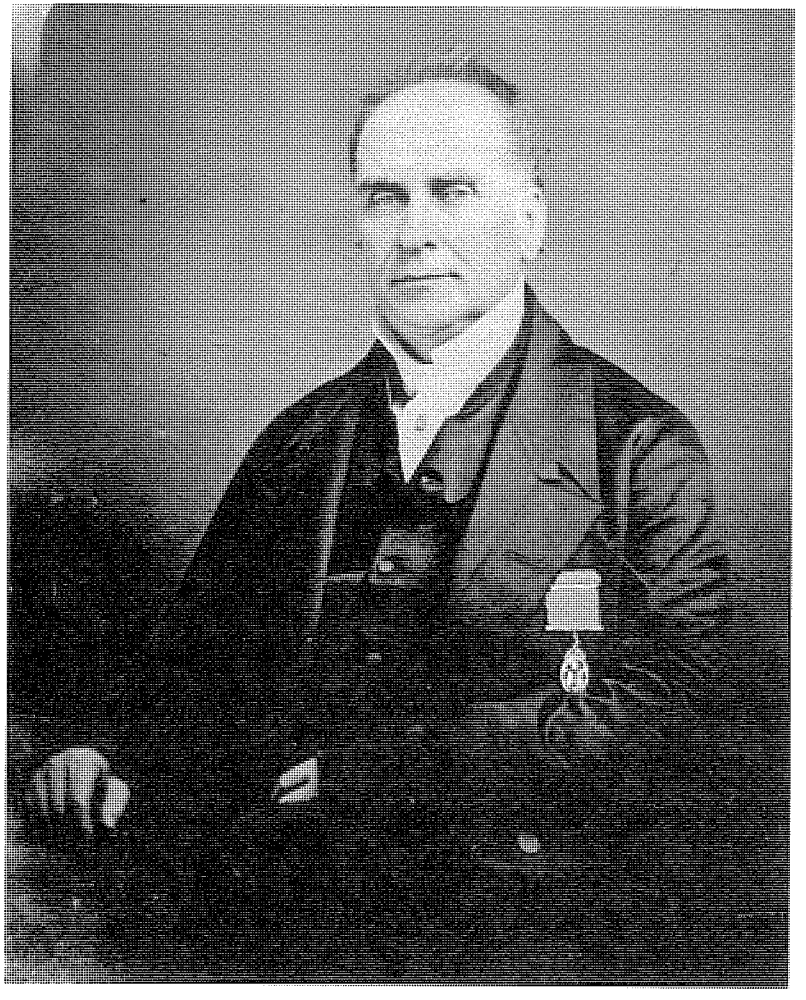
Poor William was instantly stricken; Mademoiselle Lind could take his heart and do with it what she wished. Mercifully, he did not know that she and Goldschmidt were lovers, and that the following year, they would wed in Boston.

When the applause subsided, Goldschmidt bent to the keyboard, playing the opening chords of a fantasia by Thalberg. The Swedish Nightingale cupped her lovely hands beneath her breast and, gazing up at some unseen heaven, began to sing. In that instant, William knew that no sound he had ever heard, or would hear in the future, could approach the ineffable beauty of Jenny Lind's voice.

There followed arias by Bellini and Donizetti, and another fantasia by Belletti. She even sang Scottish standards like "John Anderson My Jo" and "Comin' Through the Rye." Occasionally, to allow the diva to rest, there were brief musical interruptions by Messrs. Salvi and Burke, which the crowd barely tolerated.

All too soon, the concert came to an end. Mademoiselle Lind retired from the stage amid cheers and shouts of "Bravo!" Slowly, William rose to his feet and shuffled to the exit. Outside the Hall, he made his way along King Street in the direction of his dowdy hotel, his heart in tatters. He couldn't have been happier.





Robert Baldwin (1804–1858)
Parliamentary reformer, Robert Baldwin, was among those whose generosity made it possible for the Protestant Orphans' Home and Female Aid Society to serve Toronto's impoverished children.

The capital campaign was conducted over many months. While it proceeded, a small wooden house on the east side of Bay Street a few doors south of King Street was rented and used as an orphanage. It is not certain exactly when this happened, or even which of two buildings on Bay Street served as the Society's first orphanage. Either the house at 53 Bay Street, owned by Rev. Dr. James Richardson, or a house owned by Alexander Rennie at 45 Bay Street, may have been the actual location. An 1882 newspaper article mentioned the Richardson building and the Rennie building was referred to in the report of the Society sub-committee that was appointed to rent a house in 1853. In any event, until such time as the Society was able to build a permanent shelter of its own, there is some evidence to suggest that they used one of the buildings on Bay Street as an orphanage until 1854.

There is also reason to believe that the orphanage may have existed at one of the two Bay Street locations as early as the mid-1840s. Nearly 40 years later, at the official opening of the Society's orphanage on Dovercourt Road, a man by the name of Bennet, who was the Orange Grand Master for Ontario West, would recall that his organization had given financial assistance to the orphanage as early as 1844 or '45.

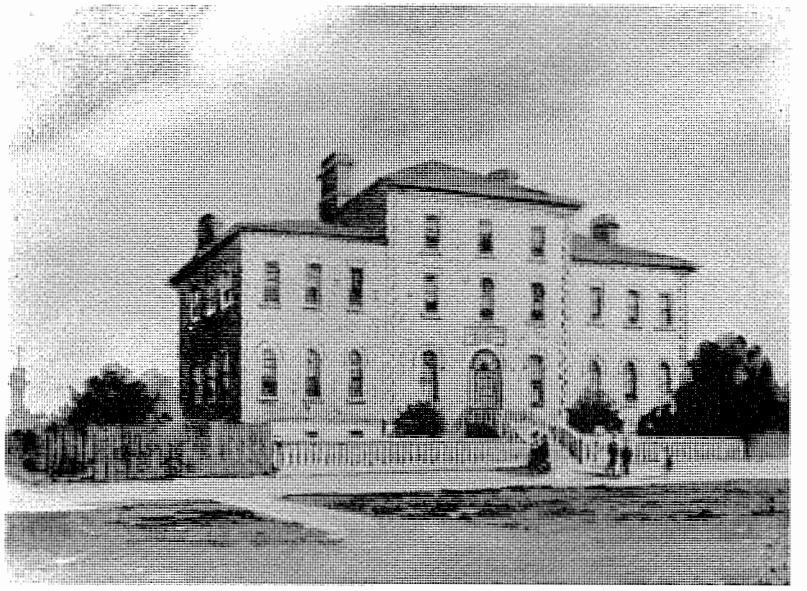
By 1852, the question of land remained unsettled. In July of the previous year, Messrs. Cayley and Baldwin had written to the Society to offer approximately half an acre of land east of Spadina Avenue near St. George's Square as long as "a permanent and respectable building is erected and the land enclosed." The following May, Mr. Baldwin wrote again to say that he and Cayley would withhold the deed for the land until such time as the building was erected, and that their offer had a two-year time limit on it. Baldwin was concerned that the land be used for an orphanage, not, as he apparently feared, as a profitable investment for the Society.

Also being considered as a potential site for the orphanage was a parcel of land nearer the lake at Victoria Square. But the acquisition of this land proved to be somewhat controversial.

When, in August 1852, a patent was issued granting the Society an acre of the Victoria Square tract, a man named Daly, who was in possession of it, refused to surrender it. The Society brought an action of ejectment against Daly, who threatened to seek an injunction in Chancery, as well as other unspecified legal proceedings.

Some members of the Society were concerned that a public legal battle might do their cause harm by alienating certain influential people in the city. Moreover, some families residing close to Victoria Square objected to the erection of an orphanage nearby. They didn't want an orphanage in their backyard. Accordingly, the Society abandoned its claim to the Victoria Square plot in exchange for land elsewhere. Two one-acre lots on Queen Street East, a lot near the Bathurst Barracks, and a four-acre parcel situated on the military reserve between the lunatic asylum and a brewery were all considered and, in their turn, rejected.

Jenny Lind even added her voice to the controversy, but this time less sweetly, in the form of a letter complaining that the erection of a building was taking too long. At last, an orphanage designed by Toronto architect John Harper was erected at a cost of 1,882 pounds on the land originally offered by Baldwin and Cayley. It was situated two blocks south of Dundas Street, east of Spadina, on the north side of Sullivan Street at number 12 (later listed on the city map as number 20). It was a three-storey, brick building that could accommodate up to 30 children. The Society would use the Sullivan Street building for the next 30 years, adding a west wing in 1860 and an east wing in 1864. The building incorporated an external staircase and infirmary. In honour of their major benefactors, the west wing became known as the Clergymen's Wing, and the east wing became known as the Orange Wing.



Sullivan St. Orphans' Home
When it opened in 1852, the Sullivan Street Home housed 30 children.

House of Providence
Built on Power Street in 1857, the House of Providence, which was run by the Roman Catholic Church, assisted so many Orange Irish that it came to be known affectionately as the House of Protestants.

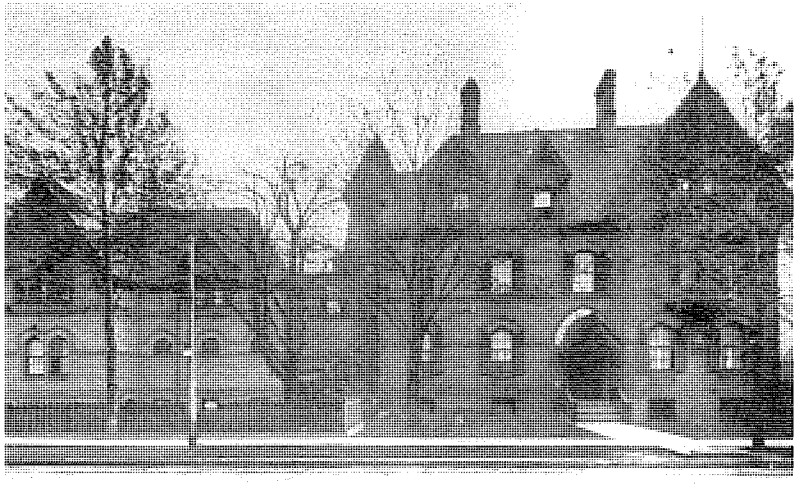
The Quality of Mercy

Between the mid-nineteenth century and the end of the First World War, a dozen other child protection agencies were established throughout Toronto. They would share in the work being done by the Protestant Orphans' Home and Female Aid Society. For the most part, they would do so with minimal assistance from the government.

The Roman Catholic Orphans' Asylum of St. Paul's

One of the earliest of these was the orphans' asylum run by lay women of the parish of St. Paul's. In 1826, St. Paul's became the first Roman Catholic Church built in Toronto. It was situated on Power Street in Cabbagetown – then a mostly Irish quarter of the city immediately west of the Don River. The cash-strapped church received timely and generous financial help from a number of sources, including certain prominent Protestants of the day, such as Robert Baldwin and Samuel Jarvis, two men whose families would figure significantly in the story of nineteenth century orphanages.

Though the actual year is unknown, sometime prior to 1851, the wife of the Honourable John Elmsley, former Chief Justice of Upper Canada, and other women from the congregation of St. Paul's, had set up an orphanage on the west side of Nelson Street – later called Jarvis Street – between Lombard and Richmond Streets. They established the asylum to care for the orphans of the numerous immigrants who had died of cholera and typhus. It was open to children of all creeds and was situated in one of two houses that sat side by side and which were owned by Elmsley. Mrs. Patrick Lee, who also conducted a school for girls, was its first matron. In 1851, Mother Delphine Fontbonne and three other Sisters of St. Joseph took over the operation of the orphanage. They had traveled by stagecoach and boat from Philadelphia at the request of Toronto's Roman Catholic Bishop Armand de Charbonnel.



Girls' Home
The Girls' Home, built in 1868 at Gerrard Street East and Seaton Street. Today the only surviving section of the building is a union hall.

Money was scarce and the orphanage struggled for several years to survive, depending day to day on the charity of Torontonians of all religious denominations. By 1859, the Nelson Street orphanage became too small. The children were moved to the House of Providence, which had been built in 1857 on Power Street, next to the church "for the relief of the poor and destitute of all classes and creeds," according to its patron, Bishop de Charbonnel.

Most of the inhabitants of Cabbagetown were Irish Protestants. Because so many of those who received help and comfort at the House of Providence were of Orange stock, the place came to be known with affection and gratitude as the House of Protestants. In 1876, orphaned children were moved from the House of Providence to the newly opened Sacred Heart Orphanage at Sunnyside in the city's west end.

The Girls' Home

In 1856, Toronto's first public nursery opened its doors on Victoria Street. Over the next decade, the nursery, which eventually changed its name to The Girls' Home and Public Nursery, then simply The Girls' Home, moved to Albert Street and then to Carlton Street. In 1860, the organization would enlarge the scope of its care to include girls up to 14 years of age. It would obtain its charter in 1863 and operate independently for the next 63 years when, in 1926, it would merge with the Protestant Orphans' Home and Female Aid Society. In 1868, the Girls' Home moved to a newly constructed building situated on the south side of Gerrard Street East between Ontario and Seaton Streets on land donated by William Cawthra. In 1885, and then again some years later, donations by William Gooderham made it possible to add south and east wings to the building. And in 1909, a separate school building containing three classrooms, which were capable of accommodating eighty pupils, was erected.

The Boys' Home

The Boys' Home was set up in 1859 in response to the alarming increase in juvenile crime in the city. Boys between the ages of five and fourteen were taught a trade. The older ones were apprenticed to local merchants and craftsmen. Half of what they earned was paid to the Home and the remainder was banked for them.

Despite the efforts of the Protestant Orphans' Home, the Girls' and Boys' Homes, and the St. Joseph's Orphans' Home, to protect the city's children, large numbers of them continued to suffer execrable treatment at the hands of neglectful and abusive adults. In 1867, a Working Boys' Home was established followed a year later by a Newsboys' Home.

Infants' Home and Infirmary

Infanticide and baby farming – the boarding of dozens of infants in utterly squalid conditions – were facts of life in nineteenth century Toronto. And despite the efforts of numerous churches and benevolent societies to protect Toronto's children, much more needed to be done. Recognizing this, a group of philanthropic women and a number of the city's trained nurses were determined to do their part. They established the Infants' Home and Infirmary in a rented house on Caer-Howell Street. The nurses volunteered their off-duty time to the shelter where young mothers stayed for up to four months after delivering their babies. In an effort to reduce expenses and to increase the chances of survival for orphaned newborns in the Home, they encouraged the mothers to nurse one other child.

In 1876, the Infants' Home and Infirmary moved to 678 Yonge Street. It remained there until 1882, when a residence was built on St. Mary's Street on the site of a reservoir, which had to be drained so that construction could begin. When the water had been removed from the reservoir, the remains of several infants were discovered. Nothing could have underscored more poignantly the desperate need for child-protection agencies of this kind.

(1864-1935)

John Joseph Kelso's efforts ultimately led to the establishment of the Children's Aid Society.

A few years after the erection of the house on St. Mary's Street, John Joseph Kelso, a young police reporter working in Toronto, whose job took him to the worst of the city's slums, had become outraged at the plight of so many children forced into lives of panhandling and prostitution because of poverty. In 1887, Kelso founded the Toronto Humane Society for the prevention of cruelty to children and animals. The following year he inaugurated the Fresh Air Fund and the Santa Claus Fund, which sponsored trips for the children to Toronto Island and other amusement spots around the city and provided cheer for poor women. In 1891, Kelso became the province's first Superintendent of the Department of Neglected and Dependent Children, a position for which he was paid $500 less per year than he'd earned as a reporter. Such was the government's careless attitude to the needs of underprivileged children; they simply were not a public policy priority. That same year, he presided over the incorporation of the Children's Aid Society, an organization that would, in 1951, amalgamate with the Infants' Home and Infirmary.

In 1893, the provincial government of Ontario passed the Child Protection Act, which combined the Department of Neglected and Dependent Children with Children's Aid Societies, thereby providing for the protection, care and control of neglected and dependent children. The Act also included provisions for temporary shelters and foster care, which fore-shadowed, many years later, the end of apprenticeships and institutional care. Kelso would use this legislation, as a basis for much of his work in dealing with the problem of wholesale child immigration schemes that sprang up in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, whereby children from British slums were imported into Canada and exploited as cheap labour.

In 1895, John Joseph Kelso organized Canada's first Conference on Child Saving. He later played a major role in the Protestant Orphans' Home, serving for 18 years on the Committee of Council between 1906 and 1924.

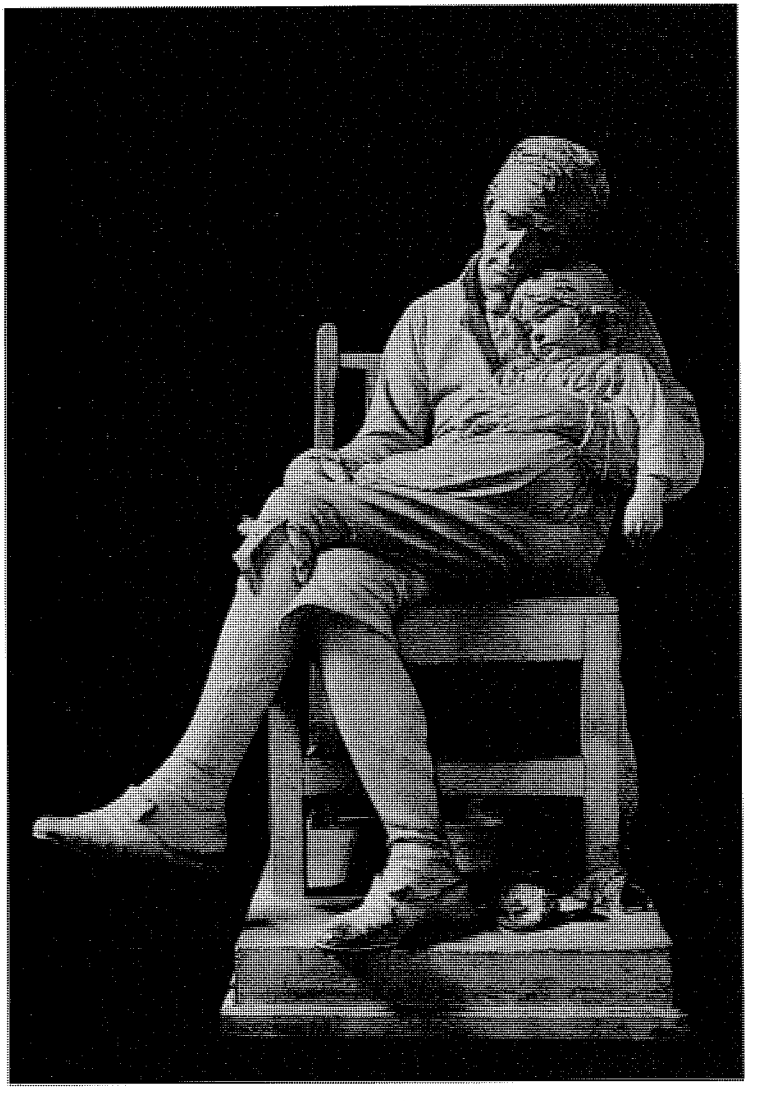
The Salvation Army

The Salvation Army, which had come to Canada in 1882, began a long history of ministering to the underprivileged and unwanted of the city. In October 1888, the "Sally Ann" opened its first Rescue Home for Fallen Girls in Toronto under the direction of Mrs. Nellie Coombs. The organization would establish similar shelters in Montreal, Winnipeg and Victoria.

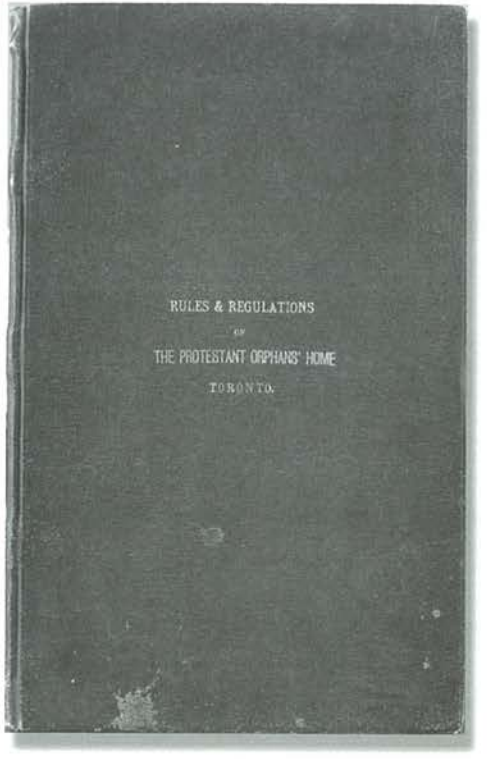
The Jewish Day Nursery and Orphanage

In the mid-nineteenth century, there were fewer than 20 Jewish families living in Toronto. Since they were a closely-knit group and were able to care for their own, they did not require an orphanage. But by the turn of the century, the number of Jewish immigrants in the city had grown significantly. Life was no less difficult for the Jewish poor than it was for any other cultural or ethnic group that composed the city's working class. There developed a need within Toronto's Jewish community for a day nursery and orphanage to care for children and to assist women during their pregnancies and after they had given birth. In 1909, the Jewish Day Nursery and Orphanage opened in a three-storey building on Elizabeth Street. It was also used as a dispensary and outpatient clinic for Jewish immigrants.

Regardless of their religious affiliations, all of Toronto's child care agencies had two things in common: lack of sufficient operating funds – a lack that was virtually ignored by the provincial government – and a desperate need for qualified personnel to adequately serve their constituencies. Pleas to Toronto City Council for money were often met with counter pleas that municipal dollars were too scarce. The belief persisted that charity was a private matter. Prior to the 1890s, no specialized department existed within the local government that was responsible for the distribution of welfare to the needy.



"Motherless"
Photographic copy is on display
in lobby of Family Day Care Services' head office.



Discipline at the Home was as conservative as the book of Rules and Regulations that governed it.

Fortunately for the Protestant Orphans' Home and Female Aid Society, the mayor did have authority to grant money, and each year a substantial amount was made to the Home.

The Protestant Orphans' Home – A Refuge for Friendless Children

According to the official rules of operation, the new Home would be a refuge for "friendless children of all denominations of the Protestant religion," though over the years, children of all religions would also be admitted.

Though it was a home for orphans, the term "orphan" included any child in need of care or protection. A mother may have died, leaving a working husband unable to care for their offspring; there may have been too many mouths to feed in one family and relief could only be had by placing one or more children in the Home. Perhaps both parents had to work in order to survive, and they'd pay the Home to care for their children. The names of many families appear on the records of a number of local agencies of the time. A significant percentage of the children who were admitted had at least one living parent to whom he or she might return once the Lady Managers had been assured that adequate care could once again be provided. Over the years, one in four of those children with at least one living parent would return home. A much smaller percentage would be adopted – in many cases years before formal adoption legislation existed, which is not to say that the Lady Managers approved such arrangements without careful thought and sufficient proof of the adoptive parents' good character and standing in the community. Most children, however, had neither a mother nor a father and were admitted to the Home on a first priority basis. Children with no father received second priority, and children with no mother, third.

The Home was established on the fundamental belief that children should not have to suffer deprivation, neglect, or exploitation in any form. The Lady Managers therefore set about to

ensure that none of these evils would touch the children who came into their care, for once inside the orphanage fence they lived an almost cloistered existence – one that was overlaid with the strict religious convictions of the Church of England. Life on the street for some had been a no-holds-barred struggle for survival. Security, order, and moral rectitude had been absent from their young lives, but no longer. The rules by which the new institution would operate required that "discipline shall be strictly parental in its character, and the order of decorum of a well regulated family shall be carefully observed."

Girls and boys slept in separate dormitories and their waking hours were governed by adherence to a strict routine. During the summer months, the children were awakened at six in the morning and were put to bed by nine at night. In the winter, they rose at seven and retired no later than eight o'clock in the evening.

There was never any doubt in the minds of the Lady Managers that they were on a rescue mission, and they pursued it with a will. So concerned were they that the children might be easily drawn into lives of moral decadence – particularly those who had already been exposed to prostitution, drunkenness, and criminality – that they strictly controlled access to them. According to one directive, "No relative or friend shall interfere in the management of the children nor visit them except in the presence of the matron, nor at any time when such visits are disapproved of by the Lady Managers."

Nor were "gentlemen of the cloth" exempt from scrutiny, for the matron was instructed to be particularly vigilant when it came to members of the clergy and other strangers who might attempt to visit the Home without permission.

As a general rule, children were admitted to the Home only after the Lady Managers had received a formal application submitted through their secretary. The "election" of applicants was made at the Society's monthly meetings. However, the Lady Managers individually had the authority to admit a child on an interim basis until full approval was granted.

The corner stone of the Western Wing of the Orphan's Home and Female Aid Society was laid on Tuesday the 3 day of July A.D. 1860 By The Honorable and right Reverend John Strachan, Lord Bishop of Toronto

Children stayed at the Home until they were 12 years old, at which time girls became indentured domestic servants and boys were apprenticed to local tradesmen. Usually, the Lady Managers arranged these situations. However, friends of the children occasionally were granted the privilege of procuring positions for them as long as the Lady Managers approved. The children were indentured to Protestant families, or to widows or spinsters, but only to those of good character. Never was a child contracted to a tavern keeper or to the operator of a boarding house. And under no circumstances was a girl apprenticed to an unmarried man.

Those with whom the children were placed were required to feed and clothe them "in a fit and proper manner," commensurate with their station in life. It was not expected, therefore, that a boy indentured to a farmer should be dressed in the manner of a successful merchant's son, but it was expected that such a boy receive clean and serviceable, if secondhand, work clothing and one respectable suit that he might wear to church on Sunday. In addition to clothing and feeding the children, masters had to properly instruct them in a trade, ensure that they were taught how to read and write, and raise them in the Protestant religion.

Girls were indentured until they were 18, boys until they were 21. Their masters were required to report each year on the well-being of their apprentices, and to pay to the Society 15 shillings a year per child. The Society deposited the money in the bank and gave it to each child upon completion of his or her apprenticeship. If a master failed to make the annual remittance, the person who had recommended him to the Society (more often than not his own clergyman) would receive a stern request from the Lady Managers to encourage the defaulter to bring the account up to date. Few people dared to risk being embarrassed in such a manner.

Though life in the Home was regimented, it represented a welcome improvement over what most of the children had been used to. And while the three-storey brick building was plain to the point of austerity, it was still a refuge. Because money had been

a major consideration, its designers favoured functionality over aesthetics. Thus there were few grace notes to be found anywhere. Nevertheless, the place was tidy, warm, and above all, safe. The children could look forward to being tucked into bed between clean sheets. And if the food was plainly prepared and presented, at least it was fresh and in sufficient supply. For afternoon tea, the children were given two slices of fresh bread, maple syrup, a tin cup of milk and fresh fruit in season.

The children received Protestant religious instruction, which included Sunday School taught by members of the Young Men's Christian Association. In addition, a schoolroom had been added to the orphanage and the city's school board provided a teacher.

Mrs. Holmes, the matron for the first 15 years that the orphanage was in operation, took direction from the Lady Managers who placed in her their utmost confidence. Accordingly, she was given full authority to run the orphanage as she saw fit. In matters of discipline, she was prosecutor, judge, jury and executioner. Her word was law. Correction, though strict, was tempered with affection and was never excessive. Each year at the Society's annual general meeting, the children – girls dressed in freshly pressed white pinafores and boys in dark tweed suits – offered up a hymn or two as part of the opening exercises.

Those with whom the children were placed were required to feed and clothe them "in a fit and proper manner," ....

Dollars and Cents

December 5, 1852, Ayr Advertiser

"The Lady Managers of the Protestant Orphans' Home acknowledge with many thanks, the following contributions kindly collected and forwarded by the Rev. Dr. Lett: – Daniel Manly, Esq., Ayr Mills, Ayr, a bag of flour; J. Goldie, Esq., Greenfield Mills, Ayr, a bag of flour; Mrs. Lett, Nightsleigh, Ayr, two pigs and two bags of potatoes; Mr. Backnell, Biefnheim, Ayr, a quarter of veal; Mr. White, Ayr, a quarter of mutton; Mr. Ross, Ayr, a large piece of beef."

December 12, 1862, The Globe

"Protestant Orphans' Home: – The Lady Managers of the Protestant Orphans' Home acknowledge with many thanks having received from Mr. Fisher, weighmaster, twelve rolls of butter taken for light weight, Dec. 6, and twenty loaves of bread also taken for light weight, Dec. 9; from Mr. Duncan Clarke five gallons of oil."

May 27, 1863, The Globe

"The Lady Managers of the Protestant Orphans' Home acknowledge with many thanks the following donations during the month: – From a friend, 12 boys' jackets, 12 vests, 11 pairs of trousers; Mrs. John Boulton, milk daily; Mrs. Crickmore, milk daily; Mr. Webb, a large loaf weekly; the butchers and market gardeners of St. Lawrence Market, meat and vegetables daily."

Well after the turn of the century, countless notices of this sort continued to appear in newspapers across Ontario. They testified to the basic goodness and generosity of country and city folk who sent what they could afford to help the Protestant Orphans' Home and Female Aid Society. While the largest gifts of land and money, which had come from the city's leading families, were most memorable and the subject of genuine gratitude, it was the daily,

small donations of cash, food, farm produce, and clothing that permitted the matron and her staff to make ends meet. No gift was too small and nothing was wasted.

Occasionally, food arrived on the hoof, or still clucking. Fresh meat of any kind was a welcome addition to the menu. But because the matron and her staff seldom knew in advance when someone intended to make a gift of livestock to the Home, they had to be prepared to treat such donations as temporary guests of the Society until such time as the cook required their presence in the kitchen. Thereupon, they were unsentimentally dispatched, butchered, and transformed into nourishing meals.

December 27, 1863, the Daily Leader

"Protestant Orphans' Home – The treasurer of the Protestant Orphans' Home begs to acknowledge the following sums: – From District (Orange) Lodge (LOL), Derry West, per Mr. A. C. Irvine, $23.55; LOL No. 264, per Mr. W. Greenwood, $5; LOL No. 774, Brussels, Ontario, per Mr. James Young, treasurer, $5; collected by Mr. T. S. Jones, High Constable of York, from the Grand and Petit Jurors, Autumn Assizes, and Grand Jurors December Sessions, $22.50; LOL No. 1,184, Campbellville, per Mr. W. Caster Brooke $2.50."

The Odd Fellows, churches of all denominations, and the Orange Order regularly contributed money to the work of the Society. The Orangemen were especially faithful and generous in their contributions. On February 18, 1864, members of the Grand Lodge of the Loyal Orange Association and all the orphans in the Home attended a service at St. George's Church, which was led by Rev. Lett. After the service, at which a substantial amount of money was collected for the work of the Home, the Orangemen assembled outside the church and marched the short distance to the orphanage, where the new East, or Orange Wing was dedicated by Rev. Lett. Contributions made by Orangemen from all over Ontario had completely paid for the addition.

From The Leader, June 9, 1864

The annual meeting of the Protestant Orphans' Home was held last evening in the St. Lawrence Hall. There were present a large number of ladies and gentlemen immediately interested in the welfare of this admirable institution. The little orphans were seated on forms—the boys on one side of the platform and the girls on the other. They were well dressed and appeared remarkably clean and healthy.

From Globe and Mail, June 9, 1864

The general annual meeting of the Protestant Orphans' Home and Female Aid Society was held last night in the St. Lawrence Hall. A few minutes before eight o'clock children in the number of 51 were marched into the hall. Their appearance reflected great credit upon the matron. The ...

The above are examples of early newspaper articles kept in Family Day Care Services' archives.

June, 1866, The Globe

"Protestant Orphans' Home – The treasurer thankfully acknowledges a donation of ten dollars from Mr. G. N. Carlisle, proprietor of the "Terrapin Saloon," King Street, Toronto."

Philanthropists, churches and benevolent societies weren't the only ones who possessed a generous spirit.

June 8, 1866, The Globe

"Protestant Orphans' Home – The Lady Managers thankfully acknowledge the following donations: – two bags of flour from the mayor of Toronto; vegetables from Mrs. Spratt; disinfectants from the health office; apples from Mrs. Foster; $2 from Mrs. G. L. Allen, for buying cakes; free admission of twenty children to the circus by Mr. Ritchie; apples and sweetmeats from Mr. Ritchie; free passage of children to the island by Capt. Salter; bread, butter and tea on the island by Mrs. Parkinson. The treasurer begs to acknowledge $2 collected by Mr. John McLean at a temperance meeting at Mount Pleasant."

June 3, 1874, The Leader

"The Lady Managers also desire to return their thanks to the captain and owners of the City of Toronto (steamer) for a free trip given the children to Niagara; and to the captain of the steamer Bouquet for free trips to the island, which excursions were heartily enjoyed by the children."

August 23, 1877, The Globe

"Protestant Orphans' Home – The entire number, at present 106, of the young pensioners of this charity had a grand picnic yesterday. The sport (sic) selected was High Park, and the party was conveyed thither in some dozen and a half cabs, the owners of which made the conveyance a free gift. The children were all neatly attired and presented a gratifying spectacle. They were accompanied by many of the active patrons of the Home, who directed and shared in the day's recreation. The day was spent in high enjoyment by the children, and will be a memorable event for them."

Toronto, 1877

Amelia was heartbroken as she watched the bigger children run ahead of her and scramble into the last cab in a line of 12 that waited on the street in front of the Sullivan Street Home. Each one was full of bouncing, squealing orphans who could barely contain their excitement at the thought of picnicking in High Park. But there seemed to be no room for Amelia. Hot tears stung her eyes and she bit her bottom lip to keep from crying. She was about to turn and run back into the orphanage, when a kindly voice said, "You can come up here and sit by me if you'd like, Missy. Help me drive old Chum." It was the cabman, smiling down at her.

Amelia looked wide-eyed at the driver, then up at the big white horse. She felt a hand on her shoulder and turned to find Miss Wheelright standing beside her. The kindly matron bent down and, scooping up the little girl, set her gently upon the black leather seat beside the driver. Proud as punch, Amelia smoothed her freshly laundered pinafore and beamed down at Miss Wheelright.

"You hold on tight up there, Amelia," said the matron.

"I ain't never drove a wagon before, Mister," said Amelia, breathless at the thought of handling the reins.

"That's alright, Missy," said the cabman, "I've never had a pretty girl sit up here beside me before."

Up ahead, the line of cabs began to move off down Sullivan Street toward Spadina Avenue, where they would turn north to Dundas Street, which would take them to the western suburbs of the city and High Park. When it was his turn, the cabman clucked his tongue. "Let's go, Chum," he said.

The big white horse lifted its head and leaned into the traces. With a slight lurch, the cab was off.

"There you go, Missy," said the cabman. "You can take over now." And he handed the little girl the reins, which hung slack across the horse's back. On the way, old Chum automatically turned when the other horses turned, and stopped when they stopped. In fact, he needed no direction.


JOHN THOMPSON

But Amelia was wonderfully innocent of that. As far as she knew, she had driven the cab and all the children in it to High Park. And she would remember the thrill that her special status had given her until she was a very old woman.

The children looked forward to day trips to city parks and waterfront amusements. Ferry rides to the Toronto Islands were especially exciting. The archipelago of 15 tiny islands recently had been sculpted from a single peninsula that had jutted out into Lake Ontario by a violent storm that struck Toronto in 1858.

American showman and circus producer P.T. Barnum also earned the gratitude of the Lady Managers for giving the orphans free admission to his "grand exhibition of animals," which visited Toronto in 1874.

On occasion, drama societies and choral groups held fund raising events, the proceeds of which were given to local charities, including the Protestant Orphans' Home. Stage shows were a popular form of entertainment and a fairly reliable source of charitable funding. For example, on January 31, 1880, an amateur troupe of juveniles staged Gilbert and Sullivan's H.M.S. Pinafore at the St. Andrew's Church Hall (it had been staged professionally in London, England for the first time less than two years before). The Globe reported the following day, "The spacious room was crowded long before eight o'clock by the elite of the city, and by the time the curtain was rung up many were turned away, there not being standing room." Protestant Orphans' Home was among the charities to receive money from the proceeds of that production.

December 15, 1886, The Mail

"The Lady Managers of the Protestant Orphans' Home commenced their 'All World's Fair,' in aid of the funds of the institution yesterday afternoon at three o'clock in the Adelaide Street rink, and it is almost safe to say that no previous event of the kind ever had so brilliant and successful an inauguration. The official opening was made by the Lieutenant-Governor...The rink presented a novel and charming appearance. Each side of the main floor was lined with a row of booths, most attractively decorated in striking contrasts of colour and representing various countries by which were collected either productions of these lands or articles suggestive of the inventive or industrial skill of their inhabitants. Each booth was in (sic) charge of a number of ladies attired in picturesque dresses of the characteristic type associated with the different countries, and in most cases it must be said that the imitation was very faithful except that in some instances, the material of the dresses was of a richer and costlier quality than is supposed to be worn by the classes represented. Silk, satin, and velvet were noticeable in the costumes of Spanish gypsy girls, French peasants, Turkish ladies, and Scotch lassies, but as these materials enhanced the rich effect of the arrangement of the colours the departure from strict accuracy was an improvement."

The Lady Managers were by no means shrinking violets when it came to raising money for the Home. They threw soirées and fancy dress balls at places such as the St. Lawrence Hall, the Horticultural Gardens Pavilion at Allan Gardens on Sherbourne Street, and the original King Street site of the city's new Crystal Palace, which was fashioned after the one built in London's Hyde Park. (Toronto's Crystal Palace would eventually be moved to the Exhibition grounds, just south of the Dufferin Gate.) These fundraising events were known for their artistry and flare. They never failed to attract not only the leading lights of the city, but representatives of senior levels of the government as well. The year following their successful "All World's Fair," with the help of the National Opera Company, the Lady Managers staged a production of "The White Slave," though in doing so, they attracted criticism from the city's Methodists. Unchastened by the scolding, the following year the Lady Managers threw a grand charity ball at the Horticultural Gardens Pavilion. Despite the fact that Governor-General and Lady Stanley and Mayor Clarke and Mrs. Clarke patronized the event, the Toronto clergy clucked their tongues in disapproval. Said Faith Fenton, writing in one of the Toronto papers, *"Dancing is looked upon with such a severe eye by the clergy of Toronto that many prominent citizens are somewhat backward about giving their patronage to the few public balls that come off during the winter season. But when the subject of patronage is charity, Toronto has always been to the front, and the majority of our leading citizens are noted for their liberality when deserving objects are brought under their notice. Such an object was the charity ball in aid of the Protestant Orphans' Home... 'A charity ball.' The term is tossed somewhat disdainfully from the lips of the ultra-religionists, who, good people that they are, hear the footsteps of that 'roaring lion' (Satan) beneath the pulsing measure of the waltz, and see the gleam of his eyes 'seeking whom he may devour' beneath the glitter of the ballroom lights, nor think that this undesirable visitor may find a more congenial abode in the hearts filled with malice and uncharitableness."*

Fenton did not confine her observations to the kerfuffle over dancing. She gave readers the benefit of her opinion concerning the style and quality of the costumes worn by the women who attended the ball, as well: *"The law of good taste was not violated in any one instance that I could see – and I wore my spectacles!"*

Over the years, there would be many operettas, concerts, bazaars and fancy balls in aid of the Home. They were popular events on the social calendar of the city's elite.

Some of the 400 guests at the fancy-dress ball in aid of the Protestant Orphans' Home, held in April, 1870, in the Toronto Music Hall, at the corner of Church and Adelaide Streets—the building that was later to become the Public Library. The gentleman in Highland dress, in left foreground, is Capt. Prince; 2, Miss Amy Grant; 3, Major Burstall; 4, Miss Gussie Ridout; 11 and 12, Mrs. Beckett and Mrs. Banks, the beautiful McPherson sisters; bowing to them, Mr. Jacobi; 16, Mr. James Michie, in Highland dress; 22, Mrs. W. P. Howland; 24, Miss Essie Heward (later Mrs. Stikeman); to her left, the young hopeful in knee breeches is Stephen Jarvis, Jr.; beside him, Mr. Frank Heward. Others in this interesting group include Sir Casimir Gzowski, Sir D. L. McPherson, Mrs. Northey, Mr. Sam Nordheimer, Mr. Chris Baines, Mr. Nicol Kingsmill, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Cawthra, Mr. Walter Cassells, Mr. and Mrs. J. S. McMurray

Suffer the Little Children

From 1854 until well into the 1880s, Doctor William Winslow Ogden was the chief attending physician to the Protestant Orphans' Home. For more than 30 years, he was known for the diligence and cheerfulness with which he performed his duties at the Home. And though every year at the Society's annual general meeting the Board recognized the debt they owed him, he refused to charge a fee.

Dr. Ogden was a young man when he first offered his services to the Home. In time, he became a highly respected senior member of the city's medical community, teaching medical jurisprudence at the Toronto School of Medicine. When the medical faculty of the University of Toronto was established, he was appointed professor of forensic medicine. Despite the many demands placed on his time, his devotion to the Sullivan Street orphans never waned.

By the mid 1880s, Doctors MacDonald, McConnell and Spragge joined Ogden in managing the increased medical workload at the Home, the result of larger enrollments. All of them were leaders in their profession and ran busy practices, yet they regarded as a priority the care they freely gave to the Society's children. The same could be said for Dr. James Ross, the attending physician of the Girls' Home for more than 20 years. Ross was an accomplished surgeon and a specialist in midwifery who, in 1889, was elected president of the Canadian Medical Association. Near the turn of the century, other names were added to the list of those physicians who came to the aid of the Home – among them Doctors Brown, Hodder, Grace, Sheard, Albert, Hunter, Sterling, Ryerson, Bowles, McKinley, Price Brown and Livingston. Until the mid-to-late 1920s, when the Society made the transition from institutional to foster care, the doctors played an essential role in the health and overall well-being of the orphan children.

The mortality rate among small children, especially those who lived in crowded slums, was high in nineteenth-century Toronto.

Common childhood illnesses such as measles and whooping cough frequently proved fatal. However, once a child was brought into the Home where he or she received properly prepared meals on a regular basis, slept in a clean bed, and was expected to maintain a much higher level of personal hygiene than perhaps might have been previously practiced, the risk of death from such diseases fell dramatically. For the most part, residents of the Home who became ill made full recoveries. Only rarely did any of them succumb to their illness. In January 1866, however, 46 children were confined to bed when measles and whooping cough swept through the Home.

At a meeting of the Society held on Tuesday, January 30, 1866, the secretary recorded events as follows:

"The secretary regrets to state that since the last meeting, there has been, and still is, much sicknefs (sic) in the Home, children having been received into the Home who brought with them whooping cough, which spread among the children, and before they recovered from that disease, were attacked with measles, and now I am grieved to say are suffering most fearfully from dysentery. The mortality has been very great, 16 of our poor little orphans have died during this month. Dr. Ogden has been most attentive, giving his time and advice, and doing all in his power to stop the disease and alleviate their suffering.

By early February, 18 children had died.

Sarah Harris.....nine years.....died January 6/66.....measles & whooping cough
Thomas Innocent .....four years.....died January 7/66.....measles & whooping cough
John Henry Peters .....five years.....died January 13/66 .....measles & dysentery
Matilda Talbot .....four years.....died January 13/66 .....measles & whooping cough
Thomas McDonald .....five years.....died January 15/66 .....measles & whooping cough
Samuel Cunningham ...three years .....died January 16/66 .....measles & dysentery
Sarah McClellan .....four years.....died January 19/66 .....measles & whooping cough
Richard Harris .....eleven years....died January 20/66 .....measles & whooping cough
William McClellan .....ten years .....died January 21/66 .....measles & dysentery
John Chase .....four years.....died January 22/66 .....whooping cough & dysentery
George Innocent .....six years.....died January 23/66 .....measles & dysentery
Robert Winters .....six years.....died January 23/66 .....measles & dysentery
John Irwin .....five years.....died January 25/66 .....measles & dysentery
William Glavin.....three years .....died January 25/66 .....measles & dysentery
Soloman Pennant .....six years.....died January 27/66 .....measles & dysentery
Joshua Fox.....six years.....died January 29/66 .....measles & dysentery
David Wiggin.....four years.....died January 31/66 .....measles & dysentery
Lavinia McClellan.....eight years .....died February 3/66 .....measles & dysentery

Names of the 18 children who died from illnesses in 1866.

Because of his large workload, Dr. Ogden had called in other physicians to help him manage the crisis. They found that poor drainage at the Home had confounded their efforts to nurse the children back to health. To prevent further outbreaks, the physicians agreed that all the children would have to be temporarily housed elsewhere, and that the entire building would have to be thoroughly ventilated, cleansed, and drained. The domestic staff took every measure they could to sanitize the building.

Those children who recovered and those who had not taken ill were moved out of the Sullivan Street Home. Along with furniture and utensils from the Home, the children were loaded onto drays provided at no charge by the Grand Trunk and the Great Western Railway companies and driven to another home in the city where they would stay for two months while the orphanage was put right. The sudden and tragic loss of eighteen children between the ages of three and eleven dealt a terrible blow to everyone involved. Doctor Ogden, the matron, Mrs. Holmes, and her small staff, and many of the Lady Managers worked themselves almost to the point of exhaustion trying to save those who were dying, and to preserve the health and safety of the remaining children. The incident stands as one of the saddest in the entire history of the Society, which deserved its enviable reputation as a well-run institution.

Dr. Ogden had sought to avoid precisely such an occurrence when, the previous year, he had recommended that two bedrooms on the second floor of the Home be made into an infirmary. It would be segregated from the rest of the building and have its own staircase leading from the ground floor. The Board had seen the wisdom in his recommendation and, at the cost of $114, had finished the renovations. The outbreak of 1866, however, caught everyone off guard. The new infirmary was simply inadequate, and the infection had spread throughout the building before anything could be done to prevent it.

Mrs. Holmes was so distraught at the loss of the children that she tearfully offered to leave the Home. But the Lady Managers knew the devoted matron was not to blame and refused to accept her resignation. Ultimately, however, the tragedy took its toll on Mrs. Holmes and she retired from the Home.

One newspaper, the Toronto Watchman, launched a vicious attack on the Society, alleging that the Home was mismanaged,

1925

PROTESTANT ORPHAN HOME

TO THE EDITOR OF THE LEADER.

Sir,—I ask the privilege of calling the attention of the numerous readers of your influential journal to the present condition and claims of the above named institution. It was the …

Ever since the epidemic, which carried off eighteen of the children in 1866 they have been cramped for means to carry on the institution ; and now, that they have lately had sixteen of the children sick with typhoid fever, their funds are exhausted, and they have had to borrow money to meet their daily expenditure. Unwilling to shut the door on any destituted Protestant orphan, born in wedlock, the ladies have had under their care at one time lately no less than one hundred and two orphan children, and eve now the children in the institution number no less than sixty-six.

The ladies deem it only necessary to have these …

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that its directors had deliberately attempted to disguise the organization's Protestant affiliation, and that the matron who had been hired to replace Mrs. Holmes, a Mrs. Kelly, was married to a Roman Catholic. (The allegations were proven groundless, but the notion of the spouse of a Roman Catholic being employed by the Home clearly offended the editor of the Toronto Watchman.) The stern response of a special committee set up to answer the newspaper's accusations are recorded in the minutes of the monthly meeting, held Tuesday, February 27, 1866:

"Your committee have not had before them sufficient evidence to report definitely and decisively upon the other charges as to the maladministration of the internal economy of the Home, but such testimony as they have had is thoroughly satisfactory leading them to the belief that these charges are equally false as the two previous ones. In fact, they are too absurd and ridiculous to be true.

"Your committee have no hesitation in recording their opinion that the charge against the managers is a grofs (sic) libel on these excellent ladies. Your committee have reason to believe that the retiring matron, Mrs. Holmes, has sustained to the last the high character which has been accorded to her in various of the annual printed reports of the Society.

"Your committee have had before them the statement of Dr. Ogden Esq., M.D., the medical officer of the Home, and by it they are confirmed in their belief that there has been no carelefsnefs (sic) or culpable inattention on the part of the officials of the Home, except for one of the nurses, who has been discharged. (Neither the nurse's identity nor the reason for her dismissal are mentioned in the minutes.)

"It seems to your committee that some member of the institution, a dismissed servant perhaps, carries false and malicious complaints to the editor of the Watchman, who they regret to say affords too ready a vehicle

Grave Marker
"Suffer the little children to come unto me."

for their publicity by giving them insertions in his paper.

"Signed William Adamson, John McKee, J.R. Brownlee, James B. Lindsay, and D'Arcy Boulton."

It is not known for certain where the 18 children were buried, though it is likely that they would have been interred in paupers' graves. In 1876, the Society purchased six lots in the northwest corner of St. James Cemetery, at Parliament and Bloor Streets, so that the children of families who had no plot could be properly buried. A sandstone monument was erected and on the front was engraved: *"This monument was erected by some of the children of the Orphans' Home to the memory of their little companion Rebecca Dorrington who died June 7, 1868 Aged 6 years – Suffer little children to come unto me."*

By the time the Protestant Orphans' Home sold the lots to the Children's Aid Society in 1962, the names of 28 children had been engraved on the monument.

The Need to Expand

By 1882, it had become clear that the Sullivan Street Home could no longer accommodate the growing number of children resident there. Moreover, the Society had received a substantial increase in the number of applicants for admission. A search was made of the city for a suitable lot on which to build a new and much larger orphanage that could house 125 children. One costing $7,500 was found on the west side of Dovercourt Road, two blocks south of College Street.

The laying of the corner stone for the new orphanage took place on Saturday, October 7, 1882. Rev. Thomas Fuller, Lord Bishop of Niagara, presided over the ceremony, which represented a major event in the city. The new Home was decidedly grander and more expensive than the one on Sullivan Street. In fact, it would cost the Society between forty and forty-five thousand dollars. A full description of the proposed structure that appeared in one of the local newspapers ran, in part, as follows:

"The new building, which will be of red brick, will have a solid stone foundation. The centre portion will be three storeys high and the wings two storeys. This exclusive of the basement, which is only four feet below the ground line and constitutes another storey.... The style will be modern English, giving a pleasing effect without any unnecessary expenditure for ornamentation, the principal object aimed at being compactness, convenience of arrangement, and solidity of structure."

The newspaper article went on to describe in detail the dormitories, hallways, and various special purpose rooms that had been incorporated into the design. The Lady Managers who attended the corner stone ceremony were understandably proud of their new orphanage – so was Mayor McMurrich, who addressed the crowd on behalf of the Ladies and provided a verbal history of the Protestant Orphans' Home.

One year and one week later, on October 15, 1883, the children were led through the front door of their new residence at 344 Dovercourt Road. At the official opening ceremonies in November, special mention was made of the ongoing and generous contribution made to the Home since its inception by members of the Orange Order.

Over the entrance to the bright and airy dormitories of the Dovercourt orphanage was the commemorative inscription, "Blessed is he that considereth the poor and needy," which honoured the generosity of William Gooderham, who donated much of the furnishings of the sleeping quarters. Colourful lettering that had been carefully rendered by the boys of the Home encircled the head of each of the small white beds.

Gooderham, who was known for his philanthropy, was a friend to both the Girls' Home and the Protestant Orphans' Home. At one annual meeting of the Society, he publicly chided certain members of the local clergy for failing to demonstrate support and leadership by not attending the meeting. He also lambasted those upper class Torontonians who failed to donate money to the Home, calling them "dishonest." But he praised the generosity of the city's

THE CEREMONY.

A silver trowel was then handed to the Bishop of Niagara, who duly performed the ceremony of laying the stone and dedicating the building to the purposes of the charity. Glass jars containing a twenty-five, a ten, and a five-cent piece of the coinage of 1882, copies of THE MAIL, *Globe*, and other newspapers, the *Dominion Churchman*, and *Orange Sentinel*, Orphans' Home reports, and list of officers were placed within the stone. Near it was displayed the flag of Norway and Sweden, out of compliment to the singer whose generous gift gave such an impetus to the Home.

Dovercourt Orphans' Home
The Dovercourt orphanage, which was built in 1882, could accommodate 125 children.

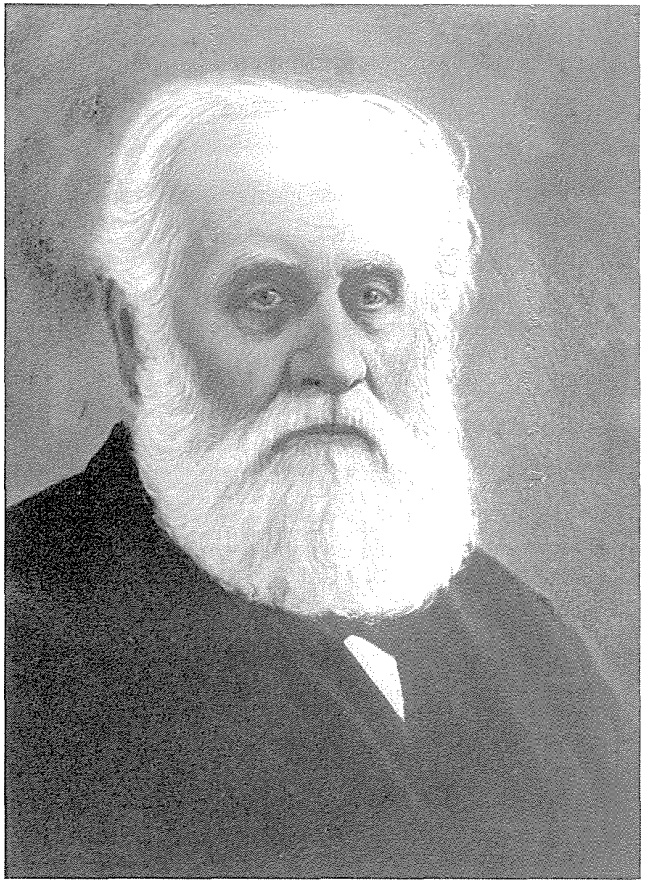
"comparatively poor people" from whom the bulk of the money to run the institution came.

The children themselves contributed to the daily operation of the orphanage by performing domestic chores. The older boys helped out in the laundry while the girls knitted and sewed. The Home had its own sewing room and the matron was grateful for the donation of cast-off clothing. The girls were taught to transform old clothes and scraps of material into skirts, dresses for themselves and suits and everyday trousers for the boys. Each child received two good outfits a year. Used boots and shoes, donated to the institution, were also welcome.

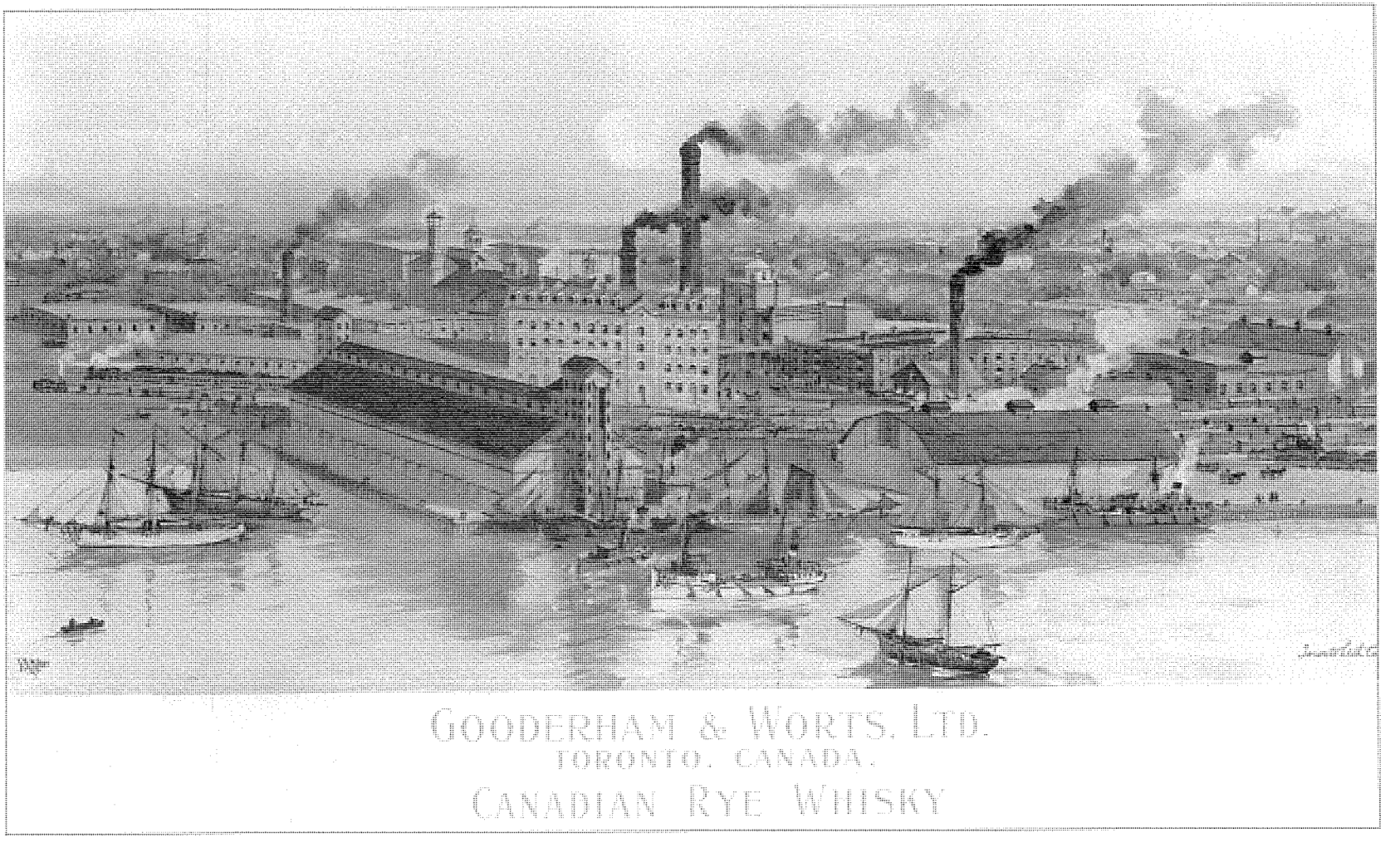
The building featured well-equipped boys' and girls' gymnasiums, and a nursery, which accepted toddlers under three years of age. The little ones were not permitted to mingle with the older children.

An 1897 newspaper column entitled "Woman's Kingdom – Kit's Gossip" drew a picture of life at the Dovercourt Home:

"I was glad for the Orphans' Home when I saw Miss Deacon (the matron). *We went from one room to another. We saw the refectory, or dining room, where two small mothers – I mean chicks, of course, but I cannot find words in which to picture the maternal attitude of them – were filling the mugs with water scooped from a bucket. We saw the kitchen, with great joints of beef simmering in deep pans of gravy; we saw the baker's shop piled with loaves; the larder stuffed with good things – not one thing superfluous – but all things needful. We saw the long, large, sunny dormitories, with their neat little iron bedsteads covered with white quilts and fitted with everything clean, sweet, and fitting. We looked into great presses and found stacks of stockings done up in shop parcels; bales of cloth for winter wear; rolls of calico and muslin for underwear and 'pinnies' and indeed aplenty of everything. Three sewing women were at work upon small breeches and skirts. There is no lack of material; no stint of anything, and yet this institution is run – I am told – and fully believe, on the most economic principles, costing a third less than anything of the kind in Toronto. Good management you see."*



William Gooderham Sr. (1790–1881)


GOODERHAM & WORTS, LTD.
TORONTO, CANADA.
CANADIAN RYE WHISKY

73 Yorkville Avenue
June 10th, 1899

I am writing a few lines hoping that all are well. And getting along very nicely. I like my place very well. I hardly ever get scolded. And I go lots of places. They are very kind to me. And I have not broke a dish since I've been here. And I go to Sunday School. The picnic is the 15 of June. And we are going to Long Branch. The Street is very quiet. And hardly any noise. And on the 2nd of June I went to the Queens park. All of the Girls in day School gave one cent in. And one of the teachers bought a basket of roses. And put them in the Queens park. Next door to us there is a piano. And the lady plays some very nice pieces. And I don't half to much work. But I don't mind it. I have a little room all to my self. And a little bed. I have all of my cards up on the wall. And they look very nice. And I know quite a few Girls at School. Some times a little Girl comes in are yard and plays with me. We tell each other all about the flowers. And I often go over to Yonge Street on a message. I think that's all this time.

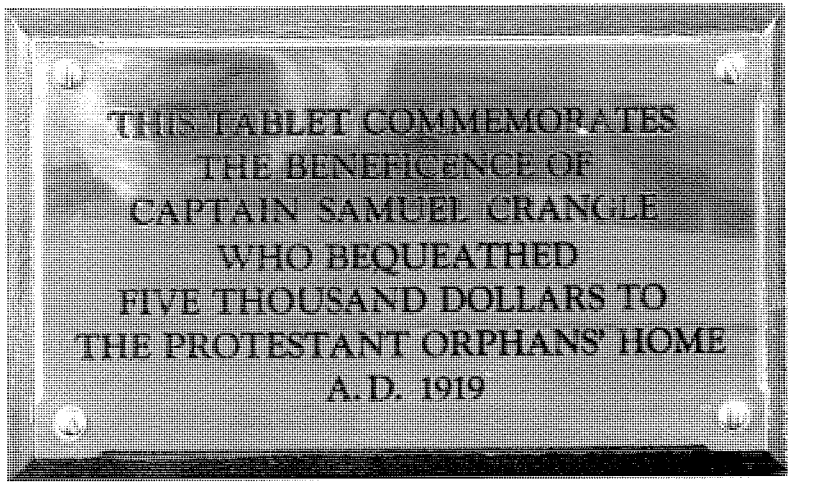
Good bye
Send my love to all
Mrs Canfield
Miss McMillian
Miss McKee
And Miss McMaster a
and lots to your
Self
Your loving
Friend Rosie

"Blessed is he that considereth the poor and needy."

The Dovercourt Road Home would remain in operation for 43 years. In 1926, the Toronto Board of Education would purchase it for $50,000 and turn it into an all-girls institution called the Edith L. Groves School. The building was finally torn down in 1961, and in its place the Board of Education erected the all-girls Heydon Park Secondary School.

Up until the final years of World War I, Toronto's child care agencies had worked independently of one another. Cooperation between them had been negligible. Furthermore, municipal authorities had never imposed upon them rules to regulate their spending or means of operation. They had been left very much on their own. In 1917, however, Protestant Orphan's Homes joined numerous other social agencies in the Federation for Community Services. Joint fund raising and budgeting under the Federation umbrella offset, to some degree, the agency's loss of autonomy.

In 1921, the Child Welfare League of America conducted a survey of Toronto's child protection agencies and concluded that there was a need for some form of consolidation. Three years later, Protestant Orphan's Homes, The Girls' Home and The Boys' Home conducted a joint survey of their own. The resulting report challenged the boards of the three agencies to implement modern social work methods, to reorganize themselves and to forsake traditional, outworn policies and procedures. Moreover, the authors of the report recommended that the three agencies amalgamate if they hoped to continue to properly serve the needs of Toronto's dependent and neglected Protestant children. The needs of Jewish and Roman Catholic children were met by their own agencies. The survey concluded that the proposed organization should specialize in short term boarding care of children who were not wards of the city, and of convalescent and problem children who could not receive proper care in their own homes. Every effort, the report stated, would be made to keep the children with relatives. An amalgamated agency would abandon forever "congregate care" in favour of smaller institutional facilities that would supplement and



This plaque, which is on display in Family Day Care Services' head office, reminds of all the people who gave for the sake of the children.

provide quarantine and reception facilities for a network of 12 to 15 boarding homes – rented houses in suitable sections of the city. These would be centrally supervised and controlled, and would hold no more than 12 children. Each would have its own house mother and cook. There would be a reception home that would serve both as an administrative headquarters and a quarantine residence for newly received children who, for sound reasons, should not be immediately assigned to a boarding home.

The report suggested that the board of the newly constituted organization would be composed of representatives of all three agencies and number no more than 12 people. An executive director would be responsible for both administration and social work, and would be assisted by two supervisors, one for homes and the other for home-finding and child-placing.

The authors of the report recognized that the proposed undertaking would be unprecedented in Toronto, both in terms of service delivery methods and budget. But it did promise to serve the needs of the city's dependent and neglected children better than current methods of congregate care had done. And as for financial considerations, the operating budget of the proposed amalgamated agency would be no more than the combined budgets of all three agencies.

At the time of the group report's release, rapid urbanization had resulted in higher rates of employment among the working class. Their improved prospects meant fewer poor people. And while those who remained were as destitute as ever, a higher percentage of Toronto's poor tended to keep their children at home. Significant improvements in the supply of safe water, public health, hygiene, and disease control contributed to a decline in the number of people who became seriously ill and died. The number of children requiring the care of child rescue agencies began to decrease. In addition, the inauguration of mother's allowance and the opening of a home to care for soldiers' children, during and after the war years, meant that both Protestant Orphans' Home and the Girls

Home – indeed, all of the child care agencies – received fewer applications for admission. The number of children housed in these institutions steadily began to decline. Though the Girls' Home could accommodate up to 100 children, by 1925, only 63 girls lived there. There were even fewer children living in the Protestant Orphans' Home, which had been built to house 200. Despite reduced enrollment, the costs of operating both Homes continued to rise.

Some of the members of the Board of the Protestant Orphans' Home also sat on the Girls' Home Board, which simplified merger discussions. At the annual general meeting of the Girls' Home, which took place on November 6, 1925, an announcement was made that, under an act of the provincial government in May of the next year, the two organizations would become one and be known as Protestant Children's Homes. Merger with the Boys' Home, which had also been seriously considered, did not take place because the Board of that organization decided to continue on its own.

No longer needed, the Dovercourt Road orphanage was sold in 1926 to the Toronto Board of Education and the girls were moved to the former Girls' Home at 229 Gerrard Street East. The boys from Dovercourt took up residence at numbers 12 and 14 Pembroke Street. Money from the sale of the Home was invested in mortgages and provided the Agency with a substantial income.

For several years, the realization had been a growing among those involved in child rescue work, and to some extent among members of the public, that no matter how well an institution might be run, it could never replace the individual attention a child could receive in a private home. This belief, which had been underscored in the 1924 joint survey report, together with reduced institutional enrollment and rising costs, precipitated a major shift in the way the agency would serve children.

Moreover, from a health standpoint, the boarding of children in separate family homes instead of in a single large institution made

Black metal box for storing a girl's personal belongings at the Girls' Home, circa 1900.

November 7, 1925

FEWER APPLICATIONS AT ORPHANS' HOMES

Decision to Amalgamate Announced at Girls' Home Meeting.

CHANGED CONDITIONS

Child Welfare Work in Toronto Has Entered on New Phases.

Announcement was made yesterterday afternoon at the 69th annual meeting of the Girls' Home, 229 Gerrard Street east, of the decision to amalgamate the two corporations of the Protestant Orphans' Home and the Girls' Home. The latter is to be retained as it is for the residence of the girls of both institutions. It will also be used for administration purposes by the new corporation.

The growth of the city and the many changes made in carrying on child-welfare work, including the inauguration of mothers' allowances and the opening of homes for soldiers' children, had contributed to the shortage of applications for admission to the Girls Home, the Boys' Home and the Protestant Orphans' Home. The cost of maintenance of these large buildings had increased. By amalgamation, it was believed

good sense. At one meeting, the Agency's Director of Social Work, Kathleen Gorrie, told Board Members that the 41 children who still occupied the Gerrard Street Home had, in a single year, spent a cumulative total of 517 days in the Toronto Isolation Hospital, while during the same period, the 132 children who had been placed in foster homes spent only 164 days in the hospital – twelve days of hospitalization per home child versus less than two days per foster child.

From 1925 to 1930, foster care, or "boarding out," gradually replaced institutional care. But finding and supervising foster parents who were willing to provide much needed emotional support in clean, wholesome surroundings where the children might flourish took special skills – the sorts of skills that professional social workers possessed.

In the spring of 1929, only 40 children remained in institutional care in the Home at 229 Gerrard Street East. Another 130 had been placed in carefully selected foster homes in Toronto and in nearby rural areas. They were visited on a regular basis by Protestant Children's Homes workers, who paid particular interest to their health, schooling, and social development.

In November of 1929, Miss Gorrie, who had recently returned from a tour of child protection agencies in Baltimore, Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, reported that American agencies had forsaken institutional child care, and had instead embraced foster care as an eminently preferable mode of delivering their service. With the number of children in institutional care rapidly declining and operating costs escalating, did it make sense, she asked the Executive Committee, to keep the Gerrard Street Home open? When asked by a director how long it would take to find foster homes for the remaining 22 children in the Home, Miss Gorrie replied that she and her staff had already selected several suitable prospective homes and had made plans for the children to be placed in them by January of the following year. At a meeting held on November 19, 1929, the Board voted unanimously to close the

Gerrard Street Home. By January 14, 1930, all of the children in the care of the Agency had been placed in foster homes, marking the end of an era that had lasted 79 years.

At the same board meeting, after outlining the considerable amount of work performed by her small staff, Miss Gorrie pressed her case for three more social workers and an automobile that, she said, would make finding and supervising foster homes far less expensive. "The investigations of children and foster home applicants, home findings, and supervision have increased tremendously and case workload is steadily growing," she said. Workers were now counselling the parents of the children who came into care in an effort to keep families together. The Board became convinced that additional trained staff was required. Miss Gorrie's requests were soon honoured.

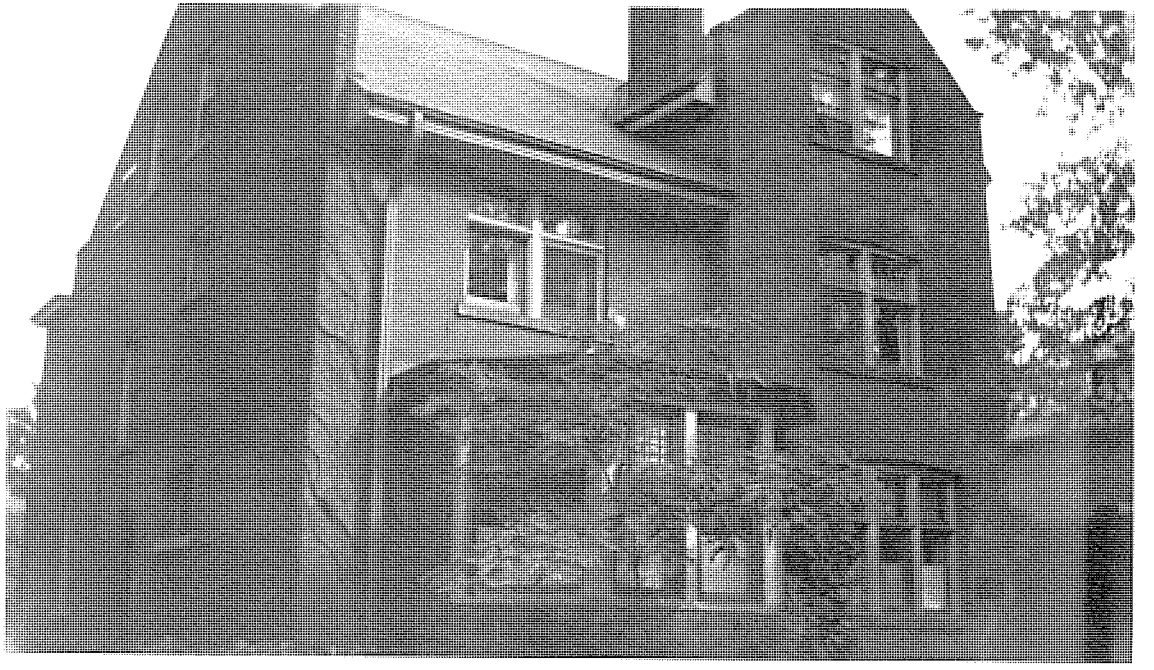
The change in the mode of service delivery necessitated a change in the public's perception of Protestant Children's Homes, from that of an orphanage to a modern, professionally run child care agency. And that shift in image proved to be difficult, as indicated by the headline of a 1929 article that appeared in the *Mail and Empire*, which read, "Difficult to Annihilate the Old Idea of Home-Child in Gingham 'Pinny.'"

"The old conception of the 'home child' in the gingham pinny has not entirely disappeared," Miss Gorrie told the reporter. "But our best weapon against it is to provide to the children simple, attractive, up-to-date clothing."

Parents who had hitherto been reluctant to place their children in an institution welcomed the notion of temporarily placing them in a well run and supervised boarding or foster home. Three-fifths of the children admitted to care in 1929 had not come from broken homes, but from unsatisfactory arrangements made by parents seeking to avoid institutional placement. In increasing number, such parents began to place their confidence in Protestant Children's Home to get them through difficult periods in the lives of their families.

Because there was no longer a need for the Gerrard Street East Home, it was leased to the Ascension Brotherhood Crusaders (soon to be known as the Toronto Men's Hostel), which used it to house indigent men during the Great Depression. In 1940, the Board put the Gerrard Street Home on the market, but it wasn't until the summer of 1947 that the Toronto Men's Hostel finally purchased it. The school wing became a community hall and would, many years later, become a union hall. Eventually the main building was levelled and the land turned into a Brewer's Retail parking lot.

When an agreement with the Ascension Brothers was reached, the agency purchased a house located at 28 Selby Street, which was outfitted with offices, reception rooms, and a clinic. It would serve as the agency's headquarters until 1947, when the agency moved to new quarters at 380 Sherbourne Street, across from Allan Gardens.



Selby Street Office
The Agency occupied 28 Selby Street from 1930 to 1947.

The Orphans' Home

Patrons & Patronesses

Her Excellency the Countess of Elgin and Kincardine, 1851 – 1855
Her Excellency Lady Head, 1856 – 1861
Her Excellency Lady Monck, 1862 – 1868
Her Excellency Lady Young, 1869 – 1872
Her Excellency The Countess of Dufferin, 1873 – 1878
His Excellency The Marquess of Lorne (Governor General of Canada), 1879 – 1883
Her Royal Highness Princess Louise, 1879 – 1883
His Excellency Lord Lansdowne (Governor General of Canada), 1884 – 1888
The Marchioness of Lansdowne, 1884 – 1888
Lord Stanley of Preston (Governor General of Canada), 1889 – 1892
Lady Stanley of Preston, 1889 – 1892
The Earl of Derby, 1893
The Countess of Derby, 1893
The Earl of Aberdeen (Governor General of Canada), 1894 – 1900
The Countess of Aberdeen, 1894 – 1900
The Earl of Minto (Governor General of Canada), 1901 – 1904
The Countess of Minto, 1901 – 1904

Patrons & Patronesses

The Earl Grey (Governor General of Canada), 1905 – 1911
The Countess Grey, 1905 – 1911
H.R.H The Duke of Connaught (Governor General of Canada), 1912 – 1916
H.R.H. The Duchess of Connaught, 1912 – 1916
His Excellency The Duke of Devonshire (Governor General of Canada), 1917 – 1921
Her Excellency The Duchess of Devonshire, 1917 – 1921
General, The Lord Byng (Governor General of Canada), 1922 – 1926
Her Excellency Lady Byng, 1922 – 1926

Honourary Patronesses

Mrs. Ludlow, 1870 – 1872
Mrs. Howland, 1870 – 1886
Lady MacPherson, 1870 – 1893
Mrs. Murray, 1881 – 1885
Mrs. A. Cameron, 1889 – 1895
Mrs. Morrow, 1895 – 1914

Honourary Presidents

Mrs. Vancoughnet, 1897 – 1899
Mrs. John Cawthra, 1895, 1901 – 1912