

wrote long letters to her husband, who wanted a progress report on the older ones in every letter. She had to make him understand that their progress could not be quantified weekly.

As well as two excellent servants whom she kept throughout her stay in England, she had a succession of nursery-governesses. Miss Chambers, an Australian, accompanied the family to England. On the *Parramatta* she was at times seasick, at times flirtatious. In Cheltenham, she asked for Thursday evenings off to attend church but was found to be taking secret French lessons. A few weeks later, she became delirious with fever and violent, and was then shipped home, having to pay half her fare herself. Mr Bennett was amazed at her presumption when she later accosted him cheerfully in Sydney, apparently unaware of her disgrace. Two or three other governesses succeeded her; at one point Mrs Bennett had fifty replies to an advertisement for the position.

It was hoped that the three or four year stay would give Al and Fan a secondary education which would complete their schooling. The boys were to get a good grounding which would give them an advantage over other boys in Australia. Their father's chief concern was careers for the boys, though he wanted to equip the girls, too, to earn a living. 'I would bring all the children up thoroughly to understand they must work for their living, life is uncertain dear wife & so are colonial appointments. . . .' (21 May 1878) He did not discuss careers for the girls, understandably, since there were hardly any; there were occupations. He hoped they would not have to teach, since it was a poor livelihood but he looked on teaching as something they could fall back on if necessary; possibly they could run their own school at Honda. He wanted Al and Fan to be taught modelling, drawing, telegraphy, astronomy, electricity and galvanism and suggested that they might earn their livings as engravers. There is virtually no mention of the main occupation for girls at that time, marriage, even though Al was seventeen and a half when the correspondence ended. Mr Bennett several times mentioned that the girls might care for their parents in their old age.

Mrs Bennett wanted the girls to be well taught and to make the most of their opportunities, but she was temperate in her support for women's education. 'I am rather afraid of overtaxing the brain', she wrote, 'there have been several such cases of it in the Ladies College & I really do think the education of women is being overdone, with the numberless domestic and other cares that are allotted to them'.

Although Mr Bennett was concerned with careers for the older boys, he did not specially favour them in other ways. He was fond of all his children but his preferences went like this: Harry, then Agnes ('my two little dots', as he called them) then Al and Fan, with the three eldest boys at the bottom. But Frank as the oldest son was the most important in career terms, followed by Alf and Wal.