

in or near Sydney. Mr Bennett paid out considerable sums for their education, with a large slice going to Frank.¹¹

Their mother's death brought the children into the sole care of a father whom they had not seen for three and a half years, fifty-seven-years old and I suspect taking his grief hard. Dr Agnes Bennett later wrote that her mother had mediated between them and their father. Now they used to run off and hide when they heard him coming.¹² These difficult relations with Mr Bennett were made worse by his remarriage. His choice of wife was linked with the overseas venture. Her sister had taught Al in Dulwich and put Jane (the stepmother) in touch with the Bennetts when Jane arrived in Sydney for health reasons.

Jane was twenty-five, delicate and not at all capable. The children disliked her and in time relations became appalling.¹³ There were faults on both sides (as Frank wrote later, 'We are all masterful people and like our way'). But Jane's letters over the years to Agnes¹⁴ suggest that she was silly and tactless, or as Harry once called her, a 'galoot'. She and Mr Bennett had two children, whom Al and Fan had to help to bring up. The animosity must have been distressing to Mr Bennett, whose letters to his first wife had rejoiced in the family harmony. There is a suggestion in the letters (it is not completely clear) that Alf and Wal as young adults refused to eat with their father and stepmother. It is possible that the miserable situation may have led to or accelerated the heart attack which killed him in 1889 at the age of sixty-five.

His death left the family relatively poor and must have made more difficult the provision of tertiary education for the children, if indeed this was ever considered. Only Agnes, apart from Frank, had any and she won a state scholarship to Sydney University. The estate was valued at £8000 but there was no pension. He had set up a trust to provide for his family. Only two of the nine children were working, Alf and Wal, twenty-one and twenty, and their wages were small.

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I want to look now at the lives of the seven children and to try to estimate what the English venture had done for them. I intend to ask to what extent their parents' hope that an English education would improve their opportunities for successful careers was realised; I intend to examine also the effects that their stay in England had on their future happiness.

Al seems to have been crushed by the experience of bringing up the younger ones, battling with Jane on their behalf and later in keeping house for them. Agnes wrote of the life being taken out of Al by her responsibilities. In later life, Al's gloomy religious outlook depressed her family. At the age of thirty-seven she trained in Liverpool as an