This thesis is my own work, and all its sources have been acknowledged.

Susan Eade.
A STUDY OF CATHERINE HELEN SPENCE 1825-1910

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<td>Adelaide Advertiser</td>
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<td>A.U.C.</td>
<td>Adelaide Unitarian Congregation</td>
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<td>N.S.W., V. &amp; P.</td>
<td>Votes and Proceedings of the New South Wales Parliament</td>
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<td>Observer</td>
<td>Adelaide Observer</td>
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<td>R.C.A.M.S.</td>
<td>Royal Commission on the Ancient Monuments of Scotland.</td>
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<td>Register</td>
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CATHERINE HELEN SPENCE c.1905.

original in South Australian Archives
Catherine Helen Spence was born in Scotland in 1825, six years after the birth of Victoria and ten years after the Battle of Waterloo. She died in South Australia in 1910, nine years after the death of the Queen, four years before the outbreak of the Great War, and seven years before the Russian revolution. Her life spanned an era characterised by Sir Keith Hancock as an 'epoch of the stupendous energies let loose by the Industrial Revolution, which originated in Britain, and the Democratic Revolution which blazed and spread from France', and, one might perhaps add, the beginning of the movement for the emancipation of women which flared early, though feebly in South Australia. Her life's work, developing out of her Scottish childhood and South Australian youth and maturity, involved some of the central issues raised by all three movements. Making a study of her life is like looking at those issues through a microscope - the whole is lost to sight but the detail of the fragment is clear. But the detail offers 'microslices'

of social history as well as 'idiosyncratic knowledge',\(^2\) so that to achieve some understanding of the minutiae of the fragment may contribute to a closer understanding of the whole.

Catherine Spence emigrated to South Australia with her family in 1839,\(^3\) three years after that first so-called systematically planned British colony was founded. She spent most of her life there. In South Australia, sixteen thousand miles away, she read and heard of the issues in the northern hemisphere that formed and informed her preoccupations. By participating in the growth of South Australia she developed and found expression for those preoccupations. In South Australia her work first won the renown which spread, moderately and temporarily, through Australia, the United States, Britain and Europe. And it is in South Australia that she is still best remembered.

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2. A.F. Davies, 'Criteria for the Political Life History', Historical Studies, vol.13, no.49. Hancock's attack on 'the proliferation of detailed studies of persons and issues of little importance, to the neglect of more central topics', passes over the possibility that such 'trivial tasks' may contribute to a closer understanding of 'more central topics'. See Sir Keith Hancock, 'Ordeal by Thesis', Australian Humanities Research Council, Annual Report No.10 1965-1966, Sydney, 1966, p.27

In 1969 the South Australian government named a newly-created electoral district after Catherine Spence. The President of the local League of Women Voters wrote to the Adelaide press expressing gratification on behalf of 'Those interested in the social history of this state', and explaining Catherine Spence's entitlement to such recognition:

At a public gathering to celebrate her eightieth birthday, the Chief Justice (Sir Samuel Way) said that Miss Spence was "the most distinguished woman they had had in Australia.... There was no one in the whole Commonwealth whose career covered so wide a ground. She was a novelist, a critic, an accomplished journalist, a preacher, a lecturer, a philanthropist, and a social and moral reformer".

Summary as Way's encomium is, it indicates the achievements which earned Catherine Spence the title of 'Grand Old Woman of Australasia'. But the affection and acknowledgement of stature implicit in the title was won equally by the impact of her person and personality.

Her looks were the kind that improve with age. She was short 'and symmetrically broad': her photographs indicate that she was little more than five feet tall, plump even in

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4. Advertiser, 10 October 1969
5. ibid.
7. J.F. Young, Catherine Helen Spence a study and an appreciation, Melbourne, 1937, p.13
her twenties, later distinctly stout. Short-waisted, round-shouldered, and short-necked, with a large jaw, heavy features and a prominent wart, she was extremely plain when she was young, but later photographs show, and her later friends remembered her face 'as one of grand and rugged strength', \(^8\) dominated by grey eyes which were 'alert, eager and almost searching'. \(^9\) Her colouring likewise improved with age. She had fair skin \(^10\) and hair which offended her when she wore it in carefully-arranged ringlets \(^11\) by being 'red, but not auburn'. \(^12\) As she grew older it turned a 'beautiful silvery grey'. \(^13\) Her lack of beauty occasioned her some distress when she was young. She confided to her diary

'I do believe my face is an honest one, and, vanity whispers, a pleasant one to look upon. Yet who is pleased to look upon it but my own relations, to whom looks are a matter of indifference. Children like my face, that is one comfort'. \(^{14}\)

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8. op.cit., p.48
9. op.cit., p.13
10. Lucy Spence Morice, Auntie Kate, typescript in South Australian Archives (A1051/S5), p.2
11. ibid.
12. Quoted in Young, Catherine Helen Spence, p.13
13. ibid.
14. Quoted in Young, Catherine Helen Spence, p.48; Mrs Young's son says that Mrs. Young mislaid the diary in about 1935. It is not in the Mitchell Library, the Latrobe Library, the South Australian Archives, or the possession of anyone I have asked
But once she had determined that she was to be a spinster, she became as resolutely indifferent to her looks as she was to her dress. Her biographer Jeanne Young recalled, 'It was the accepted belief among most people that "blue stockings" need not worry about dress, and her appearance when she was first pointed out to me as the "great Miss Spence" ... tended to confirm this belief'. Her niece was accustomed to guarding against this appearance. When seeing Catherine Spence and Jeanne Young off on a train she asked, laughing, "Please see that Aunt keeps her bonnet on straight". Catherine's dress, like her looks, troubled her when she was young: recalling her first years in South Australia she reflected, 'When a girl is very poor, and feels herself badly dressed, she cannot help feeling shy, especially if she has a good deal of Scotch pride'. She continued to dress badly probably as much because her financial resources were always meagre, as because she was proud of being known as an intellectual. Her dress improved after her visit to the United States in 1893-4, where a friend told her 'a speaker would need to be an Abraham Lincoln

15. Young, Catherine Helen Spence, pp.27-8
16. op.cit., p.28; this niece was Eleanor Wren
17. Spence, An Autobiography, p.18
in all other respects to render carelessness in dress, on
the platform negligible'.  

She returned, Jeanne Young noted, 'not only a clever and versatile speaker, but a quite-
attractively dressed woman'.  

She had a sweet voice, which was also described as 'rather carrying' and 'pronouncedly Scotch and virile', suggesting that it may have been heard more comfortably at a public meeting than in a drawing room. A distinct Scots accent, which she retained all her life, signalled a lack of genteel refinement even in Scotland. She spoke with expression, relating fairy stories or reciting poems to her small nephews and nieces with dramatic vocal sound effects. She may have been particularly conscious of her voice. After describing George Eliot's as 'singularly musical and impressive' she remarked, 'I am more susceptible to voices than to features or complexion'.

18. Young, Catherine Helen Spence, p.28
19. ibid.
20. Morice, Auntie Kate, p.7; recollection of Mrs. A.B. Caw
21. Harriet Cook, Catherine Helen Spence, typescript in South Australian Archives (A1050/A5), p.3; Young, Catherine Helen Spence, p.48
23. Morice, Auntie Kate, p.1
On the platform she relied on her voice rather than on gesticulation. She recalled, 'I had a lesson on the danger of overaction from hearing a gentleman recite in public "The dream of Eugene Aram" in which he went through all the movements of killing and burying the murdered man'. Also, she preferred the informality she established by speaking naturally from the platform. But she was not a motionless speaker: 'However little action I may use I never speak in public with gloves on. They interfere with the natural eloquence of the hand'. Her insistence upon informality and natural behaviour, as Jeanne Young observed, 'constituted, perhaps, her greatest charm', and she knew it. But her determination to speak ungloved might also have been because she had 'delicate hands ... of which she was rather proud'.

She was skilful with her hands. Another niece recalled that 'she did beautiful work. I have a pelisse and cape which she made for me when I was a baby, with very elaborate open work ... called broderie Anglaise, and a point lace collar made when she was 80'. The niece remembered, too,

25. op.cit., p.45
26. ibid.
27. Young, Catherine Helen Spence, p.16
28. op.cit., p.13
29. Morice, Auntie Kate, p.2
'a pair of bright scarlet stockings ... made of such prickly wool that they were not worn at all willingly'. Catherine Spence, while being far from inclined towards hair shirts, would probably have endured the stockings - she seems to have been almost indifferent to physical discomfort.

She wore calico underclothes and 'no woollies except a flannel petticoat' even in winter, and her photographs suggest that she usually endured the chronic discomfort of being corseted. She took a cold bath every morning, winter and summer. This all argues good circulation and an excellent constitution which probably contributed greatly to her remarkable energy and endurance. Lucy Morice, herself an indolent lady according to her son, found her aunt's energy amazing. She wrote:

On one occasion she was going to lecture at Peterborough ... that necessitated catching a train at about 7 a.m., and as she was then living in an outlying suburb meant very early rising, and a long tramride in a horse-drawn car. She would get to the township in the afternoon, be met and entertained by some (perhaps) sympathiser ... attend the meeting, lecture and conduct a demonstration, and probably get to bed about midnight! Leave the next

30. op.cit., p.3
31. op.cit., p.4
32. ibid.
33. Conversation with Mr. Patrick Morice
morning by an early train, and on the occasion I have in mind, go off to speak at Port Adelaide in the evening - a marvellous feat of endurance, but for a woman nearing the eighties it was indeed a wonderful triumph of physical and mental strength and courage. 34

Her energy came not only from a good constitution and 'usually robust health', 35 but also from the intensity of her concern for her work. When she was seventy-eight she was confined to bed for some months with an unspecified illness which threatened to curtail all her activities. 'But' wrote Lucy Morice, 'after a few months of inactivity she determined that she would not be daunted by physical disabilities, and so she carried on ... disregarding the fatigue and distress to which she was liable during the last seven years of her life'. 36

Such intensity, such energy, and such endurance sometimes made her a tiresome friend. The daughter of one old friend related a story about Miss Spence helping her mother find a washerwoman. After three unsuccessful attempts at employing Miss Spence's candidates, her mother decided that 'a philanthropist, though she had the best will in the

34. Morice, Auntie Kate, p.7
35. Spence, An Autobiography, p.68
world, was not the person to go to for help when any work was wanted'. 37 Lucy Morice observed, 'My Mother was inclined to consider that Kate's demands upon my father's purse for her pet schemes or necessitous "cases" were excessive', though she added 'but Auntie Kate never wanted anything for herself although she was never even moderately well off'. 38 Other recollections present her as absent minded - she left for America without her purse 39 - and prone to awkward situations. She recalled one on her first campaign for proportional representation:

I had no advance agents to announce my arrival, and at one town in the north I found nobody at the station to meet me. I spent the most miserable two and a half hours of my life waiting Micawber-like for something to turn up; and it turned up in the person of the village blacksmith. I spoke to him and explained my mission to the town. He had heard nothing of any meeting .... "Well," I said ... "if you can get together a dozen intelligent men I will explain effective voting to them." He looked at me with a dumbfounded air, and then burst out, "Good G--, madam there are not three intelligent men in the town". 40

'One of her admirers ... remarked on hearing of some of her misadventures, "Oh, I wish Miss Spence did not do things like that. It does give the Mothers such cause to

37. Cook, Catherine Helen Spence, p.1
38. Morice, Auntie Kate, p.3
39. Cook, Catherine Helen Spence, p.3
blaspheme". Such reactions tally with those of her niece. Lucy Morice's regard for her aunt was ambivalent. The tone of her memories of Auntie Kate wavers from faint mockery to recollected resentment, from boredom to inflated admiration, and genuine affection. While Lucy was growing up, her father, Catherine's brother, was becoming a wealthy and prominent figure in Adelaide. Shortly before she was married, Lucy Spence was considered an heiress. She was clearly more concerned with appearances and social importances than her aunt was. Her veiled mockery was for Catherine Spence's naivete and for one of her unworldly enthusiasms. Her resentment may have reflected her mother's at Kate's reliance upon her brother's interest and generosity; it may also have expressed a sense of inadequacy at the thought of emulating her aunt. Her boredom echoed her son's, at Sunday lunches at the Spences', when conversation was dominated by the 'Good Aunt's' international correspondence. Her inflated

41. Cook, Catherine Helen Spence, p.3

42. John Brodie Spence was manager of the English, Scottish and Australian Bank Limited from 1863 until he retired in 1878. He was a member of South Australia's Legislative Council from 1881-7, Chief Secretary from June to October 1885, Commissioner of Public Works from October 1885 to June 1886, and Chief Secretary again from June to July 1886, all in Downer's ministry

43. Conversation with Mr. Patrick Morice

44. Morice, Auntie Kate, pp.1,3

45. op.cit., p.7
admiration was for the fame and stature Miss Spence had acquired. But she also admired her aunt sincerely for her courage, energy and sympathetic concern for other people. And she loved her for the stories she remembered Auntie Kate telling her when she was a child, for her good humour, simplicity and generosity. These were the qualities emphasised by Catherine Spence's biographer, Jeanne Young.

This electoral reformer, the wife of A.H. Young who was foreign editor and literary critic for the Register, met Catherine Spence in 1897 when she was barely thirty and Miss Spence was seventyone. She, like several other friends of Catherine Spence's old age, sought her friendship because she admired Miss Spence and her work and wished to share it. A few months after making her acquaintance Jeanne Young suggested that Miss Spence should offer herself as a candidate for election to the 1897 Federal Convention:

46. op.cit., p.4
47. op.cit., pp.3, 7
48. op.cit., pp.1, 4, 7
49. Information from Mr. Courtney Young
50. Spence, An Autobiography, p.79; this section of the autobiography was written by J.F. Young after Catherine Spence's death, see below chapter 2, p. References to the portion of the autobiography written by Mrs. Young will be given thus: (Spence), An Autobiography
"My dear," she protested, "I fear that I am too old." I laughed. "Curiously enough, we all regard you just as one of us. The only difference is, that while we are young and inexperienced, you have had years of experience, and you have the knowledge of men and things which we younger ones still lack." \(^{51}\)

As this suggests, there was in their friendship something of the relationship between master and disciple. Jeanne Young acknowledged it indirectly when she wrote 'Had my tastes been merely literary or social, Miss Spence would assuredly have found nothing to bind us together. It was the combination of these, with my deep interest in public affairs that welded the links in our chain of friendship'. \(^{52}\)

Yet her admiration and her proselytism did not prevent her offering a clear-eyed portrait of her mentor.

Catherine Spence was aggressive, self-important, tactless and intolerant. She 'resented most intensely the modern tendency to drift into "weak fashionable expressions - as she termed them - such as "nightie," "comfy," and "handky"'; she was so ready to take someone to task for the supposed use of a vulgarism of the day that she severely admonished a speaker for using the expression 'somebody was poorly', only to discover that he had actually said 'somebody

\(^{51}\) Young, Catherine Helen Spence, p. 80

\(^{52}\) op. cit., p. 11
was poorly clad'. She attacked manners she disliked:

being asked by an official of a Board, of which she was a member, to autograph a book she had written ... she did so very pleasantly, but when, having extended to another official the offer to do his copy also, she was met with the quasi-condescending reply, "I don't mind if you do," she lost patience, and said imperatively [sic], "Do you want me to sign it, or do you not?" Sometimes her aggressiveness proved useful. At a meeting, a member of Parliament asked her 'a little offensively, - "Miss Spence, what do you and Mrs. Young get out of this?"

"Get," she said scornfully, "we get all that is left over after lecturing for nothing, and paying our own expenses". Her impatience and aggression arose partly from her confidence in her own merits and capacities. Jeanne Young wrote that 'feeling herself to be "something worthwhile" to the world ... there need be no attempt to veil her knowledge of, and belief in, herself'. Her self-importance and absorption in her work sometimes made her unperceptive and tactless. At tea tables in Adelaide one can still hear an account of her taking a seat on a tram beside the daughter of one of her acquaintances, and embarrassing the child by

53. op.cit., pp.14-15
54. op.cit., p.16
55. op.cit., pp.193-4
56. op.cit., p.16
relating anecdotes about her family loudly enough for all the passengers to hear. Jeanne Young recounted a story about taking Miss Spence to afternoon tea at Lady Bonython's:

there were already several callers present. Among them was the mother of one of the girls who had belonged to the Girls' Literary Society of which Miss Spence had been president. This girl had recently made an excellent marriage. "Oh, how is So-and-So?" Miss Spence asked the mother in her cheerful way. "She is perfectly well, and radiantly happy," was the prompt response. "Well, there is no accounting for tastes," rejoined Miss Spence laconically.

A rather deep silence fell upon the assembly at this remark. With sudden inspiration, and knowing well Miss Spence's remoteness from social life, Lady Bonython rose to the occasion. "Perhaps, Miss Spence," she said, "you did not know that So-and-So is married?"

"Good Heavens, no," said the astonished lady, "I thought she was still training to be a nurse, and I never could understand the craving of so many young people have to take up nursing. I should hate it". Possibly because of such gaffs, the Barr Smiths, who took a substantial interest in her and her work, usually invited her to call alone, and entertained her in the library rather than the drawing room. It was a more appropriate place because, as Jeanne Young remarked, 'Like most intellectual people, nothing annoyed her more than to be called upon to talk

57. Recollection of Miss Phyllis Crompton
58. Young, Catherine Helen Spence, pp.186-7
mere "persiflage". But among people unconcerned about her lack of social finesse she could be delightful. Kerr Grant, later professor of physics at the University of Adelaide, wrote, "I still recall vividly the impression of keen intelligence and intellectual vigor made by her vivacious and attractive personality". And Jeanne Young remembered, 'on those very informal occasions at my home we learned to love her, for it was then that she became so joyously youthful, so aggressively human in her intolerance, but so divinely merciful in her never-failing expressions of love for humanity'. Her greatest charm was her sense of humour. It was like that of Bret Harte's version of Aesop's Fables, which she gave to a friend for Christmas: it had an edge, albeit a fairly blunt one. One of her favourite jokes was against herself, and she told it often. She arrived at a meeting to find that she had not been notified of several earlier meetings. She complained that she 'did not want to be merely an ornamental member' of that Board. Its chairman replied, 'Oh, Miss Spence, no one would ever accuse you of

60. Young, Catherine Helen Spence, p.15
61. quoted in Young, Catherine Helen Spence, p.32
62. op.cit., p.176
being that'. She was laughing before he realized what he had said. As she left, she encountered the chairman's business partner and, chuckling, told him of the faux pas. 'Looking at her very gravely, he said at the end of the recital, "Well, Miss Spence, I am surprised. I really thought Charlie had more tact"'.

Her humour, her deep concern and generous work for other people, her courage, and her formidable energy, were the qualities which made her impact so strong. Even people who found her a nuisance admired her: C.C. Kingston, whom she regarded as spineless and badgered with telegrams during the 1895 Premiers' Conference in Tasmania, treated her with courteous and good-humoured deference, and appointed her a member of the Destitute Board. These qualities won her many friends, though, because she was so singleminded about her work, few very close ones.

Her nearest and dearest were all members of her own family. She was exceptionally fond of her mother, lived with her all her life, and when Mrs Spence died, became

64. Young, Catherine Helen Spence, p.154, Spence, An Autobiography, p.57
65. (Spence), An Autobiography, p.90
66. op.cit., p.80
67. op.cit., p.83, see below chapter 6, pp.239-40
broken and aimless for several years. She remained fast friends with one of her brothers, John Brodie Spence, who helped and encouraged her campaign for electoral reform. Her closest female friends were her younger sister Mary, and after her early death in 1870, Mary's daughter Eleanor Wren. She had long-standing relationships with two women who became adjuncts to her family. An English girl, Ellen Gregory, who emigrated, with Catherine's assistance, found herself homeless in South Australia, so Catherine took her into her own household, and kept her for the rest of her life. But it is likely that, as a dependent, Miss Gregory was regarded as a companion. Nothing that Catherine wrote about her, which was little, suggests that they were close friends. Similarly, she acted as guardian to the orphaned Rose Duval, and when Rose was widowed helped her, first

68. Spence, An Autobiography, pp.67-8
69. (Spence), An Autobiography, pp.79, 93
70. Young, Catherine Helen Spence, p.48
71. op.cit., p.39
72. Spence, An Autobiography, p.68; (Spence), An Autobiography, p.97
73. Her status in the household would have been like that of a governess, see M. Jeanne Peterson, 'The Victorian Governess: Status Incongruence in Family and Society', Victorian Studies, vol. XIV, no.1
by taking care of her children,\textsuperscript{75} then by taking Rose and the children to live with her.\textsuperscript{76} Rose Duval was not a dependent,\textsuperscript{77} but her relationship with Catherine was both established and limited chiefly by circumstance, not emotion. All Catherine's other friendships were formed with people who were primarily colleagues in her work. The pastoralist John Taylor took her first completed novel to England to find it a publisher,\textsuperscript{78} and requisitioned her help in caring for a family left unprovided by the husband's unexpected death.\textsuperscript{79} Emily Clark sought an introduction to her to congratulate her on that novel;\textsuperscript{80} introduced her to the Unitarian congregation in Adelaide;\textsuperscript{81} gave her letters of introduction to friends and relations in England;\textsuperscript{82} and drew her into thirty years' work for the welfare of destitute

\textsuperscript{75} op.cit., p.67
\textsuperscript{76} op.cit., p.68
\textsuperscript{77} She was employed as a clerk in the State Children's Department, see below chapter 6, p.237; Spence, An Autobiography, p.67
\textsuperscript{78} Spence, An Autobiography, p.22
\textsuperscript{79} op.cit., pp.21, 29
\textsuperscript{80} op.cit., p.28
\textsuperscript{81} ibid.
\textsuperscript{82} op.cit., pp.37,39
children. Edith Hübbe shared her opinion about the necessity of secondary education for girls, and as head-mistress of the Advanced School for Girls, often invited Miss Spence to give lessons to her students. John Anderson Hartley, Inspector-General of Education in South Australia from 1878 to 1895, became her good friend when Miss Spence offered to help with his education reforms, and supported her campaigns for electoral reform. Alfred Cridge, the American who improved her dress, with whom she said she felt as at home as with her brother David, was an ardent supporter of her campaign for proportional representation. Alice Henry, like Jeanne Young, shared her political views, and Rose Scott and Vida Goldstein looked to her as the

83. see below chapter 6, passim
84. Cook, Catherine Helen Spence, p.2
85. ibid.
87. (Spence), An Autobiography, p.70
88. ibid.; see below chapter 7, pp.307-8
pioneer of much that they aspired to themselves.\textsuperscript{92} These people were probably her closest friends, outside her family, and her friends were as important to her as she was to them. Yet her friendships were characterised by a kind of professionalism: they were important to her primarily as a means of sharing her opinions, her enthusiasms, and gaining support and recognition for her work; any emotional bonds were secondary to this. She identified her fulfilment and happiness not with any private and personal relationship, but with her ambition and work, her ideas and ideals.

If her aspirations and her work were her greatest passions, one of her strongest emotions was admiration for people whose work and ideas informed her own. She revered J.S. Mill,\textsuperscript{93} Thomas Hare,\textsuperscript{94} George Eliot,\textsuperscript{95} and later and less expressly Samuel Butler,\textsuperscript{96} Henry George,\textsuperscript{97} and Edward

\textsuperscript{92} see below chapter 8, pp.335-6

\textsuperscript{93} Spence, \textit{An Autobiography}, pp.23,24,41,42

\textsuperscript{94} op.cit., pp.23,24,30,37

\textsuperscript{95} op.cit., pp.42-3; C.H. Spence, 'George Eliot', \textit{Melbourne Review}, I, 2; C.H. Spence, lecture on the Writing of George Eliot, (MSS. 202/1), Mitchell Library

\textsuperscript{96} Her unpublished novel Handfasted shows strong influence of Samuel Butler's \textit{Erewhon}

\textsuperscript{97} Spence, \textit{An Autobiography}, p.66; C.H. Spence, 'A Californian Political Economist', \textit{Victorian Review}, vol. IV, 1881
Bellamy, almost without reservation. She prized her acquaintance with Mill, Hare and George, recounted her meetings with them, and strove for the implementation of those of their ideas that she had grasped most strongly. But in doing so she encountered the conventions and prohibitions which restricted her achievement, not because she lacked ability or means, but because she was a woman.

Catherine Spence worked throughout her life to overcome the social conventions which threatened to thwart her ambition, restrict her self-fulfilment and prevent the achievement of her ends. Yet her feminism was primarily personal and emancipist. She protested against society's prohibitions chiefly because they hampered her work, work directed as much towards the greater welfare of society as towards her own fulfilment. Yet in doing so she expressed, by example more than by precept, her opinion that women should take a greater interest in the world beyond their households, and accept responsibility in the public affairs of the community. And by venturing into such exclusively masculine preserves as journalism and politics herself, she expressed her conviction that women who were so inclined

98. Her short story A Week in the Future, Sydney, 1889, derives much from Looking Backward; Young, Catherine Helen Spence, p.12

99. Young, Catherine Helen Spence, pp.16-17, 207-8
could contribute, differently perhaps, but quite as usefully as men, to most fields of human endeavour. It was far from easy even to express such a conviction during the nineteenth century, much less to act upon it. Much of Catherine's aggressiveness and self-importance probably grew out of the necessity of claiming the hearing and attention automatically accorded to most men. But her self-confidence supported her in such a claim, and by making it she became 'Australia's first feminist'.

Catherine Spence did many things in the process of pioneering an altered concept of the abilities and responsibilities of women in Australia, and her feminism was more a necessity incidental to the objects she pursued than an end in itself. She wrote novels, and articles for periodicals and the daily press; she worked for, and publicised, reforms in child welfare, care of unmarried mothers and the destitute poor; she preached in Unitarian pulpits, lectured to the South Australian Institute, and advocated electoral reform persistently from platforms across the world. In each activity she worked to improve the social and political organisations which ordered people's lives, so that mankind might rise nearer perfection. Her social criticism ranged from a glancing blow at superfine needlework taught in schools, to land laws, taxation, and her obsession - electoral justice. Her recommendations ranged from religious education to single
tax and a state modelled on Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, and she was practical and constructive more often than silly. Through the wide range of reforms with which she concerned herself, indeed in almost everything she did or wrote, there runs the common thread of her preoccupation with authority, justice and freedom.

These changing concepts were central to the epoch of the industrial and democratic revolutions. They assumed a particular importance for colonists attempting, in South Australia, to found a new and coherently planned society. They required a sharpness and immediacy which made them all-engulfing in the life of a woman who, by sharing in the shaping of that new society, was also radically refashioning the conditions of her own life, and hence of the lives of all Australian women. Catherine Spence's preoccupation with these concepts formed and developed equally from her intimate, personal experiences, from her direct involvement in events in South Australia, and from her largely indirect experience of changing conditions and revolving currents of thought in the world beyond her colony. Her changing notions of authority, justice and freedom are both idiosyncratic and representative. To understand how they were formed, and how they found expression, may not illuminate the greater debate and struggle
which made them major issues in the northern hemisphere. But it must give some insight into the forces and motives which propelled women into the public affairs of the world, in an age when 'a woman's ethic' was 'duty and renunciation'.

CHAPTER 2

NOVELIST

Catherine Spence's earliest ambition, formed before she left Scotland at the age of thirteen, was 'to be a teacher first, and a great writer afterwards'.\(^1\) She was, in various ways, a teacher all her life, but she was never a great writer. Yet she pursued her ambition with characteristic energy and resolution: her first major achievement was a novel, published in her twenty-ninth year.\(^2\) During the following thirty years she wrote five more novels and a religious allegory. These, with her critical reviews, short stories, children's stories, charades, poems, and acrostics, constitute a considerable career of letters, and although H.M. Green considered that 'her literary achievements have been almost entirely overlaid by her reputation as a social and political reformer',\(^3\) the historians of Australian literature have

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2. Clara Morison a tale of South Australia during the gold fever, 2 vols., London, 1854; the Commonwealth Literary Fund and Rigby Limited have combined to bring out a new edition of this novel, for which I have written an introduction and some explanatory notes. Its appearance is planned for mid-1971.

paid her greater attention than the historians of
Australian society and politics, and general historians
notice her novels rather than her work for reform.

This uneven emphasis derives not from any stress she,
or her contemporaries, laid on her novels, but rather from
circumstance and the nature of the development of Australian
studies, which have combined to make her fiction more
prominent than her work for reform. Her first and best-known
novel, Clara Morison, is a cultural landmark: it is a
cOMPETENT and interesting work produced in a notably arid
period of Australian writing, and it is the first novel about
Australia written by a woman. The ideas which she expressed
in her practical work are most easily accessible in her novels,

4. Recent work on C.H. Spence includes: V.K. Daniels, History
and literature: A Study in the Novels of C.H. Spence, B.A.
Hons. thesis, University of Adelaide, 1962; B.L. Waters,
Gathered In by Catherine Spence edited and with an
introduction by Brian Waters, M.A. thesis, University of
Sydney, 1966; R.B. Walker, 'Catherine Helen Spence and
South Australian Politics', Australian Journal of Politics
and History, XV, 1; the section in Green, A History of
Australian Literature; a brief discussion of Clara Morison
by John Barnes, 'Australian Fiction to 1920', in The

5. e.g. John M. Ward, Empire in the Antipodes, London, 1966,
pp.104-5

6. see Grahame Johnston, Annals of Australian Literature,
Melbourne, 1970
so that they, rather than the work itself, have caught the attention of general historians. Her work for child welfare and her campaigns for proportional representation were carried out in a period of extensive and varied social development; most attention to such development has been confined to the eastern states, so that Catherine Spence's work has been as neglected as South Australian social history.

However, Catherine Spence's novels deserve attention, not only as passing showers in a period of drought, but also for their merits as fiction, and because they contain much autobiography.

Catherine Spence produced her novels in three bursts. *Clara Morison* was written in 1852-3 and published in 1854. While she was waiting to hear of its fate, she began *Tender and True* which appeared in 1856. Her next novel was first serialised as 'Uphill Work' in the *Weekly Mail* during 1864.

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7. In 1957 it was still possible to ask 'Why did nothing happen in South Australia between 1857 and about 1937?' (J.A. La Nauze, review of Douglas Pike, *Paradise of Dissent*, Melbourne, 1957 edition, in *Economic Record* XXXIII, 66)

8. This point cannot be assumed; it is discussed below pp.41-2, 43-4, 46-7

9. The first episode appeared on 27 February 1864 and the last some time after 10 August 1864, see advertisement in the *Telegraph*, 22 February 1864, 10 August 1864
and then published as Mr. Hogarth's Will in 1865. 'Hugh Lindsay's Guest' was serialised from May to November 1867 in the weekly *Adelaide Observer*, and published as *The Author's Daughter* in 1868. She did not write another novel until late in the 1870s when she produced 'Gathered In' in time for Emily Clark to take it on a fruitless search for an English publisher in 1878, and *Handfasted* for a competition run by the *Sydney Mail*. 'Gathered In' was serialised in the *Observer* from September 1881 to March 1882, but was never published as a book. *Handfasted* was rejected by the *Sydney Mail* judges and remains in typescript; references in the text to the year 1879 suggest that it was written in that year or 1880, since all the novels are set in the present or immediate past of the time during which they were written. The religious allegory, *An Agnostic's Progress from the Known to the Unknown*, was written in the early 1880s, and published in 1884. A short story 'Afloat or Ashore' appeared in the

10. hereafter *Observer*

11. C.H. Spence to the Editor of the *Cornhill Magazine*, 4 March 1878, holograph letter [possibly a copy] (All1), Mitchell Library

12. *Handfasted - A Romance by Hugh Victor Keith*, typescript (MS.135), National Library; the original manuscript is held by the South Australian Archives

13. by Williams and Norgate; it heads the list of 'Publications of the Week' in the *Spectator*, No.2, 939, for the week ending 25 October 1884
Australasian in 1878, and another, A Week in the Future was serialised in the Centennial Magazine in 1888-9, and then published in a slender sixty-four page volume in 1889.

The tale of Catherine Spence's negotiations with her publishers is a sorry one. She sent the manuscript of Clara Morison to England with a letter to Smith, Elder and Son, with John Taylor. Smith, Elder refused it, and their reader wrote to Catherine Spence that she 'could do better'. Taylor left the manuscript with a friend, William Bakewell.

14. John Taylor came to South Australia from Sydney and took a job with the Bank of South Australia. He probably met Catherine Spence through her brother John who also worked at the Bank of South Australia from 1846 until the early 1850s. Taylor bought land at Ryelands, Mt. Arden and Mt. Victor, and was a pastoralist for some years. In 1850, when John Stephens, proprietor of the Register died, Taylor, as one of his executors, carried on the paper and, with some help from Catherine Spence, cared for his widow and children. The paper was bought from him in 1853. In 1855 he joined the mercantile house of Elder and Company, with his brother-in-law Edward Stirling, and when Stirling withdrew in 1861, Taylor did too. He died in 1865 after contracting a disease on the way to Britain. See Biography, Obituary, Births, Marriages and Deaths, collected by Chas. Davies M.D., (S 920.042/a), South Australian Archives; W.J. Sowden, Our Pioneer Press The Register The Observer and The Evening Journal. A History, typescript (1219/25A), South Australian Archives; Spence, An Autobiography, pp.20,22,29


16. William Bakewell, 1817-1870, arrived in South Australia in 1839, was admitted to the Bar in 1848, practised law, M.P. 1857-69 and 1862-64, Crown Solicitor 1867-70. At the time when Catherine visited Britain, 1865-6, the Bakewells had a house in Palace Gardens, Kensington. See Foundation Members of the Adelaide Club 1863-4, typescript (A1191/A6), South Australian Archives; Spence, An Autobiography, pp.22,29
who wrote a preface for it and arranged with John W. Parker and Son for its publication as one of a two-volume series, for which Catherine Spence was to receive 40 pounds. However, the novel was too long for two volumes, so the publishers abridged it, and reduced their payment by 10 pounds as a fee for the task. 17 Tender and True was brought out in two volumes by Smith, Elder, who paid 20 pounds for the copyright; it was reissued in one volume in 1861 but brought Catherine Spence nothing. 18 Mr. Hogarth's Will earned 50 pounds from the Weekly Mail, and 85 pounds as a half-share in the profits of its publication in three volumes by Richard Bentley and Son. 19 Bentley also published The Author's Daughter in three volumes, but Catherine Spence did not record her earnings from this or her last two novels. She asked 200 pounds for 'Gathered In' when she offered it to Bentley, 20


19. op.cit., p.25

20. Spence to the Editor of the Cornhill Magazine, 4 March 1878
and the prize for which she submitted Handfasted was 100 pounds, but she gained neither. 'Novel writing' she remarked, 'had not been to me a lucrative occupation', and since she had initially hoped to earn a living with her fiction, her acceptance of 'a coolie's wage and six printed copies of the work' as payment for her efforts, may indicate some diffidence about the merits of her writing. It certainly indicates that it was difficult to be a successful writer in the colonies.

Catherine Spence's novels are not masterpieces, but they never descend to the inflated inanity of the popular English novels ridiculed by George Eliot as 'Silly Novels by Lady Novelists'. They are interesting, sometimes entertaining, informative, sometimes amusing, and occasionally absorbing reading. The framework of the stories is simple and conventional, the characters are portrayed simply, sometimes superficially, and their dialogue dramatises the ideas which Catherine Spence sought to convey through her

22. op.cit., p.23
novels. This makes them a refreshing contrast to the elaborate constructions of a writer like Catherine Martin, to the sermonizing of the narrator in Robbery Under Arms, and to the tedious and pretentious commentary of the author in Uncle Piper of Piper's Hill. But Catherine Martin, T.A. Browne, and Jessie Couvreur were far more successful novelists than Catherine Spence. Their writing is better, and suited nineteenth century tastes better, than hers.

The deficiencies of Catherine Spence's novels have been expounded by historians of Australian literature. H.M. Green considered that not even the best of her characters are as memorable as Frere in His Natural Life or the characters in Geoffrey Hamlyn. John Barnes, while observing that 'Catherine Spence is more of a realist - and more of an artist - than any of her contemporaries', noted that her novels lack narrative interest. Of Clara Morison he remarked, 'While she adopts a fairly conventional frame

25. Catherine Spence and Catherine Martin (née Mackay, pseudonyms included 'Mrs. Alick Macleod', 'Ishbel', 'Antarlo') met at the inauguration of the University of Adelaide. Catherine Spence regarded Mrs. Martin's work very highly, see Spence, An Autobiography, p.55; Young, Catherine Helen Spence, p.63

26. 'Tasma'


28. Barnes, 'Australian Fiction to 1920', p.140
for her story, she refuses its dramatic possibilities. This is admirable in so far as she avoids cheap heroics and sentimentality, but it results in a sense of continual anti-climax. Both deficiencies of characterisation and plot proceed from her insistence upon naturalism in her writing.

She took great care that her plots 'should not be merely possible, but probable'. This cost her some effort; she wrote:

With me the main difficulty was the plot ... I have heard scores of people say that they have got good plots in their heads, and when pressed to tell them they prove to be only incidents. You need much more than an incident, or even two or three, with which to make a book. But when I found my plot the story seemed to write itself, and the actors to fit in.

Her view of probability was formed from the conventions of nineteenth century fiction: her plots depend on coincidences. But the coincidences are seldom startlingly improbable, and never impossible.

The greatest strength of her narrative lies in the touches of detail with which she depicts the daily lives of her characters, and in the passages of dialogue. These

29. op.cit., p.141
30. Spence, An Autobiography, p.28
31. ibid.
convey a sense of a continuum in which events and relationships develop naturally. They probably constitute the 'much more than an incident' which she considered necessary for a novel. Her dialogue is masterly: Margaret Elliott's conversation with Mrs. Tubbins in *Clara Morison*, Jane Melville's argument with Mr. Rennie over the employment of women in *Mr. Hogarth's Will*, Mrs. Lindsay's inhibited outrage and verbal attack on Mrs. Hammond, Jessie Lindsay's wooing of George Copeland, and Lord Darlington's management of Anthony Derrick in *The Author's Daughter*, all evince a discerning ear and a skillful pen. Catherine Spence considered that 'dialogue is more important for a novel than description; and, if you have a girm grasp of your characters, the dialogue will be true'. 32 The dialogue usually does ring true, and through their conversations the characters unfold themselves to each other, and develop relationships with each other: George Oswald in 'Gathered In' adds detail to his character every time he is made to open his mouth, and the relationships between the characters of *Clara Morison* are shown to develop almost entirely through the dialogue.

But this does not mean that Catherine Spence had a firm grasp of her characters. She was herself dissatisfied

32. ibid.
with her characterisation. She reflected, in her diary, "Queer that I who have such a distinct idea of what I approve in flesh and blood men, should only achieve in pen and ink a set of impossible people, with an absurd muddy expression of gloom, instead of sublime depth, as I had intended". Yet she was, she recalled, 'both amused and annoyed with the portraits I was supposed to have drawn from real people in and about Adelaide', and she mused, 'There must ... have been some lifelike presentment of my characters, or they could not have been recognised'. But not until she had written 'Gathered In' did she consider: 'I had at last achieved my ambition to create characters that stood out distinctly and real'.

She probably drew her characters at least partly from people she knew. In her autobiography she said that she shrank from the idea that she was capable of "taking off" her acquaintances, but she also confessed that Reginald in Clara Morison was her friend John Taylor, and that Margaret

33. see above chapter 1, p. 4, n.14
34. Spence, An Autobiography, p.55; Young, Catherine Helen Spence, p.60
36. ibid.
37. op.cit., p.55
Elliott in the same novel was herself. Jeanne Young observed that entries in her diary 'included very precise views on men, on friends, and on associates'. If she did model her characters on her acquaintances, then the strong awareness of their own and other people's values that she gives them may have been a quality of the kind of people she knew. More likely that awareness was a quality of her response to people she knew: she judged them as she observed them, and the judgment clouds her portrayal of them.

She seems to have been unaware of this, possibly because she was as concerned with the values she expresses through her characters, as with the characters themselves. These values are matched or contrasted to highlight the characters' virtues or vices, and in each novel the values evinced by the virtuous accumulate to convey an argument to the reader. The pride, independence and selflessness of the Melvilles is contrasted with Mrs. Phillips's indolence and Miss Phillips's busy, selfish triviality, to make Mr. Hogarth's Will a plea for wider opportunities of employment for women. The contrast between the virtues of the bastard and dependent Kenneth Oswald and the various vices of his uncle

38. op. cit., p.26
39. Young, Catherine Helen Spence, p.103
and cousin, makes 'Gathered In' an assertion that nobility and baseness are qualities of character not birth. Catherine Spence believed that fiction exerted a powerful influence on its readers, and that a good writer expressed 'good and noble thought'. The arguments conveyed by the novels are not obtrusive, but her concern with the values through which she builds up her arguments hampers her efforts to make her characters real.

Nevertheless, those efforts do ensure that the values are sufficiently idiosyncratic to prevent the characters being mere eiphers. As H.M. Green wrote, 'there is some life in even the least important of her characters'. Catherine Spence's insistence on probability in her plots, the verisimilitude of her dialogue, and her striving for naturalism in her characters, all testify that her fundamental purpose was to make her novels true to life. The deficiencies of plot and character which proceeded from that purpose probably explain, in part, why her novels never

41. the article makes it clear that she means artistically, not morally, good
42. Frances Power Cobbe, 'The Morals of Literature', Fraser's Magazine, July 1864, p.131
43. Green, A History of Australian Literature, p.202
became popular.

Still, other colonial writers were more successful than Catherine Spence less because their writing was better than because their work was better suited to the tastes and expectations of the publishers and reading public. No doubt Catherine Spence recognised that her novels lacked appeal to many of her contemporaries; in an article on 'The Unknown Public' she remarked tartly, 'even ... what are considered the educated classes ... cannot be called discriminating'. But she also considered that there were peculiar disadvantages in being a colonial writer. In her autobiography she expressed surprise that her books had found English publishers, and observed, 'If stories are excessively Australian they lose the sympathies of the bulk of the public. If they are mildly Australian, the work is thought to lack distinctiveness'. When seeking a publisher in Sydney she was assured that 'the only novels worth publishing in Australia were sporting or political novels'. 'I felt' she wrote, 'that, though Australia was to be a great country, there was no market

44. "The Unknown Public" [By a Colonist of 1839]", galley proofs (MSS.202/6), Mitchell Library; all Catherine Spence's papers in the Mitchell Library are also on microfilm in the National Library

45. Spence, An Autobiography, p.64

46. op.cit., p.93
[there] for literary work, and the handicap of distance from the reading public was great'. She tried to overcome the distance by setting long sections of Mr. Hogarth's Will and The Author's Daughter in Britain, and most of Handfasted in a hidden valley in America. She tried to woo the colonial market by extending the sphere of society which she depicted to include a peer of the realm in The Author's Daughter and the dissolute and criminal pastoralist's son in 'Gathered In'. But she refused to write an 'offensively Australian' novel. She remarked that 'the specialism which has ... invaded fiction' had meant that 'In modern novels provincialism seems to have run a little mad'. She considered the dominance in Australian writing of

the "deadbeat" - the remittance man, the gaunt shepherd with his starving flocks and herds, the free selector on an arid patch, the drink shanty where the rouseabouts and shearers knock down their cheques, the race meeting where high and low, rich and poor, are filled with the gambler's ill luck -

as 'false in the impression they make on the outside world and on ourselves'. Better, she believed, 'to see Australia

47. op.cit., p.23


49. 'Dialect - A Protest [By C.H. Spence a Colonist of 1839]', galley proofs (MSS.202/6), Mitchell Library
steadily and see it whole'. 50 But, as John Barnes suggested, this meant that 'she did not picture the sort of Australia that the bulk of the English public believed in and wished to read about'. 51 And, although advertisements in the South Australian press for Harriet Beecher-Stowe's Dred indicate the popularity of the kind of moral purpose novel 52 that she wrote, she clearly did not picture the kind of Australia that would interest most of the colonial public.

Catherine Spence wrote directly from her own experience. 53 This is suggested by the novels themselves, which prompted H.M. Green to write:

She keeps in far closer contact with the real world than Kingsley or Clarke or even Boldrewood ... [and] her imagination is not so vivid or illuminating as theirs; it is within its limits constructive, but it was not a creative imagination: she has the

50. 'The Australian in Literature', South Australian Register (hereafter Register), 22 November 1902; the article is anonymous, but is among Catherine Spence's papers in its printed form, marked 'C.H.S.' in her handwriting, (MSS.202/6), Mitchell Library

51. Barnes, 'Australian Fiction to 1920', p.141


53. This needs to be argued; Miss Daniels points out the dangers of supposing a writer's responsibility to fact and period to be the same as the historian's, Daniels, History and Literature: A Study in the Novels of C.H. Spence, p.1
drawbacks as well as the advantages of never venturing beyond the ascertained fact.\textsuperscript{54}

It is confirmed by external evidence, much of which comes from her autobiography.

Catherine Spence started her autobiography when she was already eighty-four,\textsuperscript{55} and she did not live to complete it.\textsuperscript{56} The last thirtythree pages covering the last twenty-three years of her life were written by Jeanne Young, in the first person, from her knowledge of Miss Spence, from their shared activities and conversations, and from letters and articles which Catherine Spence wrote during those years.\textsuperscript{57} On the day that she died, Catherine told its prospective publisher: 'It is not only a record of my life but of my ideals - and those of them which have not been carried out are pretty fully treated'.\textsuperscript{58} It should, then, be a valuable source. But because Catherine Spence's memory was imperfect

\textsuperscript{54} Green, \textit{A History of Australian Literature}, p.202

\textsuperscript{55} Spence, \textit{An Autobiography}, p.7

\textsuperscript{56} op.cit., introduction

\textsuperscript{57} ibid.

\textsuperscript{58} C.H. Spence to Mr. Sowden, 14 March [1910]; the year and a note that Catherine Spence died at about 3 o'clock have been added in another hand, (uncatalogued), South Australian Archives; all Catherine Spence's papers in the South Australian Archives are also on microfilm in the National Library.
at that age, and because Jeanne Young's knowledge was incomplete, the autobiography is a problematic source of information about its subject. However, where Catherine Spence's narrative can be confirmed by public records or by her contemporary writing, it is reliable in substance, if not always in detail. With such confirmation, it reveals, either deliberately in the text, or inadvertently through the ordering and proportioning of attention and material, much about its writer, including the way in which she used her experiences to construct her novels.

Her experience was varied. It included not only the practical conditions of life and the people she encountered, but also her reading and her emotions and ideas. The environments for all her stories but Handfasted were drawn directly from her own experience. In the letter accompanying Clara Morison to Smith, Elder she wrote:

The domestic life represented in my tale is the sort of life I have led - the people are such as I have come in contact with - the politics are what I hear talked of - the letters from the diggings are like those I have seen - the opinions I give are what are floating about among Australian society - so that it may be considered a faithful transcript of life in the Colony.\

59. anonymous letter to Smith, Elder and Company, 1 August 1853. [in Catherine Spence's handwriting] MS(Alll), Mitchell Library
She may have emphasised the novel's documentary value to make it more attractive to the publishers: in her autobiography she recalled, 'I had an idea that, as there was so much interest in Australia and its gold, I might get 100 pounds for the novel'. But she was not making an exaggerated claim; events in the novel follow events in the colony so closely as to suggest that she may have written with the Government Gazette and a pile of newspapers beside her. Similarly, she gave an English setting to the greater part of The Author's Daughter, which she wrote immediately after visiting Britain in 1865-6.

The novels are not, however, mere documents. Her 'transcripts' are so integrated with the plots and characters that they play an essential, if secondary, part in shaping the main action and the relationships between the principal characters. As Frederick Sinnett noted, 'She has merely illustrated Australian life insensibly in the process of illustrating human life'. The environment and society depicted in Handfasted was drawn from her reading; the novel

60. Spence, An Autobiography, p.22

61. see notes to 1971 edition of Clara Morison


63. Frederick Sinnett, 'Fiction Fields of Australia', Journal of Australasia, vol.1, July to December 1856, p.200
bears traces of the influence of Samuel Butler's *Erewhon*. 64

Her reading was extensive, and resolutely up-to-date, as is shown by the literary discussions among her characters and her own lectures and articles on literary subjects. 65

And her reading informed her writing. She drew on the conventions of both the popular romantic novel and the social purpose novel to shape and order her material. But she resisted any temptation to write in deliberate imitation of contemporarily popular novelists. In her autobiography she remarked, in the same paragraph as she discussed reactions to her own novels, that at about the time she wrote *Clara Morison* she read Jane Austen's novels, and enjoyed them so much that she reread them every year for the rest of her life. But she also noted that her life 'had more breadth and wider interests' than Jane Austen's, and her remarks about the older novelist's restricted range of characters imply that she was proud not of the similarities between their novels, but of the differences. 67 Her novels were not derivative.

As the Register's reviewer wrote:

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64. she had read *Erewhon*, see *Register*, 14 December 1887
66. see bibliography
Miss Spence, though doubtless familiar with all the best novels of English fiction, has resisted the fascination of their influence. She has not aspired to enter into competition with them, but she has also guarded against becoming a mere echo of them. She has originality enough of thought to see the teeming novelties of her own life, and of expression to be able to describe them in a manner of her own.68

Among the 'teeming novelties of her own life' were her own emotions and ideas. She admitted that Margaret Elliott was a self portrait, and since all her heroines show a marked kinship with Margaret, they can reasonably be supposed to be, however idealized, also self portraits, their emotional experience largely drawn from her own. The ideas she expressed in her novels frequently reappeared in her other writing: Margaret Elliott's opinion about religious education in state-aided schools is the same as Catherine Spence's expressed in a letter to the editor of the Register;69 Francis Hogarth's exposition of proportional representation echoes Catherine Spence's pamphlet on the subject;70 Jane Melville's argument about employing women foreshadows Catherine Spence's observations in a series of articles on 'Some Social Aspects

68. Register, 16 August 1870
69. Register, 30 December 1856
70. A Plea for Pure Democracy. Mr. Hare's reform bill applied to South Australia, Adelaide, 1861
of South Australian Life'); and in the letter accompanying 'Gathered In' in search of a publisher she stated that the novel 'contains the result of much thought on moral and religious questions for a long series of years'. Thus, however transformed and modified, the ideas, emotions, and details of daily living depicted in Catherine Spence's novels were drawn from her own experience. Where they depict responses to situations corresponding to her own, they provide an invaluable supplement to her more summary, directly autobiographical accounts of experiences which formed, and through which she developed her ideas. And they suggest an explanation for her initial concern with the nature of authority, and her growing preoccupation with justice and freedom.

One of the most striking features of the novels, taken all together, is the prominence in them of Scots. The heroine and most of the principal characters in Clara Morison are Scottish emigrants; the first volume of Mr. Hogarth's Will is set in Scotland, and both of the principal characters are Scots; the first volume of The Author's Daughter revolves around a family of Scottish colonists; the hero and two other

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72. Spence to the Editor of the *Cornhill Magazine*, 4 March 1878
principal characters in 'Gathered In' are Scots, and the first eight chapters relate the story of the hero's upbringing and education in Scotland; and Handfasted is about a community of Scots who built an ideal society in a hidden valley in America. The humbler Scottish characters are made to speak in dialect, and the Lindsays in The Author's Daughter, which she wrote almost immediately after spending six months with her relations in Scotland, are among the most rounded and alive of her characters. This, and comments in the novels about the honesty, capacity for hard work and education of Scotsmen making them good colonists, indicate that Catherine Spence's Scottish birth and nationality were very important to her.

She was probably born in Eildon, a tiny village at the foot of the Eildon Hills, about a mile and a half from Melrose, in countryside so dotted with houses and farms that Eildon village was like an extension of Melrose. The

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73. Spence, An Autobiography, p.32

74. Jeanne Young gives her birth-place as Eildon; Catherine Spence gives it as Melrose, probably because South Australians might have heard of Melrose but not Eildon, see Spence, An Autobiography, p.7

75. map in Royal Commission on the Ancient Monuments of Scotland (hereafter R.C.A.M.S.), An Inventory of the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Roxburghshire, 2 vols., Edinburgh, 1956
countryside was littered with relics of its past history: the ruins of Melrose Abbey, used as a quarry during the eighteenth century, marked the earliest Cistercian settlement in Scotland, constituted in 1186; structures like Hillslap Tower and Langshaw Tower, built during the sixteenth century, overlooked the pastures; on the northern peak of the three Eildon Hills there were traces of a Roman fort and signal-station; and the Eildon Tree Stone was supposed to mark the spot where Thomas the Rhymer, of the fourteenth century verse romance, met the Queen of Elfland and was taken with her to Fairyland for seven years.

Catherine recalled, 'There was not a hill or a burn or a glen that had not a song or a proverb, or a legend about it ... and my mother knew the words as well as the tunes of the minstrelsy of the Scottish border'. Catherine had her first introduction to politics at a gathering to hear a Whig campaigner around the sixteenth century cross in the

76. op.cit., vol.2, p.268
77. op.cit., p.265
78. op.cit., pp.292-3
79. op.cit., p.306
market place in Melrose.  
Melrose parish was also the home of Sir Walter Scott, who bought Abbotsford, about two miles west of Melrose village, in 1811, and who depicted much of the scenery and society around his home in his novels. Catherine wrote, 'There was not a local note in "The Lay of the Last Minstrel" or in novels, "The Monastery" and "The Abbot", with which I was not familiar before I entered my teens', and if any general influence can be discerned in Catherine's novels, it is that of Scott. Such a countryside would naturally inbue its inhabitants with a strong sense of tradition, and reading Scott would foster a strong respect for the established order. In Melrose the established order of society must have seemed immutable.

Catherine probably lived in a house like No.12 Abbey Street, Melrose, a substantial two-storied structure regarded as fairly typical of the improved middle-class housing of the later eighteenth century; her father was a moderately wealthy man, and the Spence household of eight children had three maids, to whom Catherine's mother gave the top wage in

82. op.cit., p.8; R.C.A.M.S., An Inventory, vol.2, p.302
83. R.C.A.M.S., An Inventory, vol.2, p.298
85. R.C.A.M.S., An Inventory, vol.2, p.296
the district.\textsuperscript{86} But Catherine's family did not regard the established political order as unchallengeable. Her father, David Spence, was a 'writer', an ordinary legal practitioner.\textsuperscript{87} Catherine noted in the recollections of her mother's life that she wrote for her, that her father was apprenticed to the only lawyer in Melrose: 'He was almost fifteen when he entered the office and continued there for three years - five years was required for Writers to the Signet but inferior court practice only required three'.\textsuperscript{88} Having served his apprenticeship, David Spence spent some time in Edinburgh with a friend, earning his living by writing law papers for threepence a page.\textsuperscript{89} Catherine may have drawn her picture of Kenneth Oswald's life in Edinburgh, in 'Gathered In', partly from her father's accounts of his time there.\textsuperscript{90} While

\textsuperscript{86} Spence, \textit{An Autobiography}, p.8

\textsuperscript{87} Jeanne Young mistakenly exalts him to a Writer of the Signet, see Young, \textit{Catherine Helen Spence}, p.35

\textsuperscript{88} C.H. Spence, \textit{Some recollections of the life of Helen Brodie Spence - widow of David Spence}, MS.(444), South Australian Archives, p.62

\textsuperscript{89} \textit{op.cit.}

\textsuperscript{90} she may also have drawn on the recollections of Rev. J. Crawford Woods, the Unitarian minister in Adelaide, since both her novel and Woods's Rambling Recollections contain references to a snowballing
in Edinburgh, David Spence probably spent much of his time with other members of the legal fraternity who became the most vociferous champions of the Whigs and reform, for when he set up as a writer in Melrose on his own account he was a declared 'reformer'.

Catherine's mother, Helen Brodie, was descended from a long line of East Lothian tenant farmers who had, she boasted, 'always been at the head of their class'. To maintain such a position a tenant farmer must have been ready to adopt new agricultural methods and implements; Catherine's grandfather won a prize from the Highland Society for having the largest area of drilled wheat sown, and he was summoned to London twice to give evidence before Parliamentary committees on the corn laws, so her boast was well-founded. Helen Brodie was, then, probably accustomed to living with innovation. She seems to have had unusually forthright political views: before the passage of the second Reform Bill

92. Spence, Some recollections of the life of Helen Brodie, p.7
94. Spence, Some recollections of the life of Helen Brodie, p.1
she wrote two letters to the local press, over the signature 'Grizel Plowter', setting forth the advantages of reform. Thus from both her parents Catherine learned to regard the established authorities of tradition and government as susceptible to change. But her parents were very moderate Whigs. When David Spence married Helen Brodie in 1815, he was making 600 pounds a year and had 1,600 pounds on his books, and she brought him a dowry of 1,500 pounds: they had no impetus to require radical changes in a society which offered them such a comfortable living.

They were, moreover, members of the Established Church of Scotland. This, whether David and Helen Spence had any strong religious convictions or not, was essential to David's prosperity. His profession necessarily imposed unbounded

97. op.cit., p.45
98. family tree in Catherine Spence's handwriting, MS. (uncatalogued), South Australian Archives
99. Spence, Some recollections of the life of Helen Brodie, p.88
100. op.cit., p.98
101. besides working as a writer David Spence obtained a cash credit for 5,000 pounds and set up a regular bank agency. The cash-credit system permitted overdrafts on primarily personal security; its dependence on moral character is regarded by Dr. H.M. Robertson as one of the very devious ways in which Calvinism facilitated capitalism. See Spence, Some recollections of the life of Helen Brodie, pp.69,101; W.H. Marwick, Economic Developments in Victorian Scotland, London, 1913, p.78
and to establish his entitlement to that trust in a presbyterian society, he must show that he was among the elect. The Spences attended morning and afternoon service in the summer, sat through two successive services in the winter, taught their children the Shorter Catechism, and restricted their Sunday reading to such improving works as Maria Edgeworth's moral tales. But this indirectly fostered in Catherine the urge to question authority, for she found the doctrine of the Shorter Catechism tyrannical and unreasonable, and felt miserably certain that she was already one of the damned. In 'Gathered In' she portrayed the unhappiness that learning the Shorter Catechism could cause.

But perhaps the most far-reaching influence of her Scottish childhood on the rest of her life was her education. The Spences provided all their children with a fairly good education. The boys, William, John, and David were sent to the parish school where they learned reading, writing,

102. J.M. Gest, The Lawyer in Literature, London, 1913, p.78, quotes Sir Walter Scott making this point

103. Spence, An Autobiography, p.8

104. op.cit., p.11

105. ibid.

106. op.cit., pp.11-12
arithmetic, Latin and geography, then to an institution in Edinburgh for more advanced education. The girls, Agnes (who died at the age of sixteen, when Catherine was nine), Jessie, Catherine, and Mary, attended a different school because the parish school did not teach needlework. The two elder ones went to their Aunt Mary's boarding school at Upper Wooden. Catherine and Mary were sent to a day school in Melrose where they learned to sew while they were read to from a varied selection of works, 'history, biography, adventures, descriptions, and storybooks'. Their teacher, a Miss Phinn, impressed their mother with her commonsense. Catherine admired her, and aspired to continue her own education as Miss Phinn had continued hers. Her accounts of the way in which Jane Melville taught the small Phillipses in Mr. Hogarth's Will, and Amy Staunton taught Adam Lindsay in The Author's Daughter, probably describe the way in which she was taught herself. David Spence had promised to send Catherine to a new institution in Edinburgh offering advanced

107. op.cit., pp.9, 12
108. op.cit., p.10
109. ibid.
110. ibid.
111. op.cit., pp.7,10,12
education for girls,\textsuperscript{112} the year after she turned thirteen, and around this promise Catherine built her plans and ambitions for her future. They, the promise, and the security of Catherine's stable world, all vanished when in 1839 David Spence's speculation in foreign wheat brought him financial ruin and social disgrace.

Another striking feature of Catherine Spence's novels is that they are all, in various ways, about migrants. \textit{Clara Morison} is expressly about the kind of migrant most valuable to South Australia, and a similar theme runs through \textit{Tender and True} and \textit{Mr. Hogarth's Will}. It is given passing attention, too, in \textit{The Author's Daughter} and 'Gathered In'. \textit{Handfasted} deals with a migration to America in an age she could only have read or heard about, but it is, nevertheless, concerned with migrants. Further, the unfavourable reactions of new arrivals to South Australia occupies a large part of the first two novels. This suggests that her emigration with her family in 1839 was a profoundly disturbing experience for Catherine Spence.

David Spence appears to have lost not only all his own, but much of his wife's family,\textsuperscript{113} by buying shares in engrossed wheat. The grain was kept so long that it rotted,

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{112} op.cit., p.12
  \item \textsuperscript{113} op.cit., p.13
\end{itemize}
and the shares became worthless. Nevertheless, the Brodies gave him 500 pounds, and he invested 80 pounds of it in an 80-acre section in South Australia, and arranged passages for all his family except his youngest son who remained with his aunts to complete his education. 114

In her autobiography, Catherine filled the chapter called 'Towards Australia' with information about passengers and conditions on board their ship the Palmyra, about the promise held out to new immigrants of South Australia's 'climate, its resources, the sound principles on which it was founded', and with a summary account of the foundation of the colony and the establishment of its first newspaper. Then, after comparing her life with Margaret Oliphant's, she concluded:

My personal influence has been exercised through the voice more strongly than by the pen, and in the growth and development of South Australia, to which I came with my parents and brothers and sisters when I was just 14, and the province not three years old, there have been opportunities for usefulness which might not have offered if I had remained in Melrose. 115

Catherine learned to pride herself on her usefulness to South Australia, and to be proud of being South Australian, but in this passage there is a strong suggestion of recollected

114. ibid.
115. op.cit., p.15
regret. In leaving Scotland with her impoverished family, she lost the framework within which all her ambitions had been conceived. Clara's apprehension about her chances of finding agreeable work, in *Clara Morison*, and Mary's grief at being separated from her family, in *Tender and True*, probably reflect Catherine's alarm at her prospects and her unhappiness at being separated from her friends.

Her first reaction to Australia was, inevitably, to the climate. In her autobiography she recalled that they arrived in November 116 'to a country so hot, so dry, so new', 117 that 'when we sat down on a log in Light square, waiting till my father brought the key of the wooden house in Gilles street, in spite of the dignity of my 14 years just attained, I had a good cry'. 118 The mangrove swamps around the Port River, the temporary buildings at the Port, 119 the long dusty drive in a portcart to Adelaide, made first

116. *Southern Australian*, 30 October 1839, records the arrival of the barque *Palmyra* from Greenock


118. *op.cit.*, p.17. If Catherine Spence's memory was accurate, David Spence was, unwittingly, being careless of his family: Light Square was, Professor Pike says, Adelaide's chief red-light area as early as 1839

119. e.g. 'From a diary of Miss Emily Caroline [sic] Clark', in *A Book of South Australian Women in the First Hundred Years*, p.49
experiences of South Australia unprepossessing, and when Catherine depicted Clara struggling to keep her damp, dusty face clean and the trimmings of her dress fresh during the drive, she spoke directly to the memories of most new arrivals in the colony. Catherine's may have been more painful than many: the fair skin that went with her red hair would have been very liable to sunburn. The climate alarmed her father and brothers, so that, like many early settlers in the colony, they were afraid to spend money on wheat seed and attempt to farm the land they had bought. Instead, they 'stuck to the town'. But Catherine and her family had to contend with physical hardship caused not only by the climate but by their unaccustomed poverty. They stayed in the house in Gilles Street for a month, then bought a marquee and pitched it on Brownhill Creek, in the slopes at the south-west end of the Adelaide hills. There they camped for seven months, living mainly on the ton of rice they bought as the cheapest available food, and keeping fifteen cows, a pony, and a cart, which enabled them to sell milk in the town at a shilling a quart. Winter drove them back into

120. e.g. 'Extracts from the Diary of Elizabeth Davison', in A Book of South Australian Women in the First Hundred Years, p.40
121. Spence, An Autobiography, p.17
122. ibid.
Adelaide; they rented a house and yards for the cows on West Terrace, which cost them 75 pounds a year. A few months after they had moved, David Spence was made Town Clerk to the newly established Municipal Council, and this job was to bring him 150 pounds a year. But living was expensive in South Australia during the depression of 1840-44. They sold the cows, William and John went to try and farm their land, Jessie married Andrew Murray, and David and Helen Spence, with only Catherine and Mary still at home, moved to cheaper lodgings in Halifax Street. In her autobiography Catherine wrote, 'The years at Brownhill Creek and West Terrace were the most unhappy of my life. I suffered from want of some intellectual activity, and from a sense of frustrated ambition and religious despair'. Her account of Clara Morison, forced to accept employment as a maid-of-all-work, ashamed of her social degradation, unable to take part in the conversations she heard, finding her only form of self-expression by writing imaginary conversations in her journal,

123. ibid.

124. Mrs. George Gawler, wife of Governor Gawler, estimated that each of her servants cost her 100 pounds a year, A Book of South Australian Women in the First Hundred Years, p.42


126. op.cit., pp.17-18
and hindered from reading by a mistress who thought it would make her neglect her work, is an account of her own life, transposed to another key.

Catherine felt the want of stimulating conversation and reading keenly. Her education became, in so altered a world, her refuge, her badge of respectability, and her only claim to attention. Neighbours of the Spences when they lived in Halifax Street remembered that Catherine 'as a girl in her teens, would go through the streets with several books under her arm, often reading as she went. "We always thought," one commentator said, "that she was so vain of her knowledge that she paraded it a great deal more than was necessary"'. She may have made her badge obvious, but she seems to have been reading more to shut out the world. She wrote, 'The few books we had, or which we could borrow, I read over and over again. Aikin's "British Poets," a gift from Uncle John Spence, and Goldsmith's complete works, a school prize of my brother William's, were thoroughly mastered, and the Waverly novels down to "Quentin Durward" were well absorbed'. Her account of Mary, in Tender and True, trying to find congenial conversation among her fellow colonists, and her picture of Kenneth Oswald, isolated from

127. Young, Catherine Helen Spence, p.42
128. Spence, An Autobiography, p.18
anyone who could talk about anything but money, drink and gambling, and tormented by religious doubts, add detail and depth to the bald statement of her loneliness and frustration in her autobiography.

Her life improved. The colony which had been founded with an already established Literary Association meeting in London\textsuperscript{129} to hear papers like Robert Owen's on 'The Influence of Literature on the Institutions of Nations and the Habits of People',\textsuperscript{130} and whose first newspaper printed its first issue before any settlers had left Britain,\textsuperscript{131} proved culturally richer than Catherine's early experience anticipated. As the colony revived from its depression, the Mechanics' Institute was reopened, the Book Society and Subscription Library was formed and then amalgamated with the Institute, and 'For two years the joint conversaziones attracted 'all the beauty, fashion and respectability of Adelaide''.\textsuperscript{132} The Spences, despite their poverty, paid the

\textsuperscript{129} Douglas Pike, \textit{Paradise of Dissent South Australia 1829-1857}, Melbourne, 1967, p.114

\textsuperscript{130} list of lectures from minute book for 1834, given by Mabel Hardy, \textit{The History of Education and Religion in South Australia 1837-1856}, University of Adelaide, 1915, p.5

\textsuperscript{131} Sowden, \textit{Our Pioneer Press}, p.4

\textsuperscript{132} Pike, \textit{Paradise of Dissent}, p.504
1 pound annual subscription[^133] which allowed them to use the Institute's library and reading room[^134]. Catherine's brother-in-law gave her the newspapers and magazines he received as a member of a reading club, and occasionally printed something she had written in his paper, the *South Australian*.[^135] The contrast between Clara's condition as Mrs. Bantam's maid, and as a member of the Elliott household where people discussed their reading, played the piano, sang and danced, probably represents in some measure the alteration in Catherine's life as the depression lifted, the family's income became more secure, and they made some friends. By the time she wrote *Tender and True* she could remark, 'The conversation - as is usual when intelligent strangers meet in the colony - look a literary turn, this being indeed their only common ground'.[^136] By 1878 she recalled this period of South Australia's history as 'something of ... [a] Utopia'.[^137]

[^133]: Pike observes that the mechanics' institutes established in South Australia were essentially middle class institutions, and unconcerned to offer proper educational facilities for working men.

[^134]: Spence, *An Autobiography*, p.20

[^135]: ibid.


[^137]: Spence, *Some Social Aspects of South Australian Life*, p.2
Catherine contributed substantially to this greater financial security: in 1843, when she was seventeen, she found work as a governess, probably just in time to make up for the loss of her father's income when the Municipal Council collapsed from lack of funds. And in 1846, a month before her father died, she and Mary opened a small and short-lived school.

But, 'more important than all this was the fact that we took hold of the growth and development of South Australia, and identified ourselves with it'. In overcoming her fear of a world in which the accustomed authorities of tradition, government, and social conventions were no longer recognised, Catherine learned to regard such authorities less as the creation of remote forces, and more as something she and all the people she knew could participate in shaping and building. After her arrival in 1839, she wrote, 'It was not long before I saw that in the development on right lines of a new society there was work as interesting and even more

138. Spence, An Autobiography, p.18
139. Pike, Paradise of Dissent, p.245
140. 29 May 1846, Family tree in Catherine Spence's handwriting; Observer, 30 May 1846
141. Spence, An Autobiography, p.20
142. op.cit., p.21
valuable than in sharing in the progress of an older civilization. Lessons of political economy and of social equity could be studied far more closely where they were watched from the beginning'. She had learned to accept a freedom she might never have recognised had she not left Scotland. But confronted by traditions and conventions which the migrants brought to the colony with them, Catherine remained isolated and lonely for many years.

The main action in each of her novels centres on a story of romantic love. Clara Morison and Charles Reginald; Rose Lancaster, Davenant, and Edward Masefield; Jane Melville and Francis Hogarth, Amy Staunton, Lord Darlington and Adam Lindsay; Kenneth Oswald and Edith Gray; Hugh Victor Keith and Lilian Abercrombie: all become romantically entangled, and each entanglement results in a marriage. This may indicate no more than that Catherine Spence found the conventional story-line of the popular romantic novel a convenient framework. But there are unconventional features in the relationships which indicate that Catherine did not adopt that framework unthinkingly. And in Tender and True, The Author's Daughter, 'Gathered In', and Handfasted, there are close examinations of the kinds of relationship people form with each other, which suggest that Catherine devoted

143. untitled article, (MSS.202/5), Mitchell Library
a great deal of thought to this matter. *Tender and True* explores the relationship between Mary Lancaster and Robert North, mostly after they are married, demonstrating the pain a man causes his wife when he makes a sharp and evaluative distinction between the functions each has in the relationship. The secondary story in the novel, of Rose Lancaster's love for Davenant, her distress at his sin, and her final acceptance of Edward Mansfield, acts as a commentary on the first. Rose loves Davenant because she feels that he is her master, but she finds happiness with Mansfield who is her intellectual equal. *The Author's Daughter* is an unequivocal objection to marriages made for worldly reasons, but it makes a subsidiary point, sometimes with an emphasis verging on hysteria, that marriage between an old man (who is fully fifty-three) and a girl of nineteen is 'unnatural'. *Gathered In* depicts first the pain caused both partners and their offspring when their relationship cannot, for social and financial reasons, be recognised by society, and second the torment caused by a hasty and infatuated marriage of virtue and vice. *Handfasted* carries the argument behind *Gathered In* to its logical conclusion, and advocates 'handfasting', a custom which allows two people to spend a trial period of a year and a day living together to find out if they wish to be married. Catherine may have heard about this custom from her father. Until the passage of the Intestate Moveable
Succession Act in 1855, widows in Scotland had no right to terce or *jus relictae* unless the marriage had subsisted for a year and a day, or a child had been born who had been heard to cry, and there was widespread belief that this limitation of rights had grown out of the custom of handfast marriages which existed in medieval Scotland. But she had certainly read about it in Scott's novel *The Monastery*, and she makes the custom the principal ideal feature of the society in Columba, the hidden valley in America. The judge of the competition for which Handfasted was submitted, rejected it because he 'feared that it was calculated to loosen the marriage tie - it was too socialistic and therefore dangerous'. Catherine was about fifty-four when she wrote Handfasted: love and marriage had remained a constant concern to her long after her interest in such matters had ceased to be particularly personal.

Catherine chose to remain single. In her autobiography she recorded that she had two offers of marriage:

The first might have been accepted if it had not been for the Calvinistic creed that made me shrink from the possibility of bringing children into the

144. A.E.Anton, 'Handfasting' in Scotland', *Scottish Historical Review*, XXXVII, 24, p.90
145. Handfasted, p.57
146. Spence, An Autobiography, p.63
world with so little chance of eternal salvation, so I said "No" to a very clever young man, with whom I had argued on many points and with whom, if I had married him, I should have argued until one of us died! I was 17, and had just begun to earn money. I told him why I refused him and that it was final. In six weeks he was engaged to another woman. 147

This smacks of an oft-told tale, with a deliberate cheeriness calculated to prohibit probing. Gossip preserved by families of early South Australians says that the young man was James Allen, and when he engaged himself to marry only six weeks after proposing to Miss Spence, she was furious. 148 This cannot, now, be anything but speculation. Not long after this, in her diary she was 'blaming herself for not accepting the companionship she craved, because she realised that her acquaintances were incapable of giving it'. 149 But at the same time as she condemned faults in others, 'she denounced even more bitterly those faults to which she was most prone'. 150 This suggests that Catherine, striving to fashion her own life and character in accordance with her ideals, demanded the same idealism and effort from other people, and that refusing her first proposal was a strongminded resolve to live up to those ideals. The second proposal was

147. op.cit., p.19
148. information from Mrs. A.A. Abbie and Mrs. A.B. Caw, Adelaide
149. Young, Catherine Helen Spence, p.103
150. ibid.
made to her when she was twenty-three, by a Mr. Gilfillan, an artist of fifty-five who already had three children. She did not explain why she refused this offer. Margaret Elliott refers casually to having had two offers, one from a man who thought she had a noble soul, and remarks scornfully that she did not think that much of a reason for marriage. But the horror expressed in The Author's Daughter by Miss Pennithorne, Jessie Copeland and Mrs. Hammond at the prospect of Amy marrying 'that old man' Lord Darlington, and their repeated assertions that such a marriage would be 'unnatural', suggest that Catherine recognised the importance of sexual compatibility in marriage, and considered it impossible if there was a great difference in the ages of the partners. Thus, while she refused her first offer because her religion made her unwilling to have children, she may have refused her second because she thought that it would not enable her to have children. But, more simply, she may have refused both men because she did not love them. In her autobiography she wrote

I believe that if I had been in love, especially if I had been disappointed in love, my novels would have been stronger and more interesting; but I kept a watch over myself, which I felt I needed, for I was both imaginative and affectionate. I did not want to give my heart away. I did not desire a love disappointment, even for the sake of experience.152

152. ibid.
Portraits of the lovers in her novels are all observed from without, rather than expressed from within, even in the cases of Hugh Keith who is the narrator throughout Handfasted, and Kenneth Oswald with whom she seems to have identified herself, so that her judgment of this inadequacy in her novels may have been justly founded. But Jeanne Young, after reading her diary, considered that she may have 'kept a watch' over her affections at some cost to her peace of mind. She wrote, 'From passages in her diary, love affairs to be completed by the happiness of marriage seem not to have been so remote from her imagination in her early years, as we, who knew her only when world affairs had claimed her for their own, had supposed'. 153 The diary suggested that someone had enlisted her affection, only to disappoint her by '"his worthlessness"'. 154 This may have prompted a later entry in which Catherine wrote '"C... and A ... contend that if I do really not wish for marriage, I should talk much less about it, for my talking gives to people an entirely wrong impression"'. 155 She admonished herself: '"Let your ideas never dare to fancy what may happen in case of marriage; that is the forbidden subject. Place the garret steadily

153. Young, Catherine Helen Spence, p.47
154. ibid.
155. ibid.
before you and endeavour to train your mind so as to be a useful and amiable member of society, but no one's wife, and no one's mother". 156 This, in an age when, as Margaret Elliott told Clara Morison, spinsters were objects of mockery and condescension, was both a daunting renunciation of hope and a formidable resolution. It was probably possible only after considerable mental struggle. Clearly, Catherine's acceptance of her spinsterhood was not as easily won as she suggested when she portrayed Margaret Elliott's indifference to mockery, or when she wrote in her autobiography, 'People married young if they married at all in those days. The single aunts put on caps at 30 as a sort of signal that they had accepted their fate; and, although I did not do so, I felt a good deal the same'. 157

Catherine did not deny herself marriage because she sought emotional fulfilment in the kind of love Madame Blavatsky compelled in Annie Besant, 158 or that George Eliot incurred from some of her female admirers, or that Frances Power Cobbe enjoyed with Mary Lloyd. 159 The only instance

156. op.cit., pp.47-8
159. see Frances Power Cobbe, Life of Frances Power Cobbe as told by herself, London, 1904, passim
that could be interpreted as homosexual love in her novels occurs in 'Gathered In' when Edith tells Kenneth, "I have felt the fascination of Sybil's face, voice, and manner, so much that if I had been a young man instead of a young woman, I should have fancied myself over head and heels in love with her".160 This suggests that Catherine had some understanding of an intense emotional attachment between two women. She noted that between her mother and her aunt 'there was a love passing the love of sisters'.161 But there is no evidence to suggest that Catherine ever experienced such an attachment herself.

The resolution she made herself in her diary probably had more to do with her religion and her sense of vocation than with the disappointment Jeanne Young discerned. The doctrines of the Shorter Catechism which she had found tyrannical while she was still a child in Scotland, became even more oppressive when the poverty, loneliness and intellectual frustration of her first years in South Australia seemed to mark her life increasingly as that of one of the predetermined damned. She was slow to transfer to her religion the attitude she had learned from her reconciliation to

160. C.H. Spence, 'Gathered In', chapter XXV, Observer, 19 November 1881
161. Spence, An Autobiography, p.31
colonial life: she noted, 'I was 30 years old before the dark veil of religious despondency was completely lifted from my soul'. But if her rejection of the Established Church of Scotland came slowly, it had a profound effect: she had questioned and then denied the ultimate authority of her childhood, and she had freed her ambition from inhibiting doubts about her own worthiness. She portrayed her experience of this freedom in 'Gathered In' when she contrasted Kenneth's desolation when learning his catechism and his despair at his 'moral starvation' at Tingoora, with the enlightenment and peace he gained from talking to the non-sectarian preacher, Henderson. Catherine's ambition was mingled with her religious belief and her consciousness that because she was a woman, the opportunities afforded her of fulfilling her ambition were, and always would be, severely restricted. But when her conversion to Unitarianism gave her a sense of vocation, it simultaneously gave her acceptable justification for her personal ambition, and the strength and impetus to ignore the prohibitions which respectability demanded that she recognise. But, while she took many years to find her vocation, she struck the first blow for her right to follow it when she refused to be married, and resolved not even to think of marriage.

162. op.cit., p.19

163. see below chapter 3 passim
In *Clara Morison*, Margaret, her acknowledged self-portrait, and Clara, the idealised self-portrait, discuss vocation. Clara's is, Margaret tells her, marriage. Margaret seems unsure of precisely what her own is, though she knows it is not marriage: her unwillingness to suppress her own opinions, to defer to any man simply because he is a man, her range of interests and her independence, make her, she recognises, an unsuitable partner for a man in search of a wife. Towards the end of the book she resolves reluctantly to pursue the only career open to her independently, but she shrinks from the doubts with which the world might regard her abilities. She finally finds happiness with the brother who prizes her learning and independence of mind, by becoming his shadow, resolving to live for and through his career. This is probably a veiled account of Catherine's relations with her brother John who did not marry until he was thirty-eight, five years after Catherine wrote *Clara Morison*. In *Mr. Hogarth's Will*, Catherine portrayed another plain, practical, independent woman, working indirectly for greater justice in society by inspiring her cousin to undertake a variety of reforms. But

164. this suggests that Catherine Spence had not read the *Wife of Bath's Tale*

165. Family tree in Catherine Spence's handwriting
while Jane Melville's great deeds are achieved through Francis Hogarth, her direct and personal struggle for employment pursues, albeit unsuccessfully, an equally great achievement. In Handfasted, Catherine portrayed a woman who, in the almost ideal society of Columba, did not have to satisfy her ambition vicariously, but rather, took her place in the public affairs of her community as her natural right. Jane Melville's appeal against the unjust prejudices which prevent women finding work suited to their capacities and education is logical and powerful. Lilian Abercrombie's stature in Columba is persuasive.

Jane Melville's argument was Catherine's earliest extended public statement of her opposition to the social conventions which had made it necessary for her articles in the Adelaide press to be anonymous, and her articles for the Melbourne Argus to be signed by her brother. But her opposition to the authority such conventions gave to men, simply because they were men, had been developing for many years.

Catherine was born and passed her childhood in a country with a long tradition of active, independent and forthright women. The Scotswomen of literature are 'neither particularly subordinate and retiring, nor lofty and remote

as in the courtly love tradition', and Scott's intrepid Jeannie Deans probably represented the typical Scotswoman for the nineteenth century. Catherine's portraits of Mrs. Duncauson in Clara Morison and Mrs. Lindsay in The Author's Daughter are of outspoken, capable and independent women. Moreover, she was born into a family of independent and capable women. In her autobiography, she wrote, though clearly with the emphasis of hindsight:

The capacity for business of my Aunt Margaret, the wit and charm of my brilliant Aunt Mary, and the sound judgment and accurate memory of my own dear mother, showed me early that women were fit to share in the work of this world, and that to make the world pleasant for men was not their only mission.

While she was still a child, Catherine's views of the capabilities of women were probably strongly affected by her Aunt Margaret. When her grandfather suffered a stroke, he turned over his farm to his daughter Margaret, and she ran it successfully for thirty years.

Catherine's belief in her own capacities made her, in her early years in South Australia, bitterly resentful of the injustice of 'a world made comfortable for the exclusive

169. ibid.
development of men'. Before yielding to a belief in the inferiority of women, she told her diary that she would discipline her mind 'to manly virtues, to manly strength, and to manly studies, that I may learn to live without leaning on anyone'. It is, then, little wonder that her portrait of Jane Melville was of a young woman who had been educated like a boy. Her feminism was more personal than missionary, and proceeded more from her ambition than from her sense of vocation; her novels suggest that she did not have a very high opinion of most of her sex. Robert North in Tender and True thinks of his wife as 'a clinging vine', and the Register's reviewer noted that, except for the heroine, all the women in The Author's Daughter are schemers.

Catherine's support for the women's suffrage movement that emerged in South Australia late in her life was half-hearted: she considered proportional representation more important. Yet because she expressed her personal struggle against society's restrictive authority in general terms, and because she was the first woman in Australia to do so publicly, she became a figurehead for the suffragists, and a symbol for all women repeating her struggle. Miles Franklin

170. quoted in Young, Catherine Helen Spence, p.45
171. Register, 16 August 1870
172. Spence, An Autobiography, p.41; see below chapter 8, p.365
achieve her own emancipation from the subtle and pervasive authority of society's conventions until she finally carried her campaign for proportional representation onto the platform. There she found expression for her greatest talent - public speaking, satisfied her desire for attention and recognition, and fulfilled her vocation by publicising a reform she believed fundamental to the progress of mankind. She was sixty-six when she undertook her first public campaign. Until then she had followed her vocation chiefly by writing; she was, perhaps, fortunate in having sufficient talent to make the self-expression she achieved in her novels, and later in her journalism, satisfying to her ambition for so much of her life. But her ambition took a long time to overcome her submission to social convention. At the time of her first major achievement, the publication of *Clara Morison*, she had still to resolve her struggle with the authority of her childhood's religion.
CATHERINE HELEN SPENCE c.1850.

reproduced from J.F. Young, Catherine Helen Spence a study and an appreciation, Melbourne, 1937, opposite p.42.
As a child of staunch members of the Established Church of Scotland, growing up amid the disputes which finally disrupted that church in 1843, Catherine was steeped in the doctrine of the Shorter Catechism. She passed Sundays with her family at two church services, and 'All the religious books in the house and all in the carefully selected parish library' reiterated the church's teaching. One book, 'Mrs. Sherwood's "Infant's Progress"' affected her so strongly that she remembered it clearly to the end of her life. She spent weekdays at school listening to readings from books which were probably also pious, since Miss Phinn later regretted that Catherine's first two novels were not 'more distinctly religious in tone'. She could recite Watt's hymns from memory. Her knowledge of scripture was, Miss

1. Spence, An Autobiography, p.8; see above chapter 2, pp.53-4
2. C.H. Spence, sermon on Human Responsibility, n.d., MS. (1074), South Australian Archives, V.p.8
4. op.cit., p.34
5. op.cit., p.11
Phinn said, 'equal to that of many student of Divinity'.

And she learned and understood the Shorter Catechism and its proofs from the scriptures.

The Shorter Catechism's doctrine of election probably nurtured the aspirations which had made her wish for fame and influence when she was barely thirteen. But the Shorter Catechism also taught her that God 'hath foreordained whatever comes to pass', that 'Our first parents being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the estate wherein they were created, by sinning against God', and that all men, being descended from Adam, 'sinned in him, and fell with him in his first transgression'. This crude and narrow version of Calvinism, drawn up two centuries earlier expressly 'for the more rude and ignorant', puzzled and appalled her. At the end of her life she recalled: 'The only cloud on my young life was the gloomy religion'.

6. op.cit., p.17
7. op.cit., p.11
8. S.W. Carruthers, Three Centuries of the Westminster Shorter Catechism, University of New Brunswick, 1957: contains facsimile reproduction of the original manuscript of the Shorter Catechism
9. ibid.
10. Spence, An Autobiography, p.11
She found the God who exacted retribution for Adam's sin from all his posterity for all time unjust. 'Why oh! why' she exclaimed 'had not the sentence of death been carried out at once, and a new start made with more prudent people?' \(^{11}\) God's injustice made him 'unlovely', but 'it was wicked not to love God', \(^{12}\) so she saw in her question and judgment, her own condemnation. Furthermore, if she, an outwardly virtuous person, was already damned, so too must be almost everyone in the world. Even children could not be saved. Mrs Sherwood's moral tale told of three child pilgrims following the path of Bunyan's Christian. But the children had the added burden of an imp called 'Inbred Sin' which never left them, not even at the point where Christian's burdens had fallen away. \(^{13}\) Catherine was tormented by this doctrine which, she remembered, 'made me doubt of my own salvation and despair of the salvation of any but a very small proportion of the people in the world'. \(^{14}\)

As a child she rebelled, though dimly and hopelessly, against so unjust a God. \(^{15}\) As an adolescent, impoverished

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11. op.cit., p.12
12. op.cit., p.11
13. op.cit., p.63
14. op.cit., p.11
15. Spence, sermon on Human Responsibility, p.6
and among uncongenial people in a strange land, she was surrounded by evidence of her own and everyone else's damnation. During her early years in South Australia she suffered from 'religious despair'.\textsuperscript{16} Her horror at the thought of mankind's ultimate fate was so strong that, she said, she refused her only attractive offer of marriage because her 'Calvinistic creed' made her 'shrink from the possibility of bringing children into the world with so little chance of salvation'.\textsuperscript{17} Yet the doctrine which taught her that it was futile to strive against her damnation, also fostered the ambition which compelled her to do so.

Her despair softened as she adapted to colonial life. Her family's income became less precarious.\textsuperscript{18} She made friends with the Stirlings and Bakewells, and became 'Miss Spence the storyteller' to their children.\textsuperscript{19} She paid close attention to public debate in the colony, and since, in the late 1840s, this was chiefly over the relations between church and state, an issue on which she formed a decided opinion,\textsuperscript{20} she may have learned to see the Shorter Catechism's

\begin{flushright} 
17. op.cit., p.19; see above chapter 2, pp.67-8 \\
18. op.cit., pp.18,20,24,27 \\
19. op.cit., p.20 \\
20. op.cit., p.21; Young, \textit{Catherine Helen Spence}, pp.50-58
\end{flushright}
doctrine less as the absolute and only truth, and more as one faith among many. As her knowledge and assurance increased, she began to doubt herself less and her childhood's faith more. In 1850, when she was twenty-five, she told the minister of her church that she would not take communion any longer because she was not 'a converted Christian'. Her announcement surprised Rev. Robert Haining less than her continued attendance at church after making it. She had probably not lost her faith completely, and she may have needed the security of belonging to a congregation. But with her faith suspended, her ambition triumphed over her doubts of her worthiness. In August 1854, John Taylor brought her 30 pounds and the assurance that her first novel was to be published.

Soon afterwards, at a ball, Caroline Emily Clark sought an introduction to Miss Spence because her uncle in England had written to her 'that 'Clara Morison,' the new novel, was a capital story of South Australian life'. She was the first stranger to acknowledge Catherine's achievement, and

22. ibid.
23. op.cit., p.23
24. op.cit., p.28
she won Catherine's lasting gratitude. She introduced Catherine to her family, and was no doubt pleased that Catherine admired her literary brother Howard, and found Mrs. Clark like her own mother 'in her sound judgment, accurate observations, and kind heart'.

Mrs Caroline Clark was the sister of the five Hill brothers who won renown in England as social and educational reformers; her brother Rowland was the founder of penny postage. She, with her husband Francis, their five sons and three daughters, had left the English winters for South Australia in 1850. Francis Clark established himself and his sons as a mercantile and accounting firm in Adelaide, and in 1853 bought a house and property which he called

25. ibid.
26. op.cit., p.27
29. Sowden, Our Pioneer Press, p.155; Argus, 31 May 1878
Hazelwood Park near the foot of the Adelaide hills.  

After his death the same year, his sons continued the firm, Emily, the eldest daughter, remained at Hazelwood with her mother, and in 1858 Howard took his first bride to live in Hazelwood Cottage, within sight of his mother's house. Howard was rapidly becoming known as a literary critic and composer of occasional verse. Hazelwood became a centre of cultured and entertaining hospitality for the large family circle and their friends, Catherine among them. Catherine liked and admired the Clarks: they all, she noted, 'had great ability and intelligence'.

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31. 'Clark, Caroline Emily', in Australian Dictionary of Biography, vol.3

32. ibid.

33. Gunton, 'Hazelwood Cottage, of Hazelwood Park', p.80

34. Argus, 31 May 1878; Register: 18 August 1856, 12 November 1856, 19 December 1856

35. derived from Howard Clark to 'My dear Meadows', 8 September 1857; Howard Clark to 'My dearest Lucy', 22 November [1857?]; P(?). M. Martineau to Howard Clark, 10 April 1865: MS., all in the possession (1971) of Mrs. C. Barham Black, Unley Park, South Australia

36. supposition based on Spence, An Autobiography, pp.27-8, 37,39,45,47,55; C. Emily Clark to Lady Windeyer, 31 December 1876, MS. (A C47), Mitchell Library

37. Spence, An Autobiography, p.28
At about the same time Catherine probably saw much of another man of 'fine literary tastes'. William John Wren was courting her younger sister Mary. When they were married in 1855, he confirmed Catherine's opinion of him by making his first present to his new bride, copies of the poems of Elizabeth and Robert Browning.

Both Wren and the Clarks were Unitarians, a faith Catherine may never have heard of before. But her admiration for their intelligence and cultivation, coupled with her doubt and unhappiness over her own faith, made her curious about the new Unitarian congregation in Adelaide. She was led to hear what the Unitarian minister, Rev. John Crawford Woods, 'had to say for that faith', and she must have been impressed. She told Haining that for three months she would listen to him preach each Sunday morning, and to Woods each Sunday evening, and read nothing but the Bible as a guide. At the end of the allotted time she decided: 'I became a convinced Unitarian, and the cloud was lifted from the

38. ibid.

39. family tree in Catherine Spence's handwriting

40. Spence, An Autobiography, p.28

41. ibid.

42. ibid.

43. ibid.
The Unitarian Christian Church was founded in Adelaide in 1854. Howard Clark, his older brother Algernon Sidney Clark, and Howard's future father-in-law E.M. Martin, all three previously members of the Unitarian congregation in Birmingham, met with five other Unitarians in the offices of Francis Clark and Sons, on 27 June 1854, and decided to call a meeting of all Unitarians in the province. Although the advertised meeting, on 11 July, added only four to their number, they determined to found a congregation, and appointed a committee to collect subscriptions for a minister's salary. By 4 August 1854, 351 pounds 15 shillings had been subscribed, and at a meeting that day, forty people, including

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44. ibid.

45. information from Mrs. A.B. Caw and Mrs. R.N. Beckwith, both of Leabrook, South Australia

46. Manuscript Minutes of the Adelaide Unitarian Congregation (later of the Unitarian Christian Church committee, including reports of general meetings of the congregation), 3 vols., June 1854 to October 1868, in the possession (1969) of Mrs. Rosa Moore, Port Willunga, South Australia, minute for 27 June 1854

47. see below appendix A

48. Manuscript Minutes of the Adelaide Unitarian Congregation, (hereafter Minutes of A.U.C.), minute for 11 July 1854
Catherine's future brother-in-law, added to their earlier subscriptions to make up the 400 pounds determined upon as the minimum salary that could be offered. Subscribers guaranteed this sum annually, initially for three years. The Birmingham Unitarians were connected with the British and Foreign Unitarian Association (B. and F.U.A.), so the Clarks and E.M. Martin were re-establishing an old link when the forty subscribers in Adelaide despatched their first half year's subscription of 200 pounds to the secretary of the B. and F.U.A. with a request that advertisements be placed in Unitarian papers in Britain, and a minister chosen for the Adelaide congregation. The 200 pounds was then to be paid to him for his outfit and passage to Australia.

On 19 September 1855, an Irishman called John Crawford Woods arrived in South Australia to take up the pastorate. The first Unitarian service in South Australia was held in the drawing room at Hazelwood on 23 September 1855, and attended

49. Minutes of A.U.C., minute for 14 August 1854
50. ibid.
52. Minutes of A.U.C., minute for 21 August 1854
53. Minutes of A.U.C., undated memorandum
by the Clarks and a few friends. The first public service, advertised in the press, was held at Green's Land Exchange on 7 October 1855, and attended by 'a respectable and deeply attentive congregation of 200 persons'. Services continued regularly in the Exchange until the church in Wakefield street was opened on 5 July 1857.

From May to December 1856, Woods devoted one Sunday evening a month to a discourse on the fundamental tenets of Unitarian teaching. It was probably these which, in her thirtieth year, effected Catherine's conversion. Her brother John, who was as completely converted as she was, attended a general congregational meeting in November that year, and at the end of her life Catherine recalled that she was thirty before 'the dark veil of religious despondency

55. Minutes of A.U.C., annual report, minute for 5 October 1856; Woods, Rambling Recollections, vol.1, pp.107-8
56. Minutes of A.U.C., minute for 7 June 1857; Register: 29 June 1857, 1 July 1857, 4 July 1857
57. Register: 2 May 1856, 28 May 1856, 5 July 1856, 2 August 1856, 4 September 1856, 12 September 1856, 17 September 1856, 27 September 1856, 1 October 1856, 3 December 1856, advertisements
58. Spence, An Autobiography, p.28
59. the name 'Spence' appears in pencil at the end of a list of voters at a general congregational meeting on 16 November 1856, see Minutes of A.U.C., minute for 16 November 1856
was completely lifted from my soul'. The doctrine Woods preached brought her her 'first clear vision' of a benevolent God and a perfectible mankind. She told Woods's third wife:

No one owes more to your dear husband than I do. The dark pall which enveloped heaven and earth was lifted; the confused conscience was made clear and straight; the rebellious heart was made submissive and contented under his ministrations. I have been a very cheerful person ever since, more comfortable to my friends, and more serviceable to the world.

Woods, his doctrine, and his congregation in Adelaide altered Catherine's concepts of God and mankind so profoundly as to give her life a totally new direction.

Woods was a middle-of-the-road Unitarian. Like Catherine he was a convert from Presbyterianism, but in his case the church he left was a Presbyterian church in County Down in Ireland, where his father was the minister. He learned his new faith first, after graduating from Edinburgh University, from the works of Channing, an American

60. Spence, An Autobiography, p.19
62. ibid.
63. Woods, Rambling Recollections, vol. 1, pp. 1, 27
64. op.cit., p. 52
65. op.cit., p. 55
Unitarian divine, famous at the beginning of the nineteenth century as a champion of liberal theology and practical piety. Having decided to join the Unitarian ministry, Woods attended classes for students for the ministry of Nonsubscribing Presbyterians, conducted by Henry Montgomery LL.D. and Rev. John Scott Porter. Montgomery had led the secession from the General Synod of the Presbyterian Church in 1830, and the erection of the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster. But both he and Porter were 'Old' or doctrinally conservative Unitarians: they both contributed to the Remonstrant Synod's journal which, while it refused "to be the organ of Trinitarians", refused also to give space to "those who think that the Scriptures have no more authority than the Koran" and "regard Jesus as simply a man of genius and goodness". Unitarianism had grown out of Dissenting movements against accepting any doctrinal authority but the

66. J.H. Allen, An Historical Sketch of the Unitarian Movement since the Reformation, New York, 1894, p.195
67. Woods, Rambling Recollections, vol.1, pp.56-60
70. McLachlan, The Unitarian Movement, pp.210-11
Bible, and the work of scholars on early texts of the scriptures.  

By the end of the eighteenth century most Unitarians held that there was no Biblical authority for the concept of the Trinity. During the nineteenth century, Unitarians debated whether Jesus was, as Montgomery and Porter believed, the son of God, and therefore more than man, and capable of miracles, or whether, as Belsham and later James Martineau argued, he was "a man constituted in all respects like other men". The doctrinal liberals sought circumstantial and practical explanations for the miracles. Woods followed Montgomery and Porter, and his later friend Robert Brooke Aspland, in accepting the divinity of Christ and His miracles. In 1856 he lectured the Adelaide Unitarians on 'Jesus Christ, the Son of God, not God the Son'. His doctrinal position probably pleased his new congregation. The Birmingham Unitarians' link with the B. and F.U.A., a doctrinally conservative body, suggested

71. Mellone, Liberty and Religion, p.67
72. McLachlan, The Unitarian Movement, pp.19-20, 48-9
73. Mellone, Liberty and Religion, p.70
74. Woods, Rambling Recollections, vol.1, pp.61-2; McLachlan, The Unitarian Movement, pp.178-82
75. Register, 5 July 1856 (advertisement)
76. Mellone, Liberty and Religion, pp.38-40
that they inclined towards the 'Old' Unitarian teaching. They had affirmed this when they considered telling the B. and F.U.A. that their minister's views 'should harmonize with those of the general body of Unitarians, and should not incline to either of the extremes of Rationalism or Arianism'.

They established their doctrinal conservation finally when they named their church the Unitarian Christian Church; a suggestion that the word 'Christian' be omitted from its title was defeated at a general congregational meeting by a show of hands. However, neither they, nor Woods, remained solidly conservative. Towards the end of his life, Woods observed, 'I began my career as a Unitarian of the school of Channing, and gradually reached the type of religion now represented by Dr. Martineau'.

James Martineau, a leader of liberal Christian thought from about 1834 until his death in 1910, stood for a somewhat utilitarian faith, giving priority to reason and general benefit over even the scriptures as a source of faith, and to the harmony

77. Manuscript Minutes relative to the establishment of a Unitarian Christian Church in Adelaide 1854, in the possession (1969) of Miss M.E. Crompton, Heathpool, South Australia, incomplete draft of letter to B. and F.U.A.

78. Minutes of A.U.C., minute for 8 June 1857

79. ibid.

of all doctrines over the triumph of one.\textsuperscript{81} Woods followed Martineau to the extent of asserting that 'the claim ... set up for the books called "Holy Writ," of miraculous infallibility, Unitarians maintain, is utterly devoid of any rational evidence to support it'.\textsuperscript{82} But he did not share Martineau's wish for 'some large and wide organization of liberal Christians';\textsuperscript{83} Woods remained fiercely sectarian all his life.\textsuperscript{84}

His doctrinal discourses in 1856 were probably substantially the same as those the congregation had printed in 1881.\textsuperscript{85} In the later sermons, Woods both expounded the basic beliefs of Unitarians, and pointed to errors in the

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\textsuperscript{81} Inquirer, 20 January 1900; McLachlan, The Unitarian Movement, pp.63-6; Mellone, Liberty and Religion, pp.72-7

\textsuperscript{82} Rev John Crawford Woods, B.A., 'Unitarian Belief Concerning the Bible: what it is and what it is not', 1st Series Unitarian Belief No.6, Adelaide, 1881, p.59; Mellone, Liberty and Religion, p.78

\textsuperscript{83} Mellone, Liberty and Religion, p.38

\textsuperscript{84} e.g. Rev. J.C. Woods, Dr. William E. Channing, A Unitarian both in his life and at his death, Adelaide, 1877, passim; Woods, Rambling Recollections, vol.3., p.11

\textsuperscript{85} Rev. John Crawford Woods, B.A.: 'The Unitarian Belief Concerning Salvation', 1st Series Unitarian Belief No.4, Adelaide 1881; 'The Unitarian Belief Concerning the Soul's Destiny in a Future State', 1st Series Unitarian Belief No.5, Adelaide, 1881; 'Unitarian Opinion Concerning the Bible: what it is and what it is not', 1st Series Unitarian Belief No.6, Adelaide, 1881; 'Conscience and Human Life', 2nd Series Conscience No.2, Adelaide 1881; these are the only sermons I could find in what appear to be two sets
doctrines of other sects. He may have drawn much of his zeal in attacking Calvinism from his own rejection of his father's Irish Presbyterian faith; in a sermon he observed, 'Even Calvinism had not entirely quenched the heart's vivacity, though it had worked with terrible effect on the minds of some'. 86 But he probably converted Catherine more by offering her a positive alternative than by decrying the doctrine which caused her doubts and unhappiness.

He offered her a radically different God. Unitarians believe, he asserted, 'that God is not like a man with a liability to change His mind and repent of what He had done, with personal favourites and personal foes; that He is not like an earthly despot, acting from caprice or from passion, but that He is infinitely wise and perfectly good, a God of love'. 87 Unitarian teaching banished the interruptive and aggressive Providence of the Shorter Catechism as an opinion. Catherine accepted the Unitarians' God as an inspiration: in a sermon she asserted that 'Nothing unworthy of our highest conception of God should be believed on any authority whatever'. 88 In another sermon she argued that

86. Register, 5 January 1885
87. Woods, 'Unitarian Opinion Concerning the Bible', p.62
88. C.H. Spence, sermon on The Basis of Belief, 23 October 1898, MS.(1074), South Australian Archives, p.1
even man's highest conceptions must fall short of reality:

When we think of thirty millions of suns with worlds revolving round them which is as far as modern astronomy has reached - when the six days of creation are infinitely extended - and when we think of all things becoming rather than existing - when we turn from the infinitely great to the infinitely small and distinguish and divide and even subdivide the infinitesimal atom into even more infinitesimal atoms, the most recent discovery - and when we see that one great spirit is in us all, and through all, as well as above all, we stagger at the greatness of the thought of God.89

Her conversion made her God an omniscient creator of marvels man had only begun to discover, a benevolent teacher whose lessons men were only beginning to learn. 'Inconceivable as the Creator and Increaser of the Universe in his entirety must be to our limited capacity' she proclaimed, 'we must essay to learn something about him'.90

She, and all mankind, had no reason to fear unjust condemnation from such a God. Unitarians had rejected the doctrine of original sin since Socinus wrote his De Jesu Christo Servatore in 1578.91 Woods, following both Channing92

89. C.H. Spence, sermon on The Three Reverences, 24 November, no year, MS.(1074), South Australian Archives, p.3

90. C.H. Spence, sermon on the nature and character of God, 8 September 1907, MS.(1074), South Australian Archives, p.1

91. McLachlan, The Unitarian Movement, p.18

92. Allen, An Historical Sketch of the Unitarian Movement since the Reformation, p.195
and Martineau,\textsuperscript{93} preached 'The Religion of Love, as contrasted with that of Slavish Fear'.\textsuperscript{94} Unitarians reject the doctrine of innate depravity and atonement, he maintained, as 'irreverent in its representation of the character of God, unreasonable and unjust in itself, and immoral in its tendencies'.\textsuperscript{95} Catherine learned to regard it as 'one of the most paralysing dogmas that human fear invented or priestcraft encouraged'.\textsuperscript{96} The Unitarians' God did not damn mankind for all eternity; He expected them to strive for perfection. He exhorted men, not to submission, paralysis, and fear, but rather to assertion, action and sympathy. 'Character is a personal matter' Woods taught, '... and ... while the consequences of actions do affect many besides those who perform them, the merit or demerit of them belongs to the individual actors'.\textsuperscript{97} Merit consisted in striving to live in accord with the Creator's laws. These, Woods explained, were the laws of nature. Men must follow the laws of health, seek to avoid 'ignorance and error',

\textsuperscript{93} Alfred Hall, ed., \textit{Aspects of Modern Unitarianism}, London, 1922, p.108

\textsuperscript{94} Register, 3 December 1856 advertisement

\textsuperscript{95} Woods, 'The Unitarian Belief Concerning Salvation', p.36

\textsuperscript{96} Spence, \textit{An Autobiography}, p.63

\textsuperscript{97} Woods, 'The Unitarian Belief Concerning Salvation', p.35
liberate their bodies from gross appetites and passions by purifying their tastes, enlighten their consciences with reason, experience and reflection, and strive to 'worship God in spirit and truth' by avoiding 'superstition on the one hand and materialistic atheism on the other'.

Fundamental to the effort towards perfection was learning. Woods taught that Unitarians 'consider intellectual, moral, and spiritual education of unspeakable importance, and that while intelligence owes very much to religion, religion is also indebted for its practical value in a great degree to enlightened reason'. Further, he argued that intelligence should seek greater understanding of God's laws unhampered by such restrictions as were placed on Catherine's early reading, and unrestrained by deference to even such authority as the Bible. The chief guides to salvation were reason and knowledge.

Such teaching did more than sanction Catherine's continuing efforts to improve her elementary education. It spurred her to explore wider fields of knowledge and to test all opinions and assertions against her own sound common sense. In her religious allegory, An Agnostic's Progress

98. op.cit., pp.33-4
99. op.cit., p.41
100. Woods, 'Unitarian Opinion Concerning the Bible', p.59
from the Known to the Unknown, she allowed her pilgrim a respite in the halls of learning, where he was taught the importance of reading and knowing of the work of the specialists. He returned to his pilgrimage armed with the means of acquiring enough knowledge to defeat all attacks of superstition and ignorance. Such teaching also gave her a sense of participating in a world-wide pursuit of understanding of the natural laws governing men's lives, which was part of mankind's progress towards perfection. In a sermon she asserted, 'The Unitarian Churches of old were leaders of every movement for the liberation of thought'. And in her textbook for schools, The Laws We Live Under, she challenged young South Australians to join in civilisation's progress: 'Many past generations have built up so far the knowledge of the world, but it is left to those who succeed us to build on the old foundations with new materials and with added experience'. Further, Catherine found Woods's teaching illustrated in the lives of the congregation, and their example stimulated her own pursuit of knowledge and cultivation.

101. C.H. Spence, An Agnostic's Progress from the Known to the Unknown, London 1884, p.51

102. C.H. Spence, sermon on the Christian Church, 7 December 1897, MS. (1074), South Australian Archives, p.12

103. C.H. Spence, The Laws We Live Under, Adelaide, 1880, p.117
The Adelaide Unitarian's were an intellectual élite. Their commitment to doctrines exalting the necessity and benefits of learning was probably closely associated with a consciousness of their own cultivation. Many of them belonged to the few large families which, by intermarrying extensively, bound the congregation together with kinship ties, and established a common culture among them. Family gatherings at Hazelwood, for instance to perform a home-made burlesque, set the pattern for social gatherings in the Unitarian Church Hall. The most public representative

104. information from Mrs. A.B. Caw, Leabrook, South Australia.

105. Geneology of the family of Francis Clark and Caroline Hill, n.d., in the possession (1969) of Mrs. C. Barham Black, Unley Park, South Australia; Unitarian Christian Church, Annual Reports, for 1865, 1870, 1882, 1890, 1902, 1908, in the possession (1971) of Mr. Moxom Simpson, Adelaide, South Australia; Mr. Simpson also has Annual Reports for 1891, 1892, 1895-1900, 1903-5, 1907, 1911, these all list seat-holders and subscribers to the church; M.E. Crompton, Pioneers and the Centenary in the Unitarian Christian Church, Adelaide, MS. in the possession (1969) of Miss M.E. Crompton, Heathpool, South Australia


107. tickets for entertainments given by the Association for Mutual Improvement in connection with the Unitarian Christian Church, (1352/1, 1352/2, 1352/3), South Australian Archives; notebook containing manuscript minutes of proceedings of social meetings held on 23 February 1870, 2 March 1870, 23 March 1870, 30 March 1870, 6 April 1870, in the possession (1969) of Mrs. Dora Harris and Miss M.E. Crompton, Heathpool, South Australia
of the Unitarians' cultivation was John Howard Clark. He worked strenuously both to extend education to as many colonists as possible, and to establish organisations in which the more learned colonists could meet to exchange information and ideas. He contributed much time and energy to the foundation of the South Australian Institute;\(^{108}\) helped draw up regulations and programmes of subjects for the examinations the Institute offered;\(^{109}\) lectured on English literature at suburban and country institutes;\(^{110}\) and taught and examined the boys at J.L. Young's Adelaide Educational Institution.\(^{111}\) He wrote book reviews, literary articles and comic verses for the Register, and from 1870 to 1878 was that paper's editor.\(^{112}\) He joined the South

108. 'John Howard Clark', Library Record of Australasia, I, 4, pp.113-14

109. Register, supplement, 13 June 1878

110. John Howard Clark: lecture on Oliver Goldsmith, 'written about 1855', recopied with alterations and additions for the Mt. Barker Institute, November 1863; lecture on Thomas Hood, first written for Oakbank Institute, amended for Mr. Barber Institute, recopied with amendments for North Adelaide, 20 January 1864; lecture on Douglas Jerrold, first written for Burra Institute, September 1861; all MS. notebooks, in possession (1971) of Mrs. C. Barham Black, Unley Park, South Australia

111. Register: 21 February 1857, 18 December 1858

112. Argus, 31 May 1878; Register, supplement, 13 June 1878
Australian Society of Arts, and he chaired the meeting which formed the Adelaide Philosophical Society (later the Royal Society of South Australia), and became the first secretary of that august and would-be learned body. His learning and distinction were a concave-mirror image of that of many members of the congregation.

Catherine had first approached the Unitarian Christian Church through her admiration for Wren and the Clarks. She found that 'there were a number of interesting and clever people who went to the Wakefield Street Church'. Her acceptance into such a congregation must have confirmed and encouraged her own intellectual aspirations, given her a sense of security, and increased her self-assurance.

But Woods also taught that Unitarians 'think there is something better for a man to be, than in the condition of

113. Register, 16 October 1856; Argus, 31 May 1878

114. Manuscript Minutes of the Adelaide Philosophical Society, 10 January 1853 to 25 August 1853, MS. (SRG. 10 Ser.1 594), South Australian Archives, minutes for 10 January 1853

115. Manuscript Minutes of the Adelaide Philosophical Society, 1880-1902, become Minutes of the Royal Society of South Australia, November 1880 to May 1902, MS. (SRG. 10 Ser.1 594), South Australian Archives, minutes for 2 November 1880

116. Manuscript Minutes of the Adelaide Philosophical Society, 10 January 1853 to 25 August 1853, minutes for 31 January 1853

117. Spence, An Autobiography, p.28
concern merely for his own personal salvation'. 118 Better, he argued, to 'catch ... the spirit which has been called the Enthusiasm of Humanity ... which is no less a spirit of unselfish loyalty to God'. 119 This lesson transformed Catherine's attitude to society. Her belief in man's ultimate damnation yielded to a conviction that all men could and must be led to salvation. Her conversion fired her with 'the Enthusiasm of Humanity', grafting onto her ambition for personal recognition, the aspiration to contribute to the world's progress towards greater wisdom and virtue. She told the congregation, 'I did not enter into my human responsibility to God and man until my eyes were opened by the preaching of the Unitarian faith by Mr. Woods - and instead of feeling it was a burden it was a light a peace and a joy'. 120 She did not consider sacrificing her personal ambition to her 'Enthusiasm of Humanity': she argued that well-balanced people made a 'sort of instinctive compromise' between altruism, and 'egoism' which she defined as a 'reasonable regard for our own welfare, a reverence for human nature generally [,] embodied in that portion of it which

118. Woods, 'The Unitarian Belief Concerning Salvation', p.42
119. ibid.
120. Spence, sermon on Human Responsibility, v.p.8
alone is under our own control'. But when she described her pilgrim leaving the halls of learning because his mission was to teach and work in the world ... not to study in schools', she portrayed the alteration her conversion wrought in her aspirations. She spent the rest of her life working strenuously to reform government and society that mankind might move nearer to perfection.

Unitarian doctrines taught in Britain in the nineteenth century inspired a host of social reformers. But in Adelaide, a city founded to implement social and political reforms then unobtainable in Britain, the Unitarians' zeal for reform was less marked. When she joined the Unitarian Christian Church, Catherine did not join a group working collectively for social or political change. The Church's minutes and annual reports note only one attempt at corporate action, and that - Woods's attempt to found a Friendly Society - brought no positive results. Not until 1872,

121. C.H. Spence, sermon on Egoism and Altruism, 21 November 1897, MS.(1074), South Australian Archives, p.1
122. Spence, An Agnostic's Progress, p.49
124. Minutes of A.U.C., minute for 12 August 1860
sixteen years after she became a Unitarian, did Catherine join a reforming organization in which Unitarians predominated.\textsuperscript{125} In 1897 she observed 'In my long membership with this church I do not recall any effort outside of itself'.\textsuperscript{126}

Yet the Adelaide Unitarian's were not indifferent to the need for reform, even in the new society they were helping to establish sixteen thousand miles from old abuses and injustices. They were all concerned to increase religious toleration.\textsuperscript{127} When writing to request a minister in 1854, they told the B. and F.U.A. that the man selected 'should have such pulpit talents as may command the attendance of that numerous class who attend no public worship from the difficulty of finding the rational and important principles of Christianity treated in a manner which commends itself to their sense and judgment'.\textsuperscript{128} They aimed at 'the removal of prejudices and the creation of a spirit of enquiry which ... must in the end be beneficial to the cause of liberal

\textsuperscript{125} see below chapter 6, pp.243-4

\textsuperscript{126} Spence, sermon on the Christian Church, p.24

\textsuperscript{127} Minutes of A.U.C., first annual report and minute for 5 October 1856

\textsuperscript{128} Manuscript Minutes relative to the establishment of a Unitarian Christian Church in Adelaide 1854, memorandum of committee meeting 15 August 1854
Christianity'. The church committee looked forward to a time when 'conscientious opinion on matters pertaining to religion shall be respected and when mankind shall everywhere acknowledge and act upon the precept ... "that where the spirit of the Lord is there is liberty"'. The best means of increasing enlightenment and liberty was that expressly urged upon them from their pulpit - education. Several members of the congregation were engaged, according to their lights, in a variety of educational enterprises.

John Baker, one of the church's twelve founders, and an elected member of South Australia's first and second partly-elected Legislative Councils, would probably have liked to make education universally compulsory. In debates on the constitution he sought to disfranchise the uneducated. In his speech after laying the church's foundation stone, he berated parents who put their children to work instead of sending them to school, asserted that 'In this colony, where

129. Minutes of A.U.C., first annual report
130. ibid.
131. op.cit., minute for 11 July 1854; Trust Deed of the Unitarian Church of South Australia, original in possession (1969) of Mr. Moxom Simpson, Adelaide, South Australia
132. his religion was given as Church of England in 1851, see Pike, Paradise of Dissent, p.485
133. Register, 26 December 1856
every man can educate his children, there can be no excuse
for the prevalence of ignorance', and predicted that 'in
future ... the greatness of nations would turn upon their
proficiency in the arts and sciences rather than upon their
military achievements or moral exploits'. The approval
voiced during his speech suggest that other members of the
congregation also considered learning more important than
even 'moral exploits'. 134

Some, however, saw education and morality as two sides
of the same coin. Woods, preaching the need for improved
systems of education, asserted, 'We must have morality as
well as knowledge made an essential part of the training of
our young people, so that intelligent virtue may be the
principle and object of all educational agencies'. 135 Arthur
Hardy, another of the church's founders, 136 erected and
presided over a mechanics' institute in the village next to
his house and property at Glen Osmond, as much, it has been
suggested, to keep his quarry workers out of the public house
in the evenings as because he was concerned to spread

134. ibid.

135. Woods, 'Conscience and Human Life', pp.19-20

136. Minutes of A.U.C., minute for 27 June 1854; Trust
    Deed
education.  

Three Unitarians were closely associated with the South Australian Institute which 'for many years sustained the reputation of being one of the principal educational factors in the colony'. 138 William Everard, yet another of the church's foundation members, 139 who was also minister for education in 1876-7, was a member of the Institute's committee. 140 Robert Kay, an early member of the church, 141 and brother of one of its founders, 142 was the Institute's secretary. 143 Howard Clark was the Institute's most energetic supporter. He worked with the Governor and the Chief Secretary (R.D. Hanson) to draw up its original Act of Incorporation, and alone recopied the bill thirteen times before he was satisfied with it. 144 He wanted its resources

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138. Library Record of Australasia, I, 4, p.113

139. Minutes of A.U.C., minute for 11 July 1854

140. Sands and McDougall's Directory of South Australia, Adelaide, 1884

141. Committee of the Unitarian Christian Church, Annual Report for 1865; see below appendix A

142. William Kay, Minutes of A.U.C., minute for 27 June 1854

143. see below appendix A

144. 'John Howard Clark', p.114
extended as widely as possible: in 1874 he told a commission enquiring into the question of a museum and institute for Adelaide that he objected to the terms of the enquiry, and maintained that the Institute should exist for the benefit of the whole province. 145

Other Unitarians evinced the same spirit. Woods took the authorities of the new University of Adelaide to task in 1876 for the limited education they offered. He acknowledged that the university must preserve its character as a repository of higher learning, but argued that it should also adapt to its role as a colonial university and consider 'the special wants of a new country', for instance of well-trained engineers and mechanics, in its curriculum. 146

Howard Clark's sister-in-law, Annie Martin, established and ran a school which became known for its enlightenment and progressive teaching. 147 Robert Kay's daughters also founded a school, 148 and Edith Cook, a daughter of later members of

145. op.cit., pp.114-15

146. Register, 21 December 1876; this article is anonymous, but is included in a book of cuttings of articles by or about Rev. J.C. Woods, in Simpson papers (Woods's third wife was Catherine Simpson), (p129.246), South Australian Archives.

147. Information from Mrs. A.B. Caw, Leabrook, and Mrs. Rosa Moore, Port Willunga, South Australia; Morice, Auntie Kate, p.2; see below appendix A

148. Crompton, Pioneers and the Centenary in the Unitarian Christian Church, Adelaide
the church, \(^{149}\) was made the first headmistress of the state's Advanced School for Girls. \(^{150}\) Other Unitarians taught in the church's Sunday School \(^{151}\) and addressed the church's Young Men's Improvement Society.

However, the Unitarian's were teachers and disseminators of culture not only because they were cultivated people, and not only because they wished to lead mankind to salvation. They also wished, by increasing religious toleration and liberty, to win social acceptance specifically for their faith.

Organised Unitarianism was a new growth. The first Unitarian congregations in Britain were not formed until after 1770, \(^{152}\) and Unitarians had not gained freedom of worship legally until 1813, and effectively until 1844. \(^{153}\) Unitarians emigrating to South Australia brought with them already formulated demands for freedom or worship and an eagerness to establish their faith on equal terms with others.

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149. daughter of Janet Macnee and William Cook, family tree of descendants of Dr. John Macree and Ann Dixon, MS. in possession (1969) of Mrs. C. Barham Black, Unley Park, South Australia

150. information from Mrs. A.B. Caw (daughter of Edith Hübbe, née Cook), Leabrook, South Australia

151. S.M. Crompton, A Pioneer Church, typescript in the possession (1969) of Miss M.E. Crompton, Heathpool, South Australia, p.3

152. McLachlan, The Unitarian Movement, p.21; Mellone, Liberty and Religion, pp.12-14

153. 'One was not born a Unitarian in those days [mid-Victorian period] without having a tradition of protest in one's bones', McLachlan, The Unitarian Movement, p.143
in a new community. They wanted their minister to be 'able from his superior intellectual acquirements to take a high standing among his reverend compeers in the Colony'. But even in the paradise of dissent they encountered prejudice. The church founders told the B. and F.U.A. that the minister chosen for them must 'be prepared to defence our faith from the attacks of orthodoxy for bigotry and intolerance are just as rife here as in other parts of the world'. In 1856 the church committee's first annual report described 'the religious horizon' as 'darkened by the clouds of fanaticism and error', and announced that 'Christian Unitarianism yet requires the strenuous efforts of its adherents to enable it to overleap the narrow bounds in which orthodox bigotry would seek to confine it'. In 1857, the church committee hoped that the church's founders would be

154. Manuscript Minutes relative to the establishment of a Unitarian Church in Adelaide 1854, memorandum of committee meeting 15 August 1854; an incomplete draft of a letter to the B. and F.U.A. about the qualities desirable in the minister to be chosen also states that he should be capable 'of taking a good social position among the ministers of other denominations in the Colony', in Manuscript Minutes relative to the establishment of a Unitarian Christian Church in Adelaide.

155. op.cit., draft letter to the B. and F.U.A.

156. Minutes of A.U.C., first annual report
remembered as men 'who in difficulty and obloquy raised the
Banner of an unpopular faith'. 157

Their faith was explicitly attacked only once. In
January 1858, Woods preached on a sermon arguing against 'the
Divine Unity' which had been published and widely circulated
in Adelaide during the previous month. 158 In October the same
year, an Anglican, Rev. D.J.H. Ibbetson, incumbent of St.
Mary's at Kooringa, published a rejoinder to Woods. 159 His
essay, the Unitarian church committee remarked, 'is not marked
by that courtesy and charitable feeling which might have
been expected from a Christian Minister'. 160 Woods responded
with a course of lectures on Ibbetson's pamphlet. 161

But while the Unitarians encountered no further explicit
and overt opposition, they remained defensive because they
were so heavily outnumbered. They founded their church in
1854 with only forty subscribers, and the congregation at
their first public service in 1855 numbered only two hundred,
many of whom probably attended only on that occasion. Even

157. Minutes of A.U.C., committee's report presented 2
October 1857

158. op.cit., committee's report presented 13 October 1857;
    Register: 31 December 1857, 1 January 1858, 2 January
    1858 advertisements

159. Minutes of A.U.C., committee's report presented 13
    October 1857

160. ibid.

161. ibid; Register: 7 October 1858, 14 October 1858
    advertisements
two hundred from the urban and municipal districts in which most of the Unitarians lived was a small minority. In 1855 the same districts contained 10,479 Anglicans, 3,246 Wesleyan Methodists, 2,703 Roman Catholics, 1,804 Congregationalists, 1,538 Lutherans, and 1,180 members of the Established Church of Scotland. Had the census asked Unitarians to declare themselves, their numbers would have grouped them with such socially aberrant faiths as 'Other Presbyterians', Quakers, Mahommedans and Pagans. The Unitarians remained a tiny minority, even after they had had time to consolidate and expand. In 1871 they constituted only 1%, and in 1901 only 0.4% of the population in the districts in which most of them lived. 162

They expressed their defensiveness in their doctrinal conservatism and their assertiveness about their faith. They were pleased by Woods's doctrinal sermons which proclaimed the merits of Unitarism belief, and sometimes sounded distinctly smug at the superiority of Unitarian teaching. They deemed themselves 'fortunate in having secured for the Adelaide Church the services of a gentleman so well adapted

162. see below appendix B
163. see above pp.93-4
for its pastoral charge as Mr. Woods'. 164 Howard Clark's first bride told her betrothed that the visiting preacher from Melbourne ' (if it is not treason to say so) ... reads better than Mr. Woods but I would not change pastors with our sister church in Melbourne'. 165

The congregation's confidence of their intellectual distinction, coupled with their defensiveness before larger and older congregations, probably exerted considerable influence on Catherine's first attempt to reform South Australian government. She found expression for her new 'Enthusiasm of Humanity' first in 1859 when she urged that minorities should be represented more adequately in the colonial parliament. 166 The only minority group to which she belonged was the Unitarian Christian Church. It is highly likely, then, that she drew from both Woods's teaching and the attitudes of the congregation, her eagerness for the rights of minorities, and her conviction that minorities embodied the greatest intelligence and virtue in the community. She probably also drew from her membership of that minority the security and assurance that enabled her

164. Minutes of A.U.C., first annual report

165. Lucy Martin to Howard Clark, 23 August 1857, in the possession (1969) of Mrs. C. Barham Black, Unley Park, South Australia

166. Spence, An Autobiography, pp.23-4; see below chapter 7, pp.263-4
to embark on such a reform. But it is unlikely that her particular political views reflected those of the congregation. Catherine's reform was a radical measure. Members of the Unitarian Christian Church would not have been inclined to favour radical political change. While they expressed political opinions as individuals, not as representatives of their church, and while most did not express any recoverable political views, the places they lived in, their occupations and public offices, all suggest that their political temper was, in South Australia, predominantly conservative.

The church's congregation was probably entirely urban and suburban. In 1866, the 569 Unitarians in South Australia were concentrated in the districts of Adelaide (215), Kensington and Norwood (78), Burnside (23), Mitcham (27), and Onkaparinga (27). In 1865 there were 74 seatholders and subscribers to the church, and while only 52 of those

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167. A notable exception was Howard Clark who in 1857 was a leader in the demonstration and petition to the Governor seeking the immediate abolition of the Legislative Council. However, most of the Adelaide Unitarians would seem to have been roughly in agreement with the conservative John Baker, see Register, supplement, 13 June 1878; Pike, Paradise of Dissent, p.431.

168. see below appendix B

169. Unitarian Christian Church, Annual Report for 1865
74 can be identified, 48 of the 52 have addresses in Adelaide. The congregation was also solidly middle class. Of the 52 identifiable names, 28 held positions and occupations that can be classified crudely as upper middle class, 17 middle class, and only 7 lower class. But only a few of the church members were 'leading colonists'. The Bakers, the Everands and the Hardys conformed to Wakefield's ideal of the gentleman immigrant who invested in land; they were early colonists, a source of prestige in Adelaide, and Arthur Hardy and John Baker were not merely members but office-bearers in the exclusive Adelaide Club. Most of the church members were engaged in businesses ranging from hairdressing and photographic artistry to wholesale grocery, ironmongery, and the management of mining companies from city offices. They were probably serious and industrious in their work: the Simpson family's rapid rise from an impoverished safe and bedstead manufacturing business to wealth and prominence, and John Spence's

170. see below appendix A
171. see below appendix C
172. Pike, Paradise of Dissent, p.510
173. see below appendix A
174. see below appendix A
175. see A. Simpson and Son Limited, "Today not Tomorrow" A Century of Progress, Adelaide, 1954; Observer, 15 December 1888; see below appendix A
similar, though more transitory achievement of prosperity, suggest that they devoted much energy and considerable enterprise to their work. They were not members of the Adelaide Racing Club, the Adelaide Hunt Club, or the tennis, yachting and cricketing clubs which 'leading colonists' established for their diversion. Instead, they sought office in such bodies as the Municipal Corporation of Adelaide, the Chamber of Commerce, the South Australian Institute, the South Australian Horticultural and Floricultural Society, where their membership was likely to profit their work. It probably did. That forty of them could guarantee subscriptions amounting to 400 pounds a year for three years, to offer a salary which represented financial rescue to the newly-remarried Woods, suggests that their businesses were flourishing. As they prospered, they joined committees for the Institution for the Blind and Deaf and Dumb, and the Servants' Home; their wives taught in the Unitarian Christian Church Sunday School, and supported the Female Refuge; their daughters supported the Adelaide Children's Hospital. They would have had vested interests in maintaining the

176. see above chapter 1, p.11, n.42
177. see below appendix A
178. Woods, Rambling Recollections, vol.1, p.96
179. see below appendix A
freedom and prosperity they had won in a new society, and they worked for improvements and reforms through established organisations. Catherine observed in 1897, 'I think we Unitarian's in South Australia and so far as I have seen them in Victoria and N.S.W. are the most comfortable and easy going people in Australia'. The Adelaide Unitarians may not have frowned at Catherine's early efforts for reform. Emily Clark, at least, regarded them favourably. Rather, they probably paid them little attention. Catherine's first efforts brought her neither success nor recognition, and the Unitarians evinced no enthusiasm for them. By the time Catherine had achieved fame and influence, she could draw a large congregation to the church to hear her deliver a stinging tirade against monopolisers and 'greedy men' who appropriate 'the victory and the spoils of political life', or to expound the 'great wave of socialism which has invaded all the churches'. But it is likely that many of

180. Spence, sermon on the Christian Church, p.18

181. Spence, An Autobiography, p.24; Emily Clark to Henry Parkes, 22 April 1862, Parkes Correspondence (A920), Mitchell Library


183. C.H. Spence, sermon on text 'Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people', n.d., MS.(1074), South Australian Archives

184. Spence, sermon on Egoism and Altruism, pp.15-16
the early church members would have agreed with Woods when he grumbled: 'The discourse was more political than I like in a place of worship and I object perhaps more because I think her politics bad'. 185

Catherine did not achieve such prominence until over thirty years after she became a Unitarian, and thirty years after she first formulated her case for electoral reform. But she won recognition for her abilities as a practical reformer earlier, largely through her work in an organization founded and dominated by Unitarians. And she discovered and developed her talent for public speaking, earlier, by preaching in the Unitarian Christian Church. Both laid the essential foundation for her later fame.

In 1872 Catherine joined Emily Clark and several other Unitarians in establishing the Boarding-Out Society, an organisation which pioneered new methods of caring for orphan, destitute, and delinquent children in Australia. 186 Through her work in the Boarding-Out Society, and later the State Children's Council, Catherine acquired the confidence and practical experience which made her an authority on child welfare. As an authority she gained recognition for her abilities, and esteem for her selfless generosity. And that

186. see below chapter 6, passim
recognition and esteem prepared the ground for the public campaigns for electoral reform that won her fame in Australia, Britain, and the United States. She gave her first public address on proportional representation at the invitation of Dr. Charles Strong, after he had heard her read a paper to an Intercolonial Charities Conference on care for the helpless, aged and destitute.  

Six years after she began working in the Boarding-Out Society, Catherine began to fulfil a new function among the Unitarians. From 1873 to 1875, while Woods and his wife were on holiday in England, the services in the Unitarian Christian Church were taken by C.L. Whitham, later an inspector in the Education Department. During that time Whitham arranged to exchange pulpits with the Unitarian congregation in Melbourne for three weeks. The preacher who appeared in his place in the pulpit in Adelaide was Mrs. Martha Webster, sister of H.G. Turner, the principal benefactor of the  

187. Spence, An Autobiography, p.68  
188. Woods, Rambling Recollections, vol.1, pp.133,139-40, 142; John Crawford Woods, 'A Sketch of the Origin and History of the Unitarian Christian Church, Adelaide, South Australia', Month by Month, I,10, pp.2-3  
189. Spence, An Autobiography, p.53
Melbourne church. Catherine recorded in her autobiography that the Melbourne congregation had asked Mrs. Webster to be their pastor, and that she had agreed to take services but not to undertake other pastoral duties, 'visiting especially'. 'She was licensed to conduct marriage services and baptized children'; the annual reports of the Melbourne Unitarian Church for 1880 and 1881 record that Mrs. Webster was their minister, and for 1882 that she was the minister '(pro tem)'.

Martha Webster's teaching was essentially the same as that of Woods. She stressed the distinctiveness of Unitarian belief, the error of other creeds, the importance of Unitarians to increasing enlightenment in society, and the work Unitarians did, not collectively but individually, 'in all reforming movements'. But her sermons made explicit a belief which appears chiefly by implication in Woods's sermons. 'Unitarianism' she proclaimed, 'has always

190. list of subscriptions for the building fund, Committee of the Melbourne Unitarian Church, Annual Report for 1887


192. Committee of the Melbourne Unitarian Church, Annual Reports for 1880,1881,1882, in the possession (1969) of Miss M.E. Crompton, Heathpool, South Australia; the Annual Reports held by the Victorian Public Library cover only the years 1886-1901 and are missing those for 1888,1894,1895,1897-1899

193. Mrs. Webster's speech, Addresses delivered in connection with the Opening of the New Unitarian Church, Grey Street, East Melbourne, Melbourne, 1887, pp.6-8
gratefully acknowledged the deep indebtedness of the religious thought of our time to scientific research'. 194

And in a sermon on The Rising Faith she asserted: 'God speaks by the voice of science today as he spoke by the prophets of old, and it has given us the gospel of natural law, of cause and consequence, of evolution ... and upon these foundations we have to build the temple of the spirit'. 195

Such teaching was not entirely new to Catherine, but she may not have heard it presented so explicitly or eloquently before she listened to Martha Webster. She was 'thrilled by her exquisite voice, by her earnestness, and by her reverence'. 196 She was not shocked to see a woman in the pulpit; she said George Eliot's description of Dinah Morris preaching in Adam Bede had 'prepared' her. But, she exclaimed,

when I heard a highly intelligent and exceptionally able woman conducting the services all through, and especially reading the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments with so much intelligence that they seemed to take on a new meaning, I felt how much the world had been losing for so many centuries. 197

194. op.cit., p. 7
196. Spence, An Autobiography, p. 53
197. ibid.
She was able to hear Martha Webster again, when Woods exchanged pulpits with Melbourne, and more often later in her life when she went to Melbourne.\textsuperscript{198} By then she had become an eloquent preacher herself.

Although she had been inspired by Martha Webster's example, she did not seek this distinction. It was customary in both the Adelaide and Melbourne churches for a layman to take the service if a pastor was not available. H.G. Turner preached to the Melbourne congregation frequently.\textsuperscript{199} One day in 1878, Woods was ill, and there was no layman available to take the service. Some members of the congregation suggested that Miss Spence might read them a sermon of Martineau's.\textsuperscript{200} Catherine seized the opportunity, and followed it up by offering to preach a sermon of her own. On 24 November 1878 she preached an original sermon to the congregation for the first time.\textsuperscript{201} She may have been

\begin{footnotes}
\item[198] ibid.
\item[199] H.G. Turner, sermon on Philanthropy, 17 October 1875, MS. (M.1647); sermon on Unitarianism an historical retrospect, 24 October 1875, MS. (M.1677); sermon on Mrs. Humphrey Ward on the Future of Unitarianism, 10 February 1901, MS. (M.1674); sermon on A Simple Religion 28(?) November 1909, MS. (MS.8062); sermon without title, 21 November 1909, MS. (M.1651); La Trobe Library; six sermons in Theology pamphlets, vol.158, La Trobe Library
\item[200] Spence, An Autobiography, p.53
\item[201] C.H. Spence, sermon on texts: Genesis V, 22 and Luke XVII, 5, 24 November 1878, MS. (1074), South Australian Archives
\end{footnotes}
fulfilling a longstanding ambition: she had made Clara Morison compose comforting sermons for the dying Mrs. Beaufort in her first novel. Once started she never looked back. In her autobiography she remarked, 'I suppose I have preached more than a hundred times in my life, mostly in the Wakefield Street pulpit; but in Melbourne and Sydney I am always asked for help; and when I went to America in 1898-4 I was offered seven pulpits'.

Preaching gave her great pleasure. She recalled, 'The preparation of my sermons ... has always been a joy and a delight to me, for I prefer that my subjects as well as their treatment shall be as humanly helpful as it is possible to make them'. They enabled her to make use of the wide knowledge of scripture which Miss Phinn had commended. She could express in them the ideas she drew from her widely ranging reading. She preached on the parallels between different branches of Buddhism and the congregational and

202. Spence, An Autobiography, p.53; thanks are given to Miss Spence for taking services by the Committee of the Melbourne Unitarian Church in their Annual Reports for 1891,1893,1896,1900,1901

203. Spence, An Autobiography, p.53

204. see above p.81.
hierarchical Christian churches, on Luther, on Milton's unjust conception of God in *Paradise Lost*, and on Tolstoy as a prophet. She could exhort the congregation to pursue each new reform that caught her attention. She preached the merits of the work of William Booth and the Salvation Army, and on child welfare in Britain. She could expound her own views on the best attitudes and virtues to be developed: she preached recognition that Jews, besides being capitalists, were an influence for liberalism in politics because they had always been oppressed; she preached that 'Experience is an

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205. C.H. Spence, sermon on Buddhism at its Best and at its Worst, 11 March, no year, MS.(1074), South Australian Archives

206. C.H. Spence, sermon on text: James I, 27, 21 October 1900, MS.(1074), South Australian Archives

207. C.H. Spence, sermon on Milton's *Paradise Lost*, n.d., MS.(1074), South Australian Archives

208. C.H. Spence, sermon on Tolstoy as prophet, 1 March 1908, MS.(1074), South Australian Archives

209. C.H. Spence, sermon on The prophet of the poor William Booth, 10 November 1907, MS.(1074), South Australian Archives

210. C.H. Spence, sermon entitled 'Evil was called Youth until he grew old and then he was called Habit', n.d., MS.(1074), South Australian Archives

211. C.H. Spence, sermon on the Jew in legend and in History, 26 January 1908, MS.(1074), South Australian Archives.
education and not a snare'; she preached that 'meliorism', rather than optimism or pessimism was the attitude which would assist mankind's progress most. Moreover, because the congregation continued to invite her to preach, she could expect them to hear her sympathetically when she protested against traditions which repress individuality, and asserted that 'acquiescent and submissive mediocrity is too often the attitude of good women'. Her success as a preacher to the small congregation in Adelaide must have played an important and encouraging part in her resolve to preach electoral reform to larger gatherings not only in South Australia, but across the world.

As she grew older Catherine's belief and Woods's teaching diverged. While Woods maintained belief in the divinity of Christ, Catherine preached that 'Jesus Christ was not to us an incarnate God, but a more or less godlike man'. Woods's condemnation of 'materialistic atheism'

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212. C.H. Spence, sermon on text : Romans XII, 21, 18 February 1900 (also delivered in Sydney, 27 May 1900? ), MS.(1074), South Australian Archives

213. ibid.; see below chapter 5, p.190

214. Spence, sermon on the Christian Church, pp.1,9

215. see below chapter 7, passim

216. Spence, sermon on the Christian Church, p.14
may have extended to agnosticism as well: Catherine wrote An Agnostic's Progress, she said, 'to satisfy myself that reverent agnostics were by no means materialists; that man’s nature might or might not be consciously immortal, but it was spiritual; that in the duties which lay before each of us towards ourselves and towards our fellow-creatures, there was scope for spiritual energy and spiritual emotion'.

When Catherine wrote expressing her sympathy to Woods's widow on his death in 1906, she observed: 'my faith has undergone some modifications - for we cannot stand still'.

But she still acknowledged Woods's importance in her life: 'to Mr. Woods' she wrote 'I owe the first clear vision'. And to her conversion to Unitarianism, and her acceptance by the Adelaide Unitarian congregation, she owed not merely her freedom from the unhappiness and spiritual oppression of her youth, but also the spur to work for the greater virtue, wisdom and happiness of mankind, and the conviction that such work was her vocation. 'All else seems puerile and frivolous' she wrote, 'when once we see that we may be fellow workers with God here and now as prophets and apostles and saints have been in days of old'.


219. ibid.

220. Spence, sermon on Egoism and Altruism, pp.22-3
CHAPTER 4

TEACHER

Catherine had resolved to be a teacher by the time she was thirteen.\(^1\) Although her own proposed education was cut short she was probably as well qualified as many who worked as teachers and governesses in Australia and in Britain in the 1840s and 1850s.\(^2\) In the day school in Melrose, Miss Phinn, who suffered from dropsy and taught from a sofa, gave her 'what was considered the education of a gentlewoman'. She learned plain and fancy needlework, reading, writing, probably arithmetic, French, Italian, music, and a smattering of general knowledge from the books read to the children while they sewed.\(^3\) Miss Phinn gave her a testimonial saying that 'from the time you could put three letters together you have evinced a turn for teaching - so clear-headed and patient, and so thoroughly upright in word and deed'.\(^4\)

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2. F.D. Maurice and his friends had to abandon plans for instituting an examination for a teaching diploma when they found that prospective candidates were too ignorant to pass any examination however simple, see Josephine Kamm, *Rapiers and Battleaxes the women's movement and its aftermath*, London, 1966, p.49


4. op.cit., p.17
When her family's ruin and emigration compelled Catherine to consider ways in which she might earn a living, she determined to teach.

She wanted to start immediately. On board the Palmyra, she gathered up the younger children and gave them lessons, probably, as Jeanne Young observed, because she wanted practice. But in Adelaide, she found Miss Phinn's recommendation no help; she had to wait four years before any colonist considered her old enough to teach his children. It might not have been only her youth which prevented her finding employment as a teacher between 1839 and 1843. Economic depression made education a dispensable luxury for most colonists during those years. Rev. T.Q. Stow, whose Classical Accademy was one of only eleven schools pronounced worthy of the name in 1841, had to farm a lease on the River Torrens to support himself. But Catherine's youth seems to have been her greatest initial obstacle. In 1843, when she was seventeen, she was made governess to the families of the Postmaster General, the Surveyor General and the Governor's Private Secretary. She taught each family for two hours

5. Young, Catherine Helen Spence, p.38
7. A.G. Austin, Australian Education 1788-1900, Melbourne, 1961, p.97
8. Spence, An Autobiography, p.18; they were Capt. Watts, E.C. Frome, and A.L. Mundy, respectively
each day, five days a week, and she was paid sixpence an hour. As government officials, her employers were probably more financially secure than most colonists, but Catherine's salary suggests not only that her employers valued her services highly, but also that they enjoyed considerable wealth. In 1843 the South Australian School Society could not find pupils whose parents could afford sixpence a week for school fees. In 1847 when the depression had lifted and the government began giving aid to teachers, its grants were made at a monthly rate equivalent to only fivepence per pupil per week. The South Australian Proprietary School established by wealthy colonists in the same year, fixed its fees at ten guineas a year, which was equivalent to about four shillings a head, a week. Catherine was earning

9. ibid.

10. the Postmaster General, Captain Watts, was a shareholder in the South Australian Proprietary School Company formed in 1847, and as shares cost 25 pounds each, he was probably at least moderately wealthy, see R.J. Nicholas, Private and Denominational Schools of South Australia Their Growth and Development, M. Ed. thesis, University of Melbourne, n.d., pp.44-5

11. Henry Brown, The Development of the Public School System in South Australia, with especial reference to the Education Act of 1851, typescript dated 1940 (D4828(T)), South Australian Archives, p.6

12. op.cit., p.22

13. Nicholas, Private and Denominational Schools in South Australia, p.45
fifteen shillings a week four years earlier. It is little wonder that she was proud of her income: she boasted, 'My mother said she never felt the bitterness of poverty after I began to earn money'.

Catherine continued teaching as a governess for about three years. Then, in May 1846, with the help of her sister Mary, she opened her own school, probably in her family's house in Halifax Street. There is no record of her school, and it probably did not last long. The colony's reviving economy resuscitated earlier schools, and encouraged the establishment of others. Catherine may have had difficulty finding pupils. She may also have grown dissatisfied with teaching as inadequate fulfilment of her talents and ambitions. She had certainly become unhappy about teaching small children.

In 1850, while spending some time in the country, she recorded in her diary that she was about to return to Adelaide.

15. op.cit., p.20
16. Catherine Spence does not mention any location at all for her school, but many teachers used their own residences for schools, see Brown, The Development of the Public School System in South Australia, p.31
17. Brown, The Development of the Public School System in South Australia, p.24; Pike, Paradise of Dissent, p.489
18. Margaret and Gilbert Elliott's remarks about teaching suggest this, Spence, Clara Morison, vol.2 pp.16, 258
"take up my abode with ... to be her nursery governess and house counsellor".\textsuperscript{19} She disliked the prospect because it meant that she lost her prized independence,\textsuperscript{20} and because it confronted her sharply and personally with a problem which had troubled South Australia since 1846. She told her diary "... must keep the moral responsibility of her children to herself. I shall not have it. I will do them as much good and as little harm as I can, but I hope I may not have their souls to answer for. It is a dark subject".\textsuperscript{21} Miss Phinn's testimony suggests that Catherine regarded religious and moral instruction as an integral part of any education. But in 1850 her religious doubts had grown so strong that she stopped taking communion.\textsuperscript{22} The hysterical note in her diary entry suggests that she considered it either impossible, or wrong, to teach without simultaneously imparting moral and religious principles to her pupils, and that she feared the influence of her own troubled ideas. She resolved her difficulty temporarily, by giving up teaching altogether, and later, permanently, by joining the Unitarian Christian Church.

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19. Young, Catherine Helen Spence, p.48; see also above chapter 1, p.4, n.14

20. ibid.

21. ibid.

22. Spence, An Autobiography, p.28; see also above chapter 3, p.84
\end{flushleft}
But her personal involvement in the problem sustained her interest in continuing public debate over the place of religious teaching in general education all her life.

Public debate grew out of the separate issues of the relations between church and state, and the relations between schools and the state. South Australia's founders had intended the colonists to provide voluntarily for their religious and educational needs themselves. Until 1846 the colonists attempted to do so. But during the depression of 1839-44, money for voluntary subscriptions to ministers' salaries, to church buildings, to the School Society, and money for even pew rents and school fees, almost disappeared. In 1843 the School Society's schoolmaster was reduced to asking for a loan of 1 pound because 'he had not a loaf of bread in the house nor a shilling to purchase one'.

The colonists' opinions about the wisdom of sticking to the founders' aims were divided. Debate grew fiercer when the Legislative Council met in June 1846 and heard Lieutenant-Governor Robe announce his intention of 'apportioning


24. T.H. Smeaton, Education in South Australia from 1836 to 1927, Adelaide, n.d., pp.36-7

25. Pike, Paradise of Dissent, p.360
Government aid among the different sects of professing Christians'. He said nothing about aid to schools, but on 2 September that year, the Council, on the Governor's casting vote, approved an ordinance granting 1,110.10.0 pounds to church authorities for 'Christian religion and education'.

It soon became evident that education could not be treated merely as a subsidiary function of the churches; church authorities devoted a far larger proportion of their shares in the grant to their churches than to schools. Robe and his Council acknowledged this a year later when they approved two separate ordinances, one granting aid to chapels and churches, the other providing aid for public education.

Ordinance No.11, 'for the encouragement of Public Education', made no reference to religion, so that, theoretically, education supported by the state could be as secular or sectarian as any teacher pleased. But in order to receive the per capita grants from the colonial revenue, a teacher required nomination by at least twenty parents or guardians.

26. ibid.
27. No.14 of 1846
28. Brown, The Development of the Public School System in South Australia, p.19
29. No.10 of 1847
30. No.11 of 1847
of children between six and sixteen, and the testimony of a
Justice of the Peace to his moral fitness for teaching. 31
This meant that, in practice, the majority of schools
receiving government aid were either run by clerics, or
controlled by 'religious communities by which they were more
or less exclusively supported'. 32 Voluntaryist opposition to
Ordinance No.11 brought its abolition in 1851. The new
partly-elected Legislative Council appointed a School
Inspector and a Select Committee to inquire into the state
of government-assisted education. After hearing the
Inspector's and the Committee's reports, the Council passed
an Education Act, in December 1851, 33 which effected a
compromise between the voluntaryists and the colonists who
wanted government aid to denominational schools continued.
The compromise favoured the voluntaryists, but it did not
abolish government assistance to schools. Instead it
established a Central Board of Education to administer the
government grants, but excluded all ministers of religion
from membership of the Board; provided that 'no attempt ...
be made to influence or disturb the peculiar tenets of any
religious sect', but laid down that schools receiving

31. op.cit., clause 2
32. S.A., G.G., 7 August 1851
33. No.20 of 1851
government aid 'must provide good secular instruction, based on the Christian religion, but apart from all theological and controversial differences of discipline and doctrine'. The Board drew up regulations prohibiting use of any catechism, but instructed teachers to read a chapter from the Old and New Testaments each day. Outcry from churchmen and the most extreme voluntaryists made the Act appear unpopular, but it satisfied the majority of colonists; despite renewed debate, self-government in 1857 brought no change.

Catherine agreed, though reluctantly, with the majority. 'Most men' she wrote 'would like a complete system of Government education to teach true religion along with secular things; but as 20 or 30 different sects cannot agree as to what constitutes truth in religious matters, the thinking part of the community fall back on a purely secular system'. But she was uneasy about solely secular education, and in 1856 she added her voice to the clamorous debate in the press. 'Sir' she wrote -

34. S.A., P.P., 1860, No.34, p.16

35. letter signed 'C.H.S.', Register, 30 December 1856; C.H. Spence to Anthony Forster (then editor of the Register), dated 1856, submitting letter for publication, (MSS.202/5), Mitchell Library
Nothing in this world stands alone; and a course of policy which would divorce objects and interests intimately connected, and acting and reacting upon each other would be wrong and unwise.... Is there any act of common everyday life which religion may not hallow, or a religious ordinance, however holy, which secularism may not degrade? There appears to me to be nothing in the world purely secular; and to say that we would have the education of our children strictly so is to say that we would strengthen one side of the body, one arm, one leg, and leave the other side undeveloped by exercise.

However, she did not argue on these grounds that the government should support schools in which any or every variety of religion was taught. Rather, she maintained that teachers endowed by public money (and, if they did this duty well, public money should flow out in double tides to reward their labours) should be bound to teach morality, not upon utilitarian principles, not because honesty is the best policy, but because goodness, truth, honesty, courage, patience, temperance, and obedience to law are eternally and immutably right, noble, and beautiful and in conformity with the will of our Heavenly Father.36

Another correspondent noted Catherine's 'intelligent and important remarks',37 but the majority of colonists sought no change from Bible reading without comment or instruction. In 1861 a Select Committee ignored Lutheran and Roman Catholic discontent, and reported favourably on the system of education established under the 1851 Act.38 Later efforts

36. ibid.
37. Register, 7 January 1857
38. Austin, Australian Education 1788-1900, pp.157, 159-60
sought not increased religious or moral instruction, but totally secular education. Attempts to abolish Bible reading altogether were defeated in 1873, 1875 and 1896, but Bible readings were given only on request and out of formal school hours after 1875; denomination religious instruction was not introduced in South Australian state schools until 1939. Catherine maintained her opinion of the importance of religious and moral instruction to the end of her life. But she changed her mind about its place in general education as legislation changed the conditions of that education. In 1905 she asserted that free and compulsory education was 'necessarily secular', and that churches should develop their Sunday schools.

Catherine's argument in 1856 bore no traces of the sectarian squabbling which characterised public debate on this issue. She showed, rather, that she was deeply concerned with the practical welfare of both teachers and pupils in government aided schools, with the intellectual freedom of the students, and with the colony's future moral welfare. Her concern may have sprung from her early commitment to education, and it was strengthened and expanded by her

39. [South Australia] 38 & 39 Vic. 1875, No.11; Pike, 'The History of Education in South Australia', pp.63-4
40. Pike, 'The History of Education in South Australia', pp.66-7
41. Register, 31 October 1905
conversion to the Unitarian Christian Church. But she had worn out her early ambition to be a teacher while trying to earn her living at teaching. She did not attempt to express her concern in a schoolroom. But although she was engaged in matters related specifically to schools and classrooms only occasionally after she had given up teaching in 1850, her concern persisted. And she expressed it through her involvement both in discussion of the nature of the education offered in state schools, and in promotion of more useful education for girls.

After she had abandoned her own school, Catherine was interested only in the colony's public education. She maintained all her life that education was the government's responsibility. In 1856 she acknowledged that religious and moral principles might be better taught by parents, but remarked: 'when I look at a shipload of female immigrants, and consider that these are the future mothers of South Australia; when I recollect how much the education of principles and feeling has been neglected in the mother country, I maintain that we ought not to trust implicitly to parental guidance'. 42 In 1880 she argued for government responsibility less because she considered parents incapable of guiding their children than because she was convinced

42. Register, 30 December 1856
that 'the well-being of the colony depends very much on all its children being prepared for the duties of citizenship by receiving a good plain education'. In 1882 she countered voluntaryist objections to parents 'in good circumstances' sending their children to State schools, by asserting that every child had a right to education 'at the expense of the State'. Towards the end of her life she described public education as a 'socialistic movement', and expressed approval of the cost being distributed evenly through the community. She condemned denominational schools as unnecessary extravagance.

Catherine's interest in public education may have been fostered by her visit to Britain in 1865-6. In London she met William Ellis and Barbara Bodichon. She described Ellis

43. Spence, The Laws We Live Under, p.10
44. evidence to the Commission on the working of the Education Acts, S.A., P.P., 1882, No.27, p.143
45. C.H. Spence, address to Women's League, 7 February, no year, (MSS.202/5), Mitchell Library
46. Register, 31 October 1905
47. Catherine Spence's fares to and from Britain in 1865-6 were a present from her friend Edward Stirling, who was a close friend of her brother-in-law, Andrew Murray, and brother-in-law to her close friend John Taylor. Taylor gave her 200 pounds spending money, Spence, An Autobiography, pp.20,28,29
as 'a predominant talker ... and a noteworthy man'. During the 1850s, she recounted, when the Established Church 'overshadowed' all education in England, and Dickens's satire of the commercial schools attended by Nonconformist children was well deserved, Ellis established secular schools which were, Catherine judged, 'good for something'. He also taught 'what he called social science', which Catherine defined as 'teachings on things that make for human happiness and intellectual freedom', 'lessons on the right relations of human beings to each other'. It is likely that his example prompted Catherine's later insistence that elementary education in South Australia should be plain, practical, and directed towards producing useful and dutiful citizens. At Barbara Bochichon's salon, Catherine listened to discussions about the higher education of women, discussions which eventually bore fruit in the establishment of Girton College. These did not inspire her with similar plans for South Australia: the colony had no institutions.

49. ibid.
50. ibid
51. op.cit., p.37
52. C.H. Spence, Paper describing a visit to England in 1865-6, MS.(A434), South Australian Archives
for tertiary education in 1865, and such plans may have seemed premature to a colonist appalled at the state of elementary education in England. But Catherine's conversation with Barbara Bodichon may have contributed something to her later enthusiasm for better education for women.

She was first provoked to public statement about the nature of education in South Australia's government-aided schools by the question of educational standards. Dispute over education raged in the colony from 1872 until the Royal Commission on Education reported in 1882. In 1873, discontent was sharpened by reports of the implementation of the 1872 Education Act in Victoria which provided generally for free, compulsory and secular education. When the South Australian Parliament met in July 1873, Arthur Blyth's government promised to bring in a bill which would make use of 'the experience gained from the working of the new Education Act in Victoria'. But the bill was first amended beyond recognition in the House of Assembly, then in December,

55. S.A., P.D., 14 August 1873, c.143; Register, 26 July 1873
56. Register, 26 September 1873
thrown out by the Legislative Council.\textsuperscript{57} Dispute centred on continued Bible reading and payment of fees for all, or only destitute children. Divided opinion inside Parliament was a pale reflection of that outside. But in the advertisements, articles and letters in the press, at the meetings held in local schoolrooms and the Adelaide Town Hall,\textsuperscript{58} practical determination of the standard of education to be achieved was lost from sight. Despite defeat in Parliament, the government probably retained some hope for improvements within the existing system. At the beginning of 1874 its high handed treatment of the old Education Board, initially appointed in 1851, provoked the Board to resign.\textsuperscript{59} The government appointed a new Board, and made John Anderson Hartley its chairman.\textsuperscript{60} Hartley had been a member of the old Board since 1871,\textsuperscript{61} but his attempts to rouse it to

\textsuperscript{57} S.A., P.D., 10 December 1873, cc.1411-1417

\textsuperscript{58} Register: 29 August 1873, 1 September 1873, 5 September 1873, 9 September 1873, 10 September 1873, 11 September 1873, 12 September 1873, 15 September 1873, 17 September 1873, 20 September 1873, 26 September 1873, 4 October 1873, 6 October 1873, 11 October 1873, 14 October 1873, 27 October 1873, 31 October 1873, 4 November 1873, 7 November 1873, 8 November 1873, 14 November 1873, 2 December 1873, 9 December 1873

\textsuperscript{59} G.E. Saunders, John Anderson Hartley and Education in South Australia, B.A. Hons. thesis, University of Adelaide, 1958, p.15

\textsuperscript{60} S.A., G.G., 5 February 1874; Saunders, John Anderson Hartley and Education in South Australia, p.16

\textsuperscript{61} Saunders, John Anderson Hartley and Education in South Australia, p.12
greater energy and efficiency had been blotted up in its inertia.\textsuperscript{62} As chairman of the new Board, he won his colleagues' support for a policy of reform.\textsuperscript{63} One of his first moves was to draw up new examinations for teachers requesting the certificates which entitled them to government grants. Then, in July 1874, he published the first results from the new examinations.\textsuperscript{64} They were appalling. Of thirty-four teachers taking the exam., three had already received government grants for more than three years, four for more than two years, twelve for more than one year, and fifteen for some months. Of the thirty-four, only three passed the exam., and two of those had been appointed by the new Board. With the results, Hartley offered examples of the questions asked and answers given. To the question, 'What changes were introduced at the Norman Conquest''', one candidate answered, 'The introduction of Christianity', a second, 'The ringing of the "Corfu" bell', and a third 'From the house of Plantagenet to the time of the Tudors'. When asked 'What was the cause of the Crusades, and which of our kings took part in them?', one teacher wrote, 'The

\textsuperscript{62} ibid.  
\textsuperscript{63} op.cit., p.17  
\textsuperscript{64} Register, 28 July 1874
boundary of Nova Scotia and Charles I engaged in them'. The Register wondered if the answers were jokes, dismissed the notion as improbable, and commented that they were 'a very painful revelation of the imperfect educational attainments possessed by some of the persons who desire to take charge of the State schools of the colony'. Hartley had successfully presented the standard of education in government-aided schools for specific and scathing criticism, and thus cleared the way for total reform.

Catherine, however, considered the whole affair grossly unjust. She asked the Board for copies of the examination papers and incorporated them in a letter to the Register. She pointed out indignantly that 'the promised list of books recommended for teachers to prepare from was not published until after the examination', that the exams were divided into three standards for first, second and third class certificates, that no-one had attempted a first class paper before so that 'we do not know what is expected as the perfection for our town and country schools requiring Government aid', and that many who failed the second class exam would probably have passed that set for the third class certificate. Infuriated by the pretentiousness of laughter

65. ibid.
66. ibid.
67. Register, 1 September 1874
at the published blunders, she declared that 'even ladies
and gentlemen who have had much culture in books, newspapers
and society' would have failed the second class paper. The
Board must 'bid considerably higher' if it wanted 'higher
attainments'. An inspection of a teacher engaged in teaching
his pupils 'to read, write and calculate in the best manner
in the shortest possible time', would reveal his capabilities
for his work, but asking him the date of the Licinian
Rogations could not. What use, she demanded, was such
learning to a teacher educating children who, in most cases,
would spend no more than six years in school? She went on
to argue that what the colony needed was sound basic
education: 'teaching a child to read intelligently,
fluently ... is of more consequence to his development than
all the rest of his school education together. It is giving
him the key to the universe'. 'Second ... comes writing, not
of copies only, but the thoughts of others, as in dictation
and his own recollection of lessons in his own words. And
arithmetic by which he may learn to buy and sell and manage
his own affairs, is a very good third'. She thought this
could be supplemented with 'grammar, intelligently taught,
because it is the only mental training that children under
twelve are capable of receiving, and to be able to perceive
differences and to make distinctions between different classes
of words helps a child understand better anything he reads'.
Basic education could also include 'such scientific instruction as deals with the objects that come into the child's daily life'. A teacher who could impart all this, 'keep order and discipline and enforce cleanliness and good manners', was worthy of higher pay than he was then receiving, whether he could answer the Board's questions or not. The general standard of education, she asserted, would be as high as that required either by Melbourne or in the English National Schools. If maintained in country schools, she claimed, it could do much 'for the civilization of the district'. Why, then, prohibit teachers who could not pass an exam. from teaching, when the exam. bore so little relation to what they needed to teach, and teachers were in such short supply?  

Catherine's fierce common sense may have prevented the matter being taken any further by the press; there were no more derogatory remarks about the examination results. She may also have ensured that Hartley at least gave the teachers fair warning of the books they should prepare from: a far higher proportion of teachers passed the Board's next examination held in 1875.  

And she offered a sensible and well-timed reminder of educational priorities in a colony

68. ibid.  

69. Register, 2 February 1875
where short supply of either capital or labour created urgent demands for child labour on farms, and generated cries of 'useless' whenever clauses to make education compulsory were included in proposed legislation.

Catherine's attitude to education was strictly utilitarian, but it was not restrictively so. Her own experience had led her to value practical learning more highly than formal education. Towards the end of her life she observed that Australia had taught her 'more valuable lessons' than the institution in Edinburgh to which her father had promised to send her. And she saw clearly that conditions in a new colony required that sound, elementary and practical education be extended to as many children as possible. Arguments that voluntary education would be 'less mechanical and more expansive' than 'comprehensive and uniform' education provided by the government were impractical. 'We cannot legislate for geniuses and dunces', she argued, 'but for the ordinary rank and file'. It was usually possible for able children to proceed to higher education,

70. Catherine Helen Spence 1825-1905, reprinted from Register, 31 October 1905, p.21

71. Register, 3 March 1879

72. Hartley introduced scholarships which enabled a very few able boys to proceed to secondary education at government expense at 'one or other of the reputable private schools', Education in South Australia Report of the Committee of Enquiry into Education in South Australia 1969-1970, Adelaide, 1971, p.15
and geniuses would not be hampered by a system of education designed to benefit the majority - they overcame 'all the obstacles in their way'. But she maintained that the education of 'the ordinary rank and file' was not merely 'comprehensive and uniform'. She acknowledged that 'State action is proverbially slow, cumbersome and costly', but contended that this did not mean it would provide only 'the drill education system, which, like the bed of Procrustes, stretched or cramped varied intelligence to suit one mediocre standard'. Rather, she claimed, 'We try to devise some scheme by which the poor child's time may be economized so ... that he shall be put in possession of the tools for self-cultivation as easily, as cheaply, and as quickly as possible'. One feature of the scheme was making familiarity and curiosity an incentive to learn. She held that

the three R's are better apprehended when the child is interested in various reading, when he knows something he can write about and when he has some idea about what things are bought and sold, where they come from, where they can be sent to, arithmetic is much more interesting.

73. Register, 3 March 1879
74. ibid.
75. ibid.
76. Register, 31 October 1905
Another feature was cultivation of initiative and independence. Catherine opposed harsh or oppressive discipline. She told the Criminological Society:

> It used to be a maxim that the first thing to be done in education was to break a child's will, so as to produce instant and unreasoning obedience .... [but] if the ipse dixit of the parent is made the only law of life, the child has no guiding rule for his conduct in the world. The will should be trained and strengthened, for it is indeed the real "ego".  

Such a system of education required teachers who were wise and sympathetic rather than people with specialised, or even particularly advanced education. Catherine considered it unnecessary for elementary teachers to go to the university, because university education was highly specialised, and 'for our elementary teachers' she said, 'we want breadth rather than depth'.

With such an enlightened view of the colony's educational needs, Catherine approved warmly of the increasing enterprise and efficiency of public education during the 1870s and 1880s. And despite her anger at Hartley's initial efforts to raise the standard of public education, she sympathised with his aims. Hartley's power had increased. In 1875 Parliament.

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77. C.H. Spence, Heredity and Environment Delivered before (and printed at the request of) the Criminological Society of South Australia, 23 October 1897, Adelaide, 1897, p.7

78. Register, 4 November 1905
passed an Education Act\textsuperscript{79} which dissolved the new Education Board, appointed a Council of Education, and left most of the details of reorganising the education system to be drawn up as regulations by the Council. Hartley was made the Council's permanent, salaried president, so that the regulations were very largely his work. In 1878 Parliament passed another Education Act\textsuperscript{80} which, while it reorganised the central administration and its relations with the government, did not materially alter the provisions of the 1875 Act. Hartley, with the new title of Inspector-General, remained in executive control of the colony's public education. As chairman of the Board in 1874, he drew criticism for his attempts to make the education system more efficient.\textsuperscript{81} As president of the Council, which controlled courses of instruction and standards of education within schools, appointments, removals, examinations, certification and salaries of teachers, he was widely and emphatically criticised as authoritarian and centralist.\textsuperscript{82} After reading a

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\textsuperscript{79} [South Australia] 38 & 39 Vic., 1875, No.11
\textsuperscript{80} [South Australia] 41 & 42 Vic., 1878, No.122
\textsuperscript{81} Saunders, John Anderson Hartley and Education in South Australia, p.20
\textsuperscript{82} op.cit., p.22
\end{flushleft}
particularly violent attack on him in the press,\textsuperscript{83} Catherine was so distressed that she could not sleep.\textsuperscript{84} She did not, then, know him personally, but, she recalled, 'I knew he had been an admirable head teacher, and the most valuable member of the Education Board .... I knew, too, that the old school teachers were far inferior to what was needed for the new work, and that you cannot make an omelette without breaking eggs'.\textsuperscript{85} So, at one o'clock in the morning she got out of bed and wrote to him offering her sympathy and support.\textsuperscript{86} Hartley responded, and their subsequent friendship\textsuperscript{87} led to Catherine's active involvement in South Australia's public education.

The Education Act of 1875 made elementary education compulsory, and provided for appointment of local Boards of Advice to supervise school attendances and to inform the Council of local requirements.\textsuperscript{88} Before Boards could be

\textsuperscript{83} possibly the biting attack in a clipping from the Register preserved among J.P. Boucant's papers: the article is pasted on a sheet of paper with remarks criticising the article in Boucant's handwriting, interspersed with remarks justifying the article in John Howard Clark's handwriting, beside it, (99(321)no.14), South Australian Archives

\textsuperscript{84} Cook, Catherine Helen Spence, p.2

\textsuperscript{85} Spence, \textit{An Autobiography}, p.54

\textsuperscript{86} Cook, Catherine Helen Spence, p.2

\textsuperscript{87} see above chapter 1, p.

\textsuperscript{88} \textit{Education in South Australia}, p.12
appointed to enforce compulsory education, school districts had to be defined and government schools selected or built within them. Progress was hampered and slow; in 1876 the Register observed caustically that no Boards of Advice had yet been appointed. But in November 1877, Catherine wrote to C.H. Pearson, boasting: 'I am a member of the Board of Advice for the School District of East Torrens and I hope in time to have a seat on the Council of Education itself'. She was the first woman in South Australia to be given such an appointment, and it pleased her greatly. But she probably did not enjoy the work her position entailed. The Board's chief task was to interview parents who claimed they could not afford the fees, and those whose children had not been at school for the prescribed number of days. In 1877 she told Pearson, 'I like our system of fees, and until our Boards of Advice become rating boards I should be inclined to make them higher rather than to reduce them'. She may, at that time, have considered free education likely to pauperise the children. She explained to Pearson that she thought children 'should receive instruction in morals and

89. Register, 17 January 1876

90. C.H. Spence to Professor Pearson, 2 November 1877, MS. (7471), La Trobe Library

91. Spence, An Autobiography, p.57

92. ibid.; Education in Australia, p.12
in the duties of a citizen, especially with regard to govt property govt patronage and govt money being a trust for the benefit of all, and not plunder to be scrambled for by the strongest and most unscrupulous'. 93 But by 1882, when she gave evidence to the Royal Commission on Education, she had changed her mind. She cited the example of America and asserted that free education would not pauperise children. 94 In her autobiography she claimed that she had disliked her work for the East Torrens Board of Advice because she objected to school fees as a burden on the poor. 95 But this did not prevent her relishing her official position, or her sense of humour from leavening the Board's work. 96

The Board did not acquire the power to determine fees, and the Education Council was replaced by a government department, so Catherine did not fulfil the ambitions she had displayed to Pearson. But two years after she wrote to him she was given an opportunity to satisfy her long-standing wish to introduce moral instruction into state schools, and her more recent eagerness to teach children 'the duty of a

93. Spence to Professor Pearson, 2 November 1877
94. S.A., P.P., 1882, No.27, p.143
95. Spence, An Autobiography, p.57
96. ibid.
citizen'. The Minister of Education suggested that a textbook should be written about the laws and institutions of the colony for senior pupils in the state schools. The suggestion must have pleased Hartley: he regarded state education at its best as a preparation for life, and he expected teachers to turn out good citizens from their classrooms. He asked Catherine to prepare a text. It was 'to lead from the known to the unknown - it might include the elements of political economy and sociology - it might make use of familiar illustrations from the experience of a new country - but it must not be too long'.

Catherine probably devoted much time and effort to this work. She may have read some of William Ellis's textbooks for schools as a guide. She almost certainly drew heavily on another work to which she had contributed at least considerable time. Among her papers is an essay of a hundred pages, in her handwriting, entitled 'Ethics of

97. ibid.
98. Saunders, John Anderson Hartley and Education in South Australia, pp.41-2
100. see Florence Fenwick Miller, 'William Ellis and his work as an Educationist', Fraser's Magazine, February, 1882
In 1892 she referred to 'an unpublished book' with this title which was, she said, 'written by my late brother, who was one of the most conservative of thinkers'. She meant her youngest brother David. She noted in her autobiography that he was 'greatly interested in all abstruse problems and abstract questions', but that although 'he had various schemes for the regeneration of mankind', he had 'inherited all the Conservatism of the Brodies for generations back'. Since David's essay is preserved in Catherine's handwriting, it is likely that she either wrote it at his dictation, or that she formulated ideas they had discussed together. And while the predominant sentiment of the essay is both politically and socially more conservative than anything Catherine wrote, similarities in some of the arguments and illustrations show that David's 'book' influenced Catherine's textbook strongly.

Catherine's text, a small book of 120 pages, entitled *The Laws We Live Under*, was published by the Education Department in 1880. It was divided into short chapters with long headings in heavy print summarising the contents. Some

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101. (MSS.202/2), Mitchell Library

102. C.H. Spence, 'National or Compulsory Providence', Proceedings of the Second Australasian Conference on Charity, Melbourne, 1892, p.81

words and phrases within the chapters also appeared in heavy print, presumably to guide the teachers' emphasis and assist the students' memories. Starting with a chapter on 'The law of the family, the law of the school, and the law of the land', Catherine expounded the necessity of laws, the importance of obedience even to imperfect laws, and the value of understanding them. The highest law, she stated, was that of 'Conscience' which held people in obedience to the laws of the Creator. But she did not allow her urge to moralise more than passing expression. Her book gave accounts of 'wealth', land, labour and capital, land laws, taxation, the constitution and government of South Australia, the functions of governments, different kinds of law, institutions and means for providing for the future, trade unions, local government institutions, pauperism and benevolence, and organs for the expression of public opinion. She was criticised for covering too much ground: "political economy, trades unions, insurance companies, and newspapers" her detractors objected "were outside the scope of the laws we live under". But Catherine considered that 'in a new State where the optional duties of Government are so numerous, it was of great importance for the young citizen

104. Spence, The Laws We Live Under, p.14
105. Spence, An Autobiography, p.58
to understand economic principles'. 106

Her book was the 'first economics text for Australian secondary [sic] schools'. 107 Twenty-four years after it first appeared, the Assistant Inspector-General of Schools said that it had introduced into South Australian schools, subjects which were still only being considered at educational conferences in other states in 1905. 108 Catherine was proud of it. She hoped it would help and encourage parents as well as children, so that she was disappointed to learn that its use was restricted to school hours. 109 But in her autobiography she observed:

the children of thirty years ago, when "The Laws We Live Under" was first published, are the men and women of today, and who shall say but that among them are to be found some at least worthy and true citizens, who owe to my little book their first inspiration to "hitch their wagon to a star". 110

She was probably exalting, as well as sentimentalising her influence. Jeanne Young recalled children wishing that Miss Spence could be left in the cupboard. 111 But Catherine's

106. ibid.


108. Catherine Helen Spence 1825-1905, p.19


110. ibid.

111. Young, Catherine Helen Spence, p.152
book may have stirred some schoolgirls to an awareness of events beyond their households. In its first chapter she stated 'The progress of the world ... depends on the character and conduct of its women as much as on that of its men; and there can be no greater mistake for girls to make than to suppose they have nothing to do with good citizenship and good government'. 112 Her assertion was supported by her promotion of more advanced education for girls to equip them for the citizenship she wished them to recognise.

Secondary education for boys had been available in South Australia since 1847. In that year, wealthy Anglicans formed a proprietary school which, in 1849, became St. Peter's School Collegiate. 113 In 1867 the Wesleyan Methodist Conference established Prince Alfred College. 114 Other private schools, like J.L. Young's Educational Establishment 115 and the Whinham's North Adelaide Grammar School 116 supplemented the denominational secondary schools. But, while there were

112. Spence, The Laws We Live Under, p. 8
113. Act of Incorporation, No. 1 of 1849
114. Saunders, John Anderson Hartley and Education in South Australia, p. 6; Hartley was headmaster of Prince Alfred College when he was appointed chairman of the new Education Board.
115. Nicholas, Private and Denominational Schools in South Australia, pp. 83-6
116. op. cit., pp. 89-92
countless attempts to found private secondary schools for girls, none survived that offered an education comparable with that provided at the Presbyterian Ladies' College in Melbourne. By the time there was general debate over the colony's public education system in the 1870s, some colonists had begun to see provision of good secondary education for girls as imperative. Catherine supported them with articles in the Register.

In 1874 she argued for 'a radical change in the systems of female education which at present obtain', on the grounds that female suffrage was imminent, and women must be educated if they were to use political rights properly. In 1878 she changed her ground and argued first that changes in population growth and movement were forcing unprecedented numbers of women into the labour force, and second that industrialisation was leaving housewives idle and frustrated. Both should be enabled to find rewarding work. But to do so they must have access to a more useful education than 'the pretentious programme of the young ladies' seminary'.

117. op.cit., p.200
118. see Tregenza, Professor of Democracy p.77 ff.
119. this article is anonymous, but it is one of only two that I have found which fit Catherine Spence's description of the articles John Howard Clark asked her to write, Spence, An Autobiography, p.54; Register, 15 January 1874
120. Spence, Some Social Aspects of South Australian Life, p.10
She considered that the need in South Australia could be supplied either by the state or by a joint stock company.\textsuperscript{121}

In 1875 she wrote an account of the work of the Girls' Public Day School Company, Limited, in England, but she concluded it by exhorting the South Australian Government not to forget the importance of higher education for girls.\textsuperscript{122}

In 1875 the government's attention to education was fully occupied by its efforts in preparation for the introduction of compulsory elementary education. And the composition of both parliament and ministry changed in the following few years. But the \textit{Register} continued to argue for secondary education for girls.\textsuperscript{123} Hartley, who dreamed of a complete system of public secondary schools,\textsuperscript{124} worked for the foundation of at least one secondary school to meet the colony's most urgent need. The University of Adelaide, established in 1874, was to create unprecedented demand for secondary education for girls when, in 1880, it announced that it would admit women to courses for degrees.\textsuperscript{125}

\textsuperscript{121} op.cit., p.11

\textsuperscript{122} \textit{Register}, 5 January 1875; this article is also anonymous, see above n.119

\textsuperscript{123} e.g. \textit{Register}: 30 March 1875, 22 May 1875

\textsuperscript{124} Saunders, \textit{John Anderson Hartley and Education in South Australia}, p.41

\textsuperscript{125} Norman MacKenzie, \textit{Women in Australia}, Melbourne, 1962, p.33
government accepted the general wish, and in October 1879 the state Advanced School for Girls was opened. The only objections raised were to the expense, and Catherine answered those in the press a month before the school opened. Catherine probably regarded the school as a more important achievement than the admission of women to university degrees. In her autobiography she complained that she regarded "special knowledge and special culture as a means for advancing the culture of all", and that except for medical graduates, she had found University women deficient in those 'altruistic ideas' which 'complete [the] development of the human being'.

Although Catherine gave up teaching in 1850, she continued to enjoy the chance of giving a lesson. The Laws We Live Under was used in the Advanced School for Girls as well as in the elementary schools, and Catherine was occasionally invited to take a lesson on the subjects it

126. Register, 9 October 1879
127. Register, 18 September 1879; pupils at the Advanced School for Girls paid fees, Education in South Australia p.15
128. Spence, An Autobiography, p.58
129. op.cit., p.59
130. op.cit., p.58
131. Cook, Catherine Helen Spence, p.2; it was probably also used in the private schools: twelve copies were ordered by E.S.Wigg and Son in 1881, file 42,1881, Office of Inspector-General of Schools, MS.(GRG 18 Ser.3), South Australian Archives
treated. One of her pupils recalled that in talking about local manufacturing, she referred to the tweed factory at Lobethal. 'One girl said, "My dress is made of Lobethal tweed"'. Miss Spence replied "Take your fingers out of your mouth, Miss Lobethal tweed. We bow to you", and she did'.

This suggests that Catherine might have been a splendid teacher. But her personal ambition and her eagerness to contribute to the progress towards salvation and happiness of not just a schoolroom of children but all humanity, compelled her to seek her vocation in a wider field than a school. Her work for school education was only a minor facet of her career. Yet the emphasis in her articles on consideration of the needs, motives and incentives of the children, may have contributed a little to South Australia's conversion to the 'child-centred' "New Education" in the 1900s.

And her textbook pioneered not only the study of economics, but also the study of the world immediately outside the classroom, in Australian schools. This probably strengthened to Catherine's conviction that she could contribute to the colony's public affairs. It certainly demonstrated to other colonists that she had an important and valuable contribution to make.

132. Cook, Catherine Helen Spence, p.2

133. Education in South Australia, p.14
CHAPTER 5

JOURNALIST

By the time Catherine gave up teaching in 1850, she might well have considered journalism a better paying prospect. Her earnings as a governess could not have amounted to more than 37 pounds a year, and her school probably brought her less. Her brother John, as Adelaide correspondent for the Argus, was earning 50 pounds a year, and since Catherine wrote the articles which he sent under his name, she also received the income from them. But she did not give up teaching for journalism. The daily and bi-weekly press required news-hounds, an occupation unsuited to a lady. Although Margaret Stevenson, wife of the editor of the Register, might contribute both poems and political articles to her husband's newspaper, and although Catherine might have occasional pieces printed in her brother-in-law's paper, the Southern Australian, both sheltered behind

1. Spence, An Autobiography, p.18; see above chapter 4, pp.130-1
2. op.cit., p.24; articles about Adelaide in the Argus are unsigned
3. Sowden, Our Pioneer Press, pp.97-100, 231; George H. Pitt, The Press in South Australia 1836 to 1850, Adelaide, 1846, p.16
initials and pen-names. Social convention prohibited women from employment as journalists. Magazines and journals requiring book reviews and original essays might have encouraged contributions from a woman. But in South Australia these were ephemeral and of poor quality, and in other colonies they were generally short-lived. Catherine hoped for recognition and esteem which the anonymity of her occasional letters and trifles in the press would not win her. So she lived on the income provided for her and her mother by presents from her maiden aunts in Scotland, and attempted to fulfill her ambition and become self-supporting by writing novels.

Her novels showed that she had a considerable talent for journalism. Her interest in public affairs, her imagination, and her common sense, made her quick to perceive

5. Cooper, The Foundation of Culture in Adelaide, pp.112,138
6. e.g. the *South Australian Magazine*, the *Adelaide Magazine*, the *Adelaide Miscellany*, the *Monthly Almanac* and *Illustrated Commentator*, see Cooper, The Foundation of Culture in Adelaide, pp.129,135,153,156-60
7. information supplied by F.M. *Gentle*, The 'Gentle' Critic, chapter of incomplete (June 1971) *Ph.D.* thesis on Daniel Deniehy, Australian National University
9. 'journalism' has been used broadly throughout this thesis to apply to any form of writing for the daily and weekly press
the implications of developments in the colony, and her unadorned prose conveyed clear, economical descriptions and gave a persuasive immediacy to her rhetoric. She had probably been well trained. With both her brother and her brother-in-law connected with newspapers, she had opportunity to discuss the qualities desirable in articles in the press. Her brother-in-law, Andrew Murray, had been only an amateur when he became editor of the Southern Australian in 1843, but after he bought the paper and changed its name to the South Australian in 1844, he developed it into a significant voice in colonial debate, and he was doubtless proud of the quality of reports of events in Britain and the up-to-date book reviews with which he filled its back page. He would not have accepted Catherine's contributions if he had considered them likely to detract from his paper's reputation. Similarly, John Spence would not have put his name to articles for the Argus had he not approved them. Catherine apparently satisfied them both. John continued

10. Cooper, The Foundation of Culture in Adelaide, p.127
11. Pitt, The Press in South Australia 1836 to 1850, p.59
12. ibid.; Cooper, The Foundation of Culture in Adelaide, p.139
13. e.g. Pike, Paradise of Dissent, pp.296,378,417
to employ her as amanuensis until 1858 when the opening
of the Adelaide-Melbourne telegraph brought his appointment
to an end. When Murray went to Melbourne to become
commercial editor for the *Argus* in 1852, he left his paper
to be run by John Spence and W.W. Whitridge, with instructions
that Catherine should write any articles needed on state aid
to the churches. The *South Australian* lasted only a few
months longer, but Catherine's acquaintance with Whitridge
may have led to her introduction to Andrew Garran, and she
could only have benefited by paying attention to the journalism
of both men. Whitridge and Garran produced a weekly paper
called the *Austral Examiner* for nine months of 1851, in
which they displayed the talents which later made Whitridge
'one of the most virile writers on *The Register*', and

*Australian Encyclopaedia*

*Spence, An Autobiography*, p.21

17. *Spence, An Autobiography*, p.21

18. ibid.

19. she said that 'my friend Dr. Garran, then editor of the
Sydney Morning Herald, accepted articles and reviews from
me', *Spence, An Autobiography*, p.56

20. Cooper, *The Foundation of Culture in Adelaide*, pp.149-50

Garran the highly regarded editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald*. However, it was not until twenty years later that Catherine, enjoying the recognition her novels had won her, confident enough to disregard society's prohibitions on proper occupations for women, and disillusioned with the paltry income from her novels, first found her vocation as a publicist in working for a newspaper.

She founded her reputation as a writer in 1864, when 'Uphill Work', the first work to be published under her name, was serialised as a 'New and Original Tale, by Miss Spence, Author of 'Clara Morrison[sic]', 'Tender and True', &c.' in the *Weekly Mail*. In 1865 the same tale was published in book form and three years later her fourth novel appeared. Discussions among the characters in her novels would have shown her readers that Catherine was uncommonly well-read in modern literature. But she also acquired a reputation as a literary pundit independently.

In 1865, when she was in London, she asked Smith, Elder and Company if she would be paid for the second edition of *Tender and True*. After ten minutes' conversation, the

22. ibid.
23. *Telegraph*, 22 February 1864, advertisement
24. see above chapter 2, p. 29
firm's reader told her that if she could 'put these ideas into shape' he could have them printed as an article in the Cornhill Magazine. This she did. The same year she was asked to write an article for Edward Wilson, a former editor of the Argus who had retired to England, for the Fortnightly Review. Both appeared, the following year, without Catherine's name, indeed the article in the Fortnightly Review was printed over Wilson's name, but Catherine made sure that her colonial friends knew that her work had appeared in two highly reputed periodicals. In 1866 the committee of the South Australian Institute asked her to write a lecture on her impressions of England, and she mentioned both articles in it. The lecture was not a success: it was delivered by her friend Howard Clark, and he had such difficulty in reading her handwriting that his delivery was 'not very satisfactory'. Nevertheless the

26. op.cit., p.25; see below chapter 7, pp.278-9
29. Spence, Paper describing a visit to England in 1865-6 pp. E-G
audience learned from it that Catherine had met George Eliot, and while her account of their brief, unrewarding exchange could not lead anyone to suppose that she claimed even acquaintance with her idol, her rare distinction probably attracted attention in Adelaide's literary circles. Five years later, the Institute Committee asked her for 'two literary lectures'. Catherine not only offered to read these herself, but also chose to lecture on Elizabeth and Robert Browning. Browning was considered an obscure and difficult poet, so her lecture must have enhanced her reputation as a literary authority. About four years later, when she was lecturing to the Mutual Improvement Society of the Unitarian Christian Church on George Eliot, her friendship with Martha Webster led to her introduction to Mrs Webster's brother, H.G. Turner. He and two other prominent members of

31. Spence, Paper describing a visit to England in 1865-6, p.M
32. Spence, An Autobiography, p.45
33. Spence, An Autobiography, pp.52-3
Melbourne's intellectual and commercial circles were planning to establish a new periodical, and Turner asked Catherine for the manuscript of her lectures to print in it. In 1876 Catherine's article appeared in the second number of the Melbourne Review. This journal claimed to be 'a novelty in these Colonies'. Earlier attempts to 'acclimatize periodical literature' had been too light weight and parochial to compete successfully with the English monthlies and the local weekly papers. But the Melbourne Review intended to devote its pages to 'subjects of more solid character and more permanent interest': 'articles on Philosophy, Theology, Science, Art and Politics' it declared, would form its leading feature. Catherine probably found its intellectual

34. in 1876 Turner was General Manager of the Commercial Bank of Australia, and President of the Melbourne Chamber of Commerce; his publications include History of the Colony of Victoria, 2 vols., London, 1894; his colleagues were Arthur Patchett Martin, whom Catherine Spence calls a 'litterateur', presumably the writer of several poems signed 'A.P.M.' in the Melbourne Review, and Alexander Sutherland, head of Carlton College 1877-92, acting Professor of English Literature at Melbourne University, Acting Registrar of the University when he died in 1902, author of fifteen books, and with H.G. Turner, author of The Development of Australian Literature, London, 1898; see F. Johns, Australian Biographical Dictionary; Spence An Autobiography, p.52

35. Spence, An Autobiography, p.42

36. Spence, 'George Eliot'

37. unsigned, 'To Our Readers', Melbourne Review, I, 1
respectability attractive: her article in its second number was the first printed over her name, and she sent it two more articles within the next year.\textsuperscript{38} Her acknowledged appearance in a serious colonial periodical probably confirmed her reputation in South Australia as both a writer and an authority on modern literature. Two years later she was offered regular employment as a contributor to the literary pages of the colony's oldest newspaper.\textsuperscript{39}

She was to take the place of Howard Clark. He had become a part-proprietor of the Register and its weekly, the Observer, in 1865,\textsuperscript{40} and their editor in 1870.\textsuperscript{41} He did not, a later editor judged, have 'a news nose',\textsuperscript{42} but he did write funny satirical verses, entertaining literary articles and

\textsuperscript{38} C.H. Spence 'Sir Richard Hanson', Melbourne Review, I, 3; 'S', ' Australian Federation and Imperial Union', Fraser's Magazine, October 1877, pp.526-39; the second article was initially rejected by the Melbourne Review, see Spence, An Autobiography, p.52

\textsuperscript{39} the first number of the South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register was issued on 18 June 1836 in London, Sowden, Our Pioneer Press, pp.4, 12

\textsuperscript{40} Sowden, Our Pioneer Press, p.27

\textsuperscript{41} op.cit.,p.160

\textsuperscript{42} op.cit.,p.162
book reviews,43 so that his death in 1878 left a noticeable gap in the papers. His successor as editor, John Harvey Finlayson,44 wanted to maintain, and if possible improve, the standard of the papers' literary pages.45 He suggested to Catherine that she become 'a regular outside contributor'. He 'felt that the loss of Mr Clark might be in some measure made up' she recalled, 'if I gave myself wholeheartedly to the work'.46

Catherine was jubilant. At fifty-two she found, she exclaimed, 'a glorious opening for my ambition and for my literary proclivities'.47 Moreover, she was not restricted to literary articles. In 1877 both the Melbourne Review and Fraser's Magazine had printed her articles on land taxation and imperial union.48 The Register had noted her article in the Melbourne Review, and remarked that it was 'characterized by the clearness of thought and argument and attention to

43. op.cit.,p.28

44. Australian born son of Scottish immigrants, attended J.L. Young's Educational Institution, joined the Register c.1860, editor 1878-1897, Sowden, Our Pioneer Press, pp. 178-9,181


46. ibid.

47. ibid.

48. C.H. Spence, 'Graduated Succession Duties', Melbourne Review, II, 8, pp.443-50; 'S', 'Australian Federation and Imperial Union'
detail displayed in all Miss Spence's writings'. Under her appointment to the *Register* she was to contribute literary and social articles; 'Leading articles', she remembered, 'were to be written at my own risk. If they suited the policy of the paper they would be accepted, otherwise not'. Many leading articles were rejected, but not one literary or social contribution. Catherine said she 'felt as if the round woman had got at last into the round hole which fitted her'. Working in her 'little study' with her books, pigeon holes, and her mother knitting in the rocking chair by the low window, she enjoyed a new sense of purpose. Her articles for the *Register* were not the first for which she was paid; she had earned 12 pounds from the *Cornhill Magazine*, 10 pounds from Wilson for the article in the *Fortnightly Review*, and 8 pounds 15 shillings from *Fraser's Magazine*. But for the first time in her life she had the satisfaction of earning

49. *Register*, 27 October 1877
51. ibid.
52. ibid.
53. ibid.
54. *op.cit.* pp.25,26,52
her own livelihood, and by the 1880s she considered that she was bringing in 'a very decent income' with her pen. Even more than her financial security, she rejoiced in 'the breadth of the canvas' on which she could draw her 'sketches of books and of life'.

Her 'sketches' included some efforts which were simply fun. She wrote at least two short stories for children, called 'The Hen's Language' and 'The Story of the Three Pigs', and she contributed a large number of acrostics, and charades involving such characters as 'Mr Dryasdust, F.R.S., M.P.,... Captain Fribble, Sophy Lounger, Mrs Martinet, [and] Fanny Smart', to the Observer Miscellany. But most of her work was serious, though not humourless, literary and social criticism. She usually combined the two: her 'sketches'

55. op.cit., p.61; it was never more than 300 pounds, a year and generally less, see Morice, Auntie Kate, p.3

56. Spence, An Autobiography, p.56

57. undated clippings, (MSS.202/6), Mitchell Library

58. Bibliography of Catherine Helen Spence, Adelaide, 1967, p.15

59. C.H. Spence, 'Our Christmas Mince-Pie Acting Charade', undated clipping, (MSS.202/6), Mitchell Library
were almost always drawn simultaneously from both her reading and local events or situations. An article on Balzac in the Melbourne Review contained more biography and discussion of social values than literary criticism,\(^60\) another in the Register on trade, wages, and the mechanisation of industry commented simultaneously on the exhibition in Adelaide and on several economic and social theorists which she had read.\(^61\) Yet she won esteem as a literary critic and as a social commentator separately.

She was a sensible and sometimes perceptive literary critic. Despite her interest in the social values conveyed by fiction, she distinguished artistic from social merit in the books she reviewed. She observed of Olive Schreiner's Story of an African Farm that 'As a novel the book is nowhere, as an expression of revolt it is everywhere'.\(^62\) She praised George Eliot's novels for their balance and proportion, as

\(^{60}\) C.H. Spence, 'Honoré de Balzac: a psychological study', Melbourne Review IV, 16, pp.348-57

\(^{61}\) 'Machinery versus Manual Labour/[Reviewed by a Colonist of 1839]', Register, 14 December 1867

\(^{62}\) 'Why Do Women Wilt?/[By a Colonist of 1839]', Register 11 December 1889; articles in the Register are given their full title the first time they occur, then referred to simply by the date of the paper in which they appear
well as for their ethical purpose.63 She sent a copy of her first article in the Melbourne Review to George Eliot in an effort to excuse herself for the intrusive, inquisitive impression she thought she had created at their accidental interview in 1865.64 George Eliot replied, by 1876 an unusual thing for her to do, as she pointed out, and told Catherine that while she 'made it a rule not to read writing about myself', Lewes thought highly of Catherine's essay. He had said:

'This is an excellently written article, which would do credit to any English periodical, adding the very uncommon testimony, 'I shall keep this.' Then [wrote George Eliot] he told me of some passages in it which gratified me by that comprehension of my meaning - that laying of the finger on the right spot - which is more precious than praise, and forthwith he went to lay The Melbourne Review in the drawer he assigns to

63. Spence, 'George Eliot', pp.147,160

any writing that gives him pleasure'.

Yet even with such a testimonial, Catherine did not confine herself to literary articles and book reviews. She may have despised the sterility of soley literary critics; she characterised reviews of George Eliot's letters and journals as 'notices...with the few purely biographical passages quoted in extenso, and with a running commentary on the childhood, youth, and mature life, and on the various works as they appeared!'

Her 'social articles' range widely, from unification of the British empire to land taxation in Victoria, from destitute children to proportional representation, from superstition to cheerfulness. They are occasionally inspired, often adventurous, and usually sensible. One article so delighted a traveller in Wallaroo that he wrote to instruct Finlayson: "When we come again to Adelaide and...collect a few choice spirits, be sure to invite the writer of this


article to join us". A series of four articles so impressed Finlayson that they were reprinted as a pamphlet called Some Social Aspects of South Australian Life. H.G. Turner reviewed it in the Melbourne Review, praising 'its clear simplicity of statement, its picturesque homeliness, and its direct applicability to ourselves and our surroundings', and proclaiming it an 'excellent contribution to the social history of colonial life'. Those articles contained an assertion of the desirability of greater equality of the sexes, and a tentative suggestion that women might be given the vote, so that praise from the man who wrote a verse dialogue mocking women's suffrage, even though he approved some forms of female emancipation, was strong commendation. It must have pleased Catherine. She believed, she wrote, 'that my work on newspapers and reviews is more characteristic of me, and intrinsically better work than what I have done in fiction'.

68. Spence, An Autobiography, p. 55
69. Melbourne Review, IV, 13, p. 110
70. H.G. Turner, Dialogue on Woman's Rights, 10 December 1871, MS. (M.1656), La Trobe Library
71. Spence, An Autobiography, p. 56
Catherine's experience with her novels suggested that most colonists did not develop the habit of reading books. In 1877 she observed that there had been no market for 'literature and art' in the early days of South Australia, and in 1885 she speculated on the career George Eliot would have found if she had 'emigrated to South Australia in its earlier days, when there was no literary outlook or outlet'. But this did not mean that most colonists read nothing: 'the imagination has its hunger, which must be fed' she observed '...just in the same way as the hunger of the body and the hunger of the soul'. Instead of books, colonists read the weekly newspapers which, she decided, were the provincial and colonial equivalent of the English 'penny novel-journals', the staple reading of English families who could not afford to buy books, and the supplementary reading of those who owned their own libraries. Such reading was not to be despised. Catherine pointed out that 'such novelists as

72. Spence, *Some Social Aspects of South Australian Life*, p. 4
73. Spence, 'George Eliot's Life and Works', p. 220
74. Spence, 'The place of religion in fictitious literature'. p. 361
75. 'The Unknown Public/ [By a Colonists of 1839]', undated clipping, (MSS. 202/6), Mitchell Library
Dickens, Lytton, Lever, Miss [sic] Gaskell, Wilkie Collins, Charles Read, and Anthony Trollope [had] written for a twopenny public', and, while noting the deficiencies of most penny fiction, she observed that it was often 'better than much that is current in the circulating libraries'.  

As an author who saw three of her own novels serialised in weekly newspapers, Catherine might simply have been generalising hopefully from her own experience. But she was probably right about the early days of South Australia. Another colonist, who had lost heavily on a cargo of books in the 1840s, remarked "literature is much undervalued here. Nothing does...but light reading...Magazines and such like are the staple". And during South Australia's first twenty years, the colonists produced twenty-three newspapers and at least ten periodicals. However, by the time Catherine became a regular outside contributor to the Register and the Observer, South Australians were probably reading more novels. The South Australian Institute had about 1,500 'Novels and other prose works of fiction' in its catalogue in 1869, and

76. ibid.
77. see above chapter 2, pp.28-9
78. quoted in Cooper, The Foundation of Culture in Adelaide, p.101, n.93
79. op.cit., p.103
nearly 400 of them had been added since 1864. 80 And colonists were buying books. Catherine herself acknowledged her debt to the private library of the Barr Smiths who 'bought books in sixes and dozens'. 81

However, she considered newspapers and periodicals important not just as a source of fiction, but also, and chiefly, as the principal means of expressing public opinion, commenting on public affairs, and urging new measures upon the community. 'The newspaper' she told South Australian school children, 'partly leads and partly follows public opinion', a responsibility properly fulfilled only by 'the wisest and best people whom the common folk can understand'. 82 She was not merely making a recommendation. Her admiration for Howard Clark must have reinforced her view; she considered that Andrew Garran had enriched Australia's intellectual life with his work for the Adelaide

80. Catalogue of books held by the South Australian Institute 1864-1884, 3 vols., MS.(GRG 19/112), South Australian Archives; the number can be only approximate because there is, for instance, only one entry for the Works of Samuel Richardson, and only three entries for three sets of the Waverly Novels; 'Novels and other Prose Works of Fiction' formed only one, but by far the largest, of twenty 'classes' of books


82. Spence, The Laws We Live Under, pp.110,113
and Sydney press; and she prized her own access to the columns of the *Register* as a means of influencing the community. In her religious allegory she presented her pilgrim as the 'commander-in-chief' of the reformers in the City of Vanity Fair, because he could urge not one but a variety of reforms upon the whole city, in the articles he wrote for 'the broadsheets that come out day by day in thousands'. In her autobiography she remarked, 'When I recall the causes I furthered, and which in some instances I started, I feel inclined to magnify the office of the anonymous contributor to the daily press'.

Her experience largely justified her claim. She initiated her campaign for proportional representation with letters to the press. She did much of her work as a publicist for the welfare of destitute children through the press. She argued for better education and wider employment for women in the columns of the *Register*. She

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83. 'The Australian in Literature', anonymous leader, *Register*, 22 November 1902, clipping marked 'C.H.S.', (MSS.202/6), Mitchell Library

84. Spence, *An Agnostic's Progress*, pp.157,159-60


86. see below chapter 7, pp.266-7

87. see below chapter 6, p.238

88. see above chapter 4, pp.161-2
maintained that she had pioneered the single tax movement in Australia with her article 'A Californian Political Economist' in the *Victorian Review* in 1881.\(^{89}\) That assertion had little foundation. *Progress and Poverty* was serialised in a Sydney newspaper in 1879.\(^{90}\) Her article prompted an argument upholding the continuing validity of the theories of Adam Smith and J.S. Mill in reply,\(^{91}\) but appears to have attracted no further attention. The South Australian government passed an income tax Act in 1884, which included taxation of one halfpenny in the pound on the value of all land in the colony,\(^{92}\) but the government was concerned with its diminishing revenue, not with Henry George, and there was no reference to Catherine's article in debates on the bill. An article printed in 1881 cannot have generated the widespread discussion of the single tax in the late 1880s, nor the vociferous single tax movement in South Australia, which developed out of the Anti-Poverty Society in the wake of George's tour of Australia in 1890.\(^{93}\) But Catherine's

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89. Spence, *An Autobiography*, p.66

90. Goodwin, *Economic Enquiry in Australia*, p.110; her article is however the earliest discussion of the single tax mentioned by Goodwin


92. [South Australia] 47&48 Vic., 1884, No.323

93. *Observer*, 26 July 1890
major concerns, electoral reform, destitute children, and women, were all assisted by the influence she exerted as a contributor to the press. Her later fame and prominence was advanced by the press, and her social and literary articles may have contributed to the climate of opinion in which she won that fame. A memorialist was even prepared to assert that she was 'so influential in forming public opinion that no calculus can integrate the innumerable little pulses of knowledge that she made to vibrate in the minds of her generation'.

Catherine's influence was that of a publicist, not an original thinker. She drew all her ideas from her reading, and her ideas developed as she read more and more widely. She ranged from Browning to Walt Whitman, from Adam


96. C.H. Spence, 'The Democratic Ideal', MS. in (MSS.202/3), annotated clippings in (MSS.202/6), Mitchell Library; Catherine Spence said that this article had appeared in the Register, and that she planned to give it as a lecture in the United States in 1893, see Observer, 8 April 1893
Smith from Harriet Martineau to Jane Hume Clapperton, and included major English periodicals like the *Fortnightly* and *Quarterly Reviews* and the *Nineteenth Century*. She mirrored their concern in hers for mankind's development, economic justice, and social freedom. She expressed her concern in a piecemeal fashion, sometimes indirectly, sometimes only by implication. But it pervades all her articles, and shows that she brought to both her reading and her writing, her own vision and common sense.

She saw history as ineluctible progress: 'civilization has marched on,' she wrote 'and there is no going back'. But she did not underrate the forces of continuity. She countered Whitman's demand that democracy create 'intellectual types which shall displace all that previously

97. C.H. Spence, *Is Free Trade the Best Policy for South Australia?*, undated lecture, (MSS.202/4), Mitchell Library

98. *Register*, 14 December 1887

99. 'Four Eminent Women/[Reviewed by a Colonist of 1839]', *Register*, 27 February 1889

100. 'Scientific meliorism and the evolution of happiness /by Jane Hume Clapperton [Reviewed by a Colonist of 1839]', *Register*, 28 June 1887

101. *Register*, 14 December 1887


103. op.cit., p.3

104. op.cit., p.5
existed', by asserting:

Democracy, even American and Australian democracy, is the child of modern Europe, and that again is descended from feudalism and medievalism. In its language, its traditions, and even its government it holds from the past. It cannot escape from its ancestry. It need not displace, while it does but continue, expand and enlarge.105

The process of expansion was halting: 'this steady wave of advance' she wrote 'has ebbs and flows. Things which should move simultaneously precede or lag behind each other'.106 Uneven progress produced tragic anomalies. She considered that with the aid of machinery 'the skilled artisan of England and America has risen to an intelligence and efficiency unequalled in the world',107 but the same machinery had brought continuous reduction of wages and redundancy in the workforce,108 and frustrated idleness to housewives.109 She saw growing material prosperity in Australia destroying natural relations between men and women, and separating education and refinement from people engaged in 'useful labours'.110 Such anomalies did not harden

105. Spence, 'The Democratic Ideal', p.3; the numbering on the pages of clippings is haphazard and has not been followed

106. Spence, Some Social Aspects of South Australian Life, p.3

107. Register, 14 December 1887

108. ibid.


110. op.cit., pp.5-6
people to suffering, rather, she held, 'As life becomes more complex, we seem to become more vulnerable'. \(^{111}\) But this did not make her an opponent of advance. 'Orderly progress' she announced, 'is the right line of advance for free countries'\(^ {112}\): 'The Utopia of yesterday is the possession of today — and opens the way to the Utopia of tomorrow'. \(^{113}\) She sought in her articles to suggest defences against humanity's 'more and more various misfortunes'. \(^{114}\)

'Humor' she considered 'is not blunted, but often sharpened by mental suffering, and thrives even in the ashes of despair'. \(^ {115}\) Hope was more valuable than the 'sad vaticinations' of theorists who predicted 'calamity without precedent since the Black Death of the fourteenth century'. \(^{116}\) Faith was more productive, since belief in a benevolent Creator would turn the blame for many of society's ills from the 'niggardliness of nature' on which Mill's theories of population and land ownership placed it, to 'the injustice of

\(^{111}\) 'C.H.S.', 'Review of The Silent Sea' by 'Antarlo', [Catherine Martin], 3 vols., London, 1892, Voice, 9 December 1892

\(^{112}\) C.H. Spence, Australian answers to some American problems, lecture headed Boston, 8 December 1893, MS. (A166/A1), South Australian Archives, p.14

\(^{113}\) op.cit., p.28

\(^{114}\) Voice, 9 December 1892

\(^{115}\) ibid.

\(^{116}\) Register, 14 December 1887
society' where Henry George lodged it.117 And the injustice of man could be fought. Catherine's faith demanded commitment to reform, and, generalising from her own experience, she offered this as the most important and useful means of combating suffering and despair. In England in 1865 she had noted that 'society girls and society gentlemen ... despise ... active philanthropists as being ill-dressed, strong-minded, and most fatiguing'. But, she remarked, 'if anything could tempt me to remain in England, it is that I, too, might aid a little in [their] work'.118 On her way back to South Australia she wrote a, mercifully, largely undecipherable sonnet about new friendships formed with 'that band/of thoughtful men and women who would raise/ The level of life - the wise the brave the true'.119 By 1878 she was responding to prophecies of doom by insisting that the world's evils were remediable, and only made it 'All the more necessary ... to win recruits for the Service of Man - a service too honourable and too inspiring not to enlist the worthiest and the wisest'.120


118. Spence, 'An Australian's Impressions of England', p.117

119. C.H. Spence, poem headed July 1866, among Spence papers, no accession number, South Australian Archives

120. Register, 14 December 1887
She was not, however, simply a sunny optimist. Preaching to a Unitarian congregation in Sydney, she rejected optimism and pessimism alike as impossible ways to view the world. Better, she held, was 'meliorism', the urge not merely to lessen existing evils but also to increase positive good.\textsuperscript{121} The world was created 'with potentialities for good and evil' she observed, and 'advancing intelligence can learn and judge and act' upon them to combat the evil, promote the good, and advance the condition of humanity.\textsuperscript{122}

Using her journalism to these ends, Catherine advanced several specific criticisms of society, and suggested changes which she considered would both remedy the ill she attacked and increase general welfare. Fundamental to these was her argument for greater economic equity. She described with enthusiastic approval the early days of South Australia, when 'Nobody employed hired labour who could possibly do the work himself, and everyone had to turn his or her hand to a great

\textsuperscript{121.} she took the term from George Eliot and from Jane Hume Clapperton, see C.H. Spence, sermon entitled Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good, 18 February 1900, 27 May no year, 15 December 1907, MS(1074), South Australian Archives, p.6; Register, 28 June 1887; Haight, ed., \textit{The George Eliot Letters}, vol.6, p.333, n.2

\textsuperscript{122.} Spence, sermon entitled Be not overcome of evil, p.21
deal of miscellaneous work'. Among her impressions of England was 'a strange feeling of awe' at the 'contrast between the wealth and the poverty', at the painful juxtaposition of 'the splendid equipages, the liveried servants, the perfectly appointed equestrians, the idle gentlemen, and the handsome and elegantly-dressed ladies in Hyde Park', with 'the ragged beggars ... at every street corner'. In America in 1893 she argued that wealth encouraged vulgar materialism, spiritual and artistic decay, and the formation of monopolies which destroyed the social and political rights of individuals. She labelled the wealthy American a 'plutocrat', accused him of reverting to 'barbarism', and of sinning against the true spirit of democracy. 'The plutocrat' she announced '... loves to monopolize what is pleasant and beautiful and luxurious; the true democrat wishes for nothing which his fellows cannot share with him, or possess as absolutely as he does'. She castigated Americans 'From Boston, from New York, from Philadelphia, from Chicago, from San Francisco' for their 'exclusiveness, monopoly, [and] vulgar display'.

123. Spence, *Some Social Aspects of South Australian Life*, p.2
125. Spence, 'The Democratic Ideal', pp.1,4
She proposed several specific measures to counteract such injustice and decadence. She foreshadowed the first when, in England in 1866, she remarked: 'Although I am not so much of a Radical as to suggest a division of property, I must say that I think every facility should be given to the transfer of land, and that some step should be taken to prevent the inheritance of colossal fortunes'.

There was no need to urge greater facility in land transference in the colony which had introduced the Torrens Land Act, but Catherine continued to be troubled by the moral debilitation of people who could inherit wealth accumulated by their fathers, and by the permanence of economic inequality fostered by such inheritances. Early in the 1870s she devised a scheme for countering both, but when she submitted it in a letter to the Register it roused only passing interest. However in 1877, debate over land taxation in Victoria furnished her with a fresh opportunity.

In Victoria, conflict between pastoralists and selectors had continued despite legislation in 1858, 1862, 1865 and 1870. By 1877 the failure of successive governments to balance their budgets, leading to an annual deficit of 200,000 pounds, had made a new land tax imperative.

126. Spence, 'An Australian's Impressions of England', p.113
127. Register, 16 January 1871
nature of taxation to be introduced, and its effects upon pastoralists and selectors, became a leading issue at the elections of May 1877. Among the advocates of a tax with wide ramifications was C.H. Pearson who, as part of his electoral campaign, gave the *Melbourne Review* an article called 'On Property in Land'. Pearson argued that in Britain, landed estates were being concentrated in fewer and fewer hands, that the rural population was declining, and that the condition of the rural labourer was deteriorating sharply. By contrast, with small landholdings in France, peasant proprietors prospered, and the position of rural workers was vastly improved. If Australia was to profit by such examples, he maintained, she must direct all her energies towards providing for small proprietors and preventing the acquisition of large estates. To this end, he proposed to introduce a land tax which would increase in proportion to the size and value of a single estate, and rise so sharply for holdings greater than a specified size as to become prohibitive.

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128. Tregenza, *Professor of Democracy*, p.92

129. op.cit., pp.97-8

Catherine considered his analysis of Australian conditions alarmist, and his remedy oppressive and unjust. She joined issue with him with her own article in the Melbourne Review. Firstly, she argued, all previous attempts to restrict large estates and promote the yeomanry 'had failed to call out the yeoman spirit'. When a small proprietor sold his land, he did so freely and because it was more profitable than working it. Legislation to prevent a larger proprietor buying from him would simply lead to evasion of the law. Secondly, she asked whether it was 'just to force enormous sales of land bought in perpetuity by a law of limitation made afterwards, and to make a heavy differential tax on such property act as a deterrent from the investment of capital in this, the most conservative of all investments?' She feared that such a measure would only 'set class against class, and one house of the Legislature against the other', and recommended a 'milder method' of achieving the same result. This was a graduated tax imposed not on bequests but on inheritances of land. She observed that in the United States, where there was no

131. Spence, 'Graduated Succession Duties'
132. op.cit., p.443
133. op.cit., pp.443-4
134. op.cit., p.446
law of entail and no custom or law of primogeniture, there
was a tendency for great fortunes to be dispensed in a
generation or two, and she proposed that a similar
tendency be ensured in Australia by legislation. This might
be a slow cure for overgrown estates, but, she asserted, it
was a surer and safer one than Pearson's.

In this essay Catherine allowed her concern for
justice and the retention of incentives to enterprise,
industry and thrift, to cloud her eagerness for the
distribution of property. She was annoyed when the Argus
quoted passages from her article and labelled her argument
that of an 'aristocrat'. She probably learned from the
experience. Almost immediately afterwards she argued in
the Register that 'although a rise to a higher class is a
wonderful stimulus to energy and thrift, it is perhaps of more
consequence that the material and moral condition of the
the hewers of wood and drawers of water should be tolerably
comfortable'.

135. op.cit., p.444
136. op.cit., p.448
137. C.H. Spence to C.H. Pearson, 2 November 1877; she said
she was 'amused', but the agitated tone of the first
part of her letter betrays irritation
138. Spence, Some Social Aspects of South Australian Life, p.4;
the first of the articles in this pamphlet appeared in
Register, 26 October 1878
Four years later she had abandoned both her own and Pearson's remedies for economic inequality to argue for the introduction of the single tax. She was cautiously enthusiastic about George's proposal. It 'first takes the startling shape of confiscation of land' she wrote, 'then softens down to confiscation of rent; and finally settles down to the drawing of all taxation from the land, and the land alone'.

She did not 'anticipate such glorious results' from this measure as George did, but she did 'anticipate a greater amount of benefit than from any other reform in the world'. She must have been carried away by the enthusiasm of the hour. When she stayed with George and his wife in New York in 1893, he wondered at her devoting her energies to electoral reform instead of the single tax, but she did not waver in her commitment to proportional representation.

By the time Catherine visited the United States in 1893, her argument for greater economic equity was broader, vaguer, and far more sweeping. Against the competition and monopolies of a society dominated by the 'plutocrat' she asserted the spirit of 'the true Democrat'. She considered her attack itself the first step towards reform. 'The diagnosis of

139. Spence, 'A Californian Political Economist', pp.139-40
140. op.cit., p.146
141. Spence, An Autobiography, p.66
the disease' she argued 'is ... an important part of the physician's work, and for the ailments of society it is necessary first to see how we stand and then to endeavour to discover in what direction we should move'. The direction she proposed was cooperation. In 'social intercourse' this meant 'welcoming a friend to such a dinner as we eat everyday, and as he eats everyday', instead of collecting 'a number of people to whom we owe dinners, for something which is the daily set-out of people three or four times richer than we are but which costs time, money, and fatigue for us'. It substituted 'evening receptions' where husbands and wives might meet each others' friends, and where young men and women might become acquainted, instead of the 'one-sided ... one-sexed' social intercourse of clubs and afternoon calls, and 'courting ... done no one knows exactly where'. In industry, cooperation meant joint labour and enterprise for mutual benefit, instead of competition. In politics it meant equitable representation, and cooperation of 'the party of order and the party of

142. Spence, 'The Democratic Ideal', p.6
143. ibid.
144. op.cit., p.7
145. op.cit., p.8
progress' for the benefit of the whole people.146 Such recognition of mutual dependence and service should engender a sense of security and create genuine democracy. The 'true democratic spirit' she contended -

is that of activity, yet also of repose. Not eager to rise, not fearful lest it fall, it plants its foot firmly on the daily task. This sense of security is what ought to be the habitual frame of mind of the true Democrat in a really Democratic Society.147

Just as arguing for greater economic equity could lead Catherine to consider modes of hospitality, so it led her to an assortment of other reforms. Her articles scoffed at elaborate trimmings of women's dresses,148 derided economic considerations in marriage,149 and condemned war.150 She praised family relations in the United States,151 advocated voluntary restriction of population,152 and threatened South Australians that 'Unless the conditions of labour are made tolerable, the cultivated and moneyed classes run the risk of

146. op.cit., p.11
147. op.cit., p.4
149. op.cit., p.8
150. Register, 14 December 1887
152. Register, 14 December 1887
not getting their necessary work done at all'.\textsuperscript{153}

She had no scruples about raising the threat of revolt in the face of economic injustice and oppression. Considering the effects of mechanisation on Britain's trade and industry, she did not exclude the possibility of 'social and economic revolution'.\textsuperscript{154} But this was a rhetorical device. She was not a revolutionary. She promoted all her reforms within the social structure she knew; she did not seriously question the justice of the structure itself. Despite her strenuous arguments for greater economic equity, she did not advocate uniform distribution of wealth throughout society. She thought it both impossible and unnatural: 'Socialists' she gibed 'have wild ideas as to a reconstruction of society in which a miracle will transform the egoist into the altruist, and when each man will love his neighbour better than himself, and yet will have no sacrifice to make through that principle of action'.\textsuperscript{155} She considered that 'the nationalizing of things, as in the Utopias of Bellamy and Gronlund and William Morris, is not desirable even if it were practicable'.\textsuperscript{156} Yet she had earlier considered seriously

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{153} 'The Dignity of Labour and Thrift/[By a Colonist of 1839]', clipping, (MSS.202/6), Mitchell Library
\item \textsuperscript{154} Register, 14 December 1887
\item \textsuperscript{155} Spence, 'The Democratic Ideal', p.8
\item \textsuperscript{156} ibid.
\end{itemize}
the advantages of life in a society like Bellamy's when she wrote her short story *A Week in the Future*. And she approved warmly of the village settlements established on the River Murray by the unemployed in the 1890s which, she said, three-fourths of her friends condemned as unnatural and communistic.

She was not merely being perverse, provocative, or contradictory. She regarded a socialist state primarily as an extension to all enterprises of the state control and responsibility with which she had grown familiar through her contact with the South Australian Education Department, and her work for the colony's State Children's Council. Despite her constant questioning of the nature of authority, she did not ever envisage a society without a central governing power. She approved of state control of what she


159. Spence, 'The Democratic Ideal', p. 8
called 'natural monopolies' such as railroads and telegraphs.  

Late in her life she even favoured some increase in state responsibility; she lectured the Women's League on the nationalisation of health. But she considered total state control akin to monopolies - unjust and appressive. She found co-operation preferable to socialism because, while both aimed at increasing general welfare, cooperation's methods required voluntary effort not compulsion. The difference between the 'nationalizing of all things' and the village settlements was that the former would be restrictive and the latter were voluntary. The difference between the social organisation depicted in Looking Backward and that portrayed in A Week in the Future was the compulsion of the individual in the first, and the preservation of his freedom and initiative in the second. She told the Americans: 'It must needs be that individualism should be allowed to do its best'.

Catherine's preoccupation with individual freedom formed the core of the general picture of society which pervaded her journalism. She opposed Pearson's land tax and

160. Spence, Australian answers to some American problems, p.6
161. C.H. Spence, The Nationalisation of Health
163. Spence, 'The Democratic Ideal' p.8
Bellamy's socialism alike as the imposition of restrictive authority upon individual liberties. But she was concerned not only to preserve but also to increase the freedom people might enjoy. She urged better education for women as one means by which they could overcome the injustice of economic dependence, and hence the constraint to marry for financial security.\textsuperscript{164} Further, she maintained that individuals should develop the strength of mind to exercise such freedom. 'Mrs Grundy is only strong' she argued 'because the individuals who compose society are criminally weak'.\textsuperscript{165} Her preoccupation probably owed much to her own struggle to fulfill her ambitions despite restrictive social conventions. It certainly derived much from her Unitarianism: she had learned from her faith that each man must work out his own salvation,\textsuperscript{166} and she clearly considered such freedom necessary for everyone to do so. It also derived from her conviction that civilization's progress depended on the work of exceptional individuals. She acknowledged Harriet Martineau's work as a 'strong and uncompromising advocate of justice, freedom and progress, and what she believed to be truth'.\textsuperscript{167} She acclaimed the

\textsuperscript{164} Spence, \textit{Some Social Aspects of South Australian Life}, p.11
\textsuperscript{165} Spence, 'The Democratic Ideal', p.8
\textsuperscript{166} see above chapter 3, p.98
\textsuperscript{167} \textit{Register}, 24 February 1889
lessons of toleration and passionate love of right' taught by George Eliot's novels as contributions which 'help forward the race'. She praised Sir Richard Hanson as a politician who had 'exercised the greatest influence over the destinies of South Australia'. She maintained that 'All that we have learned in the past has been the work of individuals', and urged each individual to 'consecrate' his 'best efforts... highest gifts...[and] acquired skill' to 'the service of the community', that civilisation might advance further.

Catherine may not have overrated the power of the daily and periodical press in leading public opinion. Reports of her work for child welfare, and her later campaigns for electoral reform, undoubtedly contributed to her fame and influence. But she probably did overrate the power of her own pen. None of the changes she suggested in her articles were introduced in South Australia as a result of her advocacy. Yet simply by becoming a journalist without becoming a Henrietta Stackpole, she made an individual contribution to the changing attitudes of society quite as important as those of the individuals she praised. And by

169. Spence, 'Sir Richard Hanson', p.428
170. Spence, 'The Democratic Ideal', p.8
171. op.cit., p.11
becoming a journalist, she overcame her own submission to the restrictive authority of social convention, found at least partial fulfilment of her ambition, and gained the self-confidence which enabled her to leave the seclusion of her study, to work in the meeting room and lecture hall for specific and practical reforms.
Catherine Helen Spence c.1865

reproduced from *Adelaide Observer*, 8 April 1893.
Catherine first gained recognition as a practical reformer through her concern with destitution. Like the education issue, the question of relief for the destitute poor in South Australia was debated in terms which reflect the opposition between the voluntaryists and the supporters of state action. The succession of Acts relating to the destitute illustrates a progress from the states' total abnegation of responsibility to its acceptance of almost all responsibility. The succession of organisations established to administer relief to the destitute illustrates the persistence of voluntaryist principles beside that progress. This combination may explain the most distinctive feature of South Australia's destitute relief in the nineteenth century — its centralisation in one government department. Except for two small denominational orphanages, all care for neglected children was provided first by the state's Destitute Board, then by the State Children's Council. All relief for destitute adults was administered by the Destitute Board. Unlike the other Australian colonies, voluntaryist South Australia did not establish private orphanages, reformatories, and old age homes, financed by voluntary
donations. This paradox had two main causes. First, the voluntaryist principles of the founding fathers were incorporated into the institutions of government: the Destitute Board and the State Children's Council were, although appointed by the government, voluntary bodies. Their members gave their services gratuitously, and so were not open to the same charges of slackness and indifference as paid public servants.¹ Second, a government organisation could draw on the general revenue to meet the needs of the destitute. When relief was first officially granted, it is unlikely that anyone but the government had the resources to undertake care of the destitute. And the general revenue came from indirect taxes and land sales, which fell most heavily on that section of the community otherwise likely to make donations to charitable institutions. Thus the causes of the centralisation of destitute relief in South Australia can be described as the nature and sources of finance of the institutions of government. They could be described differently, for instance as political expediency, cheap

government, and persisting widespread antipathy to altruistic expenditure. The general indifference to the needs of the destitute favours such a description. Unlike the education issue, debate inside parliament did not either reflect or arouse debate outside: interest expressed in the press was scant and occasional. The question of destitute relief concerned only the destitute, and a small group of philanthropic workers. Among them, Catherine acquired considerable stature.

Her concern for the destitute could have arisen from direct observation of their plight. She told a Charities Conference that during the second half of 1840, when she and her family lived on West Terrace 'Just fronting our house, on the park lands ... there lay a square of small wooden houses known as Immigration-square. These houses were erected

2. This explanation was suggested in part by J.B. Hirst, 'Centralization Reconsidered: the South Australian Education Act of 1875', Historical Studies, XIII, 49; I have offered a very summary alternative to my doctrinaire explanation because debate in parliament over destitute relief was clearly influenced by the state of the economy, faction politics, the continual struggle for power, and subsidiary factors like the different attitudes of different generations of parliamentarians to expenditure of state revenue. But by concentrating on the work of voluntary and honorary organisations, whose motives were relatively plain, I have avoided discussion of the politics involved in destitute relief, which did not, in any case, have much to do with Catherine Spence.
for the accommodation of newly-arrived immigrants', but were occupied by the sick, bereft, jobless, deserted and destitute. However, Catherine's concern lay fallow for nearly thirty years before it bore fruit in her work for neglected children and the destitute poor. And her observation was not entirely accurate: in 1907 she wrote a history of the work for children thrown upon public charity in South Australia which betrayed an only slender acquaintance with developments during the colony's first thirty years.

She wrote,

From its first inception South Australia had had a poor law based on the English principle that absolute destitution had a claim upon public charity, but in the infancy of any State [,] local rating is inadvisable, and, indeed, impossible; and the relief of poverty has always been a charge on the general revenue.4

This is misleading because it imputes design where there was none. Concern to mitigate the problem of destitution in Britain had played a part in the systematic colonisers' plans, but their theories designed a state in which emigrant paupers were intended to be self-sufficient. The Colonisation Commissioners agreed that after landing in the colony,

3. C.H. Spence, 'Charity in South Australia', Proceedings of the first Australasian Conference on Charity held in Melbourne from 11th to 17th November, 1890, Melbourne, 1890, p.15

all emigrants should be allowed a week's rations; after that period, if they could not find employment, they were at liberty to work for the government at reduced wages. But there was no place in their project for extended relief of the destitute in the colony. The wooden huts built in Light Square by the Immigration Office were intended to house immigrants during their first week in the colony. Their occupation by the destitute was unanticipated and inconvenient, and relief given to the destitute was minimal.

In June 1841, Governor Grey told Lord Russell that many immigrants had found they could live comfortably on the reduced wages offered for work for the government. He reduced the wages still further, observing, 'I will grant no single indulgence to them, but I will not suffer them to starve.'

When Catherine claimed that from 1836 to 1848 the Immigration Department looked after the destitute, she failed to recognise both the reluctance of the voluntaryist and impoverished government to provide relief, and the transitory existence of

5. Governor Grey to Lord Russell, 7 June 1841, Despatch No.6 and enclosure 3, in Papers Relative to the Affairs of South Australia, presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty, London, 1843

6. see Pike, Paradise of Dissent, p.318

7. ibid

8. Grey to Russell, 7 June 1841

several well-intentioned but inadequate voluntary organisations. In 1843, Grey attempted explicitly to rid the government of any responsibility for the destitute by passing an Act which compelled near relations of destitute people to provide them with the means of subsistence. The government's only duty was to administer the Act through justices of the peace.

Catherine's account of the reluctant beginnings of a more positive government policy for the destitute is not merely misleading but inaccurate. She wrote:

In 1848 a Board was constituted, called the Children's Apprenticeship Board.... This Board continued operations till 1867, but was known as the Destitute Board.

She had confused two separate bodies. In 1848 the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners responded to reports of a demand for domestic servants and farm labourers in South Australia by arranging for emigration of orphans between the ages of 14 and 18 from the Irish workhouses. In obedience to instructions from the Colonial Office, Young gazetted a committee of eleven 'for the protection and guardianship of the said expected orphans'. The committee, which called

10. Pike, Paradise of Dissent, p. 319
11. No.11 of 1843
12. Spence, State Children in Australia, p.8
14. ibid
itself the Orphan Immigration Committee, advertised for applications for orphan apprentices, published the form of indenture to be used, and on 26 October 1848 announced that 219 female Irish orphans had arrived. Applications for eighty orphans had been received. On 10 November 1848, Young and the Legislative Council ratified their acceptance of this source of labour by passing an Act 'To Provide by Apprenticeship for the Protection, Guardianship and Advancement in Life of Emigrant Orphan Children, and of other poor Children maintained at the Public Expense'. The Act named the committee 'The Children's Apprenticeship Board'. It embodied the conditions of the indentures, and extended the committee's sphere of operation to 'any of such other poor Children as shall from time to time be supported in whole or in part by Alms at the Public expense'. This was the first gesture the government made towards formally accepting the responsibility which Catherine believed it had taken since 1836. And it was a hollow flourish. The Board could not

15. S.A., G.G.: 7 September 1848, 12 October 1848
16. S.A., G.G., 5 October 1848
17. S.A., G.G., 26 October 1848
18. ibid
19. No.8 of 1848
20. clause II
provide for colonial orphans when it could neither find employers for the immigrant orphans nor supervise their subsequent welfare adequately. In February 1850 the *Adelaide Observer* railed against the 'pestiferous dens', the 'moral ordure pits' around Light Square, where the Irish orphan girls were 'cooped up or caged together, as so many goods and chattels of the lawful owner, to hire out, to barter, or to sell'. In July 1850 the Board published a request to J.P.s to answer its circular letter 'inviting returns on the conduct of Orphan immigrants', as only a third of the letters despatched had been answered. A ledger of 'children boarded out 1855-67' amongst the archives of the Destitute Persons Department suggests that by 1855 the Board had gained greater control of the supply and demand for orphan apprentices, and that it administered the 1848 Act until new legislation established a new organisation in 1867.

None of these measures gave any help to either destitute adults or children too young to be apprenticed, and the continuing necessity of keeping the destitute from starvation decided Young to establish a 'Board for the relief of the Destitute Poor' to administer such aid as the government

21. *Observer*, supplement, 9 February 1850
23. MS. (GRG 28 Ser.6), South Australian Archives
provided. This was the Board which Catherine confused with the Children's Apprenticeship Board. The seven members, gazetted on 22 February 1849, were supplemented in March by a Relieving Officer who enquired into cases of distress, and acted as the Board's secretary. He was the first salaried official appointed to work for relief of the destitute. During its first year of existence, the Destitute Board could do little but administer outdoor relief and recommend sick destitute people for admission to the Adelaide Hospital. The huts in Light Square accommodated only fourteen until October, when Young ordered 'repairs' which made room for eight more. When the Board reported in January 1850, the huts were occupied by '3 infants, 4 orphan children, 1 destitute family of four... three aged cripples, 2 widows admitted for confinement having 2 children, 1 blind and one idiotic girl, and 3 sick men'. The Board felt itself

24. S.A., G.G., 22 February 1849; Pike, Paradise of Dissent, p.319 gives the date of appointment of the Destitute Board as February 1848. This must be a misprint: his source - Register, 19 January 1850 - refers specifically to the appointment of the Destitute Board 'in February last'.


26. ibid

27. ibid
hampered by 'want of proper accommodation... where salutary rules might be enforced, and where a due distinction could be drawn between deserving and undeserving characters.'

1,500 pounds was voted in the supplementary estimates for 1850, for the erection of an Asylum for the Destitute Poor. It was built on North Terrace, next to the Morgue (which later caused some objections), with an Orphan Free School attached. In 1873 the Misses Davenport-Hill described the Asylum as 'a cheerful place... though not ornate in style, it is handsome and somewhat too inviting in aspect, giving the beholder an impression that a very comfortable life may be led inside'.

But even with an attractive building the Destitute Board was apparently unsuccessful in enforcing 'salutary rules' in its Asylum; reports in Parliament of 'wretchedness and depravity' and overcrowding led to passage of an Act to regulate the Asylum in 1863. The Act was merely a skeleton for

28. ibid
29. S.A., G.G., 20 June 1850
30. Register, 29 January 1886; S.A., P.P., 1885, No.228
31. Rosamond and Florence Hill, What We Saw in Australia, London, 1875, p.141
32. S.A., P.D., 22 August 1860, cc.648-9
33. [South Australia] 26 & 27 Vic. 1863, No.2
regulations drawn up by the Board and gazetted in April 1864. They compelled cleanliness, industry, sobriety and godliness, and prohibited visitors and jaunts out of the Asylum. But they made no special provision for destitute children whose increasing numbers made special measures imperative. Nobody noticed this until two years later.

Catherine Spence spent the years 1864-5 in Britain, thinking about literature and proportional representation rather than destitute children. But by the time she returned to Adelaide in mid-1866, preparations for the work to which she was to devote years of time and energy had been made, by her friend Miss Caroline Emily Clark.

In February 1866 the member for Light told the House of Assembly that he had received accounts of brutal treatment of inmates of the Destitute Asylum by the resident Relieving Officer who 'was reported to be very much addicted to intemperance'. Arthur Blyth raised a laugh by declaring that any government officer found 'disguised in drink' would be dismissed, but he also promised to make enquiries about the Destitute Asylum. These showed that almost half the inmates were children, and that their numbers were increasing.

34. S.A., G.G., 7 April 1864
35. S.A., P.D., 16 February 1866, c.1073
36. S.A., P.P., 1867, No.9
Blyth's government resolved to build an extension to the Asylum to house the children, and the resolution provoked Emily Clark to action.

Miss Clark had just read Frances Power Cobbe's 'The Philosophy of the Poor-Laws' published in the September issue of Fraser's Magazine in 1864, and republished as a pamphlet in 1865. It may have been sent to her by her cousins Florence and Rosamond Davenport-Hill, who themselves published a book on training juvenile paupers in England, in 1868. The article was a fierce attack on the report of the Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry into Poor Relief in Britain, made in 1861. The two points which impressed Emily Clark most strongly were about pauper children, and they formed the policy and programme of her campaign in South Australia, and later of articles and speeches made by Catherine Spence. The first was the assertion that

As a matter of right, no child ought to bear the stigma of pauperism; and, as a matter of public interest for the future of the community, every dependent child ought to be separated and removed as far as by any means may be possible from pauper moral influences and pauper physical and social degradation.  

37. S.A., P.D., 1866, cc.375-6


The second was the suggestion about one way of effecting such a removal:

to send the children out first to be nursed, and then boarded, by respectable poor families, under proper inspection. As they reach the age for going to school, the persons who have charge of the children being obliged to send them to one in the neighbourhood chosen by the inspector, and to produce certificates from the teacher of the child's attendance. 40

Boarding out pauper children, usually with an allowance paid to the families taking them, was a practice adopted first by the Dublin Protestant Orphan Society in 1828, 41 then by the Edinburgh Parochial Board in 1842; 42 its introduction was requested by an increasing number of Boards of Guardians in England during the 1860s. 43 Miss Cobbe's article in 1864, like the Davenport-Hills' book in 1868, belonged to a rising tide of publications advocating the boarding out system. 44

40. ibid

41. N.S.W., V. & P., 1878-4, vol.6, p.50; the South Australian Destitute Commission's report, S.A., P.P., 1885, no.228, p.xlv, gives this date as 1827, but the dates given in the New South Wales Charities Commission's report have been preferred because they are drawn directly from British sources, whereas the dates in the South Australian report are taken from citations in evidence given to the Commission

42. N.S.W., V. & P., 1873-4, vol.6, p.45

43. op. cit., p.48

44. op. cit., pp.41, 44-7; these included: Florence Hill, The Boarding-out System distinguished from Baby-farming and Parish Apprenticeship, a paper read before the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science, 1869; Charles Dickens, 'Little Pauper Boarders', All the Year Round, 1869
Emily Clark introduced this movement into Australia.

In March 1866 she wrote to both the Register and the Observer, referring to Miss Cobbe's article and arguing that the money for extensions to the Destitute Asylum would be better spent on boarding the children 'among our healthy and industrious population instead of fostering them in the hotbed of their own moral disease'. In March she was primarily concerned that the children be removed from the Asylum: if they could not be boarded out, they should at least be taken to live in the country 'removed from sight and sound of evil among their elders'. By September she had decided that this was not enough. Her friend Annie Martin had accidentally discovered that none of the children in the Asylum could even dress themselves; the nurses found it less trouble to do it for them than to teach them how to look after themselves. Emily Clark remarked, 'when we remember that these children were to be sent out as little servants to help others when they could not help themselves, it may be imagined how useless they would be'. Institutional life was bad for

45. Register, 14 March 1866
46. Observer, 17 March 1866
47. ibid
children, and those in the Asylum must be boarded out. She formed a Boarding-Out Society and headed a deputation, which included Catherine Spence, to persuade the government to supply allowances for the children whom the Society would board out. 49

She achieved only half her aim in 1866. Blyth's government agreed with her that the children should be separated from the adult destitute; 50 acknowledged that boarding out was an excellent system; 51 but refused the Boarding-Out Society's request 52 and proceeded to pass an Act almost identical to Victoria's Neglected and Criminal Children's Act 1864. 53 This provided for building government industrial schools and reformatories, but not for boarding the children with members of the community. 54 However, she achieved the rest of her aim in 1872. Faced with over-crowding in the new Industrial School, and recognising the precedent established

49. Boarding-Out Society, Report, 1873, pp.3-4; C.E. Clark, 'Report of the Initiation and Progress of the Movement for Boarding out the Children of the State in the Province of South Australia', MS. (121/131), South Australian Archives

50. S.A., P.D., 13 September 1866, cc.375-6

51. op. cit., c.378

52. Boarding-Out Society, Report, 1873, pp.3-4

53. [Victoria] 27 Vic. 1864, No.216

54. [South Australia] 30 Vic. 1866-7, No.12
in November 1870 by the English Poor Law Board, the South Australian parliament passed 'The Destitute Persons' Relief and Industrial and Reformatory Schools Act, 1872'. This permitted the boarding out of neglected children.

Thus, the boarding out system was inaugurated in Australia by legislation in South Australia. Victoria followed suit in 1874 and New South Wales in 1881. But during the seventies the system was successful only in South Australia. In Victoria, children still filled the industrial schools when the Royal Commission on Public Education reported in 1878, and the first work undertaken by the Committee of Inspectors of Industrial Schools in 1880 was 'to board out all the children'. South Australia's priority and success in this field became a source of pride to its colonists. In 1874 the Register reported some recommendations of the New South Wales Charities Commission, and remarked, 'As regards destitute children, it is pleasant to find we have already adopted a far better system than our neighbours'. The South Australian Destitute Commission reported in 1885 that 'The rapid extension

55. N.S.W., V. & P., 1873-4, vol.6
56. [South Australia] 35 & 36 Vic. 1872, No.26
57. Vic., P.P., 1877-8, vol.3, No.105
59. Register, 16 July 1874
of boarding out in South Australia naturally attracted attention in the other colonies'. Section 59 of the 1872 Act, the Commission proclaimed, 'marks a new epoch in the treatment of children under Government control'. Successful boarding out brought closer acquaintance with evils which produced orphan, destitute and delinquent children. The 'new epoch' saw South Australia score three more firsts: the government introduced licences for foster-mothers in 1881 and for lying-in homes in 1895, to prevent baby-farming and reduce infant mortality, and established a children's court, unofficially in 1890, legally in 1895. Such a record suggests that the climate of opinion in South Australia may have been particularly favourable to the introduction of measures for children's welfare in general, and in particular the introduction of boarding out, from which the other reforms followed. But neither parliament nor press give any indication that this was so.

Emily Clark's attempts to persuade Blyth's government to adopt the boarding out system in 1866 met polite acknowledge-

60. S.A., P.P., 1888, No.228, p.xlvi
61. [South Australia] 44 & 45 Vic. 1881, No.210
62. S.A., P.P., 1896, No.81
63. Spence, State Children in Australia, p.48
64. [South Australia] 58 & 59 Vic. 1895, No.641
ment from parliamentarians but no alteration of their determination to build an institution to house the children.\textsuperscript{65} She received sparse support from the press, and even after her brother became editor of the \textit{Register} in 1870, the paper did little more than argue, cautiously and occasionally, that boarding out would be cheaper than keeping the children in an industrial school.\textsuperscript{66} And, while the government arranged for a large, expensive institution to be built at Magill,\textsuperscript{67} and Emily Clark experimented privately with boarding out,\textsuperscript{68} the state's new Destitute Board\textsuperscript{69} simply neglected the children in its care. In November 1866 the children in the Destitute Asylum were removed, to provide barracks for two companies of the 14th Regiment returning from the Maori war.\textsuperscript{70} Over a hundred children were lodged in the Exhibition building for several months, so 'seriously deficient in the most ordinary appliances of cleanliness and decency; that their health

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{65} S.A., P.D., 13 September 1866, c.878
\item \textsuperscript{66} \textit{Register}, 18 August 1870
\item \textsuperscript{67} S.A., P.P.: 1867, No.2, 1868, No.3; S.A., P.D., 19 October 1869, c.605; \textit{Register}, 28 October 1867
\item \textsuperscript{68} Clark, 'The Boarding-Out Society', pp.17-18
\item \textsuperscript{69} appointed under [South Australia] 30 Vic. 1866-7, No.12; S.A., G.G., 11 April 1867
\item \textsuperscript{70} \textit{Register}, 17 August 1870; Constance M. Davey, \textit{Children and their Law-makers}, Adelaide, 1956, p.4
\end{itemize}
rapidly declined... very many of the children presenting a
squalid and emaciated appearance'. 71 Then they were moved to
a house called the Grace Darling at Brighton. It was large
enough for only a third of their number; it needed repairs;
the matron was harassed not only by lack of space and
assistance, but also by difficulties in getting her requisit­
ions attended to by the new Destitute Board, and by its
chairman's interference in the Orphan School. 72 In July 1867,
Strangways told the House of Assembly that the children at
Brighton were 'dying like rotten sheep'. 73 The Destitute
Board supplied a report showing that twelve children had died,
four from gangrene following measles; of the 102 children
still at Brighton, 53 were sick. 74 Temporary relief, then
the opening of the government industrial school at Magill, by
January 1869, 75 improved the children's condition. But the
water supply at Magill was inadequate, and there were no
proper lavatories; a 'nuisance' in the east parklands in

71. Report of the Committee of the Legislative Council on
Destitute Establishments, Register, 28 October 1867

72. ibid

73. S.A., P.D., 17 July 1867, c.104

74. S.A., P.P., 1867, No.50; S.A., P.D.: 23 July 1867,
c.156, 31 July 1867, c.231

75. S.A., P.D., 8 January 1869, c.1376
October 1869 was accused of coming from Magill. By 1872 the building was overcrowded. The Chairman of the Destitute Board, in desperation, began boarding out the overflow of children. He paid allowances to their guardians, but he did nothing about supervising or inspecting them. Only the ages of the children boarded out distinguished his measure from baby farming. The 1872 Act legalised his action, but its chief impetus came not from concern for the children but from the government's discovery that it had no power to punish children in its care when they destroyed government property. The Register welcomed the provision for boarding out in the 1872 Act, but it had done little to promote the system. Two years after it had begun, an Anglican clergyman attempted to discredit the system, but otherwise it drew little attention. Opinion about social reform in South Australia in 1872 was more concerned with cleaning-up measures

76. S.A., P.D., 1 October 1869, c.484

77. S.A., P.D., 25 April 1872, c.655; Clark, 'The Boarding-Out Society', p.19

78. S.A., P.D., 24 April 1872, c.608; Clark, 'The Boarding-Out Society', p.19; Davey, Children and their Lawmakers, p.7

79. S.A., P.D., 30 April 1872, c.681

80. Register: 13 April 1872, 1 August 1873

81. Register: 13 May 1874, 23 May 1874
than with welfare. In May a large deputation appealed to the government against the houses of ill-fame in Adelaide, 82 and in November the parliament passed the Juvenile Offenders Act, to allow magistrates to order that offending children be whipped. 83 The Register remarked of debate on that bill, 'The line of argument pursued was not generally of a character to impress the minds of uncared-for children with a high idea of the paternal solicitude of the State for their welfare', 84 but the paper gave no further attention to the bill which passed through parliament in record time. 85 Clearly, public opinion in South Australia was not even interested in children's welfare, and still less disposed to introduce measures to improve it.

So - why was South Australia so successful with boarding out? The highly centralised administration favoured

82. Register, 2 May 1872
83. [South Australia] 35 & 36 Vic. 1872, No.35
84. Register, 9 November 1872
85. leave to introduce the bill was moved on 6 November, and the bill was passed on 30 November, the haste probably arising from the fact that Parliament was about to rise, but this makes even more emphatic the indifference of members of Parliament to the well-being of 'larrikins and neglected children'
efficient operation of the system; Victoria's initial lack of success was partly caused by the absence of a strong central authority to coordinate the efforts of the private institutions to board out their inmates. The Destitute Board's care in selecting families who seemed likely to fulfil their responsibilities to the children favoured harmonious operation of the system. But the principal reason for South Australia's early and continuing success was the frequent, careful and tactful supervision of the boarded out children. Supervision was essential. Emily Clark told the N.S.W. Charities Commission that in some parts of England the system had failed for want of more frequent supervision than the official inspection. In 1881 the Committee of Inspectors of Industrial Schools in Victoria recorded their belief that the system could be worked efficiently only with the assistance of the ladies' committees

86. Catherine Spence outlined five major benefits of the centralised system in South Australia in 'Charity in South Australia', p.22; see also S.A., P.P., 1885, vol.4, No.228, p.xiii

87. this was shown by the rapidity with which children were boarded out from the private and government institutions once the Committee of Inspectors of Industrial Schools had taken charge of them in 1880: Vic., P.P., 1880-81, vol.4, No.10

88. Boarding-Out Society, Report, 1873, p.5

89. N.S.W., V. & P., 1873-4, vol.6, par.8822, note on revision
of visitors. In South Australia, from 1872 until 1886, supervision was organised and carried out for the Destitute Board by the wholly voluntary Boarding-Out Society, founded by Emily Clark and dominated by Catherine Spence. The most immediate reason for South Australia's early success with the boarding out system, and hence South Australia's leadership of the child welfare movement in Australia, was the enterprise, energy, and endurance of Emily Clark and Catherine Spence.

Emily Clark re-formed the Boarding-Out Society in 1872 when she discovered that the Destitute Board was already boarding out children from Magill, but without supervision. The original members organised themselves into a committee, with Emily Clark as secretary and Catherine Spence as treasurer, and offered the Destitute Board their services for

90. Vic., P.P., 1880-81, vol.4, No.101; see also N.S.W., V. & P., 1873-4, vol.6, p.53

91. a travelling inspector, who was a salaried government official, was appointed by the Destitute Board in 1882; his work supplemented that of the Boarding-Out Society, see Boarding-Out Society, Report, 1882, p.4

92. Boarding-Out Society, Report, 1873, pp.3-4; Clark, 'Report of the Initiation and Progress of the Movement for Boarding out the Children of the State in the Province of South Australia', p.3

superintending the boarded out children. The Board accepted, and laid down conditions for the Society's work, which was to visit the children and their guardians once every three months, at irregular intervals, and report each visit to the Board within three days of making it. Most of the Board's conditions were designed to compel the Society to fulfil the task it had undertaken, or relinquish it, and to preserve the guardians and children from undue interference. The Society added one condition of its own: 'Should ill-treatment be suspected, the Visitor shall immediately investigate the case, and if necessary report upon it to the Destitute Board and to the Hon. Secretary of the Society'.

The Boarding-Out Society was a small body with a continually changing membership. Any subscriber of five shillings, and anyone appointed as a visitor, became a member: the largest number of subscribers recorded was 26, and the largest number of visitors 123, and as many as 23

94. Boarding-Out Society, Report, 1873, p.4
95. ibid.
96. Boarding-Out Society, Reports, 1873-86, rule 8
97. op.cit., rule 5
98. op.cit., lists of subscribers
visitors resigned in one year.\(^{100}\) But the core of the Society, its committee, remained basically the same. It met on the first Tuesday of every month to consider duplicates of the visitors' reports to the Destitute Board and appoint a visitor for each area in which children were boarded out.\(^{101}\) The committee was well-suited to its task: its patroness, the Governor's wife, Lady Musgrave, was an American\(^ {102}\) and may have been the Society's source of information about new measures introduced in the United States for dealing with delinquent children; and its members included Lady Ayers,\(^ {103}\) Mrs. (later Lady) Colton,\(^ {104}\) and Mrs. (later Lady) Davenport,\(^ {105}\) all wives of wealthy public figures in the colony. Their acquaintance would have been

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102. Lucy Webb, 'Our Viceregal Ladies' in *A Book of South Australian Women in the first Hundred Years*, p.80

103. wife of Sir Henry Ayers, C.M.G., K.C.M.G., G.C.M.G., managing director of the South Australian Mining Association, six times premier of South Australia, president of the Legislative Council 1881-93, see *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol.III

104. wife of Sir John Colton, K.C.M.G., Chief Secretary 1876-7, 1884-5, Mayor of Adelaide 1874-5, knighted 1891, see *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol.III

wide, and their social prominence would have attracted sycophants as well as the genuinely philanthropic to the ranks of the visitors. They were friends of Emily Clark.

Despite her own friendship with Emily Clark, Catherine Spence could have felt overpowered by such company. She observed in her autobiography that she was 'out of society'. Her own and her family's poverty had kept her so, and while by 1872 she might have borrowed ease and acceptance from her brother's position as manager of the E.S. & A Bank, her careless dress and brusque manner, her impatience with small-talk which she called 'mere persiflage', and possibly her broad Scots accent, all set her apart from the more polished colonial gentry. However, she probably enjoyed a unique acceptance as an intellectual among those ladies. When she was appointed treasurer of the Boarding-Out Society in 1872, she was already the author of three novels and a political pamphlet, and had made the acquaintance of

106. Spence, An Autobiography, p.54
107. op.cit., p.28
108. Young, Catherine Helen Spence, pp.27-8
109. op.cit., p.16
110. op.cit., p.15
111. op.cit., p.13
John Stuart Mill and George Eliot. The ladies of the colonial gentry might themselves have felt a little overpowered. Catherine's office as treasurer was not arduous: the Society's funds came from subscriptions, seldom amounted to more than 10 pounds a year, and were spent on stationery. But she also undertook a great deal of visiting for the Society, and gained a closer acquaintance with individual children and guardians, and with conditions at Magill, than anyone else on the committee. In 1884 the Destitute Commission extracted from Emily Clark a reluctant admission that in all her years as the Society's secretary she had visited Magill only twice, but that Miss Spence had been many times. Catherine told the Commissioners, 'I have visited the industrial school and the girls' reformatory pretty often, and would visit it oftener if it were not so far away, making a fatiguing day'. It is possible that she walked the ten or so miles from her house in Collegetown to Magill and back.

The placed-out children she visited were classified in

113. Boarding-Out Society, Reports, 1873-86, treasurer's reports
114. Clark, 'The Boarding-Out Society', p.21
115. S.A., P.P., 1885, vol.4, No.228, p.245
116. op.cit., p.236
three groups. The first were children under twelve, living with people who received an allowance for them from the Destitute Board and sent them to school. Primary education was made compulsory in 1875, and boarded out children were not required to pay fees. The second were children under twelve and at school, referred to as 'licensed for adoption', because they were taken by people without the Destitute Board's allowance. The third were children between 12 and 16 who were apprenticed to their guardians and received wages, most of which were put in the bank for them. Visitors' reports described the condition of the children as 'good', 'tolerable', and 'unsatisfactory'. Catherine explained that 'The reports marked "tolerable" and "unsatisfactory" are for the most part so designated on account of the behaviour of the children, indifferent health,

117. children from both reformatories and the industrial school were boarded out, those from reformatories after having first spent some time in the industrial school, evidence of Miss Catherine Helen Spence to the Victorian Royal Commission on Charitable Institutions, Vic., P.P., 1892-3, vol.4, No.60

118. Boarding-Out Society, Reports, 1873-86

119. [South Australia] 38 & 39 Vic. 1875, No.11

120. Boarding-Out Society, Reports, 1873-86

121. this practice had been instituted under the Destitute Children Act, [South Australia] 11 & 12 Vic. 1848, No.8
or irregular attendance at church or school. Very few of them are so marked on account of the badness of the home. ¹²²

Besides regular visits, the Society's visitors investigated such reports as that of a man waking his foster-son in the mornings by pouring water in his ear, ¹²³ or that of an apprenticed girl who accused her employer of assault so that she would be taken back to her friends in the Reformatory. ¹²⁴

Sometimes they were required to protect both children and guardians from the malice, or madness of outsiders: the archives of the State Children's Department contain a piece of paper on which is written -

WITH FEELINGS TO THOSE LITTLE CHILDREN. THERE IS NOBODY WITH FEELINGS WOULD LET MRS O'MALLEY HAVE ANY MORE OF THOSE LITTLE CHILDREN ... YOU CAN SEE FOR YOURSELF THE FINE LITTLE GIRL THAT COME THERE AT FIRST HOW SHE LEFT A CRIPPLE.... THERE IS NOT SUCH DRUNKARDS IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA AS THE O'MALLEYS.

¹²² Boarding-Out Society, Report, 1878, p. 4

¹²³ Letter dated 10 November [1890], correspondence of the State Children's Department, 1889-?, MS. (GRG27 no. 1), South Australian Archives; the detailed records and correspondence of the Boarding-Out Society have not, as far as I could discover, been preserved. However the nature of cases requiring investigation, and the nature of correspondence received, is likely to have been the same in the 1870s as in the 1880s and 1890s

¹²⁴ File 427, 1896, containing two telegrams and reports of interviews with the girl and her employer, Correspondence of the State Children's Department
Nothing but cussing and swearing in their
drunkenness. It is time to speak against them
with feelings to the little children. With no
spite but from a friend.

The file is marked, in the Inspector's hand, 'Nothing to be
done'. But the visitors' most common function was to
soften abrasive situations in the homes. In 1876 the
Society's Annual Report urged the foster parents and
guardians to be patient with the bad habits of the children:

many of these children [it said] are naturally
below the average in intelligence, and ... have
often contracted bad habits. They are not
always orphans, but often neglected, deserted,
or illegitimate children, sometimes the
offspring of criminals, and in some cases have
been criminals themselves. ... it is never an
easy thing to eradicate the evil which has been
the growth of years.

The visitors' only rewards came from being able to note cases
of such attachment between child and foster-parents that
supervision was no longer necessary. But such cases
occurred, and often owed much to the visitors. In 1886
Catherine claimed that the Society's supervision had not
only saved expense for the taxpayers, but also strengthened
public confidence in the boarding out system. In the same
year, the Register asserted that 'If this Society had not

125. Letter dated 21 October 1890, Correspondence of the
State Children's Department

126. Boarding-Out Society, Report, 1876, p.4

127. Boarding-Out Society, Report, 1886, p.3
been in existence the boarding-out system would have been a great failure, for the mechanism for the prevention of imposture or of cruelty would have been incomplete without their kindly and gratuitous aid'.

For several years, Catherine combined her visiting with work as the Society's secretary. She was Acting-Secretary from 1877-9 while Emily Clark went abroad, and she became Secretary when Emily Clark's health compelled her to resign in 1883. By 1886 Catherine had held the office, looked after the important and copious correspondence it involved, and run the committee meetings, for as long as Emily Clark had. The evidence she gave the Destitute Commission demonstrated her close conscientious supervision of all the Society's work; her enlightened commonsense impressed the Commissioners; and the ideas considered by both Catherine Spence and Emily Clark, in their constant search for improved ways of caring for neglected children, infected the Commissioners with their enthusiasm. The Commission's report in 1885 recommended that a Council be

128. Register, 27 September 1886
130. Boarding-Out Society, Report, 1884, p.3
132. op.cit., pp.xxxvii-xxxix, clxxxiii
set up to take over the functions of the Boarding-Out Society and those of the Destitute Board which were connected with the children. It also recommended specifically that members of the Council include Miss Clark and Miss Spence.

When the State Children's Council was gazetted in December 1886, its eleven members included six who had been on the committee of the Boarding-Out Society, and among the seven women appointed were Emily Clark and Catherine Spence. The Register congratulated the government 'upon having been able to secure such valuable assistance'. The Council was to have, 'subject to the control of the Governor', care and responsibility for all methods of providing for neglected children. Initially, the 'control of the Governor', which took the form of high-handed disregard of the Council's recommendations by the Chief Secretary, proved irksome. From August to December 1888 the Council carried

133. op.cit., part 5
134. ibid.
135. established under the Destitute Persons Act Amendment Act, 49 & 50 Vic. 1886, No.387
136. S.A., G.G., 9 December 1886
137. Register, 9 December 1886
138. [South Australia] 49 & 50 Vic. 1886, No.387
139. Correspondence re Resignation of State Children's Council S.A., P.P., No.108; Spence, State Children in Australia, pp.30-31
on an increasingly hostile correspondence with Thomas Playford, culminating in its resignation on 16 January 1889.\textsuperscript{140} This probably signalled strain appearing in the practice of governing through honorary advisory and executive organisations,\textsuperscript{141} but the storm passed quickly. Catherine recalled that after 'great searchings of heart' among the Council members, and some yielding by the government, all but two of the Council resumed office, prepared to 'trust to time and perseverance to win the recognition of our other demands'.\textsuperscript{142} Dr. Edward Stirling, the first president, and James Smith, were replaced by Thomas Rhodes and Dr. Robert Robertson.\textsuperscript{143} The Council met monthly\textsuperscript{144} to direct the work of its small and, Catherine considered, grossly underpaid staff.\textsuperscript{145} A Ladies' Committee, which took over much of the work done previously by the committee of the Boarding-Out.

\textsuperscript{140} ibid.
\textsuperscript{141} the Destitute Board resigned for similar reasons in 1898, Manuscript minutes of the Destitute Board, 10 December 1898, minute 1246/10, MS.(GRG28 Ser.1), South Australian Archives
\textsuperscript{142} Spence, State Children in Australia, p.31
\textsuperscript{143} ibid.
\textsuperscript{144} op.cit., p.29
\textsuperscript{145} Vic., P.P., 1892-3, vol.4, No.60, p.511
Society, met fortnightly. And the Council's functions expanded as it devised new measures for caring for the 'children of the state', and persuaded the government to legislate for them.

Catherine's chief work for the Council, undertaken largely on her own initiative, was as publicist of its work and of the reforms it introduced. She continued her earlier campaign for more widespread adoption of the boarding out system, carrying it as far as the United States in 1893 when she volunteered to speak to the International Congress of Charities, Correction and Philanthropy held in Chicago. She addressed the first Australasian Charity Conference in 1890 on the advantages of South Australia's

146. Spence, State Children in Australia, p.29
147. see above p.221
148. Charity Review: I,1,pp.4-5, I,2,pp.7-9, V,2,pp.5-8; Woman's Sphere, March 1901, pp.59-60
149. Catherine Spence's autobiography suggests that she may have been sent to the United States to fulfil her commission to the Charities Congress, but a letter from the United States, quoting an earlier letter from the secretary of the State Children's Department of South Australia, makes it clear that she had decided to visit America before she received any official appointments, see Spence, An Autobiography, p.69; Register, 4 April 1893
centralised administration;\textsuperscript{151} preached in Melbourne on South Australia's efforts to reduce infant mortality,\textsuperscript{152} which ranged from the introduction of deep drainage\textsuperscript{153} to supervision of licensed foster-mothers\textsuperscript{154} and inspection of lying-in homes;\textsuperscript{155} she wrote and spoke enthusiastically about South Australia's establishment of a children's court;\textsuperscript{156} and in 1907 published a history of the work of the Boarding-Out Society and the State Children's Councils.\textsuperscript{157} But her work as a publicist was not confined to boasting about the reforms already achieved by the State Children's Council.

Her concern for the destitute expanded when, in January 1897, she was appointed to the Destitute Board,\textsuperscript{158} and, besides

\begin{flushleft}
151. Spence, 'Charity in Australia'

152. C.H. Spence, untitled sermon headed 'Melbourne - Sunday evening', 8 May, no year, (MSS.202/3), Mitchell Library


154. [South Australia] 44 & 45 Vic. 1881, No.210

155. S.A., P.P., 1896, No.81

156. Spence, untitled sermon headed 'Melbourne - Sunday evening; C.H. Spence, address on National Council of Women, n.d., (MSS.202/5), Mitchell Library

157. Spence, \textit{State Children in Australia}

158. Manuscript Minutes of the Destitute Board, 21 January 1897, minute 419
\end{flushleft}
working for more flexible conditions within the Destitute Asylum,\textsuperscript{159} she devoted considerable attention to ways of preventing destitution among both children and adults. She had spoken to the Destitute Commission of Rev. W.L. Blackley's scheme for compulsory providence in 1884,\textsuperscript{160} and she repeated her recommendations of it when she addressed the second Australasian Conference on Charity in 1892.\textsuperscript{161}

She wrote a pamphlet on The Elberfeld System of Charity, where 'measures for the destitute are preventive rather than curative',\textsuperscript{162} and she considered Sidney Webb's observations about the necessity of altering 'the economic incidence of child bearing' by 'deliberate volition in the regulation of the married state' as a means of reducing the numbers of the destitute.\textsuperscript{163}

Catherine's energy, and the extent of her work for this cause, puzzled at least one of her contemporaries. Jeanne

\textsuperscript{159} Manuscript Minutes of the Destitute Board, 23 December 1897, minute 466; Spence, An Autobiography, p.83

\textsuperscript{160} S.A., P.P., 1885, No.228, p.237

\textsuperscript{161} C.H. Spence, 'National or Compulsory Providence', Proceedings of the Second Australasian Conference on Charity, Melbourne, 1892, pp.77-85

\textsuperscript{162} C.H. Spence, The Elberfeld System of Charity; a Study of Poverty, Adelaide, 1906

\textsuperscript{163} C.H. Spence, manuscript headed The Decline in the Birthrate, n.d., (MSS.202/5), Mitchell Library
Young wrote, 'I remember hearing Mr. T.H. Atkinson... say that he could never understand Miss Clark and Miss Spence doing all the work they did for Boards and for the State Children's Council, for no payment whatever, and he confessed to wondering what motive had spurred them on.' Catherine gave some indication of her motives when she wrote, in the 1878 annual report of the Boarding-Out Society:

In this movement the rich and the great of the colony have taken a very subordinate place, for the work has been done for the unfortunate members of the working-class by the comparatively prosperous of that class. Room has been made for those little ones in the hearts and homes of the small farmers and market gardeners, the small storekeepers, the artizans, and the labourers; and no munificent subscriptions to public or private charities can have greater or wider beneficent effects than this permanent raising of juvenile pauperism into an element of strength instead of weakness to the State.

The connection between mutual assistance among members of the working class, and the strength of the state may not have been immediately apparent to her readers. She had skipped several steps in her argument which runs exactly parallel to the main thread of argument in her Plea for Pure Democracy. The skipped steps run like this: anything which provokes people to a sense of collective responsibility, heightens their awareness of moral worth, and that brings moral elevation to the whole society and the strength of

164. Young, Catherine Helen Spence, pp.107-8
165. Boarding-Out Society, Report, 1878, pp.7-8
166. Spence, A Plea for Pure Democracy
righteousness to those representatives chosen by society to govern. The boarding out system was a means of awakening a sense of collective social responsibility, just as proportional representation would arouse a sense of collective political responsibility. Catherine saw her work for neglected and delinquent children as a major contribution to the moral and spiritual elevation of mankind, particularly that class of mankind which she believed to be most in need of such elevation. As she grew older, her enthusiasm for improvement yielded place to her wish to increase the happiness of mankind: her efforts to give the inmates of the Destitute Asylum greater freedom and a more varied diet proceeded from her concern to make them happier, rather than better. Her zeal was prompted and fostered by the same rebellion against injustice and oppression as that which led to her conversion

167. ibid; see also Register, 30 December 1856; this may explain in part Catherine Spence's thinly-veiled hostility to the idea of boarding children of the state with wealthier families, Spence, State Children in Australia, pp.85-6; Register, 5 September 1885

168. 'On one occasion when the old men [in the Destitute Asylum] had been allowed to go into the streets to see some function, several of them, very few Miss Spence thought, came back very much the worse for the hospitality they had met with on their peregrinations, and the authorities were for punishing the delinquents. Miss Spence stood up for them stoutly. "Poor old things. What harm did it do once in a way!"', Cook, Catherine Helen Spence, p.2
to Unitarianism. She told the Criminological Society that she found the 'doctrine of hereditary pauperism and crime as cruel and hopeless as the Calvinistic doctrine of election and reprobation.\textsuperscript{169} She echoed both Woods\textsuperscript{170} and her own Agnostic's Progress\textsuperscript{171} when she told a meeting of the National Council of Women that:

> My work on the State Children's Council I look on not as benevolence, but as justice.... Sympathy transfers this keen sense of your own personal rights to the rights of other people. Without sympathy says Herbert Spencer there can be no justice. Thus justice instead of being hard and bloodless, is true kindness the most valuable as well as the most difficult of all virtues.\textsuperscript{172}

Her membership of the Unitarian Christian Church probably played a larger part than her friendship with Emily Clark in drawing her to the Boarding-Out Society when it began. The Society looked distinctly like the social welfare department of the church: four of the eleven members of the first

\textsuperscript{169} C.H. Spence, Heredity and Environment Delivered before (and printed at the request of) the Criminological Society of South Australia, October 23rd, 1897, Adelaide, 1897, p.2

\textsuperscript{170} e.g. Woods, 'The Unitarian Belief Concerning Salvation'

\textsuperscript{171} Spence, An Agnostic's Progress, p.63

\textsuperscript{172} C.H. Spence, Address to the National Council of Women, 30 May 1905, (MSS. 202/5), Mitchell Library
committee were members of the church, and ten of the Society's first eighteen subscribers were connected with the church.

However, Catherine's altruism was not unmixed: she always considered the individual's responsibility to himself to be as great as that to other people. In working for the Boarding-Out Society she gained recognition of her abilities, first from the committee, then from the Destitute Commissioners, and served an apprenticeship for the fame and influence she sought, and acquired in her old age. As she was about to leave for Chicago in 1893, the Advertiser wrote of 'the strong personal influence which she brought to bear upon the philanthropic work.' Sir Samuel Way told the Interstate Congress of Workers for dependent children in Adelaide in 1909 that Miss Spence 'was a household word in Australia, in England, and in America. It seemed to him that

173. Miss Spence, Miss Clark, Mr. J.H. Clark; Lady Ayers was probably not a member of the Unitarian Christian Church, but her husband frequently subscribed to it, see below appendix A

174. Sir Henry Ayers, Lady Ayers, Miss Ayers, A.S. Clark, Mrs A.S. Clark, J.H. Clark, Miss Clark, Mrs. W. Kay, J.B. Spence, Miss Spence

175. see above chapter 3, pp.104-5

176. Advertiser, 17 March 1893
success attended nearly every cause to which she devoted her great energies, and not the least was the cause of the boarding-out system. 177

Moreover, in her work for children of the state, Catherine found fulfilment for talents for practical work which she could not have satisfied either in a solely domestic life or through her journalism. Looking after children was traditionally women's work. Some of Catherine's enthusiasm for the boarding-out system may have arisen from the realisation that by insisting that homes are better places than institutions for bringing up children, the Boarding-Out Society was also insisting on the important responsibilities of housewives and mothers. Further, supervising the care of the colony's waifs and strays could be seen as a natural extension of the 'woman's sphere' into the colony's public affairs. Some of Catherine's enthusiasm may have been prompted by the recognition that the Boarding-Out Society was also demonstrating both the necessity and importance of women's participation in the community's public concerns. Much of her enthusiasm probably proceeded from delight at finding a means of expressing her 'Enthusiasm of Humanity' that was at once more extensive than any she could find within her own household, and

more direct than writing novels or letters to the press. But she was, nevertheless, primarily concerned with the children. She recognised that the emotional needs of a child were more often met in a family than in a large (179) institution, and she was sympathetic to the emotional needs of the destitute children. She told the 'State Children' Convention, held in Adelaide in 1907, that 'Above all things... [the visitors] must love the children. There was a terrible objection nowadays to kissing, on the ground that it was insanitary.\(^{179}\) Every child she visited, except the big boys, she kissed, because she wanted them to feel that they were of the same flesh and blood, and that she loved them'.\(^{180}\) Her sympathy had made her perceptive. Yet it was, surely, an oddly theoretical sympathy which allowed her to assert that the visitors 'must love' the children. Her statement that she kissed the children because 'she wanted them to feel...that she loved them', not simply 'because she loved them', could suggest a fundamental emotional detachment from

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178. 'My beau ideal of a home is where a destitute child or two, or even three, are absorbed amongst other children and go to ordinary schools and take a share in ordinary work', Miss Spence's evidence to the Destitute Commission, S.A., P.P., 1885, vol.4, No.228, p.236

179. e.g. Observer: 14 June 1890, 29 September 1894

180. "State Children" Convention, Adelaide, 1907, p.9
the children with whom she sympathised. Suggestions like this accumulate to make it impossible to believe that in working so strenuously for the children of the state, Catherine was finding expression for maternal emotions which her spinsterhood would otherwise have repressed. She probably had few maternal inclinations. She had refused the only attractive offer of marriage made to her partly because she did not want to have children. In her novels she usually portrayed motherhood as a state of natural and joyful fulfilment, but the characters convey little sense of identification with them, and Margaret Elliott in Clara Morison is sometimes sisterly, but she is not maternal. Even where Catherine had an opportunity for forming closer relationships than those she could have with boarded out children, an element of detachment remained.

Like Theodora Goodman, Catherine was 'this thing a spinster which at best, becomes that institution an aunt'. Such institutions were scarce in a new colony, and while Catherine was 'Auntie Kate' only to her own nephews and nieces, she performed the domestic offices of aunt for several of her friends. Her domestic responsibilities were formidable. She supervised the upbringing and education of two orphans,

the youngest surviving children of her friend Rose Ann Duval who died in 1861.\textsuperscript{183} She brought two other families up by hand. Her niece and nephew had been partly in her charge since about 1863 when their father died and Catherine and her mother went to live with her widowed sister Mary.\textsuperscript{184} They became her responsibility altogether when Mary died in 1870.\textsuperscript{185} The three children of one of her first wards, Rose Duval Hood, were left to her care while their mother went to work during the day, after she was widowed in 1887.\textsuperscript{186} She took the whole family to live with her from 1889 till 1896,\textsuperscript{187} and she set up house with the three children again, when Rose Hood died in 1901.\textsuperscript{188} From 1861, when she was thirty-five, until 1904, when she was seventy-nine, Catherine was free of sole responsibility for one, sometimes two families, for only four years. A memorial notice in the \textit{Register} exclaimed, 'Surely no spinster ever had more of her share of mothering!'\textsuperscript{189}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{183} Spence, \textit{An Autobiography}, p.24
\item \textsuperscript{184} op. cit., p.28
\item \textsuperscript{185} op. cit., p.46
\item \textsuperscript{186} op. cit., p.67
\item \textsuperscript{187} op. cit., pp.68, 84
\item \textsuperscript{188} op. cit., p.89
\item \textsuperscript{189} Register, 14 November 1923, in guardbook of newspaper cuttings relating to C.H. Spence, in South Australian Public Library
\end{itemize}
But for all the mothering she remained an aunt, and detached. She took pleasure in entertaining children by telling stories 'with appropriate gestures and emphasis',\(^{190}\) when she could simultaneously give play to the inventive and dramatic talents which made her a novelist and a widely-acclaimed public speaker. But she was probably less interested in the particular children she was entertaining than in her performance, as potentially entertaining to a far wider audience. Similarly, she was less interested in being a foster-mother than in helping all humanity, which had, on one occasion, disastrous consequences. In 1904, the third year after she had set up house again with the young Hoods, Kitty Hood cut her throat in the bath and died a few days later.\(^{191}\) Both Catherine's niece, and Jeanne Young suggest that some blame for this lay at her door.\(^{192}\) The characteristics of her public work: her quick grasp of practical details, her

\(^{190}\) Spence, *An Autobiography*, p.20

\(^{191}\) (Spence), *An Autobiography*, p.89; Morice, *Auntie Kate*, p.6; Mrs. Morice wrote: 'This arrangement ended tragically, for the girl, young and pretty, cut her throat in the bath, and lived only a few days after. This was a horrid shock, and might, had there been some knowledge of psychology, been avoided' [sic]

\(^{192}\) Her only help, though this must have been considerable since she still had time for so much writing, visiting, and travelling, was that given by her dependent companion Ellen Gregory
common sense, energy, and strong sympathy with the oppressed, may not have found equally happy expression at home. Perhaps Kitty Hood found Miss Spence's energy, resolution and intensity, unendurable. But Catherine was not a domestic dragon. Her portrayal of the Elliott household in *Clara Morison* indicates a keen appreciation of domestic harmony and vitality, and the young Wrens remained attached to their aunt all her life. Moreover, her preference for public work makes her acceptance and fulfilment of such extensive domestic responsibilities, a testimony to her energy and generosity.¹⁹²

Catherine was too committed to justice and the elevation of mankind, too ambitious for personal fame, and too talented a publicist to have been able to find satisfaction within the confines of a nineteenth century colonial household. Her work for child welfare, and the recognition it won her, proved to be only the start of her public work as a reformer. But because she sought satisfaction outside her household, she contributed substantially to her colony's leadership of the child welfare movement in Australia.
CHAPTER 7

ELECTORAL REFORMER

At a meeting of some of Adelaide's foremost citizens to celebrate her eightieth birthday, Catherine Spence proclaimed: 'Injustice in England is not rectified by injustice in South Australia, nor does injustice in Alexandria rectify injustice in Torrens. Injustice rectifies nothing. It is an evil everywhere and always. I who speak here tell you that Proportional Representation is the hope of the world'. In that powerful but peculiar assertion she expressed her life's major conviction and mission. Reform of electoral injustice had been, she wrote later, 'the foremost object of my life'.

Catherine Spence was already sixty-six when she first mounted a platform to explain to South Australians why and how they should demand the introduction of proportional representation. She was sixty-seven when she set out for the United States to teach the Americans how to vote. She was seventy-two when she nominated for the Federal Convention. But 'this subject is not with me one of to-day or of yesterday' she told a meeting in London in 1894.

1. Catherine Helen Spence 1825-1905, reprinted from the Register, 31 October, 1905, p.29
3. Report of meeting on "Proportional Representation", or effective voting, held at River House, Chelsea on Tuesday, July 10th, 1894, p.6
Catherine's interest in electoral methods formed first in Scotland, where her parents welcomed the Reform Act of 1832 with enthusiasm. It developed in South Australia where for about twenty years the organisation of representation was one of the chief subjects of public debate. Her father's first job in South Australia, as Adelaide's Town Clerk, introduced her to experiments in electoral methods.

On 19 August 1840, Gawler and his Council obeyed a year-old despatch from the Colonial Office and passed the first Colonial Municipal Act. Rowland Hill, secretary to the first board of Colonization Commissioners, had supervised the drafting of the Act, and introduced into it the form of quota representation devised by his father for electing committees at his school in Tottenham. The ninth and tenth clauses of

4. See above, chapter 2, pp.52-3
5. Pike, Paradise of Dissent, p.240
6. Thomas Worsnop, History of the City of Adelaide, Adelaide, 1878, p.15
7. Pike, Paradise of Dissent, p.171
8. Thomas Hare, 'Representation in Practice and Theory', Fraser's Magazine, February, 1860, quoted in Spence, A Plea for Pure Democracy, p.23
the Act required the total number of voters on the roll to be advertised, with the number of voters necessary to constitute a quorum (calculated by dividing the total by the number of councillors to be elected). Thus, any body of men, with numbers great enough to form a quorum, could vote unanimously to return a councillor before the elections. Catherine's father followed the elections closely; his chances of a job depended on the results. He explained the experiment to Catherine, and may have discussed it with Andrew Murray, soon to be editor of the Southern Australian, and also soon to be Catherine's brother-in-law. The conservative Southern Australian became indignantly astonished when the Committee of the Municipal Tradesman's Association advertised a list of nineteen people as 'the most fit and proper persons to be elected'. When only two quorums were formed, to return a draper and grocer, and a carpenter, the paper gloated over the small success of 'this novel but very absurd principle'. Other colonists must have agreed. The principle was not used again. The only other election was on

10. Worsnop, The City of Adelaide, pp.17-18
12. Southern Australian, 27 October 1840
13. Southern Australian, 30 October 1840
22 October 1841; in October 1842 only 135 citizens enrolled and no vote was taken. The Council perished from lack of interest, squabbles and want of funds, effectively by May 1842, officially in August 1843. Later Catherine recalled the 1840 Municipal Council elections as a precedent for South Australia's acceptance of proportional representation. At the time it probably meant no more to her than that her father was employed, at 150 pounds a year.

In 1846, the year in which her father died, and she opened her school, her brother John became a clerk in the South Australian Savings Bank. He had a professional interest in the nature of the government, and Catherine's picture of Gilbert and Margaret Elliott in Clara Morison suggests that he discussed developments in the colony's government with her. During the 1850s this meant discussing the kind of constitution South Australia was to have, and the ways in which the colony's representatives were to be elected.

Debate in South Australia about the principles of electoral organisation occupied as much attention as the constitution, and continued after the constitution was

14. Pike, Paradise of Dissent, p. 245
15. ibid.
settled. This was partly because the British Act 'for the better government of Her Majesty's Australian colonies'.\textsuperscript{17} which permitted establishment of a partly-elected Legislative Council in 1851, had already laid down the property qualifications for candidates and electors, and the Council's maximum size. The Act restricted the colony's self-determination to electoral districts and conduct of elections. It was also partly because introduction of manhood suffrage for the lower chamber, in the constitution of 1855-6,\textsuperscript{18} meant that the power of particular interests depended on manipulation of electoral divisions and the numbers of members each returned. The debate on electoral divisions in 1851 shows two main positions: one asserting that the distribution 'be defined on the basis of population', the other that it must allow equitable representation of interests.\textsuperscript{19} The Constitution Act of 1853, disallowed by the British government, based electoral divisions for the lower house on records of land sales,\textsuperscript{20}

\begin{enumerate}
\item 13 & 14 Vic. c.59
\item No.2 of 1855-56 'An Act to establish a Constitution for South Australia'
\item op.cit., p.17
\end{enumerate}
and safeguarded interests by determining that each constituency should return two members. The Constitution Act of 1855-6, assented to by the Crown, established manhood suffrage for the House of Assembly, a property franchise for the Legislative Council, and left details of electoral organisation to a separate Act, 'for the sake of distinctness, and also with a view to greater facility in amending its details hereafter'. The Electoral Law Act 1856 was based on the understanding that representation should be given 'to population and not acres', and the resolution that each electoral district 'should in all cases, if practicable, return not less than two members, thus ... [affording] a better chance of ... giving the minority a chance of being represented'. But it allowed Adelaide only six members when its population should have given it eight. This was

21. ibid.


23. No.10 of 1855-6

24. G.S. Kingston, quoted in Stephenson, The Electoral Districts of South Australia, p.21

partly to avoid single-member constituencies, and partly because it was believed that their location, compactness, and union in one electorate gave the people of Adelaide a fair share of legislative power.\textsuperscript{27} Despite this, the Act, basing electoral districts expressly on population and tacitly conceding consideration to minority interests, seems to have satisfied most colonists. Not until 1871 did members of parliament seriously question electoral divisions drawn according only to the size and location of population.

Stated simply, the debate between supporters of population and supporters of interest or 'the minority', as the basis for representation, was a debate between the urban and country population. Since most working men in South Australia lived in Adelaide, it was also, indirectly, a debate between labour claiming its rights and capital claiming its privileges.\textsuperscript{28} 'Interests' were primarily economic; 'the minority' was composed of owners of property and investors in mines. Although they formed no defined

\textsuperscript{27} op.cit., p.25

\textsuperscript{28} The eleventh point in the U.L.P.'s 1891 platform read: 'Redistribution of Seats on the basis of population', T.H. Smeaton, \textit{The People in Politics: A Short History of the Labor Movement in South Australia}, Adelaide, 1914, p.25
parties, nor even distinct political groups, until the
1890s, the protagonists of labour and capital in South
Australia were polarised early over assisted immigration, an
issue on which an election was fought. Their antagonism
alarmed Catherine.

She disregarded the pressures on the working men.
Continued immigration, declining prosperity, and a poor
harvest in 1858-9, caused a fall in wages and increased
unemployment in 1859. In April of that year, three hundred
working men met in the Adelaide parklands to express their
discontent and distress. The government's public works
programme could not give them employment, so they petitioned
parliament to suspend sponsored immigration. A motion
proposing this, in the debate on Estimates in June, was

29. 'as to well-defined lines of political demarcation, you
might as well look for ink-spots on the moon', Anthony
Forster, South Australia: Its Progress and Prosperity,
London, 1866, p.181; see also Edwin Hodder, History of
South Australia, London, 2 vols., vol.1, p.327; Register,
9 April 1860

30. immigrants arriving from Britain in South Australia at
public expense: 1855 11,871, 1856 - 4,177, 1857 - 3,965,
1858 - 3,553, 1859 - 4,553, Statistical Register of South
Australia for 1859, Adelaide, 1860, p.VII

31. average production of wheat per acre in 1859 was
1 bushel 33 lbs less than in 1858, Statistical Register of South
Australia for 1859, p.XVII

32. S.A., P.D.: 29 April 1859, c.1, 1 September 1859, c.619

33. Peter Cook, Faction in South Australian Politics 1857-1861,
defeated. In July, the angry workers established a 'Working Man's Association', later called the South Australian Political Association, to exert pressure in the working man's interests at the 1860 elections. The first of its seven principles read 'We believe that the time has now arrived when immigration at public expense should cease'. Catherine may have had more sympathy with Lavington Glyde, M.P. for East Torrens, who at the same time objected in the House of Assembly to 'the way in which the rights and privileges of individual voters were distributed throughout the colony', attacked population as the basis of representation, and asked 'why should the resident miner at the Burra and Clare have the right of nominating three members to oppose immigration, whilst the Burra shareholders living in the vicinity of Adelaide, whose interest it was to import immigrants, could only nominate one or two members'.

34. S.A., P.P., 1859, vol.1, p.67
35. Cook, Faction in South Australian Politics, p.115
36. Hodder, History of South Australia, vol.1, p.319
37. ibid.
38. S.A., P.D., 16 August 1859, c.518
39. ibid.
The extent to which the Association directly influenced the election results was not clear. At Burra and Clare, three Association candidates won a sweeping victory against two pastoralists, one of whom was G.S. Kingston, Speaker of the first House of Assembly. But in Adelaide and Gawler, endorsement was late and sometimes equivocal. Of the six candidates endorsed, five were returned, though not in the order recommended by the Association, and Hanson, the candidate the Association most wanted to exclude, was returned fifth on the poll.

Catherine believed the election results were directly attributable to the Association. 'But for blunders on ballot papers' she wrote, 'the whole ticket of six would have been elected'. She considered an electoral system which allowed one section of the community to swamp the parliament with its representatives unjust, and she expected the representatives elected by the popular vote to be incompetent and unworthy.

In 1859 Catherine had recently joined a church which satisfied her longing to belong to an intellectually and morally enlightened elite. With her satisfaction she had

40. Cook, Faction in South Australian Politics, p.116
41. ibid.
42. Spence, An Autobiography, p.24
absorbed the congregation's sense of being a beleaguered minority. Both the satisfaction and the defensiveness coloured her view of South Australian politics. The intellectual and moral impoverishment of her early years in the colony made her apprehensive about manhood suffrage. She had expressed unease at the quality of colonial politics when, in Clara Morison, she made Gilbert Elliott complain 'These elections have made me ashamed of my fellow-colonists; such an amount of clap-trap and mock wisdom, such truckling to the masses, such abuse of the term liberty, put me too much in mind of Yankeeland'. In 1859 she was alarmed by reports about the election results in Victoria, and she saw the Political Association's agitation as a forewarning of similar results in South Australia. Her apprehensions about the 1860 elections echoed the Register's:

It is no novel fact that "fools rush in where angels fear to tread;" but when the ground to be occupied is the important field of statesmanship, and when the consequences of action involve the well-being of a whole people possibly for years to come, the results of an Assembly largely composed of the inferior class of beings ... are not to be contemplated without dread.

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43. See above chapter 3, pp.111-14
44. See above chapter 2, pp.60-2
45. Spence, Clara Morison, vol.1, p.133
46. Letter signed 'C.H.S.', Register, 31 August 1861
47. Register, 25 February 1860
The polarisation of labour and capital faded. Economic conditions improved, the Political Association's representatives proved competent, and the new House of Assembly suspended immigration. The Register changed its tune and approved the election results. But Catherine, concentrating on the electoral system rather than on the men elected, only changed key.

She was concerned with the electoral system because in 1859 she read J.S. Mill's article 'Recent Writers on Reform' in the April number of Fraser's Magazine. This gave her, she wrote later, her 'strongest political inspiration'.

Mill's article reviewed three books about parliamentary reform. The third was Thomas Hare's A Treatise on the Election of Representatives, Parliamentary and Municipal, which Mill acclaimed as 'the most important work ever written on the practical part of the Subject'. By developing 'what is commonly called the Representation of Minorities', Hare's treatise showed opponents of 'purely democratic

49. Register, 9 April 1860
50. J.S. Mill, 'Recent Writers on Reform', Fraser's Magazine, April 1859
51. Spence, An Autobiography, p.23
52. Mill, 'Recent Writers on Reform', p.489
53. op. cit., p.500
suffrage' how they could accord to 'the most numerous class, that of the manual labourers' the majority representation which justice to their numbers demanded, without conceding the whole representation. Hare's electoral scheme ensured that minorities would retain a representative voice in the parliament. It would also, Mill wrote, 'prodigiously improve the personnel of the national representative': 'An assembly thus chosen would contain the élite of the nation'.

Mill's article showed Catherine 'how democratic government could be made real, and safe, and progressive'. She saw in his account of Hare's system a way of at once safeguarding the rights of minorities like the religious minority she had recently joined, and preventing such bodies as the Political Association returning a parliament of incompetent demagogues like that, she believed, elected in Victoria. Her perception electrified her:

I read Mill's article one Monday night, and wrote what was meant for a leader on Tuesday morning, and went to read it to my brother at breakfast time, and posted it forthwith.

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54. op.cit., p.503
55. op.cit., p.502
56. Spence, An Autobiography, p.23
57. op.cit., p.24
Diffident about her chances of success with the South Australian press,\(^{58}\) she sent it to the *Argus* for which her brother had been Adelaide correspondent.\(^{59}\) The *Argus* had kept up an abusive editorial commentary on the results of the 1859 elections in Victoria throughout August and September,\(^{60}\) so Catherine thought its editor 'would hail with joy the new idea'.\(^{61}\) Instead he rejected it and wrote to her that the paper was committed to representation of majorities.\(^{62}\) This must have disappointed her sorely; she did not offer her inspiration to any of the South Australian papers after the elections in 1860, and while the *Register* decided to approve the election results, the conservative *Thursday Review*\(^{63}\) might have given her case a hearing. But in 1861 she found an opportunity to reassert her discovery when press and parliament debated an Electoral Act Amendment Bill, the fourth since the first Act was passed.

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58. ibid.

59. ibid.

60. e.g. *Argus*: 2 September 1859, 3 September 1859, 5 September 1859: 'for all we know, the eccentric gentleman who, on Friday last, solemnly, and with uplifted hands, walked Collins-street destitute of all garments but his shirt, may be of the new League that is to teach our statesmen their business'.


62. ibid.

63. *Register*, 9 April 1860
Population growth and movement threatened to disfranchise many voters, and made the distance from polling places an obstacle for many more. Amendment to the Electoral Act was moved because such a small number of electors had voted in the 1860 elections. In August 1861 Arthur Blyth introduced a bill to reorganise the electoral districts and their numbers of representatives. Supporting the second reading motion, Lavington Glyde regretted that the parliament had not 'grappled with the great question of representation of minorities', and read a thirteen-point proposal for incorporating some of the provisions of Hare's scheme into the bill. Glyde had groped into, rather than 'grappled with' ways of representing minorities: his account of Hare's scheme is confused and confusing, and he concluded his speech with three alternative suggestions 'If Mr. Hare's scheme was considered too difficult'. Reactions in the House were mixed. One member asserted, irrelevantly, to laughter and shouts of 'hear', that 'The majority ever would, and ought to rule'. Hanson objected: 'All constitutional government was based on the principle that the voice of the majority

64. S.A., P.D., 3 May 1861, c.48
65. S.A., P.D., 1 August 1861, c.557
66. op.cit., cc.652-4
67. op.cit., c.654
should be superior, but it also acknowledged that the majority should at times be guided by the minority (Hear, hear.).' 68 Glyde's proposals were then passed over; the bill that was passed hurriedly on to the Legislative Council did only what it was designed to do. 69

Glyde's muddled exposition of Hare's electoral system revived Catherine's enthusiasm. She rushed into print with a letter published in the Register in the week after Glyde's speech. She pointed to the elections in Victoria as an awful warning to South Australia: 'the Victorian patriot could laugh with scorn, if he did not rather weep with shame, at the set of men who now represent the collective wisdom of that important and intelligent colony'. Representation of minorities would have ensured that there was a proportion of the House of Assembly 'composed of men of sufficient talent, respectability and independence as to oppose reason to declamation, and have made the conduct of government possible'. Such a proportion would constitute 'a strong and well-organised opposition, that all questions should be fully and fairly argued', and this was essential to capable and progressive government. 70 This last was Mill's point. Hare hoped proportional representation would so fragment

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68. ibid.

69. [South Australia] 14 & 15 Vic., 1861, No.20

70. Register, 31 August 1861
political parties that there would be no single body forming the opposition. Catherine's inspiration had probably not yet carried her far enough to read Hare's book. The day before her letter appeared, the Register discussed Glyde's proposals in a sub-leader, acknowledging the justice of the scheme, but objecting to its effects. Catherine sprang to the defence with another letter, taking each objection in turn. Hare's system need not interfere with voting by ballot. Counting the votes would be no more complicated than the work done each day at the General Post Office. Selfish local interests should be subordinate to the interests of the whole colony, represented by men elected by voters throughout the colony. Even if majority rules had not yet silenced minorities in South Australia, the rights of minorities should be safeguarded while the majority had the 'good sense and general intelligence to acknowledge them'. Catherine's opposition to manhood suffrage and simple majority rule made the tenor of her argument misleading. It sounded the same note as conservative supporters of minority interests in debates on the Electoral Law Bill, and it echoed Glyde's objections in 1859. She confessed in her

71. Register, 30 August 1861
72. Register, 9 September 1861
autobiography that at the time of her political inspiration she was 'at first ... struck chiefly by its conservative side'. But she was not concerned with the interests of property owners. Indeed she considered many of South Australia's wealthy colonists ignorant and unworthy of the influence their money gave them. Her use of terms like 'shallowness', 'insincerity', and 'ignorance' to describe candidates elected by the majority; her application of terms such as 'talent', 'respectability', and 'independence', to candidates to be elected by minorities, indicate clearly that she was concerned with interests that were not economic, but moral and intellectual. Her plea for the representation of minorities was an appeal for wisdom, virtue, and integrity in the legislature. A government was, for its term, an absolute authority, and she feared its power for injustice as she had feared and resisted her childhood's God. She believed that representation of minorities would ensure that the parliament contained at least an element of the enlightenment she had found in her new church.

Catherine remained an advocate of Hare's system of proportional representation, in season and out, for the rest

73. Spence, An Autobiography, p.23

74. C.H. Spence, draft letter in diary, quoted in Young, Catherine Helen Spence, p.57

75. see letters, Register: 31 August 1861, 9 September 1861
of her life. But her reasons for urging its adoption passed through three stages, the first in 1859 and August-September 1861, the second later in 1861, the third not until the 1890s.

Catherine's letters in the press attracted no attention. At her brother John's suggestion, she wrote a pamphlet urging the adoption of Hare's electoral system in South Australia. In preparing it she read Hare's book, probably for the first time.

A Treatise on the Election of Representatives was an expanded, reshaped version of a pamphlet called The Machinery of Representation which Hare had published after the 1857 general election in Britain. It contained the detailed provisions of the electoral system still known as the Hare system of proportional representation. These were formulated as thirty-three clauses of an Act, to make the proposal more precise and show its practicability, and embedded in three hundred pages of verbose argument. The principal features of his system were voluntary combination

77. Thomas Hare, A Treatise on the Election of Representatives, Parliamentary and Municipal, London, 1859
78. Lakeman, How Democracies Vote, p.268
79. Hare, A Treatise on the Election of Representatives, 4th ed., 1873, p.xxxvi. All page numbers refer to this edition
of interests - intellectual, professional, religious, economic, regional, or otherwise - to form constituencies, and preferential voting with the single transferable vote. These measures, he claimed, would remove the iniquities of the existing system of representation in Britain, and resolve the difficulties in schemes proposed for reform.\textsuperscript{80} Further, voluntary combination into electorates would stimulate candidates, appealing to a nation-wide constituency, to deserve nation-wide esteem, and would create strong bonds between men of different ranks and stations.\textsuperscript{81} Preferential voting, ensuring that every man's vote contributed to the election of some candidate, would rouse electors to a greater awareness of individual and communal responsibility; it would nourish 'the habit of scrutinizing with attention the conduct of public men, and of forming an estimate of their relative merits'.\textsuperscript{82} Thus, as Mill observed, proportional representation would raise 'the tone of the whole political morality of the country'.\textsuperscript{83} Hare asserted that it would so elevate politics that election day should be celebrated by a special religious service.\textsuperscript{84}

\textsuperscript{80} op.cit., pp.10-12, 20-21, 106-7, 125
\textsuperscript{81} op.cit., pp.38-9, 132-3
\textsuperscript{82} op.cit., p.136
\textsuperscript{83} Mill, 'Recent Writers on Reform', p.505
\textsuperscript{84} Hare, A Treatise on the Election of Representatives, p.150
Hare's argument that proportional representation would make 'the exercise of the suffrage a step in the elevation of the individual character'\textsuperscript{85} altered Catherine's reasons for advocating his reform. Her new religion was teaching her to value highly any means of educating or elevating mankind.\textsuperscript{86} Together, Hare and the Unitarian Church probably convinced her that pursuit of electoral justice was a sacred cause. They certainly convinced her that proportional representation's importance lay in its power to educate electors. That power, in a province where all men could vote, made proportional representation a democratic reform. Catherine's pamphlet lacked the conservative tone of her letters to the press. She wrote, 'I made a mistake in introducing this subject in the Register, under the title of "Representation of Minorities," instead of "Equality of Representation"'.\textsuperscript{87} When writing her pamphlet, she recalled, 'I felt the democratic strength of the position as I had not felt it in reading Hare's own book'.\textsuperscript{88} This was hardly surprising, as Hare initially opposed manhood suffrage, the ballot, and votes for women. But her 'democratic

\textsuperscript{85} quoted in Lakeman, \textit{How Democracies Vote}, p.268

\textsuperscript{86} see above chapter 3, pp.107-11

\textsuperscript{87} Spence, \textit{A Plea for Pure Democracy}, p.5

\textsuperscript{88} Spence, \textit{An Autobiography}, p.24
strength' was founded in Hare's contention that proportional representation would educate electors; she echoed him when she proclaimed 'I want every man to have a vote and to use it, for it is the most valuable element of education that every man should feel his weight in the state'.

Her pamphlet, signed 'C.H.S.', entitled A Plea for Pure Democracy Mr. Hare's Reform Bill applied to South Australia, was printed late in 1861. This rambling and ill-organized essay represented the second stage in the development of her reasons for her enthusiasm for proportional representation. She appealed to conservative and popular interests alike for acceptance and implementation of Mill's definition of 'pure democracy': 'the government of the whole people by the whole people equally represented'.

Political equality could be achieved only when 'every man's vote shall have its weight, wherever he may live and whatever majority he may belong to'. Proportional representation would not give minority rule - majorities would always continue to rule. Rather it would give the justice of genuine equity, as the current electoral system could not. She

89. Spence, A Plea for Pure Democracy, p. 5
90. op.cit., pp.i, 24
91. op.cit., p. 7
92. op.cit., p. 5
93. op.cit., p. 6
illustrated this by supposing that one-third of the voters in South Australia favoured the resumption of assisted immigration, and two-thirds opposed it. In an election to an Assembly of 36 members this division of public opinion should return 12 members in favour and 24 against. But artificial divisions created by electoral districts made this impossible: those in favour might return four, or six, or fourteen members, 'according to the majority being unequally divided into the eighteen electoral districts'. Moreover, electors who did not vote for a successful candidate were effectively disfranchised. By belonging to a minority in any district rather than to the local majority, whatever the relative sizes of the two, those electors' votes were nothing but waste paper. Hare's system of representing minorities would counter both of these fundamental injustices. Voluntary combination to form electorates, and the single transferable vote, would return men who genuinely represented their constituents. This would ensure proper discussion of both sides of any issue, and 'If the equality is actual in the representation of citizens, truth and virtue being stronger than error and vice, and wisdom being greater than

94. op.cit., p.7
95. ibid.
96. op.cit., p.11
folly ... the higher qualities subdue the lower, and make themselves felt in every department of the State.\textsuperscript{97} Electoral equality would both elevate the electors and return legislators worthy of their responsibilities. Hare's treatise, she claimed, was for politics what Bacon's \textit{Novum Organum} had been for science and philosophy.\textsuperscript{98} South Australia, with its absence of traditional vested interests\textsuperscript{99} and its precedent in the 1840 Municipal Council elections,\textsuperscript{100} was 'a fit place for initiating that radical reform ... which, sooner or later, must be brought about, if we mean to have any progress at all in the civilised world'.\textsuperscript{101}

Catherine's pamphlet 'did not set the Torrens on fire'.\textsuperscript{102} It might have attracted more attention had she lived further east: the \textit{Argus} discussed Mill and Hare on the representation of minorities in 1861,\textsuperscript{103} and in 1862 a proportional representation bill was passed by both houses of parliament in New South Wales, but was not implemented

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{97} op.cit., p.20
\item \textsuperscript{98} op.cit., p.8
\item \textsuperscript{99} op.cit., p.iv
\item \textsuperscript{100} op.cit., p.23
\item \textsuperscript{101} op.cit., p.iv
\item \textsuperscript{102} Spence, \textit{An Autobiography}, p.24
\item \textsuperscript{103} \textit{Argus}, 5 September 1861, 6 September 1861, 11 September 1861, 18 October 1861, 28 October 1861, 28 October 1861
\end{itemize}
because the government resigned. But colonists in South Australia saw no need to seek moral and intellectual elevation by changing the electoral law. With the ballot inhibiting electoral bribery they may not have considered such elevation wanting. Nor did they find it necessary to take special measures to secure electoral equality. Districts based, more or less on population, and multiple electorates already provided equality. Moreover, they seemed safe from any tyranny by a majority. Even in the Assembly returned after the Political Association's efforts, there was no consistent majority.

Catherine's brother paid 15 pounds for 1,000 copies of her pamphlet to be printed 'to be sent to all the members of Parliament and other leading people in city and country'. But neither he nor she was disappointed with its reception. The journalist and editor Frederick Sinnett was impressed and

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104. Lakeman, How Democracies Vote, p.224

105. this point is made forcibly by R.B. Walker, 'Catherine Helen Spence and South Australian Politics', Australian Journal of Politics and History, XV, 1, p.36; this most helpful article has a number of misprints. In the text: p.40 'R.C. Butler' should be R.C. Baker; p.42. 'Crawford Vaughan' should be J.H. Vaughan; in the footnotes: n.9 '1860' should be 1861; n.23 'Pecuniosius' was Catherine's brother David, not John Brodie Spence, see Spence, An Autobiography, p.65; the discussion of technicalities on p.39 suggests possible confusion between the Droop quota and the Gregory principle, see below pp.302-5

invited Catherine to serialise her new novel 'Uphill Work' in his paper. Catherine's friend Emily Clark sent copies of the pamphlet to her English relations, and to Henry Parkes asking him to give it to J.S. Mill. The English relations and their friends responded: Catherine received compliments from Hare, Mill, Rowland Hill and Professor Craik, and they made her welcome when she was in London in 1865. Describing her visit to England she boasted 'It was the little pamphlet rather than the novels that procured me introductions into the best society, or what I call the best, the most intelligent in London'.

Catherine's visit to Britain reinforced her self-confidence, confirmed her conviction of the importance of proportional representation, and consolidated her general theory of government. During her first weeks in London she was apprehensive about her reception: 'I had to face up to the people I had written to with no idea of any personal

107. ibid.

108. Catherine Spence received Professor Craik's congratulations through Rosamond and Florence Davenport Hill, Emily Clark's cousins, Spence, An Autobiography, p. 24

109. Emily Clark to Henry Parkes, 22 April 1862


111. C.H. Spence, paper describing a visit to England 1865-66, MS. (A434), South Australian Archives.

communication, and I must confess that I felt I must talk well to retain their good opinion'. Since she characterised one person she met as a 'predominant talker', and complained of another that he would not allow her a fair share of the conversation, she may not have got many words in edgeways. But her trepidation evaporated. Emily Clark's uncles, Rowland, Matthew Davenport and Edwin Hill, and her cousins Florence and Rosamond Davenport Hill, took her into their circles. When she returned she flourished a list of acquaintances which included Julia Wedgewood, Charles Dilke, Frances Power Cobbe, Barabara Bodichon, Bishop Colenso and Henry Smith. The friendship extended to her by Hare and his family added personal loyalty to her enthusiasm for proportional representation. Hare's concurrence with her insistence that proportional representation made manhood suffrage both safe and desirable, allowed her to boast 'I took this reform more boldly than Mr. Mill'.

114. op.cit., p.39
115. op.cit., pp.38-9
116. op.cit., pp.37, 39
117. op.cit., p.37
118. ibid.
complimentary courtesy and interest during their brief interview \(^{119}\) crowned the satisfaction the visit afforded her ambition for recognition and her craving for a cause.

However, it was an erstwhile colonist in England who gave her the most tangible evidence of her importance. Edward Wilson, co-proprietor of the *Argus* from 1847 until his death in 1878, and editor from 1847 to 1855, \(^{120}\) had retired to England with failing eyesight. Known for unorthodox views on representation published in the *Argus*, he was invited to contribute an article on representation to the *Fortnightly Review*. His doctors forbade him even to dictate. \(^{121}\) Hearing that Miss Spence was in Scotland, he summoned her as, she said smugly, 'the only person in the world who could honestly and clearly express his ideas'. \(^{122}\) She returned to her relations in East Lothian armed with copies of his letters to the *Argus*, \(^{123}\) and instructions and

\(^{119}\)  op.cit., pp.41-2; Spence, Paper describing a visit to England, p.2B

\(^{120}\)  F. Johns, *Australian Biographical Dictionary*, Melbourne, 1934; Edward Wilson to the *Argus*, printed 29 December 1856: 'It is about a year and a quarter since I resigned the labours and anxieties attendant upon the editorship of the Argus'

\(^{121}\)  Spence, Paper describing a visit to England, p.F; *Autobiography*, p.25

\(^{122}\)  Spence, Paper describing a visit to England, p.G

\(^{123}\)  *Argus*, 29 December 1856, 14 May 1857
information about elections in Britain, to write his article for him. Wilson was not an enthusiast for proportional representation. But his doubts about the equity of manhood suffrage divided into unequal electoral districts, and his eagerness for the representation of interests established a kinship between his ideas and Catherine's. In one four-column letter to the Argus in 1856, he proclaimed himself 'a staunch advocate for the widest possible extension of the franchise', but proposed that extra votes for men of property would create 'a sound system of representation of interests' necessary for just and progressive government.¹²⁴

Catherine's article elaborated Wilson's earlier proposals. She outlined an electoral system by which voters, divided into a few large electorates, returned as many as nineteen major interests. Two such interests were labour and women.¹²⁵ But in applying Wilson's argument to British conditions she radically altered its emphasis. Threatening the enfranchised with both revolution and whole-sale emigration of the unenfranchised work force, she devoted almost eight of the fifteen printed pages to a diatribe against the injustice of withholding manhood suffrage. She

¹²⁴. Argus, 29 December 1856
spent another three pages attacking bribery at elections, unequal electoral districts, and uneven representation of interests. This was all consistent with the scheme Wilson had developed to preserve the privileges of his kind in a colony which already had manhood suffrage. Wilson may even have asked her to stress current injustices. But the emphasis overshadows his proposals: the article is primarily a forceful plea for democratic electoral justice. Working on it did not sway Catherine's commitment to proportional representation, but it probably consolidated her general theory of government.

Catherine's theory of government was a mixture of utilitarianism and Bagehot. It was benevolently paternalistic, and it remained so throughout her life. In 1850 she supported state aid to the churches. In 1856 she argued that government should ensure that state-aided schools taught children the morals their parents neglected. In the 1870s and 1880s she voluntarily assisted the state in its involuntary role of parents to orphan and destitute children. In 1892 she advocated a scheme of compulsory providence for

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126. Spence, draft letter quoted in Young, Catherine Helen Spence, pp.56-7; Spence, An Autobiography, p.21
127. Letter to Register, 30 December 1856
128. see above chapter 6, passim
Later she prophesied a national health scheme. In 1910 she praised attempts in New York to compel employers to pay accident compensation. She believed that just as governments were better able than private contractors to undertake such works as the Adelaide-Darwin telegraph or the Adelaide-Pinnaroo railway, so they were better able to provide for the moral and intellectual welfare, and thence the happiness, of society. But she also believed that such provision, even when it was enforced, must be at least indirectly the wish of the community. In her pamphlet she wrote, 'We want no paternal Government to tell us what we ought to hear, do, or say'. She opposed trade unions because they made membership compulsory. Towards the end of her life she told the

129. Miss Spence, 'National or Compulsory Providence', Proceedings of the Second Australasian Conference on Charity, Melbourne, 1892

130. C.H. Spence, manuscript paper headed The Nationalisation of Health, (MSS.202/5) Mitchell Library

131. Spence, An Autobiography, p.60

132. op.cit., p.61

133. Spence, A Plea for Pure Democracy, p.iii

134. Spence, The Laws We Live Under, pp.93-4, 97-8
Women's League, 'No one can say absolutely what is and what is not the duty of the State. It is [undecipherable] for every successive generation in any given community to say what duties shall be discharged independently by individuals or collectively by the state'. But she believed that as people grew better educated, and representation more truly representative, 'We may safely widen the area of State control'. Such measures as compulsory providence and accident compensation, and even the kind of state socialism depicted in Bellamy's Looking Backward, were the community's wish when they were introduced by the community's elected representatives. But elected representatives must also be delegates, able to discuss and decide other issues besides those arising from their constituents' needs and interests. Representatives accepting such great and delicate responsibilities must be men who were the best - the wisest, most enlightened and virtuous in the community. She explained in

135. C.H. Spence, Manuscript paper headed Address to Womens League, (MSS.202/5), Mitchell Library
136. ibid.
137. Young, Catherine Helen Spence, p.12
138. Spence, A Plea for Pure Democracy, p.11
The Laws We Live Under, representative institutions make the Government at once 'the ruler of the people and the servant of the people'.

This theory of government enabled her to move easily from alliance with conservative propertied interests in opposing the brute vote, to alliance with labour interests in extending state welfare. It had most in common with reformers who were unconcerned with particular interests and were, rather, inspired by visions of a world in which institutions were just and men were wise and virtuous. And since she refused explicit allegiance to any political group or party, she could maintain her views consistently, unhampered by organisational connections which might have made her shifting allegiances appear inconsistent.

139. Spence, The Laws We Live Under, p.67

140. e.g. 'a more perfect realisation of the democratic principle in our institutions would be the most conservative movement South Australia could make', Spence, A Plea for Pure Democracy, p.5; 'The reform she advocated was as truly conservatives as it was really democratic', C.H. Spence, 'Political and Social Notes on America', Observer, 26 January 1895; this was a public position; privately Catherine Spence seems to have disliked conservative representatives of capital; 'I think I dislike Cohen most of the Aust Nat League Candidates', C.H. Spence to Alice Henry, 31st [sic] April 1905, MS.(1050), South Australian Archives
The theory did not spring ready-armed from her head. It developed from her close attention to colonial affairs, her religion, and her reading. It accumulated from her constant pondering the nature of authority, and her eagerness for that authority to be just, and justly created. It grew from, and with, her conviction that proportional representation was the fundamental panacea for the evils of her time, and the only path to the higher civilization towards which she believed mankind must move. It was only ever given piecemeal expression, but it permeated her campaign for proportional representation.

Catherine returned to South Australia in 1866. She faced increasing domestic responsibilities and financial anxiety. Her mother was seventy-five. Her recently widowed sister was occupied with her ten year old son and four year old daughter, and possibly in poor health; she died four years later. Her brother, who had been made manager of the English, Scottish and Australian Bank Limited, was spending

141. Spence, An Autobiography, p.44
142. Family Tree in Catherine Spence's handwriting
143. Spence, An Autobiography, p.28; Observer, 29 February 1896
sleepless nights over the drought and financial depression.\textsuperscript{144} Yet Catherine was undaunted. Indeed she thought life at home dull, and plunged into another novel. But she could find 'nothing to do for proportional representations except to write an occasional letter to the press'.\textsuperscript{145} She found nothing more to do for her cause for the following twentysix years.

She did not lack occasion. In 1871, Glyde, as a member of a Select Committee on electoral districts, again raised the question of proper representation of minorities.\textsuperscript{146} In 1872 a bill proposing proportional representation with the single transferable vote was introduced in the House of Commons.\textsuperscript{147} In 1880 one of the members for Burra made a plea for the Hare system of representation during debates on another electoral districts bill.\textsuperscript{148} In the same year debate over an electoral bill in New South Wales prompted the \textit{Sydney Morning Herald} to pronounce the Hare System the only one capable of achieving really proportionate

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{144} Spence, \textit{An Autobiography}, p.44
\item \textsuperscript{145} ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{146} S.A., \textit{P.P.}, 1871, vol.2, No.137
\item \textsuperscript{147} C.G. Hoag and G.H. Hallett, \textit{Proportional Representation}, New York, 1926, p.179
\item \textsuperscript{148} Stephenson, \textit{Electoral Districts of South Australia}, p.94
\end{itemize}
representation. In 1882 Catherine's brother John, in debate on another electoral districts bill, argued for making Adelaide a single electorate and assented that interests attach to people not places. In 1884 the British Proportional Representation Society was formed to agitate for the introduction of proportional representation in the Representation of the People Act. Catherine allowed these opportunities to pass, probably because her work for the press and state children kept her extremely busy, perhaps because she hoped that her brother, elected to the Legislative Council in 1881, would achieve more than she could, and possibly because she thought the current state of politics in South Australia made the task fruitless. Debates on electoral districts bills echoed the opposition between population and interests in the 1850s. The Acts amending electoral divisions revealed the power of entrenched interests: men occupying the treasury benches were able, despite unequal electoral divisions, to retain the constituencies that had


150. Stephenson, Electoral Districts of South Australia pp.109-110

151. Hoag and Hallett, Proportional Representation, p.180

152. e.g. Register, 2 August 1872
Catherine's concern for electoral justice took fire in 1891 from personal and political circumstances markedly different from those of the 1870s and 1880s. Her contributions to the press had dwindled. Her work for state children had lost its individual urgency with the establishment of the State Children's Council in 1886. Her niece and nephew had grown up and left home. And in December 1887 her mother died 'Henceforth' she wrote 'I was free to devote my efforts to the fuller public work for which I had so often longed, but which my mother's devotion to and dependence on me rendered impossible'. 154 She did not rush straight for the limelight. Nursing her mother through a year-long illness had been a strain, and she missed her sadly. 155 The following year she was summoned to Gippsland to attend the deathbed of her sister Jessie. 156 In 1889 her nephew married and took over the house she had lived in with her mother. 157 Catherine moved her papers and protegees to another house, and lived quietly, recuperating from her exhaustion and grief. 158 But

153. Stephenson, Electoral Districts of South Australia p.113
155. ibid.
156. op.cit.p.68
157. ibid.
158. ibid.
she did not live so quietly as to pay no attention to political developments in the colony, and these fanned her smouldering ardour for electoral justice into a flame. The political situation which prompted her to take to the platform paralleled that in which she had her 'political inspiration'. In 1894 she told an English audience, 'I was led to abandon my position as an obscure, anonymous writer for that of a public speaker on any platform open to me, by the democratic developments in my own country of Australia'.

Personal politics and rapidly changing ministries in South Australia had yielded place to 'something like real organisation of parties, these being capital and labour', and this convinced Catherine that 'now was the time to speak'.

Labour was the first to organise. In 1890, payment of members and the Maritime Strike prodded the United Trades and Labour Council (U.T.L.C.), the metropolitan

159. Report of Meeting on "Proportional Representation", p.6

160. op.cit., p.7; she spoke also to the Unitarians, prophesying that Industrial Arbitration would end the war of strikes and lockouts, C.H. Spence, sermon entitled 'Why Persecution is an Evil', n.d., MS. (1047), South Australian Archives

161. G.D. Combe, Responsible Government in South Australia, Adelaide, 1957, p.123; F.S. Wallis, History of the South Australian Labour Party, 1882-1900 (summary account of the Minutes of United Trades and Labour Council, The Minutes have been destroyed), typescript (1347), South Australian Archives, pp.6-12
unions, working men's clubs and democratic associations into organising for representation in parliament.\footnote{162} Their joint committee set up in January 1891 became the administrative centre of the United Labour Party (U.L.P.).\footnote{163} By 1895 there were ten U.L.P. candidates in parliament\footnote{164} and internal organisation was stable.\footnote{165} In 1904 the party's first annual conference created a U.L.P. Council, separating the party from the U.T.L.C.\footnote{166} In 1905 it was strong enough to form a coalition government headed by its leader Tom Price.

Capital marshalled its forces in defence against organised labour, creating a pressure group rather than a party. The National Defence League, formed in July 1891,\footnote{167}

\begin{enumerate}
\item Wallis, \textit{History of the South Australian Labour Party}, p.12
\item \textit{op.cit.}, p.13
\item Smeaton, \textit{The People in Politics}, pp.10-11
\item R.L. Reid, \textit{The Price-Peake Government and the formation of political parties in South Australia}, typescript (D4649(T)), South Australian Archives, p.6
\item \textit{Advertiser}, 29 January 1892, quoted in Craig, \textit{A History of The South Australian Labour Party}, p.60; Burgess, \textit{The Cyclopedia of South Australia}, vol.2, p.167
\end{enumerate}
converted into a branch of the Australian National League (A.N.L.) in 1896, endorsed candidates it favoured, but did not bind them to its programme. But its influence dominated the Legislative Council during the 1890s, and in 1906 it combined with the Farmers' and Producers' Political Union (F.P.P.U.) for joint support and selection of candidates.

However, political opinion in South Australia did not align itself exclusively with the two major organisations. From 1893 to 1899 the government came from neither, though it had strong support from the U.L.P.. Conservative discontent with the A.N.L.'s extremism spawned a number of liberal and independent groups, prototypes for the F.P.P.U. formed in 1903, and A.H. Peake's Independent Country Party. The latter, renamed the Liberal and Democratic

168. Observer, 18 January 1896


170. asserted by Walker, 'Catherine Helen Spence and South Australian Politics' p.40, but without any indication of source


172. Reid, The Price-Peake Government and the formation of political parties in South Australia, p.9

173. op.cit., p.3
Union (L.D.U.) in 1906, formed one half of the 'Lib-Lab' coalition government of 1905-10. Radical discontent with the moderation of the U.L.P., the product of retarded industrialisation and moderate unions, found expression in many small, often short-lived groups which, for a short time exerted considerable influence. In the early 1890s the A.N.L. feared them as much, if not more than it feared organised labour.

These groups were the source of South Australia's utopianism, 'the ideas and anticipations that played a part in warming trade union programmes into labour politics'.

174. op.cit.p.9

175. op.cit.,p.6; Craig, A History of the South Australian Labour Party to 1917, p.63


177. programme in Burgess, The Cyclopedia of South Australia, vol.2, p.167

The District Democratic Clubs and Associations, the Land Reform Leagues, the Single Tax League, the Society for the Study of Christian Sociology, the Allgemeiner Deutscher Verein, the Working Men's Patriotic Association, the South Australian Fabian Society, and the district Sociological Classes, were called collectively 'the Forward Movement' or the 'Reform Movement'. In the early 1890s they were all working strenuously for 'A distinct forward movement, lifting up instead of levelling down society'. Their major fundamental link was their faith in the new social and moral order which they believed particular reforms would bring. Their faith gave their demands - for the single tax, nationalisation of land, distribution of wealth, and justice to labour - the ring of a sacred creed. This,

179. Observer: 26 July 1890, 1 August 1891, 30 July 1892, 7 October 1893, 14 October 1893, 21 July 1894; Voice: 9 December 1892 - 31 August 1894, particularly 15 September 1893

180. e.g. Voice: 7 April 1893, 12 May 1893, 7 July 1893, 22 September 1893

181. Observer, 1 August 1891

proceeded partly from their fervour, and partly from their connections with the churches. The movement was extremely Christian. J. Medway Day, vociferous agitator for the land reform and instigator of the Reform Convention held in September 1893, had been a minister in the Baptist Church. Rev. Dr. Jeffries gave a series of discourses in the North Adelaide Congregational Church on 'The Socialism of Christianity'. The Wesleyan Rev. G.E. Wheatley addressed the Reform Convention on 'The Churches and Reform'. D.M. Charleston, speaking on 'The Ethics of Socialism' shared the platform with the Primitive Methodist, Rev. J. Day Thompson, lecturing on 'The Simple Gospel'. The new moral and social order their reforms would bring was co-operative. One speaker cited Bellamy's state and asserted that 'of the many plans set in operation for the benefit of humanity none had a nobler aim or more extensive field than co-operation'.

183. Observer: 16 September 1893, 23 September 1893; Voice: 15 September 1893, 22 September 1893
184. Mt Gambier Baptist Church, Jubilee Souvenir, 1864-1914; He had later, until March 1892, been a leading member of the editorial staff of the Register, see Observer 26 March 1892
185. Observer, 15 December 1894
186. Voice, 22 September 1893
187. Voice, 6 April 1894
188. Observer, 1 August 1891
Another proposed to establish a co-operative settlement at Mount Remarkable. The movement as a whole applauded the village settlements on the Murray, and greeted William Lane and his vision of 'New Australia' with enthusiasm. Their second, and scarcely less important link was their opposition to capital, the appropriators of land, the accumulators of stock, the exploiters of labour. They tended to regard all capitalists' ideas as part of a conspiracy against them. Medway Day scoffed: 'Bimetallism, protection, and all other artificial nostrums remind me of the little boy who expressed his wonder that his father should first of all wear braces to keep his trousers up and also straps to keep them down. With well-developed hips, neither the one expedient nor the other is required'. A.T. Saunders, lecturing on 'Bimetallism, a scheme to reduce wages' asserted

189. **Observer**, 9 December 1893
190. **Voice**, 29 September 1893
191. **Voice**, 28 April 1893; **Observer**, 1 July 1893
192. **Day, Wages**, p.3
that 'if he had no other reason for concluding that bi-
metsallism was not proposed in the interests of the workers
the names of the promoters in this colony would be sufficient,
including, as they did, several of the most prominent
opponents of Trades Unionism.\textsuperscript{194} Federation, likewise, was
a capitalist plot. Charleston claimed that 'The subject... had not come from the people, but from their rulers',\textsuperscript{195} and
Medway Day proclaimed 'The old cry of patriotism is now little
more than cant - a sing-song phrase; for how can we grow
enthusiastic over the rule of money-bags and the sacrifice of humanity'.\textsuperscript{196} Both their vision of a new society and their
hatred of capital was fed by their reading. A ballot of
books on reform showed the overwhelming influence of Henry
George, whose various works were first, second, fourth, sixth
and seventh on the poll. (George had spent some days in
Adelaide on his visit to Australia in 1890.)\textsuperscript{197} Davidson's
The Old Order and the New came third, Looking Backward fifth,
Gronlund's Cooperative Commonwealth eleventh, and Donnelly's
Caesar's Column (printed like this: 'Column, Past and Present
(Caesar)') came twelfth. Marx had a place among 'Other
authors given', together with Carlyle, Spencer, Mill and
Longfellow.\textsuperscript{198}

The Reform Movement did not achieve parliamentary
representation. Some reformers condemned existing forms of

\textsuperscript{194. Observers, 9 June 1894}
\textsuperscript{195. Observers, 11 July 1891}
\textsuperscript{196. Voice, 12 January 1894}
\textsuperscript{197. Goodwin, Economic Enquiry in Australia, p.368}
\textsuperscript{198. Voice, 19 January 1894}
government so that to seek election would have compromised their principles. Two single-taxers, J.N. Birks, a chemist, and Cornelius Proud, a sharebroker and chairman of the first meeting of the Reform Convention, stood as U.L.P. candidates in 1894. Their lack of success combined with protests from the unions in 1895 to exclude all but wage-earners from U.L.P. selection. But in the early 1890s, the meetings and lectures of these groups, and their paper Voice, spread a spirit of idealism, a receptivity to new ideas, and a readiness for change which may have contributed to the liberal Kingston's unprecedentedly long term in office.

It certainly contributed greatly to Catherine Spence's initial success.

Catherine remodelled the cause with which she took to the field. Her brother John had found it a name: 'effective voting' was easier to say repeatedly than 'proportional representation' and more likely to appeal to the reforming temper of the time. The separation of society into the warring

199. *Voice*, 15 September 1893
201. *op.cit.*, p. 29
202. The Kingston Administration assumed office in June 1893 and resigned in November 1899; his was the longest term of office in the nineteenth century in South Australia
camps of labour and capital pushed her reasons for advocating proportional representation into their third stage. In February 1892 she told the Adelaide Democratic Club 'The feud between labour and capital will become more and more bitter if by your political machinery you exclude all those large bodies of independent thinkers who might bring moderation into the national Councils'. In February 1893 she told the Advertiser, 'it is borne in upon my soul that in the co-operative spirit and the co-operative method applied to politics instead of the competitive, we may find deliverance from many evils that are eating into the heart and lessening the happiness of humanity'. Effective voting guaranteed to each of the giant protagonists accurate representation of its relative strength. It also ensured representation of independent opinion which, acting as moderator and mediator, would induce labour and capital to recognise their interdependence and cooperate. Catherine's principal plea was still for education, talent and virtue in politics. But for the last twentyeight years of her life she saw the intellectual and moral elevation of both electorate and legislature

204. Observer, 27 February 1892

205. C.H. Spence, Effective Voting One vote, one value, reprinted from the Advertiser, 9 February 1893, p.5; see also C.H. Spence, Effective Voting A National Right, reprinted from the Century, copy in the National Library has 'My last manifest' written on it in Catherine Spence's handwriting
as much as a means to cooperation of labour and capital as an end in itself.

Cooperation was a cry likely to win her support from all but the arch-conservatives. One of her first invitations to speak came from the Adelaide Cooperative Society, a body of shareholders in a non-political and moderately profitable venture in cooperative farming.\(^\text{206}\) But, while she insisted on her independence from any political group or party, and never accused either camp of conspiracy against the other, her appeal for cooperation was made in the spirit of the Reform Movement. The emphasis in her general theory of government on freedom from compulsion, on justice, and the elevation of mankind, pronounced her kinship with the reformers. She had both read and written the kind of work from which they drew their ideas: she claimed that her essay on Henry George in the *Victorian Review* in 1881 pioneered the single-tax movement in Australia,\(^\text{207}\) and she described her short story 'A Week in the Future'\(^\text{208}\) as 'a social speculation not so extravagant as Bellamy's or Grönlund's'.\(^\text{209}\) Her belief in the elevated social and

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206. *Observer*, 27 February 1892
207. Spence, *An Autobiography*, p.66; see above chapter 5, p.184
208. *Centennial Magazine*, 1888-9
209. *Observer*, 8 April 1893
moral order which effective voting would bring was identical with the millenarianism of the reformers. The Reform Movement made her cause part of their own, supplied her most vocal supporters, and publicised her activities. In June 1893, papers on 'Effective Voting' and 'New Australia' were read from the same platform.210

Catherine made her first appearance for effective voting in 1891 in Melbourne. At the Australasian Charities Conference she read her own paper.211 This was not the first time she had spoken in public, but it was the first occasion on which her ability as a speaker drew particular commendation.212 She won the praise of her friends and an invitation from Dr. Charles Strong213 to speak at his Workingmen's Club. She addressed them on effective voting, building on the Victorian workers' current demand for 'one man, one vote' her own for 'one vote, one value'.214 Back in Adelaide, Robert Barr Smith, convinced of the justice of her cause, and possibly

210. Voice, 2 June 1893

211. Proceedings of the Second Australasian Conference on Charity

212. Spence, An Autobiography, p.68

213. Strong was a friend of Catherine's friends H.G. Turner and his sister Martha Webster. He had taken up an appointment in Scots Church, Melbourne, but his liberal theological views brought him into conflict with the Church Assembly which declared his charge vacant in 1883. In 1885 he established his 'Australian Church' in which religion was regarded as a spirit of life rather than a theological creed. A.G. Austin, ed., The Webbs' Australian Diary 1898, Melbourne, 1965, p.132

214. Spence, An Autobiography, p.68
pleased to find a way of inducing her to shake off the lassitude of the years since her mother's death, offered to finance a public campaign. \(^{215}\) Catherine had ballot papers printed for mock elections, and took to the platforms of South Australia. On 17 February 1892, she launched the campaign she was to continue for the rest of her life.

From February to August she concentrated on the metropolitan area. \(^{216}\) In August she 'delivered her first country lecture on "Effective Voting" to a large and attentive audience in the Institute Hall' at Blumberg. \(^{217}\) In December she toured the South East. \(^{218}\) In January 1893 she began a tour of the north. \(^{219}\) By February she had delivered, she said, 'about forty public addresses to audiences in various places and of various political and social standpoints'. \(^{220}\) In March she conducted a scrutiny of 3,824 votes collected at mock elections held at her lectures or returned to the Register, which in July and August 1892 had advertised instructions and a ballot paper as an experiment. \(^{221}\)

\(^{215}\) ibid.; Walker, 'Catherine Helen Spence and South Australian Politics', p.39 conveys the impression that she had money of her own

\(^{216}\) Observer, 27 February 1892, 7 May 1892, 18 June 1892 20 August 1892

\(^{217}\) Observer, 6 August 1892

\(^{218}\) Voice, 16 December 1892

\(^{219}\) Voice, 3 February 1893

\(^{220}\) Spence, Effective Voting One vote, one value, p.1

\(^{221}\) Register, 1 July 1892; Observer; 9 July 1892, 16 July 1892, 20 August 1892; Voice, 17 March 1893
Her campaign had several teething troubles. She had tried to forestall charges that the system was impracticable, by substituting a few large multiple electorates, like Edward Wilson's, for the single colony-wide electorate she had advocated in 1861. But at Port Adelaide she struck trouble with an impractical attempt to avoid party strife. She held a mock election of poets instead of political candidates. When a working man was told how to enter a preferential vote on a paper containing the names of Shakespeare, Milton and Burns, he objected: "I have not been long in the colony you know, and all these men are strangers to me". Even after she began holding mock elections of familiar political candidates, electors remained in some confusion about how they were to vote. Also, her mock elections reflected the influence of the current political groupings. She noted, of her scrutiny, 'Charleston's [Labour] second votes all

222. see above p.279
223. Spence, A Plea for Pure Democracy, pp.6-7
224. Register, 7 May 1892
225. Observer, 7 May 1892
226. Observer, 16 July 1892; Register, 10 March 1892
through went to the three Labour candidates, with an occasional choice for Birks [Single Tax] or Glynn [Liberal conservative and Irish Catholic] .... Magarey's [temperance] second were given to Stirling [property owners] in most cases'. 

She was pleased that 'neither the Labour party nor the Capitalistic party were strong enough to bring in two men', but she seemed uneasy at the ability of political groups to dominate even her mock elections. This probably proceeded partly from the quota she used.

In 1861 she described only Hare's quota, calculated by dividing the number of formal votes cast by the number of seats to be filled. When she began her campaign in 1892 she adopted 'Sir John Lubbock's mathematical quota'. This was the quota devised in 1868 by H.R. Droop, and adopted by Lubbock (later Lord Avebury) a leading member of the British Proportional Representation Society.

227. Voice, 17 March 1893

228. Spence, A Plea for Pure Democracy, pp.20-21

229. Register, 23 February 1892


231. Register, 28 February 1892; Hoag and Hallett, Proportional Representation, p.180
Droop quota was calculated by dividing the total formal votes cast by the number of seats to be filled plus one, and adding one to the quotient. This gave the smallest number of votes necessary to secure a seat. Both the Hare and the Droop quotas leave a small number of votes unused, but the Droop quota prevents manipulation of the vote by parties, while the Hare quota only restricts it. After the scrutiny of votes in March 1893, Catherine concluded, inaccurately, that the Droop quota left too many votes unused and returned to the simple Hare quota. In 1894 she observed that 'popular audiences prefer the simple quota of Thomas Hare'. However, she did not object strongly when J.H. Vaughan determined to employ the Droop quota in the effective voting bill he drafted in 1902.

Objections were also made to the element of chance

232. Lakeman, *How Democracies Vote*, pp.111-112
233. *op.cit.*, p.138
234. *op.cit.*, p.139
235. *Voice*, 17 March 1893
236. Report of Meeting on "Proportional Representation" p.4
237. C.H. Spence to Mrs E.W. Nicholls [1902], MS. (A1251), South Australian Archives
involved in distributing votes: a tenth preference had the same value in a candidate's total as a first. This did not matter greatly until votes were being counted for the sixth member in a six-man constituency. The surplus from a candidate returned with more than the quota was distributed among remaining candidates according to the preferences marked on the voting papers. The same was done with votes for candidates whose first preferences placed them at the bottom of the poll. But if the surplus, or 'minus' votes were taken from the bottom of the pile of votes for a returned or rejected candidate, the preferences might return a different man from the candidate returned by surplus or minus votes taken from the top. In 1893 Catherine's solution sounded like a receipe for plum pudding: 'Let all voting papers from all polling-places be well mixed together, and then take the votes as they come to hand'. By 1894 she decided that the distribution in a large election stood little chance of unjustly affecting the results. In 1896 she adopted the suggestion of

238. Spence, Effective Voting One vote, one value, p.1
239. op.cit.,p.2
240. Report of Meeting on "Proportional Representation" p.35
her friend Annie Martin,\textsuperscript{241} unconsciously echoing the solution devised by J.B. Gregory of Melbourne in 1882,\textsuperscript{242} and gave fractional values to all preferences but the first. She continued this practice, and made it part of the effective voting bills submitted to parliament annually during the first decade of the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{243}

Such difficulties and objections have attended most attempts to introduce complex electoral systems in Australia. As Joan Rydon observed 'Without compulsion, it is possible that the numbers voting would have fallen heavily in protest at difficult and complicated voting methods: e.g. Proportional Representation in Senate elections'.\textsuperscript{244}

Apart from technical difficulties, Catherine's first campaign was an enormous success. Her first audience listened attentively, applauded her frequently, and cheered

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{241} Observer, 19 October 1895; C.H. Spence, Effective Voting: Australia's Opportunity. An explanation of the Hare System of Representation, Adelaide, 1898, p.19
\item \textsuperscript{242} Lakeman, How Democracies Vote, p.131
\item \textsuperscript{243} Schedule, A Bill for An Act to amend "The Electoral Code, 1896" Legislative Council No.22, 1902
\item \textsuperscript{244} Joan Rydon, 'Electoral Methods and the Australian Party System 1910-1951', Australian Journal of Politics and History, II, 1
\end{itemize}
her when she concluded. Reports in the Naracoorte Herald and the Agriculturalist and Review indicated that she had made effective voting a subject of general discussion throughout the colony. Items in Voice indicated the strength of the Reform Movement's support; Medway Day asserted that if he were standing for election the first plank in his platform would be Miss Spence's effective voting system.

The Advertiser paid her enthusiastic tribute:

Persons who take only a superficial view of things, very likely regard the whole affair as a fad which this excellent lady has taken into her head, and the advocacy of which furnishes congenial employment for her somewhat rare gifts of speech and intellect. But those who understand Miss Spence best will be the last to imagine her likely to allow herself to be dominated by a mere fad, and will have no difficulty in discovering a truer explanation of the arduous task she has imposed upon

245. Observer, 27 February 1892
246. Voice: 27 January 1893, 3 February 1893
248. Voice, 16 December 1892
herself in the endeavour to arouse public interest
in the proposed method of voting. Her enthusiasm
in this springs from the same root as her enthusiasm
in the cause of State children and of all philanthropies
- the love she has for humanity. 249

Catherine's aspirations were being realised. She was
achieving the personal fame and applause she had craved
since she was a child, in winning support for a cause she
believed to be the most important in the world.

Within a month of her scrutiny of the mock-election
votes, she left for the United States, to teach the Americans
how to vote. She went at the invitation 250 of Alfred
Cridge, a San Francisco journalist and advocate of the Hare
system of proportional representation. 251 Cridge probably
began corresponding with her early in 1892, after reading a
letter she had written to the Register on effective voting. 252

249. Advertiser, 17 March 1893
250. Spence, An Autobiography, p.69
251. Hoag and Hallett, Proportional Representation, p.186
252. 'The Principles of Representation (By Alfred Cridge,
San Francisco)' Observer, 4 January 1892, refers to
Miss Spence's letter in Register, 30 July 1891
At the end of 1892 she published two articles on 'The Australian Ballot as used in America' in *Voice*,\(^{253}\) using information probably sent her by Cridge. Needless to say, her articles, besides criticising the strength of political parties and the complexity of voting in the United States, were arguments for the necessity of effective voting. Cridge's invitation, and the attention she would get by coming from Australia, home of the ballot, determined her to seek a repetition of her success at home on the platform of the world.

She set out well-armed. She was to represent the South Australian State Children's Council at the International Conference on Charities and Correction to be held in conjunction with the World Fair at Chicago.\(^{254}\) She was commissioned by the Single Tax League to report on equivalent bodies in the States.\(^{255}\) Her brother, a member of the Bimetallc League probably gave her her commission to sound opinion about

\(^{253}\) *Voice*: 30 December 1892, 6 January 1893

\(^{254}\) Miss C.H. Spence, the electoral reformer, reprinted from *Register*, 4 April 1893; *S.A. P.P.*, 1893, No.123

\(^{255}\) Miss C.H. Spence, the electoral reformer
bi-metallism. 256 She undertook to report on the state of education in the States, and the progress of the American women's suffrage movement. 257 She was given letters of introduction, one from South Australia's Chief Justice Way to William Lloyd Garrison, 258 another to Henry George. Lectures and drawing room meetings were arranged for her as she passed through Melbourne and Sydney. 259 At the age of seventy-seven, in an age when few Australian women ever spoke at public meetings at all, she departed unchaperoned and unprotected to give public lectures in a strange land. Characteristically, she left without her purse. 260

Catherine spent almost a year in the United States, and her reception there eclipsed her success at home. She cast her net wide. In Chicago she addressed the Charities Congress, the Single Tax Conference, the Peace Conference, the Proportional Representation Congress, the Chicago Single Tax Club, and gave a lecture in the Woman's Building on the

256. ibid.
257. ibid.
258. Young, Catherine Helen Spence, p.17
260. Cook, 'Catherine Helen Spence' p.3
261. She arrived in San Francisco in May 1893, Voice, 23 June 1893; she left New York for Glasgow in April 1894, Voice, 8 June 1894
World's Fair grounds. In the east she found audiences who paid to hear her lecture on George Eliot and the Brownings. At Harvard she was invited to preach in the Unitarian Church of the Disciples. Julia Ward Howe, President of the New England Women's Club, introduced her as a writer. In Boston she lectured on effective voting and stayed with the Garrisons; social notes in a Boston paper observed 'Some Boston people will remember, thirty or forty years from now, that they saw the prophet of the new system when she was here'. In New York she stayed with Henry George. Her chief object was to persuade America to adopt proportional representation, but her appeal was much wider. She complained to her brother 'One drawback to these pulpit ministrations with regard to the Cause is that people are more interested in the Children of the State than in Effective Voting which would benefit the reformers of

263. (Spence), *An Autobiography*, p.70
264. op.cit.p.72
265. op.cit.,p.73
266. C.H. Spence, 'Political and Social Notes on America' *Observer*, 26 January 1895
267. Newspaper clipping in possession of Mrs A.B. Caw, Heathpool, South Australia
of old abuses'. But she lectured on effective voting all over the country, and to enough paying audiences to begin supporting herself on the proceeds. By the time she left in 1894 she had a gratifying list of achievements. In San Francisco she helped Cridge persuade the Pacific Coast Council of the Trades and Labour Federation 'to become actively interested in political questions', and she induced the Council to pass a resolution in favour of effective voting. The Proportional Representation Congress she addressed founded the American Proportional Representation League which agitated for several forms of the system. The League issued a quarterly Review for three years after it was founded, then again from 1901-13. During its last twelve years it was edited by Robert Tyson, a Canadian. Catherine claimed to have converted Tyson to the cause when she paid a rapid

269. C.H. Spence to John from Rockville Centre, Long Island, New York 15 September 1893, (MSS.202/5), Mitchell Library
271. Voice, 21 July 1893
272. Hoag and Hallett, Proportional Representation, p.187; Proportional Representation Review, Chicago, September 1893, pp.2-5
273. Hoag and Hallett, Proportional Representation, pp.187-8
274. op.cit., p.188
visit to Toronto, so she could regard the regular issues of the Review as the result of her influence. She made a considerable, if delayed, impact on Toronto. Seven years later the Women's Canadian Historical Society opened a campaign for proportional representation with a lecture on 'Effective Voting: Its History as Developed by an Australian Woman'.

She could also claim to have influenced the growing female suffrage movement in the United States. In Chicago she converted Susan B. Anthony, veteran of the suffrage movement, to her cause. But her principal achievement was her personal success as a speaker. This gave her great satisfaction. She boasted to her brother, 'I posted for Australia a number of copies of the Boston Transcript with an Editorial on Miss Spence's Crusade - written after...the Editor had heard me speak entempore to the Nationalist Club at Charlesgate the most swell hotel in Boston'. Later she added 'I am really a personage in America out of New York at least'.

275. (Spence), An Autobiography, p.73
276. Australian Woman's Sphere, March 1901, p.60
277. Voice, 20 October 1893
278. C.H. Spence to Spence family from Brooklyn, Boston, 25 January 1894, (MSS.202/5), Mitchell Library
279. C.H. Spence to John from Washington Square, 13 February 1894, (MSS.202/5), Mitchell Library
In April 1894 she left by steamer for Glasgow. In Britain she spoke only to the converted, and their more sceptical friends, at a special meeting called by Hare's daughter and members of the inactive Proportional Representation Society. In London she fell over, avoiding a bus, and dislocated her right shoulder. It was not quite healed by the time she reached South Australia again, so the rest of her journey must have been uncomfortable. But this did not prevent her visiting Zurich in search of English speaking supporters of her cause, nor from discussing electoral systems with Ernest Naville in Geneva. As Alfred Cridge had remarked, 'She was almost constantly at work'. In London and on her journey home, she laid the foundation for the correspondence which enabled her to belabour South

280. *Voice*, 8 June 1894
281. Report of Meeting on "Proportional Representation"
282. (Spence), *An Autobiography*, p. 76
283. Observer, 15 December 1894
284. (Spence), *An Autobiography*, p. 77
285. ibid.
286. *Voice*, 20 October 1893
Australia with examples of electoral reform all over the world.\textsuperscript{287} She reached South Australia, in December 1894,\textsuperscript{288} in the eyes of many colonists an international celebrity.

By that time the Reform Movement had already passed its peak. Groups like the Single Tax League and the Adelaide Democratic Club remained active and influential, but the fervour of 1890-94 had evaporated and many smaller groups died. Attempts to continue campaigning for effective voting while Catherine was away,\textsuperscript{289} stopped two months after she left. The movement's paper \textit{Voice} was absorbed in the \textit{Weekly Herald},\textsuperscript{290} the U.L.P. paper. J. Medway Day went to live in Sydney.\textsuperscript{291} E.J. Hickock, secretary and driving force of the

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{287} e.g. C.H. Spence, \textit{Proportional Representation Success in Belgium}, reprinted from the \textit{Advertiser}, 19 September 1900, Adelaide, 1900; C.H. Spence, 'How Should we Vote', clipping c.1901, refers to proportional representation in Switzerland, Guard book of newspaper cuttings on proportional representation, South Australian Public Library; C.H. Spence, 'Proportional Representation', \textit{Proceedings of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science}, 11th meeting, 1907, p.633
  \item \textsuperscript{288} \textit{Observer}, 15 December 1894
  \item \textsuperscript{289} \textit{Voice}: 27 April 1894, 4 May 1894, 11 May 1894
  \item \textsuperscript{290} \textit{Voice}, 17 August 1894
  \item \textsuperscript{291} \textit{Voice}, 22 December 1893; at a welcome given him by the Single Tax League of New South Wales, reported in the \textit{Daily Telegraph}, 10 January 1894, 'he condemned single electorates...[and] spoke in favour of Miss Spence's system of effective voting', \textit{Voice} 19 January 1894
\end{itemize}
Single Tax League, died.\textsuperscript{292} The village settlements on the Murray were suffering from internal squabbles, and there were reports of dissension and secession from Paraguay. The hopes of the fragmenting Reform Movement, like those of the U.L.P. and the liberals, focussed for a time on the liberal Kingston ministry. But as the decade wore on, and the pile of bills passed through the House of Assembly but rejected by the Legislative Council mounted, disillusion set in.\textsuperscript{293} The fall of the Kingston government in November 1899 did nothing to dispell reviving cynicism about the motives of parliamentarians.\textsuperscript{294}

Catherine's cause did not suffer the fate of most of the Reform Movement causes. Nor did it suffer greatly from the loss of the Reform Movement's support. Effective voting remained a subject of earnest discussion in the colony, and became a subject of heated debate in parliament during the last fifteen years of her life. Its continuing attraction

\textsuperscript{292} Observer, 18 May 1895
\textsuperscript{293} e.g. Register, 22 April 1899; Combe, Responsible Government in South Australia, p.130
\textsuperscript{294} Combe, Responsible Government in South Australia, p.134
was a consequence of electoral developments throughout Australia, political developments in South Australia, and Catherine's persistence.

In the last years of the nineteenth century, the Federal Conventions, Premiers' Conferences, and in 1901 the elections to the Commonwealth Parliament, generated widespread interest in electoral methods. Catherine took full advantage of that interest to urge her reform. The Premiers' Conference in Hobart at the beginning of 1895 appointed Kingston, with George Turner, to draft the bill for the election of representatives to the Federal Convention. Catherine telegraphed and wrote to Kingston exhorting him to ensure that representatives for the convention would be elected by proportional representation. Her efforts were to no avail, which may explain why she thought Kingston spineless. Representatives at the Federal Convention were to be elected by scrutin de liste. During 1896 Catherine's campaign for effective voting included an attack on scrutin de liste,

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297. (Spence), *An Autobiography*, p.90
which provoked first a suggestion that effective voting might serve party purposes, then a rebuff.

Using the figures from her mock elections in 1892-3, she prepared a handbill demonstrating the difference in the results of election by effective voting, the 'Hare-Spence method', and by scrutin de liste. The handbill showed that scrutin de liste wasted 7,429 votes whereas effective voting used all but 66. It also showed that with effective voting, the votes from her mock elections returned two staunch conservatives whose places were taken by an independent and a U.L.P. candidate with scrutin de liste. The point was, mistakenly, taken. In January 1897, shortly before the Convention elections, the Adelaide Observer was alarmed at the apparent strength of the combined Labour Party and Ministerialist nominations. In an editorial it deplored the possible 'disfranchisement of the country and territorial interests

298. Effective Voting. Hare-Spence Method. Defective Voting
Scrutin de Liste, Adelaide, 1896. The place and date is added in pencil.
When proportional representation with the single transferable vote was introduce in Tasmania for the two large multiple electorates of Hobart and Launceston, for elections to the lower house, that electoral system was referred to as both the Hare-Clark system and the Hare-Spence system. The Hare-Spence system proper, with several large multiple electorates, was not introduced in Tasmania until 1907, when proportional representation was adopted for elections to the House of Assembly for the whole state. See Lakeman, How Democracies Vote, p.223 and Representation, (journal of the British Proportional Representation Society), July 1908 p.60
of South Australia, and the exclusion from the Convention of federal experts (i.e. R.C. Baker) who might lack the advantage of a party-political backing at the polls'. It reiterated, as a remedy, its earlier suggestion, which had been 'discussed in many quarters with almost unvarying approval', that 'the contests would offer a capital opportunity for a thoroughly practical experiment with the Hare-Spence system of ballot'. The conservatives need not have worried. The elections returned six A.N.L. candidates and four Ministerialists, and furnished Catherine with material for a diatribe against scrutin de liste. She described it as 'vicious' and characterised by 'stupidity' and 'injustice'. 'Federation would have been more acceptable to Australia' she remarked 'if the large numbers and large interest of wage-earners had been adequately represented'.

299. R.C. Baker's A Manual of Reference to Authorities for the Use of Members of the National Australian Convention, 1891, influenced the makers of the Commonwealth Constitution, Australian Encyclopaedia; Baker was an influential leader of the National Defence League (A.N.L.)

300. Observer, 23 January, 1897
301. Observer, 13 March, 1897
302. Observer, 17 July 1897
Catherine's efforts to publicise effective voting at this time did not stop with meetings, deputations, handbills and letters to the press. Urged by her new friend and colleague Jeanne Young, and probably encouraged by favourable notices of her work in the press, she stood herself as a candidate for the Convention elections. This made her the first female political candidate in the history of Australia. When her intention became known there was considerable speculation about whether she would be eligible to sit in the Convention if she was elected. Her nomination was delayed until the last minute, to avoid its rejection by the Returning Officer. Her name was included by one of the small Liberal organisations in a ticket headed '10 best men', the organisation's leader asserting 'she's the best man of the lot'. In the elections she scored 7,383 votes, coming twenty-second out of thirty-three candidates. She regretted 'losing a great opportunity of directly urging on the Convention the

303. Young, Catherine Helen Spence, p.80
304. Observer, 23 January 1897
305. Spence, Federal Convention Elections and Effective Voting; (Spence), An Autobiography, p.81
306. (Spence), An Autobiography, p.81
307. ibid.
308. Observer, 13 March 1897
wisdom and justice of effective voting', but on the whole she was pleased. She told the *Weekly Herald* 'As my own candidature was mainly undertaken as a plea for electoral equity; as I stood or fell on a question which both parties thought it expedient to ignore...I look on my position on the poll as very satisfactory'.

In 1899 and 1900 Catherine launched a final campaign for effective voting in federal elections. She and Jeanne Young together made speeches and conducted mock elections all over Adelaide, wrote letters to the press, distributed handbills and posters, sent out circulars and petitions, led a deputation to the Premier, and extracted expressions of opinion about the system from all members of parliament.

In both years P.M. Glynn in the House of Assembly and D.M. Charleston in the Legislative Council moved the adoption of 'the mode of election by single transferable vote, known as the Hare-Spence'. The effectiveness of Catherine's work and propaganda appeared when in 1899 Glynn was able to assert that 'there were something like sixteen or seventeen members

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309. Spence, *Federal Convention Elections and Effective Voting*

310. ibid.

311. *Observer*, 7 October 1899

returned with a fairly strong pledge in favour of the system', and when W.H. Carpenter said the motion 'was one to be considered apart from party considerations'. Moving a similar motion in 1897, Glynn had been able to read an acknowledgment of Miss Spence's influence from a pamphlet by R.M. Johnston, Government Statistician of Tasmania. There, proportional representation had been introduced for election of members of the lower house from Hobart and Launceston in 1896. In 1900 Glynn could tell the House of Assembly that Miss Spence and Mrs Young were lecturing on effective voting in Sydney at the invitation of a member of the New South Wales Government. Debating the motion in 1900, which asked for the adoption of the Hare-Spence system specifically for the federal elections, T.H. Brooker paid tribute not only to Miss Spence's 'hard work and persistency' but also to her political skill. 'In democratic quarters it was urged, for example, that it would give to labor the representation it was entitled to,' he said 'while in other quarters different

313. S.A., P.D., 23 August 1899, p.347
314. ibid.
315. S.A., P.D., 26 July 1897, p.286
316. S.A., P.D., 25 July 1900, p.200; entries for 14 May 1900 16 May 1900 in MS Diary of Robert Garran, MS (2001, Box 2), Australian National Library
reasons were assigned for its adoption'. He might have considered his charge vindicated by the results of the motion. In the conservative-dominated Legislative Council, conservatives and labour men combined to pass the motion eleven votes to five against ministerialist opposition. In the House of Assembly it was discharged to make way for a new motion for the adoption of effective voting simply 'for the election of members of Parliament' and that was defeated only by the speaker's casting vote. The division showed that the bill was supported by eight members of the U.L.P., and one ex-labour vote. Arguing against it Premier Holder resorted to accusing Glynn of too brief a speech for a measure that asked members 'to submit their own seats to this new method of election'. He was reinforced by the

317. S.A.,P.D., 8 August 1900 p.296
318. S.A.,P.D., 24 July 1900 p.192; Australian Woman's Sphere, October 1900, applauded this as a triumph
319. S.A.,P.D.; 14 November 1900, p.859
320. S.A.,P.D., 21 November 1900, p.924
321. the motion was that the debate be adjourned. Noes were: Catt, Grainger, Miller, Rounsevell, Glynn and U.L.P. members Archibald, Carpenter, Coneybeer, Hourigan, Hutchison, MacGillivray, Poynton and Price, and the Ex-U.L.P. member Wood. See John Playford, Australian Labor Party Personnel in the South Australian Legislature 1891-1957, typescript, Adelaide, 1957
322. S.A.,P.D., 14 November 1900, p.859
conservatives Homburg and Downer asserting that the system was incomprehensible.\(^{323}\) As Rounsevell remarked in disgust at Downer: 'A more complete and absolute ignorance with regard to the aims and scope of the Hare-Spence system could not have been more glaringly shown'.\(^{324}\)

Ignorance like Downer's was a perpetual hindrance to Catherine's attempts to have effective voting adopted for state elections. Proportional representation is difficult to explain. Catherine sought to overcome the difficulty by illustrating the system with her mock elections. Except for occasional technical discussions prompted by the Returning Officer's objections, or an article by E.J. Nanson, Professor of Mathematics at Melbourne University,\(^{325}\) she confined her speeches, letters and handbills to simple explanations of how to vote and elaborations of the benefits effective voting would bring.\(^{326}\) But it was precisely those benefits which doomed her campaign. Her demand for the moralisation of politics, in a period when South Australians

\(^{323}\) S.A.,P.D., 14 November, 1900, pp.861,862
\(^{324}\) S.A.,P.D., 14 November, 1900, p.862
\(^{325}\) Observer, 30 September 1899
\(^{326}\) e.g. C.H. Spence, *What is Effective Voting and How is it to be Secured?* Adelaide, 1896
were first becoming acquainted with party machines in politics, was a rearguard action for a kind of politics that had become obsolete. Indeed, it was a fight for a kind of politics that had rarely existed in anything but appearances. Lavington Glyde, the first advocate of proportional representation in South Australia, has been described as one of the few genuinely independent members of parliament in 1861. Moreover, Catherine's determination that labour and capital must be reconciled was, at a time when polarisation of the two was an essential condition of political and social progress, a resolution to revive a moribund state of society. It is possibly only because that polarisation developed so slowly as to allow five years of cooperation between labour and capital, under the Price-Peake government, that effective voting was discussed so seriously. It attracted men from both political camps, and from neither; romantics and idealists wishing for a political structure as remote from contemporary conditions as Horace Walpole's gothic castle and Bellamy's restrictive cooperative state were from theirs. And they were forced either to abandon effective voting or to suffer defeat in the arena of practical politics. From 1895 to 1910 politics in South

327. Cook, Faction in South Australian Politics 1857-1861, pp.68-9
Australia were concerned with power, not principles, and with economic interests, not moral elevation.

In June 1895 the Single Tax League used effective voting in its election of officers. In September the same year a U.L.P. meeting agreed that the plebiscite for candidates for 1896 should employ both 'the ordinary system of voting ... for the official counting' and 'the Hare-Spence system as an experiment'. The experiment was not successful, 'a number of papers distributed being unused'. At about the same time Catherine addressed a public meeting of the Women's Land Reform League and aroused such enthusiasm that her supporters urged her to form her own organisation. Encouraged by the Single Tax League's and the U.L.P.'s interest she did so. On 11 October 1895 she chaired the inaugural meeting of the Effective Voting League in the Cooperative Hall in Angas Street. Her presidential address was supported by speeches from D.M. Charleston, A.W. Piper and Samuel Tomkinson. Charleston was still in 1895 a member of the

328. Observer, 18 May 1895
329. Wallis, History of the South Australian Labour Party, p.31
330. Observer, 13 June 1896
331. Observer, 19 October 1895
332. ibid.
U.L.P., though he left the party in 1897. Piper was a barrister on the ladder for the Chief Justiceship, and not explicitly aligned with any political group. Tomkinson had been a member of both houses of parliament, and in 1895 was being endorsed by the Young South Australian Patriotic Association, a body closely related to the A.N.L.. Such politically mixed support remained characteristic of the League during its years under Catherine's leadership. In 1900 its executive included Tom Price, leader of the Labour Party, P.M. Glynn, a liberal conservative, Mrs. Elizabeth Nicholls, President of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and T.H. Webb, President of the Free-trade and Liberal Association. In 1902 the first effective voting bill was drafted by J.H. Vaughan, who became president of the U.L.P. in 1913, and introduced into the Legislative Council

333. Playford, Australian Labour Party Personnel


335. Observer: 5 May 1895, 5 June 1897

336. Observer, 9 June 1900

by Joseph Vardon, a conservative. Effective voting bills were brought into parliament every year from 1902 until Catherine's death in 1910. Every year Catherine and Jeanne Young gave lectures and mock elections to support the measure. But every year the bill was rejected: some did not understand it, others believed it would profit no-one, and its supporters were left isolated.

Even in 1905, when Tom Price, one of the Effective Voting League's vice presidents, became premier, the bill suffered its usual fate. When Price was asked about the government's proposed alterations to the Constitution he said he did not intend to introduce 'representation by the Hare-Spence system' that session. He had little choice. Although the bill was introduced by a labour man, it was opposed forcefully by W.O. Archibald, U.L.P. member for Port Adelaide, and by Peake, leader of the liberal half of the coalition government. Archibald took a passing swipe at Charleston: 'The philosophers who used to wander round the country enlightening the heathen dropped the subject like a hot

339. Vardon was Commissioner of Public Works in the Jenkins ministry in 1904 and Chief Secretary and Minister of Industry in Sir Richard Butler's ministry in 1905, in 1906-13 he was a member of the Senate

340. S.A., P.D., 15 August 1905, p.50

341. E.H. Coombe, member for Barossa
potato when they got into the Federal Parliament'. Then he reiterated his five years old objection: 'The method proposed was too philosophic for the everyday requirements of ordinary people', Peake paid tribute to Miss Spence and her work and then opposed the system as impractical. Speaking as the leader of a newly-created political party, he stressed the importance of coherent organisation of opinion in politics, and raised the bogey of 'a chamber dominated by sectional interests' and religious sects. As the leader of a party whose numbers in parliament made him deputy-premier, he asserted that government by a majority required domination of parliament by that majority; opposition to the majority had its chance at the polls. As the leader of the L.D.U., he raised the old opposition of population and interests as the basis for representation, and protested that the electorates for effective voting would contain equal numbers of people. Since the electoral reorganisation

343. S.A., P.D., 14 November 1900, p.860
346. ibid.
348. op.cit., p.4
following federation, conservative and country interests had sought to make representation of country districts double that of the city electorates.\textsuperscript{349} Ironically, effective voting was rejected in 1905 for reasons which were the reverse of those for which it was ignored in 1861. Peake's arguments amounted to a charge that effective voting was inappropriate to party politics. As Catherine remarked at her eightieth birthday party: 'If the measure promised any decided advantage to any party, that party would take it up and work for it, but it has the disadvantage of being perfectly equitable. "Too damned fair," I have heard it called by the profane'.\textsuperscript{350} Moreover, her claim that it would enable labour and capital to cooperate was by then easy to counter. The uneasy coalition government of 1905-10 was achieving that cooperation without it.

But Catherine never gave up. In 1900 she roused enough interest by speaking at public meetings in Sydney and Melbourne for Effective Voting Leagues to be formed in both cities.\textsuperscript{351} In 1901 she attracted general attention to her cause by inviting the Tasmanian Sir Edward Braddon to speak

\textsuperscript{349} Combe, Responsible Government in South Australia, p.138

\textsuperscript{350} Catherine Helen Spence 1825-1905, p.23

\textsuperscript{351} Observer, 7 July 1900; Australian Woman's Sphere, December 1900; (Spence) An Autobiography, pp.91-3
in its favour at a public meeting in the Adelaide Town Hall. In 1907 she addressed the eleventh meeting of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science, on proportional representation. Even in 1908 she was still working. The first issue of Representation, the English Proportional Representation Society's journal, noted that the French Le Proportionaliste contained 'a letter from Miss Spence, for whose energies, at 82 years old, the continent of Australia is too narrow'. Later in the same year, after she had turned eightythree, she did not hesitate to travel north to Peterborough to speak to electors. Reform of electoral injustice was her sacred mission and ultimate ambition. Her commitment was perpetually reinforced by her religious faith and her delight in public esteem. The justice of proportional representation was a long-standing conviction for her, so familiar that it was like a habit, so strong it threatened to make her a bore. In her autobiography, Jeanne Young wrote for her, 'My friends sometimes accused me of judging people's intelligence by the interest

352. Observer, 10 August 1901

353. Address no.3, section G(I), Report of the Eleventh Meeting of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science, Adelaide, 1907, pp.632-3

354. Representation, March 1908, p.7

355. (Spence), An Autobiography, p.99
they took in effective voting'. She never ceased to believe that the system would be accepted and implemented; she saw it as a necessary condition of the progress of mankind. It is ironic that she should be commemorated in a state famed for unequal electoral districts, by the name of just the kind of electoral district she sought to abolish.

However, Catherine's campaign was not fruitless. Her lectures and her presence on the public platform contributed immeasurably to the political and social education of women in the first Australian colony to give women the vote.

356. op.cit., p.82
CATHERINE HELEN SPENCE in Rose Scott's garden 1902. original in South Australian Archives.
CHAPTER 8

Feminist

'Catherine Spence' asserted Norman Mackenzie '... was the most able and distinguished woman of her generation'.

She was the first woman to write novels about Australia, the first woman to address a meeting of the South Australian Institute, the first female political candidate in Australia.

When the Register wanted articles on advanced education for girls, Howard Clark asked Catherine Spence to write them.

When the Unitarian Christian Church accepted a local equivalent to Melbourne's Martha Webster, Catherine Spence was invited to preach.

When the South Australian Parliament

1. Mackenzie, Women in Australia, p.55
2. see Johnston, Annals of Australian Literature; see also above chapter 2, p.
4. see above chapter 7, p.319
5. Spence, An Autobiography, p.54; Register: 15 January 1874, 5 January 1875; see also above chapter 4, p.161, n.119
6. Spence, An Autobiography, p.53; see also above chapter 3, p.124
required a woman for its select committee on the working conditions of nurses, it chose Catherine Spence. When Premier Kingston decided to appoint a woman to the Destitute Board, he selected Catherine Spence. When members of the Working Women's Trade Union determined to establish a cooperative clothing factory, they appointed Catherine Spence President of the board of directors. When the daughters of old colonists founded the Queen Adelaide Club they conferred honorary membership upon Catherine Spence. When fifty South Australian women formed the Women's Political Association, they made Catherine Spence their president. When she died she was mourned as 'The Grand Old Woman of Australia'.

7. S.A., P.P., 1895, No.20

8. (Spence), An Autobiography, p.83; Young, Catherine Helen Spence, p.26; Records of the Destitute Board, MS.(GRG 28 Ser.1), South Australian Archives, minute 419, 21 January 1897

9. (Spence), An Autobiography, p.94

10. Amy L. Tomkinson, 'Women's Social Clubs in Adelaide', in A Book of South Australia Women in the first hundred years, p.241


She was an obvious choice for such positions, not least because she was energetic, industrious and informed. She made her mark in everything she did, and she did a variety of things. Frederick Sinnett judged her first novel 'Decidedly the best Australian novel that we have met with'. H.G. Turner proclaimed her journalism an 'excellent contribution to the social history of colonial life'. Woods's successor as pastor of the Unitarian Christian Church remarked of her sermons that 'From no male creature had he heard sounder sense or better doctrine'. The 1907 State Children Convention in Adelaide paid tribute to 'her splendid altruistic record'. Her campaigns for effective voting brought her acclaim for her 'somewhat rare gifts of speech and intellect'. The South Australian government commemorated her by founding a scholarship for women to study sociology.

But Catherine became prominent chiefly because she was the first woman in Australia to undertake many of the things she did. She wrote her first political pamphlet in 1861, almost

15. Catherine Helen Spence 1825-1905, p.20
16. "State Children" Convention, p.2
17. Advertiser, 17 March 1893
18. Young, Catherine Helen Spence, pp.200-02
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18. Young, Catherine Helen Spence, pp.200-02
thirty years before Australian women began asking for the vote. Her articles and letters in the press were appearing under her own name by 1878, six years before Alice Henry's first article was printed anonymously. She read her own paper to the 1890 Australian Charities Conference, at which Vida Goldstein's father read his wife's paper for her. In 1892, one year after Rose Scott, who was twenty-two years younger, first joined a political organisation, Catherine conducted her own political campaign alone. In 1897, six years before Vida Goldstein, who was forty-four years younger, stood for the 1903 federal elections, Catherine stood for the Federal Convention elections. Her achievements created a precedent for Australian women. Her career made her a symbol of what a woman could attempt. The South Australian Woman's Suffrage League adopted her as a figure-

20. Proceedings of the First Australian conference on Charity p.60
22. L.M. Henderson, Vida Goldstein 1869-1949 Biographical notes by her niece, typescript (MS.1637), National Library, pp.5-6; Norman Mackenzie, 'Vida Goldstein; the Australian Suffragette', Australian Journal of Politics and History, VI, 1 pp.190-204
head for their cause. Younger feminists from other states paid her homage and sought her advice and friendship. Jeanne Young portrayed her 'not as a "Women Pioneer" of South Australia only, but as...a "Pioneer Woman" of the world, opening new paths for her sisters to tread'.

Catherine became a 'Woman Pioneer' deliberately, but a 'Pioneer Woman' almost inadvertently. It was possible for her to become both because she was an educated, middle-class spinster. But her career was neither sublimation of nor escape from the condition to which she was born and brought up. She secured herself all three by her own choice and determination.

She was born into a prosperous middle class Scots family. Until she was thirteen her food, clothes, companions and schooling were those of a middle class Scots girl. But her father's financial crash, and the family's emigration to a three-year-old colony destroyed her economic and social location in any class. Financial necessity could have

23. E.G. Walker, The Story of the Franchise, dramatic monologue performed in Adelaide, 28 June 1944, typescript, supplied by Miss E.G. Walker, Fullarton, South Australia; see below pp. 355, 363

24. Young, Catherine Helen Spence, preface

25. see above chapter 2, p. 50

26. see above chapter 2, p. 58-60
compelled her to become a domestic servant like Clara Morison, or a shadowy dependent in someone else's household like her own companion Ellen Gregory. The fluidity of colonial society could have enable her to marry one of Adelaide's prospering proprietors, as her elder sister Jessie married Andrew Murray. Instead she worked to sustain her middle class respectability, by educating herself and endeavouring to acquire her own income. She remained a member of Adelaide's middle class all her life. Although she was always relatively poor, and for part of her life earned her own living, she never identified herself with women of the working class. Although some of her friends, and her later fame, brought her into contact with Old Colonist - Adelaide Club society, she never identified herself with the leisured ladies of Adelaide's upper crust. When she signed her newspaper articles 'A Colonist of 1839' she claimed her distinction both from the working class who had no reason to consider the date of their arrival in the colony important, and from the Government House circles who did not write for the daily press.

27. see above chapter 2, pp.62-3
As a child she asked for the advanced education automatically given her brothers, apparently unthought of by her sisters. When her family's ruin and emigration prevented her further formal education, she set about educating herself. She read widely and attentively, as her novels, articles, lectures and sermons show. She discussed her reading and colonial affairs with her father, her brothers, and her friends. She attended lectures at the Adelaide Philosophical Society, and probably at the South Australian Institute. She prized her self-education highly: at her eightieth birthday celebration she told her guests 'Australia [taught] me more valuable lessons than the Edinburgh institution to which my father had promised to send me'. She continued her self-education all her life, partly from habit, partly because the Unitarian Christian Church taught that learning was the road to salvation, and partly because it became essential to her livelihood.

28. Spence, An Autobiography, pp.9,10,12
29. op.cit.,pp.17,24; see also above account of Ethics of Political Economy, chapter 4,pp.156-7 and Annie Martin's contribution to effective voting, chapter 7, p.305
30. Spence, 'Sir Richard Hanson', p.431
32. Catherine Helen Spence 1825-1905, p.21
33. See above chapter 3, p.99
She could have gained social and financial security, and possibly encouragement with her self-education, by accepting her first offer of marriage. But she refused, probably wisely. If, at the age of seventeen, she thought of marriage as a relationship entailing such subordination, self-sacrifice and service as she portrayed in Mary Lancaster's marriage in Tender and True, then her independence and ambition would have made her, in her own eyes, a bad wife. Even if she had thought of marriage as a relationship like that of Lilian Abercrombie and Hugh Victor Keith in Handfasted, in which each takes pleasure in the abilities, esteem and aspirations of the other, she was probably sensible to reject her suitor. Without children of her own, she was not open to the accusation Dickens made against Caroline Chisholm in his horrifying portrait of Mrs Jellaby. 34 And Catherine may have sensed this when she determined to place the garret steadily before her, to discipline her mind 'to manly virtues, to manly strength, and to manly studies', that she might not to lean on anyone, but could be 'a useful and amiable member of society'. 35 Despite her many friendships with men, she

34. C. Dickens, Bleak House, Everyman edition 1907, 1962 issue, pp.33-38

35. Young, Catherine Helen Spence, pp.45, 47-8
was probably generalising her own experience when she wrote later, 'there are some men and a great many more women who have a vocation for celibacy'.

Catherine's social status, education, and spinsterhood combined were a necessary condition of her work and achievements. Working class women in the nineteenth century seldom had sufficient financial security, education, or energy, to allow them to seek satisfying work. Middle class women who needed to earn a living found posts as governesses, the only employment society allowed for ladies who wished to remain respectable. But a governess's employment was precarious, her status in the household equivocal, and her education usually minimal. She was as unable as a working class woman to look for satisfaction in work. Middle class women enjoying financial security lacked the goad to learn

37. see Ray Strachey, "The Cause" a short history of the women's movement in Great Britain, London 1928, pp.17-18, 54-7
38. op.cit., p.59; Kamm, *Rapiers and Battleaxes*, p.49
39. Peterson, 'The Victorian Governess: Status Incongruence in Family and Society', passim
to work efficiently and enduringly. Many, deprived of any rights to property by marriage, could take no responsibility even for their own affairs. 40 Many, educated only in social graces and accomplishments, lacked the wide reading which could make them restless in their proscribed, protected lives, and wanted that knowledge of conditions of life beyond their own which could impel them to try to alleviate other people's misery. Many were worn out, even chronically ill, from constant pregnancy. 41 Catherine's social status signified her freedom from the depressed condition of working class women. Her need to earn developed her capacity for work. Her education fostered her ambition, and drove her to seek greater personal satisfaction than she found in teaching, and to reform the society in which she worked. Her spinsterhood freed her from the physical debilitation of perpetual childbearing, the psychological debilitation of becoming a protected subordinate in an intimate relationship, and from the helplessness of not being responsible for her own affairs.


41. see e.g. Keith Briant, Marie Stopes a biography, London, 1962, pp.141-2; however, during the later nineteenth century the increasing use of contraceptives and the falling birthrate, in both Britain and Australia, reduced this evil, see J.A. and Olive Banks, Feminism and Family Planning in Victorian England, Liverpool, 1964, p.5; A.G. Austin, ed., The Webbs' Australian Diary 1898, Melbourne 1965, p.75
But all three only created the potential for achievement. It was Catherine's independence, her ambition for herself and later also for all humanity, which spurred her into the varied enterprises which won her fame.

Catherine was probably independent because she was proud of the social station to which she was born. Her independence impelled her to seek not simply a livelihood, but one which neither detracted from her respectability nor unduly restricted her freedom of decision and action. She was ambitious for herself, probably because the doctrine of election in her childhood's faith taught her to be so, probably because Miss Phinn encouraged her to value her own abilities highly, possibly because she needed to compensate for being short, fat and plain. Her ambition drove her to seek work suited to her abilities which would win her at least recognition and esteem. She was ambitious for mankind because emigration prompted her to consider ways in which a new colony could best develop, and because her conversion to Unitarianism

42. see above chapter 3, p. 81
43. see above chapter 4, p. 129
44. see above chapter 1, p. 4
45. see above chapter 2, pp. 64-5
inspired her with the possibilities of humanity's progress. Her commitment to civilisation's advance prompted her to work for specific reforms in the community in which she lived. But her independence and ambition brought her into direct conflict with the conventions of a society which considered a woman's ultimate ambition to be a husband, a home, and children. Catherine was neither a fanatic nor a revolutionary; she achieved fulfilment cautiously.

She found work first in the traditional occupation of distressed gentlewomen, but she found teaching both unrewarding and unlucrative. She next ventured upon an occupation made respectable by a few gifted and several merely hardworking women. As she observed in her autobiography, 'when I began to wield the pen the novel was the line of least resistance'. She continued to write novels over a period of thirty years. She clearly found it a satisfying occupation; it enabled her to present many of her ideas about human relations and social organisation, and it won her the first measure of the public esteem to which she aspired. But the income from her novels was pitiful. At the same time she covertly defied social convention with anonymous contributions to the South Australian

46. see above chapter 3, pp.104-5
47. Spence, An Autobiography, p.56
and articles in her brother's name for the Argus. But at first she felt society's prohibitions keenly. When she was writing for the moribund South Australian in 1851, she recalled, 'At a subscription ball...my younger sister Mary... found she had been pointed out and talked of as the lady who wrote for the newspapers. I did not like it even to be supposed of myself, but Mary was indignant'. 48 By 1878, however, she was less deferential to social convention. She was older, she had become known in South Australia as a writer, and she had found her articles accepted readily by English journals. She rejoiced in her appointment as a 'regular outside contributor' to the Register. Social convention had not changed greatly: Catherine's appointment was the first opportunity she had found for work that was both rewarding and remunerative. And she was by that time already fifty-three. Emily Clark could boast to Lady Windeyer that she and Miss Spence had collaborated on an article for the Melbourne Review, 49 but the Melbourne Review was not the daily press, and did not pay its contributors. 50

48. op.cit., p.22

49. C. Emily Clark to Lady Windeyer, 31 December 1876; this article appears never to have been published

50. Spence, An Autobiography, p.52; see also Peterson, 'The Victorian Governess: Status Incongruence in Family and Society', p.9
Although Catherine's articles for the Register were to fill the gap left by the death of the editor, there was apparently no suggestion that she should be anything but an 'outside' contributor. Catherine acknowledged the likelihood of social disapproval by continuing to shelter behind 'A Colonist of 1839' for many years. But when four early articles were reprinted as a pamphlet in 1879 she added 'C.H. Spence' to her nom-de-plume, probably considering the merits of her work sufficient protection against any notoriety she might acquire. Her decision to acknowledge them as her own represented the triumph of her ambition over her submission to society's norms. From that time she signed her letters to the press with her own name. By the end of her life she felt so secure from society's sexual prejudices that she could despise the work of an American woman journalist as 'essentially woman's work, dress, fashions, functions, with educational and social outlooks from the feminine point of view. My work' she boasted 'might show the bias of sex, but it dealt with the larger questions that were common to humanity'.

Journalism, however, gave her no scope either to discover or to employ her talent for public speaking, offered

51. Spence, Some Social Aspects of South Australian Life, cover
52. Spence, An Autobiography, p.56
her only limited fulfilment of her personal ambition, and provided only an indirect means of reforming the world. Yet she approached the platform as cautiously as she claimed recognition for her work in the press. In 1866, when the committee of the South Australian Institute asked her for a lecture on her impressions of England, she recalled, 'neither the committee nor myself thought of the possibility of my delivering it'. Difficulty with her handwriting spoiled the lecture, so in 1871, when the same committee asked her for 'two literary lectures', she offered to read them herself.

To deliver a lecture from a rostrum on which only men had spoken, even if only to a small and exclusive audience, was a major step towards her emancipation from the expectations of society. But it was not sufficiently surprising to attract attention to her as a pioneer of women's participation in public life. Nor was her appearance in the pulpit before the small and close-knit congregation of the Unitarian Christian Church. And Catherine's first public appearance as an advocate of electoral reform was prefaced by an appearance made as a member of the State Children's Council.

53. op.cit., p.45
54. see above chapter 5, p.170
55. Spence, An Autobiography, p.45
Catherine was, as a spinster, particularly vulnerable to charges of being 'unwomanly'. But she was also shielded from them by being guardian to two families of children, foster mother to her niece and nephew, and a respected worker for the colony's orphan, destitute and criminal children. Care for children belonged to a 'woman's sphere'. Admission of women to public organisations looking after children was gained more readily than higher education or wider employment for women. Catherine's membership of the Boarding-Out Society and State Children's Council demonstrated her femininity to the world. When she read her own paper to the Australasian Charities Conference in 1890, she cleared herself a path for her thoroughly unwomanly public campaign for electoral reform two years later. Once launched she seems never to have encountered the prejudice that made Beatrice Webb exclaim in irritation at Australian women who 'apparently think it "unwomanly" to take an active part in public affairs'.

56. see Strachey, "The Cause", p.17
57. e.g. J.L. Stirling, S.A.,P.D., 17 July 1894, cc.517,518
58. Mary Carpenter encountered no positive opposition when she founded a Working and Visiting Society in 1835, and a 'ragged school' in 1846, see Kamm, Rapiers and Battleaxes, p.32
59. Austin, ed., The Webbs' Australian Diary, p.32
The Advertiser began its article on Catherine's venture to the United States in 1893 by praising her work for children of the State, and asserting that she was unsurpassed in 'womanly sympathy'. It prefaced its conclusion by quoting her assertion:

"No one has gone out of 'woman's sphere' more than I have during the last twelve years... and yet I believe I am as womanly as ever".  

In taking effective voting to the platform, Catherine found her most complete self-fulfilment and the fullest gratification of her ambition for herself, and prospectively for mankind. She also achieved, with her womanliness unquestioned, the greatest measure of freedom from society's prejudices that she could imagine. The publicity given her campaigns did not follow the Advertiser's lead. The Register and Observer gave her considerable space and attention, even briefly supported her cause, but gave no emphasis to her sex. Unlike the president of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (W.C.T.U.), she never announced that she was not a member of a Turkish harem, or found it necessary to appeal to biblical authority for woman to speak in public. The papers seem to have been more impressed with the vigour of her age

60. Advertiser, 17 March 1893
61. see above chapter 7, pp.300,318
62. Observer, 4 April 1896
63. Observer, 16 September 1893
than with her courage and enterprise as a woman. She probably worked deliberately for this effect. In a society where even the most progressive were still dubious about women in public affairs, she could not have avoided some diffidence and defensiveness. She was sixty-seven when she began her public campaign for effective voting. Lacking the beauty and compelling voice of a Josephine Butler, Annie Besant, or Victoria Woodhull, she could make no specifically sexual appeal. But, perhaps instead, she quickly developed the habit of telling her audiences how old she was, and proclaiming that she would fight for her cause to her last breath. This suggests that despite her self-importance and conviction of the justice of her case, she was not sufficiently confident to be able to present herself and her argument on their own merits. She seems to have purposely appealed from a condition requiring special, and slightly tolerant, recognition. Her sexless appeal may have avoided evoking sexual condescension in the audiences who applauded her. But she still invited patronage by exploiting her age. And she probably received it. Even parliamentarians who scoffed at effective voting were compelled to express

64. Young, Catherine Helen Spence, p.193
admiration for Miss Spence. Had she been younger, or a man, or both, it is possible that they would instead have tried to persuade her to direct her energies to a more useful reform. Catherine's emancipation, then, was probably only partial. But she achieved a degree of freedom from society's prejudices unprecedented in Australia.

Although Catherine strove for self-fulfilment and personal recognition rather than for sexual equality, she found her chief opposition in the structure and attitudes of a society that discriminated against women. She must have realised that in fighting to become a 'Woman Pioneer' she was fighting as a 'Pioneer Woman'. And she attempted in passing to make the battle easier for women who would follow her.

She was not greatly concerned about working class women. She hoped the dignity of domestic service would increase, and she approved the movement of young women from domestic service to the factories because the change gave them greater freedom and independence. But she seems to have considered the interests of working class women already cared

65. see above chapter 7, pp.321-2,328
66. Spence, Some Social Aspects of South Australian Life, p.10; Spence, 'The Democratic Ideal', p.9
67. Spence, 'The Democratic Ideal', pp.9-10
for: in 1878 she asserted that factory and workshop legis-
lation protected women and children from overwork, and that
the sewing machine had improved the condition of needle-
women.68 She drew her information from English periodicals,
and she clearly knew nothing of conditions in South Australia.
In 1892 the Shops and Factories Commission reported 'an
entire absence in South Australia of any legislative provision
for the protection of women and children in relation to their
hours of labour'.69 As late as 1904 the Legislative Council
appointed a committee to investigate allegations of sweating,
reported to be most prevalent among employers of needlewomen
and machinists.70 Despite her contact with working class
families as a visitor for the Boarding-Out Society, Catherine
had little real appreciation of their conditions of life. In
1883 she wrote to the Register, in reply to a protest that
girls apprenticed to trades were not paid enough to keep
themselves, 'No doubt parents and guardians who wish their
girls brought up to any other calling than that of domestic

68. Spence, Some Social Aspects of South Australian Life, p.9
69. Report of the Shops and Factories Commission, S.A., P.P.,
1892, No.37
70. Report of the Select Committee of the Legislative
Council on the Alleged Sweating Evil, S.A.P.P., 1904,
No.71
service must be willing to pay nearly all the cost of their maintenance while they learn a business'. Later, her friends in the Reform Movement brought her closer to a practical appreciation of the lives of working women. In 1901, at Agnes Milne's suggestion, she helped form the South Australian Co-operative Clothing Company Limited, to encourage thrift among working women and lighten their burden.

She was most concerned about middle class women; in the articles reprinted as *Some Social Aspects of South Australian Life*, she examined their position closely. There was, she asserted, a 'widespread movement...all over the world for the admission of women to new fields of labour'. This sprang from 'the marriage difficulty' and industrialisation. The falling marriage rate was caused, she considered, in Britain by emigration of men to climates and conditions unsuited to women, in the colonies by increasing prosperity, materialism, and social pretension which made marriage 'formidable'. So unmarried women sought employment. So, too, did married women. Industrialisation deprived them of the spinning, weaving, stitching, brewing, baking, pickling, preserving, fine cooking and pastry making that had filled their days.

71. *Register*, 28 February 1883
72. (Spence), *An Autobiography*, p.94
Their lives were idle, luxurious, and unbearable: 'Life all amusement is more intolerable than life all labour'. They sought occupation in 'charitable pursuits' and 'earnest studies'; their daughters demanded education and employment. Despite prejudice against blue-stockings, despite 'the half-jealous, half-tender opposition of most men who regret that the winning grace of dependence should be sacrificed', despite economists' alarms at potential competition lowering wages, women must be trained for and granted employment. This would improve human relations and social customs, and enhance the happiness of mankind. 'Men and women will have more common ground, if there will be less outward deference on one side and less softness on the other there will be more mutual respect and more thorough understanding'. A woman trained to support herself could choose 'not between destitution and marriage but between the modest competence she can earn and the modest competence her lover offers'. All marriages would then be marriages of love, and their bonds would be 'more coherent'. 'The standard of morals will be equalized'. Divorce would be granted more readily to women capable of supporting their children alone. Women would cease to be slaves to ornate, impractical fashions. They might even be given the vote.73

73. Spence, Some Social Aspects of South Australian Life, passim
In 1878 Catherine was optimistic about the enlarged future of women. 'No one' she proclaimed 'can thoughtfully watch the stream of tendency all over the world without being convinced that [these things] are at our gates'. But by 1889 her optimism was shaken. After reading a pile of contemporary novels ranging from _The Silence of Dean Maitland_ and _Robert Elsemere_ to _A Story of an African Farm_, she pondered 'the doleful and pessimistic character of much of the fiction written by English women'. She divided the novels into two groups, 'those of endurance and those of revolt'; protested at the sacrifices required for endurance; and, while remarking that _The Wing of Azrael_ was badly written, quoted with explicit approval its condemnation of a wife's self-effacement and submission in marriage. She concluded: 'never before was there such a deep sense of the remediable evils of life'. Perhaps her reading provoked her to regard women's emancipation as urgent. Perhaps it merely combined with events in South Australia to sweep her into the current of action. In any case, by 1891 Catherine had joined the ranks of the suffragists.

She had toyed with the idea of votes for women since her early years in the colony. She told the diary she kept

74. op.cit., p.13
75. Register, 11 December 1889
in the 1840s and 1850s that women with property qualifications might vote, but she was not enthusiastic at the prospect.\(^{76}\) She appended an argument for female suffrage to Frank Hogarth's explanation of proportion representation in \textit{Mr Hogarth's Will}.\(^{77}\) But not until 1891 did she work actively for the vote, and then she worked mainly because, as she told a drawingroom meeting in December 1892, 'The woman's suffrage movement in this province has...become too strong for me to keep outside of it any longer. I must take hold of it and endeavour to guide it somewhat'.\(^{78}\) This suggests that her eagerness to be associated with major reforms had overcome her preoccupation with effective voting, and possibly her jealousy of a movement in which she would not shine alone. The self-importance of her assertion had some small justification in the suffragists' eagerness to enlist her support. But in 1892 the movement she proposed to guide was already four years old, and quite adequately guided.

The first advocate of female suffrage in South Australia was Edward Stirling, the eldest son of Catherine's

\(^{76}\) Young, \textit{Catherine Helen Spence}, p.174

\(^{77}\) Spence, \textit{Mr Hogarth's Will}, vol.2, p.253

\(^{78}\) \textit{Voice}, 9 December, 1892
friend and benefactor. Stirling returned to South Australia from Cambridge in 1881 to become first lecturer, then professor of physiology at the University of Adelaide. In 1884 he was elected M.H.A. for North Adelaide. In 1885 he moved in parliament, amid cheers, 'That in the opinion of this House, women, except while under coverture, who fulfil the conditions and possess the qualifications on which the parliamentary

79. see above ch.4, p.141, n.47; Catherine Spence seems to have been a figure of some importance to Edward Stirling's children. She remarked, 'I was a great deal interested in the Stirlings and their eight children'; she was known in their household as 'Miss Spence the story teller'; and before the family left for England in 1864, the two eldest boys, Edward and Lancelot, rode to Glenelg to visit Catherine at her brother's house, to say goodbye. Lucy Spence remembered 'they were making fun of homeopathy in which my Aunt believed, and one of them swallowed a globule and then pretended to stagger about as a result of the potent drug'. When Catherine traveled to England in 1864, she accompanied the younger members of the Stirling family, see Spence, An Autobiography, p.20; Morice, Auntie Kate, p.1

80. Edward Charles Stirling was born on 8 September, 1848, educated at St. Peters School Collegiate where, in 1864, he won a Westminster Scholarship, and went to Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1865. He graduated B.A. with honours in Natural Science in 1869, was awarded his M.A. and M.B. degrees, and became M.R.C.S. of England in 1872, was elected F.R.C.S. in 1874, and in 1881 was awarded his M.D. degree. In 1892 he was made C.M.G., and elected F.R.S., and 1917 he was made a Knight Bachelor. He died in 1919. P.M. Last, 'A paper on the life and work of Sir Edward Charles Stirling, F.R.S., read before the Adelaide Medical Students' Society on Tuesday June 15 1949' Adelaide Medical Students' Society Review, November 1949; Foundation Members of the Adelaide Club 1863-1864, typescript (A1191/A6), South Australian Archives
franchise is granted to men, shall, like them, be admitted to the franchise for both Houses of Parliament'.

Stirling's motion came out of the blue. His speech indicated three possible impulses behind his surprising measure. Among his English correspondents was William Woodall who had submitted a female suffrage bill to the House of Commons in 1884, and proposed to do so again in 1885. Stirling's motion may have been an attempt to influence the British parliament by demonstrating the support female suffrage would win a colony noted for its progressive legislation. He was also an influential member of the Adelaide University which in 1880 had secured the admission of women to degrees; in his own subject prizes had been won in three out of four years by women in open competition with men. 'Speaking ... as a teacher of both sexes, he

81. S.A., P.D., 22 July 1885, c.319

82. In June 1884 the House of Commons debated an amendment by William Woodall (Liberal M.P. for Stoke-on-Trent) to the Representation of the People Bill, extending the suffrage to women, and in November the same year debated whether Woodall be given leave to bring in his Parliamentary Franchise (Extension to Women) Bill. Woodall reintroduced his bill in 1885, and it was reintroduced again by Leonard Courtney in 1886, see Constance Rover, Women's Suffrage and Party Politics in Britain 1866-1914, London, 1967, p.219

83. [South Australia] 43 & 44 Vic., 1880, No.172

84. MacKenzie, Women in Australia, p.33
had no hesitation in saying that he could recognise no essential difference in the mental capacity of men and women'.  

Finally, Stirling emphasised that his measure was a just and logical development from legislation passed in the previous year. The Married Women's Property Act, passed partly to conform with British legislation, partly to prevent tax evasion, was assented to in February 1884. In November the same year income tax was introduced. Stirling, echoing Mill's speech to the House of Commons in 1867, demanded that 'taxation and representation should go hand in hand. Did not a woman who owned property pay taxes like the man in a similar position?'

Stirling's motion was passed unanimously, possibly because it sought opinion on only a limited extension of the franchise, possibly because as a motion, not a bill, it was a gesture it would be unchivalrous to oppose. The cheers which greeted him, the laughter and banter which punctuated his speech, suggest that his motion was received both

85. S.A., P.D., 22 July 1885, c.323
86. [South Australia] 46 & 47 Vic., 1883-4, No.300
87. [South Australia] 47 & 48 Vic., 1884, No.323
88. quoted in Rover, Women's Suffrage and Party Politics in Britain, p.31
89. S.A., P.D., 22 July 1885, c.326
favourably and flippantly. When he had the bad manners to
mistake a joke for serious opinion, and introduce a bill
for limited female franchise the following year, he
encountered the sexual prejudice and opposition to
increasing the propertied vote that his motion had failed
to arouse.  

Stirling lost his seat in 1887, but in 1889
and 1890, female suffrage bills were introduced by Robert
Caldwell, M.H.A. first for Yorke Peninsular, then for
Onkaparinga. Caldwell's bills, like Stirling's, sought the
vote for only single and widowed women possessing adequate
property. By 1890 his measure won little favour with
anyone, even with the women who had organised to urge female
suffrage.

By 1890 middle class women in South Australia were
comparatively privileged. Women paying rates had been
entitled to vote for district councils since 1876.  

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90. S.A., P.D.: 17 June 1886, c.188; 22 September 1886,
c.1080; 13 October 1886, cc.1263, 1265; Ebenezer Ward,
M.H.A. for Frome, 'did not wish to treat the matter
seriously, because he could not imagine it to be within
the range of practical politics', S.A., P.D., 22
September 1886, c.1079

91. Combe, Responsible Government in South Australia, p.128

92. E.J. Wadham, Women's Suffrage in South Australia 1883-1894,

93. [South Australia] 39 & 40 Vic., 1876, No.43, clause 187
could retain their own property and remain in command of their incomes even if they married. They had access to higher education in the state's Advanced School for Girls, and admission to degrees at the University. They had successfully established themselves in public affairs with the Boarding-Out Society, the State Children's Council, and the Adelaide Children's Hospital. Their major specific disadvantage was the double standard of sexual morality, embodied in an Act which allowed men to divorce their wives for adultery, but women to divorce their husbands only if they could prove them guilty of incestuous adultery, bigamy with adultery, rape, sodomy, beastiality, or adultery coupled with such cruelty as alone would allow them legal separation. But middle class women were less troubled by their legal disadvantages than by the condition of working class

94. since 1884, see above p.358
95. founded 1879, see above chapter 4, p.163
96. since 1880, see above p.357
97. see above chapter 6, pp.228,236
98. founded in 1876, with 48 women forming its ladies' committee, see MacKenzie, Women in Australia, p.82
99. [South Australia] 31 Vic., 1867, No.3
100. nevertheless, they secured prompt amendment of them after they had been given the vote: the Married Women's Protection Act 1896 did not abolish the inequalities of the divorce law completely, but it gave women much greater equality than they had had before; [South Australia] 59 & 60 Vic., 1896, No.664
women, and the general social evil of drunkenness. The Social Purity Society formed in 1886 gradually fragmented into the first Australian branch of the W.C.T.U. formed in the same year, the Women's Suffrage League (W.S.L.) formed in 1888, and the Working Women's Trade Union (W.W.T.U.) formed in 1890. These organisations combined to campaign vigorously for the vote, disregarding the apathy of most South Australian women. Their energy and their political temper won them the

101. Register, 11 December 1889; Woman's Voice, ed. M.S. Wolstenholme, Sydney, 23 February 1895, p.179; Wadham, Women's Suffrage in South Australia, pp.67, 87-91; Mary Lee, secretary of the Woman's Suffrage League was also secretary of the Working Women's Trade Union

102. Observer, 28 September 1895; Cornelius Proud, 'How Woman's Suffrage was won in South Australia', Review of Reviews, 20 January 1895, pp.28-9; Elizabeth Webb Nicholls, president of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, was also a member of the executive of the Woman's Suffrage League

103. Woman's Voice, 23 February 1895 p.179; MacKenzie, Women in Australia, p.34

104. Observer, 28 September 1895

105. Proud, 'How Women's Suffrage was won in South Australia', p.29; MacKenzie, Women in Australia, p.34

106. Woman's Voice, 28 February 1895, p.179; Wadham, Women's Suffrage in South Australia, p.67

107. Voice, 9 December 1892; South Australian Woman's Suffrage League, Report, Adelaide, 1894, p.2

108. Wadham, Women's Suffrage in South Australia, p.87
allegiance of the Reform Movement, the U.L.P., and eventually of the Kingston government.

They also won Catherine's support. By May 1891 she was one of two vice-presidents of the W.S.L. In June she joined a deputation to the premier. In May 1892 her address to the W.S.L.'s annual meeting was greeted with enthusiastic applause, and in July she led a deputation

109. Voice: 26 January 1894, 20 April 1894

110. adult suffrage was the twelfth plank of the first platform of the U.L.P., drawn up in 1891, see Smeaton, The People in Politics, p.25; Voice, 26 May 1893

111. the adult suffrage bill of 1894 was introduced by Kingston's Chief Secretary. MacKenzie asserts that the victory of the women suffragists had been won for them, not by them. While he acknowledges the intelligence, eagerness, and work of the 'championesses of women's suffrage', he argues firstly that the measure was supported by the Kingston government as a means of attacking the supporters of property, and secondly that the majority of the women in South Australia were indifferent or hostile to the measure. Both contentions are indisputable, but he underrates the importance of the political temper of the W.S.L., W.W.T.U., and W.W.T.U., in convincing Kingston that adult suffrage would increase the liberal vote, and not that for propertied conservatives, see MacKenzie, Women in Australia, pp.36-7

112. Woman's Suffrage League of South Australia, Annual Report, Adelaide, 1891

113. Register, 3 June 1891

114. Observer, 21 May 1892
to the government. In December the W.S.L.'s Council asked her to 'urge its interests' during her effective voting campaign. In April 1893 the Advertiser observed that Miss Spence's 'arguments are thoughtful and sober, and her language entirely free from the screeching hysteria that has so often brought ridicule and contempt on the cause of "women's rights"'. Catherine was a powerful recruit. No other women could so justly assert, as she did, that she 'had taken her full share in colonial life', and that 'Australian politics were the very breath of her nostrils'. Parliamentarians referred to her as 'a well-known authority on political subjects', and averred that she had 'an acquaintance with the principles of government that few men could claim to attain'. But Catherine spent the time of greatest agitation for female suffrage in the United States and Britain.

By 1890 Caldwell's bill represented for some an attempt to inhibit the increasing radicalism which brought Kingston to office in 1893. By 1894 the political temper of the

115. Register, 9 July 1892; Observer, 16 July 1892
116. Voice, 9 December 1892
117. Advertiser, 17 March 1893
118. Register, 3 June 1891
119. S.A., P.D.: 26 August 1891, c.896; 14 August 1894, c.886; Wadham, Women's Suffrage in South Australia, p.66
women's organisations had convinced Kingston that adult suffrage would increase his chances of expanding the suffrage for the Legislative Council. After an attempt to legislate for adult suffrage following a referendum had been thrown out in 1893, and a petition containing 11,000 signatures, gathered chiefly by district branches of the W.C.T.U., had been presented in 1894, he resolved to make adult suffrage a government measure. The bill was introduced first into the Legislative Council, then after months of debate and manoeuvering for a two-thirds majority, passed, and reserved for the royal assent in December 1894.

Catherine arrived back in South Australia in time for the victory. The W.S.L. held a special meeting to greet her and watch the progress of the bill simultaneously. She listened with embarrassment, wrote Jeanne Young, to 'the avalanche of eulogium' that overwhelmed her. In March 1895

120. Combe, Responsible Government in South Australia, pp.128-9
121. Proud, 'How Woman's Suffrage was won in South Australia', p.28
122. S.A., P.D., 23 August 1894, c.1086
123. S.A., P.D., 4 July 1894, c.364
124. [South Australia] 57 & 58 Vic., 1894, No.613
125. Observer, 22 December 1894, pp.4,30
126. (Spence), An Autobiography, p.78
she was congratulated on the bill's passage by a letter bearing twenty-nine signatures from the National Council of Women of the United States. 127 Yet she described herself as a 'weak-kneed sister' of the suffrage campaigners, though she was as convinced as the stalwarts of her right to vote. She considered 'electoral reform ... of more value than the enfranchisement of women'; she 'was not eager for the doubling of the electors in number, especially as the new voters would probably be more ignorant and more apathetic than the old'. 128 However, since the women of South Australia had gained the vote without her eagerness, she set about enlightening their ignorance and apathy.

In February 1895, Mary Lee, the energetic and plain-spoken secretary of the W.S.L. gave a lecture to the Adelaide Democratic Club entitled 'What Will She Do With It?'. 129 The question was reiterated throughout the colony. In April the Observer reported that postmen and policemen had been 'beset with entreaties from the lately-fledged voters for information concerning "what it is

127. May Wright Sewell, Susan B. Anthony, et al to C.H. Spence, 1 March 1895, MS. (A971 D1), South Australian Archives
128. Spence, An Autobiography, p.41
129. Observer, 9 February 1895
about".  Catherine had one main answer to the question: repeating her chief argument in the suffrage campaign, she contended that women's votes would 'moralise public life'.

But first women must develop a sense of responsibility to their new privilege, must learn about public affairs, and organise themselves. For the last fifteen years of her life Catherine added to her already taxing activities, her efforts for the education and organisation of women.

Her effective voting campaign was itself a form of education for voters, and her lectures on child welfare in South Australia indicated areas of public life which women could easily enter. But she also gave lectures and wrote articles specifically about women's emancipation. At first she concentrated on the immediate need: indicating ways of forming preferences for candidates, and giving simple instructions for filling in voting papers. She warned her readers against total dependence on the advice of husbands, fathers and brothers, and against ignorant yielding to a candidate's solicitations.  At the same time she gave

130. Observer, 6 April 1895

131. C.H. Spence, The Approaching Elections. A Few Plain Words to the Women Electors of South Australia, reprinted from the Register, 24 March 1896; Register 9 July 1892

132. Spence, The Approaching Elections, passim
lectures on subjects ranging from Prince Kropotkin to finance in South Australia and Susan B. Anthony in an attempt to teach women something of public issues. She extended her self-education campaign to Sydney and Melbourne where, both as an enfranchised woman, and as the most distinguished woman of her generation, she was asked for advice and opinion. She spoke from platforms beside the Sydney suffragists. She passed on to the women of Melbourne letters from her correspondents in Britain and the United States, contributing to their confidence of solidarity.


136. Women's Political Education League, President's address, August 1904, 5 November 1906, pamphlets (Q324 3/W), Mitchell Library; Catherine Spence also became close friends with Rose Scott, but she never developed the sense of alienation from men which tinges Rose Scott's address to the Feminist Club in 1921, see Franklin, 'Rose Scott, Some Aspects of Her Personality and Her Work', p.101; (Spence), An Autobiography, pp.86,92; Rose Scott, Address to the Feminist Club, 12 April 1921, typescript (As 75/2), Mitchell Library
in a world-wide movement. 137

Yet the 'woman movement' at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries was, despite the efforts of women like Millicent Fawcett, Susan Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, less a movement than a chaotic outburst. It mistook means for ends, appearance for substance, noise for coherence, the vote for emancipation. Catherine, growing increasingly disillusioned with the enfranchised women of South Australia, attempted to direct the Australian movement's spreading but shallow ramifications into a single channel. On her return from Sydney in 1900 she remarked ruefully, 'I could not promise them that they would revolutionize human nature by extending the vote to women'. 138 Later she complained that South Australian women were not voting 'as women', but as their husbands and fathers voted. 139

137. e.g. 'Vida Goldstein was delighted with the letter I had from Miss Emily P. Collins ... borrowed it to copy it and make some use of it', C.H. Spence to Alice Henry, 23 November 1906, MS. (1050), South Australian Archives; Woman's Sphere, December 1900; Catherine Spence also submitted articles to their journals, e.g. C.H. Spence, 'Australia's Opportunity', Woman's Sphere, March 1901

138. 'A Chat With Miss Spence', clipping from unidentified newspaper, guardbook of newspaper cuttings on proportional representation, South Australian Public Library

139. C.H. Spence, lecture on National Council of Women, typescript, (MSS.202/5), Mitchell Library, p.8
In 1906 she exhorted the nurses of Australasia to recognise their political responsibilities. She saw the remedy for continuing dependence and apathy in organisation.

At first she simply supported the bodies which sprang up after the Adult Suffrage Act was passed. In August 1895 she seconded the motion of a public meeting for the formation of a society to work for the rights of women and children. In the same month she addressed the Women's League, the body formed by members of the defunct W.S.L., to educate women to use their votes wisely, and to encourage solidarity of women as women, 'apart from all considerations of class and party'. As late as 1909 she chaired the inaugural meeting of the Women's Political Association of South Australia. But she soon decided that all such bodies should be affiliated with a central organisation, a National Council of Women. The International Council of Women (I.C.W.), formed in London in 1888, and national

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140. C.H. Spence, 'Political Responsibilities', Australasian Nurses Journal, 15 November 1906, p.360

141. Observer, 31 August 1895

142. Observer, 22 June 1895

143. Observer, 31 August 1895

144. Manuscript minutes of the Women's Political Association, minutes for 19 July 1909
councils affiliated with the I.C.W., provided a means of cooperating in common specific enterprises for otherwise unconnected organisations.  

 Attempts were made to found a National Council of Women in South Australia in 1889, but no public meeting was called for that purpose until 1902, after councils had been established in New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania. The meeting advertised in 1902 formed a council in South Australia, with Catherine Spence as one of its vice-presidents, but it faded out of existence about five years later. The South Australian council was not formed officially until 1920. This was not for want of support from Miss Spence. Catherine suggested that South Australian women lacked the cohesion and enthusiasm of women in other states because they had not had to fight so hard for the vote, and told them that their council would give them impetus and organisation. In 1905 she argued first for federation of Australian state councils, 'for the purpose of interaction and combined

145. Brownfoot, Women's Organisations and the Woman Movement in Victoria, p.54

146. Register, 12 September 1902

147. information from Miss Ruth Gibson, National Council of Women, Adelaide

148. ibid.

149. Spence, lecture on National Council of Women, pp.8-9
action', then for smaller subscriptions which would admit poorer women to membership, and for inclusion of delegates from associations of teachers, university graduates, and nurses. Enlightenment and progress, she considered, required coherent action by women, united by their sex.

Catherine's enthusiasm for organisations of women, devoted to the interests of women, may seem to bely her own emancipation. But it was a thoroughly practical policy. As she observed in 1896, women were indifferent to most public matters because they 'had been kept out of politics'. As she recognised when she complained of their political dependence, the vote had done little to alter relations between the sexes. Women called upon to play a social role for which they could find no tradition, and had no education were 'tormented with doubts and difficulties of a domestic, social and ethical character'. For most women, lacking the flamboyance of the Pankhursts, the resolution of Millicent Fawcett, the charm of Rose Scott, and the beauty and ardour of Vida Goldstein, achievement of the independence that would make them useful members of society

150. C.H. Spence, lecture entitled National Council of Women, 30 May 1905, (MSS.202/5), Mitchell Library

151. 

152. 
was difficult. Many thought it undesirable. Catherine urged the formation of connected organisations to ease the difficulty. But she never doubted that it was desirable that women learn to participate in public life, and she argued stridently against their apathy to the end of her life.

Catherine did not call herself a feminist. The term was new in Britain in 1895 and seems not to have appeared in Australia until later. Even if she had been acquainted with the word, she might have hesitated to accept the label. 'Feminism' is defined by MacKenzie as 'the demand for legal, social and economic equality of the sexes'. Catherine's whole life represented a struggle against inequality, but it was a struggle, not a demand. She did not, for instance, demand that women be permitted to address the South Australian Institute. Instead, she simply addressed it, 'to make [it] easier henceforward for any woman who felt

153. e.g. C.H. Spence, Address to the Old Scholars' Associations of Ladies' Schools on the 13 April, Banqueting Room, Town Hall, Adelaide, n.d.; the copy in the National Library has '1894' written on it in pencil, but this is impossible : internal evidence suggests 1904

154. Shorter Oxford English Dictionary

155. MacKenzie, Women in Australia, p.2
she had something to say to stand up and say it'.\textsuperscript{156} Moreover, Catherine's struggle was for greater self-determination for women, for their participation in affairs which conditioned their lives, but not for absolute sexual equality. She came close to recognising the parallels between the oppression of economic determination and that of determination by sexual prejudice.\textsuperscript{157} She had portrayed South Australia in its early days as approaching 'that Utopia' where 'There was very little difference in the actual circumstances of different classes', and where all men and all women worked together to supply their needs. 'Perhaps never in any society' she wrote, 'did circumstances realize the ideas of the community of labour and the equality of the sexes so fully as in South Australia in its early days'.\textsuperscript{158} In Handfasted she portrayed an Arcadian society in which all men and all women subsist comfortably on the fruits of

\textsuperscript{156.} Spence, \textit{An Autobiography}, p.45

\textsuperscript{157.} these parallels were recognised explicitly by Tom Price, first Labour premier of South Australia, when he said 'He had carefully read up the agitation which had preceded the attainment of manhood suffrage, and he found that the identical arguments used now against extending the franchise to women were used against men being granted what was essentially their birthright', S.A., P.D., 15 November 1894, c.2373

\textsuperscript{158.} Spence, \textit{Some Social Aspects of South Australian Life}, p.2
whatever occupation they freely chose to pursue. They establish relationships with each other according only to inclination, acknowledge superiority only to talent, and that in a member of either sex.\textsuperscript{159} Both the article and the novel suggest that Catherine sensed a connection between economic and sexual discrimination in a capitalist society. But she did not explore the connection, and even if she had recognised it explicitly she might still not have struggled for absolute sexual equality: she did not favour absolute economic equality. When she told the \textit{Advertiser} in 1893 that 'Woman ... is not so much the equal as the complement of man',\textsuperscript{160} she echoed Lydia Becker's assertion in 1879 that 'woman is the co-ordinate not the sub-ordinate half of humanity'.\textsuperscript{161} But the difference between the two statements emphasises Catherine's continuing conviction of the superiority of men. In disagreeing with Charlotte Perkins Gilman's attack on the notion that 'human activities are sex activities', so that women competing with men for work were betraying their sex, Catherine affirmed her belief in the fundamental difference between the social and occupational roles of

\textsuperscript{159} Spence, Handfasted, \textit{passim}

\textsuperscript{160} \textit{Advertiser}, 17 March 1893

\textsuperscript{161} quoted in Rover, \textit{Women's Suffrage and Party Politics in Britain}, p.36
women. To indicate that the social, political and economic roles of either sex could be enriched, was not to obviate the fundamental differences between them.

Yet she knew that she was invading masculine territory when she became a journalist, and when she began campaigning for electoral reform, and she did not consider that she had betrayed her sex. Rather, she seems to have believed that she, like the individuals she admired for their contribution to civilisation's progress, had abilities and vision which enabled her to transcend social norms, to lead all humanity towards greater justice and freedom. By satisfying her independence and fulfilling her ambition, she had set an example to the women of Australia. In her autobiography she declared, with some false modesty, that she claimed no credit for the enfranchisement of women 'further than this - that by my writings and my spoken addresses I showed that one woman had a steady grasp on politics and on sociology'. At her eightieth birthday party she generalised her achievement, proclaiming:

162. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, 'Competing With Men', clipping headed 'The Woman's Column' from unidentified newspaper, with note in Catherine Spence's handwriting on it, among Catherine Spence's papers, (MSS.202/6), Mitchell Library

163. see above chapter 5, pp.202-3

164. Spence, An Autobiography, p.41
I am a new woman, and I know it. I mean an awakened woman ... awakened to a sense of capacity and responsibility, not merely to the family and the household, but to the State; to be wise, not for her own selfish interests, but that the world may be glad that she had been born.\textsuperscript{165}

She might have been charged with colossal arrogance, but that her claim was just.

"Even as a 'new woman' Catherine Spence was essentially a woman of her time. The democratic and industrial revolutions inspired and compelled mankind to define and strive to implement new relations between man and authority, man and work, man and man, the individual and himself. Acting on that inspiration and compulsion, the colonists of South Australia sought to found a new society, more free, more just, and more rewarding than the old. Within the new society men worked to modify and reform the relations it established. Among them Catherine Spence strove to make authority more just, mankind more virtuous, and individuals more free. Compelled by an independence formed from class pride, driven by an ambition drawn from oppressed religious belief and education, inspired by a vision of the potentialities of mankind created by a benevolent God, she responded, as other women in Britain and America responded to similar conditions and impulses, by committing her life

\textsuperscript{165.} Catherine Helen Spence 1825-1905, p.33
to reform. And in each reform she undertook, she sought to infuse into society an enlightened form of the 'woman's ethic' of 'duty and renunciation'\textsuperscript{166} - recognition of mutual dependence, responsibility and service. Her achievement was partial and incomplete. But she succeeded in moulding herself a new place in a society which offered her none. And by doing so, she refashioned the expectations and aspirations of women, not only in her home colony, but throughout Australia. Yet she is most properly remembered less as a 'Pioneer Woman' than simply as one of many individuals endeavouring to teach industrialism and democracy to serve the greater welfare of humanity.

\textsuperscript{166} Young, 'Portrait of an Age', p.415
APPENDIX A

NAMES AND OCCUPATIONS OF FINANCIAL MEMBERS OF THE UNITARIAN CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

1854

Foundation members of the Unitarian Congregation, Manuscript Minutes of the Adelaide Unitarian Congregation, minute for 11 July 1854. I could find no directory giving occupations for 1854.

John Baker  John Craig  T. Mahony
William Blyth  William Everard  Edward Mardon
A.S. Clark  Arthur Hardy  E.M. Martin
J.H. Clark  William Kay  G.B. Martin

1865

Names of seatholders and subscribers listed in the Annual Report of the Committee of the Unitarian Christian Church for 1865.


Relationships given by Mrs. A.B. Caw, Leabrook, Mrs. R.N. Beckwith, Leabrook, Mrs. Rosa Moore, Port Willunga, and Mrs. A.A. Abbie, Unley Park, all of South Australia.
Addresses have been omitted to avoid unnecessary clutter.

Allen, J. chemist; father of Lavinia who married A.M. son of A. Simpson

Ayers, Hon. Henry emigrated as carpenter; J.P.; Member of Legislative Council; Chief Secretary; one of 7 on Board of Governors of Botanic Garden; chairman of trustees of Savings Bank of South Australia; secretary of South Australian Mining Association; chairman of 5 directors of South Australian Gas Company.

Bailey, Mrs. innkeeper

Bailey, Edward not listed*

Baker, A.J. superintendent Fire Brigade; councillor on the Municipal Corporation of the City of Adelaide; married Annie Vernon Herford (Mrs. Herford listed 1890)

Baker, Hon. John J.P.; Member of Legislative Council; Captain in South Australian Volunteer Military Force; one of 3 trustees of the Adelaide Club; president of the South Australian Agricultural and Horticultural Society; one of 5 stewards of the South Australian Jockey Club; president of the Acclimatization Society of South Australia

Bee, T.W. Relieving Officer of the Destitute Asylum (see above, chapter 6)

Bonney, C. J.P.; Member of Legislative Council; manager of the Great Northern Mining Company

Bryan, J.C. not listed*

Burne, Richard not listed*

Cave, J.D. J.P.

Chapman, William postman
Clark, Mrs. F. widow of F. Clark, of Francis Clark and Sons, merchants; mother of Caroline Emily (listed 1890), Algernon Sidney (see below), John Howard (see below), Ellen Rosa (married Henry Maydwell, son of E.M. Martin - see below), Matthew Symonds (married Euphemia, daughter of E.M. Martin - see below), Susan Mary (married Joseph Crompton - see below).

Clark, A.S. merchant; councillor on the Municipal Corporation of Adelaide; son of Mrs. F. Clark.

Clark, J.H. locomotive superintendent; Captain and Adjutant of the Rifles in the South Australian Volunteer Military Force; one of 2 auditors for the Savings Bank of South Australia; one of 11 on committee of management of Chamber of Commerce; hon. secretary of Board of Public Competitive Examinations; treasurer of Adelaide Philosophical Society; son of Mrs. F. Clark; married first Lucy, daughter of E.M. Martin (see below), then Agnes, daughter of Mrs. John Macnee (see below).

Clark, C. M.D. surgeon

Clisby, R. music seller

Corpe, J.A. not listed*

Crompton, J. wine and spirit merchant; married Susan, daughter of Mrs. F. Clark (see above)

Davies, Dr. Charles J.P.; Member of Legislative Council; member of Board of Governors of Botanic Garden

Dehane, G. stationer

Dixon, J.C. general inspector and manager of South Australian Bank

Donaldson, P. carpenter

Duggan, Mrs. not listed*

Duryea, T. photographic artist

Everard, C.G. J.P.; Member of Legislative Council; father of William
Everard, W. Member of House of Assembly; son of C.G. Everard
Eymer, C.P. hairdresser
Franklyn, G. not listed*
Gray, W.F. ironworker
Greayer, P.C. not listed*
Galway, W. not listed*
Hardy, A. J.P.; solicitor and Notary Public; Member of House of Assembly; secretary of Glen Osmond Silver Lead etc. Mining Company; hon. secretary of Adelaide Club; R.W. Provincial Grand Master of the Masonic Lodge with the English Constitution
Hallett, John manager of Adelaide Land and Gold Company; manager of Worthington Mining Company
Hatchett, John J.P.; solicitor and Notary Public
Hemmingway, not listed*
Jas.
Hill, S. fancy repository
Huddleston, A. grocer
Hutton, R. chemist
Jaffrey, A. importer; trustee of Savings Bank of South Australia
Jefferey, W.H. not listed*
Jones, A. not listed*
Kay, R. secretary of South Australian Institute; father of Misses F., S., C., M., M.A., Kay (listed 1902)
Kay, W. valuator for Savings Bank of South Australia; father of Misses Rosa and Kate Kay (listed 1908)
Liston, H. not listed*
Livesay, H. not listed*
Macnee, Mrs.  widow of Dr. John Macnee; mother of Annie (married W. Herford, listed 1870), Agnes (married J.H. Clark - see above), Janet (married W. Cook, listed 1902)

Martin, E.M.  founder of Martin and Sach, ironmongers; father of Lucy (married J.H. Clark - see above), Henry Maydwell (married Ellen Rosa, daughter of Mrs. F. Clark - see above), Euphemia (married M.S., son of Mrs. F. Clark - see above)

Mardon, E.  grocer

Miller, W.E.  not listed*

Molton, A.S.  carver

Moody, J.  cooper

Morgan, W.  of Morgan and Company, wholesale grocers

McHenry, Dr.  not listed

Noltenius, H.  wine merchant

Noltenius, B.A.  not listed*

Perryman, D.  gasfitter

Rippon, J.  deputy Registrar of Births and superintendent of Court House

Roberts, -  unidentifiable

Sach, F.  of Martin and Sach, ironmongers

Samson, C.  grocer's assistant

Sanders, W.  not listed*

Sandover, Wm.  no occupation given

Sholl, L.H.  not listed*

Simpson, A.  founder of Simpson and Son, tinsmiths; father of A.M. (married Lavinia, daughter of James Allen - see above), Catherine (married John Crawford Woods, his third wife)
Spence, J.B. manager of English, Scottish and Australian Chartered Bank; brother of Catherine (listed 1870)

Strappes, W. foreman

Titt, E.F. storekeeper

Varley, J. clerk Local Court

Vaughan, Rd. furniture broker

Williams, Chas. compositor

Whitfield, not listed*
J.A.

Whitfield, not listed*
Miss

Wood, Mrs. not listed*

* signifies not identifiable in Booth's Directory and unknown to the people consulted; the search for identities and occupations was not exhaustive.

This list was chosen for assessment of the socio-economic status of South Australian Unitarians (see Appendix C) because it is the earliest given in the annual reports for which I could find a directory giving names and occupations. The following list is given to indicate the nature of the congregation to which Catherine Spence preached.

1908

Names of seatholders and subscribers listed in the Annual Report of the Committee of the Unitarian Christian Church for 1908. Occupations and offices given by Sands and McDougall's
Directory of South Australia, Adelaide, 1908.

Relationships given by Mrs. A.B. Caw, Leabrook, Mrs. R.N. Beckwith, Leabrook, Mrs. Rosa Moore, Port Willunga, and Mrs. A.A. Abbie, Unley Park, all of South Australia.

Allen, Miss Lavinia daughter of James, married A.M., son of A. Simpson (see 1865 list)

Angel, Alfred printer

Angel, Walter clerk at Savings Bank of South Australia

Angel, Sidney manager of Commercial Bank

Angel, Charles accountant

Blyth, David clerk

Bone, Mrs. not listed*

Bone, S. 'hrnsmkr'

Buring, R. traveller

Buring, H. tobacconist

Burden, F.R. engineer; married Emily, daughter of H.M. Martin (see 1865 list)

Chapman, Geo. son of William (see 1865 list)

Clark, Mrs. J.H. (see 1865 list)

Clark, Miss daughter of J.H. Clark (see 1865 list)

Clark, Miss C. daughter of Mrs. F. Clark (see 1865 list)

Clark, F.H. accountant; secretary of British Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited; son of J.H. Clark (see 1865 list)
Clark, M.S. licensed land broker, and land, house, loan and estate agent; one of 11 members of Flora and Fauna Protection Committee of Royal Society of South Australia, one of 17 members of committee of South Australian Branch of Society for Protection of Birds; son of Mrs. F. Clark; married Euphemia, daughter of E.M. Martin (see 1865 list)

Clark, Mrs. M.S. wife of Matthew Symonds; daughter of E.M. Martin (see 1865 list)

Clark, E.V. B.Sc.; lecturer in electrical engineering, assistant lecturer in mechanical engineering, at School of Mines and Industries; son of M.S. Clark (see above)

Cook, Mrs. W. daughter of Mrs. Macnee (see 1865 list)

Cook, Miss daughter of Mrs. W. Cook (see above)

Corpe, J.R. one of 13 members of committee of management of St. Margaret's Convalescent Hospital

Crompton, H.W. merchant; secretary of Stonyfell Olive Company Limited; son of Joseph Crompton (see 1865 list)

Crompton, Mrs. J. widow of J. Crompton of Crompton and Sons, wine and spirit merchants; daughter of E.M. Martin (see 1865 list); mother of H.W. Crompton (see above)

Crompton, Owen of Crompton and Sons, wine and spirit merchants; son of Joseph Crompton (see 1865 list); married Sarah, daughter of A.M. Simpson (see below)

Crompton, Alfred manager of Elder, Smith and Company Limited; son of Joseph Crompton (see 1865 list)

Crompton, T.E. son of Joseph Crompton (see 1865 list)

Crompton, Mrs. O. Sarah, daughter of A.M. Simpson (see below); granddaughter of A. Simpson (see 1865 list)

Crompton, R. manager Bunyip Soap Company; son of Joseph Crompton (see 1865 list)

Dittmar, Mrs. pastryshop
Franklin, C.H. printer
Furness, H.S. music teacher
Furness, Mrs. wife of H.S. Furness (see above)
Glyde, E.J. underwriter
Glyde, Mrs. daughter of William Kay (see 1865 list)
E.J.
Greayer, Miss not listed*
Hague, Miss not listed*
Hübbe, Mrs. of Mrs. E.A. Hübbe and Miss H. Cook, ladies' school; widow of Capt. S.G. Hübbe (listed 1890); daughter of Mrs. W. Cook (see above)
Hutton, Robert no occupation given
Jacob, Mrs. Hy. not listed*
Kay, Herbert vigneron
Kay, Miss F. daughter of Robert Kay (see 1865 list)
Kay, Miss S. " " " " " " "
Kay, Miss C. " " " " " " "
Kay, Miss M.A. " " " " " " "
Kay, Miss Rose one of 8 members of Ladies' Committee of South Australian Institute for the Blind and Deaf and Dumb; daughter of William Kay (see 1865 list)
Kay, Miss Kate daughter of William Kay (see 1865 list)
Kay, Mrs. R.H. accountant
Kay, Mrs. R.H.
Latty, J. J.P.; bootmaker
Martin, Miss  ladies' school; teacher of the Blind at South Australian Institute for the Blind and Deaf and Dumb; daughter of E.M. Martin (see 1865 list)

Martin, H.M.  vigneron; one of 15 members of Advisory Board of Agriculture under Department of Agriculture and Intelligence; son of E.M. Martin, married Ellen Rosa, daughter of Mrs. F. Clark (see 1865 list)

Meyer, G.H.C.  of A. Bartels and G.H.C. Meyer, licensed land brokers

Monk, Mrs.  J.E.  no occupation given

Morphett, J.C. J.P.; clerk of the House of Assembly

Nienaber, O.H. piano tuner

Paterson, Mrs  cannot be identified

Rymill, F.  wife of F. Rymill of H. and F. Rymill, land agents; one of 60 life members of Adelaide Children's Hospital

Sandover, W.  no occupation given

Schedlich, M.C.  bookbinder

Shepherd, Mrs. R.  boarding house

Simpson, A.A.  J.P.; son of A. Simpson (see 1865 list)

Simpson, A.M.  J.P.; son of A. Simpson and Son, iron and tinplate workers, galvanizers, japanners and enamellers, coppersmiths, galvanised iron workers, iron-founders, locksmiths, brassworkers, wireworkers, makers of enamelled iron signs, fire resisting safes, patent bedsteads and spring mattresses, field gates, sheep and cattle troughing, cooking ranges, ovens, tanks, guttering, etc., etc., the only vitreous enamellers in Australia; one of 8 members of Board of governors of Botanic Garden; one of 7 members of State Board of Conciliation under Ministry of Industry; son of A. Simpson; married Lavinia, daughter of James Allen (see 1865 list)
Simpson, F. of A. Simpson and Son (see A.M. Simpson)

Simpson, Miss not listed*

Smith, F.C. J.P.; agent

Spence, Miss not listed*

Tellaneous, T.A. merchant

Valentine, J.P.
   C.J.

Vaughan, A. photolithographer in Surveyor-General's Office

Vaughan, Mrs. A.

Vaughan, Miss postmistress; sister of A. Vaughan (see above)

Wallis, Hon. J.P.; Member of Legislative Council; secretary of United Trades and Labour Council
   F.S.

Whitfield, daughter of E.M. Martin
   Mrs

Whitham, one of 61 members of general committee of Minda Home for Weakminded Children; wife of C.L. Whitham, one of 8 inspectors in Education Department
   Mrs. C.L.

Wight, A.J. J.P.

Wilder, Mrs. not listed*

Woods, Mrs. widow of Rev. J.C. Woods; daughter of A. Simpson
   J.C.
   (see 1865 list)

Woolnough, daughter of Mrs. C.L. Whitham (see above)
   Mrs.
APPENDIX B

SIZE OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE UNITARIAN CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

These figures are not a direct comparison because the Annual Reports of the Unitarian Christian Church for years, at suitable intervals, in which a census was taken, have been lost.

1855

Population figures from returns of the Census of 31 March 1855, S.A., P.P., 1855-6, No.19.

Unitarians were not registered in this census, but as later returns show Unitarians living chiefly in the municipal corporations of Adelaide, Kensington and Norwood, and later Unley, and in the district councils of Burnside, Mitcham, and Onkaparinga, it seems reasonable to suppose that they were concentrated in these areas in 1855. The district council of Burnside was not established in 1855, so the districts used for comparison for this year are as follows:
In the same year there were 40 subscribers to the Unitarian Christian Church, and a congregation of 200 at the first public Unitarian service, Manuscript Minutes of the Adelaide Unitarian Congregation, 3 vols., June 1854 to October 1868, in the possession (1969) of Mrs. Rosa Moore, Port Willunga, South Australia, minutes for 14 August 1854, 5 October 1856

1871

Population figures from returns of Census of April 1871, S.A., P.P., 1872, No.9
In the previous year, 1870, there were 102 seatholders and subscribers listed in the Annual Report of the Committee of the Unitarian Christian Church.

1901

Population figures from returns of Census of 1901, S.A., P.P., 1902, No.74

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Kensington &amp; Adelaide</th>
<th>Burnside</th>
<th>Onkaparinga</th>
<th>Unley</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>39,240</td>
<td>12,568</td>
<td>7,773</td>
<td>3,281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of England</td>
<td>15,469</td>
<td>4,313</td>
<td>2,595</td>
<td>824</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman Catholic</td>
<td>8,618</td>
<td>1,586</td>
<td>946</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>5,072</td>
<td>2,282</td>
<td>1,606</td>
<td>902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lutheran</td>
<td>866</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>1,730</td>
<td>606</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congregationalist</td>
<td>1,366</td>
<td>746</td>
<td>536</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unitarian</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the previous year, 1900, there were 99 seatholders and subscribers listed in the Annual Report of the Committee of the Unitarian Christian Church.

Annual Reports of the Committee of the Unitarian Christian Church in the possession (1969) of Mr. Moxom Simpson, Adelaide, South Australia.
Any assessment of the socio-economic status of people in an Australian colony must necessarily be crude and artificial. But it is not a meaningless exercise if the criteria used in making it are those which predominated in the colonists' own awareness of social and economic differentiation among themselves. The difficulties involved in establishing such criteria are discussed in Renate Howe's thesis, The Wesleyan Church in Victoria 1855-1901: Its Ministry and Membership (M.A., University of Melbourne, 1965). Mrs. Howe takes the occupations of church members as the basis of their socio-economic status, and divides those occupations into groups corresponding to upper middle, middle, and lower classes. She takes the range of occupations followed in the colony from the census returns, and groups professional men, merchants, auctioneers, commission and insurance agents, and stock and share brokers as upper middle class, small business owners and men who were self-employed as middle class, and all employees from skilled labourers to domestic servants as lower class. I have followed this precedent.

The earliest list of financial members of the Unitarian Christian Church for which I could find occupations
was that in the committee's annual report for 1865 (see Appendix A). The census nearest to 1865 was taken in 1866, but the returns group and subdivide the occupations of the colonists in a way which defies any attempt to derive from them a general scale of status for occupations. However, in the returns of the census taken on 31 March 1855, the occupations are given in an order which appears to correspond to a descending scale of social and economic status, so I have taken that list as indicative of the range of occupations followed in South Australia, and I have divided it into three groups corresponding to Mrs. Howe's three classes. But in order to make the groups correspond more closely to Mrs. Howe's I have moved 'Agricultural Labourers' from the position immediately below 'Farmers' in the census returns, to a position immediately above 'Shepherds and others in charge of sheep', and 'Clerks' from immediately above 'Brewers' to immediately above 'Brickmakers'. In the latter case the move might seem dubious: the educational qualifications of a clerk, for instance, were probably greater than those of brewers, millers and publicans. But the classification of occupations is consistent only if all wage (or salary) earners are grouped as lower class. Moreover, many of the clerks among the Unitarians were employed by the government, and as Douglas Pike observes: 'As any form of dependence on the state was reckoned unmanly the civil service was particularly
disliked.... Civil servants were regarded as inefficient drones intent on their own uninspired economic security' (Paradise of Dissent, p.510). The scale of socio-economic status among South Australians, then, appears like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UPPER MIDDLE CLASS</th>
<th>LOWER CLASS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farmers</td>
<td>Clerks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchants</td>
<td>Brickmakers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stockholders</td>
<td>Bricklayers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Men</td>
<td>Smiths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawyers</td>
<td>Carpenters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministers of Religion</td>
<td>Masons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surveyors</td>
<td>Plasterers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineers</td>
<td>Shoemakers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other professional persons</td>
<td>Cabinetmakers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Saddlers and Harness Makers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIDDLE CLASS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brewers</td>
<td>Tailors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millers</td>
<td>Tanners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publicans and Licensed Victuallers</td>
<td>Miners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopkeepers and other Retail Dealers</td>
<td>Sawyers and Splitters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanics and Artificers, viz. Master Builders</td>
<td>Agricultural labourers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shepherds and others in charge of sheep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stockmen and others in charge of cattle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LOWER CLASS (contd.)

Carriers and their assistants

Gardeners

Mariners and Fishermen

Domestic Servants

All other persons not included in the above.

The occupations of the financial members of the Unitarian Christian Church for 1865 were then set against this scale; the general conclusions are given in chapter 3 above.
The first section of this bibliography is not comprehensive. A really comprehensive bibliography of the works of Catherine Spence would probably be impossible since, as her autobiography suggests and the cuttings among her papers show, many of her contributions to the press were printed anonymously. The Bibliography of Catherine Helen Spence printed by the Libraries Board of South Australia in 1967 contains several works which are not used directly in this thesis, and omits several of Catherine Spence's papers which are used. The works listed here are only those cited, or quoted from, in the thesis. Catherine Spence's letters to editors of newspapers have not been itemized.

The organisation of papers without dates must appear haphazard. Those listed below are in alphabetical order derived from the first major initial in the title. Articles with complete dates are given in chronological order.

All Catherine Spence's papers in the Mitchell Library and the South Australian Archives are also on microfilm in the National Library.
I. Works of Catherine Spence.

A. Manuscripts.

1. Novel.

Hand Fasted -- A Romance by Hugh Victor Keith (pseud.), typescript (MS.135), National Library, original MS. is held by the South Australian Archives.

2. Lectures.

lecture entitled Finance in South Australia, fragment, n.d., (MSS.202/4), Mitchell Library

lecture entitled Is Free Trade the Best Policy for South Australia?, n.d., (MSS. 202/4), Mitchell Library.


lecture entitled Miss Anthony Voted Once, n.d., (MSS. 202/5), Mitchell Library.

lecture entitled National Council of Women, 30 May 1905, (MSS. 202/5), Mitchell Library.


paper describing a Visit to England in 1865-6, n.d. [1866], MS. (A434), South Australian Archives.

address to Women's League, 7 February, no year, (MSS. 202/5), Mitchell Library.

3. Letters.

to Smith, Elder and Company, 1 August 1853, anonymous, in Catherine Spence's handwriting, MS. (A 111), Mitchell Library.

to Anthony Forster [then editor of the Register] submitting letter on religious education in schools for publication in the Register, dated 1856, (MSS. 202/5), Mitchell Library.

to C.H. Pearson, 2 November 1877, MS. (7471), La Trobe Library.

holograph letter to Editor of the Cornhill Magazine, 4 March 1878, possibly a copy, MS. (A 111), Mitchell Library.

to John Spence, from Rockville Centre, Long Island, New York, 15 September 1893, (MSS. 202/5), Mitchell Library.


to Spence family, from Brooklyn, Boston, 25 January 1894, (MSS. 202/5), Mitchell Library.

to John Spence, from Washington Square, 13 February 1894, (MSS. 202/5), Mitchell Library.

to Mrs. E.W. Nicholls, n.d., [? 1902]. MS. (A 1251), South Australian Archives.

to Alice Henry, 31 [sic] April 1905, MS. (1050), South Australian Archives.

to Alice Henry, 23 November 1906, MS. (1050), South Australian Archives.

to Mr. Sowden [then editor of the Register] 14 March [1910], the year and a note that Catherine Spence died at about 3 o'clock [but on 3 April] have been added in another hand, MS., no accession number, South Australian Archives.
4. Sermons.

Unless indicated otherwise, all the sermons listed are at 1074, South Australian Archives.

sermon on the Basis of Belief, 23 October 1898.

sermon entitled Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good, 18 February 1900.

sermon on Buddhism at its Best and at its Worst, 11 March, no year.

sermon on the Christian Church, 7 December 1897.

sermon on Egoism and Altruism, 21 November 1897.

sermon entitled Evil was called Youth until he grew old and then he was called Habit, n.d.

sermon on Human Responsibility, n.d.

sermon on the Jew in legend and in History, 26 January 1908.

sermon on Milton's Paradise Lost, n.d.

sermon on the nature and character of God, 8 September 1907.

sermon on text 'Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people', n.d.

sermon on the Prophet of the poor, William Booth, 10 November 1907.

sermon on The Three Reverences, 24 November, no year.

sermon on Tolstoy as prophet, 1 March 1908.

sermon entitled Why Persecution is an Evil, n.d.


sermon on text: James I, 27, 21 October 1900.

sermon on text: Romans XII, 21, 18 February 1900.

sermon without title headed Melbourne -- Sunday evening 8th May, no year, (MSS. 202/3), Mitchell Library.
5. Notes.

paper entitled Things I have seen and people I have met, concerned with trip to the United States of America 1893-4, n.d. MS. (A 433), South Australian Archives.

poem headed July 1866, in Catherine Spence's handwriting, MS., no accession number, South Australian Archives.

notes on The Decline in the Birthrate, n.d., (MSS. 202/5), Mitchell Library.

family tree of the descendants of David Spence and Helen Brodie, in Catherine Spence's handwriting, n.d., MS., no accession number, South Australian Archives.

Some recollections of the life of Helen Brodie Spence -- widow of David Spence, n.d., MS. (444), South Australian Archives.

B. Newspaper contributions.

(a) located among Catherine Spence's papers.


'The Democratic Ideal' MS. in (MSS. 202/3), annotated clippings, with no indication of paper, (MSS. 202/6), Mitchell Library.


'The Dignity of Labour and Thrift/[By a Colonist of 1839]', clipping, (MSS. 202/6), Mitchell Library.


'Our Christmas Mince-Pie Acting Charade', clipping, (MSS. 202/6), Mitchell Library.
"The Unknown Public"/[By a Colonist of 1839]", clipping, (MSS. 202/6), Mitchell Library.

(b) located in the press.

'Gathered In', Observer, 3 September 1881 - 18 March 1882.

'Scientific meliorism and the evolution of happiness by Jane Hume Clapperton/[Reviewed by a Colonist of 1830]", Register, 28 June 1887.

'Machinery versus Manual Labour/[By a Colonist of 1839]", Register, 14 December 1887.

'Four Eminent Women/[Reviewed by a Colonist of 1839]", Register, 27 February 1889.

'Why Do Women Wilt?/[By a Colonist of 1839]", Register, 11 December 1889.

'Review of The Silent Sea' by 'Antarlo' [Catherine Martin], Voice, 9 December 1892, signed C.H.S..

'Children and the State in South Australia', Woman's Sphere, March 1901.

'Australia's Opportunity', Woman's Sphere, March 1901

'The Australian in Literature', Register, 22 November 1902, anonymous, clipping marked C.H.S. in (MSS. 202/6), Mitchell Library.

C. Periodical articles.


'Sir Richard Hanson', Melbourne Review, I, 3.

'Australian Federation and Imperial Union', Fraser's Magazine, October 1877, signed S.
'Graduated Succession Duties', Melbourne Review, II, 8.


'A Federal Outlook on Charity', Charity Review, I, 1.

'Mother State and her little ones/Children's Courts of Justice and Infant Life Protection', Charity Review, V, 2.


'Political Responsibilities', Australasian Nurses Journal, 15 November 1906.

D. Pamphlets and broadsheets.

A Plea for Pure Democracy Mr. Hare's reform bill applied to South Australia, by C.H.S., Adelaide 1861.


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What is Effective Voting and How is it to be Secured?, Adelaide, 1896.


Proportional Representation Success in Belgium, reprinted from the Advertiser, 19 September 1900.


Effective Voting A National Right, reprinted from the Century, n.d., the copy in the National Library has on it in Catherine Spence's handwriting 'My last manifesto'.

E. Published addresses.

Address to the Old Scholars' Associations of Ladies' Schools on the 13th April, in the Banqueting Room, Town Hall, Adelaide, n.d., the copy in the National Library has 1894 written on it in pencil, but this is impossible since Catherine Spence was in Britain in April 1894, internal evidence suggests 1904.

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'National or Compulsory Providence', Proceedings of the Second Australasian Conference on Charity, Melbourne, 1892.


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F. Books.

Clara Morison a tale of South Australia during the gold fever, 2 vols., London 1854.


Mr. Hogarth's Will, 3 vols., London, 1865, first serialised as 'Uphill Work' in the Weekly Mail 1864.


The Laws We Live Under, Adelaide, 1880.

An Agnostic's Progress from the Known to the Unknown, London, 1884.

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