THE FEMALE ROLE IN THE DECLINE IN FERTILITY
IN AUSTRALIA, 1861-1901

Thesis submitted for the degree of
Master of Arts
of The Australian National University

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Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.

(P.H. Quiggin)
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While gratefully acknowledging all the assistance I have received, I accept responsibility for any error of fact or interpretation which remains.
ABSTRACT

During the second half of the nineteenth century fertility in Australia declined from a high level which was never regained. A similar decline was evident in many Western countries during the same period. This study of the role of Australian women in initiating the decline examines the effects of demographic and socioeconomic changes as possible explanations for the lowered birthrate.

A review of some of the extensive literature is used to provide guidance in the choice of factors which, from overseas experience, might be expected to explain some of Australia's fertility decline. Evidence on the timing of the commencement of fertility control is reviewed, leading to a suggestion that, in Victoria in particular, the decline in marital fertility may have commenced earlier than previously was believed.

Based on the content of contemporary newspapers and magazines, the role of women as mothers is shown to have changed, with a greater emphasis on the responsibility of women for the spiritual and physical care of their families.

Statistical evidence shows the extent to which marriage became less attainable although, at the time, the problem was seen as socioeconomic, rather than demographic.

As education became compulsory, the assistance formerly provided by young girls was no longer available to their mothers. At the same time, education provided options for women other than dependence on parents or husbands.

From an examination of the role of feminism and its relationship to birth control and religion, it is concluded that organised feminism was not an important factor in initiating fertility decline. However, a rise in 'domestic feminism', or more equality within marriage, may have explained partially why the fertility of Australian women declined in the second half of the nineteenth century, although economic factors were also of considerable importance.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

THE BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Introduction

Many theories have been advanced to account for the decline in fertility which commenced in the nineteenth century in Western Europe and in English-speaking overseas countries. Most explanations attribute fertility decline to a cluster of economic and social changes, often grouped as modernization, although single factor theories are not lacking. Among the more common reasons given are economic factors, the introduction of mass education, the decline in infant and early childhood mortality, changes in the status of women and in family relationships, the introduction of new forms of contraception and a decline in religion combined with a more scientific and less fatalistic attitude towards life.

However, few studies have taken women's role in the decline as their prime focus. The effects of feminism have been investigated (Banks and Banks, 1964; Rover, 1970; D. Smith, 1974; Weiner, 1980) but, apart from Branca (1975), who devoted a chapter to the more general question of women's involvement in reducing fertility, it does not seem to have received much attention. Given that the great reduction in family size during the past century has affected the lives of women of all classes more than almost any other change that has occurred, it seems important that their involvement in initiating the change should be investigated.

Comparisons between Countries

One of the thorniest problems in attempting to isolate the factors leading to fertility decline is that the change took place in many countries at about the same time, but these countries differed in the timing of their economic and social events.

Australia gained votes for women early, and with little fuss; the suffragettes were still fighting their battles twenty years later in

---

1In France, the decline was evident in the late eighteenth century.
England and America. Different countries, and even the different Australian colonies, did not coincide in their periods of boom and depression. The European working class sprang from the peasantry (Scott and Tilly, 1975); England's peasantry had disappeared centuries earlier and her overseas settlements had no peasant tradition (Macfarlane, 1978).

In Europe, the fertility decline took place in countries which had centuries-old social structures that had only recently been disrupted by the industrial revolution; the United States had a history of about two hundred years' European settlement before the upheaval of the Civil War in the 1860s, while Australia had barely gained a stable social system before the fertility decline began. In spite of these differences, Australia's history of fertility decline has paralleled closely that of Northern Europe and America (Ruzicka and Caldwell, 1977, pp.5-6). Conclusions based on evidence which sheds light on the cause of the decline in Australia can, therefore, be generalized to other Western countries with some confidence.

This study investigates the hypothesis that, in the Australian colonies, women initiated the nineteenth century decline in fertility. A broad view is taken of the concept of women's influence: aspects of women's lives which may have resulted in reduced fertility are investigated, whether or not they were thought at the time to be linked to a decline in the birthrate.

Aboriginal Women

In 1861, at the beginning of the period under review, aborigines made up about 16 per cent of the Australian population. However, no attempt will be made to include aboriginal women in this study, as one of its aims is to examine the Australian fertility decline in the

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2Throughout the period covered by this study, Australia was composed of separate colonies, although a concept of being 'Australian' was well developed.

3Ruzicka and Caldwell (1977, Table 2.1) gave census totals excluding aborigines on 7-4-1861 for New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania and 31-12-1859 for Western Australia; these totalled 1,151,191. L.R. Smith (1980, Table 8.2.1) gave as 179,402 the estimated aboriginal population in 1861.
context of the decline in Europe and in English-speaking countries of overseas settlement. The aboriginal population in the late nineteenth century could not be considered to form part of the same tradition. Even had it been appropriate to include aboriginal women, suitable data do not exist.

**METHODOLOGY**

Choice of Sources

The relative validity of using various sources in the writing of women's history was discussed by Branca (1975) and Hammerton (1979).

Branca (1975, pp.9—19) emphasized the importance of what Hammerton called the 'inferential' approach, based on an examination of such documents as housekeeping and health manuals to discover how Victorian women lived. The problems of relying on such material were discussed by Mechling (1975) when warning historians to beware of assuming that advice manuals on child rearing could be accepted as evidence of actual child rearing practices of the time.

In the approach labelled by Hammerton 'experiential', the evidence is that of individual women, drawn from such sources as diaries and oral histories. Hammerton considered that there was a danger that, in the first case, 'a real woman...never appears' while, in the second, the significance of the facts might be lost. He, therefore, advocated a middle course, and used both approaches to arrive at a balanced, but not impersonal, account of the lives of the 'emigrant gentlewomen' of whom he wrote (1979, pp.14-15).

This study adopts an approach closer to the 'inferential' than the 'experiential', partly owing to the availability of sources. Personal reminiscences of Australian women of the late nineteenth century are not sufficiently numerous to provide a balanced picture of the life of the period; in particular, many describe rural conditions in a country which was, even then, predominantly urban.

Two main groups of sources have been used: statistical data, contained in such publications as censuses, government yearbooks and official reports; and contemporary newspapers, magazines, correspondence and journal articles.
Official Documents

Government publications were consulted to obtain the quantitative data needed to provide a factual background to the study.

At the beginning of the period, in the early 1860s, official statistics were sketchy and often unreliable but by the end of the century they had improved considerably in Victoria and New South Wales owing, to a great extent, to the influence of Government Statists such as Archer, Hayter and Coghlan. The Victorian Yearbooks and The Wealth and Progress of New South Wales provided valuable commentaries on vital statistics and population trends in the intercensal years; the decennial censuses themselves contained a detailed description of the colonies' people. The limitations of the official statistics will be considered when they are used in the various chapters.

Other, more subjective, official reports were used to gain information about the effect on schools of the introduction of compulsory education in Victoria and New South Wales. The reports of the Education Departments to Parliament incorporated reports from inspectors on the schools in their districts. In addition to a factual account of physical conditions and academic standards, many of the inspectors included interesting social comments about the pupils; these reflected both the children's situation and the attitudes which the inspectors brought to their task. The New South Wales Royal Commission into the Decline of the Birth-Rate provided an insight into contraceptive practices at the end of the nineteenth century and into prevailing beliefs about those practices.

Contemporary Writings

Newspapers and magazines which were published weekly, fortnightly or monthly, of which the National Library of Australia held issues covering at least five years between 1860 and 1900, were examined for references to topics which were believed to be relevant to an examination of women's role in fertility decline. The survey was limited to New South Wales and Victorian material, as these two colonies were of overwhelming importance numerically during the period under review and most periodicals originated in Melbourne or Sydney (Stuart, 1979, p.2). Some publications explicitly drew attention to their suitability for women readers and most devoted some space to women's interests.
The choice of sources was based both on the availability in Canberra of sources and on the breadth of study to be attempted. A consultation of the periodicals listed in Stuart (1979) indicated that few successful publications intended for working class readers appeared before the 1890s. The study, therefore, has an undeniable bias in that its evidence is based mainly on middle class publications. The validity of the conclusions thus depends on the assumption that the middle class did not lag behind the working class in deciding to reduce family size, a relatively safe supposition given that the studies which suggest a differential in the timing of fertility decline claim that it was initiated by the middle class (Banks, 1981, p. 39), even if the working class followed with only a slight lag (Caldwell and Ruzicka, 1977, p.11).

The balance between references to newspapers and magazines and to other contemporary material varies between chapters and sections of this study. Subjects which involved professionals, such as education and health (including fertility control) led to the production of official reports or articles written by professionals for their colleagues or for the lay public. Other matters such as marriage and women's rights were more exclusively the province of leader writers, columnists and correspondents to periodicals.

Appendix A describes the major newspapers and magazines surveyed and the methods used to record and select material from them.

Until reproductions of photographs in the press became technically feasible fairly late in the nineteenth century, illustrations generally were very detailed line drawings, some original and some based on photographs.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Although the specific issue of the female role in fertility decline has not received much attention, there is a vast literature on the relationship between socioeconomic factors and the nineteenth century reduction in family size, particularly as it was manifested in Europe and the United States. For instance, the Office of Population Research at Princeton University, as an outcome of its comprehensive study of fertility decline in individual European countries, has published a series of volumes detailing the course of the decline (see for instance: Livi-Bacci, 1971; Knodel, 1974; Lesthaeghe, 1977; Coale and Watkins, 1985, in press). The material reviewed below explores issues which, it was thought, could be relevant to the Australian experience. In most cases, however, studies relating specifically to Australia have been introduced in the later chapters where the effects of the various factors are examined individually.

Family Relationships

Modern research stresses the importance of communication between a husband and wife if a decision is to be made to use contraception (Höllerbach, 1980). The wife's ability to participate in such a discussion implies that she is regarded as a person of some standing, if not as an equal, by her husband.

One of the great changes - perhaps the most significant change - which took place at about the same time as the decline in fertility was a change in relationships within the family, particularly in the middle classes. Replacing a tradition in which marriages usually had been arranged primarily for economic reasons, there was a transition to marriages based on mutual affection and the establishment of close emotional bonds between wives and husbands.

The evolution of the English family from the 'open lineage' of the fifteenth century through to the 'closed domesticated nuclear family' was traced by Stone (1977), who believed that the change between 1640 and 1880 was not 'a change of structure, or of economics, or of social organization, but of sentiment' (p.658), a rise in 'affective
individualism'. He pointed out that the decline in mortality caused the Victorian family to be the first to be long-lasting but he wrote of the 'repression of wives and children and an intense emotional and religious concern for their moral welfare' (p.679) and of sexual repression (p.678). Ariès (1980) wrote of the change in a somewhat similar vein when he traced the development of sexual eroticism which, at first, was controlled only outside marriage; within marriage artificial restraints were resorted to only in unusual circumstances. However, Ariès differed from Stone in regarding changes in attitudes to control of the future as being a new form of family life in which 'the family...turned inward upon itself and organized itself in terms of the children and their future' (p.646). Ariès believed that the scope available for social mobility was an important determinant of attitudes towards family size. Farmers and craftsmen could, by investing in their children's care and training, expect to see them rise to a higher social status. Factory workers had no avenue for social mobility, so they continued to have large families. Burguière (1976, p.239) concurred in Ariès' belief that the value placed on children was important in causing a decline in fertility:

The apparently paradoxical idea that birth control could be encouraged through an increased concern for children is supported for eighteenth-century France by a great deal of literary and iconographic evidence.

Charles Tilly (1978b, p.335) took the opposite viewpoint to that of Stone when he claimed that the studies which he had edited did not favour 'the interpretation of fertility changes in Europe and America as resulting from changing enthusiasm for children and for family life' but rather supported 'theories emphasizing the rational pursuit of long-run individual, household, family or community objectives'.

The position taken by Caldwell (1982a) was compatible with those of both Stone and Tilly. He argued that fertility commences to decline when there is a reversal in the 'intergenerational net wealth flow' so that the younger, rather than the older, generation benefits. The change occurs when couples form close conjugal bonds and focus their attention on their children, rather than on other members of their family groups.

Wells (1975, pp.12-13) claimed that, in America, attitudes to
children had changed by the beginning of the nineteenth century, with a strong emphasis on preparing a child for success in this world rather than the next. The changes also touched American women who came to have greater choices about whether to marry or whom to marry. Reed (1978) supported Wells, also pointing out that the greater value placed on romantic love as the basis of 'companionate marriage' increased the problem of restricting families to a 'manageable number of children' (p.22).

Many writers on marital relationships tended to the view that sexuality within marriage had to be controlled, some even advocating the restriction of coitus to occasions when a pregnancy was desired. However Reed made the point that although nineteenth century literature often equated birth control with a lack of self-control, contraceptive practice in fact required self-discipline [if coitus interruptus or abstinence were to be employed]. 'The need for consultation between married mates was a central theme of marital advice literature' (p.27).

The argument that the emergence of the new middle class family depended on the availability of divorce and contraception was published by Harte in 1870, followed by Cookson who, in 1872, claimed that family limitation was a duty of married persons (McLaren, 1978, p.100).

Shorter (1971, 1973 and 1975), in papers and a major book, used the evidence of the rise in illegitimacy rates in Europe from the late eighteenth century to argue that, as women joined the workforce, they became independent of their families, one result being greater freedom in their sexual relationships. Throughout the 1970s, debate raged among family historians with many, including Flandrin (1979), disagreeing with Shorter's interpretation of the statistics and documentary evidence. Shorter's opinion was also contested by Tilly, Scott and Cohen (1976), who argued that the increased workforce participation by women was simply an extension of the traditional home-based women's role and that the increased illegitimacy arose when women behaved in a traditional manner in circumstances where their lovers were able to evade the expected response of marriage. However Phillips (1979) used Rouen divorce records for the years 1792 to 1802 to demonstrate that the ability to find employment allowed women to escape from unhappy marriages in which their husbands had exercised
with impunity their traditional rights to beat them or to commit adultery. Louise Tilly (1978) claimed that

The Making of the Modern Family provides us with useful quantitative data, many fascinating impressionistic reports... But in the end, we are left with a biased, incomplete and optimistic account of how social change has transformed people's lives (p.433).

Fairchilds (1980) provided a useful summary of the opposing viewpoints in the controversy.

Grimshaw (1979, pp.415-416) emphasized the crucial role of the family unit in the early days of settlement in Australia. Even as the population became increasingly urban in nature, women performed valuable services in a country where the shortage of domestic servants was never overcome.

Economic Theories of Fertility Decline

An English study used contemporary household manuals and general statistics to determine the effect of a rising standard of living on fertility.

According to Banks, in Prosperity and Parenthood, the middle class in England aspired to a more expensive life style from the 1850s onwards. Already the men delayed marriage until they were sufficiently advanced in their careers to afford numerous children, but when they believed that they could no longer anticipate maintaining standards simply by delaying marriage, they turned to birth control. This occurred when the optimistic atmosphere of the 1850s and 1860s was replaced by a less hopeful climate of opinion and many families decided that they must invest heavily in their children's education to give them a good start in life (Banks, 1954, pp.197-201). Branca did not agree that Victorian men made birth control decisions based primarily on economic concerns (1975, p.116). She claimed that some sections of the middle class, particularly those in the newly-expanding professions

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1In response to suggestions that conditions were not really bad, Banks (1981, p.100) stated that the real incomes of those earning more than 150 pounds reached its peak in the decade 1871-1881 and then tailed off.
of medicine, engineering and law, commenced reducing their fertility as early as the 1850s, in a very prosperous period (pp. 119-121). If one accepts her interpretation of the statistics, one must presumably accept her opinion that:

once we realize that we cannot explain the chronology of birth control efforts or the differentiation of such efforts within the middle class by economic crisis, the whole question of the role of women in the birth control process is reopened (p. 121).

Although Banks claimed that the beginnings of a decline in fertility coincided with the belief that the economy was faltering, he did not assert that the two events were causally linked, although he stated that 'The middle class concept of the standard of living... was indeed a factor in the late nineteenth-century developments in family size' (1954, p. 204).

Ariès (1972b, p. 111) pointed to notions of 'calculation', 'policy' and 'standard of living' as causes of the desire to limit families in France. He emphasized that it was women, not men, who wished to limit pregnancies (p. 108). In America, the meaning of 'calculate' had been expanded to include 'believe' or 'think' (Reed, 1978, p. 27).

Prosperity and Parenthood concluded with the recommendation that 'Some of the alternative variables in the web of causal factors must now be followed through, such as the breakdown of the family as an economic unit, the growth of urban living, the decline in religious belief, or the emancipation of women.' (Banks, 1954, p. 207).

Decline in Religion

In Victorian Values, Banks (1981) explored the possibility that a decline in religious belief contributed to an acceptance of methods of fertility control. He showed that, among the middle classes who were among the pioneers of family limitation, there was no flight from church attendance and little evidence that secularism had a wide following. Their behaviour 'constituted a rather more complicated process of the re-interpretation of Christian teaching on the responsibilities of parents than the simple failure on their part to attend church and be exposed to sermons on their obligations' (Banks, 1981, p. 10). One illustration of the change could be seen in Victorian
attitudes to sexual matters. Venereal diseases and masturbation were redefined so that they became disorders requiring medical treatment, rather than moral problems for which the church had a responsibility. Victorians who sought medical solutions to sexual problems could rationalize that their behaviour did not conflict with membership of the Christian church. Neither the church nor the medical profession approved the use of methods other than 'restraint' to limit fertility but a change in attitudes to children, brought about by the evolution of a 'meritocracy', meant that parents could not afford to have so many sons if they were to undertake the expensive educational process in which examinations had become a dominant feature.

A search of religious records undertaken by McLaren (1978, p.14) revealed that the churches in England made only very general references to fertility and 'avoided any action which could arouse the ingrained hostility of the masses against clerical meddling in domestic affairs'.

Although secularists of the nineteenth century advocated the use of artificial aids to birth control, Banks did not consider that the movement was influential in initiating the general decline in fertility. The 'pioneers' of birth control, according to Banks, were the upper middle classes who did not wish to be associated with the lower middle class secularist movement and its 'muscular anti-Christianity' (Banks, 1981, pp.25 and 75).

Branca claimed that there was a decline in religious observance among the middle class, although she did not distinguish between upper and lower middle class practices. One might assume that men became somewhat indifferent to religion but that among women there was little decline in religious sentiment. However Branca (1975, pp.146-147) concluded, partly on the basis of the content of women's reading material, that for women, too, 'religion lost some of its meaning' (p.147). In spite of her assertion that English women's interest in religion waned, there is evidence for America that women were expected to assume new responsibilities as the moral leaders in their families and 'conservators of religious values' (Reed, 1978, p.21). Religion was valued because its practice did not remove women from their proper sphere, the home, and because it reinforced the womanly virtues of piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity (Welter, 1978,
p.313-314). However American feminists were opposed to organized religion until after 1875 when they joined forces with the temperance reformers (Leach, 1981, p.7). In writing of the increased importance given to a French woman’s role in 'the moral guidance of the family', Ariès (1972a, p.19) claimed that 'she was able to exert the authority necessary to persuade the man, formerly indifferent, to take into account her aversion for too frequent pregnancies'.

The French literature on fertility decline devoted considerable attention both to changes in the attitude of the Catholic church towards marriage in the centuries before fertility decline and to the general question of the link between increasingly secular attitudes and the spread of birth control. Biller (1982), having examined mediaeval and early modern moral teachings of the Catholic church, concluded that contraceptive practice might have been fairly widespread in the early fourteenth century and that the Church might not have regarded it with great disapproval. Burguière (1976, pp.242-243) reported research by Chaunu which correlated the early adoption of contraception in Normandy with areas which were strongly influenced by a radical form of religious revival, Jansenism. The Jansenist belief that the only justification for sexual activity was to enable procreation required that its adherents become accustomed to a high level of sexual control, the way for which had been prepared by the increases in the age at marriage which had been a feature of the previous century or more. Combined with the encouragement of a private morality, Jansenist asceticism could lead to the unintended result of married couples using contraception when they perceived an advantage in having a small family.

Thus [Chaunu's] thesis can account for a phenomenon peculiar to France: the early diffusion of contraceptive practices, not through a hypothetical dechristianization, but through the religious revival of the seventeenth century which, in its late stages and in its most radical forms (Jansenism), was also peculiar to France (p.243).

Also, many good Catholics were simply not aware that coitus interruptus was illicit (p.239).

Burguière attributed the spread of contraception in eighteenth century France to 'a change in outlook upon life' (1976, p.239) which
caused individuals to feel responsibility for their children's futures and, by increasing the value placed on conjugal relationships, caused couples to 'delineate a zone of intimacy and autonomy over which the Church no longer had any say' (p.239). Burguïère went on to point out that in the modern Third World religious prohibition is less important than the type of emotional relationships in determining whether birth control will be used. He cited the lack of success with early family planning programmes in India, where the practice was religiously acceptable, which contrasted with the ready adoption of birth control in Catholic Puerto Rico. Sutter (1960, pp.349-350) was prepared to give some credence to a link between the weakening of religious influence and the use of contraception, but questioned the direction of causality: one could argue either that contraceptive use hastened the decline in religion or that the appearance and spread of contraception was a manifestation of religious indifference. Even if a decline in religion were connected with the spread of birth control, Sutter believed that no one single factor was wholly responsible for its introduction. Sauvy (1960, pp.389-390) was more inclined to attribute the change to religion. The situation of the Catholic Church in France was unlike that in other European countries: in Scandinavia and England religion had been adapted to the 'mentality of men'; in Spain and Italy the authority of the Church remained strong; but French Catholicism managed to impose its law only imperfectly, in an atmosphere of malaise characterized by less obedience to its instructions. Sauvy admitted that the early use of birth control among the Genevan ruling classes would seem to weaken his theory, but he felt that the strong French influence in the area provided sufficient explanation for the apparent anomaly.

For the United States, Wells (1975) described a change in attitudes from an early acceptance of a 'theology which stressed predestination and order and [which] was certainly not conducive to notions of the individual improving himself' (p.8) to a 'growing sense of an individual's worth and his influence over his life' (p.9). Such a change did not involve a rejection of religion but rather a redefinition of its scope; ideas which had been treated as heretical became the accepted principles by which life was lived. Such a change
in values replaced fatalism with beliefs that allowed innovations in health care, thereby reducing mortality. An indication that the change in attitude which allowed couples to resort to family limitation was compatible with strong religious conviction was the action of Quaker families during the War of Independence. At a time when they were under great pressure due to their religiously-motivated pacifist actions, some Quaker couples began to limit their families. This is not surprising when one considers that, as Olive Banks (1981, p.4) pointed out, Quakers were among those radical Protestant sects which provided 'a suitable environment for the growth of feminist ideas' including 'ideas on the nature of marriage and the family, and on sexuality itself'.

For England, Banks felt that the development of science brought men a new 'power over their material environment'(p.203) which they then felt able to extend to the use of birth control(pp.201-204).

Van de Walle (1978) was another of the writers who, explicitly or implicitly, attributed the adoption of birth control to a change to 'rational attitudes towards the control of one's fate and one's body, including the view that Nature is not an intrinsic part of God's design, but can be reshaped and influenced' (p.271).

Religion was not dead; its scope was merely regarded as narrower than before.

Education

It has long been recognized that education is a good indicator of fertility differentials between groups of women. The means by which higher education encourages reduced fertility were considered by Hollerbach (1980, p.27) to be higher aspirations for one's children (making them more costly to train), approval of roles outside the household for women, thus reducing their dependence on their husbands, improving husband-wife communications, developing decision-making skills and a future orientation and exposure to family planning information. Surveys of numerous studies linking education and fertility were undertaken by Cochrane (1979) and Graff (1979). The fear was expressed in America that higher education for women could lead to 'race suicide' because the best educated women bore the least
number of children while the immigrant poor had large families (Gordon, 1977, pp.13-139). Early in the fertility decline it was found that many graduates of Harvard, Yale and Wellesley did not marry and those who did had small families (Kennedy, 1970, p.44). However women with a university education did not necessarily have fewer children than men graduates or than their less-educated sisters and cousins. The National Birth Rate Commission, an English enquiry into causes of the declining birth rate, heard evidence that, when age at marriage and duration of marriage were taken into account, there was no difference between the fertility of women who had completed rigorous college courses and that of non-college women. Thus, much of the fertility differential may have been between women who came from families in which at least one daughter was highly educated, and other middle and working class women.

Allied with concern about the smaller family size of the families of women college students was a fear that higher education took such a physical toll of women that they were particularly prone to have difficult births. The chairman of the Commission indicated that he believed that the most highly educated women were the most severely affected. However the medical witness whom he was questioning gave no support to the chairman's opinion although she agreed that such women frequently limited the size of their families (Decline, 1917, pp.328-329).

The distinction between literacy and schooling was made by Caldwell (1980) who claimed that it was the experience of a new world outside the family, rather than learning to read, which was responsible for the attitudinal changes leading to lower fertility. Although he used evidence related to Third World countries exposed to Western schooling in the twentieth century, he also demonstrated that similar arguments could be applied to Western countries in the nineteenth century. In this regard, the importance of maternal education in reducing child mortality (Caldwell, 1979; Caldwell and McDonald, 1981) leads to another possible link between female education and fertility

\(^2\)Many of these academically-distinguished women were not graduates because Oxford and Cambridge did not award degrees to women until after World War I.
decline. If a decline in infant and early childhood mortality can be shown to be a predisposing factor to the onset of fertility decline, then the introduction of schooling for women, leading to a decline in child loss, should be of importance.

Infant and Childhood Mortality

The connection, if any, between reductions in infant mortality and the decline of fertility was examined at a 1975 seminar (Preston, 1978). The results were inconclusive. Knodel found that

One tentative implication of [a] review of evidence based on individual data for European populations in the past is that once family limitation is introduced into a population and starts to spread, couples who have unfavorable experiences with child mortality will be more reluctant than couples with favorable experience to practice birth control. Thus a reduction in child mortality should facilitate a decline of fertility. It is not clear, however, from the data reviewed if a reduction in child mortality is a necessary prerequisite for spread of family limitation (Knodel, 1978a, p.43).

Matthiessen and McCann, working from Princeton European fertility project data, concluded that

the relevant information in the national reports of the Princeton project do not point to any general, positive association of the vital forces in the years preceding the demographic transition. In the absence of such an equilibrium, any causal connection must be understood in terms of events and relations more or less specific to the period of transition, for example, the diffusion of contraception and the general process of modernization (Matthiessen and McCann, 1978, p.67).

In a subsequent paper on 14 villages in pre-industrial Germany, Knodel (1982, p.199) found that, when data for individual families were analysed,

favourable child mortality apparently facilitated a couple's adoption of family limitation, which led them to lower fertility while unfavourable child mortality seems to have impeded, if not totally prevented, such efforts.

During the period covered by Knodel's study, infant mortality was rising slightly while there was a steady decline in the mortality of children between the first and fifth birthday (Knodel, 1982, p.180). However, his reconstruction of the histories of these families led
him to suggest that, at the level of individual families, a good record of survival of infants and young children may have affected subsequent fertility.

Feminism and the Role of Women

The role of the feminist movement in reducing fertility was the subject of Feminism and Family Planning, in which J. A. and Olive Banks investigated the theory that the rise of feminism during the second half of the nineteenth century was a factor leading to the rise in the use of methods of birth control and hence to the reduction in marital fertility.

The ideal of the role played by a middle-class married woman was claimed to have changed from that of the 'perfect wife' to the 'perfect lady'. The perfect wife took an active part in the management of her household, without performing the more menial chores; in particular, she was expected to closely supervise the upbringing of her children. The perfect lady delegated their care to nursemaids, while she engaged in a smart social round.

With the need to keep up appearances by employing nursemaids for the time-consuming routine of child care came the expense of housing and maintaining them, in addition to their wages. The Bankses emphasized that it was the cost of employing servants, not any difficulty in finding them, which proved to be a problem for the middle class until well after the practice of family limitation was common (Banks, 1964, p.69).

In response to Branca (1974; 1975, pp.38-59), Banks (1981, p.101) conceded that it was only the upper middle classes who could afford numerous servants and that Branca was correct in asserting that 'In terms of economics and in terms of availability, the one and only servant in the majority of middle-class homes employing servants was the maid-of-all-work' (1975, pp.55-56). But, as noted in relation to secularism, it was the upper middle class which led the fertility decline.

During the period when fertility began its decline in England, the feminist movement was mainly concerned with the causes which affected single women and women whose marriages had broken down. Few feminists
were concerned with the problems of the wife and mother; it was not until the 1890s that feminists began to speak against large families. The attitude of the movement was puritanical, so that they regarded the practice of contraception as a means by which men could indulge their base appetites without facing the financial consequences of their actions, although feminists do not appear to have been opposed to abstinence designed to limit family size (Banks and Banks, 1964, pp.37-38, 41, and 120-121).

For Victorian England, the Bankses concluded that:

The feminist movement as such was not a causal factor in the advent of family planning, and any of its activities which may validly be linked with this development are to be seen as consequences not only unanticipated, but almost certainly unapproved (Banks and Banks, 1964, pp.128-129).

For some years, the Bankses' assessment of the feminist role in fertility decline was generally accepted, but recently there have been challenges to its correctness. Part of the difference of opinion stems from the definitions of 'feminists'. As Rover pointed out:

The connection...between feminism and birth control, throws into strong relief the contrast between the two types of feminists. On the one hand there were those, such as Richard Carlile, who supported both women's emancipation and contraception as part of a syndrome of advanced left-wing ideas, and, on the other, the main supporters of the 'women's movement', who shied away from anything likely to reflect upon their respectability and thus, they felt, hinder them in their pursuit of reforms such as educational opportunities, enfranchisement, married women's property rights, entry into the professions and so on (Rover, 1970, p.97).

The Bankses paid most attention to the women's movement, while McLaren claimed that, because supporters of birth control such as Carlile, Owen and Place were concerned about the health of women and their rights to control their own bodies, they were feminists and that, therefore, feminists supported birth control (McLaren, 1978, pp.94-95). McLaren claimed that women were sufficiently influenced by the writings of the male feminists to develop a "domestic feminism" which manifested itself in the desire to avoid needless pregnancies'. He conceded that the Bankses might have been correct in believing that husbands were the final arbiters, who made decisions on family size based on economic considerations, but the spread of knowledge about female contraceptives complicated the issue (p.95).
D. Smith (1974) traced the development of 'domestic feminism' in Victorian America, claiming that sexual control of the husband by the wife occurred to the extent that wives could 'persuade or coerce' their husbands into using coitus interruptus or abstinence (p.123). Smith asserted that, with the increased importance accorded to the role of wife and mother, married women acquired a new autonomy within the family. When this was manifested in a demand for smaller family sizes, women had the advantage that their wishes coincided with the economic interests of their husbands (p.127). Smith, like McLaren, made the distinction between 'domestic' and 'public' feminism as a factor in the decline of marital fertility (pp. 131-132).

Weiner (1980) examined in some detail the combination of birth control advocacy and feminist views expressed by Bentham, Place, Carlile and Owen. In describing the opposition faced by Frances Wright when she lectured on birth control early in the nineteenth century in America, Weiner concluded that arguments in its favour were regarded by the public as particularly shocking when advanced by a woman. 'That it was men, rather than women, who propagated for birth control, may be explained by the greater difficulty women would have had in writing on a tabooed subject' (Weiner, 1980, p.427). In some cases, although men were the authors of birth control literature, it might be inferred that they were expressing the ideas to which they had been introduced by women friends (McLaren, 1978, p.98). In considering the feminist attitude towards family limitation, a distinction must be made between contraception and methods such as coitus interruptus and abstinence. In America from the 1840s, feminist women discussed sexual issues and, by the 1870s, 'they had gained sufficient clarity about their critique of the [sexual] system, and sufficient confidence in their movement, to raise publicly a birth-control demand, which they called voluntary motherhood' (Gordon, 1977, pp.90-91). Because contraception was associated with sexual immorality (Gordon, 1977, p.100), feminists were advocating that family limitation be achieved by self-restraint on the part of husbands. The idea that wives might make sexual demands appears to have been almost unthinkable.

There was an increased emphasis in England and in the United States on the role of wives in providing a 'civilizing influence...in a
viciously competitive world' (Reed, 1978, p.21). The notion of separate spheres for women and men, based on their different natural abilities, gained strength among the middle classes who could afford to keep their wives and daughters out of the workforce. Within their proper sphere, the home, marriage brought an increase in the authority of women (Welter, 1978, p.325). They were required to maintain their virtu against the assaults of men, who were more sensual (p.35). However much the 'cult of true womanhood' may have been paid lip service, American women, at least those of a slightly later period, do not appear to have been as averse to sexual relationships as has been assumed (Degler, 1974).

Biological Theories of Fertility Decline

One of the more intriguing theories as to the cause of fertility decline is that of Davies (1982). He argued that, for England and America at least, the fertility of upper middle class women declined at much the same time as corseting became 'the hallmark of virtue' among middle-class women. Davies described the physical damage caused by tightlacing and then used the Davis and Blake (1956) framework of intermediate variables to show that the effects of the practice on frequency of intercourse, exposure to conception and gestation and successful parturition could reduce fertility. He claimed that the bodily distortion caused by tight corsets caused intercourse to be so painful that women tried to avoid it; when it took place, conception was less likely to result; should women become pregnant, they had a reduced chance of a live birth. Women then rationalized their unintended lower fertility by making it the fashionable norm. Davies' theory hinges on the timing of the decline; he admits that it is somewhat unsatisfactory when applied to France, where fertility declined in the eighteenth century in a era of loose-fitting dresses. However the case of France may not refute Davies' theory, as studies, such as those of Biller (1982), have shown instances of low fertility in numerous communities at times well before the onset of secular fertility decline. It seems reasonable to attribute at least some of the decline in the number of live births in the nineteenth century to gynaecological abnormalities induced by tightlacing.
Another theory, which applied specifically to the decline in the birthrate in New South Wales, was advanced by Powys, of the Victorian Government Statist's department, in 1905. He believed that the decline was due, in part, to 'a considerable change in the physique of the population' (1905, p.244). In earlier years, the population of New South Wales had been drawn from 'the two most fertile classes of the British community, viz. the agricultural and artisan.' Until about 1885, when free and assisted immigration ceased, migrants had had to pass medical examinations before departure so that the population of New South Wales was of unusually healthy stock (1905, p.275). Powys further noted that men of the medical profession were conspicuously less prolific than the community as a whole (1905, p.283). It seems unlikely that doctors tended to marry women whose general health was below the community average; once married, doctors' wives would have had good health care. Their low fertility could lend some support to the Davies theory regarding corsets, as the wives of doctors might be among the women most likely to wish to demonstrate their respectability by tightlacing. It seems more probable, however, that they were less fertile because they had greater access to contraceptive information.

Birth Control

It is clear, from the fact that fertility declined so rapidly in the latter part of the nineteenth century, that some form or forms of birth control had been adopted on a large scale. The process by which the use of birth control spread has been described by some writers in terms of previously unavailable access to knowledge of methods and by others to a change in motivation to use already-known techniques. Carlsson (1966) has labelled the two explanations 'innovation' and 'adjustment'.

The 'innovation' approach seems to have attracted those writers who stress the importance of the woman's role in initiating the use of birth control, since contraceptive methods which could be used by women were becoming available late in the nineteenth century, at the

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³It appears that Powys' theory was unpopular with the Commissioners inquiring into the decline of the birthrate in New South Wales in 1903-4; his request to give evidence was declined (Hicks, 1978, p.167).
beginning of the decline in fertility or, at least, by the time it was gaining momentum.

One problem with the 'innovation' approach is that it seems to rely on the fact that contraceptive information was widely disseminated in advertisements in the popular press in England (and Australia) at the appropriate time. However in the United States, where fertility decline kept pace with Australia, the Comstock Laws forbade the public spread of contraceptive advice from 1873 onwards, although there may have been previously-published material circulating privately or contraceptive information being passed on by word of mouth. Certainly Fryer (1965, pp.113-116) referred to a book on fertility control being found all over America by 1856 and suggested that there was widespread advertising of contraceptives before the Comstock Laws came into effect. Kennedy (1970, p.45) claimed that the book to which Fryer referred had 'only a small underground circulation' in America after its publication in 1832, but he went on to quote a New England doctor who, in 1867, claimed that when a marriage was announced in the paper, the young lady would receive a circular advertising contraceptives. Kennedy claimed that middle class Americans 'were well supplied with contraceptive information and devices' from the late 1800s. Some publications which denounced the use of contraception described, in detail, the methods which they condemned, thereby providing a source of information for would-be contraceptors (Reed, 1978, pp.31-32). It is not clear whether the Comstock Laws eventually prevented the distribution of manuals containing such details; certainly one was published in 1874, a year after the laws were passed (Reed, 1978, p.25).

In America marriage manuals were an important source of advice on all aspects of family life, particularly for couples whose geographical or social mobility had cut them off from their families. '... the intense interest in birth control was part of a larger concern with the future of the family in a world of economic change and social uncertainty' (Reed, 1978, p.19).

McLaren (1978, pp.13-14) came out explicitly in favour of the 'adjustment' approach, tracing the changes in the working class family during the period when England passed through various states of
industrialization. When child labour was in demand, fertility was high; when education and skills were needed, fertility declined. Aries (1980) was describing a similar phenomenon when, as noted above, in discussing family relationships, he linked fertility with opportunities for social mobility.

Langer (1975), in describing the origins of the birth control movement in Britain, credited Place with distributing, in 1823, the first explicit advice on birth control methods, in particular the vaginal sponge. Langer believed that Place, a working man, must have had influential friends, both because he was able to finance his activities and because his supporters, like the young John Stuart Mill, in common with later public advocates of contraception, were treated leniently, there being no prosecutions until the Bradlaugh-Besant case half a century later. However Place's middle class sympathizers were reluctant to be associated openly with his views.

Carlile, unfortunately for the proponents of birth control, linked contraception with sexual freedom in a pamphlet which drew the wrath of more conservative writers and changed the subject of debate to 'free love'. Robert Dale Owen disliked the pamphlet but was so impressed with the birth control argument it contained that he published Moral Physiology in America in 1830 and subsequently in England. Owen's recommendation that coitus interruptus be used did not satisfy a New England physician, Knowlton, who advocated the use of a vaginal syringe in his Fruits of Philosophy, published anonymously in 1832 in New York and in England a year later. Fryer (1965, p.103) stated that inherent in Knowlton's writing was the idea that contraception should be used for spacing births and not merely avoiding further childbearing.

Most English birth control literature of the early nineteenth century was designed to assist working men to reduce their fertility but Langer claimed that the advice was not well received by the poor who believed that a better distribution of wealth, not fewer babies, would offer a solution to their poverty. Gordon (1977, p.81) claimed that the published birth control material had little impact in Britain until the revival of Neo-Malthusianism in the 1870s. McLaren (1978, p.12) wrote in very strong terms:

It is my contention that the great interest of the
nineteenth century birth control debate is that it reveals that there was not a growing consensus of opinion on the question of family planning but that there were two important cultural confrontations. These were the struggle of middle-class propagandists, both of the right and the left, seeking to manipulate working-class attitudes towards procreation for political purposes, and on a deeper level the clash of the differing attitudes of men and women towards the possibility of fertility control.

Theories of Marriage Change

It is generally recognized that the marriage patterns of a society have an important influence on its fertility. Glick (1967) demonstrated fertility differentials associated with age at marriage and failure to marry for the twentieth century United States; such differentials have been shown to apply generally (Ruzicka, 1981).

In contrast to most parts of the world, where women married at an early age and marriage was almost universal, Western Europe, from at least the seventeenth century, developed a pattern of high age at first marriage, with many people never marrying. Hajnal (1965, p.132) pointed out that the emotional content of marriage, the relation between the couple and other relatives, the methods of choosing or allocating marriage partners - all this and many other things cannot be the same in a society where a bride is usually a girl of 16 and one in which she is typically a woman of 24.

An understanding of the underlying causes of further changes in marriage patterns which occurred in the nineteenth century and which, in turn, affected fertility can be gained from the work of Dixon and Schoen. Dixon (1971) developed a framework for analysing variations in marriage patterns, based on the availability of mates, and the feasibility and desirability of marriage. The availability of mates depends upon the age and sex structure of a given society. The feasibility of marriage is determined by the ability to meet community expectations that a couple should have an adequate financial base to afford appropriate residential arrangements. The desirability of marriage depends on the extent to which alternatives to marriage are available and the attractiveness of such alternatives.

In 1978, Dixon examined the relationship between late marriage and non-marriage in some detail, concluding that there was a definite
tendency for the same societies to exhibit both patterns. While providing a primarily economic explanation for delayed marriage, she attributed different levels of non-marriage to social constraints. Japan had a high age of marriage but few people could accept the social stigma of eschewing marriage entirely. In Ireland, the social pressures to marry were less strong and the social rewards for single women in particular were quite substantial, when marriage meant leaving a relatively independent urban wage-earner's life for subordination and rural drudgery. Dixon considered that as 'the number of single women increases, the social stigma and isolation associated with spinsterhood should decline' (p.449).

As Dixon noted when including 'availability of mates' in her framework, marriage patterns may be affected by demographic patterns caused, in turn, by previous economic or social influences. A rise in the annual number of births can lead to women having difficulty in finding husbands in the smaller cohorts of men a few years older (Schoen, 1983, p.61). Schoen stated that the "marriage squeeze" is an evocative though imprecise term used to describe the effects of an imbalance between the number of males and females in the prime marriage ages'.

Conclusion

Many theories have been advanced in an attempt to explain the decline in fertility which began in the second half of the nineteenth century. As any of those considered above could have accounted for at least some of the reduction in the birthrate in Australia, subsequent chapters will examine the importance of each in changing Australia's fertility pattern.
CHAPTER 3: THE TIMING OF THE DECLINE

Introduction

It is important to this study to pinpoint the timing of Australia's nineteenth century fertility decline with some accuracy, and to distinguish between trends in marital and overall fertility, to enable a comparison to be made between attitudes before, during and after the commencement of the downward trend in fertility. Two studies of Australian fertility, while showing that some evidence points to a decline in overall fertility as early as the 1860s, consider that it in fact commenced its downward trend in the 1870s, to be followed by a decline in marital fertility in the 1880s, or possibly in the 1870s in Victoria (Ruzicka and Caldwell, 1977, p.92; Caldwell and Ruzicka, 1977, p.10A).¹

It is necessary to examine the colonies individually, in addition to studying the overall pattern, since economic and social factors affecting fertility varied between the Australian colonies. Aggregate data for the whole country are affected by events which were confined to one colony, particularly if they occurred in New South Wales or Victoria, each of which, from 1852 to 1899, had a population greater than that of the four smallest colonies combined. Although reference is made to the other colonies, much of this study relates only to New South Wales and Victoria. The data needed for some measures of fertility are available for New South Wales alone; while these are valuable, they should not be assumed to reflect the fertility pattern of Australia as a whole. For instance, Caldwell (1982b) noted that the difference in levels of marital fertility between New South Wales and Victoria in 1871 and 1881 required an explanation.

There is no one measure of changing fertility which is entirely satisfactory, given the available data. Therefore several approaches are used and their limitations discussed.

¹This section has drawn heavily on Ruzicka and Caldwell (1977), Caldwell and Ruzicka (1977 and 1978) and Jones(1971).
Crude Birth Rates

Throughout Australia there was a downward trend in crude birth rates from the early 1860s, although the pattern varied greatly from colony to colony (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Crude Birth Rates, Australian Colonies
Selected Years, 1860-1900

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>N.S.W.</th>
<th>Vic.</th>
<th>Qld.</th>
<th>S.A.</th>
<th>W.A.</th>
<th>Tas.</th>
<th>Australia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>42.11</td>
<td>43.17</td>
<td>47.93</td>
<td>44.85</td>
<td>38.96</td>
<td>36.48</td>
<td>42.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865</td>
<td>43.28</td>
<td>42.63</td>
<td>44.01</td>
<td>42.74</td>
<td>33.06</td>
<td>32.96</td>
<td>42.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>40.15</td>
<td>38.22</td>
<td>43.71</td>
<td>38.35</td>
<td>34.27</td>
<td>30.53</td>
<td>38.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>38.60</td>
<td>33.80</td>
<td>41.47</td>
<td>35.76</td>
<td>28.43</td>
<td>29.86</td>
<td>35.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>38.85</td>
<td>30.76</td>
<td>39.38</td>
<td>37.91</td>
<td>31.79</td>
<td>32.00</td>
<td>35.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>38.03</td>
<td>31.63</td>
<td>37.76</td>
<td>38.97</td>
<td>34.52</td>
<td>36.29</td>
<td>35.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>35.62</td>
<td>33.57</td>
<td>39.83</td>
<td>32.72</td>
<td>33.16</td>
<td>33.60</td>
<td>34.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>31.18</td>
<td>28.47</td>
<td>34.07</td>
<td>30.16</td>
<td>26.06</td>
<td>31.16</td>
<td>30.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>27.52</td>
<td>25.81</td>
<td>30.20</td>
<td>25.44</td>
<td>31.15</td>
<td>28.18</td>
<td>27.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: C.B.C.S. Demography 1938, p.163.

When all the colonies are combined, there was a decline from 43.3 per 1000 in 1862 to 35.0 in 1877, a level about which the rate fluctuated until 1890, followed by a further decline to 27.3 in 1900.

The New South Wales, Victorian and South Australian rates dropped steadily from 1862 to 1872, while in Queensland, Tasmania and, especially, Western Australia, they declined erratically. During the 1870s and early 1880s, the crude birth rate in New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia remained fairly stable but in Tasmania and Western Australia it rose to the level of the 1860s; Victoria's downward trend continued until the early 1880s when, with that of Queensland, it was reversed until the end of the decade. All the colonies shared in the drop of the 1890s, with only Western Australia showing a marked rise before the turn of the century.

But crude rates are affected by changes in age structure in a population and by variations in the sex ratio; in addition, they take no account of the proportions of married to single women. Their main interest is that they were the measures first used to draw attention to the declining fertility of Australian women (Hicks, 1978, p.138; Royal Commission, 1904, pp.5-7).
Children Ever Born

A better indicator for this period than crude rates is the record of children ever born to women of the birth cohorts whose childbearing took place in the period of changing fertility levels. In Australia, the Census of 1911 asked men and women to state the number of children born to them from the present and any previous marriages. When this information is studied, it is clear that the change from stable high fertility to a situation where some form of regulation of fertility was evident was between women born in the early 1840s and those born a decade or more later. Women born before the mid 1840s recorded fertility comparable with that of the Hutterites, which implies that they did not impose any limits on their family size. Women of later cohorts had families smaller on average by nearly two children, a reduction partly resulting from increased age at first marriage, but also due to the use of some form of fertility regulation within marriage (Caldwell, 1982b).

Table 3.2: Percentage Distribution of Parities of Australian Married Women by Birth Cohort, 1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parity</th>
<th>1837-41</th>
<th>1842-46</th>
<th>1847-51</th>
<th>1852-56</th>
<th>1857-61</th>
<th>1862-66</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>10.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8+</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>33.9</td>
<td>25.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>4.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13+</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: (a) Percentages may not total 100.0 due to rounding. (b) Excludes women whose parity was not stated.

Calculated from Census 1911, pp.1136-1137.
Figure 3.1: Percentage Distribution of Parities of Australian Married Women by Birth Cohort, 1911 Census (excludes parity not stated)

Source: Calculated from Census 1911, pp.1136-1137
A comparison (See Table 3.2 and Figure 3.1) of the parities of women of birth cohorts from 1842-46 to 1862-66 shows a marked change in patterns of family size, with a steady decline in the percentage of women who had borne more than seven children. The proportion of childless women showed very minor fluctuations, varying between 7.9 and 8.6 per cent.\(^2\)

The 1911 Census gives tabulations of parities by age of mother for currently-married women only. If widows and divorcees had very different fertility from wives, and formed a high proportion of all women of their age, measures of parity would not reflect the fertility of all women in their child-bearing years.

However, a comparison (Table 3.3) of the average issue of wives with that of widows and divorcees of the same cohorts shows that while

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Birth Cohort</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Percentage of Ever-married Women of Same Age Group</th>
<th>Average Issue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>Wid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1862-66</td>
<td>45-49</td>
<td>87.1</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1857-61</td>
<td>53-54</td>
<td>81.5</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1852-56</td>
<td>55-59</td>
<td>73.1</td>
<td>26.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1847-51</td>
<td>60-64</td>
<td>61.6</td>
<td>38.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1842-46</td>
<td>65-69</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>50.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1837-41</td>
<td>70-74</td>
<td>37.6</td>
<td>62.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Calculated from Census 1911, pp.1080-1081 and 1205.

the differences in average issue between married and widowed women are greatest in the youngest cohorts, widowed and divorced\(^3\) women form a smaller proportion of these cohorts than at the older ages where the difference in average issue is small. The decline in average issue for currently-married women between the birth cohorts 1837-41 and 1862-66 (1.77) is almost the same as that for all women (1.78). Thus, the lack

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\(^2\)Coghlan (1903), pp.14-15 claimed that, in New South Wales, childless marriages became more common between 1861 and 1897, but his figures include adjustments for ante-nuptial conceptions.

\(^3\)Divorced women comprised a miniscule proportion, no more than 0.3 per cent, of ever-married women in the cohorts over 45 years of age in 1911.
of information about marital status during the childbearing years does not invalidate the use of the data when measuring marital fertility.

Tabulations of parity by age are given only for the Commonwealth as a whole, so comparisons between States must be based on the average issue of the birth cohorts. There were marked differences in the levels of fertility attained, but these must be assessed cautiously. For instance, Western Australian levels were decidedly lower than those of any other state, but an examination of data relating birthplace and age shows that a majority of women in the older age groups were not born in Western Australia, so that their fertility performance was that of women who, in some cases, came to the state after they had completed childbearing. There was a particularly strong migration from Victoria, the state with the next lowest fertility. In addition, many of the single women who migrated from Victoria were older women who, because they married late, could be expected to have had lower fertility (McDonald, 1975, pp.154-157). Many husbands came ahead of their wives (Appleyard, 1981, p.220) or families which arrived in Western Australia together may have subsequently been separated for long periods when husbands travelled to the goldfields alone, rather than subject their wives and children to the rigours of life in improvised towns in the desert.

Figure 3.2, which shows the average issue of women born in Australia and the United Kingdom, demonstrates the higher fertility of the native-born Australians. McDonald's analysis of marriage pattern by birthplace (1975, pp.114-122) suggested that Australians married slightly earlier, perhaps because some of the adult women migrants did not marry until after they reached Australia. The higher fertility of Australian women may, therefore, be explained by an earlier commencement of childbearing.4 When data by birthplace are compared with data by state of residence in 1911, some unexpected patterns

4The levels for the United Kingdom are not unduly distorted by the inclusion of Irish-born women. For later cohorts, Coghlan (1903,p.41) describes their fertility as 'conspicuously above the average of all other women', but he states that this differential was not apparent as late as 1880. In fact they had a slightly lower average issue than the United Kingdom for the older cohorts and a maximum of 0.25 births higher among the younger women.
Figure 3.2: Average Issue of Australian-born and United Kingdom-born Married Women, by Birth Cohort

Source: 1911 Census, pp.1160-1161
emerge (Figures 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5). Women born in New South Wales had gradually declining average issue from the 1832-36 to the 1842-46 cohorts, while those born in Victoria, after a slight rise between the 1837-41 and 1842-46 cohorts, declined sharply from the 1847-51 cohort; rates in average issue in both colonies then continued to decline rapidly. In contrast, women living in New South Wales in 1911 had maintained a gradually increasing number of births up to the 1842-46 cohort and, after a short gradual drop, declined rapidly thereafter. Victorian residents of the 1832-36 cohort had the highest average number of children, maintained a gradual decrease for 15 years then also joined the sharp decline common to all the States. Some of the erratic shifts in fertility evident in the oldest cohorts can probably be ascribed to the small numbers of women involved; for instance there were only 16 Victorian-born women of the 1827-31 cohort still living in Australia in 1911.\(^5\)

Whether one uses birthplace or state of residence in 1911, the pattern is clear: increases in the average number of children born to the earlier cohorts, followed by a dramatic decline among the younger women.

Data are available on the fertility of women living in metropolitan and extra-metropolitan areas of the states in 1911. These are not strictly rural-urban comparisons, since the extra-metropolitan areas contained some large urban centres. For instance, Bendigo had a population of 28,539 in 1911. However, as can be seen from Table 3.4 and Figure 3.6, the average issue of metropolitan women was lower, and their fertility decline commenced earlier, than that of the country women.

For the whole Commonwealth, the difference was a little below one child for the earlier cohorts, rising to about one and one-quarter children for the younger women. With only minor exceptions, all the states followed the same pattern of lower metropolitan fertility, but the difference was generally greater in New South Wales and Victoria than in the less populous states, particularly Western Australia. In New South Wales, the gap between metropolitan and country average issue

\(^5\)Tabulations of age by marital status by birthplace were not published in 1911; the numbers of married women would have been even smaller than the example given.
Figure 3.3: Average Issue of Married Women in Australia in 1911 by Birth Cohort and Birthplace New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia

Source: 1911 Census, p.1143
Figure 3.4: Average Issue of Married Women by Birth Cohort and State of Residence New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia in 1911

Source: 1911 Census, p.1143
Figure 3.5: Average Issue of Married Women by Birth Cohort and State of Residence Queensland, Western Australia and Tasmania in 1911

Source: 1911 Census, p.1143
Figure 3.6: Issue of Australian Married Women, 1911, by Metropolitan and Extra-metropolitan Residence and Birth Cohort

Source: 1911 Census, p.1143
Table 3.4: Average Issue, Metropolitan and Extra-Metropolitan Australian Married Women, 1911, by Birth Cohort

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohort</th>
<th>Residence</th>
<th>NSW</th>
<th>Vic</th>
<th>Qld</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>WA</th>
<th>Tas</th>
<th>Aust</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1837-41</td>
<td>Metropolitan</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Extra-Metro</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>7.3</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1842-46</td>
<td>Metropolitan</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Extra-Metro</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1847-51</td>
<td>Metropolitan</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Extra-Metro</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>6.9</td>
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<tr>
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<td>6.6</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1852-56</td>
<td>Metropolitan</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Extra-Metro</td>
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<td>6.8</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>6.9</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Total</td>
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<td>6.2</td>
<td>6.7</td>
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<td>6.1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1857-61</td>
<td>Metropolitan</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Extra-Metro</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1862-66</td>
<td>Metropolitan</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Extra-Metro</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


remained steady at about one and one-half births, for the women from the 1847-51 to 1862-66 cohorts, but in Victoria it varied from one for the women born between 1862 and 1866 to one and one-half for those born between 1847 and 1851. In Queensland and Tasmania, the gap widened for the younger cohorts, in South Australia it was fairly constant, while in Western Australia it was erratic.

The data on children ever born and on average issue are less useful in establishing the timing of the start of fertility decline than in identifying the patterns of fertility within the first cohorts of married women who restricted their family size.

Age-specific Fertility Rates

Age-specific marital fertility rates for New South Wales for 1871, 1881, 1891 and 1901 were included in the exhibits tendered to the Royal Commission on the Decline of the Birthrate in 1904. They identify the cohorts which initiated fertility control within marriage. (Table 3.5 and Figure 3.7).
Figure 3.7: Age-specific Marital Fertility Rates, New South Wales, 1871-1901

Source: Royal Commission (1904), Appendix to Vol. I, p.90
Similar data are not available for the other Australian colonies.

The 1847-51 birth cohort, who were 30 to 34 years old in 1881, had marginally higher rates than the comparable cohort in 1871, but in 1891 their rates were 9 per cent lower than those of the 1881 40-44 year olds. The next cohort, those born from 1852 to 1856, had slightly lower rates in 1881 and a 13 per cent reduction in 1891, compared with women ten years older. Thus there is some slight evidence of a decline in marital fertility commencing with the 1852-56 cohort in the 1870s, followed by a general decline, involving cohorts back to that of 1847-51, in the 1880s.

The rates for 1881 were slightly above those for 1871 for some age groups and almost identical for others, but the 1891 and 1901 rates showed marked drops on earlier decades. Between 1881 and 1891, the percentage decline for women from 25 to 39 years of age was about 13 per cent, while for those under 25 and over 40 it was about 9 per cent.

Table 3.5: Age-Specific Marital Fertility Rates per 100, New South Wales, 1871-1901

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age of Mother</th>
<th>1871</th>
<th>1881</th>
<th>1891</th>
<th>1901</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 to 19</td>
<td>50.10</td>
<td>51.60</td>
<td>47.91</td>
<td>56.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 to 24</td>
<td>44.15</td>
<td>45.79</td>
<td>41.63</td>
<td>39.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 to 29</td>
<td>40.75</td>
<td>40.52</td>
<td>35.37</td>
<td>29.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 to 34</td>
<td>33.67</td>
<td>33.86</td>
<td>29.22</td>
<td>22.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 to 39</td>
<td>27.04</td>
<td>27.36</td>
<td>23.63</td>
<td>17.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 to 44</td>
<td>13.41</td>
<td>12.89</td>
<td>11.84</td>
<td>8.81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Royal Commission(1904), p.90.

Two factors operated to keep marital fertility rates at young ages at a high level: about one-third of the brides were pregnant when married (Coghlan, 1903, p.26), and a high proportion in the youngest age group were 18- or 19-year-olds whose fecundity was greater than that of the less numerous 15- and 16-year olds. Older women may have already accepted large families and, knowing that their fecundity was decreasing, were less interested in accepting the inconvenience of fertility control than were women in the middle years of childbearing. This was particularly evident for women in their thirties and slightly less so for the older women, suggesting that, in reducing the number of children they bore, women were less likely to reduce the span of their childbearing years than to increase the space between births. The pattern of decline between 1891 and 1901 was slightly different.
Pre-nuptial conceptions may have accounted for a rise in fertility among the few married women under 20 years of age and an only modest reduction among those of 20-24 (Coghlan, 1903, p.26). The rate for women of 25-29 declined by a slightly higher percentage than between 1881 and 1891, but the difference doubled for women in their thirties and trebled for those aged from 40 to 44.

In New South Wales family limitation appears to have commenced among women in the middle years of childbearing in the 1880s, with the similar drop in fertility over the age range 25 to 39 indicating a greater spacing of births, rather than simply an attempt to cease childbearing. However, by the 1890s, the greatest rate of change had moved to the 35-44 year age group; the women who had initiated the movement to the smaller family had continued to curtail their fertility throughout their fertile years. Coghlan (1903, p.67) supports the view that women wished to space births, although he saw their actions in the context of an attempt to avoid childbearing altogether:

The great majority of married women still bear children, but many of them do so with reluctance, and make the interval between the births of successive children as great as possible.

Princeton Indices

For the study of the timing of the decline, other indicators are the fertility measures developed by Coale (1967, p.209). The Ig index compares the marital fertility of a population with a standard, that of the 'natural' fertility of the Hutterite women in the United States, using different weightings for the various age groups within the reproductive span of 15-49 years. Two other indices, Ir and Im, measure overall fertility and proportions married, using the same standard as Ig. The Hutterite age-specific marital fertility rates were compared with those of Australia in 1911, the earliest year for which reliable data could be located, in an attempt to determine whether they approximated the fertility of the women under review. Australian women 15-19 years of age had a high age-specific

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6The indices require data which were available only for census years for the period under review.
marital fertility rate, probably due to many of the young brides having been pregnant when they married. Coghlan (1903, p.26), showed that 31 per cent of first births in the period 1891 to 1900 were the results of pre-nuptial conceptions; there does not appear to be any reason to assume that the situation had changed greatly by 1911.

In contrast, the Hutterite women of 15 to 19 had a very low age-specific marital fertility rate which can be explained by two factors. Firstly, 'Sex relations [were] severely frowned upon during the pre-marital period' (Eaton and Meyer, 1954, p.18) and behavioural norms could be enforced fairly effectively in such a close-knit community, so that pre-nuptial conceptions would not commonly have precipitated marriage. Secondly, as half of the few married women 15 to 19 years old married at 19, many would not have had a birth until they reached the 20-24 age group.

At all ages other than 15-19, Australian married women had appreciably lower fertility than that of the Hutterites.

Thus, use of the Hutterite fertility schedule as a standard might be considered to have a potential for distorting measures of Australian fertility trends in the late nineteenth century.

The Princeton procedures also assume a constant age structure within the range 15-49 years but this was not the case in the Australian colonies in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

In an attempt to determine the extent to which the Princeton indices were affected by the use of an inappropriate fertility standard or by changes in the age distribution of women 15-49, a new series of indices was calculated, using different weights:

Weight 1  Hutterite age-specific marital fertility rates; age structure of colonies and Australia, 1871-1901

Weight 2  Hutterite age-specific marital fertility rates; age structure of Australia in 1911

Weight 3  Australian age-specific marital fertility rates, 1911; age structure of colonies and Australia, 1871-1901

Weight 4  Australian age-specific marital fertility rates, 1911; age structure of Australia in 1911

In computing the new sets of indices, use was made of the formula for $I_m$ derived by McDonald (Caldwell et al., 1982) and similar
derivations which he supplied for $I_f$ and $I_g$. A comparison (Appendix Tables B.1 to B.3 and Figures B.1 to B.3) of the trends over the period 1871 to 1901 reveals a consistent pattern. When the age structure is held constant, the substitution of 1911, in place of Hutterite, age-specific marital fertility produces similar trends, but with appreciably lower values. However the use of the 1911 age structure produces trends in marked contrast to those based on the years 1871, 1881, 1891 and 1901. For instance, for Australia as a whole, the index $I_m$ shows an almost linear decline from 1871 to 1901 when the age structure is standardized, compared with a marked drop to 1881 and a levelling, or even a slight increase, to 1891, followed by another steep drop, without such standardization.

Although there are wide variations in values, the pattern for all the colonies and for the indices $I_m$ and $I_g$ are consistent: the two fertility measures differ mainly in magnitude while the two age structures produce appreciably different trends for the two largest colonies.

As noted above, the trends for Australia as a whole are strongly influenced by those in New South Wales and Victoria which, for some of the period under review, were in opposite directions. The dramatic influence of changes in the age structure can be seen in the $I_g$ series for Victoria and, as a consequence, for Australia. Whereas the original Princeton indices suggest a steady decline, those standardized for age show marked fluctuations. In contrast, New South Wales, with its longer history of settlement, had a much more stable age structure which did not interfere to the same extent with the trends produced by other weights.

Although the values for $I_g$ and $I_m$ show considerable variation over time when different age weights are used, the $I_f$ values follow very similar patterns, regardless of the age weights used.

These calculations, like those of Jones, used five-year averages of births, centred on census years. Jones drew her data from a variety of sources; although these are listed, the combinations in which they are used make it difficult to recreate them exactly, so that it is probable that these calculations use a slightly different data base. However when Jones's calculations were duplicated using these data, only very minor discrepancies were revealed.
It can be shown that, when births to married women approximately equal total births, then $I_m \times I_g$ approximately equals $I_f$. When $I_m$ and $I_g$ are multiplied, the component eliminated is that of married women in each age group as a proportion of all women aged 15-49. The proportion of married women in each age group in Victoria and New South Wales declined over the period, but the fall was spread fairly evenly over the age groups (Fig. 3.8).

When the relative proportions of all women in each age group are examined, it can be seen that there were dramatic changes in Victoria during the period, although the distributions were similar in 1871 and 1901, while in New South Wales the changes were of lesser magnitude (Fig. 3.9). The changes between 1871 and 1881 had the effect of increasing the proportion of women under 25, reducing the numbers from 25 to 39 and, to some extent, 44, then increasing the proportion in the oldest group. In calculating $I_g$, the Hutterite weightings emphasize the fertility of women in the 20-39 age groups, so a decline in their numbers is offset by their greater fertility. If 1911 Australia fertility weightings are used, the high fertility of the larger youngest groups compensates for the decreased proportions in the middle group, so that $I_g$ remains constant. However, when age is standardized, there is a marked drop in $I_g$ for Victoria between 1871 and 1881, followed by an increase to 1891, when the proportion of women under 20 dropped while that in the middle years increased. In New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia, the $I_g$ trend is converted from a modest increase to a slight decrease in the 1870s, a trend which continued through the 1880s and intensified during the 1890s. Data were not available for 1871 for Western Australia and Tasmania; for that reason, and the smallness of their populations, they are not considered in detail, but they appear to have followed different trends from their sister colonies, with a later commencement of marital fertility decline.

Thus, in the four most populous colonies, and hence in the overall trends for Australia, the effect of calculating the $I_g$ index standardizing for age is to change the accepted timing of the beginning of marital fertility decline in Australia from the 1880s to the 1870s.

However, such evidence should be assessed cautiously, given that the indications from other data are ambiguous.
Figure 3.8: Proportion of Currently-married Women in Five-year Age Groups, 15-49, Australia, New South Wales and Victoria, 1871-1901
Figure 3.9: Women in Five-year Age Groups as a Proportion of All Women 15-49, Australia, New South Wales and Victoria, 1871-1901

**NEW SOUTH WALES**

**VICTORIA**

**AUSTRALIA**
General Marital Fertility Rates

General marital fertility rates can be used to trace the pattern of fertility decline but, like the Princeton indices, they need data on the age and marital status of women which were only available for census years. However Caldwell and Ruzicka (1977, Appendix B) calculated a series of general marital fertility rates for New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland from 1871 to 1901, making estimates for the intercensal years. Their figure is reproduced in Appendix C. After warning that changes in marriage, migration and age patterns could produce inaccuracies in the rates, they concluded that the decline in Victoria in marital fertility may have commenced as early as 1873, in New South Wales from 1884 and in Queensland from 1887 (Caldwell and Ruzicka, 1977, p.10A).

CONCLUSIONS

The evidence from crude birth rates, children ever born, age-specific fertility rates, Princeton indices and general marital fertility rates shows that there was a dramatic decline in both overall and marital fertility sometime between 1860 and 1900.

Of the three measures from which the timing of the decline can be deduced - age-specific marital fertility rates, the Princeton indices and general marital fertility rates - the first is available for New South Wales alone. Both the age-specific rates and the age-standardized Princeton indices for New South Wales suggest a very slight decline in the 1870s, before the sustained drop from 1881 onwards, while the general marital fertility rates indicate a very slight downward trend in the early 1870s, which was reversed by the end of the decade. As the early decline was evident for only one cohort in the age-specific rates and was relatively slight in the Princeton age-standardized indices, it does not seem that the findings require a major reassessment of the view that marital fertility commenced its decline in New South Wales in the 1880s. However the Princeton age-standardized indices and the general marital fertility rates for Victoria give a much stronger indication of marital fertility decline in the 1870s so that, in the absence of other evidence, it seems highly likely that in Victoria the decline may have commenced by 1873, at least a decade before New South Wales.
While the inability to establish a definite timing is a disadvantage for this study, the early material will pre-date the commencement of marital fertility decline sufficiently to cover the possibility of an early commencement of that decline. Particular attention will be paid to indications that attitudes of writers in New South Wales changed more slowly than in Victoria on matters which might have been relevant to the onset of fertility decline.
CHAPTER 4: MOTHERHOOD

Introduction

The importance given by society to a woman's role as mother, compared with roles of productive worker, in a narrow sense, or housekeeper, increased over the centuries so that, by the nineteenth century, it was regarded as crucial. During the previous century and before, there was a change from the view that children's wills had to broken, by whatever drastic means were necessary, to the idea that children were beings who must be gently moulded by loving, if firm, maternal training (Branca, 1978, pp. 120 and 125; deMause, 1976, pp.51-52). Their relative importance in the household increased so that, as Ariès (1973, p.130) wrote, 'the child [had] taken a central place in the family'.

With the increasing emphasis placed on motherhood, nineteenth century women in Australia, as in Europe, who accepted the changed expectations, faced pressures which may have made childbearing and childrearing so onerous that they wished to limit the size of their families.

Maternal Mortality

During the latter half of the nineteenth century, maternal mortality fluctuated, but the rate was always high (Table 4.1). However the accuracy of the statistics is doubtful.

Victoria appeared to have a relatively high incidence of maternal deaths, compared with some other colonies, but, according to the Government Statist, this was due to the careful collection of deaths statistics rather than to a real disadvantage. Hayter stated that it was the Victorian practice to follow up reports of deaths of women in the child-bearing ages to determine whether they were associated with childbirth, as it had been found that this information was frequently not volunteered in cases where women died of infections shortly after giving birth (Vic.YB, 1887-88, pp.391-392). This procedure was subsequently adopted in New South Wales (Coghlan, 1903, pp.66-67).

While, in some cases, the rates are based on so few maternal deaths
Table 4.1: Maternal Death Rates, Australian Colonies, Selected Years, 1870-1900
(Deaths per 10,000 live births)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>NSW</th>
<th>Vic</th>
<th>Qld</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>WA</th>
<th>Tas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>66.1</td>
<td>88.7</td>
<td>55.2</td>
<td>72.9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>103.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>45.1</td>
<td>50.1</td>
<td>51.2</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>48.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>36.3</td>
<td>56.1</td>
<td>59.1</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>43.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>47.0</td>
<td>53.0</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>35.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>71.7</td>
<td>56.7</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>45.6</td>
<td>33.7</td>
<td>29.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>72.1</td>
<td>53.0</td>
<td>33.8</td>
<td>49.2</td>
<td>71.5</td>
<td>49.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Royal Commission, 1904, Exhibits Nos 43 and 107, and App. pages 32 and 38; VicYB 1873, p.96; VicYB 1887-8, p.392; C.B.C.S., Demography Bulletin, 1938, p.162.

As to render them of particularly dubious accuracy, it seems unlikely that the statistics overstate maternal mortality. Coghlan (1903, p. 67) believed that poorer women had larger families and were thus more prone to die in childbirth. He also believed that contraceptive practices were 'inconsistent with the future safe delivery of another child.' Coghlan's figures for New South Wales for 1893-1900 show that, for married women, there was one chance in 114 of dying as a result of their first confinement, while the second, and safest, birth brought a one in 214 risk of death (1903, p.60). He estimated that one woman in 32 who married at the age of 25 would die in childbirth (Coghlan, 1898, p.528). To put these figures into perspective, the rate for New South Wales for 1982 was one death from pregnancy-related disorders for every 8,000 confinements (A.B.S. 1983 and 1984). The mortality following a first birth in the 1890s was similar to that after an abdominal hysterectomy today,1 while the second birth carried a risk comparable with Caesarian section (Potts et al., 1977, p.211). In 1879 childbirth ranked behind only phthisis (tuberculosis) and typhoid as a cause of death among Victorian women aged from 15 to 44.

In some of the published statistics, a distinction was made between deaths due to the birth itself and those which were due to infection (known as metria or puerperal fever). However there does not

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1The mortality of hysterectomies would be accentuated by cancer in a proportion of cases.
seem to be any consistent relationship between increased maternal mortality and the proportion of deaths ascribed to the two categories, although maternal deaths increased in years of measles and scarlatina epidemics (Vic.YB, 1887-88, p.390).

Dr. James Jamieson of Melbourne, in one of his numerous papers on puerperal fever (1882, p.129), stated that 'Probably no cause of death, producing on average a very small amount of mortality, causes more feeling of popular alarm than puerperal fever.' The means by which puerperal fever spread had been described as early as 1795 and simple hygienic measures on the part of doctors and midwives had been advocated to reduce its incidence (Branca, 1975, pp.86-89; Rubenstein, 1980, p.402). A Melbourne doctor had introduced Lister's antiseptic methods in 1867 (Inglis, 1958, p.52), but there was still, in 1879, a 'want of agreement among authorities as to its real nature and nosological affinities' (Jamieson, 1879, p.1).

The simple measures proposed by Jamieson to reduce the incidence of puerperal fever, had they been practised by most doctors and midwives, should have drastically reduced its incidence. Instead, much medical energy was devoted to a battle in the pages of the Australian Medical Journal to refute Jamieson's somewhat derogatory remarks about the Melbourne Hospital. However, when a high standard of care was provided under the supervision of a dedicated doctor, maternal mortality could be reduced considerably, as is shown by the results achieved by the Benevolent Asylum (the Royal Hospital for Women from 1904) in Sydney where 1118 women were accouched during the period 1863-1872, with a maternal death rate of only 2.7 per 1000 deliveries, only one of the three deaths being due to puerperal fever (Lewis, 1980a, p.201). The rate is particularly impressive for two reasons. Firstly, the Asylum catered for the needy and refused admission to wealthier women who were prepared to pay for the privilege of being delivered in a hospital with such a good reputation for safety. Patients were therefore poorer women whose general standard of health would probably have made them vulnerable to the risks of childbirth. Also, many of the patients were women having their first baby who, likewise, had a relatively high risk of mortality.

The increased involvement of doctors in obstetrics, while
preventing some maternal deaths, probably increased the incidence of puerperal fever in the middle class patients who consulted them in preference to midwives. Doctors treated a variety of patients, including those suffering from diseases such as scarlet fever, throat infection and erysipelas, all caused by bacteria which are also responsible for puerperal fever. Although midwives were less able to assist with complicated deliveries, they treated only obstetric patients and usually stayed with women throughout their labour, so, therefore, had less opportunity to transmit disease between patients.

In 1873 there was a sudden upsurge in the number of deaths from puerperal fever in Victoria, followed by a temporary drop in the number of births (Jamieson, 1879, p.3). The Argus (3-7-1873, p.5), in a report on the meeting of the Medical Society of Victoria, mentioned a paper given on 'the recent epidemic of puerperal fever'. In the discussion following the paper's presentation, there was a marked difference of opinion between those doctors who believed that puerperal fever could be carried by doctors between patients and those who totally rejected that theory. It is tempting to speculate that couples who were apprehensive about the increased danger of child-birth took measures to delay conception when the alarm was at its height.

Young (1976, p.34) noted that the first case of puerperal fever was not recorded in Australia until 1830; there were subsequent occurrences in Tasmania in 1833 and 1851-1852. It does not appear to have been an important cause of maternal death in any colony until the 1850s or 1860s. Thus it was a danger introduced since they commenced childbearing for some women who were still fecund in the 1870s and, perhaps, the 1880s.

The practice of tight-lacing may have been an added hazard for the women of the period. Davies (1982) showed that women who had worn tight corsets from their youth were liable to have displaced reproductive organs, rendering them prone to obstetric difficulties. Even if one does not accept Davies' theory which attributes the commencement of fertility decline to the introduction of tight-lacing,

2It is possible that deaths from puerperal fever may have been attributed to other causes more frequently in the first half of the century.
it seems likely that some women, at least, faced difficult, or even fatal, childbirth as a result of a deformity induced either by their mothers or as a result of their own wish to conform to the dictates of fashion and respectability. The arguments of the advocates of 'rational dress' in Australia and specific references to the evils of tight-lacing suggest that it was practised to some extent in Australia. In its description of the wedding of a popular woman doctor, Table Talk (19-11-1897, p.17) commented on her 18-inch waist and later remarked that doctors 'talked of the dire consequences of tight-lacing but one of our fair physicians boasts of a "seventeen inch waist"' (17-12-1897, p.17). More alarmingly, an advertisement for an 'abdominal corset and belt combined' merely conceded that 'for before and after lying-in a slight modification is introduced...' (TT, 17-5-1895, p.3; See Plate 4.1).

Women had good cause to fear childbirth and, according to Teale, literally put their houses in order late in their pregnancies in case they succumbed (1978, p.121).

Added to the women's fear of death was the knowledge that they would receive little relief from the pain of childbirth. Youngson and Smith describe, in horrifying detail, the ordeal through which some were put (Youngson, 1979, pp.90-124; F.B.Smith, 1979, pp.13-64). Many doctors were reluctant to employ chloroform for normal births and, although they had little medical justification for denying its use, 'Opponents of chloroform during childbirth and gynaecology always gave their arguments a medical veneer (F.B. Smith, 1979, p.20).

Although the dangers and sufferings of childbirth were great during the nineteenth century, they were probably no worse than in earlier times. How, then, can it be claimed that a fear of childbirth caused women to attempt to reduce their fertility in the nineteenth century?

Branca writes:

Maternal and infant mortality were no longer quietly accepted as part of a divine plan. The growing emphasis in the nineteenth century was that through proper measures one could control this process of nature and improve upon it. [There was a] decline in fatalism... (Branca, 1975, p.76).
CAUTION—NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that any persons imitating the Elizabeth Abdominal Corset and Belt Combined, are liable to be Prosecuted.
The public is also Cautioned Against Purchasing Imitations.

The only Genuine Elizabeth Corset can be Purchased from the Sole Inventor and Patentee.
E. Merrilees, Stationers’ Hall, 224 Swanston-street, Melbourne.

ELIZABETH ABDOMINAL CORSET & BELT COMBINED

A Marvellous Change in the Figure is Effected.

No matter how much the abdomen is distorted these Corsets bring the figure back into graceful, flowing, and above all, natural lines.

Every Movement is Free and Graceful in Riding and Walking.

The result of many years’ thought and experiment, constructed on true anatomical principles, and combines the attraction of a Neat Figure with the Maximum of Ease and the Minimum of Compression.

Spinal Corsets Made to Order.

To Suit any Shape, no matter however deformed. Ease, Grace and Health Studied.

TESTIMONIALS, given by Prominent City Ladies, may be seen at
STATIONERS’ HALL, 224 Swanston Street, Melbourne.

(Table Talk 17-5-1895, p.3)
Plate 4.1: The Elizabeth Abdominal Corset and Belt Combined.

Corsets and tightlacing were blamed for many gynaecological disorders in the nineteenth century.
Infant Mortality

The idea that a decline in infant mortality may have triggered the decline in the birth rate does not seem promising when colonial or national statistics from Australia and overseas are examined. Infant mortality rates in the Australian colonies fluctuated in the second half of the nineteenth century but remained at a high level, perhaps due to a higher level of urbanization in an era when the risk of infant death was greater in the metropolitan areas than in the rest of the colonies. It is also possible that the high death rate in later years reflected a higher level of registration of infant deaths, rather than a lack of improvement in infant health.

Infant mortality rates in the Australian colonies apparently rose in the 1870s (Table 4.2), a partial explanation being that the registration of infant births and deaths improved at much the same time as fertility declined. Hayter, Victoria's Government Statist, fell into the trap of 'discovering' South Australia's high infant mortality rate (Vic.YB 1878-79, p.114), only to have to recant years later when he established that the rates he had calculated for other colonies were based on the incomplete recording of births (Vic.YB, 1887-8, p.333).

Table 4.2: Infant Mortality Rates, Australian Colonies, Five-year Rates, 1870-1899
(Deaths before one year of age per 1000 live births)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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Concern about the accuracy of vital statistics in New South Wales

For the years 1873 to 1887, the infant mortality rate for Greater Melbourne averaged 170.7, while that for the rest of the colony averaged 97.5; the rural-urban differentials did not change much in the period, while the proportion of births registered in Greater Melbourne rose from 29.5% to 44.1% of all Victorian births (Vic.YB 1887-8, p.336).
led, in 1886, to the establishment of a Select Committee of the Legislative Council to investigate the registration of births, deaths and marriages; the subsequent report showed, in particular, that the registration of births and stillbirths was unsatisfactory (NSW JLC 1885-6, p.181).

The increase in infant mortality also reflected a higher level of urbanization in an era when, as has been shown, the risk of infant death was greater in the metropolitan areas than in the rest of the colonies. Several factors combined to enhance the chances of survival of rural, as compared to urban, children.

Young (1969, p.19) pointed out that isolation gives protection from infectious diseases; these had become a greater danger to young Australians as the population increased. She quoted Fenner (1970) as stating that measles, a viral disease, requires communities of 300,000 to 500,000 to survive, unless infection is re-introduced from outside. Victoria and New South Wales reached populations of 300,000 in the mid-1850s. Other diseases dangerous to children - diphtheria, scarlet fever and whooping cough - are caused by bacteria and can be spread by carriers. Both viral and bacterial infections have less chance of spreading in isolated areas than in large towns or cities.

Milk supplies in the country were less likely to be contaminated or adulterated. Families who kept a cow would have had fresh milk available twice a day, so that the lack of refrigeration was not a very great danger. Residents of the smaller towns could probably choose to obtain their milk from a farm which they knew had a clean dairy.

Sanitation was less of a problem in the country. It was not difficult for families to construct safe toilet facilities themselves, particularly as instructions were given in the press (A'asian, 2-3-1867, p.272), but governments were slow to take action to supply the more elaborate systems needed in the larger urban centres (Pryor, 1977, passim).

Country children may have had a better diet as it was possible to grow fruit and vegetables in many areas and meat was cheap and readily

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^Melbourne's population increased from 125,000 in 1861 to 191,000 in 1871 and 268,000 in 1881, while that of Sydney rose from 96,000 to 138,000 and then to 225,000 in the corresponding years (McCarty, 1974).
available. However, this cannot be claimed as a major factor in preserving their health as 'even in times that are called bad, there are probably very few persons [in Melbourne] who have not sufficient, perhaps abundant, food and clothing' (Jamieson, 1878, p.259).

Rural families' lack of accessibility to medical care was less of a disadvantage than it would be today; however, Young (1969, p.16) quoted several sources who regarded this aspect of isolation as a decided liability. Certainly, doctors could provide useful treatment for the accidental injuries which were common in the country, but their remedies for the infectious diseases which afflicted the colonies' children were not very effective (Kociumbas, 1982, p.15). Muskett (1882, pp. 33-60) could only suggest sending city children away to mountain sanitoria to regain their health.

Archer, the Victorian Registrar-General, showed that, in the 1850s, a much higher proportion of infant deaths occurred in the summer than in the winter months. This applied to virtually all except respiratory diseases. Dysentery, diarrhoea and convulsions were a much greater problem in Victoria than 'at home' (AMJ, 1859, pp.139-145) and were a major cause of infant deaths (Young, 1976, p.12). Colonists were at a loss to explain why Australian children did not suffer from rickets (A'asian, 10-9-1887, p.506), not realizing that the Vitamin D which they received from the abundant sunlight generally prevented this deficiency disease.

F.B. Smith (1979, pp.65-66) showed that the infant mortality rate in England and Wales and in Scotland remained steady or even rose in the second half of the nineteenth century (F.B. Smith, 1979, pp.65-66).

The rates Smith quoted for England and Wales for five-year periods between 1866 and 1885 ranged from 38 per thousand to 16 per thousand higher than the combined New South Wales and Victorian rates for the corresponding years, with the gap narrowing towards 1885.

Infant mortality in the Australian colonies in the mid nineteenth century was lower than in England, but the reverse was believed by many Australians. The Australasian, in a leading article on infant mortality, informed its readers that

The question as to the comparative value of infant life in the Australian colonies and in England is usually decided against us. It is broadly asserted by medical men and statist
that the chances against a newly-born Australian reaching manhood are greater than the similar chances affecting the life of a newly-born Briton...We are not prepared, however, to maintain the contrary allegation; all we contend for is that further investigation is required (1-12-1866, p.1104).

The leader went on to point out that the manner of calculation of the statistics was probably at fault. Archer (AMJ, 1859), demonstrated that when infant deaths were related to births, rather than to total population, Victoria's position was relatively favourable. In some published statistics, infant deaths were shown as a proportion of all deaths. In a youthful population, such measures emphasized infant deaths unduly. However, it appears from the Australasian editorial that Archer's explanation had not been widely disseminated or understood even seven years later.

When it eventually became clear that Australian babies had a better chance of survival than those 'at home', women who, for any reason, wished to ease the burdens of motherhood would have become more confident about reducing their fertility. If fertility decline depends on reductions in infant mortality, or a relatively low risk of infant death, then it is necessary that those who make decisions about fertility are aware of the level of mortality in their community. It appears that, for Victorians, this was not the case until about the 1870s.

The interval between births affects the chances of a baby's survival (Puffer and Serrano, 1975, pp.28-32; Rutstein, 1983, pp.30-32), so anything that increases the spacing between births should decrease infant mortality. In non-contracepting populations which do not practise lengthy periods of postnatal sexual abstinence, the intensity and duration of breastfeeding are probably the most important factors in determining birth intervals. As will be shown later, there may have been changes in breastfeeding practices which could have extended birth intervals for the women by whom they were adopted.

An increase in age at marriage should also have led to reduced infant mortality if, as appears likely, measures were not taken to delay first births. Infants born to women under 20 years of age have an appreciably higher death rate than those of all other ages, regardless of the general level of mortality in the society, according
to Puffer and Serrano (1975, pp.3-10), although World Fertility Survey data also show that mothers over 40 years of age may have greater infant loss where infant mortality levels are not high (Rutstein, 1983, pp.26-28). The slightly increased mortality of infants whose mothers are older than the mid thirties is offset by their longer birth intervals. If, then, changes in age at first marriage reduced the proportions of births to women under 20 years of age, infant mortality due to youthful childbearing might have decreased. The percentage of Victorian women aged 15-19 who were married declined from 12.9 in 1861 to 6.4 in 1871 and 2.9 in 1881 (Censuses of Victoria, 1861, 1871 and 1881).

It has been shown that as the number of children born to a woman rises above four, their infant mortality rate rapidly exceeds that of lower order births: 'tenth or later children have only half as much a chance of survival as do second children' (United Nations, 1954, p.8). One of the features of the fertility decline in nineteenth century Australia was the rapid drop in the percentage of births to women of high parities (Table 3.2 and Figure 3.1). The percentage of women who bore from one to four children almost doubled from 18.4 per cent of the 1842-46 birth cohort to 36.4 per cent of the 1862-66 cohort, while those with ten or more children declined from 29.2 to 12.1 per cent. However, the available statistics do not show the distribution of births by birth order, so it is not clear what proportion high-risk children formed of all births in the 1870s and 1880s. If the proportion of high order births did fall, it is interesting to speculate why infant mortality did not decline earlier.

Davies (1982), in addition to attributing maternal risk to the practice of tight-lacing, claimed that some foetal loss and infant mortality could be traced to maternal malformations present before pregnancy and the constriction of organs during pregnancy.

The early trends in statistics of infant mortality probably reflected underregistration of births and deaths and greater urbanization but one may also conjecture that women who continued to have large families after fertility had generally declined differed in important respects from women who had limited their family size: that women who reduced their fertility were women who would have lost fewer
children, regardless of their parity. If fertility declined mainly among women with characteristics which helped them to attain a low infant mortality rate, then their different fertility pattern would not have greatly affected the overall infant mortality rate. In fact, were women with thriving children those most confident in attempting fertility reduction? Knodel (1982) concluded that such was probably the case in preindustrial Germany. Lewis (1976, p.43) has shown that there were working class/middle class differentials in infant mortality rates; L.L. Smith (1873, p.151) wrote: 'my observations show me that the wealthier classes are raising healthy offspring; whilst, on the other hand, the poorer classes have more sickly children'. Although Caldwell and Ruzicka have demonstrated that fertility decline showed little difference in timing by class, they do show that the working class lagged slightly (1977, p.11).

Parents' Responsibility for Health

As early as the mid-1860s, newspapers and magazines expressed concern at the high level of infant mortality. Public health measures were advocated but the responsibility of parents for their children's health was not ignored.

Much may be done by the state, but much more by individuals. It may be harsh to tell parents, at a time when in whole districts disease has visited almost every house, that the fault rests to a considerable extent with themselves ... even in such unfavorable circumstances parents may do much to increase the probabilities of escape from the prevailing scourge, or to mitigate its virulence when it visits them (A'asian, 1-12-1866, p.1104).

There was controversy between the proponents of the germ theory of infection and those who believed that 'miasmas', or airborne influences, caused the diseases which periodically ravaged the community (Gandevia, 1978, p.78). For instance, the Town and Country Journal (1-8-1874, p.177) advised its readers to site their houses so that they were not affected by 'miasm', 'the principal cause of nearly every "epidemic" disease, which falls upon the people, attacking numbers in any community with fevers, ague, diarrhoea, dysentery, cholera, Etc, Etc'. It was supposed to come up from the surface of the earth. Jamieson (1878, p.299) recognized that a range of common
diseases including measles, scarlatina, typhoid and diphtheria were 'in one way or another contagious', although he was not sure how diphtheria and typhoid were spread. However he was convinced that care by individuals and the installation by public authorities of proper drainage would greatly reduce the death toll (1878, pp.301-302). Women were expected, as part of their housekeeping responsibilities, to see that their houses were well drained and ventilated (T&C, 1-12-1877, p.921; 5-3-1881, p.460; 7-2-1885, p.290; A'asian, 1-12-1866, p.1104). Melbourne Punch (13-1-1870, pp.12-13) published a cartoon (Plate 4.2) and a verse about 'miasma', dedicated to the Mayor and the Council of Ministers; typhus and cholera were blamed on this 'Demon of Drain and of Alley'. The issue was clouded, since some measures which were effective in reducing the incidence of disease, such as effective sanitation, could be claimed by either camp as demonstrating the correctness of its theory. Since the aetiology of many of the common serious diseases was not understood by doctors, let alone by laymen, some of the advice offered was of dubious value. A correspondent to the Australasian assured his readers that diphtheria could be eliminated if children washed their necks with cold water and avoided wearing collars (A'asian, 3-8-1869, p.135).

The Care of Sick Children

The survival of sick children depended much more on their mothers' competence than is the case today. Some relief was given to wealthier Melbourne mothers when, from 1880, the Alfred Hospital provided nurses to care for patients in their own homes (A'asian, 4-7-1885, p.7), but, throughout the period, papers and books gave advice on treating illnesses at home, sometimes without even mentioning the possibility of consulting a doctor (T&C, 16-11-1872, p.618). A grandmother, giving advice to readers of the Town and Country Journal, wrote

A mother must have her thoughts about her and not get frightened when the children fall sick. No one needs presence of mind as much as a mother; and she must learn to think quick [sic] and act promptly when a sudden emergency comes up. Many painful hours could be avoided if mothers would only take proper precautions and use suitable remedies when the little ones are first taken sick (12-3-1881, p.508).
Plate 4.2: A GHOST THAT OUGHT TO BE LAID. (Punch, 13-1-1870, p.13.)

'Miasm' was thought to be the cause of such diseases as cholera and typhus.
Children's hospitals were established but, in their early days, were used mainly by the poor (Holden, 1887; Argus, 25-6-1873, Supp.). The attitude of doctors and nurses towards their patients and, particularly, towards the mothers of their patients was often one of patronizing impatience. Nurses 'knew' that children would recover more readily if not disturbed by the visits of ignorant parents (A'asian, 24-8-1889, p.376). Nevertheless, in spite of the staff's condescension, parents, anxious that their children receive treatment, would even bring them for admission in wheelbarrows (A'asian, 28-6-1890, pp. 1266-1267). In a letter to the Argus regarding a proposal for the removal of the Hospital for Sick Children to a more salubrious site, the Surgeon reminded his readers that

these persons are very poor, that they have to carry their children, or that at the most they can only afford the threepenny cab-fares (25-6-1873, Supp.).

If the hospital were moved too far from its potential patients, many parents would not leave their children for treatment as in-patients:

It is a singular and irrational thing, but no less a fact, that mothers in the class for whom the hospital is chiefly designed will rather let their children run the most dangerous risks than have them well-cared for when they cannot see them frequently. Now it would be a mere mockery to tell a poor woman of Collingwood, with her husband's dinner to cook and half a dozen children to look after, that she could see her child at the Royal Park frequently. Her whole day would be lost in trudging to and fro (Ibid.)

The Argus was not impressed with such arguments and adopted a harsh attitude towards free medical care for poor children.

Is there no alternative? Is it not possible that, instead of relying upon eleemosynary medicine and attendance, the parents of these children might bestir themselves to obtain such advice and assistance as their children might require, instead of being beholden to charity for both?...With regard to sick children, their maladies, where they are not inherited, are mainly traceable to ignorance, neglect, uncleanliness, improper diet, and unwholesome habitations. Why not apply ourselves, therefore, to remove the causes, instead of expending our energies upon the provision of some palliation of the deplorable consequences? So long as we limit our efforts to expedients for mitigating and diminishing the latter, we may calculate upon finding the demands upon our charity annually increasing in a far greater ratio than our ability to meet them; and we shall ultimately discover that we have been
Plate 4.3: The Outpatients’ Entrance, Melbourne Children's Hospital.  
(Illustrated Sydney News, 31-1-1891, p.8.)  
Mothers apparently had to wait in the street with children needing medical treatment.
unconsciously pauperising and demoralising the objects of our well-meant but ill-applied bounty (27-6-1873, p.5).

Infant deaths, although causing sorrow, were not regarded as unusual events; even families fortunate to avoid such a loss would have had friends or neighbours whose babies had died. Sad little verses and stories appeared in the weekly newspapers. 'When the Baby Died' (T&C, 17-6-1871, p.756) dealt with a mother's sorrow but offered, as consolation, the idea that 'of all life, all death, God's love is law'. Children were not shielded from the idea that babies died. Sentimental verses, 'The Day that Baby Died', (T&C, 23-4-1881, p.797), were written as though by the infant's brothers and sisters; the Children's Corner carried a story about a family who took a doll out for a walk in their baby's pram, so that they could avoid telling their grandfather that the child had died (T&C, 4-7-1885, p.29). However, infant deaths were not regarded in the same way as those of older people; a mother who was worried about the etiquette in such matters was advised that it was not necessary to wear mourning following the death of her month-old infant (T&C, 18-2-1886, p.346).

The idea, developed in 'When the Baby Died', that infant mortality was part of a divine plan was coming under attack. Jamieson (1878, p.261) warned mothers whose artificially-fed babies died that they could not 'clear themselves of responsibility by saying it was God's will'. As with maternal mortality, there was a decrease in fatalism with regard to infant mortality.

Wet-nursing

The practice of wet-nursing, of one woman feeding another's baby, was reasonably common in Australia in the 1860s and 1870s, but was criticized for the risk at which it placed the nurse's own baby.

Poor, usually unmarried, women who acted as wet nurses to the babies of more privileged women, had to allow their own babies to be 'dry-nursed', or spoon-fed, mainly with cereals, usually with fatal results. The practice came to public notice when a doctor was sufficiently outraged to refuse to issue death certificates when the unfortunate babies succumbed, stating that 'Dry-nursing has now become a synonym for infanticide.' (A'asian, 18-2-71, p.210).
The publicity given to the deaths of infants from 'dry-nursing' may have been one factor leading to the decline in Australia of wet-nursing. Women who considered obtaining a wet nurse would have been aware that they were thereby depriving the nurse's child of a reasonable chance of survival. The writer of medical advice to women wrote:

I ask my readers to pause and consider well what is the effect of this wet nursing – why, that the mother (I allude to the nurse) is tempted to leave her own offspring to suckle that of a stranger; (L.L. Smith, 1873, p.155).

He went on to point out that the dry-nursed baby would almost certainly die, with the result that 'The State thus sustains a great loss, and society is outraged.' (p.155). He was very critical of the practice of 'indiscriminantly [selecting wet-nurses] from a crowd at the Lying-in Hospital' without making close enquiries into the nurse's health and background (p.152).

A reduction in the prevalence of wet-nursing may have slightly reduced fertility, as those mothers who previously would have employed a wet-nurse would probably have had longer births intervals if they continued to lactate, as will be shown below. Although the number of women involved would not have been large, they would usually have been reasonably affluent to afford to employ a wet-nurse and, therefore would have been of the class who initiated the fertility decline.

Infant Feeding

Babies who were not breast-fed were given milk and cornflour (A'asian, 11-2-71, p.180) and before the advent of rubber feeding teats, were fed through 'a cloth soaked in a gruel mixture' (Branca, 1978, p.122). The need for sterilizing, as opposed to merely washing, feeding equipment was not fully recognized, although doctors who were concerned about preventable diseases pointed out the need to choose

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2Branca documents the decline in wet-nursing in England and France in the early nineteenth century, relating the change to new attitudes towards the mother-child relationship, as well as to cost (1978, pp.120-121). However, wet-nursing had never been as widespread in England as on the Continent (Robertson, 1976, p.410).
easily-cleaned bottles, rather than Mather's shilling feeding bottle which had gained favour in the late 1870s (Jamieson, 1878, p.262). The Mather bottle, which was illustrated in Punch on 6-1-1881, featured a teat which was connected to the bottle by a long tube which would have been very hard to clean adequately.

The adulteration and poor quality of milk was a concern of Victorians from the 1860s. In 1861, '(W)atered, starched and dirty milk was blamed by one doctor for an increase in the mortality of children.' (Inglis, 1958, p.35). The deaths from diarrhoeal diseases of many infants each summer were no doubt partly due to their being fed poor quality milk which was stored in germ-laden containers without the aid of effective means of cooling. Muskett, who provided much advice to mothers on child-rearing, believed that 'the bottle-fed infant in the crowded districts of any large city has a desperate - indeed a well-nigh hopeless - struggle for existence during the hot months of the year' (1882, p.24). He offered the sensible advice that babies should not be weaned from December to early March (1882, pp.25-26).

Given the dangers of artificial feeding, mothers were under increased pressure to breast-feed the babies themselves. Moral arguments were also invoked:

Be it always remembered that an infant's profferest food is its own mother's milk, and that she who can suckle her own child and does it not, is guilty of a serious offence against God's law (A'asian, 19-3-1870, p.359).

Infant feeding practices may have had both direct and indirect effects on fertility decline. Mothers in the early 1870s (A'asian, 2-4-1870, p.423; T&C, 14-6-1873, p.756) were advised to feed babies two-hourly, though apparently not all through the night, for up to three months, then three-hourly; at four months the baby was expected to sleep from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. Branca (1978, p.122) referred to similar advice on feeding given to English mothers in the middle of the nineteenth century, implying that it was a departure from earlier practice. Such a regime would have imposed considerable stress on a mother and would have been an almost impossible burden if she had other young children for whom she had to care unaided. However, in partial compensation, such frequent feeding should have extended the period of post-partum amenorrhoea, thus ensuring a moderate interval between
births (Howie and McNeilly, 1982), thereby compensating for possible reductions in the age at which babies were weaned. If mothers followed Smith's advice to commence weaning their babies at from the seventh to the ninth month (L.L. Smith, 1873, p.168),^3 and had, until then, been feeding three-hourly, they might well expect a spacing of at least 16 to 18 months between births.

Inexperienced mothers often rely on their own mothers or older relatives for advice on child care and feeding. For many Australian women of the 1870s and 1880s this source of advice was not available because their families were in Britain. They were, therefore, particularly likely to turn to newspapers and books for help and, as a result, could well have adopted the innovations which such sources prescribed.^4 In 1871, 46.1 per cent of Victorian females and 33.4 per cent of females in New South Wales were born outside the Australian colonies, mostly in the British Isles. Since the censuses for Victoria and New South Wales did not contain tabulations of birthplace by both age and sex, these percentages do not necessarily apply to women of childbearing ages, and some women would have migrated with their families before they married, but they do indicate that there must have been many women who could not avail themselves of traditional advice about child-rearing practices. Also the fact that they, or their parents, had chosen to emigrate suggests that they would have been prepared to adopt innovative solutions to their problems.

**Feeding Older Children**

In describing a suitable diet for children aged from 5 to 17, the *Town and Country Journal* (21-7-1877) advised mothers that children needed meat, fat (for a good skin) and plenty of food, but fresh fruit

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^3If Mrs. Beeton is a reliable guide, English women of the class to whom she addressed herself would have weaned their babies from the ninth to the fifteenth month (Robertson, 1976, pp.410-411).

^4Mechling (1975) warned that even those mothers who read child-rearing manuals often ignored their advice in favour of attitudes which they acquired in the process of their own childhood; Mechling's caution may not apply to the kind of information, such as frequency of feeding, which would not have been remembered from babyhood, although it may well have affected the strictness with which children were treated.
and vegetables were not mentioned. However, younger children were not to be given meat, but rather a diet based on milk and wheaten flour (Gibbons, 1878, p.17). Animal food, other than milk, was suspected of causing convulsions in infants and was not to be given to a child until it had teeth. However Gibbons did consider tomatoes and oranges to be valuable in children's diets (p.16).

As with many aspects of child care, diet was believed to affect the character, too much meat leading to a savage nature while 'a purely vegetable diet confers ... moral and physical weakness' (Gibbons, 1878, p.20). Gibbons' booklet provided generally sound, and not unduly prescriptive, advice on a suitable diet for all members of the family. Louis Smith (1873, pp.190-191) wrote of 'that great energy of character, and power of will, which we are all desirous of seeing in our children, is begotten by the quality and quantity of food'.

The Mother's Influence

A mother's responsibilities did not end with ensuring that her children were protected from disease and nursed carefully if, in spite of the precautions taken, they fell ill.

A mother's influence in shaping her children's character was increasingly stressed, with its newly-perceived importance placing heavy responsibilities on her. The ideal mother was depicted as a patient, sweet-tempered woman who did not allow tiredness to prevent her paying attention to her children's demands. Readers of the Town and Country Journal were told:

There is an awakening awareness of the importance of maternal influence in the family circle. It is the mother's influence which constitutes the mainspring of action, that is felt alike in the smallest circle and in the largest empire ... the traces of her skill and labour shall last when adamant shall cease to crumble, and the paltry glory of mortal greatness shall be shrouded in oblivion. The traces of her influence upon that young mind; the thoughts, that she now causes to glow and beam in that young soul, shall one day light up a world of emotion and energy in the bosom of others; and those, in their turn, shall rouse and stimulate and strengthen others to acts of noble doing, until her single influence, like the power that moves the first ... and so on to the last, shall reach the utmost boundary of time. There is no resisting the well-directed influence of a good mother. Her sweetness of temper will soften the manners of her children: her courtesy will render them respectful and polite; and her endearing
tenderness will make them mild and affectionate. (6-12-1873, p.724)

L.L. Smith (1873, p.136) asked 'Who is there amongst us who has not at one time or other felt the high toning power and influence of a well-cultivated home-loving, virtuous mother?'

But when we ... remember how large a share of the toil and responsibility involved in all this nursery work has fallen to the lot of mothers and has been performed by them with so few rebellious murmurs at the dispensations of Providence and with so much apparent cheerfulness and goodwill, we are persuaded that maternal patience is an inherent quality in maternal history (24-5-1873, p.66).

The Australasian stated that:

[the mother] can to a great extent make the little heart that caught its beatings from her own just what she would have it be, if she has courage, wisdom, and patience ... (7-7-1877, p.423).

Parents who write with their own pencil lines of heaven upon the fresh tablets of their children's hearts - who trust not to the hand of hirelings their first, holiest, most indelible impression - will usually find less than others to blot out when the scroll is finished, and less to mourn for when they read it in eternity (Ill. Syd. News, 11-5-1870, p.402).

Lest mothers flagged in their devotion to duty, they were warned that if the child died they would reproach themselves for not making enough effort to be patient:

A little elbow leans upon your knee.
Your tired knee, that has so much to bear; 
************
You do not prize this blessing ever-much,
You almost are too tired to pray tonight.
************
I wonder so that mothers ever fret,
At little children clinging to their gown;
************
The little boy I used to kiss is dead!
(T&C, 22-3-1873, p.372).

One might infer from such exhortations that many women were believed to find the burdens of motherhood onerous.

When offering advice, Australian newspapers and manuals had to assume that the mothers they addressed were unlikely to have skilled assistance in caring for their children. Trained children's nurses
were almost unavailable in Australia and commanded such high wages that only the wealthy could afford their services. Other parents had to make do with the services of nurse-maids, ignorant girls who saw their work as a very brief stage before they moved up in status to become maids of all work. A case in which the death of a child was believed to have been due to a nurserygirl's ill-treatment (Asian, 1-11-1879, pp.437 and 564) added to fears about the danger of delegating child care. Although it is unlikely that most girls were cruel, they had the reputation of being irresponsible. L.L. Smith (1873, pp.163-164) described the pranks (including perambulator races) of nurserygirls when they took babies for a walk or an outing in the park. One baby died when its pram was overturned, throwing it to the ground on to its broken feeding bottle. Ironically, unreliable general servants were paid about 30 pounds per annum, compared with the 20 pound salary commanded by a governess (Punch, 27-8-1874, p.342). Twopeny (1883, p.54) observed, 'Thus it is that many mothers prefer undertaking the duties of nurse themselves, and devote themselves to their children often at the expense of their husbands and certainly of all social relations.' By implication, Twopeny considered that middle class English women could easily obtain competent servants. However Branca (1975, pp.54-57) claimed that it was probably only upper class and some upper middle class English households which could have afforded to employ other than 'an unskilled and often sulky teenaged servant'. The Bankses (1964, p.69) stated 'There was no slackening off in the employment of servants generally, or of nursemaids in particular, until well after birth control was firmly established', suggesting that servants, but not necessarily trained servants, were readily available in England; subsequently Banks (1981, p.101) conceded Branca's point that many middle class families did not have a sufficient income to employ more than one servant.

As migrants, many mothers lacked that help from female relatives which seems to have been a feature of nineteenth century families. The lack of relatives to provide help, either regularly or during crises such as illness, placed an added burden on women of all social classes. Even today, such help is of great value to mothers of young children, but in an era when there was little organized community support for families in difficulties it would have assumed much greater importance.
Poor families could be reduced to leaving children unattended. The Town and Country Journal (20-9-1873, p.375) reported, without implying that the parents were negligent, a case in which a six year old country girl was left with her younger brother to mind some sheep while her mother and father worked elsewhere on their farm. The children wandered away, were lost, and died.

Conclusion

The important point, when considering the demands of motherhood as an influence on fertility decline is not whether the demands were heavy but whether they changed so as to make large families a greater burden than they had been in the past. Childbirth may possibly have become more dangerous with the increase in deaths from puerperal fever; certainly there was alarm about such deaths and less fatalism about maternal and infant mortality. Changes to more frequent feeding of infants, discouragement of wet-nursing and the greater emphasis on the importance of the maternal role in shaping the character of children all combined to make motherhood more demanding than before and, perhaps, to make women more receptive to thoughts of family limitation. It is not implied that women rejected the idea of motherhood altogether. Rather, they may have wished to have fewer children, spaced further apart, than women of earlier birth cohorts, in order to provide better care to each child.
CHAPTER 5: MARRIAGE PATTERNS

Introduction

In societies which have strong sanctions against ex-nuptial fertility and which do not practise contraception, women's age at first marriage and the proportions of women who ever marry have important implications for fertility.

When the proportion of women who are married declines but the age-specific fertility rates of married women remain constant, several measures of fertility may show a decline. Some measures use as their denominator the total population or all women in the fecund age ranges. Other rates, although they measure the fertility only of married women, can also be affected by an increase in the age at marriage, because they do not distinguish between the fertility of various age groups. Caldwell and Ruzicka (1977, App. B) demonstrated that changes in the proportions of married women in different age groups can affect general marital fertility rates. Thus changes in age at marriage may cause an apparent change in both overall and marital fertility, even when birth control is not practised.

Another effect of change in age at marriage on fertility is more speculative. Attitudes to young women may alter when many of their numbers spend some years as single adults; when they marry they may then have a more equal relationship with their husbands so that they can express their wishes about family size and the spacing of births. This possibility is developed further below.

Ex-nuptial Fertility

It is clear that in Australia in the second half of the nineteenth century pre-marital sexual relations were regarded with strong disapproval and, consequently, unmarried women who bore children suffered considerable hardship. Although there were expressions of outrage against their seducers (A'asian, 24-12-1870, p.817; Bull, 29-4-1882, p.2; TT, 26-2-1892, p.12; Ill. Syd. News, 9-2-1893, p.6), the actual burden of society's disapproval fell on the mothers of illegitimate babies. Pregnant single women faced unpalatable choices. They could be delivered in special asylums or hospitals where they were segregated from 'respectable' mothers or, in desperation, they could
kill their new-born babies. Some undoubtedly had abortions and others committed suicide. Infanticides and the suicides of 'fallen' women were often reported in the newspapers, infanticide, in particular, being regarded as an ever-present social problem. Refshauge's examination (1982, pp.38-40) of non-marital fertility patterns revealed a slight overall decline for Australia between 1871 and 1901, with trends in Victoria similar to New South Wales but with lower values. Ex-nuptial births were less than 10 per cent of all births in New South Wales and Victoria in the period, so any investigation of fertility decline can safely disregard ex-nuptial births when seeking the causes of the decline.

**Marriage Patterns**

For the period covered by this study, the crude marriage rates do not provide a good guide to marriage patterns because the age and sex structure of the population, particularly in Victoria, fluctuated considerably. However, the rates were taken seriously by most contemporary writers, with concern being expressed when the rates fell. Of the accuracy of reporting of marital status at the censuses, McDonald (1975, p.266) stated 'At best it can be said that there are no obvious anomalies in the statistics'. Crude marriage rates will not be used in this study and analyses of proportions married will not depend on a high level of accuracy in the statistics on which they are based.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, the sex ratio was very high; in New South Wales in 1851, there were three males for every two females of 14 years of age or over (McDonald, 1975, p.40). It might be supposed that, in these conditions, most women would marry, while the proportions married would fall as the numbers of men and women became more similar.

McDonald (1975, p.89ff.) examined the effect of the balance of the sexes on the proportions marrying for a wide range of marriageable ages for men and women, with particular emphasis on the age groups 20-34, but he also showed that from 1871 to 1891 the proportions of women who had not married before reaching the 45 to 49 age group rose only slightly, from 4.0 to 6.4 per cent in New South Wales and from 4.1 to
7.4 per cent in Victoria (1975, p.96). Thus, the great majority of women were married before they became too old to bear children. This study focuses on marriage patterns as they affect fertility and will therefore concentrate on the marriage chances of women under 35 and, particularly, under 30 years of age, since postponement of marriage when women are most fecund is of particular importance to the study of fertility. A significant decrease in the numbers of children ever born to married women could be expected of women who did not marry until they had reached their thirties. The New South Wales and Victorian statistics both show a general rise in the percentages of never married men and women in the lower age groups up to 1891, with a marked increase in the proportions of younger unmarried Victorian women.

The magnitude of the change is shown in Table 5.1. and Figure 5.1.

Table 5.1: Percentages Never Married, New South Wales and Victoria, 1861-1901

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>87.9</td>
<td>65.1</td>
<td>65.1</td>
<td>46.8</td>
<td>41.1</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>10.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>84.2</td>
<td>57.3</td>
<td>60.9</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td>57.9</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>38.3</td>
<td>15.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>85.6</td>
<td>57.2</td>
<td>57.2</td>
<td>41.1</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>38.3</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>88.1</td>
<td>60.1</td>
<td>60.5</td>
<td>40.8</td>
<td>61.9</td>
<td>50.8</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>66.1</td>
<td>42.0</td>
<td>42.0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: Victorian data exclude Chinese and Polynesians.

Sources: McDonald (1975, p.96) and Censuses of New South Wales and Victoria, 'Conjugal Condition', 1861-1901.

Although both New South Wales and Victoria shared in the trend towards later marriage for women, there was a striking difference between the two colonies, although they had very similar percentages of never

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1These are cross-sectional data; of the cohorts who reached marriageable ages in the late 1880s and in the 1890s, a higher proportion remained single.
Figure 5.1: Percentages of Never Married Males and Females, Selected Age Groups, Victoria, 1861-1901, New South Wales, 1871-1901, and England and Wales, 1861-1901.

Source: As for Table 5.1
married women in their twenties in 1871. For women aged 20-24, the percentage never married increased from 53.4 in 1871 to 69.3 in 1901 in New South Wales and from 53.7 to 77.8 in Victoria; for women aged 25-29 the increases were from 23.9 to 40.3 in New South Wales and from 23.8 to 50.8 in Victoria.

Changes in marriage patterns in the 1870s and 1880s depended partly on the age structure of the population which, in turn, resulted from demographic changes which occurred in the 1850s and 1860s (Davison, 1977, p.193). In New South Wales the population increased fairly steadily in the mid nineteenth century, in contrast to Victoria, where the gold rush produced massive immigration, followed by both a great increase in the number of births and, later, by the emigration of many men. This would not have caused such great problems for girls of the 1850s birth cohorts if brides usually took partners from within their own birth cohort. However women usually married men a few years older. Ridley (1968) examined the effects of changing mortality, natality and migration patterns on the roles and status of women, paying considerable attention to the problems of a marriage squeeze caused by a combination of all the demographic variables. Davis and van den Oever (1982) also demonstrated the importance of demographic trends in changing the life chances of women, while Dixon (1978) and Schoen (1983) specifically noted the effects on marriage patterns. Their analyses can be applied to marriage in Australia in the late nineteenth century. Mortality rates in Australia were low, compared with those in England (Young, 1969, p.30), so couples faced the probability of a longer period of marriage unbroken by the death of one of the partners than had been the case in the past. Using the comparative tables published by Burridge in 1884, it was calculated that, of 1000 couples where the man was aged 30 and the woman 25, 260 men and 457 women would have been alive 35 years later, but in England there would have been only 237 male and 406 female survivors.

The population pyramids (Figure 5.2) for 1871, 1881 and 1891 illustrate the differences in age and sex structure between New South

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2McDonald (1975, Table 33, p.105) showed that the median age at marriage for Victorian men ranged from 5.0 to 3.3 years higher than that for women in the years 1871 to 1891.
Figure 5.2: The Populations of New South Wales and Victoria, 1861-1881

NEW SOUTH WALES

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
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<th>Females</th>
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Population (',000)

VICTORIA

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<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
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<th>Females</th>
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Population (',000)

1871 1881 1891
Wales and Victoria. In New South Wales, for every age group of both females and males, there was an increase in numbers in each decade and, except in the case of young adult males, each five-year cohort was larger than the next older group. Most cohorts of both males and females were increased by immigration in each succeeding decade, and this source of population growth was spread over all ages and both sexes, except in that it provided something of an excess of young men.

The Victorian population grew much more erratically; the number of females increased unevenly in most age groups, particularly at the young adult ages. For males, the pattern was even less regular. In some age groups, the numbers fell between the census years and, although some cohorts had their numbers dramatically increased by immigration, others such as that of men aged 25 to 44 in 1871, lost far more members by 1881 than would have died. In 1871, although the cohorts aged 15 to 24 of both sexes were preceded by cohorts of a similar size, in the next age groups there were many more men than women aged 25 to 44. However, by 1881, the large cohorts aged 15 to 24 followed much smaller cohorts of both women and men in the next older age groups, thus producing a 'marriage squeeze'.

Marriage Prospects

The last quarter of the nineteenth century saw a retreat from marriage in New South Wales, as well as Victoria, but the patterns were very different, as shown by an examination of the statistics for men and women aged 20-34. The 1881 census in Victoria revealed a massive increase in the percentage of unmarried women aged 20-34, combined with some decrease in the percentage of never married men aged 25-34. The decade to 1891 saw an increase (though of more modest proportions for men aged 20-24 and for women of 20-29) throughout the age groups 20-34 for both sexes. In contrast, in New South Wales there was a decrease in both decades in the proportion of never married men aged 30-34, but an increase for both men and women in all the other age groups analysed for the period. Thus, in New South Wales, the relative opportunities of marriage for men aged 20-34 in comparison to women of the same birth cohorts remained fairly constant from 1871 to 1891. In contrast, young Victorian men, particularly in the 1870s, had much more favourable marriage prospects than the women of their colony.
Although there was a marked decrease in the percentage of never married men aged 30-34 in Victoria and New South Wales in the late nineteenth century, the lowest proportions were appreciably higher than those prevailing in England and Wales at the same time. In Victoria the percentages dropped sharply between 1861 and 1881 from 46.8 to 35.0, then rose to 42.0 by 1901. The New South Wales pattern was much more stable, with a modest decline from 43.4 in 1871 to 40.8 in 1891, followed by an increase to 42.0 in 1901. In contrast, the percentage of men aged 30-34 in England and Wales who had not married rose only slightly from a low 22.6 per cent in 1861 to 25.0 in 1901.\footnote{McDonald (1975) drew attention to these contrasting marriage patterns (p.95 ff.) and provided a detailed analysis of marriage levels in Great Britain for the period 1840 to 1910 (pp.58-85).} One factor in the difference between the Australian colonies and England and Wales was the relatively higher proportion of single men in the rural districts of the colonies. Having developed a social organization based on this imbalance, with most men remaining single, it may have been difficult to adjust to much higher rates of marriage even with greater urbanization and a surplus of women in the colony. Blainey (1975, p.109) argued that Australian men who sought improved working conditions preferred to have shorter hours and, hence, more opportunity for leisure, than the higher wages that they would have been under pressure to obtain if they were married and wished to support a wife and family in reasonable comfort.

During the 1870s much of the comment in both New South Wales and Victorian papers concerned the reluctance of men to marry but the censuses of 1881 revealed the differences between the two colonies in marriage prospects for their young men and women. In spite of some feeling that delayed marriage was a problem, New South Wales saw itself as having an entirely different situation from that in Victoria. In commenting on the 1881 Census, the \textit{Town and Country Journal} stated that there were even numbers of men and women in Sydney and a surplus of men in the country, unlike Melbourne with its excess of women (21-5-1881, p.977). In the \textit{Victorian Yearbook 1881-2} (pp.166-168) Hayter pointed out the imbalance in the numbers of potential marriage partners. In commenting on the Report of the 1881 Census, the \textit{Australasian} stated...
that 'the female sex in Victoria has now reached a crisis in its existence'. Two problems existed: there were many more 'marriageable' women than men and the proportion of married to marriageable was lower than in any other Australian colony (21-11-1883, p.657).

When considering the impact of changes in marriage prospects on attitudes towards young women's futures, it may be useful to consider the increase in numbers, as well as the increase in percentages, of those who were unmarried (Table 5.2). Between 1871 and 1881 in Victoria, there was an increase of 26 per cent in the proportion of unmarried women in the 20-24 age group, but this represented an increase of 216 per cent, or 15,835, in the number of such women. There were fewer men than women in the appropriate age groups, with a decrease between 1871 and 1881 of 6 per cent in the proportion of never married men aged 25-29 and a decrease of 1152 in the numbers of men in that group. From 1861, when there were nearly four unmarried men aged 25-34 for every unmarried woman five years younger, the situation rapidly changed until a mere twenty years later there were five single women of 20-29 for every three unmarried men aged 25-34. For the remainder of the century there was a shortage of never married men compared with women in these age groups. Thus Victorian society may have felt that it was flooded with single young women, the reverse of the situation when their British-born mothers had emigrated in the boom years following the gold rush.

Table 5.2: Never Married Males and Females, Aged 20-34, Victoria, 1861-1901

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>24 445</td>
<td>9 206</td>
<td>30 421</td>
<td>4 013</td>
<td>20 085</td>
<td>1 513</td>
<td>50 006</td>
<td>13 219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>20 250</td>
<td>13 567</td>
<td>16 498</td>
<td>6 000</td>
<td>12 408</td>
<td>2 738</td>
<td>28 906</td>
<td>19 567</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>35 423</td>
<td>29 402</td>
<td>15 326</td>
<td>8 902</td>
<td>7 675</td>
<td>3 440</td>
<td>23 021</td>
<td>38 304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>56 485</td>
<td>43 219</td>
<td>37 872</td>
<td>21 126</td>
<td>17 581</td>
<td>8 912</td>
<td>55 453</td>
<td>64 345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>35 592</td>
<td>34 260</td>
<td>29 488</td>
<td>26 722</td>
<td>19 116</td>
<td>14 796</td>
<td>48 604</td>
<td>60 892</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 'Conjugal Condition', Censuses of Victoria, 1861-1901.

The 'Marriage Question'

It is not clear whether the 'Marriage Question' to which Australian papers frequently alluded was, initially, an interest
imported from England, where the problem of a surplus of marriageable women existed from the mid nineteenth century.

The Bulletin (12-5-1888, p.4), in a leading article 'Why Men Don't Marry', saw the problem among 'the English-speaking folk of the British Empire' as stemming from a common cause:

the ominous decrease in the marriage rate is a symptom, not so much that young men are afraid to chance poverty, as that in the balances of cases poverty, with all its unlovely surroundings, must necessarily follow as a consequence of the insensate method or want of method employed in fitting woman for her mission.

However, a recent immigrant from England claimed that there, at least, girls were 'never... better fitted to fulfil their duties than now' (A'asian, 4-7-1885, p.7).

Table Talk (18-6-1888, p.3 and 3-11-1893, p.4) considered that, although the English problem stemmed from an agricultural depression, the situation in both countries was exacerbated by parents; rather than directing their resources to providing their daughters with endowments to give them financial independence, as was the European custom, parents encouraged them to feel themselves too 'cultivated' to undertake menial work if they did not marry, and made them too expensive to marry. Australian fathers encouraged both sons and daughters to mix with wealthy families in the hope of making a financially desirable match. If unsuccessful, marriage was delayed until most young women and men 'resigned themselves to marriage in their own class'.

In New South Wales in the early 1870s there were numerous comments about the failure to marry, the Registrar General being quoted as stating that 'the disproportion of the sexes is doubtless the chief cause operating to keep down the marriage rate, as also probably influenced by habits of convenience'. The disproportion of which he wrote was a surplus of marriageable men. He explicitly rejected the theory that 'the prosperity or depression of trade, and the increase or decrease in the agricultural returns' were causes governing matrimonial arrangements (T&C, 22-10-1870, p.9). A writer, puzzled by the 'great social problem' of 'marriageable women who never get married', did not accept the common belief that men could not afford to marry; his
suggestion was to improve arrangements for mixing socially (T&C, 16-11-1872, p.628).

As early as 1864, the Melbourne Punch contained suggestions that Victorian girls were faced with a shortage of husbands. Under the heading 'The Marriage Question', several clearly spurious 'Letters to the Editor' discussed 'this topic of the day', two of the 'correspondents' being women who wanted to marry. It was a topic to which Punch returned frequently. The problem was sometimes expressed in terms of the cost of supporting a wife: 'Is it any wonder that men hesitate to marry the fashionable young lady of 1868?' (Punch, 2-4-1868). Some years later it published another collection of fake letters, this time on 'Why Men Don't Marry', again suggesting strongly that a lack of money was seen as the cause of the problem (22-1-1874, p.31).

By 1874 the difficulty in obtaining husbands for Victorian girls was sufficiently obvious for the Australasian to comment, albeit unfavourably, on a New Zealand proposal to tax bachelors (6-6-1874, p.722). However, later in the same year readers were asked 'Don't men propose?' by a correspondent who did not see any marriage problem (A'asian, 21-11-1874, p.658). At this time it was apparently not realized that the problem was not simply the unwillingness of bachelors to propose but their insufficient numbers.

On 15 May 1880, 'A Husband' of Ballarat, in writing to the editor of the Argus, initiated a lively debate on 'The Decline of Matrimony', a state of affairs which he attributed to 'an increasing selfishness and love of luxuries... that educated egoism which is the inevitable result of increased culture, or, rather, over-civilization'. He dismissed arguments that the cause lay in women's expensive tastes in dress or that 'any depression of trade satisfactorily explain[ed] this unnatural position of matters'. Although hardly any correspondents denied that the decline existed, the reasons they gave for the retreat from marriage varied greatly. Of those who replied, only one suggested that a shortage of eligible bachelors was the problem. Few writers

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4Davison (1977, p.193ff.) drew attention to these explanations tendered to explain the 'marriage question'.

hinted that the decline in matrimony resulted from anything other than a reluctance on the part of men to marry, although one man claimed that widows, with their experience in humouring men, were marrying the eligible bachelors so that 'single girls [had] depreciated in value and the market [was] overstocked'. There was at least a generally implied belief that men needed a suitable income on which to marry, but the writers' attention was focused on the reasons why men did not marry when they could afford to do so.

The inconvenience of living in a boarding house was described in a humorous manner, to support the argument that 'single blessedness is not good for men'. Men needed the company of women and the domestic services they could perform, such as sewing buttons on shirts (Ill. Syd. News, 17-4-1871, p.62). However the fear was expressed that the numerous letters extolling the virtues of marriage might encourage some men to plunge 'in the care and trouble of married life' with insufficient means. 'There are numbers of married [men] living, or existing, on 140 pounds with an increasing family...' (Argus, 25-5-1880, p.7)

'The Bachelor's Soliloquy' (T&C, 27-2-1886, p.447) summed up the plight of men who could not afford to marry:

Marry, or not to marry? That is the question —
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The sullen silence of these cob-webbed rooms,
Or seek in festive halls some cheerful dame,
And, by uniting, end it?

But that the dread of something after marriage
(Ah! that vast expenditure of income.

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5This writer was wrong if he was implying that more widows than widowers remarried. Until 1873, widows formed a higher proportion of those marrying than widowers but from 1874 the situation was reversed, although the percentage of remarriages of widows remained a higher proportion of all marriages than was the case in England and Wales where, in the 20 years ending in 1874, 48 per cent more widowers than widows remarried. In the Victorian Yearbooks the point was made that the relative proportions of widows and widowers remarrying in Victoria reflected the relative numbers of marriageable males to marriageable females in the population (Vic YB 1873, p.75 and Vic YB 1881-82, pp.174-175). In 1871 4.4 per cent of widows and 6.0 per cent of widowers remarried; in 1881 the rates were 2.5 per cent and 5.3 per cent respectively. In both years widows substantially outnumbered widowers. (Calculated from Vital Statistics of Victoria.)
The tongue can scarcely tell) puzzles the will,
And makes us rather choose the single life
Than go to gaol for debts we know not of.
Economy makes bachelors of us still,
And thus our melancholy resolution
Is still increased upon more serious thought.

The 'Proper Time to Marry'

For those young Australians who were not deterred by the financial problems of supporting a wife, or the difficulty of attracting a husband, there was the further question of the 'proper time to marry'. As McDonald (1975, p.59 and pp.126-131) has shown, this had been widely discussed in England in the mid nineteenth century, the outcome being the adoption of a later age at marriage to allow a couple to maintain the standards to which they were accustomed in their single lives. English immigrants brought to Australia this concern about the 'proper time to marry' and from the 1870s opinions on the subject appeared in the Australian press.

Young men in New South Wales were advised that when they were 'in a situation to support a wife and household, [they] should marry' choosing a wife with sterling qualities; men should aspire to make themselves ideal husbands (T&C, 12-10-1872, p.468). In a later 'appeal to a bachelor', young men were advised not to postpone marriage, but finance was not suggested as a cause of delay (T&C, 15-9-1877, p.424). Young men were told that when they were old enough to be mature and to have sufficient money to support a wife they should marry someone they loved who had similar opinions and values (T&C, 3-12-1887, p.1215). It was preferable to marry a woman with a head, not just a heart, but intelligent women should be prepared to devote themselves to housekeeping and to postpone their hearts' desire [presumably, of undertaking further education] (T&C, 6-5-1871). 'Love, dear ladies, is self sacrifice; it is life out of self and in another' (T&C, 17-8-1872, p.213).

Young women were advised not to marry before they were 21; it was better to wait until they were 25, but the Express (9-2-1887, p.17) considered that there was no bar to early marriage if a woman knew how to manage a household. Her husband should possess good personal qualities, not merely superficial attraction (T&C, 18-12-1874, p.985),
advice that was frequently repeated (T&C, 11-1-1873, p.52 and 23-7-1870, p.21). 'Matrimonial blunders' were attributed to couples marrying without really knowing each other until it was too late; there should be a better system of choosing marriage partners (T&C, 20-9-1873, p.371).

Some of the advice suggests that, although parents influenced their daughters, many young ladies of the colony took the responsibility for choosing their own husbands and had considerable opportunity to spend time, unchaperoned, with male friends. However the Town and Country Journal believed that the 'Currency Lasses', as it described the girls of New South Wales, were changing. Their freedom and self-reliance, which was attributed to a country life, was disappearing, as were their 'household virtues'; with 'more balls and concerts, [they] have fewer laughing rides and kitchen feats' (1-2-1873, pp.147-148).

There was ambivalence about whether girls should marry for love or for prospects, although it was believed that 'the great majority of marriages are determined solely by love' (Ill. Syd. News, 19-3-1872, p.7). Parents were warned not to force daughters into a 'good' marriage to men they did not care for when they loved someone else (T&C, 30-10-1875, p.705). However young lovers were exhorted to make sure their love was real (T&C, 29-1-1881, p.220). Some felt that it was safer to marry for sentiment rather than for passion (T&C, 1-9-1877, p.345), while others implied that it was better to marry an 'ugly, conceited' wealthy man than to risk not marrying at all (T&C 5-2-1881, p.268).

Commencing in 1880, the Illustrated Sydney News conducted a series of competitions in which its readers were invited to express their views on a variety of topics of contemporary interest. When asked 'At what age should people marry in Australia?', those whose entries were published (10-7-1880, p.14) were generally of the opinion that the couple should be mature enough for the responsibilities of marriage, but should not wait until they were too settled in their ways. The mid to late twenties were suggested as a suitable age for men to marry; a woman should not be younger than nineteen or twenty. There was considerable emphasis on the importance of mutual affection.
following verses from two entries reflect the spirit of most of the published replies:

'Tis when with honest hand-clasp can be pledged the sacred troth
When a clear, bright burning love fire lightens up the eyes of both,
When, with trust in one another, with a warm impulsive breath
Can be spoke the solemn numbers that shall pledge the twain
till death.

But the wooings and the weddings in our sunny Austral clime,
Should be ever in life's summer, and before the hoary rime
Of a dark and dreary winter whitens o'er declining days
And the shaded frozen lakelets fail to catch the sun's bright rays.

and

When full grown man (of any clime) wishes for married life
And has not only wit to win but means to keep a wife,
And woman learns to rule her tongue and household with discretion,
They're the right age to choose their home, marry, and take possession.

The question of 'ways and means' - how much was needed before one could afford to marry - was a topic of lively discussion, particularly from the mid 1880s. It was felt that the same income was required in Australia as in England because although meat was cheaper and less fuel and warm clothing were needed, house rents and servants' wages were higher (T&C, 7-2-1885, p.290). Correspondents disagreed on how much money was needed to 'keep up a respectable appearance'; some felt that men did not reach a sufficient income until middle age, by which time they had adjusted to a single existence (T&C, 28-2-1885, p.446). Table Talk (25-12-1891, p.10) considered that 'while parents train their daughters at such cost that they cannot spare a dowry, it is small wonder that young men regard marriage as an irksome duty, to be deferred as long as possible.' 'Men and women who have been accustomed all their lives to balls, dinner parties, visiting, and the other enjoyments of wealthy and cultured society, find it hard to relinquish all for the sake of living together.'

The consensus appeared to be that, providing a woman had reached her early twenties and had at least some affection for her proposed husband, the 'proper time to marry' depended on his financial
situation, over which she had little control. However the standard of living to which she aspired could have the effect of allowing an early marriage or of causing a delay until her aspirations could be met. Although it was not pointed out at the time, any such delay would have the potential of reducing her total family size.

**Setting up House**

One of the difficulties faced by young men was the supposed aversion of young women to starting married life in a modest establishment. Nevertheless one lady who wrote to *Table Talk* (20-1-1886, p.4) claimed that it was the men who wished to have large establishments:

> People who look into the marriage question are fond of asserting that the number of young fellows who annually propose is growing smaller yearly, because girls expect to start just where their fathers and mothers left off. Many a winsome little bride, whom her proud husband has taken to an establishment having as many rooms as days there are in the month, would have given much if she could have settled down in a dainty little cottage where the work must have been less, and the enjoyment greater. Above all, too, in a small place like this, the expense of the first year or two's housekeeping would be incomparably smaller than could possibly be the case in a residence which has all the discomforts of a castle, with none of the comforts of a small house.

Sydney brides were accused of expecting to set up house with all the comforts they had enjoyed in their parents' homes, rather than begin simply, *Ill. Syd. News*, 19-3-1872, p.47) but in Melbourne a regular contributor to the Ladies Column expressed the fear that young couples were marrying because they were able to rent cottages cheaply and did not foresee that they would eventually need a larger house with all the additional expenses that would ensue (*A'asian*, 9-1-1875, p.40). The *Bulletin* (10-7-1880, p.8) quoted a Melbourne journal editor who regretted the lack of the type of first-class hotel in which an American 'society man' could reside when first married. From these comments, it appears that it was very much the custom for newlyweds in Sydney and Melbourne to move from their parental homes and that marriage might not be contemplated unless a house of their own could be rented or bought. Unlike the critic of 'love in a cottage', a bachelor, writing the following year, claimed that there were few marriages in Melbourne; he suggested that women should propose to men
Punch (26-12-1872, p.208) took a cynical view of marital finances:

Now love in a cottage is all my eye
Compared with a catch that's golden!

For couples who shrank from the inevitable difficulties faced by those who chose love in a rented cottage, the alternative was to delay marriage sufficiently to afford to buy a house.

With the introduction of new or improved household appliances, such as stoves and sewing machines, and increased advertising of luxury items like pianos and carriages, the initial cost of furnishing in style a bought or rented house rose from about 1880.

Middle class men often felt the need to establish themselves securely in their occupations before they could consider undertaking the expense of marrying and establishing a home. A number of firms even refused their employees permission to marry before they reached a certain age or salary (McDonald, 1975, p.129; Davison, 1977, p.195; Rolfe, 1980, p.3). McDonald speculated that some working men in the 1880s might also have postponed marriage until they could afford to buy a house (1975, p.131), although they were not likely to have to stay single as a condition of employment. However Davison's comparisons of the proportions of never married men aged 25 to 30 years old, by suburb, showed that there was a decided contrast between middle class and working class propensity to marry early in the 1880s, though not by 1891 (1977, p.197); McDonald (1975, p.130) warned that such comparisons are subject to some problems, although they do not invalidate Davison's argument.

The actual level of home-ownership at the time has been the subject of debate among economic historians, with Butlin's claim that well over fifty per cent of dwellings were owner-occupied in 1891 (1964, p.259) being disputed by Jackson (1974) for Sydney and Dingle and Merrett (1972) for Melbourne. Butlin's estimate related to the whole of Australia but the proportion of home owners in the capital cities was lower (Jackson, 1974, p.40). However, regardless of the exact level of owner occupancy in Australian cities in the 1870s and 1880s, the general belief that it was high must have been influential
in creating an atmosphere in which most Australians subscribed to the ideal of home-ownership. Fry (1978, p.36) stated that the 'picture of the thrifty artisan paying off his comfortable home was a favourite one with the politicians and publicists and seems to have been accepted by the populace at large'. McDonald's theory that working men may have delayed marriage to buy a house is strengthened by McCarty's observation (1974, pp.19-20) that the distinction between the middle and working classes was less sharply defined in the large Australian cities, based as they were on commercial activities, than in the industrial cities of England; wealth, rather than the membership of a traditional elite, was the determinant of social class. Therefore working-class men need have felt no discomfort in aspiring to what, in England, might have been considered middle-class ideals of home ownership.

Thus many men may have felt that, as a matter of pride, they should be able to buy a house when they married. This would have been the case more particularly among the residents of the middle class suburbs where there were proportionately higher levels of owner occupancy than in districts of lower standing (Jackson, 1974, p.52). For those, including artisans, with a reliable income, the building societies provided a convenient source of home finance in Australian cities. At first the conditions attached to loans were very restrictive, but by the 1870s and 1880s they had eased considerably. The building societies catered to the needs of individual home builders, most loans until the mid 1880s being of only a few hundred pounds (Butlin, 1964, pp.259-262).

Jackson (1974, p.49) estimated the cost of constructing a five-roomed brick house in Sydney in the 1870s and 1880s at about 375 pounds, with an additional 75 to 100 pounds needed to purchase the allotment on which it was built. In non-metropolitan areas, land prices were much lower and building costs were reduced by the high proportion of houses of weatherboard construction (p.50). The savings possible in land and building costs encouraged the erection of terrace houses in the inner suburbs of Sydney from the 1870s; such houses were usually rented, although sometimes one of a row of terraces was occupied by its owner-builder (Fry, 1978, p.35; Jackson, 1974, p.50; Kelly, 1974,
For the working men who needed to live near their workplaces so that they could walk to work, such rental accommodation was probably all that they could afford. Although the 1880s saw Melbourne and Sydney change from 'walking cities' to 'train and tramways' cities (McCarty, 1974, p.22), there was still a financial incentive for workers to live close to their place of employment and thereby avoid paying fares.

It appears that, for Australia as a whole, housing was scarce until the 1880s (Butlin, 1964, pp.215-219). However it seems probable that in this respect, as in many others, New South Wales and Victoria differed. Based on the number of persons per room, the 1870s saw an improvement in the housing situation in Victoria, partly due to reduced population growth, so that 'Victoria took a definite leadership in housing standards'. In every other colony 'Housing became slightly scarcer per person' (Butlin, 1964, p.218). The decline in Victoria's prosperity from 1873 or 1874 saw a stagnation in residential construction (Butlin, 1964, p.225); the output of bricks declined by 1880 to a mere 65 per cent of the 1874 level (Hall, 1963, p.48). This paralleled a fall in the crude marriage rate, though the latter could have been due to a changing age structure, rather than a real decline in the age-specific marriage rates. The annual number of marriages in Victoria fluctuated but generally increased throughout the 1860s and 1870s and rose each year in the 1880s. In New South Wales the number of marriages rose somewhat erratically between 1865 and 1874 and then was greater in each year until 1887. Butlin (1964, p.236) made the point, previously noted, that crude marriage rates are too misleading to be used when investigating possible links between marriages and house-building; he, therefore, used the annual number of marriages as his measure of the influence of marriage on demand for housing. However demand for housing does not seem to have been directly controlled by marriage patterns as depicted by official statistics. Some newlyweds were couples who married in England and then came to Victoria to set up house. Also, Butlin (1964, p.238) pointed out that many immigrants married after their arrival in Australia, some to Australian fiances who already had dwellings to which to take their new brides, while immigrant women servants in the country who subsequently
married other farm workers used existing farm housing. In addition, some newlyweds could expect to take over the homes of their deceased parents, given the age at marriage and mortality patterns prevailing (Butlin, 1964, pp.237-238). Butlin concluded that 'it would seem that marriage had in many cases less immediate significance in the expansion of housing than might be expected' (1964, p.238).

The alternative possibility, that availability of housing may have affected marriage patterns, does not receive much support from the available data. The annual number of marriages in 1880 in Victoria was only 12 per cent higher than in 1870, compared with a 45 per cent increase in New South Wales where the housing supply, as measured by rooms per person, was less favourable in the 1870s. However, the lack of a reliable measure of marriage rates in the intercensal years makes it difficult to establish a clear relationship between marriage patterns and changes in the economic climates of the various Australian colonies.

Women's 'Faults'

In the Victorian debate as to why men were not marrying, one correspondent pointed out that, of the wide variety of reasons given for the decline of matrimony, many contradicted others. Most suggested explanations implied that something was wrong with young women, other than their excessive numbers. Punch(29-1-1874, p.38) had some sympathy for young women who were denigrated, although it was frequently guilty of the offence described in its verses:

When surly critics don't know what to write,  
Or yet on whom to vent their paltry spite,  
His venomed shaft each canting humbug hurls  
Against the present period and its girls;  

These beauties... always striving to ensnare  
Oh! joy of joys! some bloated millionaire,  
One who can gratify their love intense  
For luxury, regardless of expense.  
And thus most bachelors, as it's averred  
From matrimonial projects are deterred.

In Victoria in the 1880s, a little over one-third of persons aged 25-29 had both parents living and one in seven had lost both parents (McDonald and Quiggin, 1985, p.70).
Can this be true? Full well we know it can't.

Girls were criticized for being empty-headed or, alternatively, too studious; they were accused of thinking of nothing but clothes or trying to be like men and compete in their professions (A'asian, 4-7-1885, p.7). A bachelor stated that he would not marry a woman who thought herself the equal of a man. 'Humming Bee', the Ladies Columnist, commented that all the men who wrote to the column blamed the frivolity, expensiveness, advanced culture and aspiring views of women for the decline in matrimony (A'asian, 6-6-1885, p.1063). However, if men wanted to marry women who looked up to them, it was no wonder that women were frivolous (A'asian, 4-7-1885, p.7). The cry of the 1870s that women's expensive tastes and lack of domestic skills were a barrier to marriage was repeated, by implication, when it was stated that young men did not marry on Norfolk Island, even though there was no servant shortage there and the ladies did not dress extravagantly (A'asian, 3-10-1885, p.650). It was claimed that men preferred to marry country girls with domestic skills rather than those who were only 'accomplished' (A'asian, 7-3-1885, p.439) and girls' lack of housewifely ability was blamed for men not marrying them (A'asian 19-2-1887, p.343). A woman retorted that some men were such poor specimens that women would not want them and that many 'accomplished' girls could be quite practical, too (A'asian, 11-7-1885, p.55). Punch (15-4-1880, p.152) wrote of an imaginary lock-out of servants by their mistresses which proved that ladies could do housework if necessary. This discovery led to men deciding that they could marry without ruining themselves financially to pay for domestic help.

As in Victoria, young women in New South Wales were criticized for having expensive tastes and an ignorance of housekeeping skills. If women were industrious, economical and healthy 'then marriage [would] become the rule and not as now, the exception'. Young men who lacked independent means but were ambitious would be willing to choose such women (Ill. Syd. News, 13-4-1872, p.59). The Express (24-12-1885, p.23) saw no harm in teaching girls accomplishments if parents had the time and money, but only after their daughters had mastered simple domestic skills and had the ability to live on their income.

In view of the experiences of such English gentlewomen as Rachel
Henning and Georgiana Muiloy who, when they came to Australia, could adapt to performing the tasks needed to run homes in the bush without servants (Adams, 1969, p.189; Grimshaw and Willett, 1981, pp.147-148), it seems likely that the criticisms of the unsuitability of 'accomplished' young women as potential brides was a rationalization of, rather than a reason for, their difficulty in finding husbands.

It seems clear that an Australian man, unless he were really wealthy, had to face the fact that, in marrying, he was expecting his wife to perform heavy housework with no more help than that provided by a poorly-trained maid-of-all-work, if any servant were available. They may also have had to lead a very restricted social life. It is possible that some middle class men may have found such a prospect so intolerable that they preferred to remain single.

The Ideal Lady

In spite of the many unfavourable remarks made about women, there was fairly general agreement about the attributes they should possess. When asked, in another *Illustrated Sydney News* competition (5-8-1880, p.11) 'In what should an Australian lady principally excel?', the entrants concentrated on the domestic virtues. The verses which won the first prize described a country wife:

Riding a buck-jumper, driving a gig,
Milking a cow, and feeding the pig;
Nursing the baby, quick out of bed,
Deft hand at a cake, a pudding, or bread;
Smart with her needle, neat in her dress,
Kind to the poor and all in distress;
Fond of her husband, and little ones, too,
Loving and kind, faithful and true,
Making home happy, cheerful, and bright,
Filling each heart with joy's sunny light,
On failings in others unwilling to dwell.
Oh! blest is the lady who in these doth excel.

None of the other published replies nominated 'riding a buck-jumper' or farming skills but most agreed that an Australian lady should be a capable housekeeper and a loving wife and mother. When references were made to 'accomplishments', they were regarded as pleasant, but of less importance than more practical skills. Those writers who addressed the question of the meaning of the description
'lady' in Australian society made their judgement, to a large degree, on the basis of her virtue:

    And morally, her daily walk embraces
    All human sympathies and Christian graces!

At a time when the upper middle class ideal of a wife was, according to Banks (1954), the 'perfect lady', the gulf between the ideal and the reality was great for all but the wealthiest Australians. Twopeny's observations (1883, pp.45-46) show that he considered that, for people of his social level, the difficulty in obtaining trained servants was greater in Australia than in England (See Plate 5.1). Therefore, in Australia, a lady's ability to perform household tasks competently might have been much more appreciated, certainly after marriage, than her mastery of the less practical accomplishments.

**Relations Between Wives and Husbands**

A recurrent theme in the Australian press of the 1870s was the relative status of husbands and wives and their proper attitudes to one another. The consensus appeared to be that men must respect women but that, although equal, women had different capabilities from men. Women were supposed to give emotional support to their husbands:

    If the parasitic vine about the oak tree, to which she is so often compared be truly her emblem, it is because she binds together the broken boughs, and drapes with verdrous [sic] coolness the withered branches (T&C, 17-8-1872, p.213).

On the other hand:

    The husband is the very roof-tree of the house, the corner-stone of the edifice, the keystone of the arch called home

although some wives did not value their husbands as they should (Ill. Syd. News, 29-9-1870, p.62). Men should be affectionate towards their wives and express interest in their daily activities (Ill. Syd. News, 10-7-1871, p.115).

However, both in New South Wales and Victoria, there were many comments, often in a light vein, on the contrast between husbands' behaviour when courting and that after marriage. 'It is a singular fact
A Young Wife's First Attempt at the Registry Office:—Bridget: "How many rooms in the house? Do ye keep company? How many in the family?"

The young wife gives the necessary information: A six-roomed cottage; three children; very little company; wages, 12 shillings a week.

Bridget: "Ye won't do. I never goes to small people. I only goes to South Yarra, Turak, and them sort of places. I am a cook and laundress, and get 25 shilling a week, and the use of the piano."

Plate 5.1: The Servant Problem. (Table Talk 11-3-1886, p.8)
Cartoons frequently depicted servants called Bridget who interviewed their prospective employers and had ideas above their station in life.
that a man generally requires very different qualities in a wife from those he admires in a sweetheart' (T&C, 31-1-1874, p.185). In the verses 'Two Pictures' a man was depicted as being solicitous and generous before marriage and critical and bored later (T&C, 5-2-1876, p.225). A similar situation was described in 'Single v. Married' (T&C, 20-10-1877, p.645). The Illustrated Sydney News (23-11-1872,) published a cartoon of a 'Matrimonial Thermometer' showing the rise and then fall of passion from the beginning of a couple's courtship until after their marriage. Punch Almanac of 1880 (p.20) told of a husband, married a mere two months, who fell asleep when his wife sang to him, and a Bulletin cartoon (21-3-1885, p.6) compared the behaviour of a 'courting sample' with a 'married sample'.

Wives were sometimes shown to be disillusioned with marriage, particularly when their love for their husbands was not reciprocated (T&C, 11-2-1871, p.181 and 18-2-1871, p.213). One wife, who had married at sixteen, complained 'Here I am, a comparatively young woman, with ten children'; her baby was troublesome, her other children lively and mischievous. Her husband earned her wrath when he contrasted her unfavourably with an intellectual single woman (Ill. Syd. News, 16-4-1872, p.15). Perhaps the fact that she had married at an early age reduced her opportunity to be regarded by her husband as an equal; she would not have had a period as a single adult in which to have the mental stimulation of moving in a more varied milieu than that provided by her family. Even if her education were similar to that of a single woman, her intellectual growth would have been stunted by going with little interval from school to her own children's nursery. Women who married later were in a better position to be treated as equals by their husbands.

By the mid 1880s, the hardships of marrying without sufficient finance, or of encountering misfortunes after marriage, almost replaced the earlier emphasis on the emotional aspects of marriage. However love had not gone out of fashion and 'A Genuine Love Story' of 1885 described how a couple still loved each other in spite of years of hardship faced together (T&C, 10-1-1885, p.82).

During the late nineteenth century, the legal rights of women within marriage improved with the passing of legislation which gave them the right to property and which restricted husbands' ability to beat their wives with impunity. In 1891, the Australasian greeted with enthusiasm the news that husbands had no right to lock up their wives.
and, therefore, could not beat them since the victims could run away (28-2-1881, p.423). In discussions of proposed divorce laws, there was often emphasis on the plight of women whose husbands squandered their money and abused them physically (TT, 30-8-1889, pp.8-9). Divorce became more readily available, although the cost, both financial and social, remained high. In practice, these laws affected few wives but they were indicative of changing attitudes. Whereas previously women were considered to be almost wholly subject to their husbands' wishes, during the second half of the nineteenth century legal mechanisms became available to give them relief from some of the more intolerable situations in which women could find themselves.

Few writers presented a view of men as beings to whom wives should be subservient; the notion that they had separate, but equally important, spheres of influence was much more common. But the Bulletin (1-7-1882, p.7) believed that 'Mostly [women were] quite content to remain in subjection, provided their ruler [was] manly and worthy'. Even at the end of the century, a judge pointed out that 'the law recognised that the husband was master in the house, and that the wife was mistress and had to obey the master' (TT, 3-12-1897, p.12). Although, in practice, women's status was lower than that of the men on whom they were economically dependent, wives were expected to be companions to their husbands, and Table Talk (2-7-1897, p.12) considered that 'women are certainly more companionable than they were'. Thus, they should have been in a position to talk about the physical and emotional pressures of frequent childbearing and large families and to suggest that measures be taken to ease their burdens. This was important because, although abortion and some forms of contraception could be used without their husbands' knowledge, women needed a cooperative husband if they were to space or curtail their pregnancies by the use of coitus interruptus or by periodic or total abstinence.

Women's Role

Related to the duties of wives and husbands to their partners was the more general issue of Woman's Rights and her role in society. 'Woman, and her Position' was a lively issue in the early 1870s, with
the theme being that they were equal to men, but different, with their place definitely in the home (T&C, 15-1-1870, p.22).

Home is the throne of empires on which woman sits, the sceptre with which she wields the destiny of nations. All that is dear and holy, noble and divine, in society or the nation, centres back to home, where woman presides as the angel of love. If she would seek the honor of exerting an influence which shall last after the present order of the universe is changed, a philanthropist whose name, though not lauded by the fickle multitude, shall be remembered by the good and pure in the ages of eternity, let her not for any social interest or cause, neglect the hallowed duties of home, but watch over them with jealous trust, with devotional constancy, with unruffled vigilance, to keep the home the nursery of all the virtues, the sanctuary of the heart's deepest love, the 'holy of holies,' where the divine presence may shine forth in her looks, and be manifest in her actions. Home is woman's true sphere. There is nothing in this wide world that will confer greater honor upon her than to make that home a type of what society should be, and of what heaven is in the graces of exalted character. As a wife, she should be to her husband a guardian angel; as a mother charged with the high trust of directing the child, she should see that, like the work of the skilful artist, she moulds it, 'true to nature,' beautiful and pure. (Illus. Syd. News, 26-10-1870, p.78)

Men were told that in elevating woman 'man is himself elevated and improved. In enlarging her mental freedom, he extends and secures his own' (T&C, 4-2-1871, p.181).

As the peculiar office of man is to govern and defend society, that of woman is to spread virtue, affection, and gentleness through it; she has a direct interest in softening and humanizing the other sex....but her rights will neither add dignity to her social influence, nor bring practical security to her domestic situation, except as they are found really to promote the virtue and happiness of society (T&C, 9-11-1872, p.596).

Such a view of women's duty, even if it limited their lives and set unattainable standards, might have been acceptable in a society where most women could expect to marry. When, however, there was a large group of women for whom husbands could not be found, modifications were needed.

Alternatives to Marriage

The analysis by Davis and van den Oever (1982), mentioned on page 77, was based mainly on the effects of changes in mortality, whereas
the bleak marriage prospects for Victorian women were, to a considerable extent, the result of past and current migration patterns. However this does not detract from the applicability to the Victorian situation of Davis and van den Oever's assertion, similar to Ridley's (1962) conclusions, that women adjust to the knowledge that they cannot rely on spending all their adult lives as wives and mothers by legitimizing alternative roles.

With the prospect of marriage proving uncertain for quite a large group of women, public opinion in Victoria, as in England at the same period, could not ignore futures other than in marriage for at least some of its women. The acceptance of the fact that some women might not marry appeared in the popular press of the time (A'asian, 12-5-1877, p.583) and, although marriage and motherhood remained the preferred destiny, the need for a 'fall-back' position for unmarried ladies was recognized. However, religious leaders, in particular, emphasized that women's only proper place was in the home, their duty being to marry and be domestic (Punch, 11-7-1872, p.59). 'These are very important considerations for those who hold that marriage is the end and object of woman's existence. And on any view it forms a social problem deserving of serious meditation' (A'asian, 29-11-1883, p.657). Earlier the Australasian (7-5-1881, p.593) had commented on the surplus young women:

who will in time be preferring their demands for a share in the work of life. They will tell us that the limitation of a woman's sphere to the chase of a husband and the achievement of matrimony cannot stand in the face of the fact that there are at any rate 7,000\(^5\) women for whom nature has not supplied a mate. It is easy to see what a vista of woman's claims this single circumstance opens up.

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\(^7\)A similar situation occurred in the 1930s when single women, whose marriages had been delayed by the Depression, formed too large a proportion of all women to be ignored by popular opinion, unlike unmarried women of the birth cohorts of the late 1920s and the 1930s whose small numbers made them insignificant when the cult of the housewife and mother was encouraged by the media of the 1950s and 1960s.

\(^8\)Hayter, to whose report the Australasian referred in this leading article, calculated the number of single and widowed men 20 years old and over and of women 15 and over to arrive at the number of women without potential husbands.
By 1884, it was recognized that because some girls would remain 'on the shelf', they should have other interests so that their failure to marry would not be a complete disaster (A'asian, 9-8-1884, p.247). Young ladies were therefore advised to learn skills, not just to acquire accomplishments. An 'old maid' wrote about the compensations of single life and recommended education for girls who had the aptitude (A'asian, 7-3-1885, p.775). Although disclaiming any sympathy for the 'Woman's Rights Movement', Table Talk (11-12-1885, p.9) felt that training 'in a practical direction' was desirable in case a woman was denied the more desirable goal of 'loyally fulfilling the duties of a wife and mother'.

By the late 1880s, the New South Wales press was also conceding that some women would not marry. It was clear that the best 'Woman's Destiny' was still marriage, but she should not compromise her ideals to gain a husband (T&C, 17-9-1887, p.604).

Conclusion

In the 1870s and 1880s, the concern of Victorians was with finding husbands for their single young women and with the qualities needed by would-be brides. In New South Wales the emphasis was rather on the proper time to marry, and on the qualities one should seek in a spouse and on the mutual respect and affection in which husbands and wives should hold each other. There were some aspects of marriage, with implications for fertility, which could be influenced by women. By becoming competent housewives and by being prepared to start marriage in a modest establishment, they could improve their prospects of marriage or of marriage earlier; by aspiring to be 'perfect ladies' with impressive houses they could postpone marriage or reduce their chances of ever marrying.

Once married, the closeness and equality of their relationships with their husbands might well have determined whether birth control measures were adopted.

With the introduction of a network of public transport, young couples who could not afford to keep a carriage could live away from the city in the newly-established suburbs. However distance may have made them dependent on each other for the companionship they had previously found in clubs and in the houses of friends. With better
education and a higher age at marriage, women were more aware of the
world outside the home and less likely to accept without question the
authority of their husbands. Thus technological and social change may
have combined to make couples more dependent on each other and less
influenced by pressures to conform to mores which were not to their
economic or personal advantage.

However women played a generally passive role in changing marriage
patterns in Australia in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.
Demographic and economic factors over which they had no control were
responsible for much of the increase in female age at marriage and, for
some women, the possibility of marrying at all.
CHAPTER 6: EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Introduction

In Australia, there were important changes in the educational experience of both working class and middle class girls between the mid 1860s and the 1880s.

From a legislative viewpoint, the major innovation was the introduction of compulsory education, mainly during the 1870s and 1880s. Barcan described the process by which each colony's schools became 'free, compulsory and secular'. Although a high proportion of the population had previously been literate (Table 6.1), the rapid expansion of the network of schools, and the legal requirement to attend them, affected girls in two ways which may have been important for future levels of fertility. Firstly, they were withdrawn from their homes for substantial periods each day, thereby depriving their mothers of assistance with household chores and child care or of the possibility of income from sending them to work. Secondly, the demand for trained school teachers provided an incentive for girls to acquire higher levels of education and the prospect of financial independence should they not marry.

Education was also important as a means of preparation for entry to a new range of occupations which were becoming available to women. Such alternatives reduced the need for women to marry and hence may have reduced fertility.

University education was available to women from the late 1870s and, although universities were the preserve of the wealthy, whether female or male, the very fact that some women had graduated provided a goal for others and a proof that tertiary education was not beyond female capabilities.

1 Legislation to make school attendance compulsory was passed in Tasmania in 1868, Western Australia in 1871, Victoria in 1872, South Australia in 1875, New South Wales in 1880 and Queensland in 1900 (Barcan, 1980, p.151).
Table 6.1: Percentages of Girls Aged 5 to 15 Years who could Write*, Australian Colonies, 1861-1891

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>NSW</th>
<th>Vic</th>
<th>Qld</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>WA</th>
<th>Tas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>47.9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>54.8</td>
<td>71.2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>55.7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>65.4</td>
<td>86.1</td>
<td>67.0</td>
<td>70.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>74.3</td>
<td>83.9</td>
<td>71.8</td>
<td>72.1</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td>68.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>77.1</td>
<td>82.8</td>
<td>79.4</td>
<td>78.2</td>
<td>84.1</td>
<td>76.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Or Read and Write

Sources: Censuses of: N.S.W., 1861 and 1901; Victoria, 1861, 1881, 1891 and 1901; Queensland, 1901; S.A., 1871, 1891 and 1901; W.A., 1891 and 1901; Tasmania 1891 and 1901.

The situation, described for some contemporary Third World countries, in which marriage and, hence, childbearing are delayed until a girl completes her education, was not likely to have been of importance in Australia in the late nineteenth century because few girls married before they were 20 years old, and most children left school when they were much younger.2

Although it is clear that during the last quarter of the nineteenth century there was a huge increase in the number of children attending school in the Australian colonies, precise comparison of rates of attendance over time and between colonies are difficult to obtain. Census data on education concentrated on levels of literacy which demonstrated that standards had improved over the period but did not show how many children in each age group attended school. Even when schooling statistics were published, they used different age ranges at different times and in different colonies. The quality of statistics on attendances improved in step with improvements in enrolments, presumably reflecting the importance attached to education. In Victoria, the percentage of children aged from 5 to 15 attending school rose from 56 per cent in 1867 to 67 per cent in 1871 (Vic. PP, No. 47, 1872, p.viii). By 1881, most Victorian children were at school and

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2In 1871, in Victoria, only 6 per cent of girls aged 15 to 19 had ever married; only 21 per cent of girls and boys aged 16 were at school (Census of Victoria, 1871, 'Conjugal Condition'; Vic PP 1874, No. 63, p.iv).
concern was being expressed about the mere 4 per cent who had not been reached (Vic. PP, No. 67, 1882-83, p. vii). Although Tasmania was the first colony to legislate for compulsory education, it clearly did not enforce attendance. In 1881, 39 per cent of children aged between 7 and 14 were enrolled in government schools, 23 per cent were in private schools and 16 per cent were receiving instruction at home. Barcan (1980, p.147) claimed that many children were stated to be in the latter two groups simply to avoid the attendance provisions.

School Children

Most middle class publications, in their discussions of education, emphasized the topics likely to have been of interest to their readers, rather than devoting much space to the educational experiences of the poorer students. The inspectors' reports, which formed part of the Education Departments' annual reports to Parliament, go some way to redressing the imbalance. The opinions expressed on the value of education for children destined for manual work, on discipline and on attendance give an impression, albeit from a middle class viewpoint, of the impact of compulsory schooling on public pupils.

School discipline was viewed partly in terms of attendance, but inspectors also looked for the controlled behaviour which some thought was best fostered by training in military drill (NSW JLC, 1880-81, pp.624-625 and 633).

The Victorian inspectors recognized the importance of child labour, particularly on farms and market gardens, and regarded irregular attendance as better than nothing, even after schooling became compulsory and free in 1873 (Vic PP 1875-76, No. 69, pp.143 and 146). In a report on the region from Richmond to Mornington, the inspector wrote of 'children's labor [being] indispensible to their parents at certain periods'. The children of market gardeners were kept away from school on Friday afternoons 'while at such crises as cherry picking, potato planting, Etc, the dearness of outside labor [made] the value of children's services too considerable to be forgone' (Vic. PP, No. 69, 1875-76, p.163). The inspector for the North Western region 'fail[ed] to see the advantage in enforcing attendance at school' after the 'Standard of Education' examination had been passed, given that
'the services of many of these children [were] almost indispensable to their parents, and as the majority will ultimately follow some manual employment' (Vic. PP, No. 69, 1875-76, p.146).

In New South Wales, where education became compulsory, but not free, following the passing of the Education Act of 1880, inspectors viewed as sympathetically as their Victorian counterparts the farmers' practice of withdrawing children from school to help at busy times. The inspector for the western section of the Bathurst district wrote

Nearly sixty-nine per cent. of the children enrolled are regular in their attendance. This proportion in agricultural and pastoral localities, where the services of children are at times as valuable as those of adults, must be regarded as very satisfactory... (NSW JLC, 1880-81, p.625)

In the context of a generally favourable report, the inspector at Wellington stated that 'at shearing and harvesting, the schools are well nigh emptied'. (NSW JLC, 1880-81, p.632).

Rural children's irregular attendance might have been treated tolerantly, but urban children were expected to attend school regularly and, hence, could not have undertaken the type of employment between fixed hours which was available in the towns and cities. Fry (1956, p.369) concluded from his study of the urban wage earning class that 'few children under thirteen or fourteen years of age [were] in employment during the eighties'.

There was, thus, a marked contrast between urban and rural children in the impact of compulsory schooling. Rural children could achieve the required minimum attendance each year, even if they were frequently withdrawn from school to help their parents who were thereby freed from the need to pay wages to workers from outside the family. The parents had control over the amount of money, if any, paid to their children. Urban children had less opportunity to avoid school attendance and, when employed, had some control over their wages. To use Caldwell's concept (Caldwell, 1982a), the 'net intergenerational wealth flow' was in the direction of parents in the country but towards children in the city. It is not surprising, then, that fertility decline in rural areas lagged behind the towns and cities.
Children's Assistance to Mothers

In the comments of school inspectors on the importance of child labour, the lightening of the burden of domestic chores did not seem to be accorded the same emphasis as children's assistance in rural production.

Although some children received a basic education at home before the introduction of compulsory education, the time spent in teaching a child to read and write at home need not have been great and such lessons could have been fitted into times which were convenient to the mother. The advantages of having on call someone able to perform simple housework, run errands and watch younger children would have been very great for the mother of a large family. With the introduction of compulsory schooling, children were removed from the house during the day just at the age when they were becoming of some value in easing their mothers' workload. Women faced with the sole care of toddlers and a baby would have had a considerable incentive to avoid further births.

For a working class mother, caring for her home and family unaided, the services provided by a child of school age probably outweighed the effort involved in its care. Children were sent on errands and could mind their younger siblings while their mother was busy with chores which required strength or skill. Older girls could earn worthwhile wages as nursemaids. Punch (5-10-1871, p.106) told of a girl of 13 who was paid four shillings a week; her four sisters, aged from 10 to 14 could have received from one to five shillings per week for similar work. To their mother, a widowed washerwoman, such earnings were probably of great importance. In verses inspired by a court case in which a girl could not take the oath because she did not understand its meaning, the Bulletin (5-8-1882, p. 8) wrote

Miss Storey was a little girl
(Her Christian name was Jane)
And, lo, she helped her mother turn
The mangle in Balmain.
She turned the mangle all day long,
And then took out the clothes;
And so her time was limited
For school, you may suppose.
For, when the handle got a rest,  
Her work was far from done:  
She had to scrub the floors, and take  
The baby in the sun,  
Just run with 'father's dinner,' and  
Wash up, too, as directed;  
Her schooling, therefore, just became  
A little bit neglected.

On Sundays, she was up at six,  
(She'd gone to bed at one),  
And got the breakfast, peeled the greens,  
And put the 'taters on,  
Got out her brothers' Sunday suits,  
Made all the beds; so you'll  
Agree with us, she couldn't waste  
Much time on Sunday school.

Some mothers solved the problem of child care by sending their very young children to school. A visitor to the Fort Street Model Public Schools in Sydney described the 'babies' division of the infants' department containing '150 "babies" - happy, fat and smiling - ranging from two and a half to four years old', in the charge of two teachers. The writer commented that they were 'merely sent to school to be out of harm's way, and [were] not expected to learn much' (T&C, 22-4-1871, p.496). A Melbourne school inspector commented unfavourably on the 'undue proportion of infants fitted rather for their mothers' arms than for school' (Vic. PP, No. 69, 1875-76, p.141). The minimum age in Victoria was raised from three to four and a half years in 1892 to reduce costs (Rankin, 1939, p.128), but earlier moves to increase the minimum age had been resisted because of the effect on teachers' incomes (Sweetman et al., 1922, p.84).

Another solution to the problem of child care was recounted by an old lady reminiscing about her schooldays in the Western Australian goldfields at the beginning of the twentieth century. As her father was an invalid, her mother did domestic work to support her family which eventually included eight children of whom the old lady was the eldest. She took with her to school 'the younger kiddies', a little baby in a pram and a two-year-old who stayed in a playpen on the verandah of the one-teacher school. The teacher was sympathetic and, although he had between forty and sixty pupils, tried to help the girl make up for the interruptions she suffered during the day while caring
for the little ones (Carter, 1981, pp.48-49). Such an arrangement may have been an isolated occurrence, tolerated in a country town, but it stresses the value of children's help and the lack of alternative child care arrangements in the absence of extended families.

Middle class girls in Australia, probably more than in England, would have been expected to help their mothers with housework, given the difficulty of obtaining servants. Even young ladies who escaped heavy work were expected to help with the care of their little brothers and sisters. The effect of the introduction of properly enforced school attendance could have had a rapid effect on fertility. Mothers of young families who were unable or unwilling to send very young children to school and who suddenly lost the services of school-aged children may well have wished to curtail their families in response to the new pressures under which they worked. Depending on the number of children they already had to care for, they may have delayed the next birth or attempted to cease childbearing altogether.

**Educational Standards**

For girls of the class who attended private schools, there were moves to improve the academic standard of their education so that it provided more than just basic literacy in addition to the ladylike subjects of music, drawing and general deportment. *Punch* (29-3-1860, p.80) gave an indication of the education given to some girls when it published a cartoon showing a young lady alighting from her carriage in an awkward manner; the caption suggested that her school should have taught her better.

The *Town and Country Journal* (29-4-1871, p.516) noted in an approving editorial that the decision to allow ladies to sit for the examinations set by the University of Sydney should have a good effect on private schools. In an article, 'The Education of Girls' (21-9-1872, p.373) (reprinted from an English publication), it advocated proper teaching standards for girls, not simply expecting them to memorize information. The idea of a government high school for girls received the support of the *Bulletin* (19-11-1881, p.5), with the proviso that cookery and physical education should have their place in its curriculum, in addition to academic subjects at a good standard.
The following year, when reporting that two 'of the other sex' intended going up for matriculation in June, the Bulletin (13-5-1882, p.2) again drew attention to the need for 'an institution where secondary instruction shall be given thoroughly'. When the school (Fort Street) opened, the Illustrated Sydney News (19-1-1884, p.14) published a drawing of the cookery class, and a paragraph which described at length the teacher's qualifications and experience, rather than emphasizing academic aspects of the curriculum.

The 1880 Education Act, which provided that high schools for girls and boys might be established in New South Wales, stipulated the subjects to be taught. Boys were to be given instruction in ancient and modern languages, in history, in literature, in mathematics and in physical sciences, in addition to a few other subjects. Girls were to be offered a more limited curriculum of modern languages, history, music and elements of mathematics and physical sciences (NSW JLC, 1880-81, p.12).

In Melbourne, although some girls did well in the matriculation examination, the Australasian thought poorly of girls' schools.

As the case stands at present, the education given to girls retains, with very few exceptions, the flimsy, showy, shallow character which has long been thought proper for it, and which some of our conservatives desire to perpetuate. When a matriculation class is formed at a girls' school it is as an excrescence upon the general scheme of study, not as the natural outcome and completion of the curriculum.

It was hoped that the proposed Presbyterian Ladies College would give girls an education equal to that available to boys; there was seen to be a need for the government also to provide 'an institution to serve as a training ground for the higher curriculum of the university' (A'asian, 10-1-1874, p.49). The establishment of the college was in keeping with the Scottish tradition of almost universal education; adult migrants from Scotland had a high level of literacy as early as the 1850s (Prentis, 1980, pp.84-85). Scots were disproportionately highly represented in parliament in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland; Prentis (pp.84-85) speculated that Scottish liberalism (which included a belief in the value of education for all girls and boys) was very acceptable in the Australian colonies.

By the 1880s it seems that standards had improved, with the Australasian (8-12-1883, p.722) commenting:
The girls are closely threatening on all sides the traditional male superiority in education and intellectual matters...When a beginning was made some years ago in admitting girls to examinations for matriculation and other purposes equally with boys, the high position often taken by the girls in the results was accounted for in ways soothing to male pre-eminence by saying that they did not represent an average; they were picked girls who by their ability, and self-reliance, and courage had been led to dare the ordeal, and who naturally took a high place. But the number of girls who go for examination is always increasing, and it must be admitted that on the whole they hold their own very well with the boys.

Higher Education for Women

From the end of the 1860s, the Australian press carried reports of the entry of women into higher education overseas and of their success in local matriculation and civil service examinations. The Town and Country Journal condescendingly noted that women were able to take the University of Sydney examinations but felt that, having done so, their 'great object - we will say [their] most proper object' should be to marry as soon as possible (25-3-1870, p.255); 'When therefore the daughters of Australia begin to graduate in the University of Sydney' they should not neglect their domestic duties in order to study (8-4-1871, p.424). When reporting that two bursaries were to be made available for lady students at Sydney University, 'Mr. Punch [thought] that perhaps if two nurseries were made available for a longer period, they would be more acceptable' (Punch, 6-4-1882, p.139). The girls rapidly showed that they could compete successfully with the boys, at least in the subjects they had traditionally been taught, when they came at or near the top in English and modern languages in the Senior examinations (T&C, 7-12-1872, p.757). However they did not necessarily receive equal rewards. In giving details of the Hordern Prize for the University Junior Examination, the Town and Country Journal (17-3-1888, p.538) stated that the male receiving the highest mark would win 100 pounds and the female with the best result 25 pounds. The Australasian, both in editorial comment and in articles reprinted from English publications, gave support to the education of women. It denied that the 'blue stocking' image was just (2-5-68, p.560) and discussed the reasons why society encouraged mental indolence, or at least the pretence of it, in women (10-4-1869, p.455). The Australasian considered that
A woman indeed requires to possess more than ordinary strength of mind and purpose to be able to apply herself to study, for a sensitive person shrinks from being pointed at as a blue-stockling or a bore; and this is an ordeal which all ladies having any pretensions to a masculine education must pass through, whether the epithets be applicable or not being a point into which none take the trouble to inquire (A'asian, 27-8-1870, p.263).

The Australasian described the facilities available to women for higher education in Scotland, printed a letter from London about a girl who was preparing for the matriculation examination (A'asian, July-Dec 69, p.359) and wrote in favour of women's entrance to Melbourne University (19-8-1871, p.240). However, a 'hasty decision' on the part of the university authorities prevented the admission of the first girls to pass the matriculation and civil service examinations (A'asian, 9-12-1871, p.753).

Punch (6-12-1866, p.179) at first treated the idea of lady BAS very flippantly but when there was a real prospect of their receiving tertiary education, there was rather more encouragement for young ladies, when it commented sympathetically on their exclusion (14-12-1871, p.189), although it subsequently took the opportunity to publish a cartoon suggesting that the problem was the lack of a suitable dress for women university students (16-5-1872, p.152). During the next ten years the Australasian repeatedly pressed for the admission of women to Melbourne University. In 1873, it pointed out that there was no 'ancient usage and mouldy custom' to justify the exclusion of women. 'We ought to be in advance of, not to lag behind, our country men and women [in England].' Educated women could do much light work and men could go to the country to become 'bronzed and vigorous producers' (11-1-1873, p.49). When reporting that a woman had gained a bachelor's degree at a New Zealand university the Australasian asked why Victorian women 'should be excluded from a like opportunity' because of the 'stupid conservatism or illiberal jealousy of the other sex' (14-7-1877, p.50). When, in 1880, a decision was made to admit women (although not for the study of medicine), Melbourne University was congratulated 'on its readiness to move with the spirit of the time'. 'Women are more and more asserting a claim to share in the practical work of society and showing, at the same time, their fitness for it' (13-3-1880, p.338). In 1883, the first two Melbourne women gained their BA degrees (A'asian, 1-12-1883, p.689).
In the meantime, women were already studying at the newly-established Adelaide University and in 1880 the Adelaide University Act was amended to state explicitly that women could be admitted to degrees, but it was not until 1885 that a woman graduated (Adelaide University, 1887, pp.25 and 48).

Sydney University finally decided, in 1882, to allow ladies to attend lectures (Bull., 6-5-1882, p.11). In response to earlier concern that nothing indecent was taught to the ladies, the Bulletin (14-5-1881, p.2) had asserted that no knowledge was impure. The Illustrated Sydney News (6-6-1885, p.10) published pictures of the first two ladies to obtain degrees from Sydney University, followed by an enthusiastic description of their achievements. Thus, by the mid 1880s, girls had graduated from all three Australian universities and 'the movement [was] now firmly established' (A'asian, 2-7-87, p.26), its respectability being demonstrated by the support of the wife of the Governor of New South Wales for the establishment of a University Women's College (T&C, 23-7-1887, p.190).

The introduction of higher education for women, particularly their training for the professions, was by no means without its critics. In two letters to the editor of the Melbourne Bulletin (24-6-1881, p.7 and 15-7-1881, p.7), 'Harkaway' wrote of the natural differences between the sexes and contended that:

women could not safely, much less profitably, study by the side of men, that sex, and pre-eminently so, has denied them the capabilities which are indispensable for the proper practice of most of the learned professions, in which they would be as much out of place as Jupiter would be if found mending his wife's stockings, if she wore them.

'Harkaway's' main concern was that education would weaken women's moral influence. Even at the end of the century, a woman lecturer, while conceding that a woman could attain 'as high a mental development as the average man', still believed that women should be educated principally to fill their roles as wives and mothers (TT 5-4-1895, pp.11-12). Table Talk (1-8-1890, p.2), when reporting a woman's success in mathematics at Cambridge, gave its opinion that abstract studies were not suited to the 'finely structured female intellect'. 'Woman's true intellectual instruments are the heart-warmed intuitions, not the "freezing Reason's colder part".'
The attractive appearance of many of the first women students would have made nonsense of any attempt to claim that they had turned to higher studies because of poor marriage prospects. *Punch*, which had greeted the entry of young ladies to the University with numerous cartoons featuring 'Sweet Girl Graduates',³ paid 'Homage to the Beautiful and Clever' when the first student completed her course (6-8-1883, p.228; Plate 6.1).⁴ In verse, the *Bulletin* (5-8-1882, p.8) recounted the startled reaction of a man to the discovery that, instead of the usual all-male group, two of his fellow matriculants were 'ladies fair'. Australians did not seem to subscribe to the belief quoted from the *New Haven Register* that 'very intelligent women are seldom beautiful' (*T&C*, 30-9-1876, p.545).

The Relevance of Girls' Education

The relevance of girls' education, at all levels, to their future roles of wives and mothers was a contentious issue from the 1870s onward. Correspondents and columnists bewailed the modern trend for girls to grow up without training in the domestic skills they would need in married life. The fear was expressed that by attending school girls would be kept away from learning to do housework (*A'asian*, 28-6-1879, p.807). There were constant pleas that girls should be taught to manage a house and that even those who could expect to employ servants should know how to perform household tasks correctly if they were to supervise the work of others (*A'asian*, 28-6-1879, p.807). These comments were frequently voiced in English papers but they had particular force in Australia where few but the wealthiest women could rely on having well-trained servants to compensate for their lack of practical housekeeping ability. The *Town and Country Journal* (10-12-1887, p.1237), in describing Wellesley College in Boston, made a point of mentioning that the students performed housekeeping tasks in

³References to women students as 'Sweet Girl Graduates' stemmed from Tennyson's 1847 poem, 'The Princess', which described an imaginary women's college attended by 'sweet girl-graduates in their golden hair' (*Tennyson*, 1946, p.259).

⁴Punch depictions of women students were in striking contrast to its treatment of the supporters of the woman's rights movement who were shown as ugly harridans.
HOMAGE TO THE BEAUTIFUL AND CLEVER.

"Saturday, December 1st, will doubtless figure as a red-letter day in the annals of the University of Melbourne, for it witnessed the reception and admission of the first lady 'bachelor of arts,' Miss Bella Guérin, of Ballarat.

—Daily paper.

Plate 6.1: Mr. Punch paying homage to the 'Beautiful and Clever'. (Punch, 6-12-1883, p.228)

Women university students were treated very kindly in Punch cartoons.
addition to their studies. Education which consisted principally of acquiring 'accomplishments' was repeatedly attacked, both by those who advocated more academically demanding courses for girls and those who believed that education should concentrate on practical homemaking skills. An extreme example of the anti-education viewpoint appeared in an article, reprinted from the anti-feminist English Saturday Review, which claimed that the charm of women was in their ignorance which allowed men to feel superior (A'asian, 1868, p.455). Much more typical of the level of debate was a Town and Country Journal discussion of 'The Education of Women' which stressed the value of an educated mother who could also 'make a marriage an intercourse of understanding as well as affection' and who would have resources when she was older (6-7-1872, p.20). Whether or not they received much formal education, women were reminded that 'they owe[d] a duty to the state - viz., to fit themselves to become good mothers' (T&C, 6-8-1870, p.758). The Superintendent of the Children's Hospital in Melbourne pleaded that young women be taught physiology as a preparation for motherhood, thereby removing some of the misery caused by ignorance (Holden, 1883). Gymnastics were suggested as fitting girls to be mothers more than 'accomplishments' (A'asian, 9-2-1884, p.167). However the Illustrated Sydney News (30-1-1892, p.15) feared that 'girls ... now-a-days...are...too highly cultured to take seriously to babies.'

The stress on the role of education in preparing girls to be better mothers is important when considering the link between maternal education and child mortality (Caldwell, 1979; Caldwell and McDonald, 1981). If educated women could expect to lose fewer infants and young children then they may have reduced their fertility in response to the pressures of caring for numerous children and the expectation that the children would survive to adulthood.

As discussed earlier, the role of education in preparing women for equality within marriage also had implications for fertility. In a marriage which was 'an intercourse of understanding as well as affection', a women could express her feelings about the burdens of motherhood and, perhaps, persuade her husband that measures should be taken to space births or to cease having children.

As in England (Decline, 1917, pp.328-329), there was concern that
higher education might prove to be too taxing, physically or mentally, for young women. When the Presbyterian Ladies College was established in Melbourne, emphasis was placed on high academic standards but also on the care which would be taken with the health of its pupils (Asian, 19-12-1874, p.788). Ten years later, parents of girls were still in need of assurance that higher education was safe and usually desirable for girls (Asian, 19-7-1884, p.103). This was not surprising, given the attitude of some leading doctors, one of whom 'drew the attention of colleagues at the Intercolonial Medical Congress of 1887 to the unhappy effects of mental strain felt by young women preparing for university studies' (Lewis, 1980b, p.105). In a paragraph on noted English literary women, the Bulletin (13-6-1885, p.18) observed that even those who were married were generally childless, going on to claim that intellectually able men and women were liable to be childless (although not going so far as to suggest a cause for their infertility): 'the world would soon be depopulated if it were filled with persons of great intellectual stature'. In its regular letter from 'Mab' to 'Belle', the Bulletin quoted a professor who stated that all literary women looked 'worn, sad and tired'. 'Mab' considered that it was mainly a masculine desire to keep women restricted to a domestic life which led to such claims, but she confessed to a dislike of blue-stockings whose learned talk she could not comprehend (Bull, 27-2-1886, p.16).

Education for Careers

The possibility that girls' education should be entirely directed towards preparation for marriage came under attack, at first in reprinted English articles (Asian, 4-6-1870, p.711), including a lengthy discussion on the pros and cons of higher education for women which concluded

The question, at any rate for a woman, resolves itself into this. Shall I prepare myself for marriage alone and run the chance of a miserable life as an old maid, or shall I prepare myself for an independent existence by learning to perform some special work which will occupy my thoughts and bring me comfort and happiness if I remain unmarried, but which I shall be obliged to lay aside in the event of my getting married? Surely the answer is simple. It is more easy to give up an employment than to learn one (Asian, 11-5-1872, p.583).
By the mid 1880s, Victorian writers, too, were accepting that many local women would be unable to find husbands and that those who had the aptitude for higher education might do well to fit themselves for life as single women (A'asian, 1-12-1883, p.689; 18-4-1885, p.727 and 25-4-1885, p.775). 'What will they do with it?' was the problem which would face young women graduates, according to a correspondent to the Australasian (13-7-1872, p.39). Teaching, as a governess or a bush teacher, was the principal employment available.

Occupational Distribution

Statistics on the occupations of women in late nineteenth century Australia must be used with caution. Deacon (1985) has shown that the rate of female labour force participation depended to some extent on changing census definitions. For England and Wales, Hakim (1980) used Census Reports to demonstrate that there, too, the definition of women as productive workers or dependents greatly affected the proportions who were classed as 'economically active'.

For the 1891 censuses, the Australian colonies adopted a uniform classification of occupations which had the effect of removing some women, particularly those whose families had farms or small businesses, from the 'breadwinner' category. The Victorian Statist, Hayter, had opposed the change, although Victoria adopted it. It is probable that some of the apparently greater workforce participation of Victorian women, compared with those in New South Wales, reflected a greater willingness to class women in family enterprises as workers, not dependents.

England and Wales did not fully adopt a classification like that of the Australian colonies until 1911, so their data are not strictly comparable. However it appears that the pattern of employment for women was closer to that of Victoria than of New South Wales, although the proportion of women in industry and in domestic service was greater than in the Australian colonies and the overall labour force participation higher.
Table 6.2: Occupations of Women, Victoria and New South Wales, 1891 and 1901, and England and Wales, 1891

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N.S.W. 1891</th>
<th>N.S.W. 1901</th>
<th>Victoria 1891</th>
<th>Victoria 1901</th>
<th>E&amp;W 1891*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breadwinners</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>24.2**</td>
<td>26.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependents</td>
<td>82.6</td>
<td>82.4</td>
<td>78.8</td>
<td>75.5</td>
<td>73.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trans.&amp; Commun.</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Industry</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indefinite</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependent</td>
<td>82.6</td>
<td>82.4</td>
<td>78.8</td>
<td>75.5</td>
<td>73.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Calculated by classifying all girls under 10 years of age as dependents.
**Plus about 0.2% occupation not shown, most of whom were breadwinners.

Source: Censuses of N.S.W. and Victoria, 1891 and 1901, 'Occupations'; Census of England and Wales, 1891, 'Occupations'.

Teaching

With the introduction of compulsory schooling, there was an increase in the demand for teachers and the introduction of salaries which enabled them to be financially independent (Punch, 5-6-1873, p.180).

Enrolments increased rapidly, with a 50 per cent increase in daily average attendance in Victoria in 1873 (Rankin, 1939, p.124). 'As a rule it was rare to see more than three pupils from the same family, it is now common to have four or five' (Vic. PP, No. 69, 1875-76, p.147). Most new city students enrolled in the existing public schools had been to private schools but some had never attended school 'in consequence of the poverty of their parents' (Vic. PP, No. 69, 1875-76, p.143).

The effect on teachers of the introduction of compulsory education in Victoria in 1873 can be gauged from the reports of the inspectors. The incomes of classified teachers rose but even some of those teachers whose salaries were reduced were satisfied because of improved status, future pensions and the prospect of advancement on merit, rather than patronage (Vic. PP, No. 69, 1875-76, p.147). They were assured of receiving a salary whereas they had experienced trouble in collecting fees in poor districts; sometimes they had had to take payment, if any, in labour or its equivalent (Vic. PP, No. 69, 1875-76, p.153). A very important change was the requirement that teachers had acceptable
qualifications. In the early 1870s unclassified teachers were warned that they must obtain a Licence to Teach; those who had not passed the examination by 1879 were dismissed (Sweetman et al., 1922, pp.88-89). The teaching profession in all the colonies was entered by many as pupil teachers who were recruited at ages between 13 and 15 (Barcan, 1980, p.160). They assisted the teachers and were, in return, paid a small allowance and were given at least one hour's instruction each day themselves. Some of the more promising pupil teachers in Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia were selected to attend training colleges (Barcan, 1980, pp.160-161).

During the late nineteenth century, in both New South Wales and Victoria, there were periodic references to the surplus of women seeking positions as governesses and, sometimes, to their poor pay and conditions (for example, Punch, 5-2-1874, p.52; III. Syd. News, 10-6-1872, p.3; Bull., 5-6-1880, pp.1-2). Many of these comments were in the context of the contrast between the availability of governesses and that of servants to do the more menial tasks of housework and child care. Some women who would otherwise have been forced to seek positions as governesses may have been able to become school teachers during the period of rapid expansion of the education system in Victoria following the introduction of compulsory education in 1873. Employment as a schoolteacher, although it might entail moving to a remote rural area, offered a more independent life than that of a governess who spent virtually her whole time with the family for whom she worked.

An examination of the lists of the staffs of government schools in Victoria in 1874 shows that, excluding work mistresses, approximately half were female. The pay scales were complicated but women received less than men with the same qualifications. For instance, male pupil teachers received 20 pounds per annum and females 16. However there were a few cases in which a woman appeared to be the senior teacher at a school. Work mistresses (sewing teachers), who were employed part-time at schools without trained female teachers on their staffs, do not seem to have taught academic subjects and were apparently often the wives of masters, particularly in small country schools. In an era when few married women undertook paid employment unless from dire necessity, this work was a respectable exception. The salary of 30 pounds would have been a useful supplement to the family income and a

5 Of the 411 schools employing a work mistress, in 68 per cent she had the same surname as a male teacher on the staff.
source of some economic independence. In New South Wales, married male teachers were paid an extra 12 pounds per annum for the services provided to the schools by their wives who were required to take charge of the discipline of girl pupils if there was no female teacher on the staff; female teachers in charge of schools were paid 12 pounds less than males. Teachers' wives also had to teach needlework for at least four hours each week. Assessments of the efficiency of schools took into account the work of teachers' wives (NSW JLC 1880-81, p.590). They do not appear to have been employed as individuals, as was the case for work mistresses in Victoria who were included in the lists of school staffs.

In New South Wales there were complaints that women teachers were paid more than men with the same qualifications and much longer service, apparently because some positions, such as being in charge of an Infants' Department, were always filled by women. As most women taught for only a few years before marrying, those who remained had better opportunities for promotion than the men.

Teaching was no sinecure, to judge from inspectors' reports on school buildings and teachers' housing in the country, and a description of the Fort Street Model Public Schools in Sydney where a visitor reported on the good progress of the children who, apparently, were in classes of one hundred or more for each trained teacher (NSW JLC 1877-78, pp.393-398; T&C, 22-4-1871, p.496).

Medicine

Medicine was seen by some as being an excellent choice of profession for women, partly because of the belief that women would prefer to be treated by other women and partly to avoid the risk that women would make false accusations of impropriety against male doctors (A'asian, 9-3-1872, p.364). The Bulletin (18-5-1887, p.5) reported favourably on a proposal to establish in London a hospital for women, staffed by women. The Town and Country Journal published information about women in the United States and Europe who had become doctors; these included Mary E. Walker who was featured in a series on prominent women (18-9-1875, p.543). The Bulletin (21-4-1883, p.14) reported that Adela Knight, of Adelaide, 'intends entering the medical profession and is pursuing studies [in London] with that end in view'. Her good progress there was mentioned by the Town and Country Journal 6

6The headmaster of a small school often received less than 150 pounds per annum.
and her subsequent graduation was noted by the *Illustrated Sydney News* (3-4-1890, p.12). Unfortunately Dr. Knight died suddenly in Vienna before she could return to practise in Australia (Ill. Syd. News, 4-7-1891, p.9). The first woman to become registered as a qualified medical practitioner in the Australasian colonies was Constance Stone, who trained in the United States because 'the obstacles interposed by masculine conservatism - now happily removed, but at that time (six years ago), in full force - made it impossible for Miss Stone to prosecute her studies in Victoria' (Ill. Syd. News, 4-7-1891, p.9).

Sydney University accepted women undergraduates in its medical school; in 1888, the fifth year of the school's existence, two of the 56 students were women (T&C, 9-6-1888, p.1174). Much to the disgust of the *Bulletin* (12-2-1887, p.5), the University of Melbourne delayed the admission of women to its medical course until 1887; it then eliminated one of the obstacles by providing a separate dissecting room for female students (Bull, 29-10-1887, p.12; Plate 6.2). Later, two women were reported to have gained medical qualifications at Sydney University and a Sydney woman qualified in the United Kingdom (Ill. Syd. News, 1-4-1893, p.7). The women in the medical school had separate classes but in classics the works to be studied were selected so that ladies could attend with males students; the respect paid to their presence was said to have improved the classes (Ill. Syd. News, 17-4-1890, p.18). 7-6-190, p.12). In spite of a generally favourable response to the idea of women doctors, some writers felt that women were better suited to be trained nurses (TT, 1-8-1890, p.2).

**Nursing**

Although ladies traditionally had taken responsibility for nursing members of their families at home, hospital nursing was regarded as a form of domestic service in the early nineteenth century. The introduction of training was the vital step in making nursing an occupation suitable for ladies (Abel-Smith, 1960, p.4). Although it was essential that trainee nurses were sufficiently educated to take notes and to read books on medical subjects, the first English trainees were selected more for their high moral stature than for their educational attainments (Abel-Smith, 1960, p.21). Trained nurses from
Plate 6.2: A Peaceful Settlement of a Great Social Difficulty. (Bulletin, 29-10-1887, p.12)
the Nightingale School soon moved away from London in their mission to reform hospitals. The arrival, in 1868, of Miss Osborne and six trained nurses to help staff the Sydney Infirmary (Ill. Syd. News, 25-3-68, p.1), was important in opening a new possibility for independence for Australian women.

At the Prince Alfred Hospital educated ladies trained as nurses (Ill. Syd. News, 3-10-1889, p.19). The Melbourne Children's Hospital's school of nursing had a two-year course of night lectures and practical training in the wards, with two examinations. The many applicants for admission there, and at the Alfred Hospital, included daughters of the clergy, judges and other professional men (Ill. Syd. News, 31-1-1891, p.8; TT, 21-1-1887, p.11). However young ladies were sometimes reluctant to perform domestic duties, such as scrubbing floors, which were a usual part of nursing training (Bull., 25-5-1889, p.15).

Commerce

New technology provided opportunities for educated women. In an article on 'women of the time', Punch (12-3-1868, p.88) referred, among other occupations, to 'electric telegraph clerkesses'; the Town and Country Journal (10-6-1871, p.707) approved of women's employment as telegraph operators. The Illustrated Sydney News (8-6-1872, p.93) reported on a telegraph school which had opened in Victoria in which women filled the classes, for which the fee was one pound for 16 lessons. A decade later, there were 800 women applicants for 30 appointments, at 10/- per week, in the Victorian Telegraph Department (Bull., 23-12-1882, p.11).

Some women took advantage of the introduction of typewriters to acquire a skill which would ensure their entry into respectable white collar employment. They apparently needed to buy their own machines at a cost of 22 pounds, and then to pay for lessons, so the opportunity to train as a typist was restricted to women with at least some means (A'asian, July-Dec 1888, p.233). The Illustrated Sydney News (17-4-1890, p.28) published a long illustrated article on typewriters, emphasising the suitability of educated ladies as operators. It was suggested that some governesses might undertake training. 'It is to be hoped that shorthand and type-writing will come to the rescue of numberless poor drudges of teachers who now have to take what they get and be thankful' (Bull., 12-1-1889, p.6).
With the depression of the 1890s, there was an influx of young women into the typewriting business. The *Illustrated Sydney News* (12-8-1893, p.6) reported that many were finding positions in lawyers' and mercantile offices, where there was a demand for them, particularly if they were good-looking. The paper urged parents to ensure that their daughters had a good general education, so that they had good vocabularies and could spell. 'There is money in typewriting, girls, and it is a good, ladylike occupation'.

**Writing and Journalism**

In 1891, the *Illustrated Sydney News* published a photograph illustrating a paragraph about a young woman who had written fiction for the paper both before and after her marriage (3-1-1891, p.12); in a later feature in a series 'Some Australian Women', it described the work of a number of authors and also commented on the large number of women journalists in Australia (11-9-1891, pp.12-13). The work of women artists had been mentioned earlier (9-5-1891, p.10).

**Shop Assistants**

Girls with some education, but without the training needed for professional or office work, could seek respectable employment in shops selling such goods as gloves, lace and ribbons; however their very long hours and treatment by customers were often the subject of unfavourable comment. The *Bulletin* (29-5-1880, p.10) published verses, 'The Shopgirl', which suggested that conditions were so trying that

Is it a wonder that souls are lost  
When bodies are held at so light a cost  
That the hopeless heart and the jaded limb  
At times take rest in the haunts of sin.

The *Illustrated Sydney News* (15-3-1888, p.2) took up 'The cause of the shop girls', stating that they often had to work 12 to 14 hours per day; ladies were blamed for encouraging shops to stay open to the detriment of their employees. In a more general article on the attitudes of non-working women to working women, it protested about the unfeeling treatment by some shoppers of tired assistants who were liable to be dismissed if they did not make enough sales (3-1-1891, p.220).
In spite of the bad conditions, the availability of employment in shops provided some women with a respectable alternative to total dependence on their families or to destitution.

Women in the Workforce

The 'Woman's World' column of the Town and Country Journal (9-4-1887, p.762) wrote of women's successes in a variety of occupations, many formerly male preserves. The Illustrated Sydney News (27-9-1888, p.25) told of women who had set up little fancy goods shops; for girls who were not good at sewing, it advocated training in 'carpentering (of a mild form), type writing, shorthand writing, or photography'.

In the early 1870s, it was thought that although women should not compete with men, they should be educated and, if they had to work, should be able to choose occupations other than teaching and still remain respectable (A'asian, 27-4-1872, p.519). By the mid 1880s women were believed to be suitable for some traditionally male jobs, although it was felt that caution should be exercised in allowing them to enter such fields; however, women were regarded as more trustworthy cashiers than men (T&C, 3-1-1885, p.30).

Even when writing of women who had distinguished careers in the professions, there was still an emphasis on their duties to their families. In an obituary for the English scientist Mary Somerville, the Town and Country Journal (3-8-1873, p.297) stressed her devotion to her family at cost to her studies.

Victoria and New South Wales

Education became compulsory in Victoria in 1873, seven years before New South Wales; the level of literacy had been higher for many years (Table 6.1). Victorian papers approved of careers for women before those of New South Wales.

If a higher level of school attendance and a more encouraging attitude towards the education of girls are factors in initiating the beginning of a decline in fertility, then one would expect that Victoria would have shown a reduction in fertility before New South Wales. As has been shown earlier, there is some evidence to support this hypothesis.
Conclusion

Thus, in the latter part of the nineteenth century, the combination of better educational opportunities and an increase in the range of respectable employment opened up new horizons to young women while, at the same time, child labour became less available to urban families.

The standard of education available to girls improved during the period. Whether standards were raised in response to greater employment opportunities, or whether the availability of better educated women opened new careers to them, is not clear. However the latter part of the nineteenth century saw the scope of employment suitable for ladies widen from being a governess or taking in sewing to teaching in government as well as private schools, hospital nursing and a range of professional and commercial occupations. For an educated woman, marriage was no longer virtually the only alternative to dependence on her family. Should she marry, she was less likely to lose her babies in infancy or early childhood and might have wished to space or limit her childbearing. As an educated woman her relationship with her husband should have made it easier to convey her feelings and to have them respected. Education may, therefore, have been a factor in initiating the decline in fertility in Australia in the late nineteenth century.
Chapter 7: Feminism, Fertility Control and Religion

An assessment of the influence of feminism in the decline in fertility in late nineteenth century Australia depends very largely on how feminism is defined. For England, the Bankses (1964, p.128), who chose to study the influence of organized feminism, concluded that the movement 'was not a causal factor in the advent of family planning'; however McLaren (1978, pp.94-95) and, for America, D. Smith (1974) found that when feminism was defined more broadly it was seen to be favourably disposed towards birth control.

The distinction between the types of feminism is important in the Australian context because feminist organizations were not founded until after the fertility decline had become established. Evans (1977, p.59) described Caroline Chisholm as the 'pioneer Australian feminist' who, from the 1840s, 'set the pattern for many other female philanthropists who sought to temper the "rough masculinity of Australian society"'. He stated that by the 1860s and 1870s the focus of women's efforts was on ensuring that girls, as well as boys, had opportunities for primary and secondary education, but that success in gaining these objectives 'took place in the virtual absence of an organized feminist movement' (1977, p.59). However Australian feminist interests before the 1880s were not limited to education; there was also concern about more equal status for husbands and wives, the role and status of women, and suffrage.

Suffrage

The Victorian Women's Suffrage Society was founded in 1884, but stalwarts such as Henrietta Dugdale had been active since the late 1860s (ADB); as a rationalist, Mrs. Dugdale did not share all the concerns of the more religious agitators for the vote such as the founders of the Women's Christian Temperance Union. The temperance body, established after the Suffrage Society, dominated feminist activity from the mid 1880s, concentrating its activities on trying to obtain the vote for women as a means of gaining support for liquor prohibition legislation (Evans, 1977, p.60), although it also supported equal pay and training for careers, and attacked the double standard of sexual morality (Hyslop, 1976, p.41).
The frivolous, although favourable, press coverage of the inaugural meeting of the Victorian Women's Suffrage Society (A'asian 10-5-1884, p.593) drew protest from Mrs. Dugdale (A'asian, 17-5-1884, p.5946). The Australasian (17-5-1884, pp.625-626) then gave qualified support to the idea of suffrage but claimed that its effect would be reactionary. In a subsequent comment on the English vote against suffrage, the Australasian considered that the question was 'very real and formidable' (21-6-1884, p.842).

The formal campaign to gain votes for women had been preceded by years of discussion in the press. As early as 1863, Punch (17-12-1863, p.194) reported with amusement that a female Adelaide ratepayer had insisted on voting in the Mayoral election. In 1867, the possibility of female suffrage was raised when the Australasian (3-8-1867, p.135) reprinted an English report that J.S. Mill wanted 'person' to replace 'man' in the new Reform Bill. Three years later (9-7-1870, p.56), it reported that the House of Commons had defeated a proposal to give electoral rights to women. The Town and Country Journal (26-7-1873, p.116) published a sympathetic account of a London suffrage meeting and the English suffrage debate was reported again in 1876 by the Australasian (24-6-1876, p.822).

In both Victoria and New South Wales, attempts to extend the vote to women were made in Parliament many years before female suffrage was achieved.

The action of the Victorian Legislative Assembly in passing a resolution to admit women to Parliamentary suffrage was criticized by the Australasian (17-7-1873, p.50). In a subsequent leading article (9-8-1873, pp.176-177), the paper included in its argument the assertion that if 'the denizens of Little Bourke-street or Romeo-lane' (presumably prostitutes) voted then respectable women would not go to the polls. However, the Punch (10-7-1873, p.12) comment on the speech of a politician who thought that women would not vote, was that the ladies would say 'Won't we just!'. Women were not prepared to let anti-suffrage arguments go unchallenged and soon produced their 'women's claims, from their own point of view' (A'asian, 13-9-1873, p.327).

The late 1880s brought a proposal by the New South Wales Premier,
Sir Henry Parkes, to enfranchise women, and although the bill was rejected, the debate on suffrage was given an impetus. The Bulletin (2-4-1887, pp.4-5) realized that 'the logical sequence of woman-suffrage [was] the representation of women in Parliament by legislators of their own sex'. It then speculated that women politicians would vote for legislation supported by men who were handsome, well-dressed, respectable ('respectability goes almost as far with the fair sex as good looks') and, preferably, bachelors. The Bulletin painted an amusing picture of the activities of lady politicians but concluded on a more serious level:

Women are not meant for legislative duties. Nature has proclaimed against it. Woman's sphere is the domain of her own home - here she should be supreme. Her office is maternal, and she best fulfil the object of Nature by the discharge of the sacred duties of wife and mother. If this not be her destiny, whence the difference of sexes? She must indeed be a poor specimen of her sex who cannot secure adequate representation at the hands of man. We would not desire that woman should be able to protect herself from a common assault in the public street, and if assaulted we should feel all the better pleased with her if she should flee in trepidation to male protection.

'Femina', in a letter to the Illustrated Sydney News (6-8-1893, p.14), commenced her 'girl's plea for the majority' on the subject of Woman's Suffrage with the question: 'Where are the dear, sweet women of long ago?' and concluded by cautioning against pressing for the vote:

Women, let us aim to be well educated; let us read and think; let us become helpmeets for the men; but let us pause ere we take a final step; let us hesitate ere we lose the gentleness which, once inherent to womankind, threatens to slowly, but surely, fade away.

Women were warned that those 'who seek to rival men in politics are deliberately casting aside their own wide triumphant empire - the empire of the heart of man' (Ill. Syd. News, 2-12-1893, p.17).

Other writers put more forcefully their opinions that suffragists were 'unwomanly' and that they did not represent the views of the majority of women. In response to a woman who protested against its treatment of the suffrage debate, the Illustrated Sydney News (4-2-1893, p.5) wrote:

What we do object to are the women who wish to be men, and who make no secret of their belief that the Creator made them
of the wrong sex - a belief, by the way, in which male observers are generally gallant enough to acquiesce. Such people, in whom an error of sex has admittedly been made, occasionally band themselves together to attack that reserve and womanliness which are woman's chiefest charm. They claim to represent women, whereas they merely represent themselves. Because a minute section of the women of a country evince an unwomanly desire to participate in the blare, glare, and sordidness of politics, that is not a reason why the franchise should be conferred upon the great mass of women, to whom such things are repugnant. If a similar clique of women claimed the right to participate in the equally masculine function of war-making, men would similarly refuse to entertain the proposal.

The Worker, in a feature about a prominent suffragist, Rose Scott, recognized the prevalence of this attitude:

Those who entertain the vulgar prejudices against woman's rights advocates are fond of representing them as masculine-minded women who are anxious to usurp the proud position now occupied by the Lords of Creation; but no friend or even casual acquaintance of the subject of our portrait can long retain any such idea.

Suffragists were often portrayed as very unattractive women in verse and illustrations. For instance, the Illustrated Sydney News (6-9-1870, p.46) published 'A Song of Female Suffrage' which concluded:

Women who want women's rights
Want, mostly, woman's charms.

The Melbourne Punch published very unflattering cartoons depicting 'Woman's righters' and suffragists (3-7-1884, p.8; Almanac for 1885). The Bulletin (23-8-1884, p.13) also denigrated the suffragists:

Lovely woman, or rather a most unlovely section of her, wishes to vote - wishes especially to have a voice in making the laws affecting women and children. 'Give us the custody of our children!' shriek Dr. Anna with the blue nose and Dr. Mary with the bottle-curts and eye-glass.

Moral Standards

The importance of woman's rights and, in particular, of female suffrage on moral standards was stressed by both sides in the debate.

Even before the suffrage movement in Australia became dominated by temperance interests, the influence of women's votes in improving standards of conduct was stressed by many of its advocates. A woman
Plate 7.1: The Woman's Righters. (Punch, 29-1-1885, p.48).

The typical Punch treatment of advocates of woman's rights was in strong contrast to its perceptions of women students (see Plate 6.1).
writer (A'asian, 13-9-1873, p.327) claimed that moral standards might be raised by women voting for candidates whose private lives bore scrutiny.

I believe, moreover, that women's voting, instead of deteriorating, would be elevating to the tone of the House. Although I admit honestly that woman would have to acquire a more catholic spirit of toleration than she now owns before she would be able to recognise the fact that a man may be most objectionable in private life, and yet valuable to the state as a wise, incorruptible legislator.

Such men were contrasted with 'those women who have risen to eminence in this century - from Mrs. Somerville to Mrs. Browning, Florence Nightingale to Rosa Bonheur - all are as worthy of admiration in their private as in their public life'. A contributor to the Liberator (23-5-1891, p.2500), on the other hand, pointed to Lucretia Borgia, Catherine of Russia and others as examples of women who rose to powerful positions.

The Bulletin also feared the moral effects of suffrage. In a savage attack on an English proposal to grant the vote to women, it claimed that woman had gained advances in recent years 'in the legitimate way, by using the social influence they will always possess, unless they sacrifice it by entering the political lists, and losing in influence much more than they seek to gain in power. If their cause prospers, they may find one day that political gain may prove to be intellectual and moral loss' (23-8-1884, p.13). Later, when speculating on the actions of future women politicians, it claimed that educated women were 'the moral and intellectual slaves of Mrs Grundy. Respectability has more charms for them than Virtue, the opinion of the world in which they live - the world of other women - has more terrors for them than Vice...' (2-4-1887, p.5). The argument that women's suffrage would 'moralise politics' was attacked by the English anti-feminist, Mrs Lynn Linton, in an article reprinted in the Illustrated Sydney News (29-8-1891, p.12). 'What is it that gives women their peculiar moral power over men but the purity born of their greater ignorance...because of their more restricted lives?' But a woman correspondent to the Hummer (30-7-1892) countered with: 'sisters, it never hurts an innocent-hearted woman to know of evil - ignorance is not innocence.'
Supporters of female suffrage claimed that it was unreasonable that the mothers whom young men had been brought up to respect should be regarded as inferior to their sons who had reached adulthood:

How can boys and men respect their mothers and grown-up female relatives when they see them put aside as incompetent to decide on matters of State, while a deliberate expression of opinion is solicited from youths of 21? (Worker, 15-2-1896, p.2).

A correspondent to the Sydney Evening News (quoted in the Worker (29-10-1892, p.2)), expressed dismay at the thought of a lady parliamentary candidate being exposed to 'the turmoil incidental to an election campaign', in particular to election meetings. He was particularly concerned that she might have to answer questions about contagious diseases. However it was claimed that in New Zealand and in South Australia, where women had been given the vote in 1893 and 1894 respectively, 'rowdyism was conspicuous by its absence' at such gatherings (Worker, 2-5-1896, p.3).

With the coming of Federation, voting to elect the Federal Parliament was open to everyone who had suffrage in their States. Those eligible under this rule included all Australian men but only South Australian women and their Western Australian sisters who were enfranchised in 1899. This anomaly was removed in 1902 when universal suffrage was introduced for the Federal elections. New South Wales gave the vote to women in the same year, followed by Tasmania in 1903, Queensland in 1905 and Victoria in 1908. Victorian women spearheaded the fight for suffrage and had come very close to achieving it on several occasions before Federation, so that it is ironic that theirs was the last State to give the vote to women. The strength of feminist demands for the vote, and the general status of women, seem to have had less influence on the timing of universal suffrage in Australia than political situations which made it expedient to enfranchise women.

**Suffrage and Fertility**

The proposition that the attainment of feminist goals, including the granting of female suffrage, would lead to a decline in fertility was regarded seriously, at least by the Bulletin and the Illustrated Sydney News; Punch expressed its fears in verse:
And men should work, but, entre nous, 
If every place and trade'll 
Be occupied by women, who 
Henceforth will rock the cradle?  
******  
Then won't the coming census show 
A shocking alteration,  
With no posterity, and - oh!  
No rising generation!

The Bulletin's 'Woman Items' paragraphs (3-4-1882, p.11) included the following:

Godwin Smith says, in the Nineteenth Century, that the suffrage movement is, in the United States at all events, only part of a movement against the limitations of sex, against the bondage of matrimony, and the burdens of maternity. If it spreads in America, the consequence will be that the Anglo-American race will be supplanted by the Irish and Germans, whose women are loyal to sex, true to the family and good mothers; while all the Irish and half the Germans belong to a Church by which the family has always been upheld. The question is of tremendous significance, and in dealing with it levity and concessions to vague sentiment are criminal.

Later, the Bulletin(23-8-1884, p.13) noted that of a committee of 20 for women's suffrage [in London], nine were old maids and the eleven married women had only three children between them. It again linked woman's rights and fertility when it contrasted France, whose 'emancipated' women neglected their duty to bear sons, with Germany whose vigour as a country was due 'as a natural consequence' to its women. 'In Germany woman is the wife, not the mistress of her husband, as in France' (2-4-1887, p.5). In her attack on suffrage, Mrs Lynn Linton also implied that it would affect fertility.

'To admit women - that is, mothers - into the heated arena of political life would be as destructive to the physical well-being of the future generations as it would be disastrous to the good conduct of affairs in the present' (Ill. Syd. News, 29-8-1891, p.12).

However the author of an 1894 article, quoted by the Worker (2-5-1896, p.4), from a South Australian journal, thought that the fertility of good mothers would not be affected. After asserting that, with a few 'brilliant exceptions' all women were inferior to men, it concluded:

Yet this weak sex is for the future to govern us; and not the best of the sex, but the worst. The best of the sex will
be engaged in nursing babies and other suitable and natural avocations.

Although the fertility decline was well established by the time that suffrage was a real issue, the debate is important to this study for the light it shed on contemporary beliefs about links between fertility and the role of women.

FERTILITY CONTROL

Feminism and birth control

In considering the role of feminism in supporting the use of fertility control in the late nineteenth century, two distinctions must be made. The first, mentioned above, is between the organized feminism studied by the Bankses and what Smith described as 'domestic feminism'. The other important distinction is between natural and artificial methods of birth control.

Although Australian feminist organizations supported many of the political, legal and social reforms needed to improve the status of women, they did not openly endorse the use of artificial methods of birth control (Kelly, 1982, p.213).

Whether suffragists feared greater hostility to their cause, whether they believed that it was an issue that might divide their own ranks, or whether they believed that sexual restraint was the appropriate way to ease the burdens of motherhood, is not certain. A few individual suffragists, like Brettina Smyth, openly advocated the use of contraceptives, but they seem to have been exceptions whose work was confined to the period after the mid 1880s. Therefore, if feminism is to be considered of importance in the fertility decline, then it must have been in the form of 'domestic feminism' and it must be established that respect for wives' opinions and concern for their comfort led men to cooperate in limiting marital fertility.

Attitudes to Family Size

The blame for the declining birth rate was attributed by the press to two main causes: the cost entailed in bringing up children and the reluctance of women to accept the restriction on their freedom imposed by motherhood.
Particularly during the early part of the period covered by this study there were frequent, often humorous, indications that large families were regarded unfavourably by men, mainly due to the financial burden they entailed, but there appeared to be a fatalistic attitude towards the arrival of more children and an absence of suggestions that anything could, or should, be done to prevent their births. In Punch (7-2-1861, p.8), a father bewailed the fact that he had eight-and-a-half children, but saw no remedy except a family bounty. Some twenty years later, Punch published a story about a family who couldn't afford to 'buy' a baby as the people next door had done (29-6-1882, p.258) and, in an editorial (5-3-1885, p.92), advocated the introduction of bonuses to allow men to marry and to afford child care. Couples about to marry were warned that they must be able to provide for the probability of a family; it would be no use expecting to be luckier than their neighbours (Punch, 10-11-1870, p.147). In a cartoon captioned 'Revenge', a clergyman who asked if Jones (father of nine) remembered him was told 'Remember you? Well, I ought to, you married me' (Bulletin, 31-1-1891, p.8). However it was claimed that a man with plenty of children to fetch and carry for him could be very happy (Punch, 5-8-1880, p.53).

A Bulletin writer (26-9-1885, p.23) commented on a suggestion in the Melbourne Age that the law be amended to allow less able students to leave school at twelve years of age to 'earn money for their parents'. He suggested, further, that all children should be forced by law to repay their parents all the money spent on them from birth until they left school. He claimed that colonial children were inclined to keep their wages themselves, so that parents were financially disadvantaged by having children. This discouraged young men from marrying, as children were an almost inevitable consequence of marriage.

The effects on women of bearing and caring for large families received less attention, although a feature (reprinted from the New York Tribune) deploring the trend towards small families concluded 'I do not mean by this that the women necessarily must be subject to the mental and physical exhaustion consequent upon constant and over production. The rational power of human beings should guard against
this' (A'asian, 23-9-1871, p.392); these words may be interpreted as a hint that couples should use abstinence or coitus interruptus, either of which could be deduced by a 'rational' person as being a means of reducing fertility. A stronger indication of a changed attitude to women emerged from a question asked by Sir Normand MacLaurin, a medical member of the New South Wales Royal Commission. After expressing disgust at 'the spread of the so-called philanthropy which seems to be unwilling to witness or to think even of the suffering of pain by any one - this mawkish, maudlin feeling that there is throughout society now', he complained:

I sometimes hear rather weak-kneed husbands express extravagant commiseration on their wives' sufferings in child-birth; but I do not notice that it is a potent factor in causing their abstinence from the sexual act. (Minutes, p.101).

He appears neither to have considered that such feelings may have been evidence of a closeness which was expressed in mutually enjoyed sexual relationships nor to have thought that such husbands may have used methods other than abstinence to protect their wives from unwanted pregnancies.

Methods of Fertility Control

Some methods of fertility control can be used on the initiative of women without the cooperation or even knowledge, of their husbands, so if it can be shown that they were widely used, then there is a strong possibility that women's role in the decline of fertility was important. If, on the other hand, coitus interruptus, periodic abstinence or the use of condoms were important forms of birth control, men must have either wished to limit family size for their own convenience, or women must have been able to influence their husbands in a manner which does not appear to have been the case in earlier years.

If one considers the use of methods of fertility control in the light of the innovation/adjustment alternatives proposed by Carlsson (1966), it is necessary for the 'innovation' case to show that fertility commenced its decline at about the same time as new methods of contraception became available.
In the late nineteenth century, methods of fertility control were not discussed even in the pages of radical newspapers, like the *Liberator*, although some published advertisements for abortifacients and, to a lesser extent, contraceptives. Reports of the Bradlaugh-Besant trial in England (T&C, 10-11-1877, p.792) and *Ex Parte Collins* in New South Wales in 1888 no doubt gave publicity to *The Fruits of Philosophy* as a source of advice on contraceptive methods (Hicks, 1978, p.23). 'Almost from its first issue in 1884, *The Liberator* advocated the use of 'Malthusianism' (but did not give explicit details), and published advertisements for contraceptives and for books on fertility control, but it was a struggling publication whose information did not reach a wide audience. For those who had little access to newspapers or books, even basic information about reproduction might not be available in an era when many women did not discuss such matters even with their daughters (Carter, 1981, passim.; Reiger, 1985, p.204).

In 1885 a Sydney physiology lecturer was fined ten pounds after giving lectures to men only, 'ostensibly for exhibiting surgical diagrams, but really for discussion of that subject - Population...' (Bull, 16-5-1885, p.4). It seems that Melbourne was more willing to accept such lectures or, perhaps, the lecturers were careful not to leave themselves open to prosecution. A lady doctor gave two private lectures each for ladies and gentlemen (*TT*, 4-2-1887, p.11) and by 1890 Mrs Smyth was lecturing to women only on 'Women's Diseases; their Cause, Cure and Prevention', illustrated with medical plates. It is not certain that the lectures included instruction in contraception, but Mrs Smyth's audience may have known that she stocked such products in her North Melbourne store. Three hundred free tickets were offered to the poor women of North Melbourne for one lecture (*Liberator*, 10-11-1890, p.2039). As a member of the Australasian Secularist Society, Mrs Smyth probably held eugenicist views on reducing the fertility of the poor to prevent the deterioration of the race. The *Liberator* (17-1-1891, p.2217) found it necessary to rebut the idea, supposedly held by the poor, that Malthusianism was advocated by the aristocracy for ends of their own. Certainly the working class *Hummer* (7-5-1892, p.2) felt that Malthusians were 'introducing into social
life a new factor which may possibly be for good, but more likely is for unmitigated and far-reaching evil.'

There is one particularly valuable source of information on New South Wales practices at the end of the century - the evidence given to the Royal Commission on the Decline of the Birth-Rate. Although the Royal Commissioners' questions showed a very strong bias against artificial methods of fertility control, the evidence provided valuable information about the prevalence of abortion and about available contraception. Newspaper advertisements for abortifacients and contraceptives gave indirect evidence of contemporary practices.

New Contraceptives

The last quarter of the nineteenth century saw some improvements in contraceptive technology, made possible by the invention of the process for vulcanizing rubber. Teale (1978, pp.127-128) argued that the introduction of these improved contraceptive methods was the most important single factor in the decline in marital fertility in Australia and noted 'that the advertisements for contraceptives were aimed primarily at women'.

Condoms made of a variety of materials had been used, mainly as a protection against venereal diseases, for thousands of years. The new mass-produced rubber condoms could be afforded by the wealthier members of the middle class, although at Mrs Smyth's advertised price of 1/6 each they may have been too expensive for others. Himes (1963, p.201) implies that they became available in America in 1876 or later, so that they probably arrived in Victoria too late to be regarded as an 'innovation' capable of setting in motion a decline in fertility, although they certainly were available when fertility declined rapidly in the 1890s.

¹The Report of the Royal Commission was published without the Minutes of Evidence, copies of which, although printed, were not circulated and have only recently been located. See Hicks (1978) for a discussion of the formation and proceedings of the Commission.
Home-made contraceptives

Some contraceptives were prepared from material and ingredients which could be bought easily. A chemist gave evidence to the Royal Commission that women bought cocoa-butter and quinine to make their own soluble pessaries, while others prepared their own contraceptive sponges (Minutes, pp.30-31).

Traditional Methods of Fertility Control

Prolonged lactation

Some women, no doubt, continued to breastfeed their babies for extended periods in an attempt to delay further pregnancies, but the only reference to prolonged lactation was found in a doctor's evidence to the New South Wales Royal Commission. He stated that some women still suckled for a long time but that, by the twentieth century, the practice was mainly confined to the lower classes.

Coitus Interruptus

Coitus interruptus had been known as a contraceptive method since at least Biblical times and abstinence for varying periods was an obvious means of birth control; that these methods were used during the early days of fertility decline may be inferred from the Melbourne Survey data which show that, even in the middle of the twentieth century, one-third of Australian-born couples practising contraception were using them, in spite of further advances in contraceptive technology (Caldwell and Ware, 1973, p.17).

More direct evidence came from a medical witness, answering a question on the incidence of abortion, who told the 1903 Royal Commission that 'next to the withdrawal of the male organ it [was] the chief cause of the decline of the birth-rate' (Minutes, p.104). The earlier reference to the 'rational power of human beings' also implies the use of coitus interruptus.

Abstinence

The successful use of the rhythm method of periodic abstinence depended very much on a couple's source of information regarding the
practice. An obstetrician giving evidence before the National Birth-Rate Commission in England in 1914 stated that 'There is no doubt whatever that the majority of women conceive either just before or just after the period' (Decline, 1919, p.247); periodic abstinence based on this opinion was more likely to increase the birthrate than reduce it. However Allbutt's The Wife's Handbook, published in the mid 1880s, was more accurate when it identified a 'safe period' of five days before and eight days after menstruation (Himes, 1963, pp.251-252). The questions put by the New South Wales Royal Commissioners implied that they did not regard abstinence from sexual intercourse as undesirable, although they considered the use of artificial means of birth control reprehensible. The emphasis of the Commission was on ways in which the decline could be halted, with a stress on the use of new legislation and the enforcement of existing laws. Its members were particularly interested in the preventing abortions and the sale of abortifacients and contraceptives. Practices such as coitus interruptus and various forms of abstinence were not amenable to prohibiting legislation so evidence about their prevalence was not specifically sought. Lengthy periods of abstinence may have been practised by married couples, but whether prostitutes provided a substitute source of sex for married men is not clear, although The Liberator (15-2-1885, p.599) claimed that prostitution was the alternative to the use of 'the Malthusian doctrines'. Mrs Harrison Lee, a well-known temperance worker, advocated platonic relationships for married couples, except when they wished to have a child, but her ideas which, she believed, would allow young couples to marry were treated with considerable levity by the Bulletin (20-10-1888, p.5).

Abortion

Official statistics did not provide direct information on the incidence of induced abortion and although abortion was included among causes of death in Victoria (but not in New South Wales) it seems likely that such maternal deaths were ascribed to more medically and socially acceptable causes if possible. Allen (1982) documented strategems by which doctors avoided the necessity of mentioning induced abortion when providing death certificates.
She gave examples of the occasional scandals which brought this practice to public notice. The Australasian (23-9-1882, p.402) was very critical of Victorian doctors who, like their New South Wales counterparts, also hushed up deaths due to illegal abortions. After examining New South Wales coroners' records for the period 1880 to 1939 of cases in which a woman's cause of death had been uncertified, Allen concluded that there were about 42 such deaths in the 1880s and 103 in the 1890s; maternal deaths were 1427 and 2375 respectively in those decades. According to evidence given to the Royal Commission, abortion was second only to coitus interruptus as a method used to restrict fertility (Minutes, p.104).

Indirect evidence suggesting that many women attempted to end unwelcome pregnancies by abortion is found in the advertisements in some newspapers of the period. Drugs were recommended for 'female complaints', to 'correct all irregularities', 'remove obstructions' or 'remove all difficulties' (Ill. Syd. News, 27-10-1869, p.292; T&C, 12-11-1870, p.31; A'asian, 23-11-89, p.1102 and 17-11-1883, p.S920; Bulletin, 29-8-1886, p.2). A chemist claimed that some women took as many as 50 pills 'worth a guinea a box' [Beecham's Pills] in the space of two to three days when attempting to abort themselves (Minutes, p.30). Drugs were commonly used in abortion attempts by women who did not enlist the direct aid of abortionists. If doctors were involved, they had the expertise to use instruments, with more certainty of success. Evidence of the use of drugs can be inferred from advertisements for them; doctors' involvement usually was revealed from legal proceedings when a patient died.

In general, drugs taken orally are of doubtful use as abortifacients, although preparations containing ergot and, perhaps, savin, are effective (Potts et al., 1977, pp.169-172). 'Ergot of rye' was mentioned as an abortifacient in a Victorian case where a nurse was tried for murder when the mother died (A'asian, 30-9-1876, p.437); the 1903 New South Wales Royal Commission heard evidence that 'emmenagogue' pills, based on ergot, were sold in large quantities (Minutes, pp.24 and 119). However, even if many of the other supposed abortifacient drugs were not very effective, the persistence in the Australian press of advertisements for abortifacients throughout the last third of the
nineteenth century testifies to the desire of many women to end unwelcome pregnancies and their readiness to grasp at anything which offered a solution.

Although it is clear that abortion attempts were common, the practice may have been restricted to those for whom wide knowledge of their pregnant condition would have brought social and, often, economic ruin - unmarried girls and widows, but not married women. The evidence on this point is particularly difficult to disentangle, unfortunately for a study in which the decline in marital fertility of central importance.

However, some products were advertised as particularly suited for young or older women. An advertisement in the Australasian (14-4-1866, p.63) was addressed 'To Parents and Guardians':

Kearsley's Original Widow Welch's Female Pills, long celebrated for their peculiar virtues, are strongly recommended as a safe and valuable medicine in removing obstructions and relieving other inconveniences to which the female frame is liable, especially those which at an early period of life frequently arise from want of exercise and general debility of the system.

Such an advertisement would allow some users of the product to rationalize that they were simply correcting an imbalance in their daughter's system, not inducing an abortion. On the same page, Holloway's Pills were advertised as 'the best remedy known in the world' for diseases including asthma, colics, consumption, erysipelas and fits. The advertisers addressed 'A Word to Females':

There are two periods, especially in woman's life, which require for safe passage, judgment, and attention. Irregularity is apt at those critical times to take place, and to lay the foundation of future disease. These pills, safe in action and effective in result, should be taken at certain periods, and the issue will be marvellous both to the young and middle-aged.

These advertisement appeared well before the decline in fertility commenced.

Resort to abortion by married women can be regarded as an 'adjustment' which took place when a reduction in marital fertility was required. The information which previously had been applied to the concealment of illicit pregnancies and, perhaps, to those of
middle-aged married women, could be used to prevent unwelcome births at other stages of a woman's reproductive span.

Some may have used abortifacients and other forms of fertility control from fear of the discomfort of pregnancy and the pain of childbirth, rather than to avoid having many children to care for. The Liberator, which was more open about sexual matters than other newspapers of the time, republished a letter (4-7-1886, p.94) from a woman who had used unspecified 'desperate remedies' to procure an abortion when her husband would not 'protect her from his lusts'.

Some advertisements were worded in such an ambiguous way as to make it difficult to know whether they offered advice on birth control or on sexual difficulties. A doctor who advertised The Physiology of Marriage also gave consultations and treated all correspondence as 'sacredly confidential' (A'asian, 16-4-1881, p.S785). 'The Clinique' in Adelaide advertised in the Victorian Australasian (4-7-1885, p.34) that it catered 'for ladies suffering from diseases peculiar to their sex'; in an era when most illnesses were nursed at home, this seems suspicious. Also, although the Australasian may have been circulated in South Australia, most of its advertisements for services were for Victorian firms so it seems possible that 'The Clinique' was offering discreet abortions to Victorian women. The 'Home Hospital for Ladies' in Sydney advertised its facilities to 'ladies suffering from diseases peculiar to women needing special medical or surgical treatment' (T&C, 7-1-1888, p.50). 'Certain places of convenience existed in Sydney' where ladies could have abortions or be delivered of babies which were the killed or abandoned in the streets 'as part of the ordinary business of the establishment[s]' (Bull, 8-10-1887, p.5).

Potts et al. (1977, p.69) suggested that in the United States, particularly in the late nineteenth century, physicians served wealthier women, while midwives and herbalists helped poor women to procure abortions. According to the Liberator (17-7-1887, p.115), the practice was similar in Melbourne. Commenting on the Herald's alleged entrapment of a man who 'advertised certain means of preventing families, and procuring abortion', it claimed:

The doctors can procure abortion, and may do so to any extent - if the parties who employ them are only respectable and rich enough to warrant it. If poor and vulgar, the doctors
are too high to stoop to it. Amongst the upper classes, so called, vice is rampant; but illegitimate children almost unknown. The ladies are ill: but highly respectable doctors attend them for lumbago, rheumatics, and what not. But poor people are excluded from all such advantages; and the doctors, aided by prowling policemen and the Herald, run their unordained rivals to earth.

The Liberator's attitude to doctors apparently softened, as it later sympathized with doctors who were attacked for performing abortions on desperate single women (5-4-1890, p.1).

In a report of a coronial inquest into a suspected abortion, The Australasian Medical Gazette (1-9-1882, p.166) stated that many women wanted abortions and that, although doctors were against it, 'several members of the profession in this city [Melbourne] [were] regularly engaged in this practice'.

Infanticide

Infanticide is not strictly a method of fertility control. Fertility measures have as their numerator the number of live births in a given period and as their denominator a population or, more usually, the number of women of particular age groups in that population. However fertility measures used in this study are calculated from registered live births; it seems reasonable to assume that babies who were killed to conceal the fact of their births would not have been registered. This argument does not apply to most of the older babies who were the victims of 'baby farming' and other forms of neglect. From at least the 1870s, the incidence of infanticide was a continuing scandal. Although it was probably a minor cause of infant death, it excited much public comment and debate. Juries were most reluctant to convict women who had almost certainly killed their new-born babies; public opinion seemed torn between horror at infanticide and sympathy for the mothers when they were young women who had been seduced.

The frightful number of cases of infanticide that have occurred during the last few days has been the subject of a good deal of newspaper discussion, with, however, but very little in the way of practical conclusion being arrived at... It is found that in cases of this kind it is almost absolutely impossible to enforce the law. Recent instances of this are not wanting. If there is any loophole whatever for an acquittal juries will not convict, and even where there is no loophole we have had some flagrantly false verdicts of
acquittal recorded, in the face of the most direct and conclusive evidence. ...When there is a strong public feeling of sympathy, or, at the least, of leniency, exhibited towards a particular class of offences their adequate punishment becomes impossible (A'asian, 26-7-1873, p.114).

Both the Bulletin (29-4-1882, p.2) and Table Talk (26-2-1892, p.12) published editorials entitled 'The Massacre of the Innocents' deploring the incidence of infanticide, without totally condemning the babies' mothers.

The death rates of babies at the Benevolent Asylum in Sydney were high in the 1870s. However the Town and Country Journal (9-2-1873, p.181) opposed the establishment of a Foundling Hospital, claiming that mothers would escape responsibility for their babies and profit from their immoral situation by obtaining positions as wet-nurses. A bishop was against the Hospital, fearing that it would lead to immorality if errant women could escape from their shame by depositing their infants there (T&C, 10-10-1874, p.567). The Hospital was apparently established, since the Town and Country Journal reported, with little sympathy, on its high rates of infant mortality (14-11-1874, p.711). In five months of 1876, eight or nine babies were 'dumped' at the hospital, but they were left well wrapped (T&C, 30-12-1876, p.1061), suggesting that their mothers cared about their welfare. Some unwanted babies who escaped outright infanticide met a slower death when they were 'put out' 'to be slowly murdered' (A'asian, 24-12-1870, p.817; A.M.J., 1879).

In Melbourne, a foundling asylum was established in 1877 'to provide the unfortunate mothers of illegitimate children...with a place of safety for their offspring' and, thereby, to reduce the risk of infanticide. Lest it be thought that they were promoting vice by allowing women to escape the consequences of their immoral conduct, 'the benefits of the asylum [were] extended to persons who [had] sinned but once' (A'asian, 29-6-1878, Supp.p.2).

It is impossible to estimate the incidence of infanticide in late nineteenth century Australia. Stillbirths did not have to be registered and, according to Allen (1982, pp.114-115), some New South Wales undertakers specialized in burying 'stillborn' babies of up to two years of age. Although Allen points out that many victims of
infanticide were never found, the fact that only 261 unidentified babies were taken to the Sydney morgue between 1881 and 1899 suggests that, although infanticide was regarded as a disturbing social problem, it was not an important means of fertility control.

Motivation

Although new methods of contraception were available and older methods had received publicity towards the end of the nineteenth century, it seems likely that Monsignor Brown, of the National Birth-Rate Commission, was correct when he stated that it was a new motivation to reduce family size, not new knowledge about the means of achieving that goal, which was responsible for the decline in the birthrate (Decline, 1917, p.184).

The experience in Third World countries in the second half of the twentieth century suggests that it is not enough for couples to know how to reduce their fertility; they must, in addition, wish to limit their family size. The new contraceptive devices made birth control easier than before but they probably became available after the fertility decline had commenced.

Female Influence on Fertility Decline

If the evidence given to the Royal Commission is to be accepted, then coitus interruptus was the principal method of fertility control used at the end of the nineteenth century; abortion was also very prevalent. If the use of coitus interruptus is to be interpreted as support for a 'domestic feminism' theory of fertility decline, then it must be shown, at the very least, that men's willingness to reduce fertility was based on a desire to protect their wives from the perils of childbirth and the strain of caring for a large family; however the practice could equally have reflected an opinion, not necessarily shared by women, that large families entailed too great an economic burden.

Abortion, on the other hand, could be undertaken by any woman who could outlay the required money, even without her husband's knowledge. No doubt many abortions were decided upon by mutual consent and some were forced upon reluctant women (Allen, 1982), but surely some
desperate women secretly consulted abortionists, used patent medicines or even inserted objects into the vagina in abortion attempts.

Infanticide could be, and according to Allen (1982) was, presented as accidental death though this would probably have required the concurrence of the husband if the birth were to be hushed up and not registered.

It appears most unlikely that the widespread adoption of control of marital fertility was achieved by women acting without the cooperation of their husbands. However there is a much stronger case for suggesting that the fertility decline resulted, to some extent, from a changing attitude to women, including a belief that they should not be subjected to an unremitting cycle of pregnancy, childbirth and lactation. There is little evidence to support Teale's contention that the fertility decline was initiated by women's use of 'innovations', such as the new pessaries. Rather, the prevalence of the use of coitus interruptus and abortion gives much more weight to the 'adjustment' theory of fertility decline, the use of previously-known methods to meet a new situation in which fertility was to be controlled by married couples and not only illicit lovers.

**RELIGION**

The relationship between religion, feminism and fertility control is complex.

The early feminist movement in Australia found its main organized expression in the formation of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, whose members supported female suffrage in the belief that the women's vote would enable the introduction of moral reforms, in particular, of legislation to limit or prohibit the sale of alcohol. As has been shown, encouragement for artificial means of birth control was not a feature of the movement.

The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries saw rapid advances in scientific knowledge and the development of theories such as Darwinism which challenged established religious beliefs. One expression of the new values was found in the rise of the secularist movement but there was also, according to some Australian opinion, a change in the strength of religious sentiment among professing Christians in the community.
The Australian colonies differed considerably in the proportions of their populations professing adherence to the various Christian denominations, when questioned at the censuses (Table 7.1). In general, the proportions within each colony remained fairly constant. In New South Wales, Western Australian and Tasmania, nearly one-half of the population belonged to the Church of England, compared with little more than one-quarter in South Australia. Roman Catholics formed a higher proportion of the New South Wales population than in any other colony, and nearly twice that of South Australia. The other Protestant denominations accounted for most people who were neither Church of England or Catholic, as few described themselves as having no religion or as being members of non-Christian religions.

The religious composition of their populations had implications for the education of children in the colonies because, almost without exception, the children of the other denominations were more literate than those belonging to the Church of England who, in turn, were more likely to be able to read and write than Roman Catholic children (Table 7.2). Although there were, no doubt, other influences, it seems likely that the colonies with higher proportions of Nonconformists would be those most likely to favour the development of good public education systems.

The Australasian Secularist Association, a vehemently anti-religious body led by Joseph Symes, editor of The Liberator, supported the English secularists led by Charles Bradlaugh and was, therefore, strongly committed to neo-Malthusian views of fertility control. Religious sentiment in Victoria in 1885 was strong enough for Joseph Symes to be prosecuted successfully for holding anti-religious meetings, the charge being 'keeping a disorderly house' because he charged admission on Sundays. A more moderate anti-clerical stance was taken by the Bulletin which claimed that papers such as the Sydney Morning Herald were hypocritical when they regarded 'plebeian' freethinkers as villains but did not criticize the Princess Royal whom 'many voices call irreligious' (Bull., 24-3-1883, p.5). The Bulletin went on to contrast the princess, a good mother and charitable woman,
Table 7.1: Membership of Main Religious Denominations, Australian Colonies, 1861-1901.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Denomination</th>
<th>1861</th>
<th>1871</th>
<th>1881</th>
<th>1891</th>
<th>1901</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>New South Wales</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. of England</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>46.4</td>
<td>45.3</td>
<td>45.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman Catholic</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>26.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>10.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Victoria</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. of England</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td>35.1</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>35.9</td>
<td>35.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman Catholic</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>21.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Queensland</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. of England</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>34.6</td>
<td>36.2</td>
<td>36.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman Catholic</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>South Australia</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. of England</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman Catholic</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>7.0</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>7.2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Western Australia</strong></td>
<td>(1859)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. of England</td>
<td>67.0</td>
<td>59.0</td>
<td>54.7</td>
<td>49.8</td>
<td>42.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>28.7</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tasmania</strong></td>
<td>(1870)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. of England</td>
<td>53.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>51.7</td>
<td>49.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman Catholic</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: N.S.W. Census 1861 Report, 1901 Vol. 1; Victoria Census 1901 Summary Tables; Queensland calculated from Census 1891, Census 1901; South Australia PP 1871 No. 9 and 1892 and 1902 No. 74; W.A. Census Report 1891 and 1901; Tasmania Census 1891 and 1901.
Table 7.2: Percentages of Children Aged 5-15 Years in Australian Colonies Who Could Read and Write, by Religious Denomination, 1891.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Denomination</th>
<th>N.S.W.</th>
<th>Vic.</th>
<th>W.A.</th>
<th>Tas.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>76.7</td>
<td>84.6</td>
<td>70.8</td>
<td>58.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>75.5</td>
<td>83.0</td>
<td>66.5</td>
<td>58.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. of England</td>
<td>73.6</td>
<td>81.9</td>
<td>67.6</td>
<td>55.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman Catholic</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>81.6</td>
<td>61.9</td>
<td>51.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Census Reports, 1891, for N.S.W, Victoria, Western Australia and Tasmania.

with the Emperor of Germany who saw God's hand in his successes at war, in spite of the sufferings of his civilian victims. In a more frivolous vein, it was claimed that a lady would not mind having her age recorded in the family Bible, as it would stay a secret (Bull., 16-10-1880, p.2).

It seems that, rather than an outright rejection of religion, there was a different attitude towards its presentation.

If a preacher wants a congregation nowadays he must abandon dogma for sentiment, pious or philosophical, as may suit the class residing in his parish - the wealthy preferring science, the middle class the condemnation of the 'sins they have no mind to', only the poor caring to hear about heaven and hell. (TT, 18-2-1889, p.1).

Table Talk (16-8-1889, p.8), in arguing against the establishment of a Sunday newspaper, made it clear that its objections were based on the need for a specific day each week when workers could be with their families, rather than from any wish to support the 'man mauna whistle' style of Sunday observance. A Melbourne cleric approved of women who did charitable work among the poor, but opposed the suggestion that a scientific education to improve their skill was desirable (A'asian, 30-9-1876, p.434). Some religious leaders spoke of the necessity for women to do their duty as mothers (T&C, 16-6-1888, p.1206); the impression is of a very conservative attitude towards the role of women. As Punch (11-7-1872, p.15) put it:

By Bishop Perry has been said,  
In language most majestic,  
A woman's duty is to wed,  
And mind affairs domestic.
A Church of England minister agreed with the propositions put by a Royal Commissioner that 'there has been ... a general relaxation of the bonds by which women were kept in control' (Minutes, p.216), and that 'the relaxation of bonds has led to this immorality [the practice of restricting families].'

Although clergymen generally opposed artificial means of birth control (Hicks, 1978, p.61) it appears that some lay members of the churches saw no contradiction between their religious affiliations and the practice or even advocacy of family limitation. As in England (Banks, 1981, p.96), there was a feeling in Australia that birth control decisions were not a religious matter. A clergyman stated in his Royal Commission evidence that women 'admit the religious sense as far as it may touch them in other directions - absolutely not in this' (Minutes, p.214). He considered that 'The people seem to think that there is no harm in what they are doing, and the moral sensitiveness of the people must be aroused as to their duty in this respect.' (Minutes, p.204). Another witness told of a highly intelligent lady in his district who advised women to use birth control. When asked by a Royal Commissioner, 'But apparently she is totally destitute of moral sense?', he agreed: 'Yes, and yet she will tell you plainly and publicly that she is a Christian, and I know her to be a member of a church and a communicant' (Minutes, p.217). It seems, therefore, that many couples felt that family limitation was a private matter, outside the authority of the church.

Even some of those women who agreed with contemporary moralists that the use of contraception was generally unacceptable may have persuaded themselves that their individual personal circumstances justified the use of fertility control. A parallel case is that of Catholic women today; most know that their church teaches that abortion is wrong, but Catholic women have a similar, or even higher, proportion of abortions compared with the average of Australians of all religious persuasions (Snyder and Wall, 1976, pp.15-16).
Conclusion

Beliefs about the capacity of women to succeed in the hitherto male fields of higher education and professional employment underwent change, so that by 1900 there was widespread acceptance of the view that a woman's goals need not be limited to marriage and motherhood. The suffrage movement argued, with some success, that women were not intellectually inferior to men, but male religious leaders saw dangers in encouraging women to venture outside the home. The decline in the birth rate was attributed to the selfishness of women in wishing to avoid the care of motherhood in favour of an unfettered social life although, as has been shown, it was a reduction in the proportion of women who had very large families, not an increase in childlessness, which brought about the decreased fertility. The married woman of 1900 was better educated, less fatalistic and more likely to have been in paid employment than her grandmother; her husband was more a companion and less an autocrat. The use of fertility control was a logical approach to maintaining some freedom and control over her life. Few women were active feminists, but the movement probably reflected a change in attitudes which permeated society; organized feminism articulated the aspirations of the New Woman but did not invent her.
CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

This study examined the hypothesis that women played an influential role in initiating the decline in fertility, and especially marital fertility, which occurred in the second half of the nineteenth century in Australia. It was hoped that the question could be resolved by examining factors which could affect attitudes towards family size, but the evidence has not been strong enough for a decisive conclusion.

New South Wales and Victoria

Some emphasis has been placed on the contrasts between New South Wales and Victoria, both in the probable timing of the decline and in some of the factors leading to that decline.

The decline in fertility in Victoria seems to have commenced in the early 1870s and, after having been arrested in the 1880s, to have intensified in the 1890s. There is little indication of a decline in New South Wales before the 1880s, but the colony shared Victoria's slump of the 1890s.

Maternal and infant death rates were high throughout the period, although the infant rates, at least, were somewhat lower than in England and Wales, particularly until 1885; both rates in Victoria were higher than in New South Wales for most of the period, but the differences were not great and, particularly in the case of maternal deaths, may have been due to better data collection methods. Urbanization kept the infant death rates high and contemporary opinion suggested that there were considerable differentials by socioeconomic status.

Women in New South Wales had no shortage of potential marriage partners throughout the period, although the economic conditions of the 1880s affected their prospects. In contrast, young Victorian spinsters who in 1861 and 1871 considerably outnumbered single young men, found that the situation had reversed by 1881, and for the rest of the century there were more never married women aged 20 to 29 years than single men aged 25 to 34. In England and Wales, there was a fairly constant excess of never married women over men but the percentage of single men in New South Wales and Victoria remained much higher than in England and Wales, even when there was an excess of unmarried women.
Until 1881, there was a lower proportion of unmarried women in the two colonies than in England and Wales, but the situation then reversed in Victoria, while the gap had closed by 1901 in New South Wales.

Even at the beginning of the period, nearly half the girls aged 5 to 15 years in both colonies were literate, but Victoria's slight advantage in 1861 increased considerably in 1871, just before schooling became compulsory there. The gap between Victoria and New South Wales widened in the 1870s but decreased in the 1880s, probably due to the introduction of compulsory school attendance in New South Wales in 1880. Victorian girls' level of literacy remained higher than that in the other colonies but the New South Wales level was below that of South Australia and Queensland in some census years. Differentials in education, particularly for girls, are often seen as contributing to the beginning of fertility decline, so the contrasts between New South Wales and Victoria are particularly important as one explanation for the earlier onset of the decline in marital fertility in Victoria.

Changing census definitions made comparisons of occupational distributions between the colonies and England and Wales difficult. Of the occupational categories in which women were less susceptible to redefinition as dependents, the proportion of professional women was similar, with Victoria's position improving between 1891 and 1901. England and Wales showed a much higher proportion of its women in industry than Victoria which, in turn had a slightly higher level than New South Wales. Overall, in 1891, the participation of women in the workforce was higher in England and Wales than in Victoria, which was higher than in New South Wales.

There were substantial differences in the religious composition of the Australian colonies in the late nineteenth century but, in general, the proportion of adherants to each of the main religious denominations did not change greatly within each colony during the period. New South Wales had a higher proportion of members of the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church than Victoria, where the other Protestant denominations were stronger. Methodist and Presbyterian children were more likely to be literate than those of the Church of England who, in turn, were more likely to be able to read and write than Roman Catholic children. Some of the higher level of literacy of Victorian girls may
have been attributable to their membership of denominations which encouraged education.

Changes over Time in Factors Affecting Fertility Decline

Founded as a regimented penal colony, New South Wales was, by the middle of the nineteenth century, a well-established society with a strong rural base and a considerable native-born population. It had an excess of men, particularly in country areas, but its growth until the end of the century was reasonably steady. Its settled society was less literate and held more conservative views on the role of women than its recently-separated southern portion which became Victoria.

The gold rushes of the 1850s and 1860s had a much greater impact on Victoria than on the other colonies. From its unauthorized first settlement by graziers from Tasmania, Victoria's population had grown to only a modest size before the massive influx of gold diggers and businessmen attracted by the colony's sudden wealth. Such migrations were undertaken by those whose urge to improve their situation outweighed their reluctance to leave the settled society of Britain. Those who came to establish and staff the commercial institutions of Melbourne and the larger country centres were literate members of that urban middle class which has usually led fertility declines throughout the world. Such families, cut off from both the social controls and practical support of close relatives, were probably very ready to adopt innovative solutions when faced with social and economic problems.

The Victorian age structure, affected for many years by the gold rushes, led to difficulty in finding marriage partners for Victorian women from the 1870s onward and the need for society to accept that some women should accept roles other than those of wife and mother. The support for the principle of education for all children, which led to the early adoption and enforcement of compulsory schooling, was probably a reflection of a belief in an individual's right to rise in the world. When excess fertility threatened their way of life, such individuals may have felt few qualms in curtailing their family size.

The nineteenth century Australian fertility decline may be seen as the result of a series of interacting changes, some occurring briefly, some affecting a few years and others developing over a long period.
Each can be viewed in terms of the impact it had on women's fertility decision-making.

The year 1873 saw two events in Victoria which could have accounted for the drop in the number of births in the following year. One was an outbreak of puerperal fever which probably made women particularly fearful of having a baby before the number of cases subsided. Some women may well have been sufficiently reluctant to become pregnant that they resorted to fertility control as a short-term measure, whether or not they believed its use was generally justified. The other occurrence to have an impact on families was the introduction of compulsory education which resulted in an immediate massive increase in school enrolments, thereby removing children of school age from either paid employment or from providing unpaid assistance at home. Either consequence of the new education laws would have caused a sudden drop in the practical value of children to their parents and, in particular, to their mothers. The realization of the great burden which was to be placed on them may have caused women to adopt a lower desired family size and to present strong opinions on the subject to their husbands. In those colonies where the enforcement of legislation requiring school attendance was lax, or where many children were in rural areas where schooling did not conflict with economic activities to the same extent as in the cities, the increase in the proportion of children attending school probably had a more gradual impact spread over a number of years.

Although there was opinion expressed to the contrary, it seems clear that economic conditions played a significant role in determining fertility levels in the colonies. Women had good reason to press for fertility reduction in the face of depressed financial conditions. As housekeepers, they had to face the practical problems of feeding and clothing their families, a daunting task if their husband did not have regular work. In such circumstances women with several children would hardly have welcomed another pregnancy. New South Wales had little, if any, decline in marital fertility in the 1870s, a modest decline in the 1880s and a drastic drop in 1890s, probably reflecting the colony's economic experience. In contrast, Victoria, whose economy declined in the second half of the 1870s, boomed in the 1880s and slumped in the
1890s, probably experienced some marital fertility decline in the 1870s, little in the 1880s, and a marked fall in the 1890s.

Another influence on fertility was the spread of information about fertility control methods and some innovations in contraceptive technology. The publicity following the Bradlaugh-Besant trial in England and ex parte Collins in Australia no doubt made many more couples aware that fertility control was possible and led them to seek information about the methods available.

Rather more speculatively, there may have been an improvement in the experience of some families with infant and child mortality, leading them to reduce the number of births needed to achieve their desired number of surviving children.

Over a longer time scale, changes in the status of women probably had an impact. 'Domestic feminism' resulted in middle class women, at least, having a greater influence in their households, particularly in matters related to children. Although their perceived sphere of influence probably was a rationalization of their economically inferior position to men, it gave them a moral force which could be used to support their opinions about family size and the wish to avoid excessive childbearing. In late nineteenth century Australia, a 'modern' population was faced with economic and, probably, domestic pressures which made them dread the prospect of unchecked fertility. In using either new or traditional methods of control to avert or delay births, these individuals probably felt that they were simply reacting to a short-term and unusual set of circumstances. Few are likely to have realized that their actions marked the beginning of a decline in fertility which was to have a greater effect on women's lives than any other change in the next one hundred years.
The newspapers and magazines listed below were consulted systematically; they are grouped according to their colony of publication.

Each available issue of those tabulated was scanned for references to topics which seemed relevant to the fertility decline, such as infant and maternal mortality, marriage, education and feminism. Although women's columns were given particular attention, leading articles and general news paragraphs were checked systematically. Few of these items identified the writer at all, while the women's columns and even letters to the editor were usually published under pseudonyms. The first few references to each topic were noted but, if it became evident that the subject would be mentioned frequently, then only the more interesting items were recorded. Care was taken to include the opposing views on controversial questions.

The chapters of this thesis draw on a selection of the recorded material intended to reflect the variety of attitudes expressed in the publications surveyed. For some topics, such as explicit mention of contraception, most references are used; for others, such as the difficulty of obtaining suitable servants, only a small proportion of the hundreds of items seen were recorded and, of these, only a few cited.

The daily papers were not checked systematically, although references to items in them which occurred in other material of in secondary sources were sometimes investigated. If it was important to establish that a matter had been raised in the press but it was not found in the weekly papers, then the daily papers at the time in question were checked.
NEW SOUTH WALES

The Bulletin

The weekly Sydney Bulletin commenced publication in 1880. Although politically radical, it had a very conservative approach to the 'Woman Question'. It was scathing in its criticism of brutal husbands (16-12-1882, p.2) and in favour of education for girls, to fit them to be wives and mothers (3-2-1883, p.2), but its cartoons implied that emancipated women would adopt the worst of male habits - smoking, coming home late and flirting with hotel bar staff. It was very clear about its policy:

The Bulletin favours -
- A Republican Form of Government.
- Payment of Members.
- One Man, One Vote.
- State Revenue derived directly from the Land.
- Complete Secularisation of State Education.
- Reform of the Criminal Code and Prison System.
- A United Australia and Protection against the World.

The Bulletin denounces -
- Religious Interference in Politics.
- Foreign Titles.
- The Chinese.
- Imperial Federation.

Humper

See Worker

The Illustrated Sydney News

The Illustrated Sydney News was modelled on the Illustrated London News. After a false start, when it appeared weekly from 1853 to 1855, it commenced with a new series which ran monthly from 1864 until 1881 and then fortnightly and, briefly, weekly until its demise in 1894. Its first leading article included a paragraph addressed to its female readers:

To the elegant and refined requirements of our fair readers, we hope to attend with a sedulity which will have for its
reward our highest ambition - their confidence and regard. We know full well their influence, and would enlist it in our favour; we admire their taste, and hope to gratify it; we honour their intelligence, and shall try to obtain their esteem (8-10-1853, p.6).

As an indication of the tone of the Illustrated Sydney News, it very rarely published advertisements for abortifacients. In the 1850s and 1860s there was a strong emphasis on women remaining in the home but there was a gradual acceptance of higher education and paid employment for women, although the importance of their maternal role continued to be stressed.

The Town and Country Journal

The weekly newspaper, The Town and Country Journal, published in Sydney from 1870 to 1919, contained news items, commercial and agricultural information and features about women and their interests, devoting some of its space to practical instruction in health care, particularly for children. In addition to an extensive review of the news of the week, it carried advice to the man on the land, particularly regarding agriculture and animal husbandry.

From the first issue, there was mention of the campaign for 'Woman's Rights', the choice of material for publication indicating that the editorial attitude was that women were equal but different; a woman's place was definitely in the home, although she should be allowed to have a good education. Aspects of marriage were considered frequently, great emphasis also being placed on women's responsibilities as mothers. The advertising section reflected the wide range of material included in the paper: furniture, farm equipment, accommodation and patent medicines, the latter usually including abortifacients.

The Worker

The Worker, published as the Hummer until 1892, is of particular interest in being the only avowedly working class paper studied. It commenced publication in Wagga late in 1891 and, after an erratic start, was published weekly until well into the twentieth century. In 1893 the printing plant was moved to Sydney. At first the paper dealt mainly with the concerns of the Shearers' and the General Labourers'
Unions in the Riverina, but gradually broadened its scope to include politics at the colonial level. It was unequivocally in favour of female suffrage. Its support for equal pay for women and men seemed to be motivated more by the belief that men would then be employed in preference to women, than by a commitment to equal rights for women. The Worker's advertisements were mainly for stores and accommodation; the advertisements for medicines did not include abortifacients. The Worker's pages were not numbered; the page numbers are cited in this study for ease of location of an item on, for example, the fourth page of an issue.
The Australasian

The Australasian was the Victorian equivalent of the Town and Country Journal, being a weekly publication intended to appeal to a wide range of urban and rural readers. From its inception in 1866, it combined social comment with articles of practical use to women and men. At first its Ladies Column was usually a reprint from an English or American paper but local contributions, usually written by a man, became more frequent from about 1875. The Australasian took a generally liberal position on the 'Womans Rights' debate, although it published a wide range of opinions on the issue. Its advertisements included many for medicines, some of which were claimed to cure an amazing variety of ailments. Most issues published advertisements for abortifacients.

The Liberator

The Liberator, published from 1884 to 1895, appears to have been dependent on the efforts of its editor, Joseph Symes, a disciple of Charles Bradlaugh and an advocate of the cause of freethought in Victoria. Most of the material in the paper was devoted to a criticism of organized religion, but legal disputes with the government and with splinter groups from that of Symes evoked emotional outbursts every few years. Its value in a study of nineteenth century fertility trends lay in its support for Malthusianism, or birth control. It did not approve of abortion but regarded contraception, not the prosecution of abortionists, as the proper means to reduce the incidence of abortion. It appeared to be neutral on the subject of female suffrage, publishing arguments both for and against the vote for women. The main concerns of the Liberator were expressed in its slogan:

Hereditary rulers suit none but fools. As long as the workers do not own the fruits of their toil and skill, they are nothing better than slaves. While the people fear god and the devil, the priest and the parson may easily fleece them.

The Liberator regularly published advertisements for freethought books, including The Fruits of Philosophy, and for Mrs. Smyth's range of contraceptives. With its condemnation of many aspects of society life,
combined with a eugenicist viewpoint towards the poor, the Liberator could best be described as a lower middle class publication.

Melbourne Punch

The Melbourne Punch was a satirical magazine published weekly from 1855 to 1925 which, in addition to political comment, devoted much space to social issues. Some of the information derived for this study from Punch was indirect, in that illustrations were used as a guide to customs of the day, although they often had a different purpose when published. As an example, a cartoon, on a political subject, of a husband and wife at the breakfast table also showed that young children breakfasted with their parents (3-1-1861, p.188). The difficulty in finding husbands was a frequent topic, and jokes on the 'servant question' appeared regularly. Higher education for women was supported but the 'Woman's Righters' were given short shrift. Punch was roused to great indignation by the defects in the public health system on which it blamed many diseases. The limited advertising printed usually consisted of a few lines at the bottom of a page extolling the virtues of spirits, cigars and other goods which would appeal to the well-to-do; there were occasional half-page advertisements for furniture.

Table Talk

Table Talk was published weekly in Melbourne from 1885 to 1939. Its stated intention was 'to conduct Table Talk along the lines of the leading fashionable journals in England, as far as the widely different conditions of Colonial Society will permit'. It consisted mostly of political, business and social gossip and fashion news; after important social events it devoted numerous pages to alphabetically-listed descriptions of the clothes worn by the lady guests. Although the editors initially regarded female suffrage as something of a joke, they supported higher education for women. Advertisements in the paper were, at first, mainly for land but when the boom collapsed they featured household goods and the types of services, such as dancing classes and florist and dressmaking shops, which would appeal to those of the middle class who had retained comfortable incomes during the depression of the 1890s.
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Years Published</th>
<th>Years in NLA*</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>No. of Pages</th>
<th>Pages for Women**</th>
<th>Price</th>
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<td>Weekly</td>
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<td>3%</td>
<td>6d</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1884-1895</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>3d</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1856-1885</td>
<td>8 (1855-78)</td>
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<td>Weekly</td>
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<td>25%</td>
<td>3d</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bulletin</td>
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<td>1880-1900</td>
<td>8-12 (1880)</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>6d from 3d; from 1883 up to 48 by 1899</td>
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<tr>
<td>Illustrated</td>
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<td>1853-1854</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>8-16</td>
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<td>6d - 1/- 1/-</td>
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<td>24-36</td>
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<td>(Australian)</td>
<td>1870-1919</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>1891-</td>
<td>1891-1900</td>
<td>Irregular</td>
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</table>

* Up to 1900.
** This estimate is based on the percentage of total space devoted to Ladies Columns, reports of social events, fashion and housekeeping (including child care).

Sources: Stuart (1979); records made while checking periodicals.
### APPENDIX B: PRINCETON INDICES

#### Table B.1: Comparison of \( I_m \) Values, Australian Colonies, 1871-1901 using Various Weights

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>SA</th>
<th>WA</th>
<th>Tas</th>
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<td>.526</td>
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**Notes:**
- a: Does not include Western Australia and Tasmania in 1871.
- b: As explained in the text.
Figure B1: $I_m$, with Various Weights, Australia, New South Wales and Victoria, 1871-1901

NEW SOUTH WALES

VICTORIA

AUSTRALIA

continued/...
Figure B1: $I_m$ with Various Weights, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania, 1871-1901
Table B.2: Comparison of $I_x$ Values, Australian Colonies, 1871-1901 using Various Weights

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Notes: a: Does not include Western Australia and Tasmania in 1871.  
b: As explained in the text.
Figure B2: $F_{ij}$ with Various Weights, Australia, New South Wales and Victoria, 1871-1901

![Graphs of $F_{ij}$ for New South Wales, Victoria, and Australia showing the trend over the years from 1871 to 1901.](image)

continued/...
Figure B2: $I_f$, with Various Weights, Queensland, South Australia, (cont'd) Western Australia and Tasmania, 1871-1901

Queensland

South Australia

Western Australia

Tasmania

--- $F_i k_i$ --- $F_i' k_i'$

--- $F_i' k_i$ --- $F_i' k_i'$
Table B.3: Comparison of I \(_0\) Values, Australian Colonies, 1871-1901 using Various Weights

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<th>WA</th>
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Notes: a: Does not include Western Australia and Tasmania in 1871.  
b: As explained in the text.
Figure B3: I, with Various Weights, Australia, New South Wales and Victoria, 1871-1901

NEW SOUTH WALES

VICTORIA

AUSTRALIA

LEGEND:

\[ F_i k_i \]  
\[ F_i' k_i' \]  
\[ F_i k_i' \]  
\[ F_i' k_i'' \]

continued/...
Figure B3: $I_g$ with Various Weights, Queensland, South Australia, (cont'd) Western Australia and Tasmania, 1871-1901
APPENDIX C: GENERAL MARITAL FERTILITY RATES

The general marital fertility rate is the number of nuptial births per 1000 women aged 15 to 49 in a given year. Figure C.1 shows the Victorian rate dropping from 1873 to 1882, recovering during the rest of the 1880s and falling dramatically in the 1890s. The New South Wales rate began its consistent downward move from 1884, with a sharper fall from the late 1880s. Queensland's rate was higher than that of the other colonies, except from 1880 to 1882, but it shared the rapid drop of the 1890s.

Caldwell and Ruzicka (1977) warned that general marital fertility rates are affected by changes in the age structure within the group of women 15 to 49 and assume regular population growth between censuses; these conditions were probably not met in Australia between 1871 and 1901.

Figure C.1: Nuptial Births per 1000 Married Women Aged 15-49 Years, New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland, 1871-1901.

Source: Caldwell and Ruzicka (1977), Appendix B.
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fertility: An analytic framework', Economic Development and

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