CHAPTER 3

FAMILIES

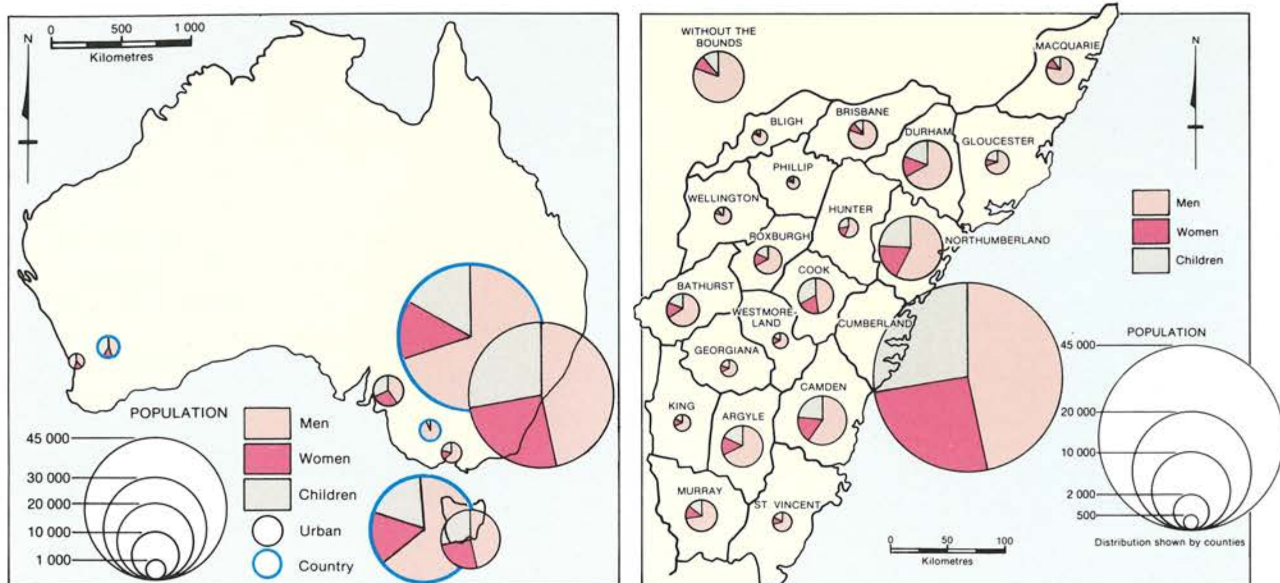
THE LOWER HUNTER VALLEY, to the north of Sydney, had been settled in the 1820s, in many areas by men of considerable capital who received from the crown free grants of several thousand acres each. One of them was Alexander Warren, a Scotsman, who made his home at a place he called 'Brandon', on a tributary of the Hunter, where he ran sheep and cattle and experimented with grape growing.

In 1838 Warren was 42 years old and still a bachelor, but thirteen years as an employer in the colony had given him firm ideas about the need for working men to marry. The good order he maintained in his own life was a result of his being a gentleman, bred to habits of honour and decorum. He did not believe that common labourers could follow his example unless they were married. In 1838 he explained his ideas in reply to a circular letter of enquiry from a committee of the legislative council appointed to consider the future of assisted immigration to the colony. The government, said Warren, must aim to bring in more families. 'Every properly selected Emigrant Labourer's Family', he predicted,

> would, in time, become a school or pattern for the cultivation of the decencies of domestic life, operating most favourably upon the whole mass of our present male Labourers, who are now so much addicted to restless unsettled vagabond habits of life.

This was no new theme. The civilising power of marriage had long been an article of faith among colonial administrators. Successive governors had encouraged convict marriage to tame both men and women, and one aim of assisted immigration in the 1830s was a better balance of the sexes in the convict colonies.

Not only wives, but children too could have a 'humanizing' effect, Warren told the committee. He had encouraged his own convict servants to marry, and had found that as the numbers of children increased, so did the 'comfort and decency of conduct' of the parents: 'the man remains contentedly at home, and feels indeed, for the first time, that he has one; the woman attends more sedulously to her domestic duties'. The end results were a more disciplined labour force and added prosperity all round.



Above.
The British population of Australia, 1838, showing overall numbers and the proportion of men, women and children in each of the colonies. The Port Phillip region, around Melbourne, has been shown separate from the rest of New South Wales. There is no way of distinguishing urban and rural population in South Australia. The map clearly shows how men outnumbered women throughout the colonies, especially in the rural parts of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land.

Above right.
The British population of New South Wales, excluding Port Phillip. The county of Cumberland includes Sydney, and this explains why it is the only part of the colony where men make up less than 50 per cent of the population. The limits of location separate the twenty surveyed counties from the pastoral districts, where there is no settlement sanctioned by government.

The appointment of the committee on immigration reflected the anxiety of colonial employers to secure a cheap and steady supply of labour at a time when the economy appeared to be booming and the system of assigned convict labour was under threat. Politically active colonists wanted a review of the process by which immigrants were selected and brought out to New South Wales, and Warren was one of about eighty gentlemen whose opinions were sought by the committee. Although his view was in keeping with Colonial Office policy, few shared Warren's enthusiasm for married workers. Most took a narrowly economic view, preferring their employees to be single, though married men with half-grown sons were admitted to be useful. A few thought that young boys trained in industrious habits might in time make a valuable addition to the workforce. More agreed with Robert Crawford of Parramatta, that

> the introduction of Emigrant Parents with large Families is against the interest of the Colonists at this time. It is a boon to posterity, at the immediate expense of the existing generation. Self-interest forbids the system, and of course self-interest in this case, will and ought to prevail.

However, there was no chance that the immediate self-interest of the colonists would be permitted to prevail over the colony's long-term needs as the Colonial Office saw them. In 1838 there was still only one adult woman to every three men in New South Wales, and one child to every woman. In Van Diemen's Land and Western Australia the ratios were much the same, except that in Western Australia there were about two and a half children to every woman. Only in South Australia, founded with a policy of planned assisted immigration financed from land sales, were the ratios more 'natural', with three men to every two women and two children. Official attempts to promote the immigration of single women had met with strong opposition from employers. These men—from whose pockets came some of the funds for immigration—were far more anxious to assist the passage of shepherds and craftsmen. They were also convinced that any woman travelling without a husband or some other male family member must be a prostitute, it not being 'in character for young women of virtue and prudence to agree to undertake such a voyage, unless assured of such protection'. In deference to colonial prejudice official policy changed, and assisted passages were offered only to young women

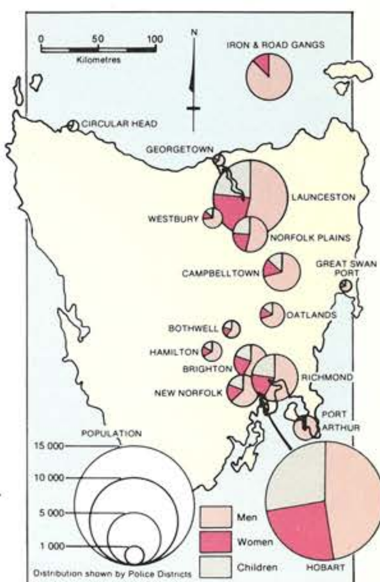
travelling with family groups. But the British authorities never accepted colonial suggestions that such migrants were 'unproductive', and should not be assisted: their reproductive capacities were too valuable for that.

Economic pressures in Britain itself also favoured family migration. Emigration agents trying to engage suitable men and women found that many large families wanted to come to Australia, or were being urged to do so by the parish authorities obliged to support them. One agent told the committee in Sydney that he had

> experienced very disagreeable treatment from the Guardians of one of the Unions which I visited, for not taking all the families which they wish me to take, because I did not consider them such as might be the most useful to this Colony.

At times it seemed to the agents that only 'the burden of a large family' impelled 'the labouring classes seriously to contemplate emigration to the Colonies'. In short, it was often the urgent necessities of poor families in Britain, rather than the social or economic needs of the colonies, that influenced the British settlement of Australia in 1838.

This chapter is about people living in families. We look at babies and children, young adults and people long married, and consider relationships between parents and children, sisters and brothers, husbands and wives. What was it like to be a woman in 1838? What was it like to be a man, or a child?. How effectively did family life discharge the civilising responsibility thrust upon it by moralists like Alexander Warren?



The British population of Van Diemen's Land, 1838.

INFANCY

Of the two peoples warring for Australian soil in 1838, the settlers were reproducing themselves much faster than the Aborigines. A large group of white men lived without fathering children, for many convicts and ex-convicts of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land had no prospect of marriage or family life. We have already met such men among the stockmen and shepherds who formed the first line of white advance against the Aborigines of the inland plains of eastern Australia. But in small farming communities and townships the first generation of native-born women were marrying and producing large families, and in New South Wales assisted immigration was multiplying the numbers of men and women of marriageable age. The newer colonies of Western Australia and South Australia were also stocked mainly with young adults and children.

Children born to convicts were scanned anxiously for signs of inherent indolence and disrespect; those from assisted immigrant families were bewailed by employers as an unproductive burden. But however greeted, the babies continued to come. Both native-born and immigrant women married very young, commonly produced their first child within a year and, whatever the circumstances—in riches and in poverty, in sickness and in health—gave birth thereafter, on average, every two to two and a half years. Some even bore children in the stinking holds of ships, where both mothers and children were gravely at risk. Sarah Fairfax, travelling as an unassisted immigrant with her husband, John, in the steerage quarters of the 380-tonne barque *Lady Fitzgerald*, gave birth to a son, Richard Pope Fairfax, at sea somewhere between Tenerife and the Cape. The baby died a few months after the family's arrival in Sydney.

Aboriginal families appear never to have permitted themselves the prodigal growth typical of settler families. Prolonged lactation, polygamy, abortion and infanticide kept the number of dependent infants and toddlers in each hunting

John and Sarah Fairfax. This picture probably dates from between the time of their marriage in England in 1827 and their emigration to New South Wales in 1838. On their arrival in Sydney, John Fairfax was 33 and Sarah 30. He was highminded and well educated, having been a newspaper proprietor in England. He and his wife appear here as a young loving couple, paragons of their rank in life. By an unknown artist, undated.

IN PRIVATE POSSESSION

group roughly equal to the number of adults caring for them. Family size varied over time and from place to place, but children usually were reared only where human and material resources could support them adequately.

In 1838 the presence of the white invaders had already upset this balance across much of the continent. Among the survivors of groups already dispossessed of their lands, disease, starvation and the logic of rearing only cherished and cherishable children had reduced reproduction almost to nothing. Groups losing warriors in armed conflict with the settlers responded by limiting the number of dependent children. Even beyond the white advance, diseases such as smallpox and measles had killed many thousands. Pregnant women were particularly susceptible to smallpox, while older men and women suffered less severely. So by 1838 those facing the white invasion were an ageing population, with few children and depleted numbers of young men and women.

The firm adherence to custom within Aboriginal society makes it possible to use anthropological and archaeological evidence to reconstruct events surrounding the birth of an Aboriginal baby beyond the line of white advance in 1838—say, among the Bakendji on the Darling River. Indeed, the details are clearer in this case than anything we can write about the birth of a child to illiterate white parents in the same year. We know that when an Aboriginal mother was ready to give birth she usually left the main camp and went into the bush, accompanied by older women and sometimes by children. The other women acted as midwives, massaging the mother's back and stomach as she squatted to deliver the child. Nobody touched the baby until it was fully born, when the mother took it at once to her breast—and there it remained more or less constantly, carried until about three weeks old in a coolaman, and thereafter in its mother's arms, feeding whenever it stirred. Aboriginal babies were never allowed to cry. Should one whimper while its mother was absent it would immediately be hurried back to her breast.

A toddler was almost inseparable from its mother until it was about three years old, staying close to her side and riding high in a grass bag on her back when the group was on the move. In winter, a possum skin cloak would cover mother and child, with the grass bag tied tightly over both the cloak and the baby's buttocks, and knotted under the mother's chin. Children were never denied any food they asked for, and the move to semisolid food probably came as soon as the infant could help itself over its mother's shoulder. But the breast remained a solace even for four and five-year-olds. Mothers spent a lot of time looking for special titbits. On the Darling 'kopudge', a fat creamy chrysalis, was specially tempting to infant palates. Aunts and sisters could be relied on to assist the mother in caring for the child, carrying it and showing it affection.

We can only speculate how much the encroachment of settlement into areas to the east of their country was affecting Bakendji babies born in 1838. We know that these people had recently suffered fevers and skin diseases that left many dead or disfigured, and that they resented the peaceful appearance of Sturt's expeditions and actively opposed the more brutal passages of Major Mitchell. But we do not know the name of any child born among the Bakendji in that year, nor its parents' names, nor the particular date of its birth. It tells something of the bureaucratic organisation of nineteenth-century white society that we can discover most of these facts for most white children.

John Spencer was born in Fremantle, Western Australia, on 21 February 1838. His mother was Sarah Spencer, born Norcope, and his father John Spencer, a boatman. Fremantle was a settlement of a few hundred dwellings, mostly huts of wattle and daub. The tiny port clustered against a rocky outcrop for protection from the westerlies that swept sand across the coastal wastes in winter. Nine years

had passed since the first settlers had struggled there to pitch tents over their bedding and boxes in the teeth of the winter gales. Aborigines who saw the smoke of the settlers' fires from the shelter of the inland ranges must still have wondered at the stupidity of anyone trying to live on the coast in winter.

About forty white babies were born in Western Australia in 1838, into a population of fewer than two thousand people whose numbers were barely increasing from year to year. Immigration had almost ceased in 1831 when news—some said slanders—of mismanagement, sandy soil and starvation had got back to England. For the first time since the foundation years a few families of well-to-do settlers arrived in 1838, attracted by the prospect of woolgrowing beyond the ranges. But working men were still leaving Western Australia in search of better wages in the more prosperous colonies to the east. There was no shortage of vacant cottages in Fremantle for young married couples like the Spencers.

Mother and child of the Kaurna people, South Australia. Coloured lithograph by J.W. Giles, undated.
SOUTH AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM

When his first son was born, John Spencer was 23 years old and working as a boatman, unloading ships on the searoads beyond the mouth of the Swan, and ferrying cargo and passengers across the broad reaches of the river to Perth. Not the least of the new colony's disappointments was the shelf of rock blocking the mouth of the river to all but small boats and yielding steady, if dangerous, employment to young men with nothing to sell but a strong back and a steady eye. John Spencer had never learned other skills. At fourteen, when he might have been apprenticed, he was indentured in London to Henry Edward Hall, a gentleman of large family and small means who was about to depart for Western Australia.

Spencer was one of ten servants indentured to Hall under a form of agreement used since the beginning of the American colonies by settlers seeking an assured labour force in a new land. Instead of using convicts like the degraded colonies to the east, the gentlemen settlers of Swan River and later South Australia tried to build their fortunes on the labours of men and women who were bonded to work for them for up to seven years after their arrival. In return the employers paid their passage money to the colony, and promised a certain level of board and lodgings and a minimal yearly salary. But the indentured servants were in an unenviable position. Called 'free', to distinguish them from convicts, they were effectively in bondage, as we shall see in later parts of this book.

But many Western Australian masters had been forced to release their indentured servants in the colony because they could not bring their other resource, land, into production rapidly enough to pay them. John Spencer may have been too young in 1830 to seek other employment. In any case, he continued to work for the Halls in Fremantle for several years, probably until the end of his period of indenture. By 1837 he was earning enough on his own to propose marriage to young Sarah Norcope.

Sarah Spencer's experience of the indenture system was much harsher than her husband's. Sarah was only six years old in 1830 when she arrived in the Swan River colony with her parents, Anne and Samuel Norcope, and a younger sister and brother. The family came as part of a large immigration venture by Thomas Peel, one of the great capitalists reponsible for the idea of settling the Swan River. Some three hundred people indentured to Peel were to be settled as farmers on small leaseholds. Samuel Norcope, a mason by trade, probably anticipated steady employment building the houses of the proposed model settlement. But Peel's scheme went awry. The settlers disembarking from his ships were left leaderless, without adequate food or shelter, on a desolate beach a few kilometres south of Fremantle. During the terrible winter of 1830 more than twenty of them had died there, mainly of scurvy and dysentery. Among the dead were Anne Norcope and her two youngest children.

Houses in Pakenham Street, Fremantle. We would expect to find John Spencer and his family in a hut similar to the smallest buildings in this picture. Pencil and watercolour by Lieutenant G.F. Dashwood, 1832.
ART GALLERY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

In 1831 the governor of Western Australia broke up the settlement by releasing Peel's people from their indentures. Some moved to Fremantle; those who could left the colony entirely. At this point Samuel Norcope vanishes from the records. He may have died; perhaps he fled. How Sarah survived, aged seven, is unknown. She is next caught in the net of written evidence in 1836, working as a servant in Fremantle. She was at the most fourteen when she married John Spencer in May 1837, and fifteen when their son was born nine months later.

The boatmen of Fremantle and their wives and daughters were a singular lot. They married young, and the perilous lives led by boatmen left many of their wives as widows. The women took little heed of the legal niceties and many conceived children before and between marriages. Throughout the colony, the average age for women at first marriage was twenty, with women of rank generally marrying later and labouring women rather earlier—though at fourteen Sarah Norcope was exceptionally young, even for the wife of a boatman. The decent nine-month interval between her marriage and the birth of her first child was also unusual among boatmen's families, though even in the wider community in Western Australia about one bride in three went to the altar knowing she was pregnant.

John Spencer had been granted a block of land in Fremantle but had failed to build on it the £100's worth of improvements that were necessary before he could gain formal title. Probably the baby was born in a rented, single-roomed mud cottage, thatched and without glass in the windows. Sarah Spencer would certainly have been confined at home, not in a hospital. Like the Bakendji mothers she would have had other women to help her—neighbours and perhaps a local woman who acted as midwife and nurse for a small fee. Mothers helped daughters where they could, but colonial women were often denied this comfort by distance or, as in Sarah Spencer's case, by death. Birth remained a women's affair. Doctors were called only in an emergency, such as prolonged labour or the failure of the afterbirth to come away. Midwives rarely attempted any manipulation of the baby within the womb. Their role was to comfort, encourage and assist manually in the final stages of the birth.

March 31: Yesterday morning Charlotte began to complain—Mrs. Hay who was to have attended her was importunately confined to her bed (on dit) with miscarriage. Charlotte continued ill all day and at 40 minutes past 11 pm presented me with another daughter, the image of Popsey. The afterbirth . . . did not come away and we were in a state of alarm all night—Mrs. Cant kindly stayed the whole time, and so did Cant with me till about ½ past 5 this morning—at ½ past 7 I laid down in Tom's bed and had an hour's sleep which . . . quite restored me—about 9 the doctor found it necessary to remove the placenta by force—poor Charlotte was in dreadful agony and still continues (12 oclock) in great pain.

Entry from the 1838 diary of Thomas James Lempriere, deputy assistant commissary general at Hobart Town, describing the confinement of his wife.

We cannot write with any certainty about the rituals likely to have been observed at this baby's birth. Midwives in England helped preserve local habits such as the confinement of women with all their clothes on: 'boots, stockings, drawers, chemise, stays, petticoats, dress, shawl, bonnet, some of the items borrowed or saved especially for the occasion'. Once the afterbirth had come away the clothes were removed, a clean nightgown put on, and the new mother 'got into bed'. This was the custom in Yorkshire and London, even among 'better class people'. Where it was observed, the patient lay upon a mattress; in other parts of England women delivered squatting or standing with support. Such customs may have reappeared in Australia, especially where whole communities were transplanted. But in Britain it was the older women who presided on these occasions, making sure that everything was done properly—and older women rarely emigrated.

Three generations of labouring people: an old woman meets a mother and child. Pencil drawing by G.T.W.B. Boyes, late 1820s.
TASMANIAN MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY

The way in which a newborn baby was handled also varied according to class and region. Wealth was not necessarily an advantage: babies of the rich were sometimes washed in brandy, causing external and even internal irritation. Still worse, some had forced down their throats within an hour of birth, 'a solid mixture of nutmeg, butter and brown sugar', followed by 'a tea-spoon of castor oil, and a boat of gruel'. Wealthy mothers usually waited three days before attempting to suckle their babies, giving artificial food in the meantime. Poor mothers with less food to offer began to suckle from the first day: a much safer procedure. But poor mothers also pressed the breasts of the newborn 'to get out the milk', and they sometimes inserted raisins or figs into the navel to seal it, all of which could cause infection. Grandmothers, midwives and doctors all agreed that the newborn needed 'something of an opening nature', castor oil being the favourite aperient. This custom was certainly carried over to the colonies.

Evidence given at an inquest in New South Wales in May catches a midwife at work. A convict woman's illegitimate child had been found dead in her bed a day after its birth. Susan Randell, a paid midwife, told the magistrate investigating the death that she had been called at one o'clock in the morning to attend the mother and child. Ann MacIntosh, a convict, had been confined in the house of a sympathetic former convict, Ann Sheridan. Labour had set in fast and early, and the mother gave birth alone while Ann Sheridan ran for a neighbour. Only then was the midwife called. On her arrival Susan Randell did, as she said, 'all that was necessary and usual in such cases for the mother and child'. Presumably she cut the umbilical cord, bathed the baby, and made sure the afterbirth came cleanly away. Midwives normally continued to look after mother and child—and other children, if any—for as much as a week after the birth. Mrs Randell stayed all night at the Sheridans' house, but next morning she left, 'finding the mother and child quite well and comfortable'. She had 'made and left some arrowroot there and desired the mother to give it a little castor oil if necessary'. Early the following morning

Mother and child at the door of a row of houses, or hovels, at Darling Point, Sydney. The figures kneeling in front—possibly children—are playing a game of some sort. Watercolour by Robert Russell, 1835.
NATIONAL LIBRARY

she returned 'to dress the baby'—presumably to check the healing navel and maybe to change its clothes. Unfortunately in the interval Ann MacIntosh, an alcoholic, had got enough brandy to make her violently drunk, and apparently had rolled onto the baby in the night, suffocating it.

Babies commonly slept with their parents and death by 'overlaying' was not unusual. But the magistrate saw poor Ann MacIntosh as 'a most notorious character', the type of convict woman unredeemed by motherhood. He wrote to the attorney-general in Sydney asking if there was sufficient evidence to put her on trial for manslaughter, believing 'that an example made of this woman might have a salutary effect upon others of a similar description in the district'. But the evidence could not bear such an interpretation. While Ann MacIntosh's conduct was not 'that of a fond or careful mother', witnesses agreed that she was 'very fond' of the baby. Her friend, Ann Sheridan, reported that even at her most drunken moment the mother 'kept hugging and squeezing the child to her body saying you shan't have my pretty dear; she would not let me take it away or touch it'. Upon learning that the child was dead, Ann MacIntosh was distraught.

Susan Randell would have learnt her trade on the job, in a sort of apprenticeship to an older midwife. A few colonial midwives had more formal training. A Mrs Barfoot placed the following announcement in the *Hobart Town Courier* in 1837:

MIDWIFERY

Mrs Barfoot begs leave to acquaint the Ladies of Hobart Town and its vicinity that she has recently arrived from Edinburgh, where she has attended the regular course of lectures, on the principles and practice of the above profession, under Dr Thatcher, F.R.C.S. and clinical lecturer at the Royal College, Edinburgh.

Mrs Barfoot having passed her examination, and received her diploma, which pronounces her fully qualified for the important duty of a practitioner of Midwifery, and subsequently practised in Edinburgh with success, ventures most respectfully to offer her services in this Colony to those Ladies requiring such assistance and who prefer a female attendant to a Surgeon Accoucheur, and solicits the patronage of the Ladies of the colony.

> References are kindly permitted to Mrs Barnett, corner of Elizabeth street.
> N.B. Since the above was last inserted Mrs B. has attended a number of Ladies to whom she can further refer.
>
> 58 Murray street, January 23, 1837

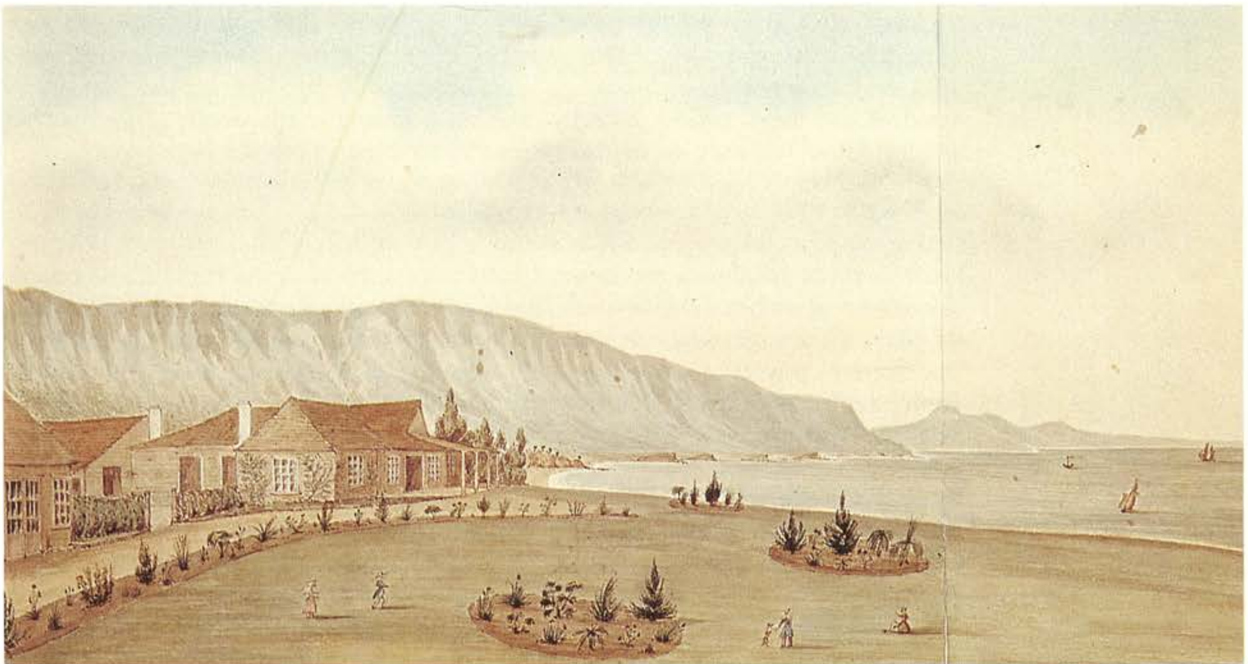
Mrs Barfoot was vying for fashionable patronage in direct competition with the surgeons of the colony, and she was much better qualified than most of them in the science of midwifery, if not the practice. Like poor women, ladies saw the functions of doctor and midwife as different and complementary. Midwives assisted with the normal management of a birth, while doctors were to be called in if something went wrong. Edward Deas Thomson, colonial secretary of New South Wales, engaged Dr James Mitchell to attend his wife during her pregnancy in 1838, and a nurse to help at the birth. Anne Deas Thomson had reason to fear complications during her pregnancy. She had lost her first child—'a perfect picture of health and beauty'—suddenly and inexplicably a week after its birth in 1834. Eleven months after this she had suffered a 'slight' miscarriage which left her very weak, and within six months another one. Then in November 1836 she was safely delivered of a healthy daughter, Elizabeth. As it turned out there were no problems during her pregnancy in 1838, nor any difficulties with the birth. She was attended by a servant and the nurse—'a very superior woman', according to Deas Thomson. Dr Mitchell's services were not required.

On 25 July, eight days after the baby was born, Edward Deas Thomson wrote to his wife's father in Ireland that

> she had a severe but not very long time of it and bore it with her usual fortitude. The baby, another daughter, is also, thank God, doing well. She is, I am assured, to be pretty.

He went on to describe in loving detail the impact of the 'little stranger'—Susan Emmeline—on life in the two-storey town house which the family occupied in Macquarie Street, Sydney, just opposite the gates of the government domain. Anne

The children of a gentleman. The four children of Robert Marsh Westmacott, former aide-de-camp to Governor Bourke, play in the garden at their home at Illawarra. Watercolour by R.M. Westmacott, 1838–44.
DIXSON LIBRARY



Deas Thomson had hoped to nurse Emmeline herself, but she had 'the same difficulty about nursing which she experienced on former occasions', wrote her husband, and 'I regret to say with no better success'. Educated Sydney matrons, like London ones, thought it right to suckle their own babies. Shops carried a range of expensive imported goods intended to make breastfeeding easier: 'prepared teats, with nipple shells complete, invaluable in all cases of tender and delicate breasts', 'Maws Improved Breast Pumps', and various cordials and purges. A little breast milk, at least, was considered absolutely necessary—hence the pumps. Bottles were unknown, so the usual alternative to suckling was to bring a baby up 'by hand', by feeding it a mixture of milk and solid such as bread or arrowroot from a spoon.

Very few infants could digest such substitutes. The babies of poor women who were unable to feed them generally wasted away or died from a stomach infection, unless the mother could find another woman, with milk to spare, to take on an extra mouth to feed. Rich women hired wetnurses. Rather than letting little Emmeline's condition 'fall off' as Lizzie's had done, Anne Deas Thomson moved quickly to hire a wetnurse from the women's prison, or female factory, at Parramatta. She was a woman proud of her rationality and scornful of superstitious suggestions that 'moral taint' might be 'transmitted through the milk'. But she told her father that neighbours were 'greatly shocked at the idea of my taking a prisoner at muster'.

Midwives and grandmothers in England were keen to get new mothers walking within 24 hours of the birth, to help clear the uterus. But doctors advised wealthy patients to stay in bed for at least three or four days, and much longer if they were thought to be 'delicate'. Immobility could protect a uterus worn out by pregnancies, but it also increased the chance of infection. After her earlier pregnancies, Anne Deas Thomson was probably considered delicate. Only on the seventh day after the birth did she sit up 'on the sofa', and even that left her 'fatigued'.

Friends helped her to recuperate by taking turns to look after nineteen-month-old Lizzie. Anne was used to taking most of Lizzie's care on herself. The lack of any but convict nurses made colonial gentlewomen spend much more time with their children than they would have done in England, although English practices themselves varied widely. Lizzie was becoming a 'romp', talking incessantly and making loving assaults on her infant sister. Her grandfather was told that 'she is very fond of the baby, calling it "baby dear" and kissing it frequently'. Much as her parents loved her they were glad to send her away to keep the house quiet.

Visitors came calling on mother and baby very soon after the birth. Close female friends came within the first week, and less intimate ones not long after. The diary of Mary Phoebe Broughton records the complicated pattern of visiting that was considered proper for women of rank (see chapter 6). Among more formal visits Phoebe often noted visits, both to friends and mere acquaintances, to welcome the arrival of a baby.

Babies were formally presented to the world outside the family—especially the male world—at their christening, usually a month after the birth. In Adelaide Eliza Malpas recorded in her diary an account of what was seen to be an historic christening in July. A number of children were baptised, all rather older than a month. The event had been delayed by the time it took to build Trinity Church, the first Church of England building in South Australia. As it was, the ceremony took place under an unfinished roof with workmen hammering above.

Trinity Church, Adelaide. Hand-coloured lithograph (detail) by J. Hitchen.
NATIONAL LIBRARY

These children were members of the most influential families in South Australia, and the event was as splendid as possible. Ladies dressed up for the occasion, in outfits that must have been completely imported. Matrons wore silk: 'maroon corded silk, with a very handsome worked collar' or 'a fawn silk, with lace pelerine' or 'pale green silk, white crepe scarf and sable boa'. The minister's wife wore 'stiff corded black silk', her sister 'violet silk'. Unmarried daughters dressed more simply, in 'a white frock and blue scarf' or 'French poplin, of fawn and brown', or wore miniature copies of their mothers' clothes. Officers wore dress uniforms.

The ceremony held a number of meanings for its participants. Those who listened to the words of the service could not have avoided the message that its first aim was to save a soul that was otherwise without hope:

> forasmuch as all men are conceived and born in sin ... None can enter the kingdom of God, except he be regenerate and born anew of Water and of the holy Ghost.

Only by ritual washing could the infant 'enjoy the everlasting benediction of thy heavenly blessing, and ... come to the eternal kingdom'. This idea of original sin probably weighed lightly, if at all, on the minds of the congregation. Pious parents were sometimes overcome by a sense of their own sin, especially in the face of death or disaster, but they tended to see their children as innocent, at least while they were young. Christening remained important, however, for both religious and social reasons.

The ceremony marked the acceptance of the child 'into the Congregation of Christ's flock'. The Church of England service called for the appointment of three godparents to speak for the child, and exhorted them to renounce on its behalf 'the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the carnal desires of the flesh'. Godparents also promised to teach their charges the nature of the vow made on their behalf, to give them a Christian education, and to have them confirmed as adult members of the Church of England. The choice of godparents on this occasion showed that the congregation of which the children became members stretched far beyond the

unfinished walls of Trinity Church: colonial friends acted as proxies, making the responses in place of relatives and friends in distant England.

For young Eliza Malpas the best part of the event was not in the church at all but back in the residence of John Hurtle Fisher, the resident commissioner, whose baby was among the new initiates. The vain pomp and glory of the world was much in evidence as the company assembled for 'an elegant cold collation'. Eliza noted down the entire bill of fare, to allow readers 'at some future time to know the manners of the colony'. '[A]s nearly as I can remember', she wrote, the company consumed

> giblet and gravy soup, cold roast sucking pig, fowls roast and boiled, tongue, chicken pies, plum pudding, gooseberry pie, scalded codlings [cooking apples], damson pie, preserved ginger, tipsy cake [akin to trifle], custard, open tart, preserved orange, plum cake, port, sherry, ale, cheese.

After dinner the party broke into two, the ladies to walk in the garden and the gentlemen to smoke, while supper—a 'round of beef and plum pudding'—was set out for the servants. Then the company gathered in the sitting room for conversation, music and dancing. There being a number of young gentlemen present, Miss Malpas thoroughly enjoyed the dancing, especially the 'coquette'.

The Fisher christening was especially sumptuous, having been so long delayed. But well-to-do families usually marked their children's entry into society with similar celebrations. Poor families may have celebrated, but they often neglected the religious part of the ceremony. Of the 75 couples marrying in Trinity Church in 1838—the only place in Adelaide where marriages could be registered—fewer than 30 would later return to baptise first children. In the English countryside at this time about one married couple in two brought babies back to be christened in the church where they had been married. The comparative figures for New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land were lower: about two-fifths and a quarter respectively. In moving to the colonies young men and women not only lost contact with an older generation which might have taught them precise traditions about childbirth; religious habits and loyalties, already tenuous in many cases, were also weakened. Convict parents were especially careless. Of all convicts married in New South Wales only about a quarter seem to have baptised first children, and in Van Diemen's Land seven in every eight failed to do so. If they understood the meaning of christening, convict parents, and many other colonials as well, were largely content to ignore it.

Baptism being the only official registration of birth, the tendency of convicts and other people not to have their babies baptised makes our statistical knowledge of births in the colonies uncertain. The official total in New South Wales in 1838 was 2836 births, which was probably at least 20 per cent too low. But the official figures do allow us to compare the number of births in the colonies during the 1830s with the number of women of child-bearing age. The proportion of births to potential mothers in New South Wales was more than 150 to every 1000, and it was increasing rapidly as the number of young women migrating to the colonies increased. At the same time, a growing number of native-born women were reaching the age of young motherhood. Many migrant women were of course already married and brought children with them. Indeed, as far as we can tell from the official figures, the number of children who migrated to New South Wales in 1838 was about equal to the number born there.

Three houses displaying social rank and culture.

Elswick, on Parramatta Road near Sydney, home of the solicitor James Norton, his wife Jane, and their large family of sons and daughters. Norton conducted an old and very successful legal practice in Sydney. Around his house he planted a garden of roses, bamboo and gardenias, and tended them with great care. Out of sight is the row of neat cottages he built for his convict servants. Watercolour by Conrad Martens, 1840.
DIXSON GALLERIES

Panshanger. The house at Panshanger, near Longford in Van Diemen's Land, sums up in its elegant proportions and its romantic rural setting the ultimate aspirations of a gentleman settler. It was built by Joseph Archer between 1831 and 1834, apparently inspired by a Palladian house in Italy which Archer and his wife saw during a tour of Europe in the 1820s. Hand-coloured lithograph by W. Lyttleton, 1835.
NATIONAL LIBRARY

House in Macquarie Street, Hobart Town. An elaborate brick residence, such as might satisfy a successful merchant. Houses in Van Diemen's Land often lacked verandahs, because of the relatively cool climate. Watercolour by J. Atkinson, 1838.
ALLPORT LIBRARY AND MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, STATE LIBRARY OF TASMANIA

The colonies had long had a reputation for fertile women and healthy babies. In part this arose out of visitors' surprise at the paradox of convict women, old in crime and disease, nursing fine bright-eyed babies. In part it was fostered by literate parents writing fondly home describing the superior growth of their colonial children. One mother wrote that her two-year-old daughter was 'as tall as most children are in England at four years old and far more precocious'. Another wrote that her daughter was 'now altogether more knowing and lively by far than any Baby of her age I ever saw'. Another wrote thanking her mother for baby clothes, and complaining that

> the generality of babies in this country are so large that they would be scarcely large enough for a child just born, a lady remarked the other day that she scarcely saw a baby in this country. They were all children.

The colony's reputation for health and fertility was well deserved, though perhaps less so in the 1830s than in earlier decades. Colonial birth rates were well ahead of British rates in the early years of the century. By the 1830s the rates in both countries were rising rapidly, with the colonies still in the lead. Death rates for children under one year of age give a similar account of good health. The official statistics suggest an infant death rate in New South Wales of about one death to every five births. In Britain, among the poor, the rate could have been as high as one death to every three births. However, it seems likely that the proportion of infant deaths to births in the white population of the colony was rising steadily during the late thirties. Child migrants brought with them measles, influenza, whooping cough and similar diseases from which the native born had been relatively free. The population may have been reaching a level at which some of these childhood diseases were becoming endemic.

About half of all white families in New South Wales could expect to lose at least one child, usually in infancy, and in families with more than six children the chances were much higher. Most colonial children experienced the death of a brother or sister. Babies who survived the first weeks of infancy entered another period of serious risk towards the end of their first year. Contemporaries attributed this to teething—a time of mysterious danger to children, when fits, fevers and convulsions were most common. It is more likely to have been linked directly to problems associated with weaning. Mothers often weaned their children suddenly, with little regard for infant digestive tracts. Diets consisting mainly of bread and oatmeal were thought suitable even for the children of the rich, water was not always boiled and milk supplements were liable to be of poor quality, especially in summer. Thus many parents lost children just as they were beginning to walk and hug and return affection—to become, in the language of the day, 'interesting'.

The burden placed on immigrant families was even heavier. In twelve months from early 1837 about 1800 children had either embarked for New South Wales with their parents or been born during the voyage. More than two-thirds were younger than twelve years of age; more than a thousand were under seven. Of these 1800 children, 215 died on the voyage: about one child in every eight. The toll was especially high among younger children, and on ships carrying disease the losses could be catastrophic. The *Strathfieldsaye*, with whooping cough aboard, lost one in four of all children passengers; the *Layton*, carrying measles, lost almost two in three. Infants born on any vessel had less than a 50 per cent chance of survival.

Why did parents subject their children to such risk? Perhaps they did not understand the dangers—though an immigration agent recruiting in Scotland reported great difficulty in filling his quotas when news got back of disease on vessels recently departed. But many came because the alternatives seemed even

Two houses in which the need for accommodation overrides all other considerations.

Three-storey cottage in Van Diemen's Land. This is a roomy building, but with no social pretensions. It is clearly modelled on English traditions of building and accommodation. Watercolour by T.J. Lempriere, 1836–40.
DIXSON GALLERIES

Mafra, in the district of Maneroo, New South Wales. A collection of purely functional buildings at the head station of a sheep or cattle run. The main building materials are timber slabs and bark. Pencil and watercolour by O.W. Brierly, 1842.
MITCHELL LIBRARY

worse, both for their present survival as a family, and for the future welfare of their children. They travelled as much in despair as in hope.

The families who came on the *Layton* had been recruited in Gloucestershire and nearby counties in mid-1837. It was an area affected by the decline of handloom weaving, a cottage industry, as the power loom concentrated weaving in the factories located mainly in the distant industrial towns of Yorkshire and southeast Lancashire. Men who had lived well enough by combining weaving with other trades like building and farming found themselves relying on parish assistance to survive. One such man, Jonathon Wheeler of Bisley, left traces of his working and family life in the baptism records of the parish. He entered his occupation as 'labourer' when his first child, James, was baptised in 1814. A year later at daughter Hester's christening he called himself a soldier, which may account for the three-year gap before the birth of his next daughter, Harriet, in 1818, when he was registered as a weaver. His next child, Samuel, was not baptised at Bisley, perhaps because the family was on the move. But when Daniel was baptised in 1823 Jonathon had become a sawyer, an occupation he retained for the next thirteen years, through the baptisms of six more children.

When their last child born in Bisley—a second Daniel—was baptised in 1836, Jonathon Wheeler was 43 and his wife Jane 41 years of age. Of his eleven children, ten survived: a testimony to luck and careful parenting. In the same year their eldest son, James, also a sawyer, married Caroline Cull of Bisley. He was 23 and she a little older. When the elder Wheelers decided to emigrate in 1837, they were joined by James and Caroline and all their other children except Hester, who saw her future elsewhere. An emigration agent described James and his father as able to read and write 'a little', Jane and Caroline as able to 'read a little'. Jonathon described himself as a farm labourer, James as a sawyer. Both women registered as 'house servants', though that may tell more about the requirements of the immigration agent than about their paid working lives. The rest of the party included Harriet and Samuel, now virtually grown up, Anne aged twelve, John aged ten, a younger Jonathon aged nine, Phillip aged six, Roseanne aged three, and Daniel, a baby of about eighteen months.

The Wheelers were less impoverished than some families assisted to emigrate to Australia. The emigration authorities stipulated that a minimum of clothing and bedding be brought for the journey, nothing but bare boards being supplied on board ship. Some emigrants lacked even the mattresses and blankets needed, and these were sometimes provided by the parish. In the case of the Wheelers and two other families recruited from Bisley, the Butts and the Parsons, the parish supplied only extra clothing. Hats or caps, smock frocks and sometimes hose or trousers were bought for the men at a cost of about 25s each. Jane Wheeler was handy with a needle; she received only 'tape and cotton etc' at 1s 4d. The parish paid least for Obediah Parsons, aged six months. His calico swaddling cost 4½d.

The *Layton* left Bristol in the early autumn gales of 1837. The hatches had to be battened down night and day against the high seas during the first weeks, and water seepage and congested air made conditions between decks very unhealthy. At 505 tonnes the *Layton* was a large vessel, and its load of 121 adults and 110 children was not excessive by the standards of the time. But measles and a mysterious fever broke out among the children. The migrants were under the care of a naval surgeon, a man accustomed to supervising the passage of convicts under sentence, and the medical provisions on board were completely inadequate for a shipload of feverish children. This may have been a blessing in disguise, as the usual treatment for fever consisted of blistering the skin and cleansing the stomach with emetics and purgatives, which debilitated infants. On another immigrant ship the captain's son, aged two, had died after suffering equally from whooping cough and from the drastic emetics given him to cure it; he refused all food in his last days, 'seeming to think', his doctor wrote, 'it is medicine'.

Proper food was sorely missed, however. The *Layton* carried inadequate supplies of any food able to be digested by sick children. Sago and arrowroot were in short supply. Rice and oatmeal were plentiful, but with nothing to make them palatable, and soups made from salted meat were even less suitable. Children were reported as gradually wasting away. Even when their fever passed they sometimes continued to worsen, exhibiting 'marasmus', a general debility.

Sixty-eight children died on board the *Layton* and several more died in government care after they landed, a diet of eggs and chicken soup coming too late to save them. Forty-seven of the dead were younger than seven years old, most of them much younger. The Wheelers lost Roseanne and Daniel, and six other families similarly lost every one of their children under three years of age. Four families lost two children. The Parsons lost baby Obediah.

We have a record of a child's funeral at sea in 1838. Henry Lister, the captain's son who died of whooping cough and medicine, was put into the sea in a long

coffin of 'Sydney Cedar' lined with sheet lead and flannel. A Union Jack covered the coffin, and the ship's bell tolled as the full ship's company and passengers assembled to hear the service. Observers could not hide their tears as

> at the particular part 'we commit this body to the deep' it was slipped over the side into the sea—it rose once but instantly sank to rise no more.

Lister's son received special honours. With 68 children's deaths on board the *Layton* there would have been neither coffins nor solemn services for the tiny corpses. The crew would have been hard put to find sacks and weights enough for them all, and services must have become very perfunctory. The Wheelers had raised ten children out of eleven born in England, and left England for their sake, only to lose two unceremoniously to the deep.

CHILDHOOD

The *Layton* docked in Sydney on 19 January 1838. The fever among the children seemed to have burned itself out, and a doctor declared the passengers free from disease. The migrants came ashore to the government depot, where they were allowed a week's free lodging, and where employers came looking for workers. Single men able to work as skilled men and shepherds, and single women prepared to work in dairies and as house servants, found work quickly. Employers were reluctant to take married couples, especially those with dependent children. Among the Wheelers Harriet, at nineteen, and Samuel, at seventeen, could work as adults, but the four younger children were liabilities in the eyes of most employers. None of the families from Bisley found employment in the first days ashore. Then on 25 January two men came from Camden, about fifty kilometres inland, looking for family groups to live and work on the estate of the Macarthur brothers.

William Macarthur and his brother James were among the few landowners who agreed with Alexander Warren about married men making the best labourers. Besides, there were economic advantages on a place like Camden Park, where there was a great range of different types of work to be done. William Macarthur told the immigration committee that he especially preferred 'middle aged men with large families, providing those families do not consist principally or wholly of females'. He explained:

> for many purposes, such families, providing there are several boys in each, above the age of eight or ten years, may be employed with more profit to the master than young married men.

Older family men were usually of sound habits and were more reliable than the more mobile younger workers. If managed properly by their employers, 'their children would soon become a more valuable description of servants than their parents'.

Macarthur criticised other employers for agreeing automatically to maintain the families of the men they hired. He argued that this encouraged wives and children to be idle. On Camden Park rations had to be earned. Men might support their families by their own labour, but it was a good deal easier if the women and children were also employed on a daily basis or on piecework. This also promoted 'habits of industry and frugality' among them. Women were paid 1s a day, children 3d, 6d or 9d, according to age. It was William Macarthur's belief that 'every healthy child of eight or nine years should be able to earn enough for its maintenance; and children two or three years younger can contribute to it'.

In January 1838 William Macarthur urgently needed more labourers in Camden. He and his brother had already brought in two shiploads of families,

hand-picked by a third brother in England and indentured—or bonded—to work at Camden Park for three years. But even more labour was needed. In previous years they had been able to hire casual labour, but newspaper advertisements now received not a single reply. The weight of grapes ripening in his vineyard may have made Macarthur risk employing families brought out by the government, and the families from Bisley seemed promising. They were honest farming folk, uncorrupted by city life and already united by bonds of kin and locality. So Macarthur's overseer, having come down from Sydney to look them over, hired a number of married men from among the Bisley immigrants—Matthew and Reuben Parsons, George Butt, Jonathon and James Wheeler. Husbands, wives and children then found themselves and their baggage loaded on a steamer travelling upriver to Parramatta, and then on bullock drays bound for Camden Park. The cost of the journey was charged to accounts opened for them at the estate store. Employers never paid such incidental expenses. For the Wheeler family this came to 42 shillings.

Woman and child. A pencil sketch by G.T.W.B. Boyes, late 1820s.
TASMANIAN MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY

William Macarthur soon regretted his flirtation with the government system of immigration. One of the immigrant children carried the strange fever that had infected the *Layton*. It was probably Clara Layton Parsons, born on the voyage. She died and was buried at Camden on 4 February, and 10s 6d was charged to her father's account for funeral expenses. The disease then spread to adults on the estate, and at its height in March Macarthur had a dozen people so ill he had to bring in a medical attendant to care for them. Quite apart from his annoyance at the fever, however, Macarthur told the immigration committee that he could 'by no means report . . . favourably' on the *Layton* families.

The Wheelers give a clue to the reasons for his disapproval. Jonathon Wheeler was a highly skilled sawyer, and his son James an excellent mate. On 10 February, less than two weeks after their arrival at Camden Park, father and son were credited with £4 19s 7d for 1423 feet of sawn cedar. They split the money five to four, with Jonathon taking the larger share. During this period other family members also worked on the estate. Up to 17 February Jane, her daughter-in-law Caroline, Harriet and two younger children worked what Macarthur's overseer deemed to be sixteen and three-quarter days in the vineyard picking grapes, earning between them £3 3s 5d. The three women received 1s a day, while the two children were paid at the top of the scale, 9d a day.

In the next two months, March and April, the two men cut wood to the value of £16 10s 0d. Harriet worked two days in the vineyard and Caroline three, and Jane not at all. Other women continued to labour on the estate, picking grapes, digging potatoes, reaping tobacco and husking corn with the changing season, and their children worked alongside them. But Jane Wheeler did not want to tie her children to this kind of drudgery. Young John and Jonathon could have earned their 3d or 6d a day labouring in the Macarthurs' vineyards, earning, as William Macarthur said, 'enough for their maintenance'. But clearly Jonathon and Jane Wheeler wanted their elder children to labour in this way as briefly as possible, and their younger children not at all.

By May both couples had moved away from the home farm, and the immediate supervision of their employer. We know this because all the parties gave Cawdor, on the edge of the estate, as their address when Harriet Wheeler married James Butler, a local farmer, on 25 May. The witnesses were James and Caroline Wheeler. In May and June the Wheeler men did not cut any wood for William Macarthur. Perhaps it was too wet, or perhaps, not being indentured, they felt free to seek employment elsewhere. None of the women or children worked again on the estate, but between July and September James and Jonathon earned no less than

£41 6s 9d cutting timber for Macarthur, twice as much as labourers on the estate earned in a year.

No wonder Macarthur looked askance at the Wheelers. The married men were not the humble employees he had hoped for, being, as he said of single labourers, 'corrupted ... by the competition to obtain their services, and the sudden change of circumstances in which they find themselves placed'. They were also unwilling to submit their children to the 'proper management' which, if Macarthur had his way, would make them 'a more valuable description of servants than their parents'.

The Wheeler parents were not exceptional. Despite the demand for unskilled labour in New South Wales, very few colonial children were to be found working for wages. In the early nineteenth century, children in parts of Britain were beginning to work outside the home much more commonly than in the past—in factories or in agricultural gangs. But labouring families often resented the disappearance of the domestic workplaces, and many carried with them to the colonies dreams of a new independence. Employers questioned by the immigration committee in Sydney confirmed that parents discouraged their children from wage labour. Country employers tended to blame the high wages available to adult male labourers. One of Alexander Warren's neighbours argued that fathers could readily earn enough to support even large numbers of dependent children, and that 'the children cannot often be made to do much, unless most of them are stout lads from ten to fourteen years old'. Employers in Sydney believed that parents kept their children at home even when their own wages were insufficient to cover the high cost of firewood and rent. Thomas Hyndes told the committee that 'the burden of a family is felt more by the unwillingness of parents generally to let those who are able, go to service and earn their own bread'. He believed that parents were especially unwilling to part with their daughters.

Homestead, garden and mill house, Perth. *The artist, Henry Reveley, was civil engineer to the government of Western Australia, and had responsibility for all public buildings. This is his house and garden in Perth, complete with a water-powered mill built by Reveley from local stone. The picture also shows a duck pond behind the trees, a vegetable garden and pigsty. The area around the house was probably the workplace of Mrs Reveley. Her influence is evident in the flowerbeds and the path leading to the house where, as Reveley says in a key to the picture, 'vines are planted to be trained on a trellis over the walk'. Watercolour by Henry Reveley, 1833.*
NATIONAL LIBRARY

Two master masons confirmed, in evidence to the committee, that while skilled men in Sydney earned more than they could in London, the cost of living in Sydney ate up the extra. On the rearing of children they agreed that 'if his family be very large and young, he cannot do more than live'.

Feeding, clothing and bedding a child for a week at the cheapest possible standard in Sydney would have cost at market prices something like 3s: about what Macarthur's 'healthy child' could earn at 6d a day. With rent and fuel, a family of six children would need about 29s, even without beer, tobacco, newspapers, education, outings or medical bills. David Taylor, a mason, estimated that a man earning 48s a week with no more than three children could save perhaps 2s 6d. The average wage for a mason in constant work was about 42s a week, hardly enough for a sole breadwinner to maintain a family of half a dozen children.

This does not mean that most children lived in poverty. Families with six or more children were not uncommon, and some parents with large families certainly were poor. But the larger families generally seem to have belonged to fathers well able to support them. Rich men, such as professionals and merchants, and independent men, such as innkeepers and farmers, tended to have more children who survived beyond infancy. Farming families, only 20 per cent of the total number of families in the colony, accounted for about a third of families with six or more. So children in general seem to have been living in families likely to be able to support them, and their parents were often engaged in a business in which the children's labour would be useful.

Child labour was not what parents objected to. They resented placing their children under the discipline of an employer, for wages. Many had emigrated to free themselves from wage labour, and did not hesitate to use the labour of their wives and children to achieve independence as a family. A witness told the immigration committee that

> a family of six would most likely furnish, a boy to drive Bullocks, or herd Cattle, Sheep, etc, and a boy or girl to keep Swine or Poultry, while the Mother could take charge of a small Dairy.

The children of farmers, rural labourers, and even artisans and shopkeepers whose home was set on enough land to support a cow and some poultry, were generally expected to make this kind of contribution to the family economy. They worked unsupervised at such tasks, and helped their parents in other ways as well. Fathers needed assistance with sowing and reaping and weeding if they were farmers, with fetching and carrying and cleaning up in a multitude of other occupations. Mothers needed help with cooking, cleaning, mending and with the care of smaller children, as well as with the milking and butter making that were part of the lives of most wives in the colonies.

The sexes shared work, although field work was considered 'too heavy' for girls and women, who were nevertheless expected to carry water and churn butter. The location of the work, rather than the strength needed to perform it, was what really determined whether men or women should do it. A girl was not expected to mind sheep, but might have to look after swine or poultry, for the pigsty and henhouse were next to the house, within earshot of a crying baby. Some colonial daughters did work in the fields, ploughing and tending stock on horseback, but they did so wearing men's clothes—masquerading as young men. Generally, however, girls were taught at an early age that their proper place was in the home, or very near it, and that their main task was the bearing and rearing of children.

The father was the head of a working family. He was in a sense the employer of his wife and children, responsible for their performance. But work often had to be done by individuals working alone. Children had to learn to work independently and responsibly, for busy fathers were in no position to supervise them closely. Following the pigs or minding the baby was a far cry from labouring under the eye of William Macarthur's overseer and being docked 3d for a quarter of a day's work not done. Convict fathers in particular were said to treat their children with less authority than they should. One observer wrote of an ex-convict father and his son that they

> spoke to each other quite on terms of equality, but still with the utmost of good feeling. It was a simple consequence of the son having always been free and the father once a prisoner, and it is quite customary.

The colonial situation was producing obvious social and domestic peculiarities, for 'terms of equality' were not otherwise customary between fathers and sons.

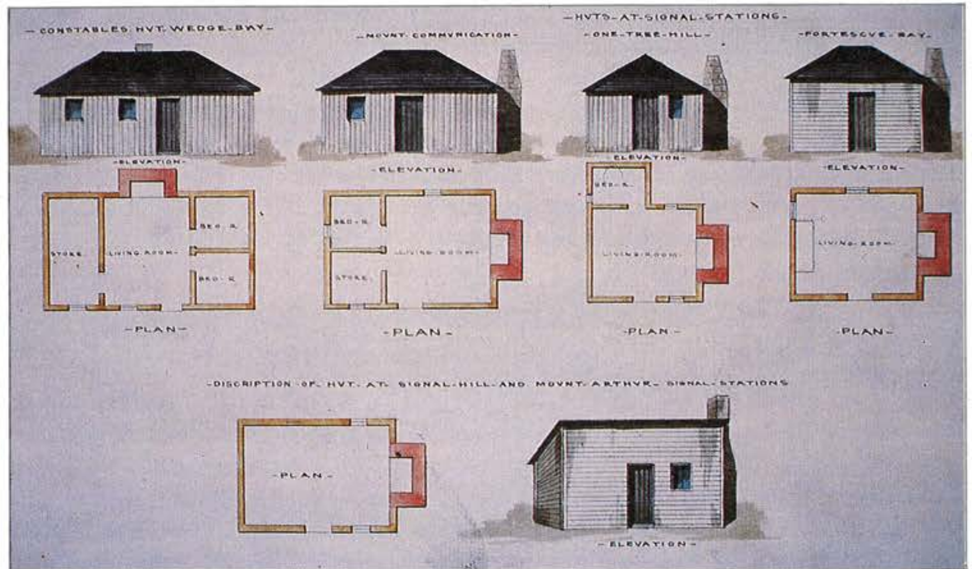
Equality had no part in the methods used by educated parents. They believed in parental authority and wanted disciplined offspring. The need to chastise children was rarely questioned. Toddlers were generally thought to be too young to profit from punishment. A mother wrote of her one-year-old daughter that 'at present "hush" and "no baby" and a kiss are all the punishment she receives'. But she added that 'I mean to whip her when she deserves it, and when she is old enough to understand that kind of correction'. Two- and three-year-old boys were sometimes beaten, although moral authority and persuasion were also used. A mother reported that her son, aged six, tried to dominate the other children he played with. 'I endeavour as much as possible,' she said, 'to counteract this tendency, and he is aware of his failing and sometimes I can see that he strives to subdue it, but we have frequent battles about it.' Willing acceptance of parental authority was the ideal. One child carried from England in his 'Copybook' an inscription beginning: 'The good boy loves his parents, minds what they say to him, and tries to please them. When they deny him what he wants he does not sulk or look angry'. Less literate parents probably expected the same obedience and may have extracted it more brutally. However, the children of the poor—the boys at least—had an earlier prospect of independence.

THE GOOD BOY

The good boy loves his parents, minds what they say to him, and tries to please them. When they deny him what he wants he does not sulk or look angry. He loves his teachers: he likes to learn his book; he is not idle. He is very kind to his brothers and sisters, to his play fellows, and even to dumb creatures. He does not fight, quarrel, or call names. He does not speak rudely to anyone. If he sees anyone lame, crooked, or old, he does not laugh at or mock him. He does not tell a lie. If he has done anything wrong he does not deny it; he says he is very sorry and will try to do so no more. He never takes any thing that does not belong to him, nor meddle without leave.

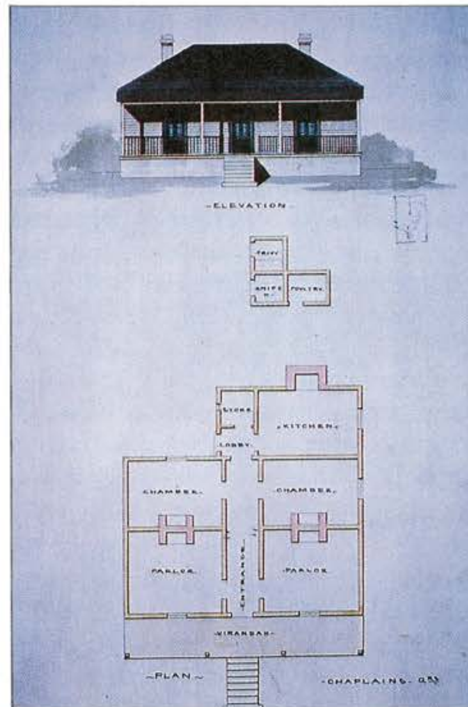
From the cover of Arthur Willmott's first 'Copybook', used in England in 1835.
Willmott *Family papers* MSS 26169/2, item 1, ML

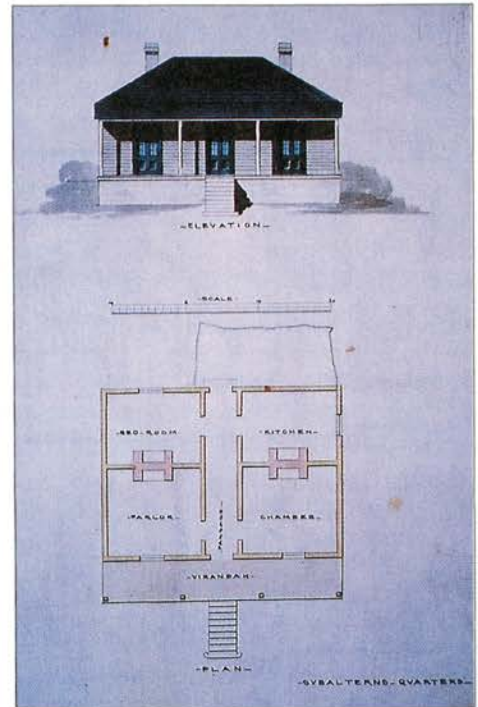
The children of the poor lived lives very little segregated from their parents. Houses of even the moderately well-to-do had only three or four rooms at most. At Camden Park the Macarthurs offered their tenant families cottages with 'a kitchen, two sleeping rooms, a small pantry, and a verandah in front'—generous accommodation at the time for two adults and half a dozen children. No wonder



House designs from Van Diemen's Land.

Constables' huts at Port Arthur and elsewhere on the Tasman Peninsula. Constables belonged to a very inferior rank in society—many were convicts—and their accommodation needs were considered to be minimal. Among the small farming population of the four colonies, huts like these might be regarded as perfectly adequate even for men with families.
ARCHIVES OFFICE OF TASMANIA





Left.
Chaplain's house, Port Arthur. Note the outhouse with privy, knife room and place for hanging poultry.
ARCHIVES OFFICE OF TASMANIA

Right.
Subaltern officer's quarters. A cottage for a gentleman without a family.
ARCHIVES OFFICE OF TASMANIA

they wrote home to friends in England that they lived like 'little gentlefolk'. Adults and children necessarily ate, slept and washed together. Bedrooms were usually divided into male and female, and adults and children of the same sex usually shared beds. The children of the rich also had little space to themselves. Old and young had to share bedrooms, and often beds. As a child, William Macarthur himself had always slept with an older sister. But adults lived in quite a different part of the house. Despite the tendency of colonial matrons to be their own nursemaids, their children led quite separate lives from those of their parents, especially their fathers.

Among the well-to-do childhood was special in ways that did not exist for the children of the poor. The poor had to grow up more quickly and become working

members of the family at an age when rich children still devoted themselves to 'childish' activities. Rich children dined separately from their parents—on the same plain food eaten by the household servants. They played separately, with expensive toys. Poor boys had few toys, and their games were like those of their older brothers and cousins with whom they had begun to work—kicking footballs, wrestling, running, swimming and a kind of cricket. Poor girls did not need dolls, although, if they were like their counterparts in England, some may have had one. But with younger brothers and sisters to care for, their play was already work.

Both rich and poor were prepared in childhood for adulthood in the social world of their parents. The children of the educated studied with tutors and schoolmasters, preparing themselves for a highly educated adulthood; poor boys and girls worked long hours to assist their parents, learning the skills of adult labourers or house servants. The little book learning they needed could be picked up by a year or two at school or even at Sunday school. The sons of the literate needed many years of formal learning to acquire the same culture as their parents. Often they were sent back to England to complete their education, remaining all the while dependent on their parents. The education of well-to-do colonial girls was less rigorous. It was directed just as surely as that of labourers' daughters to keeping house—though at a different social level.

Between the casual learning on the job of manual skills and the formal, segregated education of the gentleman, there was another kind of education—the apprenticeship of the skilled tradesman. Many of those apprenticed in the convict colonies were in fact orphans—at least as the term was used in the colony. Children placed in the male and female orphan schools normally graduated from these institutions by being apprenticed until they were 21 years of age. Boys received £2 after seven years of unpaid labour, with the consolation of having learnt a marketable skill. Girls received 30s, and usually no skills at all. Girls could escape their drudgery by marrying, though at some risk to their 30s, but boys who broke their apprenticeship were pursued with the full force of the law.

Apprenticeship under these circumstances was a mixed blessing, as Martin Quinn discovered. He was 'orphaned' in the sense that one of his parents was a convict under sentence, and this was probably the case with most of the several hundred children in the orphan schools. Some were abandoned, destitute or illegitimate, but most had at least one parent unable to support them. Quinn was native born—a currency lad, seventeen years old in 1838. Both his parents had arrived as convicts, and Martin was second in a family of three. After several brushes with the law, his father had been sentenced to work in the town gang at Parramatta, leaving his family without financial support. In 1829 Margaret Quinn had been forced to place her youngest son in the male orphan school, and in March of the following year she reluctantly parted with Martin, aged eight. He was a plain child, tall and thin with sharp features and weak blue eyes. The official who admitted him noted beside his name in the register, 'No charm'.

The Quinns may have been in a position to support Martin by the time he turned fourteen, but officials were always reluctant to release children into the custody of convict parents. They suspected that parents came seeking children only when they were old enough to be useful at home, and preferred to apprentice them to one of the many employers anxious for their services. Martin Quinn and two other boys were apprenticed to Samuel Onions, an ironmonger of King Street, Sydney. Onions taught the boys the trades of tinsmith and blacksmith, and for nearly three years they made goods for his shop in return for bed and board. In 1838 Onions was convicted of perjury and sentenced to a term on Norfolk Island, leaving the boys unemployed and homeless.

A gentleman's family. The children of the rich learn refinement through the example of their parents. Here a small boy is taught to admire the romantic view over Port Jackson, though perhaps he is mainly interested in the sailing boat. The less refined figure seated on Mrs Macquarie's Chair has his eye on the family itself. Hand-coloured lithograph by Augustus Earle, 1830.
NATIONAL LIBRARY

THE THOUGHTLESS CHILD

I am my father's only child,
For none has he beside me;
Though many say I'm rather wild,
And evil will betide me.

Yet what of that? I'm in my teens
And frolic, fun and pleasure
My watchwords are while I have means,
And Pa prescribes to measure.

My sober days will come I know,
But then, who into future peeps?
Old father time is very slow
And on his broken crutches creeps.

To meet should he and I by chance,
I'll tell you what I mean to do;
Ask the old gent to take a dance,
And be as gay as I am too.

Imagine then, his looks so grave,
Then gayer smiles will I put on;
My court'sy drop, his pardon crave
And bid old father time creep on.

C.

THE SERIOUS YOUTH

With all its cares and toils how soon
O'er me a busier world will wake,
And ere my harp is half in tune,
Its strings may break.

The summer of my days is nigh,
The buds of youth have opened now
The cypress with the rose will vie
Fit time to vow

To tread some path 'tis time I chose,
With many a swerve the paths to twain;
And if the narrow path I lose
'Tis hard to gain

The right path's fairly, plainly traced,
And when begun 'tis easily trod;
And though my years run out in haste,
They lead to God.

The path is narrow, but 'tis straight,
'Tis bright, 'tis sure and peace attends;
Here is its beauty, hence its weight,
See where it ends.

S.

Two poems from the *Port Phillip Gazette*, 12 and 19 Jan 1839.

Imprisonment for Onions meant freedom for the three boys. They took it that their adulthood and independence had arrived, found jobs as blacksmiths around King Street and probably earned their long-awaited £2 in twice as many weeks. But the orphan school was not done with them. Hearing of their freedom, the master of the school, Richard Sadlier, tried to bring them back to have them reapprenticed. Unable to find them, he sent the police after them and published their descriptions in the *Government Gazette* to warn people not to harbour the fugitives.

Quinn's two friends were arrested and reapprenticed. Quinn, more canny, fled to Mittagong, south of Sydney, and worked there as a blacksmith. Threatened by advertisements in the *Gazette*, he finally wrote to Sadlier explaining his position. The master wrote to the nearest magistrate, asking him to 'keep the boy under the eye of the police', and recommended Quinn to a wheelwright at Parramatta who wanted an apprentice blacksmith. Martin Quinn still had four years to serve for the crime of being an orphan, and a master taking him on at this stage of his apprenticeship had no legal obligation to pay him.

The movement from being a child in colonial society to being adult was not clearly defined. Legally, the criminal court regarded a boy as a man and a girl as a woman at fourteen, or even younger if they could be shown to be fully responsible for their misdeeds. In civil cases, however, the law held that parents were responsible for their children's acts and that children had no separate legal rights until the age of twenty-one. Wives stood in the same relationship to their husbands. The only civil contracts binding on children were those of employment, such as apprenticeship and indenture.

Officials counting and cataloguing the population sometimes classified all those under twelve as children. Sometimes fourteen was the dividing line. Children were apprenticed from the orphan schools at fourteen, earlier if they were tall and strong. Children under sentence from Britain were kept in separate institutions until they were fourteen, longer if they were small for their age. Sixteen-year-old labourers were called 'men', though not paid as such. But seventeen-year-old Martin Quinn was a 'boy' to Richard Sadlier, and 'boys' of the same age and older filled the senior classes of the boarding schools of the colony. Adulthood seems really to have been a matter of economic independence—and the moment at which children could become self-supporting varied with the level of training they were expected to complete. A labourer might well have been considered grown at sixteen, a young printer when he became a journeyman at 21, a lawyer not until he graduated and began taking briefs in his late twenties.

Two of the three daughters of Richard Jones, of Darlinghurst, Sydney, a member of the Legislative Council of New South Wales, and one of the colony's leading merchants. These are probably the eldest two, Mary Australia Jones, aged fourteen, but with her hair already up, and Louisa Alexandrina Jones, aged twelve. Pencil drawing by S. Elyard, 1839.
MITCHELL LIBRARY

Most colonial girls became economically independent of their families only when they married. Girls from different kinds of families married at different ages, with labourers' daughters marrying earliest and gentlemen's daughters marrying latest. The age range was not as wide as that among the men. Most girls married between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five. The men they married were usually three and sometimes six years older than they were, with labourers generally being closest in age to their wives. Among a good number of labouring couples, the wife was older than the husband.

Marriage made a girl into a woman. For some girls in the colony there was an important intermediate step—from the entirely sheltered status of a child to the more public position of a young lady. The daughters of grocers and farmers had

Emma Lord, daughter of Edward Lord, one of the largest landowners in Van Diemen's Land. Though born in the colony, she lived with her family in England after 1828. They returned to Hobart Town briefly in 1838–39, when the picture was painted.

Emma is here about nineteen years old. The glowing, yet simple elegance of her dress makes it suitable for evening wear. She probably brought it from London. We may guess that she was much admired by girls of her rank and age in Hobart Town. Oil by T. Bock, 1838–39.

TASMANIAN MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY

no need to mark the moment at which they began to mix freely with people who were neither family nor neighbours; they had been doing it in shops and markets most of their lives. But the daughters of gentlemen ideally met no-one during their childhood who was not a relative or a close family friend. They were shielded from contact with strangers—people to whom they had not been introduced—until they were of an age when they were ready to make themselves available for marriage. Once again this might depend partly on physical development. A young lady's appearance at her first public ball, dressed in muslin, with hair up and skirts down, not only launched her in polite society but made the unspoken announcement that she had entered the marriage market.

Mary Phoebe and Emily Broughton, the daughters of the Church of England Bishop of Australia, 'came out' at the Queen's Birthday ball given by Governor and Lady Gipps at government house on 24 May 1838. Mary Phoebe was seventeen years old, Emily a year or so younger. The event was the first large public entertainment given by Sir George Gipps since his arrival in New South Wales, and it celebrated Queen Victoria's first birthday since her accession to the throne. Enthusiasm for the nineteen-year-old Queen was high in the colony, and her delicate features and demure hairstyles—as far as they could be assessed from the out-of-date lithographs available—were an inspiration to all young women who wished to be in fashion.

All the respectable part of Sydney was preparing for the Queen's birthday that May. Shopkeepers and businessmen made illuminations to decorate their premises. A regatta and carnival were planned for the afternoon of 24 May, and citizens who could not quite aspire to an invitation to the governor's ball arranged their own celebrations. Mr Clark of Macquarie Street made a point of advertising in the *Commercial Journal* that his new dancing academy taught all the dances now fashionable in Paris, London and Edinburgh, including quadrilles, waltzes, gallopedes, mazurkas and hornpipes. Mrs Broughton took her daughters on 3 May to consult Madame Wechinger, the fashionable milliner and dressmaker of Castlereagh Street, who numbered among her clients wealthy and powerful families such as the Macarthurs, the Burtons and the Mitchells. Her dresses were considered 'not a whit inferior to those of the Madras establishment'. On 8 May the girls called again 'to have our muslin gowns fitted'.

The day of the Queen's birthday was a holiday, and banks, public offices and many shops were closed. The people of Sydney were entertained by a parade of the garrison troops, drums beating and colours flying, and, in the afternoon, by the regatta, crammed with gaily decorated boats. The boat races were clearly visible from the upstairs window of the Broughtons' mansion, Tusculum, on the heights of Woolloomooloo. But attention inside was focused on more important matters. Two older friends of the sisters—one recently married, the other about to be—had come to put their hair up into the side curls and back ringlets, still as fashionable in Sydney as it had been in England in the 1820s. They might have been surprised to learn that the fashion in London, shared by their young Queen, was for side plaits and plaited bun.

After nine o'clock in the evening Mrs Broughton and her two daughters left by carriage for government house in company with their neighbours, the Macquoids. The newspapers reported, with a little loyal exaggeration, that 'Sydney was ablaze, a flood of light poured down the streets in all directions and revelry and music were heard on all hands'. The unaccustomed illumination came from festoons of coloured lamps decorating businesses and shops. Motifs included the crown, the letters 'VR', the rose, the thistle and the shamrock. The Custom House Inn had created a model ship with masts and yards hung with lanterns. The Oddfellows

hailed the Queen with their familiar hand and heart symbol surrounded by stars. Government house was illuminated inside and out. The newspapers reported that the guests were 'numerous and brilliant', and that Sir George and Lady Gipps appeared to be in excellent health and spirits. Reginald Gipps, their small son, according to another guest, 'ran about from one room to another as if the whole ceremony had been got up for him'.

Dancing began at 10 pm. Young men circulated, seeking introductions to young ladies with whom they wished to dance. Etiquette made it difficult to refuse to dance with anyone to whom one had been properly introduced. Mary Phoebe's diary shows that on this occasion she and her sister remained safely within a circle of family friends. The dancing partners listed in her diary were young bachelors whose families were friendly with the Broughtons, and she had already danced with some of them at private parties. Thomas Hyacinth Macquoid, whom Mary Phoebe fondly called 'Hya', had travelled from London with the Broughton family to join his parents in 1836. Frederick Perry, with whom she danced twice, was a close friend and frequent visitor at Tusculum. Aged nineteen, he worked as a junior clerk in the office of his father, the acting surveyor-general. Robert Mackenzie, aged 26, was a well-to-do squatter closely related to a Scottish baronet. John Macleay and John Campbell were both sons of powerful families with whom the Broughtons might happily join in marriage.

Festivities were still in progress when the Broughtons left at 2 am. Mrs Broughton's comment in her diary was somewhat more animated than usual: 'May 24th: Our dear girls made their first appearance at the ball and enjoyed the evening very much'.

COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE

With my Idalia, Oh! how soon
The rapture-pinion'd moments fly.
'Tis morn—*we* scarce seem *met*—and noon
And stars are in the sky.
Then, ere for the long night we part,
Fondly unsatisfied of heart,
I turn, and oft I turn again,
With dazzling eye, and eddying brain,
To strive—how vainly?—to discover
How much, how faithfully I love her . . .

Oh! were to *words* new meaning strong,
An all-informing radiance given—
Or did I know the blessed tongue
That seraphs speak in heaven—
Or could, with limner art, my eye
Give colour to th'out-gushing joy,
Give, starlite in its orbs, to burn,
The silent spirits nameles yearn—
I then might—scarcely then!—discover
How much, how faithfully I love her.

Charles Harpur penned these lines in the full flush of love and poetic inspiration, and sent them off to Sydney's *Literary News* in January 1838. Their picture of a man overwhelmed by rapturous, timeless passion was typical of contemporary poetic sentiment. Like all such Romantic effusions, the lines centre on their author.

Harpur's self-absorption when expressing love for another human being, was mute testimony to woman's supporting role, even as the object of a man's passion. 'Idalia' herself is irrelevant: the burden of the poem is the emotion she arouses in the poet.

The conceit of the male heart overcome by irresistible female charms was commonplace in educated conversation. Even a 39-year-old man of very serious mien might be accused of having 'a streak from Aurora's blush coloured robe' across his cheek at the mention of his bride-to-be. When the *Southern Australian* announced a forthcoming 'Bachelors Ball' in August it expressed in coy language the commonplace affectation that portrayed men as hapless victims in matters of courtship and marriage. The editor, a married man, anticipated the inevitable defeat of the bachelors of South Australia 'before the indignant and irresistible glances shot from a pair of sparkling blue or black eyes'. As his wit gathered force the glances became 'admirably directed vollies fired from those formidable engines of love's parti-coloured artillery'. Finally, in a climax of confused images, each bachelor became 'a moth, blindly approaching that brilliant, but fatal flame, which puts a period to its existence'. Like all conceits this stood reality on its head. Far from being the aggressors in love, respectable colonial girls were not expected to take the initiative in courtship. In this case as in all else women were to be submissive to men. Their charms had to be exercised modestly and innocently, without acknowledgement of the sexual power that charged the editor's cumbersome wit.

In casting women as aggressors, the *Southern Australian* disguised the fact that the 'Bachelors Ball' was being organised by the respectable young men of Adelaide, in the hope of finding wives. At three to two the proportion of men to women in South Australia was not so high as in the other colonies. But without the support of activities organised by friends and family, the problems of meeting a suitable wife were still formidable. Few young men were as bold, or as desperate, as the gentleman who advertised in the *South Australian Gazette* under the heading 'MATRIMONY':

> TO RESPECTABLE YOUNG FEMALES OF INDUSTRIOUS HABITS An active and sober Young Man, of limited means but promising prospects, is extremely desirous of meeting with a Female of the above description who may wish to secure the comforts of domestic happiness and enjoy the independence of the matrimonial state. By addressing a note directed *X.Y.Z., South Australian Gazette Office*, mentionning where an interview might take place, the lady may depend upon the *utmost* and *most honorable secrecy* being observed. N.B.—The age not under 20 or above 30 years.

Yet perhaps the inducements he offered—'the comforts of domestic happiness' and 'the independence of the matrimonial state', together with his personal qualifications of sobriety, energy and 'promising prospects'—may have weighed more heavily with colonial women than any amount of poetic passion. Men took the initiative in courting but, with so many suitors to choose from, women had considerable power. Throughout the four colonies their preferences shaped the patterns of marriage.

In South Australia the population was growing more rapidly than anywhere else except Port Phillip and, unlike Port Phillip, most of the newcomers came direct from England as assisted immigrants. In April 1838 the white inhabitants of South Australia numbered about three thousand, about four-fifths of them labouring men and women who had come with free passages. Vessels arrived thereafter at the rate of two or three a month, usually carrying more people of the same kind and doubling the population before the end of the year. The South Australian colonisation commissioners in London took care to send assisted female immigrants

in numbers more or less matching those of the male immigrants, and the relatively small number of children among them, about one to every woman, suggests that many were single. Certainly weddings were the order of the day. The Church of England chaplain—who had sole authority to register marriages—celebrated 75 weddings during the year.

The reminiscences of a man who sailed for South Australia in 1838 as an assisted immigrant show the form of courtship that preceded some of these marriages. Charles French Folland was born and bred in Barnstable, Devon, and there he wooed and won Charlotte Vickery. He was a housepainter, and she was apprenticed to a milliner. Both were active members of the local Wesleyan Methodist chapel, which probably meant that their behaviour was a little more formal and circumspect than that of assisted immigrants with less demanding religious commitments. Charles recalled that he first noticed Charlotte in the chapel choir. She was dressed 'very plain and neat', with a coalscuttle bonnet and side ringlets. Her sweet singing voice led him to seek an introduction through a female friend, only to find that every time they met Charlotte took care that the friend was also present. Charles was attracted to Charlotte by her modest dress and demeanour; now he resented her modest behaviour. He asked her permission to walk her home from work each evening, only to be told: 'I am too young yet to walk with any young man in particular'.

Charles now shunned her company altogether, until one day she accosted him in the street. Holding out her hand and smiling she said, 'What a stranger you are.' 'Whose fault is that,' he replied, and suggested that he might see her after chapel that evening. She promised nothing, but was waiting for him all the same. She also let him meet her on weekdays, after she had finished work. When he 'thought it time to pop the question' he bailed her up in a narrow passageway and would not let her pass without an answer. She refused to say yes or no. Finally he lost his temper, as he later recalled:

> taking off my hat I threw it violently on the floor, saying 'You would not serve a dog so.' As I stooped to pick up my hat, she was off in a trice, saying as she entered her door, 'Has you'd have it.' I was satisfied and the next time we met we confessed our mutual love.

Here was male aggression and female modesty, charged with male passion and a mutual declaration of affection. But what had brought them together? In English towns like Barnstable people expected to marry near neighbours—people with interests like their own. Amid the associations of neighbourhood and chapel Charlotte's modest dress and sweet voice had convinced Folland that he must have her and no other. We cannot tell how much choice Charlotte felt she had in the matter—though clearly she had decided not to let him get away.

Passage to South Australia did not necessarily enlarge the choice enjoyed by women like Charlotte Vickery. Of the 75 women married by the Church of England clergyman in 1838, about half had been three months or less in the colony, and some only the few weeks necessary for the clergyman to call the banns before the wedding. Migrants who had come together from England were among those most anxious to marry. One group of four young men and five young women travelled together from Chichester in Sussex, arriving in June: three brothers, a brother and sister, two sisters and two other girls. Out of these nine, one couple married in July and another two in August. Two of the women found husbands beyond the group in August, leaving only one man unwed. Bonds established in Chichester must have played some part in these marriages, but the voyage was also important. A number of immigrant women married sailors whom they met on

board. The rhythm of life on board ship, as within villages in England, might establish intimacies and obligations which made marriage afterwards almost a matter of course.

In another South Australian marriage—one conducted on Kangaroo Island according to Lutheran rites—the bride probably felt she had no choice at all. All concerned were new German immigrants, who brought with them a particular sense of duty in such matters. Friedericke Christian was an unmarried girl when Friederich Kleeman's first wife died a few days before their ship came to anchor at Kangaroo Island, and she had cared for his small children for the remainder of the voyage. She had planned to marry one of the other members of the party, but Kleeman's need was so obvious that she married him soon after coming ashore. The other man agreed that she had done her duty—evidence of a spirit of self-denial that Charles Folland would have been unlikely to have shown where Charlotte Vickery was concerned.

Among British settlers affection seems to have been given more importance, though we usually hear of it only when it was thwarted. John Parker, a sailor, determined to break his contract and leave his ship, marry an immigrant girl and set up as a farmer in South Australia. 'I have ... made up my mind,' he said, 'never to go to Sea any more, and would soon suffer any punishment ... than to be torn from my beloved partner.' The woman herself appealed several times to the captain and Parker wrote to the authorities in Adelaide, apparently without success, because within a few days he had escaped overboard and was caught ashore. He spent at least six weeks in gaol, and afterwards seems to have left with his ship. His affection for his 'beloved partner' may have been related more to his determination to give up the sea and go farming than to her more immediate charms. His intended wife was, as he put it, 'a respectable virtuous female', and farmers must marry.

Immigrant women who waited a little longer to marry appear to have been consciously exercising a freedom of choice which they would not have enjoyed in England. There was a wider range of men available in the colony than in the limited world of a British village or a migrant ship. About thirty of the women marrying in Adelaide took husbands who had not arrived in South Australia as assisted immigrants. These bridegrooms included men from Van Diemen's Land and a bullock driver from Sydney, probably an overlander with Hawdon or one of the parties that followed him, who took his new bride to live in the Tiers Ranges south of Adelaide and still beyond the boundaries of settlement. Women who waited had to work as house servants or nurses, for no other female employment was available. When 'X.Y.Z.' promised 'the independence of the matrimonial state' to the respectable young women who might answer his advertisement, it was probably independence from domestic service that he had in mind.

Courting couples could be prompted to marry by the knowledge that a baby was on its way. On this point the behaviour of the South Australian immigrants makes interesting comparison with native-born and convict couples in the older colonies. We have already seen that the reluctance of some colonists to baptise their babies makes all birth statistics very doubtful in this period. Of those South Australians who did choose to baptise their children, a much smaller percentage conceived them before marriage than did people arranging christenings in the convict colonies: about 10 per cent in South Australia, something approaching 20 per cent in New South Wales and rather more in Van Diemen's Land. The corresponding

Courting couple. Though they are placed in romantic surroundings, a young man and woman sit at a thoroughly chaste distance from each other. Pencil, attributed to Thomas Chapman, undated.
TASMANIAN MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY

figures for England are very much higher again. More than 50 per cent of English and Welsh brides in some West Country districts seem to have gone pregnant to the altar during the 1830s.

These differences may be due largely to better registration of births in England, but for all that the South Australian figures tell us something. Given that the habit of baptism apparently remained stronger in Adelaide than in the east, it seems likely that premarital chastity was a more important rule in the courting game for respectable immigrants than it was either for those who stayed behind in England or for convicts and their native-born children in the Australian colonies.

Attitudes to chastity have to be understood in the context of longstanding ideas in England and in the convict colonies to the legal niceties of marriage properly celebrated and registered in church. The high rate of premarital pregnancy in rural England for this period indicates neither promiscuity nor a denial of the importance of marriage. It does show that little weight was attached to the order of events in courtship and marriage. Couples might sleep together before marrying in church, or after it; the decisive event was neither of these, but the couple's private commitment to each other, when, in Folland's terms, they 'confessed their mutual love'. As the labouring classes moved into the English cities this rural informality became, with clergy in short supply or actively disliked, a positive avoidance of legal marriage. Convicts, who had been mostly city dwellers, had carried these habits to the colonies, where marriage was in any case made difficult by legal and religious impediments. In 1806 Governor King had noted that the great majority of women in New South Wales 'cohabited', though with one man, as if they were married.

Cohabitation was treated as marriage by most people in those earlier years, including some gentlemen in need of the comforts of domesticity. An observer wrote of Van Diemen's Land that 'many of the officers of government made no secret of their relation to women whom they adopted as mistresses, and sometimes respected as wives'—to the material benefit of the women concerned. When such

Aboriginal husband and wife. Cranky Tom and Dilberree, of the Yarrahapinni, a clan of the Ngaku, a coastal people who occupied an area north of Sydney between the Nambucca and Macleay rivers. Lithograph from C. Hodgkinson, Australia from Port Macquarie to Moreton Bay, *London 1841. The wife is shown as a fish gatherer and the husband as a hunter—a fair account of the division of labour among a family living by the sea. At first sight the couple seem to be about to embrace. But a closer inspection shows that the woman has no right arm. Could it be that the artist first aimed to draw Cranky Tom with his arm around Dilberree's shoulders while she moves to clasp her husband's waist? If so, he changed his mind in the interest of decency: Dilberree's forearm has been transferred to her husband, and a waddee placed in it, while she has been left with one arm only.*

women entered informal unions with men of their own rank they were usually stable affairs, preceded by courtship and sealed by the woman's acceptance of personal gifts such as clothing.

From the 1820s clergymen and others tried to encourage legal marriage in the interests of remaking colonial society in their own strict image. It is hard to measure their success. Referring to what he and others like him called 'concubinage', in 1837 the Reverend J.D. Lang told a select committee of the British House of Commons that

> reputable men, who constitute but a small portion of that population, but who have been honestly endeavouring to put the obnoxious practice down, have acquired a much greater degree of influence in the community in late years than they had previously.

Despite their efforts, Lang believed that a clear majority of settlers still preferred cohabitation to holy wedlock. The Reverend William Ullathorne, the Catholic vicar-general, was more optimistic, or perhaps more partisan. He told the same committee that although 'there was a great deal of concubinage when I first arrived in the colony, in the early part of the year 1832', nevertheless, 'in consequence of the exertions made by Catholic clergy ... I believe that state of things has diminished very considerably'. Another witness before the committee, James Mudie, denied any improvement; he reported that even gentlemen still 'have their ladies, who take the head of the table; ... they drive them out in public, and some of them are married men'—married to someone else, that is.

Mudie exaggerated. The tone of educated opinion had changed during the 1820s and 1830s. Gentlemen keeping mistresses no longer acknowledged them publicly, or suffered censure if they did. In chapter 8 we meet a landowner named William Bucknell, who found himself much embarrassed in 1838 for allowing to his housekeeper, Susanna Barker, a wife's privileges in the management of his convict servants. Among the first rank of colonial gentlemen only one, Sir John Jamison, still lived openly with his 'housekeeper', Mary Griffiths.

The changing morality also affected the lives of convicts and labourers. Elderly convict couples long cohabiting without the benefit of clergy remained unmoved by sermons they did not hear and editorials they could not read. Church weddings seem to have become a normal part of wooing for their children and for younger convicts arriving in the colonies during the 1830s, but even among this new generation religion was not a principal cause of reform. Only Ullathorne's Catholics seem to have been responding directly to the strictures of their clergy. Protestants did not even bother to baptise their legitimately conceived children. But other factors contributed to bring men and women to the altar. Opportunities for women to do paid work were shrinking rapidly, at least partly because it was becoming less respectable for women to run their own businesses. Immigrant labourers from rural England, who were generally more circumspect than the convicts, may have brought new ideas about the normality of church marriages. And certainly administrative practices worked to make marriage the regular form of association for male and female convicts under sentence.

The way in which officials dealt with convicts wishing to marry has left us evidence about the expectations of courting convicts and their native-born and immigrant partners. More than a third of the 900 or so marriages in New South Wales in 1838 involved at least one convict still under sentence, and in Van

Diemen's Land at least one convict was a partner in nearly half of about 420 marriages. Marriage was for convicts a privilege to be earned, and all these weddings required official permission. In New South Wales convicts had to persuade a clergyman to apply on their behalf to the government; in Van Diemen's Land they had to apply themselves to both a clergyman and the authorities, and letters were often written by paid scribes to a set formula. The evidence of motive was therefore presented in a form liable to appeal to officials and clergy.

The evidence is more directly about men and men's desires. Men initiated the courtships and did most of the explaining to the clergymen. In any case, women did not have to argue hard for permission to marry, marriage being generally understood as the most efficient way of controlling female convicts.

The image presented to the authorities fully endorsed their vision of marriage as a means of reform. A hopeful bridegroom recommended himself by stating his belief that 'to insure a comfortable home and a creditable livelihood, he could not take a more commendable step than marrying a careful and industrious woman'. Intending husbands were always represented as sober, industrious and well conducted, intended wives as good managers, good businesswomen and sometimes good mothers. No-one was ever represented as the object of passions or desire, though some of the set pieces in Van Diemen's Land wrote of 'mutual affection'.

Some marriages certainly arose out of affection, but a large number were probably just as businesslike and prudential as the applications suggest. Some applications were refused, usually because officials found that one of the petitioners was already married. But more failed to go to the altar because one or both of the parties changed their minds during the short time—sometimes only a few days in New South Wales, longer in Van Diemen's Land—it took to get official permission. In New South Wales in 1838 about two in seven couples applying withdrew, in Van Diemen's Land about one in three. The habit was not restricted to convicts; throughout the whole working population couples tended to marry for the kind of reasons that could easily lead to a last-minute change. In a few cases we can see convicts who had applied to the government backing out of one marriage in order to make another, more prudential one. Clearly a large number of the couples who came to clergymen to be married were not moved by any deep and binding affection.

Many courtships were too short to allow for any but a most cursory acquaintance. About one in ten of the men marrying in Sydney came from upcountry, beyond the settled districts, areas where men outnumbered women by about ten to one. Unable to spend long away from work, these men often married in haste. The process was very different from British tradition, by which couples became familiar within small communities, sometimes over many years. The colonial practice fascinated some educated observers, who frequently wrote of the musters at the female factories at which a man from upcountry would choose a suitable bride from among the assembled women. James Mudie told the story of a ticket-of-leave man who called at his establishment one day on his way to the female factory at Newcastle. On being introduced to one of Mudie's convict women, he decided to look no further, and asked Mudie's permission to marry her. When Mudie drew his attention to the young woman's 'interesting condition', the man welcomed the prospect of a child to help him on the farm. At least, he said, he could see what he was getting.

Others wished to avoid the factory and its associations. James O'Hare was a ticket-of-leave holder from Maitland in the Hunter valley. Like many of his type he wanted a bride from among the young immigrant women who were arriving in increasing numbers in New South Wales. He asked his master, Houston

Mitchell, to assist him, and Mitchell was happy to help. He sent O'Hare to Sydney on a three-day pass, with a letter to the clerk of the council, William Macpherson, asking him to find a suitable bride. Macpherson selected Mary Fox, a Catholic like O'Hare. She had worked for him as a servant, and he recommended the couple to the priest:

> I have no doubt I think that she will make him a good wife, and Mr. Mitchell says he will make a good husband and has a well stocked small farm to enable him to maintain a wife.

Macpherson urged haste, as O'Hare had to return immediately to Maitland. But in this case no marriage took place. Unlike Mudie's pregnant maidservant, and the women mustered at the factories, Mary Fox may well have felt that she had no need to marry the first man who came along.

Marriage brought a clear advantage to a woman under sentence, because she was automatically assigned to her husband, exchanging penal discipline for the marital variety. Some husbands took advantage of their wives' convict status to keep them in order, occasionally sending them before a magistrate to be recommitted to the female factory. But most seem to have treated them as well or as badly as any other wife. Marriage might also be the gateway to even greater liberty. Convict women who became widows, or those who ran away from their husbands, could enjoy complete freedom even while technically under sentence, as the authorities often chose to ignore them.

Some women probably married simply to be free of convict restraint. Penelope Burke, assigned to a landowner on the upper Hunter River, married a fellow servant, a free man, and afterwards refused to work for her old master 'on the ground that she is now a free woman, and [she] says that she only married to be free'. But most seem to have looked to long-term advantage as well. Early in the year Joanna Callaghan gave up a convict bridegroom for a free one within a month. There was no advantage in marrying another convict, unless he was nearly due for his ticket of leave. Very few women did so.

Native-born women behaved much like their convict mothers. It has often been noted that they tended to marry ex-convicts and men on tickets of leave, unlike their brothers, who rarely married convict women. Partly it was a question of age. Native-born women usually married at about twenty, native-born men at least three years older. Convict women rarely arrived in the colony much before they were about twenty-three, making them too old by colonial standards for native-born men. But native-born girls often married men very much older than themselves. Parents seem to have encouraged daughters to prefer financial security to the charms of a youthful husband.

Convict women regularly twisted the inconsistency between their status as convicts and their status as wives to their own advantage. Both men and women also showed foresight and intelligence in circumventing official obstacles to marriage. Convicts already married had to demonstrate to the satisfaction of officials that the partner they had left in Britain had died, before their marriage applications could be approved. It was the usual practice to forward with their applications letters from home announcing the sad event. One such came in early 1838 from a convict in the Hunter valley, telling that his wife was 'no more':

> She fell ill at Woolwich and was removed by an order to her parish at Barkly Mospe [presumably, Berkeley Mapes in Gloucestershire], and died March the 20th 1835 the reason we did [not] write to let you know about it was that you awas so unhappy at the time and we thought she was not worth writing about.

The letter was dated Wimeswould, Leicestershire, 3 September 1837, and postmarked London, 5 September. And here the chief clerk in the office of principal superintendent of convicts, noted a discrepancy. 'The question is', he wrote in a memo, 'how did it get from Wimeswould to London?' Two days was too short. But he knew the answer:

> The truth is, the sheet of paper was folded up in the shape of a letter, given to some person leaving this Colony to drop it in the London Post Office and after its arrival here the writing was executed in order that the Dates may correspond.

Sometimes the gap between penal discipline and the official faith in marriage as a civilising institution was wide enough for a convict couple to slip through and escape. The courtship of Cornelius Murray and Mary Freeman celebrates the triumph of affection over hypocrisy.

Murray and Freeman both came to New South Wales with life sentences. By early 1838 Murray had served long enough, as a well-behaved man, to be entitled to his ticket of leave. He was 32 and Mary Freeman 23. They were assigned to a couple named De Metz, who kept a school for young ladies near Sydney. In March 1838 they went together to Mrs De Metz and asked for her permission to marry. Their mistress, taking note of the fact that the woman was, as she put it, 'in the family way', replied, 'No, she would encourage virtue, but not vice'. She had waited to be asked, she said, so that they would be forced to admit that Murray was the father. Mary replied: '*he is, I do not deny it.*'

Murray was working as a free man, but his ticket of leave was not yet formally gazetted, a fact that gave his master some hold over him. The next day De Metz asked Murray whether he knew about the pregnancy. His liaison with Mary amounted to misbehaviour and was a significant blot on his record.

Sensing his predicament, Murray denied that it had anything to do with him. He then asked his master for his wages, was denied, and took his leave without permission. De Metz took him to court, hoping to have his ticket cancelled. But by now Mary had come to understand the rules of the game, and denied ever having said that Murray was the father of her unborn child. Murray also denied it before the police magistrate. This was enough for the magistrate. He was released, with orders to proceed to the district for which his ticket of leave was issued.

Very soon after this Mary Freeman was sent to the female factory at Parramatta to have her baby, with orders to return to her present service when it was born. Murray did not proceed to his district at all, but went to the factory several times to see her. On 21 March they applied to the government through the Catholic priest at Parramatta for permission to marry. Since Mary had temporarily left the service of the De Metz family, she did not need their permission, as she would otherwise have done. When De Metz heard what had happened, he wrote to the governor that in view of

> the gross and immoral act having been committed by my *own assigned servants* and under my *own roof* . . . I am justified in a hope for the sake of religion and moral principle, that His excellency will not permit such a marriage to be solemnized.

'I am not sure,' remarked Sir George Gipps, 'that the cause of religion or morality will be served by preventing it.' The couple were accordingly married on 5 May at Parramatta. The delay of six weeks was no doubt caused by Mary's confinement. The baby, assuming it lived, does not appear to have been christened.

Like that of the sailor and would-be farmer, John Parker, the case of Mary Freeman and Cornelius Murray reminds us that love and commitment come to

the notice of the historian only when they are under threat. Clearly prudence was accepted as a good basis for marriage equally among convict and immigrant couples. Just as clearly affection was a more powerful motive for some. But it was not a necessary one. The differences in expectation and behaviour between convict and immigrant were slight. Respectable immigrants courting may have talked more about love and slept together less; convicts probably talked about it less and slept together more.

Masters, mistresses and clergymen generally approved of this balance between prudence and affection. Prudence was looked for first, and prospective brides and grooms who changed partners for prudential reasons were seen as sensible rather than fickle. To transfer one's affections to a more worthy object showed an admirable sense of values. All the same, men and women in authority did sometimes take the trouble to promote an inconvenient marriage if the couple were obviously fond of each other.

Bridal dress, from a fashion plate. White bridal dresses symbolise purity and maidenhood. This one also represents the height of fashion for a lady marrying in 1838. The poor aim to dress in new clothes when they marry, but they cannot aspire to any special finery. Convict women marrying normally expect their bridegrooms to provide them with decent wedding clothes. Hand-coloured lithograph, from The ladies' cabinet 1838 of fashion, music and romance.
MITCHELL LIBRARY

Much the same considerations seem to have guided the marriages of masters and mistresses. The little world of morning calls—made in the afternoon—and evening entertainments which mothers like Sarah Broughton built for their daughters, was designed to exclude all but prudential suitors from the field. Within that field affection was not a necessary ground for a good marriage, but its force was acknowledged. Phoebe's diary shows Mrs Broughton certainly acquiescing in and perhaps abetting the courtship of one of Phoebe's friends by a young man from upcountry.

Mary Davis was the daughter of a family very close to the Broughtons. Her suitor was a squatter from the Murrumbidgee referred to in the diary only as 'Mr. Wright', or occasionally as 'poor Mr. Wright'. Their courtship apparently opened in February when 'Mary Davis had a *Valentine* sent her'. Phoebe was not given to underlining words in her diary: this was a momentous event. The Davis children were frequent visitors at Tusculum, dropping in at odd hours and staying for meals without notice. When Mr Wright appeared on the scene in person Mrs Broughton allowed him the same privileges. His first visit was apparently made without any of the usual formalities. On 11 April Phoebe wrote, 'Mary Davis called soon after breakfast. Mr Wright called'. The young couple met often at Tusculum during April, and the Broughtons were among the first to know when on 3 May 'Mr Wright returned home to Murrumbidgee and talks of coming for Mary in two months!!' The courtship did not run smoothly thereafter, and poor Mr Wright came calling alone in early August to report the progress of his suit. However, the couple were married on 1 September.

The courtship of James Macarthur, William's brother, shows the central importance of prudence in the marriages of the very rich. In 1838 James was 39 years old, and in England, seeking a wife. He seems to have investigated the face and fortune of at least one other woman whose family connections made her a potential bride, before settling on Emily Stone, the 32-year-old daughter of a London banker. Close friends wrote wittily of him on hearing of his choice:

> We thought from your Hampshire trip that you would have taken a higher flight—a Hawker was in our minds but a Stone is a good foundation to build a permanent edifice upon.

Miss Stone's dowry was £10 000, a firm foundation indeed.

The progress of Macarthur's courtship also shows how soon affection was expected to flower in the soil of prudence. As soon as Emily accepted him—about three weeks after his proposal—her relatives wrote to Macarthur in tones assuming family affection and intimacy. One elderly lady wrote taxing him sweetly for 'running away with the "*Flower of Stanmore*"', adding that her little grandson had told his governess that morning, on being asked why he looked so sad, that 'Mr. Macarthur is going to marry my Aunt Emily, and I intended to marry her myself'. James and Emily entered at once into an exchange designed to show concern and solicitude; he fearing that she looked unwell, she chiding him gently for watching her looks 'so narrowly'. 'Is it not natural', she wrote,

> that I should feel having to tell my many dear friends that I mean to desert them? My countenance betrays that which had perhaps better be concealed, excepting that it must in some degree be a pleasure to you to know the sacrifice I make for you.

An aunt who had not met Macarthur wrote hoping that he would be a model husband to Emily: 'a sensible and agreeable companion and a kind and agreeable friend who will sympathize in all your future joys and sorrows'. Emily's sister, to whom she was very close, confirmed that he would be all that and more: Macarthur was 'an excellent and most amiable man'. Though she was going so far away, 'I think that ... he will fill up the place of sister as well as husband, he seems to enter so completely into all her feelings'.

What then of Charles Harpur's 'rapture-pinioned moments', of 'th'out-gushing joy' of his love for Idalia? Was such passion only a poetic fancy in Botany Bay? There was one young man in Sydney in 1838 so moved by love that he literally pined away and died of it. In his last will, Charles Frederick Beilby requested that his letters, card cases, copies of that highly romantic work *Arabian nights*, in three volumes, and several sealed packages should be returned to some five women, and that locks of their hair should be taken from his desktop and put into his coffin. Further, he recorded his forgiveness of the dearest of these, with whom he had formed 'a connection of the most intimate nature' which 'existed in defiance of the utmost efforts of both of us to break it'. Any attempt at decent self-restraint 'was like placing a bar of sand to stop a rapid stream for our passions only ran the more impetuous for the temporary interruption'.

Beilby believed that their separation would 'end both of us'; it was preying on his 'naturally weak constitution so as to make me glad to die', while 'her heart, I fear, is broken'. He ended this extraordinary document, more like a suicide note than a conventional will, with:

> The Lord have mercy upon our souls. God is love itself and love on earth is the nearest approximation to love in Heaven. If God did not intend us to enjoy them why should he have formed us with exquisite feelings. My only enjoyment on earth has been love, deprived of it I now die for I cannot exist alone.

He asked to be buried 'beneath the Cyprus Tree in the garden looking up Middle Harbour'. No record exists of his burial, but the administration of his will was granted to his mother in August.

In dying as he had lived, for love alone, Beilby nicely makes the point that such emotion had little to do with marriage.

MAKING A FAMILY

Marriage, says the *Book of common prayer*, was ordained first 'for the procreation of children'. Secondly,

> it was ordained for a remedy against sin, and to avoid fornication; that such persons as have not the gift of continency might marry ... it was ordained for the mutual society, help, and comfort, that the one ought to have of the other, both in prosperity and adversity.

In 1838 Mary and Richard Davies were the parents of a dozen children, and had almost as many grandchildren. The eldest son, John, was 35 years old; the youngest, Patrick, was fourteen. Patrick and his brother Frank, seventeen, were still living and working on the family farm at Cornwallis, in the Hawkesbury valley, near Sydney. All the rest were married, and nearly all were living in the neighbourhood of Cornwallis, raising families of their own.

Mary Williams had first met Richard Davies in about 1802. From Bath, England, she had been sentenced to seven years' transportation for stealing four handkerchiefs and three aprons. Richard had been a labourer in Dublin, convicted and given a life sentence for robbery. She was about twenty years of age, and Protestant; he was about twenty-six, and Catholic. By 1806 they were living together, quite independent of the government, on a small rented farm near Windsor, growing wheat and raising hogs. In a register of the marital status of the females of the colony in that year, the Reverend Samuel Marsden had listed Mary Williams as 'concubine, natural children: 2 ... legitimate children: nil'. The contemptuous term 'concubine' was used for all women who were living with men to whom they were not married.

No record exists of marriage between Davies and Williams, although they may have passed through some form of ceremony around 1811, when they began baptising their children. By this time they were prosperous. Davies had bought land at Cornwallis worth £60, and was selling large quantities of grain to the government stores. In 1811 he paid £40 for stock, mainly sheep and goats. Mary's sentence had expired in 1807, and Richard received a conditional pardon—evidence of his material success—in 1812.

'Concubine' or not, Mary Davies was a faithful consort and mother. She produced a baby every two years, from 1803 until 1821 when, in her tenth pregnancy, she was delivered of twins. The next two births were both three years apart. Her last child was born in 1825 and lived only a few days. This experience of childbearing was not typical of convict women of her generation. Their lives as partners commonly began later than Mary's and were more often disturbed by partings and separations. Most colonial families in the early years did not have more than four living children, but large families tended, like Mary's, to be very large, with a dozen children common. This came to be the pattern in the new generations of native-born and immigrant women marrying in the 1830s, who were much more fertile than their predecessors.

The fertility of the new generations suggests two things about relations between husband and wife in New South Wales, and in the colonies generally. First, most couples agreed with the *Book of common prayer*, that marriage served 'as a remedy against sin', to restrict 'carnal lusts' to the marriage bed. Secondly, there was no knowledge of artificial contraception in the colonies, or no desire to use it. Devices like vinegar douches, and pessaries made of cloth and lemon juice, were known in England at the time. But the regularity with which the younger women bore their children suggests that conception was inhibited only by the natural effects of

Three people in a donkey cart—the most humble form of wheeled transport. The family it conveys aspires to respectability, for the woman carries a parasol and the girl wears a bonnet. Watercolour by E.W. Belcher, 1844.
DIXSON GALLERIES

lactation. Most women do not ovulate while they are breastfeeding, providing the baby is fed regularly and takes a lot of milk. Advice books suggested that babies be fed every two hours for the first months and three-hourly thereafter, but illiterate mothers, innocent of such advice, probably fed their children a good deal more often. Most women followed Mary Davies's pattern of conceiving at a constant interval for their first five or six births, and at a longer interval after that. Mary was lucky in the two years between her babies: some women had a child as frequently as every eighteen months, or even closer together. Whatever the interval, most could expect to bear children until they were at least forty—which meant about twenty years of constant breastfeeding and pregnancy.

Not all women survived so long. Childbirth was associated with pain and death, and more women died in labour or from its after-effects than from any other single cause. There were risks also for the babies. When a mother could not deliver her child, desperate measures had to be taken to save her: usually the child was killed by crushing its skull and dismembering it. Caesarian section was performed only when there was absolutely no alternative, and it almost always led to the death of the mother from haemorrhage or infection, for medical men were incapable of closing the wound effectively. Women also died from the effects of the wear and tear of a series of normal deliveries, and few women moved into middle age without the burdens of 'bad legs' and 'bad breasts' caused by bearing children.

Many young mothers had to work alongside their husbands to feed their growing families. In the early years Richard Davies could not afford hired help on the farm, and as a convict himself he did not qualify for assigned convict labour. Until his sons were grown it was Mary who helped him with sowing and reaping and clearing. The purchase of 25 sheep and 25 goats in 1811 probably marked the moment when nine-year-old John and seven-year-old Thomas were thought to be old enough to care for the animals. But Mary had to supervise their labours, and the hogs and the orchard remained her responsibility.

The Davies holding grew with the eldest sons, and with accumulating capital the family began to employ hired labourers. In 1829 Richard Davies gave an account of his achievements in a letter to Governor Darling requesting a land grant of 400 acres. He listed his virtues as follows. He had reared a family of thirteen children—a slight exaggeration—and brought five of them to manhood as farmers. He owned 60 acres of land, all of it cleared, a mile of it fenced. He had built a four-roomed

Australian shepherd's hut. *This picture probably owes a good deal to the artist's imagination. Certainly a shepherd had no use for a saddle, as he did his work on foot. Nor were many shepherds married men. However the picture may give some idea of the circumstances of a well-established small farmer and his family. Hand-coloured engraving by J. Godfrey, after John Skinner Prout, from E.C. Booth,* Australia illustrated, *London 1873.*
NATIONAL LIBRARY

house worth £70, an outhouse for his workers, and a barn worth £60. He employed three servants, one convict and two free. He boasted that he found food and drink for eighteen mouths, three times daily, and estimated the value of his land and stock at £800. Two neighbours, John Hoskisson and Richard Holland, confirmed his claims and added that his sons were 'honest, sober, and industrious'. The local police magistrate, Samuel North, certified that Richard Davies was 'an industrious man' who did in fact hold the amount of capital that he claimed.

The next decade was less kind to the Davieses. The land grant was refused and convict servants were withdrawn. The farm could not support all the growing children, and the oldest ones moved on to holdings of their own. In 1833 the eldest son, John, was charged with cattle stealing after being found in possession of meat from a stolen calf. He was sentenced to death. A number of local worthies testified on his behalf, seeking a remittal, including Samuel North, the local police magistrate, and Benjamin Hodghen, the chief constable. Mary Davies petitioned the court, pleading on her son's behalf that she had reared a large family 'in the paths of virtue and righteousness'. The death sentence was remitted to seven years in a penal settlement.

There may have been doubt about John Davies' guilt. He claimed in his appeal that his lawyer failed to present two sympathetic witnesses, and Thomas Dangle, owner of the calf in question, certified that 'it does not appear to me that John Davies had any part in stealing my calf that he was convicted for'. But over the next few years the local authorities became convinced that none of the Davies boys was walking 'in the paths of virtue and righteousness'. As they left the family farm the boys did not look for jobs as labourers. They were a proud and rather wild lot, who tried farming on their own or began small businesses. They spent their leisure hours gambling and brawling at race meetings and public houses. James Davies married Ann Brown, the daughter of the publican of the Bricklayers Arms in Windsor, and Ann's sister, Lucy Upton, deserted by her husband, moved in with William Davies.

In 1837 another son, Thomas, became licensee of the Currency Lad in Windsor, a public house famous for bare-knuckle boxing and cockfighting. His brothers Patrick, James and Francis were prominent owners of fighting cocks, and Patrick was handy with his fists. The local constable was not kind to the Davies brothers. In just two years Tom Davies was fined £31 for allowing tippling, permitting persons to play cards, delivering spirits to a convict, and four charges of wilfully and knowingly receiving convicts into his public house. In the same period his brother Jim was charged with a breach of the peace and refusing to pay damages when his pigs strayed. Richard, named after his father, was charged with delivering spirits to a convict, and with assault; Michael, only seventeen years old, was charged twice in one month, June 1837, with running away from his master. His parents had apparently tried to make an honest artisan out of him by apprenticing him to a wheelwright, and they paid his fine the first time he absconded. The second time he served 28 days imprisonment. Michael evidently believed himself too much of a man to stay apprenticed. In August he married Margaret Donnelly, a girl his own age, at Windsor.

We can only guess at the relationship between Richard and Mary Davies—there is no way of being sure who led and who followed, whose will determined the course of their lives. The common understanding gave authority to the man. When women married within the Church of England they promised to love, honour and obey their husbands, and the words meant just what they said. A popular commentary on the *Book of common prayer* made the point explicit:

> there is no difference in the duties, nor consequently in the terms of the covenant, between a man and his wife: except that the woman is obliged to 'obey' and 'serve' her husband. Nor is this a difference of our own devising, but is expressly ordered by God himself ... for equality ... breeds contention, and one of the two must be superior, or else both would strive perpetually for the dominion.

We have noted already that the authorities in the convict colonies saw marital discipline as preferable to penal discipline for convict women. Both involved the perfect submission of an inferior to a superior. Women working with their husbands in the fields took the role of servant. The family hut was more the wife's domain, but it is doubtful whether even here she was expected to have dominion. The young Englishman, Alexander Harris, who saw a good deal of the Hawkesbury valley, gives a charming picture of courtship between an itinerant worker and a small farmer's daughter, which incidently shows how authority worked in the domestic sphere. Here the woman, in a sense the employer, still has to cajole the male employee into helping around the hut, and in the end the roles are reversed:

> the pleasant piano-voice of Nance or Nelly sends him unresisting to the river for a bucket of water or to the bush for a log; till joke gets transformed into serious earnest, and the wandering servant owns the heiress of the soil.

Poor Nance or Nelly doubtless had to keep joking sweetly all her life to get her wood in.

Harris here imagined another example of the mysterious power of women, as celebrated by the editor of the *Southern Australian*: the power to enslave men without taking the initiative. The commentary on the prayer book quoted earlier invoked the same consolation for women, arguing that it was not only 'impious contempt of divine authority' but 'egregious pride and folly' for any woman to refuse to love, honour and obey her husband, for such obedience was 'her chief

advantage, if she hath wisdom to understand, or skill to manage it right'. It must have been a powerful consolation. Almost universally, women seem to have preferred the ambiguous authority of a husband to that of a master served for wages. Just as men migrated to Australia in the hope of becoming self-employed, so women sought 'the independence of domestic life' and the chance of a husband who was bound at least to offer mutuality and comfort.

Yet marital discipline could be harsh. Throughout society, authority was supported by violence and, within limits, this was accepted as proper and normal. Parents beat children, masters beat apprentices, husbands beat wives. Another Hawkesbury settler, Michael Power, whose wife had tried to leave him late in 1837, explained it this way: 'we were always very comfortable: scolding is nothing between husband and wife: I have often struck her, but that is nothing between man and wife'. Power was an ex-convict and 'a passionate man', but he was probably exceptional only in the force of his beatings. Men from all classes could properly impose their will upon their wives with some degree of violence, and wives had no respectable means of escape.

Well-to-do wives were caught in a trap made by their very prosperity. Mary Bowman was the sister of James and William Macarthur and the wife of James Bowman, a wealthy landowner and government official; we shall meet her again in chapter 6, offering afternoon tea to Lady Gipps in the drawing room of her Sydney mansion. Her husband, as she said herself—though she would not have mentioned anything so shameful to Lady Gipps—was 'selfish to me, harsh and cruel', abusing her when they were alone together. Mary concealed her sufferings:

> I thought it was ill temper and I did the best I could, I thought . . . if I could keep the children where they were cared for all might some day be well, and then I loved my poor home.

There was really no alternative for Mary Bowman. Divorce would have required a special act of the British parliament and caused unbearable scandal. Husband and wife were treated as a single legal entity, so wives could not normally sue or be sued, nor own any property in their own right. Nor did they own their children. Had she left Bowman, Mary could not have taken the children. In law they belonged to him and his family. Loving the home that she had planned and furnished, she could only look forward to his death.

Women without many possessions could disregard laws designed to safeguard property. Many walked out on unsatisfactory husbands. During the year more than a dozen men advertised in the various colonial newspapers that they no longer held themselves responsible for their wives' debts—a public notice of separation. Some of the advertisements laid blame on another man, and certainly women must have found it difficult to leave a husband unless another man was prepared to support them. The only alternative was to find work and shelter as a house servant—the very situation that so many had married to avoid.

The story of Michael Power's wife, Elizabeth, shows how hard it could be even for a poor and not very respectable woman to escape a violent husband. She was native born, about forty years of age, and had been living with Power since about 1820 at Wilberforce, near Windsor. Both were illiterate. Michael had come to the colony as a convict in 1811, but he had long been free. Elizabeth had borne two children, one of whom, a daughter recently married and living in Van Diemen's Land, had survived. Perhaps gynaecological disaster had limited Elizabeth to two pregnancies. She was fond of children; she kept with her a little girl named Biddy Welsh, nearly ten years old, who helped her in the house and kept her company. Biddy's father was dead and her mother lived in Maitland.

Farmhouse of slabs and bark, at Warragubbera in the Maneroo district, southern New South Wales. In such a house the Powers and many Hawkesbury valley farmers lived. Pencil drawing by an unknown artist, 1842–52.
MITCHELL LIBRARY

For their rank in life, the Powers were comfortably off. Power ran fat cattle and made good profits selling them to Sydney butchers, and he employed a series of men to help him. One had recently become friendly with Elizabeth Power, too friendly for her husband's liking. The men had 'a bit of a wrangle', according to Power, and the labourer, Dennis Dwyer, had left.

Late in 1837 Power brought home more than £500 in cash and cheques—proceeds of the sale of cattle. He celebrated by buying a couple of gallons of rum, and he and his wife 'made free with it'. They got drunk, quarrelled, and Elizabeth received a bad cut to the head. She decided she had had enough.

Her plan was to take the money and escape with Biddy Welsh to her daughter in Van Diemen's Land. But after twenty years of living with Michael Power she had little strength to act independently. She went first to a neighbour, Thomas Maloney, and told him that if he went with her she would show him where her husband's money was. Maloney declined, and warned her husband what she had in mind. Power locked the box where the money was kept.

A few days later—a Sunday—Power went out on business. In his absence Elizabeth made a hole in the bottom of the locked box and removed all the notes and silver, keeping them together in a blue bag. That was to be her most decisive act in the whole sorry story. Then she and Biddy set out to find someone who would help them get to Van Diemen's Land. One would think that £500 would take Mrs Power to her daughter without any trouble. But Elizabeth was illiterate, ignorant and timid. She did not know how to get herself to Sydney, let alone Launceston. She went seeking help from a series of people whom she thought wiser than herself—all men. Perhaps they *were* wiser, for all refused to assist her.

First she sought help for friendship's sake. Dennis Dwyer the labourer was living at Paddy Grogan's public house at Freeman's Reach, just down the road. Elizabeth was fond of Dennis; indeed when she gave evidence later she had the wit and the affection to hide the extent of his involvement. It seems that the pair sat drinking rum until it was dark, that Mrs Power asked Dwyer for company in her flight, and that he refused her. But Grogan himself agreed to take her and Biddy down to the Windsor ferry in his cart.

Failing to get help through friendship, she tried to buy it. She spent the night at Coffy's public house at Windsor. The next day she told the publican that she had left her husband 'in consequence of his ill treatment', and proceeded to count the money in his presence, 'laying some of it on his knee as I counted it'. She got up

to about £340 and gave up because she was tired. Coffy gave her the best advice he could. He told her to take the mail to Sydney that evening, promising to send on her clothes in a box next day. She agreed to do so, and gave him two ten-pound notes to book their fares. But, in her own words, she 'drank too much and was unable to proceed' that night. Meanwhile her husband had gone to the police, as he was entitled to do, and before morning two constables came for her.

When she was taken to the watch-house the next day Elizabeth managed to hide the money from her husband, but showed it more or less accidentally to the chief constable, Benjamin Hodghen. When he gave no sign of disapproving she was emboldened to turn next to him for help. She told him, according to her own story, that 'if he would not deceive me I would make him a very handsome present. He promised faithfully he would not'. So she gave the blue bag into Hodghen's keeping. It was the last that either she or her husband saw of most of the money.

The rest of the story is mostly about Elizabeth Power's efforts to regain a fair share of the money—'her regulars'—from the chief constable. As to the subsequent events, suffice it to say that her husband took her home several times and beat her severely each time, that she ran away several times, to neighbours and to Hodghen's house, that Hodghen sent her off twice by the mail coach and that she came back both times, once with her husband and once on her own, all the way from Sydney. Both times she chose to return—or at least to go no further on her way to Launceston—out of a sense of grievance at Hodghen, for not giving her her due.

In the end she and her husband went to the police magistrate at Windsor—Samuel North, the same who had commended Richard Davies's industriousness in 1829—and told him the whole story. Hodghen and his family were brought to trial for conspiracy. Elizabeth Power could not be charged with a felony, since in law husband and wife, as 'one person' could not rob each other. Apparently the Powers went home together.

There are some fascinating glimpses in the court proceedings of how Elizabeth Power saw the world. Picture her released from the watch-house in order to have breakfast with the Hodghen family, in surroundings rather grander than she enjoyed at home, and still anticipating her new-found powers of spending:

> Mr Hodghen put two half-crowns in my lap, and I sent for a drop of brandy to treat the company, we took the brandy in our tea, which is the way poor people like it in the morning.

When she first met her husband after running away, she was sitting drinking rum and ginger beer with a neighbour in Coffy's public house. Michael Power walked past. He remembered that she held out her hand and said, 'Shake hands old man and kiss me, everything is right.' Bowing to the inevitable with a smile was something she had been doing all her married life. The wonder was that she had tried even once to avoid it.

Michael Power's attitude to the marriage was quite straightforward. His aim through all of this was to get back his money and his wife, whatever her will in the matter. He accepted the relationship, genuinely believing that scolding and blows were 'nothing between husband and wife'. His neighbours agreed. People several times took in the fleeing Mrs Power, washed the blood from her face or tended her bruises, and sent for her husband to collect her. Others helped him to search for her, and to extract her from Hodghen's house. Michael Power was not badly at fault in his neighbours' eyes: or at least not so badly as to justify them helping to end the marriage.

Sacred to the Memory of

ELIZAB$^{H.}$ WARBY

(Wife of BENJAMIN WARBY)

Who Departed this Life Nov^{r} 26th 1835
Aged 29 years
being the Mother of nine Children
Also, in Memory of her eight Infants
Still Born!!!

Stay Christian stay contemplate what has passed,
A Wife, A Mother and a Friend is lost;
A loss by all who knew her felt severe
A loss kind Heaven can alone repair.

From a gravestone in the St Peter's cemetery, Campbelltown, NSW.

Death was the surest means of parting. Because men and women often died young, about one marriage in three ended with the death of one partner while their children were still small. Such a death usually created severe difficulties. Single fathers or mothers found it virtually impossible both to care for small children and to earn enough to keep them, and after bereavement many had to put their children at least temporarily into one of the orphan schools. But widowed fathers with daughters of about eight and upwards generally relied on them to care for younger brothers and sisters. Wealthy fathers could hire housekeepers. A surprisingly large number of widowers, given the shortage of women in the colony, found a second wife who was prepared to care for them as well as their children.

Elizabeth Anlezark, the wife of a Liverpool publican, had died in childbirth in 1837, aged 22, leaving her husband with the care of three small children and the domestic duties of the public house—cooking, cleaning and waiting at the bar. In February 1838 James Anlezark married young Matilda Hawthorn. Matilda had come to Australia without her parents, in charge of two smaller brothers. At seventeen she was prepared to take on all the responsibilities of hostess and mother in a public house which was one of the main meeting places in Liverpool (see chapter 6). How Matilda Anlezark coped with this challenge we do not know. The diary of Eleanor Bedford, who married the former attorney-general of Van Diemen's Land, Alfred Stephen, in 1838, gives a glimpse of the difficulties that a stepmother could encounter. Stephen's first wife, Virginia, had also died in childbirth in 1837, leaving in this case seven children ranging in age from eleven to two. Eleanor Bedford had been Virginia's closest friend, and the Bedford family helped with the care of the Stephen children in the months after her death.

When Alfred and Eleanor married, Eleanor devoted herself entirely to the care of husband, children and relatives on both sides of the marriage. She acted as scribe for her husband, visited and wrote to relatives, and entertained the children, reading to them on dull days and walking out with them on fine ones. The three elder boys were at boarding school during the week, and the two youngest, aged three and four, were cared for mainly by their nurse. The greatest calls on Eleanor's time and energy were made by the two girls, aged seven and eight, who resented her as an interloper. Eight-year-old Virginia, called Possy, was the worst trial, always 'in a very ill temper'. On 13 November, despite a drive into the country, Possy was 'a very very naughty girl indeed', and the next day, when Eleanor was

feeling unwell, Possy was 'in punishment all day and not allowed to come downstairs'.

Eleanor's illness was not all due to Possy's intransigence. She was suffering from morning sickness. 'Mr Stephen'—as she always called her husband, even in her diary, as if he were still her best friend's clever husband—welcomed the news by giving her 'a very beautiful present, one of the prettiest gold watches I ever saw'. She noted sedately: 'It is a most acceptable gift and I am very very grateful to him for his kind attention.'

Mothers left husbandless—by desertion as well as death—had more difficulty finding a man prepared to help them look after their children. Most single parents in New South Wales were mothers, and more children were admitted to orphanages by mothers than by fathers. Widows of men working for wages had nothing to fall back on except the generosity of their husband's workmates, and that was often directed mainly towards a respectable funeral.

In September the *Sydney Gazette* opened a subscription list 'for the purpose of assisting the young and helpless widow of Mr. John Montgomery, lately a clerk in this office'. The *Gazette* assured its readers that Montgomery, a recent arrival in the colony, had been 'a young man of high respectability and character', and that

> His wife, a young and interesting female, who expects soon to become a mother, is left by the death of her husband a stranger in a strange land, almost without a friend, and without a relation in the Colony. We need scarcely say that we trust the Sydney public will come liberally forward to assist the widow in her distress.

However, later issues declared that subscriptions were intended first to 'defray the Funeral Expenses', with the balance to be applied 'to the relief of Mrs. Montgomery'. Over the next fortnight nearly a hundred people, mainly newspapermen and their associates, gave between five shillings and a pound each, to the total of about sixty pounds: not much after the cost of a respectable funeral. The 'interesting' Mrs Montgomery was fortunate to remarry within a few months.

Much richer widows could be denied control over the resources left them by their husbands' deaths. Elizabeth Macarthur, mother of Mary Bowman, had managed the estates of her celebrated husband, John Macarthur, for long periods during his life, to the considerable benefit of the family fortunes. But on his death in 1834 she had inherited no capital to manage as she wished. Even her home, Elizabeth Farm, was left to her eldest son, Edward, on the condition that he would permit his mother to use it during her life. Her only income came from some shares and from an annuity of £1000 charged upon the properties left to her three sons, and thus dependent on their money-making skills. Elizabeth apparently made no objections to these arrangements, and she renounced her right to be one of the executors of her husband's will. She accepted without question that her sons should in future make the major decisions within the family. In her widowhood, they sometimes consulted her but, while she remained the centre of her family's affections, she was never its head.

Widowhood brought its consolations. Elizabeth deeply mourned the death of her fractious and finally mad husband, despite the frantic insults he had heaped on her in his last years. But life at Elizabeth Farm was pleasant. As a widow she had more visitors than as the wife of a very quarrelsome man, and she enjoyed their conversation. She read a great deal—English and local newspapers and books on history and travel—at one time becoming so fascinated by Afghanistan that she borrowed all she could on the subject. She also stayed long periods with Mary Bowman at Lyndhurst: she loved the company of her grandchildren, and her presence kept Dr Bowman's incivility towards his wife in check.

Mrs Elizabeth Macarthur as the elegant wife of a powerful man. In 1838, her husband had died and she had quite a different standing in society—a rather ambiguous one. On the one hand she was the 'relict' of John Macarthur, implying that she had lost her main purpose in life. On the other hand, as a widow she inherited some of her husband's authority within the family, though this was very much hedged around by the provisions of his will and constraints of personality. Among small settlers' families, widows were quite often their husbands' executors, and were left with considerable authority over the management of their possessions. Oil by an unknown artist, undated.
DIXSON GALLERIES

James Macarthur. This miniature of Elizabeth Macarthur's third surviving son was painted in London about 1817. During 1838 he was once again in England, and this picture, though twenty years out of date, served as a memento for his family.

There were various means, including painted portraits, to preserve feelings of solidarity among the scattered families of the rich. Such portraits also made up part of the opulent decoration of a drawing room. Watercolour on ivory by an unknown artist, c1817.
MITCHELL LIBRARY

Mary Davies also lost her husband in 1838. He did not die, but from that time she spoke of him as one dead. In May Richard Davies was charged in the Sydney supreme court with an 'unnatural crime' involving buggery and bestiality. Charges had been brought against him more than a year before and he had left the farm at Cornwallis, only to be picked up in the northern town of Maitland in February. The man who brought the charges was Richard Holland, one of the two neighbours who had given witness in 1829 to the industry and sobriety of the Davies family. Holland had held the farm next to Davies for twenty years.

In his evidence Holland tried to show that he bore Richard Davies no malice. His wife Mary told the court that

> I never had an angry word with Davies or his wife in my life. Davies pigs have been great trespassers on our land and my Husband may have spoken sharply to Mrs Davies and the children, but nothing more. Never to Davies.

Holland told his wife that Davies was 'doing something improper with a pig', but she had not believed him. She had thought that 'Davies was not a man of that description'. So Holland kept an eye on his neighbour for several months and

finally caught him in the act one autumn Sunday in his peach orchard where the pigs came to eat fallen fruit.

The confrontation between the two men suggests spite, if not longstanding animosity. Holland startled Davies by hailing him, as he put it 'in a loud voice': 'Oh you dirty old wretch what do you mean, you ought to be hanged, if I had a gun in my hand I actually think I should shoot you.' Holland and his sons, who were listening, recalled that Davies replied, in great confusion, that yes, 'he ought to be hanged, and humbly begged my pardon, and for the love and honour of god say nothing about it'. Holland promised that he would 'make it known', and went inside to boast to his family how he had 'catched Davies' and made him 'beg his pardon'. But when Holland went next day to tell Mary Davies what he had seen, she made 'quite light of it, and said it was nothing new to her'. Perhaps she was afraid, or dissembling. Or had she always made light of it?

The supreme court took a different view. Richard Davies was sentenced to death, but the sentence was commuted to life imprisonment on Norfolk Island. That was itself a death sentence. Davies made a will in August 1838, leaving all he owned to his wife.

Stories such as this remind us of that majority of unmarried men in the Australian colonies, many of whom could never hope to satisfy their 'carnal lusts and appetites' in the sanctity of the marriage bed. It was the wisdom of the age that most men 'had not the gift of continency'. A man might readily buy a woman in the big towns but many men lived out of reach of such relief: under penal discipline, or beyond the bounds of settlement. Colonial officials feared, on little evidence, that 'unnatural crime'—bestiality and sodomy—flourished among such men. An unspoken fear of such practices contributed to the official encouragement of convict marriage.

Bestiality was so feared and despised that Holland could reduce Davies to a cringing wretch by catching him in the act because, as the courts said, the act was 'unnatural'—it dissolved one of the fundamental boundaries of God's creation, that between mankind, made in his image, and the beasts. It made a man into a beast. Richard Davies would have suffered equally for his deed had it been discovered in Britain. But in New South Wales the revulsion had an edge to it, reflecting the colony's embarrassment at its own origins and purpose. Samuel North, the police magistrate at Windsor, no longer saw Davies as 'industrious'. He now wrote that Davies 'is a man of about sixty years of age and has a large grown up family, but is a person of drunken and dissolute habits'.

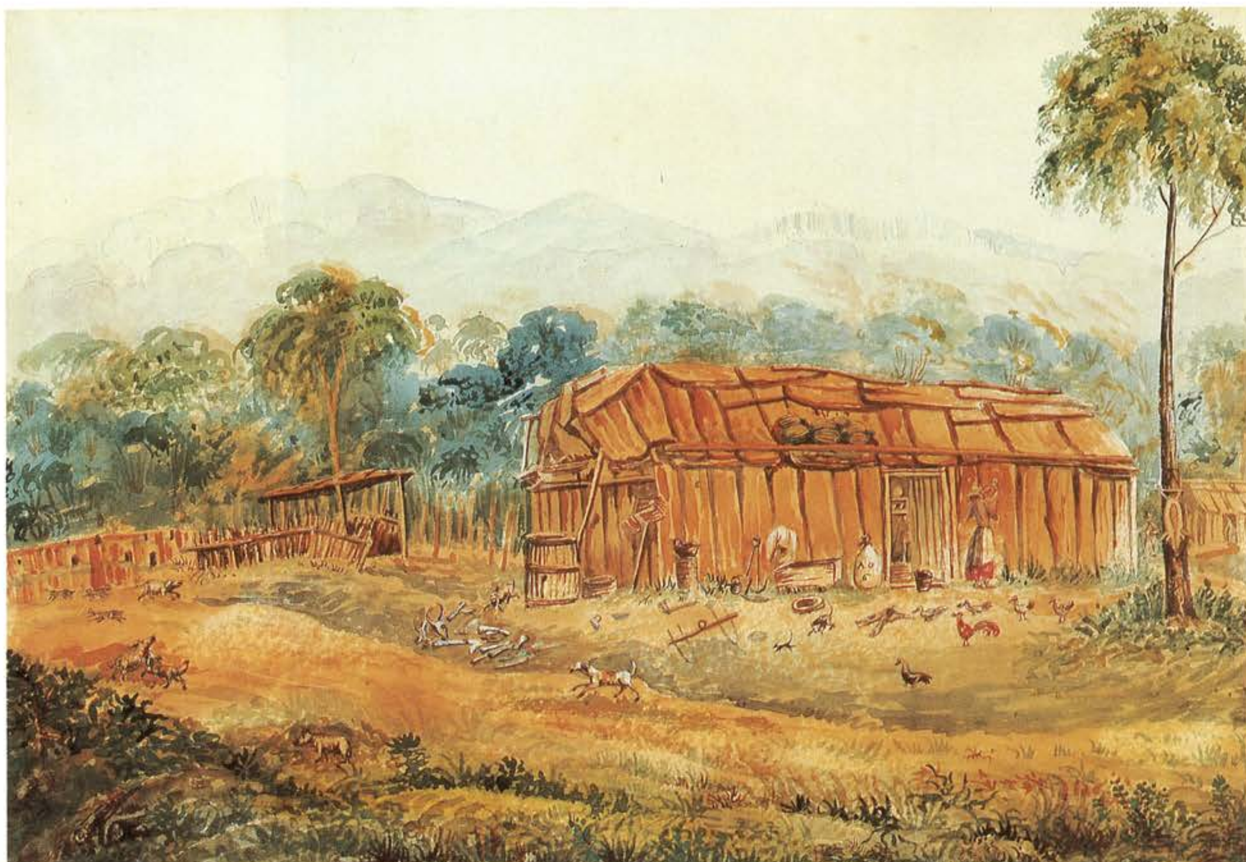
The reformers who urged marriage and family life on ex-convicts and immigrant workers did so for their own purposes. Gentlemanly employers like Macarthur and Warren encouraged family migration because they believed that married life brought order to social relations—to relations between master and men, and to those between men and women. In the first of these their perceptions of order and civilisation were at variance with those of their workers.

Employers who sought married workers did so in the belief that they would make better workers—more settled, more obedient. The case of the Wheeler family shows that workers did not necessarily share this understanding of what was best for them; that many migrated with hopes of independence from wage labour, for themselves and their families. The Davies sons show that the same was true for the native born. The brothers were diligent workers on the family farm. But when

Captain Samuel North, JP, police magistrate at Windsor, New South Wales. Undated pastel by an unknown artist.
MITCHELL LIBRARY

government policy denied them land of their own when they married and began raising families, rather than settling into steady wage labour, they took up casual work, rented land, ran public houses and generally looked to be their own bosses. Their ideas of a civilised life were not those of the men running New South Wales.

The other great civilising task expected of marriage was the ordering of sexuality. Here there was little disagreement between rich and poor, powerful and powerless in society. All agreed that marriage was ordained to contain the lusts of men and women, lusts which otherwise threatened the social and even the natural order; and all agreed that within marriage the wife must be subject to the husband. Aberrant individuals like Elizabeth Power and Richard Davies could expect little sympathy as they faced the avenging authority of husband or the law.



A woman in her workplace. Women on farms rarely went far beyond the house and farmyard, where they looked after the smaller children and the pigs, hens and other farmyard animals. This is the house of Henry Osborne at Illawarra, New South Wales, built of slabs and bark. Watercolour by Robert Hoddle, 1830.
MITCHELL LIBRARY