"STRIVING AFTER BETTER THINGS":

JULIA WILDING
AND
THE MAKING OF A 'NEW WOMAN'
AND
A 'NOBLE GENTLEMAN'

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Julia Wilding c.1890.
(Wilding Collection, C.M: Ref.15202)
CONTENTS

ABSTRACT II

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS V

ILLUSTRATIONS VII

ABBREVIATIONS VIII

PROLOGUE 1

CHAPTER ONE 20
The Making of Julia Anthony

CHAPTER TWO 63
Married and Gone to New Zealand:
The foundation years, 1879-1897

CHAPTER THREE 106
Mistress of the Household

CHAPTER FOUR 154
Family Dynamics and the 'Life Events Diaries'

CHAPTER FIVE 190
The Making of a New Woman I:
Educating Gladys

CHAPTER SIX 228
The Making of a New Woman II:
Beyond 'Fownhope'

CHAPTER SEVEN 280
Anthony: Shaping a Noble Gentleman

EPILOGUE 344

BIBLIOGRAPHY 363
II
ABSTRACT

This thesis is a study of the family of Julia and Frederick Wilding. The focus is primarily upon the role of the mother and the lives of the first two surviving children, Gladys (1881-1905) and Anthony (1883-1915). It draws heavily upon the voluminous testimony of Julia. Born in Hereford in 1853, to Charles and Ann Deyke Anthony, a middle-class couple of some substance, she came to New Zealand in 1879 immediately after her marriage to Frederick Wilding, a young lawyer beginning to make his way in Hereford. An educated and cultured woman, she was well versed in the educational theories of her day. Before leaving for New Zealand she had proclaimed, in a series of newspaper articles, her belief that the family held the key to social progress. It was here that new attitudes could be forged and human beings given the best opportunity of fulfilling their potential. She was especially hopeful that the energetic and involved mother might, within the family, promote the cause of women by preparing her daughters so that they could take their place alongside men in the world of affairs. It was with this lofty goal in view, that she and Frederick established themselves in Christchurch in 1879.

Julia’s attempt to realise these ambitious ends throws considerable light upon the life of an upper middle-class woman in late colonial New Zealand. Whatever the validity of the prevailing stereotype with its emphasis upon the decorative rather than the useful woman,
there was no room for idleness in Julia's day. Hers was a busy and engaged life directed towards providing an environment in which socially accomplished and useful individuals might flourish. This is clearly shown in her dutiful and detailed recording of her children's development. The pages of the 'Life Events Diaries' of Gladys and Anthony, in which Julia recounts her day by day engagement in their education, reveal a woman very conscious of the importance of her task and determined to do justice to it. Her desire for Gladys to assume something of the character of the 'new woman' captures the essence of her attempt to advance the cause of women. Similarly, her efforts to realise in Anthony the 'noble male', an accomplished and useful human being, reveal her continued commitment to social betterment. In seeking to realise these ideals, she constructed a lifestyle marked by plain living, vigorous exercise and above all a strong work ethic.

The Wilding family experience also provides a commentary upon embryonic colonial nationalism. Frederick and Julia had seen New Zealand as a place in which to realise the full potential of the British race and they remained committed but not uncritical in their support for the cause of Empire. As first generation colonial-born New Zealanders, their children can be observed taking tentative steps towards seeing themselves as New Zealanders. The trend is most clearly illustrated in the sporting career of Anthony. As a member of the
Australasian tennis teams which wrested the Davis Cup from the USA, and four times Wimbledon Singles Champion, he became arguably the colony's first national sporting hero. Significantly, his achievements were celebrated as much in Britain as they were in New Zealand. By his death in World War One he came to be celebrated as the ideal New Zealand male.
Many people have helped me in various ways over the past two years. I am particularly indebted to Jo-Anne Smith, Canterbury Museum Archivist, who allowed me to camp out in the museum library for an eight-month period of full-time research into the Wilding Family Papers. Jo-Anne’s level of interest in the Wildings proved almost equal to my own and she never failed to rekindle my enthusiasm when the sheer volume of the papers threatened to overwhelm me. Her familiarity with the sources led to some valuable discussions. It was Jo-Anne who first alerted me to the possible connection between Louisa May Alcott’s literature and upbringing and the ‘Life Events Diaries’ kept by Julia Wilding for her children. For her ever-cheerful assistance, I remain eternally grateful. The expert services of Kerry McCarthy and Jane Barrett in the pictorial library of the Canterbury Museum were also much appreciated. I would also like to thank the rest of the staff at the Canterbury Museum for the interest they displayed in my research and for making my time at the museum so entertaining.

Julia and Anthony Wilding provided useful insights and memories of their grand-parents and their extended family. A Master of Arts Scholarship provided by the University of Canterbury made my life much easier during the first year of my thesis. My family and friends can now
get on with their lives without having to listen to stories of Julia or Anthony or Frederick or Gladys. Gifts of 'brain-food' were gratefully received, as were my brother Peter's computer services. I owe special thanks, however, to my parents, without whose support and encouragement this thesis would never have been written.

Finally, to my supervisor, Graeme Dunstall, I wish to express my sincere gratitude. His enthusiastic interest in my topic, sage advice and the calmness and expedition with which he received and commented upon long-promised drafts were critical to the completion of the thesis. Above all, his patience allowed me the freedom to just 'get on with it.'
ILLUSTRATIONS

Julia Wilding c.1890
Frontispiece

Between pages

Julia Anthony, Frederick and
Edith Wilding c.1877
20-21

Julia Anthony c.1875
27-28

Frederick Wilding c.1879
64-65

'Fownhope': the front view c.1883
83-84

'Fownhope': a side view c.1890
84-85

'Fownhope': the view from the rear
of the orchard, the swimming pool
and the asphalt tennis court.
85-86

Domestic servants at 'Fownhope'
January 1912
151-152

The Wildings in May 1886
161-162

Julia Wilding and daughter Gladys
1 January 1883
192-193

Sunday afternoon tennis at 'Fownhope'
23 November 1902
240-241

Gladys Wilding and friend c.1895
241-242

Anthony and Frederick Wilding c.1886
294-295

Anthony Wilding playing tennis at
'Fownhope' c.1898
305-306

Anthony Wilding and the 'Harper
boys' c.1897
309-310

The Trinity College 1st XI c.1903
321-322

Anthony Wilding on the European
circuit c.1910
331-332

Anthony Wilding with Norman Brookes
332-333

Anthony Wilding with his pupils
December 1907
334-335
VIII

Anthony Wilding the intrepid motorcyclist May 1908 335-336

Trophies of a champion 336-337

Anthony Wilding in action at Wimbledon June 1910 338-339

Anthony Wilding: 'the game's first matinee idol' c.1910 339-340

Father and son playing in the New Zealand Open Doubles Championships Dunedin 1909 340-341

HMS Aniche one of the armoured cars used by the Anthony's unit during W.W.I. 342-343

Anthony Wilding's grave Rue-des-Berceaux military cemetery France 343-344

The Memorial seat on Witch Hill completed in 1917 351-352

Julia Wilding 1916 362-363

ABBREVIATIONS

CMA Canterbury Museum Archives

MBL Macmillan Brown Library, University of Canterbury

WFP Wilding Family Papers
PROLOGUE

Julia Anthony and Frederick Wilding came to New Zealand in 1879 just as the frontier phase was giving way to a more mature society in which city and town were beginning to assert their place. As a professional family they were able to carve out a niche for themselves amongst the Christchurch elite. Over the next twenty years they stamped their mark on the social, sporting and legal life of the city, if not the colony itself. In their private world at 'Fownhope' in Opawa they built a family life which nurtured five extraordinarily talented children. In public acclaim the surname Wilding was to become synonymous with Anthony (1883-1915), the idol of the centre court in the decade before World War One. In the private world of the Wilding household other individuals were finding their space. Gladys (1881-1905), at her premature and sudden death in 1905, had already displayed academic and sporting prowess which suggested a glowing future and personified the all-round capacities of the 'new woman.' Cora (1888-1982), a talented artist and physiotherapist, was the force behind the Sunlight League and did much to promote the provision of children's health camps throughout the country in the 1930s. Like Anthony, Frank (b.1886) shared the family passion for tennis and played successfully at the provincial level, followed his father into the legal profession and made his mark in local politics. The youngest of the Wilding children, Edwyn (b.1897), possessed his own sporting talents, and after attending Christ College, became the owner and
manager of a sheep run in the South Island.

This thesis is less concerned, however, with charting the considerable achievements of the Wildings than with exploring the texture of family life, the socialisation processes which were at work there and, most significantly, the role of the mother within it. And for this task the family papers provide a unique, if problematic, opportunity for the historian. Voluminous in size, they are very much the creation of Julia and they are a testimony to her attention to detail and absorption in family concerns. They lay bare the dynamics of family life as seen by the woman at the hub of its day-to-day existence. In doing so, they squeeze somewhat to the margins the male breadwinner and legal head of household, Frederick. In short, the sources by their very nature seem to sustain two diametrically opposed interpretations. On the one hand, the centrality of Julia in the affairs of the household can be read as suggesting conformity with the conventional stereotype which allocates men and women their separate spheres - the one public and the other private. An alternative reading, and one pursued in this thesis, is that Julia’s absorption in the domestic sphere was deliberate and an expression of her belief in the importance of the family as a site of social transformation.

At one level the dynamics of the Wilding household were the product of the life experiences of Frederick and Julia. Both were drawn from the upper levels of the
provincial English middle class. Their Old World experience, however, could scarcely be described as following conventional paths. Nowhere was this more starkly obvious than in the case of Julia. Her formative years were spent as part of a family which was at the leading edge of progressive thinking on what came to be called the 'woman question.' In 1867 her brother, Charles, published *The Social and Political Dependence of Women*, a tract much influenced by the writings of Harriet Taylor Mill.² And in the years before her departure for New Zealand Julia had used her father's newspaper, the *Hereford Times*, to take up the cause for the enfranchisement of women and for a variety of social reforms. In short, she came to New Zealand with not only the normal cultural baggage of a middle-class English woman but with a sharpened awareness of the embryonic women's movement. And these theoretical positions shaped by the social and political realities of the old world were to inform her life in Canterbury.

In broad terms, Julia's upbringing, discussed in detail in chapter one, may be said to epitomise that of the well-to-do upper middle classes; its emphasis was upon accomplishments and social graces. Together with her older

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sister, Blanche, she received her first formal education at the hands of a governess within the Anthony household. Her natural mother died before Julia was a year old, and while her father remarried within a couple of years, it seems that her step-mother was to play a limited role in Julia's education. Indeed the guiding influences upon her intellectual development came from her two brothers, Charles, the author and social reformer, and Edwyn, a gentleman lawyer, scholar and mathematician. Respectively twelve and ten years older than Julia, their roles in her development naturally grew with the years. The pair were to ensure that their sister was exposed to a much broader education than was then typical. Yet the conventional trappings of the finishing school approach which characterised the education of many women of her social class were there - an emphasis upon languages, a prescribed programme of literary appreciation and the sojourn in Europe to widen musical and language skills. This mixture of the conventional and the exceptional was to become a central strand in the making of the Wilding family.

Migration to New Zealand required adjustments in both Julia's expectations and in the everyday reality of her life. These experiences form the basis of chapters two and three. As the mistress of a newly established household she had to turn her hands to a wider variety of commonplace tasks such as cooking and general household chores. Domestic servants were both harder to come by and
somewhat more independent than their British counterparts. The reality of colonial demography meant that the cluster of female household help regarded as essential in the Old World - general servants, cooks and nursemaids - were the more easily able to marry. The outcome was that most homes in the colony which engaged domestic labour employed fewer servants and there was more familiarity in the relationship between mistress and maid. Negotiating the intricacies of this relationship lay at the heart of household management. While the balance of power in such a relationship always favoured the mistress, it was common for a new and largely untutored mistress to command rather less authority than an experienced one. So it was for Julia. Her capacity to influence the environment of the family she and Frederick were to raise was hinged upon her ability to establish the routines with which she had become familiar as a child. The household at Opawa may well have been named ‘Fownhope’, after the picturesque Herefordshire village Julia so admired, but it was to be some time before the Wildings were to recreate there the world they had left behind. The process of doing so, or at least attempting to do so, was a preoccupation which was to give Julia central place in the household and ultimately shape the family’s development.

The unfolding of the Wilding family history, especially in its private dimension, is largely available to the historian only through Julia’s eyes. She has left behind her a plethora of diaries and correspondence which
offer an unsurpassed opportunity to examine in some detail the inner workings of the Wilding family. The papers reveal a woman with a meticulous regard for detail and a highly developed sense of history. Undoubtedly the most intimate and significant source Julia has left us are the 'Life Events Diaries' she kept for each of her children. In part a record of each child's development, the diaries frequently take on a more reflective, even confessional tone. On occasions, we can glimpse in the jottings a degree of manipulation as Julia reveals fragments of her ambitions for her children. This is especially evident in the case of her eldest daughter, Gladys, and to a lesser extent in the upbringing of her son, Anthony. It is the relationship between Julia and these two children - explored in some depth in chapters five to seven - which provides the clearest view of Julia as mother. In Gladys' diary, for example, we can observe the emergence of a calculated attempt to produce if not a 'new woman' then at the very least a progressive and well read young woman who could take her place in the forefront of society. In Anthony's we can trace the parallel development of what Julia came to call variously the 'noble man' or the 'noble gentleman', a cultured, athletic, informed and above all useful young man.3

The 'Life Events Diaries' lay at the heart of any

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understanding of the Wilding household and chapter four is devoted to exploring their genesis and significance. Taken at face value, they seem to provide evidence that, at the very least, Julia possessed a strongly motivated and powerful voice in family life. Yet such an interpretation is a problematic one. To begin with there is the question of purpose. Why did Julia so dutifully document the development, achievements and behavioural traits of her children? There are certainly literary precedents for such diaries. The most direct and verifiable link to Julia’s diary-keeping is with the writings of the American writer, Louisa May Alcott. In her *Little Men* (1873) the central character, Jo, keeps a diary which focuses on the behaviour of the boys who attend a small private boarding school which she and her husband operate. In this case the diaries were used primarily as instruments of correction. Each week Jo goes through the diary, which she calls ‘her conscience book’, with the boys individually in the hope that the experience would encourage self-discipline and moral awareness.

At times Julia’s diary entries also suggest a concern with discipline and behaviour management. Yet more commonly we are confronted with, if not the celebrations of a doting mother, then at least the quiet satisfactions of a proud parent. There is an undertone of anxiety; a

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sense of responsibility not lightly borne, mixed with a concern to ensure that appropriate standards of behaviour were instilled. At the same time, Julia seems acutely aware that she possessed the opportunity to contribute through her children to the progressive enrichment of society. There is in the management of her children a notable lack of anything suggesting a religious sanction. Duty, as perceived by Julia, is a secular rather than a religious constraint.

The 'Life Events Diaries' also provide a window on the gendered nature of childhood in late nineteenth century New Zealand. It is here, in the diary entries for her daughter, Gladys, that Julia is at her most prescriptive. Nowhere is this more obvious than when the subject is education. Even allowing for the fact that since Gladys was her first child to survive infancy, and that as a consequence Julia had more time to spend with her, the energy invested in her early intellectual training was considerable. The emphasis was on leading Gladys through the reading which would make her the very embodiment of the idealised progressive young woman. In this way Julia could be seen as implementing inside the family an educational programme for her daughter which was designed to allow her to break into whatever sphere of public affairs she desired.

Julia's parenting approach to the boys of the household is, as chapter seven on the education of Anthony makes clear, rather more ambiguous in its direction. On
the one hand Julia eschews the increasingly normal
tendency for the English middle classes to educate their
daughters at home but send their sons to boarding school,
avay from the feminising influences of the domestic
sphere. Her preference, as demonstrated in the case of
Anthony, was for daily attendance at one of the number of
small private schools in the city. Indeed, for all but two
years he and Gladys attended the same school and were
frequently taught in the same class. They consequently had
very similar formal educations. Similarly, the pair shared
a wide range of private tutoring in such diverse
activities as dancing, speech and drama, and sewing.
Clearly then, there was little difference in the substance
of the education given Gladys and Anthony. Where the
difference came was in the intensity which Julia invested
in ensuring compliance. And there developed over time an
almost conspiratorial alliance between Gladys and Julia to
ensure that Anthony applied himself diligently to his
studies. A tendency to boisterousness in her son’s
behaviour was a worry. Julia did not discourage displays
of spiritedness or adventurousness, indeed she thought
them appropriate in boys. What concerned her was that such
tendencies might distract attention from what she saw as
the construction of a cultured, useful and noble man.

It is precisely at this juncture that the role of
sport came to play a crucial role. And in supporting and
encouraging this aspect of her children’s development,
Julia displays a sophisticated understanding of games and
their place in the scheme of things. It could hardly have been otherwise. Sport loomed large in the life of her brother, Charles, and Frederick's prowess in athletics, cricket and rugby was much remarked in the west country. An exercise regime had been central to her own upbringing which had favoured a robust rather than a pampered lifestyle. With these attitudes at the core of her thinking on the value of physical activity, Julia threw herself energetically into the sporting activities of the family. Outside the confines of 'Fownhope' she tended to assume the role of spectator assigned women by the prevailing cult of masculinity within which sport had come to be cast. But she was by no means an uninformed one.

The time and energy involved in child rearing needs to be set against time spent in the day to day management of domestic tasks. And here Julia's meticulously maintained household diaries provide us with a glimpse of the daily routine of an urban middle-class household. As mistress of the household she was the effective manager of the domestic economy. The diaries reveal a concern with the minutiae of daily income and expenditure. In the early years of life at 'Fownhope', before the family was fully established in their new environment, great care is taken to record income generated by the sale of eggs, butter and cheese - the products of the small domestic farm. In all of this, Julia displayed a quite remarkable facility. Beyond maintaining the domestic economy, Julia was also responsible for harmonious household operation. The
closeness of the attention which she paid to the employment of domestic labour is evident from the daily summaries of duties. There was also the perennial problem of retaining staff in a context which allowed a considerable degree of mobility. Like many urban professional households in newly developing cities such as Christchurch, that of the Wildings did not allow Julia to avoid the toil of kitchen, laundry or general household chores. She became a veritable 'Julia of all trades.' Versatility and a careful attention to detail were indeed the hallmarks of her domestic existence. In sum, the picture which emerges is far removed from the stereotypical image of the idle middle-class mistress of the household.

Indeed what we can observe here is a meticulous and diligent woman whose life was scarcely one dominated by a pervasive idleness broken only by the pursuit of personal accomplishments and the languid lounging of the garden gathering. Such a characterisation is wide of the mark in more ways than one. Apart from underestimating the earnestness and individual effort, it is a view which also understates the very real social role played in new urban communities by the emergent professional families and especially the part played by women. The Wilding family very quickly came to assume a central place in the sporting and social life of Christchurch. This owes much to Frederick’s endeavours as lawyer, sportsman and later sports administrator. But as the family’s social role grew
so too did Julia assume a more central role. Some of her newly acquired status was of her own making. As a talented pianist who had trained in Europe, Julia continued to take lessons in Christchurch and, even while the children were quite young, performed publicly. In this way Julia carved out a niche for herself in the social life of the community independent of that which derived from the family's activities. Precisely how much these involvements derive from a desire for personal fulfilment is unclear. What is clear, however, is that the pursuit of them was characterised by the same persistence and sense of secular duty as marked her domestic and family life.

It is precisely at this intersection between individual, family and society that the study of the Wilding family has most to offer the historian. It is a relationship in which the family is the mediating element. Yet it is the dynamics of family life that have proved almost intractable for researchers. On the one hand, the family is customarily seen as the pre-eminent site of socialisation where dominantly feminine values prevail and the cult of domesticity is constructed. In this process, the middle-class family becomes the template for the manufacture of the ideal household to which all should aspire. Conversely, it has been depicted as the foundation stone of patriarchal power. In reality, however, we are not all that certain of exactly how a middle-class family of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century functioned. The study of the Wilding family suggests that
an urban middle-class family was more than the sum of its parts. Its character varied over time and reflected changes in the collective and individual development of its members. It is the interaction within the family which determined the shaping and reshaping of attitudes which were to find expression in more public contexts. And it is in this way that the family as an institution might be seen as having a more widespread impact than has been commonly recognised.

Nowhere is the reciprocal nature of family dynamics more clearly evident than in the very area which did most to shape the public perception of the Wildings - sport. Here Frederick was undoubtedly an enthusiast of no mean ability. Anthony bestrode the international tennis world in the decade before World War One and became, in the words of one historian, the 'first matinee idol' of the centre court. Father and son were New Zealand's most talented sporting family duo. 'Fownhope' was clearly a sports buffs paradise. There was a tennis court, swimming pool, croquet lawn, a stream for boating, space for horses and the freedom of the Port Hills at hand. All of this within walking distance of a growing city. Here was an environment in which talent might freely develop. There were few if any gender differences in the way family members experienced it. Indeed, it might well be the case that the women of the Wilding household - Julia, Gladys

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and Cora - were able to exploit the confidence developed in the private sphere to play a significant role in the expansion of women’s sport from the ‘domestic and garden sphere’ to the public one. And this role was to a great extent aided by the prominence which the family as a whole carved out for itself in the sporting scene.

The Wildings were clearly part of Christchurch’s active, as distinct from leisured, elite. Despite the family’s pre-eminence, they very largely eschewed politics. On the face of it, the decision seems deliberate. Frederick had been an active member of the Hereford Liberal Association and there had been talk just before the couple left for New Zealand of his entering politics. Some spoke of him as a likely future Attorney General in the antipodes. Others predicted higher political honours. Yet for all his considerable involvement in city affairs, most notably in the sporting sphere where he was to the fore as participant, administrator and unashamed enthusiast, Frederick stood apart from colonial politics. By his own characterisation New Zealand parliamentary politics initially held little attraction for someone ‘fresh from the great questions’ which had so absorbed him in Britain. It was his initial view that the ‘best men in the country’ were ‘too much engrossed in making money by professional, agricultural or mercantile pursuits to care much for politics.’

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7 ‘Hereford Liberal Association Presentation of a Testimonial to Mr. Frederick Wilding’, Hereford Times, 28 June 1879, p.6.
not measures’ were, he believed, the watchwords of colonial politics. Whatever modifications he may have subsequently wanted to make to this initial judgement, they did not involve abandoning the position of independent urban radical that he assumed on arrival.

The same could be said of Julia. The views she expounded in the *Hereford Times*, upon the emancipation of women, ‘the tyranny of custom’ and social reform more generally, bore the stamp of somewhat detached reflection.

There was no doubting either her radicalism or the sources of it - John Stuart and Harriet Taylor Mill and her brother, Charles. But she did not see it as desirable or necessary to assume the public platform once in New Zealand. She supported the push for the enfranchisement of women but from a distance. There can be little doubt, however, that she saw her role in the family in political terms. As we have already noted, Julia brought to the task of raising children a very highly developed sense of social duty. Gladys was seen, and not only by Julia, as the embodiment of the new urban, educated woman capable of taking her place in the world of affairs. Anthony was, in some degree consciously being groomed, in Julia’s words, to ‘do something some day.’

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8 ‘Life in New Zealand’, *Hereford Times*, 17 July 1880.


10 Anthony Wilding’s ‘Life Events Diary’, vol.1, 30 August 1884.
mother. Yet the persistence with which Julia sought to prepare both Gladys and Anthony for prominent roles, however vaguely they were defined, suggests a wider social purpose.

Achievement then was linked to the attainment of the greater social good or, as Julia put it, part of a wider 'striving after better things.'" Such lofty goals sit comfortably enough with the highly developed sense of duty which Julia and Frederick had imbibed in the liberal intellectual discourse which characterised English politics in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Like many Liberals, Frederick came to the view that the progressive extension of the franchise did not of itself ensure social betterment or individual liberty. A liberal society was a necessary precondition for a truly liberal government. In this sense, the progressive, middle-class family could become critical to the achievement of the ideal society. The Wilding experience of the New World could be seen as an attempt to work out Old World dreams in what was seen as a more congenial context.

These were very high stakes, especially in a moral and psychological sense. It could be said that they contained the potential for considerable anguish. The tragic early deaths of both Gladys (23) and Anthony (31) left hopes and dreams only partly realised. They also

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11 Typed copy of a note by Julia Wilding about her music, dated January 1924, WFP: 'Correspondence and Miscellaneous Notes Concerning Music 1896-1935', Box 12, Folder 61, Item 142.
offer a window on the interaction between family and community. Here we can observe in the expression of public grief at private loss the way in which the Wilding family had come to embody certain wider community values. Anthony’s greater acclaim as a national sporting hero in the making, and the public nature of his death, at the front at Neuve Chapelle in 1915, produced the greater outpouring of community grieving. The sense of collective loss evident in the obituaries and letters of condolence tell us a great deal about prevailing attitudes to death and the customary ways society had developed for confronting it, but more importantly they reveal much about the place the Wildings had assumed in both local and national consciousness.

The local and national prominence achieved by the Wilding family by the early twentieth century also provides an opportunity to assess attitudes within an urban professional family to the question of national identity. Upon his arrival in New Zealand, in 1879, Frederick had been happy enough to describe himself and Julia as part of a host of newcomers ‘of good social position as anxious as the old settlers to perpetuate in the colony all that is best in English life.’ He noted approvingly that ‘the great bulk’ of New Zealand’s European population had been ‘born and educated in the old country’, and that ‘their constant aim is to make their children as thoroughly English as possible.’

12 'Life in New Zealand', *Hereford Times*, 17 July 1880.
successfully Julia and Frederick realised this objective is by no means clear. In part, this reflects the difficulties inherent in defining what Englishness means at any given time. Certainly the Wildings' definition did not always conform to that of the Canterbury establishment. To the latter, Englishness and Anglicanism were synonymous. Julia and Frederick were rationalists and their refusal to observe the sabbath in acceptable ways won them a degree of notoriety during their early years at 'Fownhope.'

If, however, Englishness may be taken to encompass the desire of the educated elite to inculcate the values of enlightened and cultured citizenship, a love of games and a commitment to the cause of Empire then the answer would clearly be that the Wildings had served the cause well. To say this is not to imply that they were somehow or other Britons in exile always wistfully looking towards 'Home' for recognition or approval. Rather they took pride in the achievements of the colony and their family's contribution to its transition from colony to nation. If the Empire was a family of nations then new societies, such as New Zealand, possessed the opportunity, as Frederick and Julia saw it, to go further along the road to the ideal society. It is at least arguable that in the public and private reaction to Anthony's death, explored in the epilogue, we can see the symbolic convergence of family, community and national aspiration.

In the unfolding of the Wilding family experiences it
is Julia who is our guide. Like most guides, she provides a narrative with its own prejudices and preoccupations and the inevitable 'silences' which accompany personal testimony. Whatever the shortcomings of her 'evidence', there can be little doubt that her record of life at 'Fownhope' provides a richly textured picture of family dynamics in what was an upper middle-class household. In the process of 'striving after better things', as she summed up her desire for social betterment, she also promoted the cause of women. Through her labours, she sought to demonstrate that the family could become, in the hands of a dedicated mother, the site of social transformation and not least in the sphere of traditional gender roles.
CHAPTER ONE

The Making of Julia Anthony

On 24 June 1879 a wedding in the small country church at Tupsley captured the attention of West Country society. The bride was the twenty-six year old Julia Anthony, described by the local newspaper as a 'daughter of the City of Hereford.' The groom was a lawyer and sportsman, Frederick Wilding. The same age as his wife-to-be, he was already beginning to make his way in the district's political and civic affairs. The weather was unkind but as the Hereford Mercury observed:

not withstanding the storms that fell at intervals and the threatening aspect of the heavens, the roads leading to the Church were thronged by members of the higher and middle classes of society, chiefly ladies of whom there must have been over 500, while the church though moderately spacious, being only large enough to accommodate a third of those present, the unsheltered being content to stand their ground in the pretty and well-kept God's acre.

Bride and groom were more than local notables. They were familiar

not only to Herefordians and Herefordshire people but to those reading without the confines of our country - the lady as a distinguished amateur musician at our Philharmonic concerts and daughter of Mr. Charles Anthony, proprietor of the Hereford Times; and the gentleman as a celebrated athlete, rising lawyer, and one of the hon. secretaries of the Hereford Liberal Association - positions which they deservedly won from all classes their highest esteem.¹

¹ The Hereford Mercury and Independent, 25 June 1879, p. 4.

² Ibid.
Julia Anthony is seated second from the left in the back row. On the floor to her right lies Frederick Wilding with 'Snap', Julia’s Yorkshire Terrier. Sitting behind Frederick is his sister, Edith Wilding. c.1877. (Wilding Collection, C.M: Ref.15201)
Within a month the couple sailed on the SS John Elder for New Zealand to make a new life for themselves at Opawa on the fringes of Christchurch, the urban centre of the planned, Wakefieldian Canterbury settlement.

Why such a distinguished pair chose to migrate is a difficult question to answer. Historians conventionally explore the motivations which lay behind acts of migration by weighing the merits of 'push and pull' influences - or the repulsion of present circumstances against the prospects of the new. Uncovering the precise mix in any specific case, usually comes down to an exploration of individual circumstances and expectations, and the climate of opinion informing them. It is this intersection of the private and public forces as they bore upon a single individual which provides the framework of this chapter. By examining the manner in which Julia Anthony experienced life in Britain and her reaction to the world around her, it is possible to come close to understanding why she 'married and came to New Zealand.' In doing so, we see how one educated, middle-class, Victorian woman charted a path through the cluster of ideas which came collectively to group around the 'woman question.'

Through Julia's eyes we also glimpse something of the debate which came to surround the Victorian family. To

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3 Julia Wilding's 'Events Diary, 1879-1908', Wilding Family Papers (WFP), Canterbury Museum Archives (CMA), ARC.1989.124, Box 11, Folder 54, Item 54.

4 The phrase is an adaptation of the title of Alison Drummond and James Anthony's (eds) book: Married and Gone to New Zealand, Paul's Book Arcade, Hamilton, 1963.
some, it was increasingly seen as a straight-jacket constraining women as tightly as the corsets which respectable dress codes stipulated they should wear. Only by shrugging off both could women achieve liberation as individuals in their own right. Others took shelter in the pronouncements of the medical establishment which, by defining women as the weaker sex, depicted marriage and family as their natural sphere. By following the process by which Julia carved out a space for herself along this spectrum of belief, we can observe the gradual construction of a personal philosophy and a vision of an 'ideal society.' Viewed in this light, emigration to New Zealand may be seen as an opportunity to put her ideas to the test, freed, she believed, from the constraints of the Old World.

I

Julia Anthony was born in 1853 in Hereford, a small provincial city situated on the border between England and Wales, to Ann Deyke Anthony (who died in 1854) and Charles Anthony, Hereford branch manager of a family textile business, turned newspaper proprietor and alderman. The

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youngest child in a family of four, she had two considerably older brothers: Charles, (b.1841) and Edwyn (b.1843) and a sister, Blanche (b.1852). She had the good fortune to be born into a family possessing relative wealth, social position and influence. The household which she grew up in displayed all the conventional trappings of an upper-middle-class lifestyle; the full range of domestic servants, private tutors and governesses.

Furthermore, during the early 1870s, when Julia was in her teens, a magnificent new family home was built. Occupied by the Anthonys in 1874, 'The Elms', as it came to be called, was situated on Aylestone Hill, overlooking the city. Set within the midst of five-and-a-half acres of land, it was

a mansion in the classical style: portico, ornamental parapet, figured mouldings, eight lofty reception rooms and all the elaborate offices appropriate to a prosperous Victorian gentleman's residence.

It possessed, among other notable features, a billiard room, a ball room, a music room, stables and a croquet lawn. The Anthonys were clearly a family of substance, wealthy enough to indulge their individual enthusiasms and to enjoy a comfortable, if not luxurious lifestyle.

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7 Cora Wilding, 'Julia Wilding - Notes On Her Life', WFP, Box 36, Folder 168, Item 8, n.d.

8 Armstrong, pp.11-13.

9 Hereford Mercury and Independent, 25 June 1879, p.4.
It was new wealth which sustained the Anthonys. Julia's father, Charles, had made his way in the family clothing business. Born in Hereford in 1803, he was the son of Mary Heddings, a farmer's daughter, and George Anthony, a shoe maker and, later, manager of the Hereford Branch of the family's textile firm. Privately educated until the age of twelve, Charles was formally apprenticed (aged 13) to the family business which, by then, also had branches in Birmingham, Cirencester, Stroud and Merthyr Tydfil. In 1828, when aged 25, Charles Anthony replaced his father as manager of the Hereford branch. Thus, by the early nineteenth century Charles was a member of the newly emerging industrial, middle class which was beginning to carve out a place for itself in the fabric of British society. In what was perhaps an unusual move for a manufacturer, however, Charles Anthony, in 1832, sold his shares in the family business, 'relinquished his job as manager and started a newspaper.' The first issue of the Hereford Times was published on 30 June 1832.\(^{10}\)

The abrupt move into the newspaper world reflected changes in the socio-political environment in which the Anthony's lived. Indeed, the Hereford Times was, in many respects, a by-product of the 1832 Reform Bill which enfranchised an increasingly noisy middle-class electorate. The extension of the franchise, itself, owed much to the promptings of a middle class growing 'impatient and critical of the Government's aristocratic

\(^{10}\) Armstrong, pp.6-7.
incompetence.' As one historian puts it, 'Middle-class Radicals welcomed the Reform Bill as the instrument that would end aristocratic government for ever.' In Hereford, as elsewhere, opportunities opened up by the wider franchise encouraged such interests to find ways of spreading their political message. It was this new and thrusting group which bank-rolled Anthony's establishment of the Hereford Times. In this way, the Anthony family were pushed to the forefront of the middle class drive to 'curb the pretensions of Governments'; 'provide security against the abuse of power' and remove the vested interests held to be controlling the government. Indeed, Anthony's persistent campaign, in the pages of the Hereford Times, for what he saw as 'Liberal principles' and his foundation of the Hereford Liberal Association in the 1860s probably justify calling him, if not the father of Hereford liberalism, then at least, its most persistent advocate.

Wealth and political activism provided a pathway to


13 Armstrong, pp.6, 8, 25-26.

14 Bullock and Shock, p.xxv.

public position. In 1836, four years after launching the Hereford Times, Charles Anthony was elected as an Alderman for the city of Hereford. So began forty-nine consecutive years of involvement in local government which saw him serve six terms as mayor.\footnote{Armstrong, pp.7-15.} The times favoured civic 'boosters' and men with enthusiasms - the railway mania was at its height and smaller population centres were being integrated more firmly into the national economy. And above all else, Anthony was an enthusiast whose desire to give progress a nudge knew few bounds. To him and other middle class reformers 'progress' came to take on the force of a dogma and to be equated with the advance of civilisation. Civic improvement or enhancement came to be seen as but one manifestation of the application of science and rationality to the public domain.\footnote{Hereford Times, 28 June 1879, p.6; 26 August 1911; George H. Sabine, A History of Political Theory, George G. Harrap & Co. LTD, London, 1966, pp.669-674.} Anthony's persistent pursuit of civic reform and modernisation led contemporaries to describe him as 'the father of Modern Hereford.'\footnote{Hereford Times, 28 June 1879, p.6; 26 August 1911.}

Such was the public face of the Anthony family. What of its private dynamics? During the 1850s, when Julia and her sister Blanche were born, Charles was in the thick of local politics and municipal affairs. His commitments both to his public offices and to the Hereford Times removed
him almost totally from the household and family matters. His second wife - Julia and her siblings’ natural mother - had died when Julia was an infant. Charles married his third wife, Maria Archibald, in 1856 but the latter played a limited role in Julia’s development. The widow of a Hereford surgeon, Maria was fifty-one years of age when she and Charles were married and she died in 1875 when Julia was twenty-one. As a consequence the maternal voice was a weak one in the education and general upbringing of the young Anthony girls. The important influences were increasingly those of Charles and Edwyn. Respectively twelve and ten years older than their sisters, the two brothers brought to the task an awareness of the intellectual changes which were slowly making themselves felt amongst the newer middle classes throughout Britain and Europe. As leisured young men, they had, supported by patriarchal munificence, done the grand tour and soaked up the musical and theatrical delights the continent had to offer. It was an experience which coloured their attitude to the education of Julia and Blanche.

In many respects, the upbringing they shaped epitomized that of the well-to-do upper middle classes.

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19 Cora Wilding, 'Julia Wilding - Notes On Her Life.'
20 Armstrong, pp.7-9.
21 Cora Wilding, 'Julia Wilding - Notes On Her Life.'
Julia Anthony c. 1875.
(Wilding Collection, C.M: Ref.15200)
Accomplishments and social graces were given due place. Like most young women of her social standing, Julia received her formal education at the hands of a governess within the Anthony household. Stress was placed upon languages, a prescribed programme of literary appreciation and cultural pursuits. Musical training was accorded a central place. A music tutor was employed and a music room was added to the family home. The two sisters were introduced to London’s theatrical scene and, at ‘The Elms’, were part of the private world of visiting entertainers and musicians. Julia, in particular, thrived in this environment. She became a gifted pianist and played in public concerts given by the Hereford Philharmonic Society. Charles and Edwyn later arranged for the sisters to further their training in Europe. For two years, (1871 and 1872), Julia and Blanche studied music in Germany at the Cologne Conservatoire. It was, as Julia herself wrote at the time, staffed by some of the finest musicians in Europe:

Dr. Ferdinand Hiller, justly famed as one of the most eminent living musicians, is at its head, and Gernsheim and Seiss, both of whom have made their mark in the musical world as pianists - the former also as a composer - are to be counted among its professors.\(^2\)

Julia’s exceptional talents were rewarded by a return visit to Cologne, in 1875, when she was asked by Hiller to perform a Mozart concerto accompanied by the famous

\(^{23}\) Cora Wilding, ‘Julia Wilding - Notes on her Life.’

\(^{24}\) ‘The Musik Fest at Cologne’, Hereford Times, 10 June 1871, p.9.
Cologne Gurrinich orchestra.\textsuperscript{25} The sojourn to Europe gave the two sisters the opportunity not only to refine their musical talents but also to develop their foreign language skills. During their holidays from the Conservatoire, accompanied by a governess-turned-companion, they travelled through Germany, Switzerland, Holland, Italy and France.\textsuperscript{26} The European experience was seen as providing the essential finishing touches to a young upper middle-class woman’s grooming. The creation of a ‘cultivated’ gentlewoman, cultured and refined, widely-read and possessing all the talents and manners considered appropriate for a woman of her social position, was the ideal sought by her brothers.

The making of the Anthony sisters was, however, to go well beyond the conventional trappings of the ‘finishing school.’ Independence of thought came to be prized above accomplishments. And here the influence of Charles and Edwyn was even more critical. The brothers were activists in the public debate of ‘progressive’ issues - nowhere more obviously than on the ‘woman question.’ Their views of women’s role in society, and the importance they attributed to education, led them to draw up study programmes which went beyond the usual literary studies, foreign languages, history, music, drawing and painting. They included mathematics and a range of sciences: physics, astronomy, chemistry, geology,

\textsuperscript{25} Cora Wilding, ‘Julia Wilding - Notes on her Life.’

\textsuperscript{26} Ibid.
geography, palaeontology, mineralogy and botany. Far from being light and frivolous, the reading material they prescribed was demanding, intellectually orientated and scholarly in emphasis. The sisters were led through, among others, the works of Charles Darwin, John Stuart and Harriet Taylor Mill, Thomas Henry Huxley, John Ruskin and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.\textsuperscript{27}

The intensity of Julia’s intellectual grooming was far removed from the superficial nature of that received by most of her female contemporaries. Typically the education of middle-class women skimmed the surface of most topics, failed to examine anything in detail and lacked sustained analysis. The aim of such undemanding training was to provide women with little more than enough knowledge to enable them to engage in ‘polite conversation’ and to become pleasant companions for their better educated male partners.\textsuperscript{28} Unlike the apparently frivolous female creatures which the system routinely produced, Julia clearly grew up in an unusually intellectually orientated environment where politics and current events were discussed and the social theories of

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid.

the day debated. Hers was a cloistered and sheltered world, but it was nonetheless one which nurtured an idealised view of women's role which was at the margins of what contemporaries thought acceptable.

Perhaps more than anyone else, it was her brother, Charles, who stimulated and shaped Julia's developing attitudes to women's place in society. In keeping with the family tradition, he was a prominent member of the Hereford Liberal Association.\(^9\) He was actively engaged in the contemporary debate on a wide spectrum of theories current within nineteenth-century liberal intellectual discourse. In a number of ephemeral political tracts, he championed the fundamental principles of nineteenth-century libertarian thought: protection of individual freedom, social justice, and a humanitarian dedication to ensuring 'the common good.'\(^{10}\) Much of his thinking on these issues was brought together in the 1880s in *Duty and Privilege* and *Popular Sovereignty or Some Thoughts on Democratic Reform*.\(^{11}\) The most influential of his early writings was, however, *The Social and Political Dependence*

\(^9\) *Hereford Times*, 15 February 1878, p.2; 28 June 1879, p.6.


of Women. Published in 1867, it ran to five reprints and established Charles as an outspoken advocate of women's rights.

There was no doubting the source of Charles' ideas - the writings of two British liberal/ radical intellectuals, John Stuart Mill and his wife, Harriet Taylor Mill. He was a persistent disciple of their views on ethics, politics and, above all else, the right of women to vote. Fundamental to the Mills' espousal of women's franchise was their ethical support for equality. A liberal society, John Stuart Mill contended, could not exist while one half of humanity was held in legal subordination to the other. 'Liberty', he believed, 'cannot exist in the absence of the power to use it.'

Much of his work was the result of an intellectual collaboration with his wife and he attributed to her his increased awareness of the 'consequences of the inferior position of women' for society as a whole. It was


33 Hereford Times, 20 November 1909.


36 Ibid, pp.31-58.
Harriet Taylor Mill’s essay, the ‘Enfranchisement of Women’ (1851) which stimulated Charles to write his book on the position of women in society.

In many respects, Anthony’s *The Social and Political Dependence of Women* (1867) may be regarded as an extended paraphrase of Harriet Taylor Mill’s work. In her essay, Mill had argued that the inferior position of women was not only unjust on humanitarian grounds, but also served to inhibit the progress of the human race.\(^37\) She rejected the traditional justification given for the customary exclusion of women from political and public life: that the proper sphere of women is the private, domestic world of the household. It is in her refutation of the argument that motherhood prohibited women from taking on roles outside the home that Harriet Taylor Mill expressed some of her most radical views.\(^38\) Firstly, she claimed that the reasoning applied only to mothers and the state of motherhood should not exclude women from pursuing other occupations. Furthermore, it was unnecessary to legislate against women doing anything other than managing households and caring for children for ‘Where incompatibility is real’, she wrote, ‘it will take care of itself.’\(^39\) In the case of single women without children the maternity argument was clearly obsolete and ‘there is


\(^{38}\) Ibid., pp.103-104.

\(^{39}\) Ibid., p.103.
gross injustice', Mill believed, 'in making the incompatibility a pretence for the exclusion of those in whose case it does not exist.' She concluded her essay by demanding that women be granted 'equal admission to all social privileges; not a position apart, a sort of sentimental priesthood.'

If Anthony adds anything to Mill's views, it is a sharper political awareness, a greater attention to the mechanics of turning the ideas into reality. Accordingly, he dwells more heavily on the franchise itself and the need to implement legislation which would improve the legal status of women. Indeed, the concentration is on the issue of political power:

We have only to consider whether man has a right to assume, directly by seizing all political power, and indirectly by getting under his control all the social laws, the function of determining that sphere.

In his opinion, it was the 'constant reiteration of women's unfitness for politics which [was] the most effective of the many specious devices by which man persuades woman of her inferiority.' The key, as he saw it, to freeing women from the heavy hand of custom and habit was education. If the traditional upbringing of

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40 Ibid.
41 Ibid, p.120.
43 Ibid., p.62.
44 Ibid., p.70.
women could be shorn of its emphasis upon the ornamental rather than the functional or practical, then women would be able to throw off a life of inevitable subservience. 45

Julia Anthony was thus, indirectly exposed to the cut and thrust of debate on the ‘woman question.’ Through Charles’ writings she imbibed advanced ideas about the place of women in society. It was he who introduced her to the view of the Mills and she came to regard John Stuart Mill as her ‘beloved and familiar counsellor’ and as women’s ‘most able and generous champion.’ 46 Thus, Julia came, somewhat precociously, to accept certain theoretical standpoints on the issue of women’s rights. The practical import of this theoretical awareness remains ambiguous. Neither in the education mapped out for her by her brothers nor in her own subsequent writing do we glimpse any preferred future occupation. Our best clue comes when she takes the opportunities offered her and, in the pages of the family-owned newspaper, worked out her own position on the woman question.

II

The Julia Anthony who made her appearance in the columns of the Hereford Times was clearly the product of her environment. A talented middle-class woman shaped in the image of the modern progressivism, as understood by

her brothers, she struck a radical note in her columns. Her first article on women's rights, 'Women's Suffrage', appeared when she was only nineteen years old. She began by nailing her colours to the masthead of the reformists. Courageous women who demanded 'their rights and freedom as human beings and citizens' were, she asserted, no longer condemned as 'unwomanly' and 'bold.' There were, nonetheless, too many still willing to support the worn-out arguments of women's unfitness for active life', their 'inherent disposition for petty and purely domestic duties'...[Yet] we certainly hear less than we did say two years ago - of this and that occupation not being the 'proper sphere' for women.  

The venture into the world of journalism was consistent with her social status in that it was an activity which did not overly stretch the notions of respectability which governed women's participation in the public sphere. The role of social commentator could be pursued within the sheltered confines of the household and thus avoided any involvement with the sordid realities of the 'real' world. The anonymity of the newspaper column, in these days before the by-line, further shielded the writer from public identification. Yet it represented, nonetheless, a greater or more direct involvement with the public domain than the role of anonymous novelist - commonly enough adopted by educated genteel women who


sought a respectable means of earning money.\textsuperscript{49} Moreover, measured in terms of personal development, the \textit{Hereford Times} articles allowed Julia to work out a more independent stance.

It was her column entitled ‘Women - Two Conflicting Tendencies’, which provides the best early insight into Julia’s thinking on the issues which were to become her central preoccupations; marriage, family and individual freedom.\textsuperscript{50} She began by elaborating what was to become the cornerstone of her philosophy, namely that women possessed a natural right to complete equality with men in all areas of life and that they should have the unfettered power to determine their own lives. She saw women as capable of achieving such a degree of liberation but was careful to set limits on the social changes she thought should flow from the newly won freedoms.

Put simply, Julia saw two competing tendencies as existing uncomfortably within the ranks of the contemporary women’s movement. There was the ‘desirable’ struggle for complete legal, political and economic equality with men. Here, the essential elements were: the


\textsuperscript{50} \textit{Hereford Times}, 14 October 1876, p.13.
extension of the suffrage to women, entry to all trades and professions, the equal opportunity for higher education, unrestricted 'participation of women in the bodily exercises of men' and equal rights within marriage. The campaign for improvement in these spheres had already, she conceded, borne some fruit:

More varied and fuller ways of improving and interesting themselves are being granted to women, the barriers preventing their gaining a livelihood are being gradually thrown down, and it is beginning to be generally acknowledged that a woman legally qualified to vote, is morally as much entitled to do so as a man. It is getting to be looked on as an advantage, too, that women should be the companion and helpmate of man, not only a piece of domestic furniture;\footnote{Ibid.}

On the other hand, there existed, she believed, an undesirable tendency to go beyond the achievement of independence and launch an ostentatious attack on accepted standards of morality and decorum.

The distinction between the acceptable and unacceptable elements in the women's movement was clearly tinged with a degree of social conservatism. Self-determination or independence should not, she argued, extend to licence or excess. The 'loose morality' and 'fast style' taking root amongst 'modern ladies in what is called good society' should, she believed, be shunned and traditional standards of female behaviour maintained. There was a degree of ambiguity in this stance and it is not quite clear whether Julia was espousing an idealised notion of femininity or seeking to raise the standard of
male behaviour. 'Many are the forebodings', she lamented, of women beginning to arrogate for themselves that liberty and license after marriage which heretofore men have, with few exceptions, had the discredit of monopolizing. The apeing by women of men's habits and dress, the slang expressions, and the questionable topics of conversation freely indulged in between ladies and gentlemen, all these facts are surely not to be accounted among the good signs of the times."

Similarly, she denounced the increasingly common practice of women 'marrying without love' as an 'undoubtedly dangerous precedent to follow.'

Clearly, 'Women: Two Conflicting Tendencies' is infused with a mixture of progressive and conventional attitudes. What ultimately gives Julia's position coherence is the importance which she attaches to women's education. Indeed, she uses education as a measuring stick against which to gauge the validity of what contemporaries held to be the major tendencies in the women's movement. Those who recognised that the surest way to true liberation lay in women gaining access to the knowledge that would enable them to compete in the world of affairs are depicted as representing the 'legitimate' women's movement. She held the goal of equality of educational opportunity to be one which was consistent with a commitment to the common good. Conversely, she found no space in her legitimate women's movement for those whose concerns she regarded as being grounded in individualism and whose activities and actions she thought were little

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52 Ibid.
more than shallow exhibitionism. Dress reform and other assaults on the constraining conventions of the day, in Julia's view, did not go to the heart of the issue; only the quest for education did that.

In her espousal of women's education, Julia endorsed the thrust of the argument put forward by those seeking to prize open the doors of higher learning. Knowledge would neither make women 'masculine' nor lead them to desert 'the domestic sphere.' It would allow women to freely become more 'useful and sympathetic wives.' It would also prompt women to shun license and covet 'the shield of purity and modesty which every true woman justly regards as one of her most precious possessions.' The pursuit of higher education would not, on the other hand, create a host of 'blue-stocking' type women who wore 'spectacles, are exceptionally prudish in their notions of propriety, and are learned in Latin and Chemistry.' Quite the opposite: 'Prudishness and antiquated notions' were commonly, in Julia's view, 'associated with ignorance and narrow-mindedness' while 'perfect feminineness and purity of mind' commonly came with great mental cultivation and broadmindedness.'

In supporting the push for higher education it was

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54 Hereford Times, 14 October 1876, p.13.
clearly not Julia’s intention to undermine the importance of marriage and the domestic sphere in women’s lives. Education and the opening up of professions and trades to women would enable them to become economically independent. Marriage would thus become a matter of individual choice for women, rather than an economic necessity. Love, not need, would then become women’s primary motivation for marriage.\textsuperscript{55} What she was advocating, in short, was that women should have the right to determine their own lives. They should possess the freedom to choose whether to devote themselves entirely to marriage, motherhood and domestic life or to carve out a career in the public domain or to pursue a combination of both.

Thus, marriage, ‘freely’ entered into, became in Julia’s view, more, rather than less, socially important. In the \textit{Hereford Times}, she set out the qualities she thought necessary for an ideal union.\textsuperscript{56} Her ideas on this topic, as on others, were clearly influenced by the writings of the Mills, particularly John Stuart Mill’s long essay on ‘The Subjection of Women.’ She notes with approval the changing attitudes towards the marriage relationship:

\begin{quote}
The old ideal of marriage - the ivy twining around the oak - the beautiful and helpless woman supported by the intellectually and physically strong man - or again the pattern housewife, who only appears to a
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{55} \textit{Ibid.}, 15 February 1873, p.13; ‘Marriage’, 7 November 1874, p.18; 14 October 1876, p.13.

\textsuperscript{56} \textit{Ibid.}, 7 November 1874, p.18.
studious husband in the light of a pleasant companion
to while away his leisure moments — is gradually
being replaced by an ideal of marriage in which
husband and wife are equals, not indeed, in physical
strength, or intellect either perhaps, but in
cultivation and purposes in life, in which both look
up and respect each other and are bound together not
only by the ties of affection, but also by the force
of mutual aspirations and objects.\footnote{Hereford Times, 7 November 1874, p.18.}

Julia then proceeds to define the prerequisites for such
an ideal marriage. An 'identity of religious conviction
between husband and wife' was the essential ingredient.
'How', she asks, can perfect trust, confidence, and
happiness exist where the subject on which some of the
deepest feelings of our nature are accused, is a tabooed
one, or on which profusely differing views are held?' As
well, there needed to be a compatibility of tastes and
identity of interests and goals in life:

In whatever profession or pursuit the husband is
engaged there should be not only his heart but also
that of his wife. Such a sharing of aims of life,
besides begetting confidence and happiness, would
also probably be the means of increased prosperity

In this 'ideal marriage' the wife, while in a position of
relative equality with her husband, is seen by Julia in a
'supporting' role. She is a 'helpmate and sympathiser',
assisting and spurring on her husband to the achievement
of a mutually defined goal. The husband and wife work as a
team in which each has a different, but equally important,
role. These mutually reciprocal roles did not, she
contended, restrict married women to the household. Rather, marriages should accommodate the talents of both partners and allow both to participate in the public domain. Most women, she conceded, would remain in the domestic sphere, fully occupied as wives and mothers.\footnote{Hereford Times, 15 February 1873, p13; 17 November 1874, p.18; 14 October 1876, p.13.}

Plainly, Julia’s conception of the perfect marriage was an elevated one, grounded less in practicalities as in intellectual concerns. She accepted that such ideal unions would remain rare until women received an education which was equal to that available for men. In much the same way as Harriet Taylor Mill, Julia pointed to the detrimental effect which uncultivated, ill-educated wives could have on their more highly educated and ambitious husbands. The wife who ‘has no qualifications or aspirations to make an intelligent and sympathetic companion’, she wrote, effectively ‘narrows the husband’s mental vision and lowers his tone of thought.’ He becomes, as a result, ‘a purely domestic man, with no interests or ambitions beyond his own hearth and calling.’ The higher and more extensive education of women would eradicate this problem and thus destroy the wife’s ‘docile devotion and sense of inferiority with which a dog looks up to his master.’ When intellectual equality was added to the physical and emotional bonds uniting men and women, marriage would, in her view, be raised to a higher plane.\footnote{Ibid., 7 November 1874, p.18; Harriet Taylor Mill, ‘Enfranchisement of Women’, Rossi (ed.),pp.109-117.}
There was a wider social purpose behind Julia's advocacy of complete equality within marriage. While the achievement of such ideal marriages would tend towards greater individual happiness, looked at in broader terms, they could also be seen to benefit society as a whole. A just society could not exist while women were placed in a subordinate position within the marriage relationship. Here, Julia drew heavily once more on the ideas of John Stuart Mill who claimed that the moral regeneration of mankind will only really commence when the most fundamental of social relations is placed under the rule of equal justice, and when human beings learn to cultivate their strongest sympathy with an equal in rights and cultivation.\(^ \text{61} \)

Like many middle-class reformers of the time, Julia asserted the 'ultimate perfectibility' of humankind.\(^ \text{62} \) She regarded the educated elite as having a leading role to play in re-shaping social relations. Women and men, equal in rights and education, could work together to create a fairer society. Furthermore, highly educated women, in their role as mothers and educators of children, had a special part to play in this process. They could shape and mould the type of citizens necessary to operate in this

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\(^ {\text{62}} \) 'The Power of Realisation', *Hereford Times*, 6 May 1875, p.17.
new society where equality and justice reigned supreme.\textsuperscript{63}

The moral imperatives of Julia's 'ideal society' thus dictated the provision of education for all. She rebuked those who feared that converting 'mechanical and obedient working machines into independent and thinking men and women' would 'unsettle' the lower classes and make them 'discontented and rebellious.' Education would have precisely the opposite effect: it would improve the lives of working people, widen their employment opportunities and create an 'enlightened and educated' working class. Nonetheless, she sometimes justified education for the masses in pragmatic terms. Since 'the future of humanity would soon rest with the masses', it was politically expedient to ensure that it should not be left in the hands of 'an ignorant and prejudiced multitude.' In espousing universal education, Julia was, by her own admission, entering the realms of the Utopian.\textsuperscript{64}

Important as mass education was to Julia's concept of social transformation, she came increasingly to see the family, rather than the nation's schools, as providing the key to the future. To achieve this, she promoted a fundamental shift in society's attitude to the family and to parenting. Here, as in other areas of Julia's writing, she was entering a contentious domain. In the nineteenth century the emergence of new ideas about the role of

\textsuperscript{63} 'Early Influences', \textit{Hereford Times}, 9 December 1876, p.17; 'Education', WFP: 'Press Cuttings 1873-1895', Box 11, Folder 56, Item 56.

\textsuperscript{64} \textit{Ibid}. 
upper-class women in society reinforced the trend towards decreased contact between mother and child. Idleness came to be regarded as the true mark of a 'lady', and an indicator of high social status.\footnote{Frank Dawes, \textit{Not in Front of the Servants: Domestic Service in England 1850-1939}, Wayland Publishers Ltd., London, 1973, p.22.} Upper class women increasingly spent their unlimited hours of leisure pursuing 'ladylike' accomplishments.\footnote{Thomas Caughrón, 'The Nanny in Historical Context.', Paper presented to the International Nanny Conference, Claremont, California, August 21-25, 1986.} In this context, it was common for the contact between parents and their children to be reduced until the point where they saw each other for a short, stated period each day.\footnote{Jonathon Gathorne-Hardy, \textit{The Rise and Fall of the British Nanny}, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1972, p.61.}

In upper middle-class families the separation of children from their parents and the decline of the mother’s position in her children’s lives, paved the way for the Nanny. By the 1880s she reigned supreme in the nursery, in complete control of both the children and the 'full blown panoply of Victorian nursery attendants.'\footnote{Caughrón, p.9.} In many cases, parents confessed to complete ignorance in the area of child rearing and happily abandoned their children from birth to the unfettered power of the Nanny. Not all mothers, however, were comfortable with their loss of power. There were often long drawn out battles between a
mother and a Nanny for control of her children's lives.\footnote{Gathorne-Hardy, pp.74-77.} Julia's call for a strengthening of the maternal role of the mother and a new emphasis upon the 'enlightened parent' placed her clearly on the side of those seeking to redress this balance.

The struggle for control in the nursery merged with a wider debate about the nature of childhood. The pioneer work of Locke and Rousseau had established the study of childhood as a legitimate enterprise. And nineteenth-century educational theorists increasingly, as Mussen observes, 'discover[ed] their own children.'\footnote{Paul H. Mussen, John J. Conger & Jerome Kagan, \textit{Child Development and Personality}, Harper and Row, New York, 1974, p.8.} By close, 'scientific' observation, they sought to verify prevailing views of child behaviour. The result was a rash of 'baby-biographies' which chronicled in minute detail the growth and development of individual children. Charles Darwin led the way with a path breaking study of his young son. And it was Darwin's assertion that by the 'careful observation of the infant and child, one could see the descent of man'\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p.8.}, which drew the link between such studies and evolutionary thinking. In so doing, he provided an argument for those like Julia Anthony who sought to place the family at the forefront of a programme of social
regeneration.\textsuperscript{72}

It is possible to trace the development of her thinking on the role of parents and family in a series of articles which appeared in the \textit{Hereford Times}.\textsuperscript{73} Enlightened parenting offered the means, she argued, of shaping a society capable of constantly improving itself. Beginning with the nature/nurture conundrum, she conceded that nature rather than the family environment often determined whether a person was intelligent or not, 'good' or 'bad.' In most cases however, she insisted, 'infinite good may be secured and infinite evil avoided by a wise and reasonable early training.' Nowhere was the parental function more critical than in the sphere of character training. Inherent moral defects were 'more difficult to throw off' than intellectual ones. It required, she believed, the establishment of 'a morally healthy and pure atmosphere' in which a belief in the need for 'just conduct to all' could flourish.\textsuperscript{74}

Parental example relied mostly on the mother, Julia admitted. Consequently, the maternal role was one which required assiduous development:

Then of what solid benefit to a child are the early precepts and teachings of a tender judicious mother! Instead of being scolded and sharply forbidden to do a thing, to be patiently shown why it would be wrong so to act...to have pointed out that in all our

\textsuperscript{72} \textit{Ibid.}, pp.2-10.

\textsuperscript{73} See especially: \textit{Hereford Times}, 9 December 1876, p.17; 'Education', WFP.

\textsuperscript{74} \textit{Hereford Times}, 9 December 1876, p17.
actions we must consider others and not only ourselves - in fine, the very foundations of true morality can be firmly implanted in a child’s mind by the simple precepts of loving teaching of a wise mother.\textsuperscript{75}

The wise mother’s relationship with her children determined the moral character and conduct, not only of the individual child, but by extension, the wider community of families. The family, in essence, became a microcosm of the larger community. Hence, implicit in Julia’s elevation of the maternal role is the acceptance of a more active and potentially prescriptive parent.

If the nurturing role of the family, and especially the mother, was important in constructing character, it was doubly so in the area of intellectual development. Just as a child absorbed the behavioural patterns of the immediate environment, so also did they adopt ‘the mode of reasoning and methods of discussion’ of the household. The provision of a ‘mentally enlightened atmosphere’ thus became a critical parental role. Such an environment existed, in Julia’s opinion, when parents, rather than dogmatically laying down opinions or theories, ‘reasonably and impartially’ considered ‘all sides of a question’ and encouraged their children to do the same. They would thus be teaching their children not what to think but how to think, thereby equipping them with the skills necessary to think independently and rationally. And it was not, in her view, a difficult task. Children naturally sought the ‘why and wherefore of everything’ and parents, she believed,

\textsuperscript{75} \textit{Ibid.}
should tap this inherent thirst for knowledge and understanding of the world and respond naturally and rationally. Children reared in such an environment were also spared the painful process of discovering that theirs was not the only possible 'mode of thought'. Thus, was the ideal citizen created.\textsuperscript{76}

The notion that the family might become the cornerstone of a reconstructed and refurbished society owed something to the cluster of scientific and biological literature of a broadly eugenic hue which appeared in the years after the publication of Charles Darwin's \textit{Origin of the Species} (1859). As Hobsbawm points out, the mid-nineteenth century witnessed something of a crisis within traditional science.\textsuperscript{77} It was, moreover, a crisis which brought about a fundamental shift in the 'social and political preoccupations of scientists.'\textsuperscript{78} This was especially evident in the fields of biology and those sciences which could be linked, however loosely, with the concept of 'evolution.'

The controversies which stemmed from these intellectual changes became a dominant theme in the radical middle-class discourse in which Julia had been well-schooled. The reading prescribed by her brothers had been a veritable check list of the major participants in

\textsuperscript{76} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{78} Ibid.
the debate: Charles Darwin, *The Origin of the Species* (1859) and *Descent of Man* (1871); Herbert Spencer, *Education: Intellectual, Moral and Physical* (1862); Thomas Huxley, *Theory of the Vertebrate Skull* (1858), *Zoological Evidences as to Man's Place in Nature* (1863), *Elementary Lessons in Physiology* (1866), *Elementary Biology* (1875); Francis Galton, *Hereditary Genius* (1879). It is difficult to tell precisely what Julia made of the intricacies of the evolution debate. What is clear, however, is that she saw society's evolution as being determined not by the conservative dictates of some process of natural selection, but by the application of science and reason to social issues. Similarly, the importance she attached to the family as the site of individual and, ultimately, societal improvement, indicates an optimistic faith in society's capacity to reform itself.

The strongest eugenic strand in Julia's thinking is evident in her discussion of physical development. The centrality of the family and the mother as engaged-parent, led Julia to emphasise the need for physical fitness and maternal health. Similarly, her desire to open up the

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79 Cora Wilding, 'Julia Wilding - Notes on her Life', WFP.

world of work for those women who desired it, pushed her to endorse the arguments for physical conditioning and strengthening which emerged in the 1860s and 1870s as part of the campaign for women’s higher education.\textsuperscript{81} To counter the view that women’s biological weakness circumscribed their capacity for strenuous endeavour, the proponents of change had turned increasingly to science and the middle classes flocked to clinics and health spas to be tended by dieticians and masseuses.\textsuperscript{82} Julia seems to have been aware of such attempts to justify, or to make more respectable, an active life-style among middle-class women. Her endorsement of these arguments was particularly influenced by the work of the British anthropologist and cousin of Charles Darwin, Sir Francis Galton (1822-1911) and Herbert Spencer, ‘one of the fathers of Social Darwinism.’\textsuperscript{83}

While their thinking was to follow different paths, Galton and Spencer shared the basic premise that ‘sex and gender roles were not historical accidents but...prescribed by evolution.’ Each was fundamental to the survival of society and permanent in its form.\textsuperscript{84} Accordingly, both theorists came to be concerned with the ‘science of

\begin{footnotes}
\item[81] Ibid., 15 February 1873, p.15, 9 August 1873, p.17; 7 November 1874, p.18; 14 October 1876, p.13; ‘Education’, WFP; McCrone, \textit{Playing the Game}, pp.192-212.
\item[83] McCrone, p.203.
\item[84] Ibid.; Hargreaves, p.131.
\end{footnotes}
improving stock.' In 1883, Galton gave the name 'eugenics' to the new area of study. It was his work which most influenced Julia. Galton believed that there existed 'a natural hierarchy of the human races that placed Anglo-Saxons above all others.' His early work had 'examined the family backgrounds of eminent men and women' and concluded that 'talent and genius tended to run in families.' He advocated what came to be described as 'positive eugenics' - government encouragement of men and women of hereditary fitness to marry each other. His thinking was based on a 'blending view' of inheritance or the notion that individual human beings were the product of successive blendings of parents and ancestors. There was implicit in this mixture of hereditary and environment, at least to Galton, the fear that successive generations might 'regress towards the norm of the initial breeding population.' As a theoretical standpoint, it created difficulties for Darwinian evolution. If one accepted the 'blending' notion, then no society could throw off the past and provide a source population for the development of a new species. This realisation led Galton and others to place increasing stress upon environmental factors.

Galton's concern with 'improving [the] stock' led him into 'growth studies' and his pioneer efforts stimulated a new interest in physiology and measurement of physical

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86 Ibid., pp.18-20.
development.\textsuperscript{87} It was a development which led both Spencer and Galton to modify their conception of appropriate exercise levels for women. Both initially accepted the conventional biological opposition to women’s fuller participation in more strenuous physical activity. But both came to accommodate the view that moderate exercise was neither incompatible with nor likely to damage women’s reproductive role. McCrone has seen this gradual shift as signalling the emergence of a ‘progressive conservatism’, implying that the changed perspectives were, in part, designed to ward off more fundamental attacks on the concept of Victorian womanhood.\textsuperscript{88} Whatever the explanation, a gradual shift in attitude in middle class circles was underway by the late 1860s and it can be observed both in Julia’s upbringing and in her own attitudes towards physical development.

The new preoccupation with individual physical growth seems to have influenced Julia in two ways. Moderate exercise had been an integral part of her upbringing. Sport had loomed large in the lives of her brothers, Charles and Edwyn, and, by inclination, they favoured a robust rather than a pampered lifestyle. Consequently, they were especially receptive to the push for change in the exercise regimes advocated for young women. They ensured that a programme of physical activity became

\textsuperscript{87} Atkinson, ‘The Femininist Physique’, pp.38-41, pp.75-76.

\textsuperscript{88} McCrone, p.195.
central to their sisters' upbringing. As youngsters, 'Whatever the weather', Julia and Blanche were sent off for a walk through the country lanes with their governess every morning and afternoon.\footnote{Cora Wilding, 'Julia Wilding - Notes on her Life.'} As they grew older, daily horseback rides were added. Moreover, the cloistered environment of the Anthony household provided a safe and secluded setting for Julia and Blanche to be involved in family recreational activities. The enthusiasm of Charles and Edwyn for cricket and later, tennis, proved to be infectious. Julia, in particular, seems from an early age, to have a greater knowledge of the rules and technicalities of such games than was common.\footnote{Ibid., \textit{Hereford Times}, 20 November 1909; 15 February 1919; Armstrong, pp.18-19.} Thus, environmental influences were pushing Julia, whether she knew it or not, into the ranks of the 'conservative progressives.'\footnote{McCrone, p.195.}

Perhaps more consciously or deliberately, Julia built Galton's ideas into a general rejection of the medico-biological arguments used by such medical experts as Edward Clarke and Henry Maudsley in their opposition to women's higher education in the 1870s.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, pp 193-194; Atkinson, pp.41-45.} Ignorance of physiology, she believed, lay at the heart of women's
limited participation in more strenuous physical activity:

Surely, if women had been a little more familiar with the formation of the human body, and a little better acquainted with certain natural laws obedience to which is necessary and conducive to the healthy and vigorous frame, we might have been spared the painful spectacle of women cramping and distorting their figures by tight lacing and other ridiculous health - injuring deformities. 93

Knowledge of the basic physical laws and a more robust lifestyle were justified also as essential for motherhood and the regeneration of the race.

There existed, in Julia’s view, a ‘special necessity’ for the ‘study of physiology for women’ to enhance their traditional role as mothers. 94 Given society’s traditional view that women should have the sole responsibility for the physical welfare of their children, she expressed alarm that:

it is the rule, not the exception; to find mothers perfectly ignorant of the most fundamental and elementary physical laws. We should think that even the most uncompromising opponents of ‘women’s rights’ would admit that the introduction of such a knowledge into the present sphere of women’s education would be entirely beneficial. 95

Such instruction should be an integral part of general schooling; it was an essential prerequisite for the achievement by women of fuller control over their own lives. 96

93 Hereford Times, 9 August 1873, p.17.

94 Ibid.

95 Ibid.

96 Ibid., 15 February 1873, p.13; 7 November 1874, p.18; 14 October 1876, p.13; ‘Education’, WFP.
Viewed independently of her other attitudes, these opinions on maternity and motherhood can be seen, in some ways, as being consistent with the central tenets of the Victorian cult of the family.\(^7\) By this idealised model, the respectable family centred on the man as the 'head of the house' and the woman as wife, housekeeper, childbearer and moral guardian. 'Bourgeois man', as Sheila Rowbotham puts it, was thus 'left "free" to accumulate capital' to sustain family life.\(^8\) Yet to characterise Julia's thinking in this way would fail to do justice to the complexities of her position. Her attitude to the role of mother was, on the one hand, an elevated one which saw maternity as the 'highest function' of womanhood and as essential to the healthy progress of the nation. Yet it was equally, and perhaps more commonly, linked to notions of individual choice. Thus, marriage was to be entered into by choice and not economic necessity. And knowledge of 'natural laws' was seen as possessing emancipatory as well as reproductive benefits.\(^9\) Indeed, for all its ambiguities and its preoccupation with the lives of the well-to-do middle classes, Julia's writing exhibited a concern for individual liberty.

Put in its simplest terms, Julia's 'ideal society'

\(^{7}\) Hargreaves, pp.130-131.

\(^{8}\) Ibid.

\(^{9}\) Hereford Times, 15 February 1873, p.13; 9 August 1873, p.17; 7 November 1874, p.18; 14 October 1876, p.13; 9 December 1876, p.17; 'Education', WPP.
was one which allowed individual talent its fullest expression. Adopting the dictum of the utilitarians, she wanted society to be so constructed as to facilitate 'the greatest happiness for the greatest number.' Customs or modes of thought which limited or constrained human experience were the subject of some thirteen articles which Julia wrote for the Hereford Times between February 1873 and December 1876. Collectively, they spelt out the parameters of the social regeneration and refurbishment which would allow greater individual freedom.

The 'tyranny of custom' she believed to be the single most limiting aspect of the world around her. Nothing, she argued, so limited human achievement as much as the Christian religion. She declared herself to be one of 'A large and daily increasing number' who 'openly repudiate the divinity of the Bible and assert that they cannot any longer reconcile revealed religion either with facts, their reason, or their ideas of justice.' She had particular trouble accepting the picture of the merciful and loving deity depicted in the Bible with the harshness and injustice of his system of future rewards and punishments. The notion of a God who had 'voluntarily created millions of human beings who must inevitably undergo the most fearful and aimless torture in life

100 Ibid., 10 May, 1873, p.17.
101 Ibid., 8 November 1873, p.17, 6 December 1873, p.17; 6 March 1875, p.17; 8 July, 1876; 5 August 1876, p.17.
102 Ibid., 6 December 1873, p.17.
hereafter', was, she argued, frightening. She found it equally difficult to conceive human 'sins' which warranted 'eternal misery hereafter.' Conversely even the 'Heavenly joys' conveyed a 'uniformity and dreariness.' Even in 'Heaven' she protested, one's individuality was 'erased.'

While Julia rejected the fundamental tenets of the Christian religion, she acknowledged that a religion of some sort, a standard to guide one's actions in life, an ideal of greatness and goodness to look up to and attempt to follow is essential to every person who takes a serious view of life.

Religion, however, need not be grounded either on the supernatural or on 'belief in a personal God.' She preferred her personal 'religion of humanity', a shorthand for a philosophy of life which valued the furthering of the happiness and progress of humanity - the regeneration of the human race and the advancement of civilisation.

The 'religion of humanity' was an optimistic endorsement of humankind's capacity to reform itself by rational means. Improvement might be slow but it would happen. The quest for it was as ennobling and exalting a guide to the conduct as any we can conceive. It stimulates and intensifies the highest moral feelings, offers the widest possible scope for the most spiritual (in the largest sense) aspirations and endeavours,

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103 'Scepticism v Orthodoxy', Hereford Times, WFP, Box 11, Folder 56, Item 56.

104 Ibid.

105 Ibid.
and it supplies the foundation for the most exalted conceptions of moral grandeur and perfection.\textsuperscript{106}

Furthermore, unlike Christianity, it was a disinterested faith; 'selfish and personal motives, hopes or fears for future rewards have no place in it.' Those who paid heed to the Christian doctrines, she held, did so not necessarily because they believed them to be morally just but, because they feared of future retribution if they did not. The 'supreme and paramount object' of the religion of humanity, was, conversely, the altruistic pursuit of 'the happiness and improvement of mankind.'\textsuperscript{107}

The happiness of the individual was, in Julia's view, synonymous with that of the community at large. She wished to see society organised in such a way

\begin{quote}
that the interests and happiness of the whole community are treated as identical with those of the individual and the general good should be so inseparably bound together that everyone in acting for his own happiness would also be acting for the common weal.\textsuperscript{108}
\end{quote}

Finding a method of defining the latter would, she accepted, be achieved only by the 'modifying process produced by the freest expression of the most conflicting opinions.'\textsuperscript{109} Rational discourse, or as Julia put it, 'the encouragement of originality and independence of thought.'\textsuperscript{110}

\textsuperscript{106} \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{107} \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{108} \textit{Hereford Times}, 10 May 1873, p.17.

\textsuperscript{109} \textit{Ibid.}, 5 August 1876, p.17.

\textsuperscript{110} \textit{Ibid.}, 6 December 1873, p.17.
and the testing of new ideas, was thus, a precondition of social progress.

There were barriers in the way of achieving the ideal society. The greatest of them, in Julia’s opinion, was the suffocating hold which custom exerted over people’s lives. Opinions adopted and creeds maintained without reasoning or a real knowledge had a tendency to become entrenched. Older societies were particularly burdened by the dead weight of tradition. The slavish acceptance of custom bred a conservatism which placed severe limits on social advancement. And it is here that we can glimpse a degree of frustration intruding upon a fundamentally optimistic outlook. Would British society be able to reform itself or would rational reform be thwarted by a pervasive conservatism? The decision to migrate in 1879 suggests that Julia and Frederick had come to the view that the project of creating the ideal liberal society could be more speedily achieved in the New World.

IV

The Julia Wilding who sailed on the SS John Elder could be seen as embarking on something akin to an extended social experiment. By substituting a new and potentially freer society for the unyielding environment in which she was situated, she sought to improve not only

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Ibid., 10 May 1873, p.17, 6 December 1873, p.17; 6 March 1875, p.17; 8 July 1876, 5 August 1876, p.17.
her personal circumstances but also to provide a fairer testing ground for her views. While she did not express it quite as bluntly as this, it is clear that 'married and gone to New Zealand' was not a venture accepted with resignation as part of her lot in life. Rather, it represented an opportunity, rationally assessed, to build a family life in an environment where the constraints of social conventions upon individuals were fewer and the physical environment was more conducive to a healthy and robust life. In such a setting she hoped to become the active and involved parent helping to bring the individual talent of her children to its fullest expression.
CHAPTER TWO

Married and Gone to New Zealand: The foundation years, 1879-1897

Almost eighteen years after arriving in New Zealand, Julia sat beside her sleeping infant son and penned herself a letter to be opened on her seventieth birthday. Lyrical in tone, it captures a moment of absolute contentment, a point at which she seems, in her own words, to have realised the 'ideal union' to which she aspired.

'0, the joy of love and the joy of life when one has love, full and brimming over. Is it possible to imagine greater happiness than the joy and love of motherhood, interwoven with, and inseparable from the love of husband and father. Here I am sitting at our bedroom window with our darling new baby Edwyn in his cot close by, 10 days old, and the fruit trees in full blossom outside, the sun shining, and the breath and scent of spring coming in at the open window, — and I feel almost too happy. Our other darlings will be in soon...How I love and worship them all, and how the love of them makes the world all bright and radiant.'

'A woman', she went on to declare, 'has not lived who does not know what it is to be a happy wife and mother.' These were the words of a woman blissfully happy in her role as wife and mother. It was, as we have noted previously, a role freely and deliberately chosen. This chapter seeks to demonstrate how the Wildings established a framework in which these choices, and the social objectives which lay behind them, could be fully realised.

1 Letter to Julia Wilding from Julia Wilding, 8 October 1897, 'Cora Wilding Papers', (unsorted collection), Box 4.1, Family and Personal Correspondence, 1880-1970s, Macmillan Brown Library (MBL), University of Canterbury, Christchurch.
The 1880s and 1890s were crowded years for the Wildings and especially so for Julia. There was a household to establish and manage, a way of life to reconstruct and, above all, a family to raise. Julia was pregnant with her first child when the couple reached New Zealand and there were five more before the family was completed in 1897. The childbirth years had begun traumatically: the first born, Frederick Archibald, did not reach his first birthday. The loss was somewhat softened by the subsequent successful negotiation of the perils of infant mortality. Increasingly, Julia became immersed in creating her 'ideal' family. The achievement of this goal rested, in large part, on the couple's ability to reconstruct successfully in the New World the life style they enjoyed in Hereford.

In economic terms at least, the family's fortune depended upon Frederick being able to manage the transition from the known circumstances of the commercial world of Hereford to those of New Zealand. By his background, talents and personality he was well suited to the task. The son of surgeon John Powell and his wife,

2 Frederick Archibald Wilding; 10 March 1880-31 December 1880. See Frederick Archibald Wilding’s 'Life Events Diary', 'Cora Wilding Papers', (MBL); Julia Wilding’s 'Events Diary, 1879-1908', 'Wilding Family Papers' (WFP), Canterbury Museum Archives (CMA), Box 11, Folder 54, Item 54.

3 Marriage Certificate of Julia and Frederick Wilding.
Frederick Wilding c.1879.
(Wilding Collection, C.M: Ref.15199)
Harriet Farmer⁴, he was born on 20 November 1852 in Montgomery, Montgomeryshire, Wales. He was educated at Hereford Cathedral School and the prestigious Shrewsbury.⁵

In an age which prized athleticism and set great store by the harmonious honing of mental and physical attributes, Frederick won special acclaim. At Shrewsbury he excelled as a boxer, rugby player, oarsman, sprinter, cricketer and long jumper. His 20' 6" long jump stood for many years as an English public school record. His sporting achievements continued apace after he left school. He played cricket for Hereford, rowed at Henley, was a member of the West of England Fours and made his mark in the rugby world in the West of England and, according to one commentator, narrowly missed international rank. Contemporaries rated him among 'the best all-round' athletes Hereford had produced.⁶

Frederick was not only a precociously gifted athlete, he also became a noted sport's advocate and administrator. He founded and subsequently became Captain of the Hereford Football Club and was a member of the

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Hereford Amateur Athletic Committee.\textsuperscript{7} Nor was his reputation confined to the dominant sporting spheres. He developed something of a reputation for engaging in unorthodox athletic contests. In 1876 he had accepted a challenge to walk forty miles in better than ten hours.\textsuperscript{8} And in the 1870s he competed in something akin to the modern day triathlon (walk, run, ride).\textsuperscript{9} Such events typically attracted wagers and illustrate the comparative ease with which men like Wilding could and did operate in both rigorously amateur athletic pursuits and those sports whose pedigree was somewhat less pure. More than anything else, however, Frederick’s immersion in the sporting world of his day underlines the full extent of his athletic enthusiasms.

Alongside his burgeoning sporting reputation, Wilding was also making his way in the legal, political and cultural life of Hereford. In 1874 he qualified as a solicitor\textsuperscript{10} and was secretary of the Hereford Liberal Association where he busied himself ‘in the office, in the

\begin{footnotes}
\item[7] 'Hereford Rowing and Football Clubs Presentation to Mr. Frederick Wilding', \textit{Hereford Times}, 28 June 1879, p.3.
\item[8] Newspaper clipping, WFP: 'Press Cuttings', Box 42, Item 3, p.145.
\end{footnotes}
committee rooms, and in the registration courts.'

At the same time, he was actively involved in the amateur dramatic community. In 1876 he secured starring roles in two productions put on by the Hereford Harmonic and Amateur Dramatic Society to raise funds for the Hereford Volunteer Companies. He played 'Roland Pigeon' in *Meg's Diversion* and 'Mr. Henry Higgins' in *Boots at the Swan*. His performances received mixed reviews. One critic noted diplomatically: 'Mr. Wilding's "Henry Higgins" was ever so much better and more natural than his "Roland Pigeon."' Debating, it seems, was more suited to his talents.

There can be no doubt about Frederick's amiable and wholehearted participation in Hereford life. He was a 'joiner', a young man who sought involvement in community affairs.

The Frederick Wilding who sailed for New Zealand in 1879 had been clearly well placed by birth, occupation and achievement to make his mark in the West of England, if not beyond. His local profile was such that there had been talk of a political career. Measured against these prospects the decision to emigrate to New Zealand was unlikely to have been either hasty or impulsive. Indeed,

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11 'Hereford Liberal Association Presentation of a Testimonial to Mr. Frederick Wilding', *Hereford Times*, 28 June 1879, p.6.


13 'Hereford Debating Society', *Hereford Times*, 8 February 1879, p.5.
Frederick took pains to become remarkably well-informed about New Zealand. There was, he acknowledged, a plethora of information readily available for the prospective migrant. Much of it he dismissed as the work of boosters who presented the colony as a rustic paradise where wealth and good fortune were there for the taking. Such accounts, he said, abounded with exceptional instances of great prosperity attending individual colonists; the general reductions are too rosy in their colouring, and the few drawbacks which undoubtedly do exist to life in this much favoured country are not brought into sufficiently striking relief with the many and undeniable advantages.

The Wildings thus chose New Zealand as their new home only after a thorough and careful balancing of the colony’s prospects.

During the steamship voyage out to New Zealand Frederick watched and listened with a mixture of amusement and sympathy as ‘Young fortune seekers in the colonies paced the deck and greedily exchanged aerial castles with each other.’ While some had realistic expectations, ‘the youngsters’, Frederick wrote, seem to imagine Australia and New Zealand perfect El Dorados for youthful muscular Christianity, and that without capital, without knowledge of any trade or profession, “fellows with any get up and go in them”


were bound to get on without any greater efforts than riding so many hours a day in the open country! Poor fellows! a week in any of the colonies rudely dispels the illusion in many cases...'

In contrast, the Wildings, armed with both professional skills and capital, which Frederick declared to be 'absolutely essential' for prospective emigrants, were well prepared mentally and practically for life in the colonies. Indeed, Frederick believed that his legal career could be furthered even more speedily in New Zealand where the qualifying time for admission to the bar was briefer. Prospects were good, he claimed, for 'professional men' of 'real ability.' A young lawyer would experience 'less difficulty in making a practice' in a 'rapidly increasing community like New Zealand' than in a 'stationary' English town. The quest for fulfilment of his personal career, however, was not Frederick's sole motivation in seeking a colonial career. Like Julia, he believed that New Zealand offered better prospects for raising a healthy and successful family. So convinced were Julia's family of the benefits of life in New Zealand that they saw their

17 Ibid.

18 'Life in New Zealand', Hereford Times, 22 May 1880.


20 'Life in New Zealand', Hereford Times, 22 May 1880.

21 Ibid.
emigration as a ‘sacrifice’ that ‘merged into a duty.’

Julia and Frederick Wilding eventually arrived in Bluff, New Zealand on 8 September 1879, some six weeks after leaving Britain. They travelled up from Bluff through Invercargill, Port Chalmers, Dunedin, Oamaru and Timaru and settled in Christchurch a little more than a month later. Their arrival coincided with a deepening economic depression. Suburban land was rapidly falling in value, bankruptcies among the mercantile classes were becoming more common and the labour market was depressed. Growing numbers of unemployed people held meetings in the major towns demanding that the Government provide relief work. In short, a large degree of risk was now involved for those migrating to New Zealand. And in a series of articles for the Hereford Times, Frederick provided a shrewd analysis of a migrant’s prospects in the colony.

Paid employment, Frederick wrote, was scarce. He advised ‘those happy individuals who, in these hard times, are able to hold their own comfortably at home’ to stay

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22 ‘Hereford Liberal Association Presentation of a Testimonial to Mr. Frederick Wilding’, Hereford Times, 28 June 1879, p.6.

23 Julia Wilding’s ‘Events Diary, 1879-1908’, WFP, Box 11, Folder 54, Item 54. Julia and Frederick Wilding left England on 15 July 1879.


put rather than 'brave the possible chance of failure here.' Domestic servants, labourers and farmers, the classes of people most needed in New Zealand, were experiencing problems during the depression. Demand for both skilled and unskilled labour was very low and the 'golden days' when a young man fresh off the boat, armed with nothing but the shirt on his back, could be sure of 'earning his keep' on one of the many sheepruns, were long gone. Indeed, Wilding warned that:

the cruel folly of sending out youths to farm here, without money, without experience, and perhaps, with the tastes and habits of gentlemen, cannot be too strongly condemned. The time when a strong active youngster was welcomed at a New Zealand station to stay and "work for his tucker" as long as he liked has passed away. There is a plethora already of such gratuitous labourers.

Some capital, he declared, was now essential if the transition from the Old World to the New was to be successfully negotiated.

The economic prospects for the lower middle classes were not, in Wilding's view, necessarily better. Competition for the few public positions available in the depressed employment market-secretaryships, work in banks and mercantile houses - was just as keen as that for labourers. And here, newcomers found themselves at a

26 'Life in New Zealand', Hereford Times, 22 May 1880.
27 Ibid., 29 November 1879, p.6.
28 Ibid., 22 May 1880.
29 Ibid.
30 Ibid.
distinct disadvantage when confronted by the second

generation colonial settlers. For as he saw it:

local influence and private friendship are so all
powerful in determining appointments of anything like
a public nature, that candidates recently out from
home, and possessing it may be superior
qualifications to their colonial rivals, have but
faint chance of success.31

Professional men, especially doctors and lawyers, on the
other hand, seemed to fare much better in New Zealand.
While 'on the whole badly paid', they appeared 'to make
pretty good livings.'32 Their English training was highly
valued in the colony. Lawyers possessing sufficient
capital could 'buy into an established practice on rather
easier terms than would be asked in England.'33 A
prospective lawyer without capital would, however, have to
compete with young colonials 'belonging to families of
wealth and position' now flocking to the profession.34
Those with financial backing who wished to start out on
their own would need time to establish the necessary
contacts.

Wealthy individuals clearly stood to benefit most
from the opportunities New Zealand offered. High interest
rates - between eight and ten percent - enabled 'people
with a few thousands of cash' to 'rather more than double

31 Ibid.
32 Ibid.
33 Ibid.
34 Ibid.
their incomes by investing in New Zealand.\textsuperscript{35} Real estate offered the best prospect. Mortgages for property could be raised at nine to ten percent and offered a good investment because 'the tendency of land is to increase in value with the increase of population and the development of the vast agricultural and mineral wealth of the country.'\textsuperscript{36} By Wilding's assessment the newcomer, who took 'ordinary care on real estate', was safer paying nine percent in New Zealand than the four percent then common in Britain.\textsuperscript{37} Given these circumstances, that 'class of people in England' with 'no business or profession, possessed of just a sufficient private income to support them in genteel poverty'\textsuperscript{38} may indeed be able to improve their financial position in New Zealand. In Frederick's opinion, such 'idle people' were far from 'ideal' immigrants. Such people, he cautioned, were 'not happy here, where nearly all are engaged in some pursuit or other.'\textsuperscript{39} Similarly, their less well-off middle-class contemporaries - those persons 'with a fixed income of £ 200 or £ 300 per annum and unable to invest the capital', would also 'be better off in England.'\textsuperscript{40} Professional men,

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., 17 July 1880.

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., 22 May 1880.

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid.
possessing some capital, were it seems, the most likely section of the middle class to benefit from migration to New Zealand.

Thus, even in the midst of an economic downturn, the Wildings, by their own assessment, were favourably placed to make the most of their New World environment. Frederick, at least, was convinced that 'the present bad state of trade' would soon pass because the colony's future rested 'upon the most secure of all bases - millions of fertile acres'.41 New Zealand was, in his view, 'a much favoured country'42 whose prosperity would spread once the depression had lifted.43 Then, he confidently predicted, 'there will probably be no place in the whole world where working men may enjoy greater substantial prosperity than in this colony.'44

It was, however, the colony's essential 'Englishness' rather than rational assessments of its economic prospects which the Wildings found most attractive and it was this perception which had drawn them to New Zealand. Unlike British migrants to Australia, Frederick noted with satisfaction, those who settled in New Zealand retained their national characteristics and no distinct type had developed amongst the second and third generations. The

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41 Ibid., 29 November 1879, p.6.

42 Ibid., 17 July 1880.

43 Ibid., 22 May 1880.

44 Ibid.
'British race' in New Zealand did not, he observed, 'differentiate widely from the parent stock.'

By contrast, he observed, with obvious distaste, in Australia a distinct type of humanity has been already developed, a type too, not of a very engaging description, though 'Corn Stalks' as the young Australians are called, are athletically and mentally up to the average of English youth. As a rule they are taller but slighter than their parents, with perhaps equally good features, but bad, sallow complexions. An Englishman is struck by their lounging, loafing air, their proneness to strange, uncouth slang and a nasal accent, not so pronounced as the American drawl, but most unmusical to susceptible ears. Happily at the present time New Zealand can hardly be said to possess such a distinct type.

Recent British arrivals in New Zealand appeared to Wilding 'to retain the habits and tone of good society at home.'

The maintenance of 'Englishness' was important to the Wildings. Their perception that New Zealand life more nearly approximated life at Home 'lessened the wrench of leaving one's old friends and associations.' In Frederick's view, 'the change from England to New Zealand' was not greater than that 'from Northumberland to Devonshire.' It was the 'constant aim', he claimed, of British born colonists to 'make their children as thoroughly English as possible.' He observed, also, a

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46 Ibid.

47 Ibid., 29 November 1879, p.6.

48 Ibid., 22 May 1880.

49 Ibid.

50 Ibid., 17 July 1880.
tendency for the wealthiest families to

send their sons to Oxford or Cambridge and their daughters to fashionable schools in Bath or Cheltenham. There is, moreover, a constant influx of newcomers from England of good social position as anxious as the old settlers to perpetuate in the colony all that is best in English life.\(^{51}\)

The conflation of English and British which permeated Frederick’s observations was rooted in an unconscious nationalism which frequently formed a critical element of the ideological baggage of English migrants, perhaps more especially amongst the middle classes. Yet the desire to preserve Englishness or Britishness was an objective which came under increasing pressure as the demographic mix of the colony tilted in favour of the locally born. Emergent colonial nationalism was, in later years, to create some anxieties for both Frederick and Julia. In 1880, however, their perceptions were sustainable, if more secure in a middle-class context.

It was the quest for ‘Englishness’ which dominated the Wildings’ earliest assessments of New Zealand. Frederick rejected Dunedin as ‘a money making place’ peopled by ‘canny go-ahead Lowland Scotch.’\(^{52}\) Its principal attraction, he observed wryly, was the failure of the Free Kirk of Scotland to establish its ‘little Presbyterian heaven at the Antipodes.’\(^{53}\) Now ‘all shades of belief and unbelief’ flourished and ‘the onslaught on

\(^{51}\) Ibid.

\(^{52}\) Ibid., 29 November 1879, p.6.

\(^{53}\) Ibid.
revealed religion’ was nowhere ‘pressed with greater keenness than in this strictly sectarian city.’

Dunedin’s Free Thought community was its saving grace. But if Julia and Frederick were ever tempted to make the southern city their home, their first sighting of Christchurch pushed all such thoughts from their minds. They were

at once struck with the English look of everything and everybody. The familiar names of Smith, Brown and Jones strike the eye at every turn, as you are driven briskly along in an excellent hansom cab, driven by a man with a strong cockney accent.

They took special comfort from the fact that streets were ‘named after an English or colonial Bishopric’ and that the city’s business centre was in Hereford Street. ‘A newcomer’, Frederick wrote, ‘must be much struck with the homelike-look of everything and everybody.’ With ‘its beautiful public gardens, museum, theatres, steam trains, and host of cabs’ Christchurch was ‘faintly, very faintly suggestive of London.’ Plainly, if the Wildings hoped to find a better and more congenial England in the colony, Christchurch appeared to represent a good starting place.

The couple’s initial favourable impression of Christchurch strengthened with closer acquaintance. There was enough in the social, cultural, intellectual and

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54 Ibid.

55 Ibid., 27 December 1879.

56 Ibid.

57 Ibid., 17 July 1880.
sporting life of the settlement to sustain their best hopes. Those who liked the social whirl would, Frederick wrote for the *Hereford Times*, 'find more gaiety here than in an English country town of 50,000 inhabitants.'\(^{58}\) There was 'a regular season' not unlike that of London, in which 'dinners, balls and garden parties follow each other in rapid succession.'\(^{59}\) Its highlight was undoubtedly 'Show Week' when all 'the best people within a hundred miles' attended the horse race meetings, agricultural show and the myriad of other functions which made up a grand social week.\(^{60}\) Persisting with his London/Christchurch comparison, Frederick noted that the city possessed 'two capital clubs' similar to those back home

the Christchurch Club, frequented by gentlemen of the best standing, and the Canterbury Club, which is considered slightly lower in social scale. The Christchurch Club has all the accessories of a comfortable London club, and the entrance fee and subscription are rather more.\(^{61}\)

He was less impressed by the two theatres which the town possessed: 'occasionally a good company occupy the boards, but as a rule, the performers are not up to much.'\(^{62}\) He judged the public museum, however, to be 'one of the best in the colonies' and the library was 'a really good one,

\(^{58}\) *Ibid.*  
\(^{59}\) *Ibid.*  
\(^{60}\) *Ibid.*, 27 December 1879.  
where readers of all descriptions, from the students of Darwin and Haekel down to the lovers of sensational novels will find plenty of congenial literature.' 63 Christchurch was clearly no colonial backwater.

In social and cultural terms Christchurch obviously appealed to the Wildings. The city's economic prospects, at least in Frederick's assessment, were equally promising. The 'celebrated Canterbury plains' 64 were a natural asset which guaranteed a stable economic future. Rural wealth had allowed Christchurch to become the most highly developed community in New Zealand. 65 Firmly rooted in the conventional wisdom of the West Country, it was a judgement which saw rural-generated wealth as providing the basis of all progress. Such a view saw colonial economics in imperial terms as supplying primary produce for the British market. In this sense, it was an economic expression of a fundamental Englishness.

Within this ideological framework, the Wildings' assessment of their new home was shaped by a range of personal preoccupations and enthusiasms. Foremost among the latter was an almost obsessive interest in what might loosely be called physical well-being. Before their departure from Hereford they had satisfied themselves of the climatic and environmental suitability of the colony.

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63 Ibid.
64 Ibid.
65 Ibid.
After a few months in New Zealand they pronounced the colony's climate 'very attractive to English people' and conceded that on the whole it deserved 'the high praise which has been bestowed upon it by all sides.'

Christchurch's weather was, nonetheless, 'very changeable': the hot nor'wester brought 'disagreeable days' but 'for the most part' the days were 'delicious' with 'brilliant sunshine...pleasantly tempered with cool invigorating winds.'

The climate augured well for the robust family life which the Wildings sought to create. There were, nonetheless, problems. The 'wretched sanitary arrangements' were a blot on the environment. As Frederick correctly observed, Christchurch had earned an 'unenviable notoriety for the prevalence of lower fever diphtheria and zymotic diseases generally.' Poor drainage was the cause. The city had been built on a swamp and the result, in Wilding's words, was that 'one is everywhere assailed with obnoxious smells.' In Opawa, however, where Frederick and Julia settled, a little over a mile away from the city proper, the air was 'wonderfully

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66 Ibid., 17 July 1880.
67 Ibid., 27 December 1879.
68 Ibid., 17 July 1880.
69 Ibid., 27 December 1879.
70 Ibid., 17 July 1880.
71 Ibid., 27 December 1879.
pure and healthy.'\textsuperscript{72} By the 'profuse planting of trees in the suburbs' and the implementation of a new drainage system the city, he believed, would shrug off its reputation for being a city with bad breath.\textsuperscript{73} On balance, the prospects of Christchurch building upon its fundamental Englishness and providing an environment in which a superior sample of the British race might be cultivated were, it seemed to the Wildings, overwhelmingly favourable.

\textit{II}

In personal terms, the Wildings' analysis of Christchurch and Canterbury as a congenial environment for an English professional family proved remarkably accurate. Nonetheless, the transition from Hereford to Christchurch, which in retrospect may seem to have been achieved remarkably quickly, began slowly. On 18 October 1879, a little more than a month after arriving in New Zealand, Frederick and Julia moved into a rented house in rural Opawa, 'one and a half miles from Christchurch.'\textsuperscript{74} A pregnant Julia set out to establish the household while Frederick prepared to find a space for himself in the local legal profession. Julia was in a position almost

\textsuperscript{72} \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{73} \textit{Ibid.}, 17 July 1880.

\textsuperscript{74} Julia Wilding's 'Events Diary, 1879-1908', WFP.
from the outset to employ domestic servants and men to work around the property, just as she had been accustomed to in Britain.\textsuperscript{75} There was a thoroughness and sober practicality about the establishment of the new home. This was especially evident in the development of a self-sufficient domestic economy: ten hens, one rooster and a cow were purchased during October and November 1879. Julia’s ‘events’ and ‘household diaries’\textsuperscript{76} record matter-of-factly the selling of eggs and butter, jam making and fruit preserving and the growing of fruit and vegetables for sale as well as for household consumption. A steady stream of household goods and implements from Julia’s father undoubtedly aided the Wildings’ process of establishment.\textsuperscript{77}

Indeed, the Wildings’ early years in Christchurch were characterised by careful management, shrewd investment of capital and family support from Hereford. Progress in the local legal world came quickly enough. Less than a year after arriving in New Zealand, Frederick was admitted to the New Zealand bar as a barrister and solicitor of the supreme court\textsuperscript{78} and seems to have experienced little difficulty making his way in the

\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., 25 November 1879.

\textsuperscript{76} Julia Wilding’s ‘Household Diaries, 1880-1936’, WFP, Boxes 1-11, Folders 1-53, Items 1-53.

\textsuperscript{77} For examples see Julia Wilding’s ‘Events Diary, 1879-1908’, WFP, 15 March 1880, 10 May 1881.

\textsuperscript{78} Ibid., 8 June 1880.
profession. In September 1880 he entered into a partnership with Dr Charles John Foster.\textsuperscript{79} Similarly, it was not long before the couple were able to buy their own property. They had arrived with enough capital to purchase a four-roomed cottage at Middleton. They were subsequently to rent it for fifty-two pounds per annum and leased a home in the more picturesque Opawa.\textsuperscript{80} It was there that they bought their own home in 1883.\textsuperscript{81} It seems likely that the purchase was made possible by a £1500 gift from Julia's father.\textsuperscript{82} Whatever the source of the capital, the purchase of 'Fownhope' marks the 'arrival' of the Wildings. Old World, inherited money and professional qualifications allowed them to establish a secure base. The practice of law was to allow them to build a level of affluence which placed them in the upper middle class as identified by McAlloon.\textsuperscript{83}

The 'Fownhope' which Julia and Frederick moved into in May 1883\textsuperscript{84} was a small farmlet situated in a picturesque rural setting on the outskirts of the city. Surrounded by several acres of tree-filled land and meadows for cows to

\textsuperscript{79} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{80} Ibid., 15 October 1881.
\textsuperscript{81} Ibid., 21 April 1883.
\textsuperscript{82} Ibid, 1 September 1882.


\textsuperscript{84} Ibid, 22 May 1883.
Early beginnings. The front view of the Wildings' home, 'Pownhope', with croquet lawn, in Opawa, Christchurch c.1883. (Wilding Collection, C.M.; Ref.15196.)
graze in, the Wildings’ many-roomed two-storey wooden home was stylish, comfortable and spacious. Named after a small village on the Wye near Hereford,85 ‘Fownhope’ was to become the family home. And as the Wildings became more financially secure and the family grew, additions were made to the house.86 The reminiscences of a frequent visitor to the Wilding home create a picture of ‘Fownhope’ as a veritable rustic paradise:

The spacious and comfortable house, with its broad verandas, is situated in the midst of many broad acres, planted with fruit trees and flower beds in great profusion. Close by the broad lower veranda is a grass tennis court, which is the pride of the Wilding pere. Beyond that is the asphalt court with volleying board at back... Within easy distance is the open - air swimming bath, truly ‘a thing of beauty and joy forever.’ This beautiful white stone bath, filled with ever-running crystal artesian waters from the fish pond on the terrace above, is surrounded with a hedge of evergreens. In the summer time this evergreen hedge is covered by climbing sweet peas of varying colour and scarlet poppies. Reflected in the water, these colours give the bath a beauty which is indescribable, while the joy of a cold plunge after a hot ‘five- set ‘go’ was always a feature of Fownhope tennis.

Away beyond the meadow, where amidst the sweet-smelling clover, the cows and horses grazed, and beyond that again the quiet little Opawa River flowed under the weeping willows and the little rustic footbridge on its way to the sea. Cherries, plums, strawberries, raspberries, pears, apples, and gooseberries are here in abundance, and when one is tired of tennis and swimming and eating fruit, then there is the bowling-green or the billiard table for more relaxed effort.87

‘Fownhope’ was clearly a deliberate attempt to recreate the slice of Hereford they had so recently left behind.

85 Myers, p.11.

86 Julia Wilding’s ‘Events Diary, 1879-1908’, 10-29 April 1895, 13 April–3 May 1897.

87 Myers, pp.11-13.
A side view of the Wildings' house with Frederick Wilding and daughter, Gladys, inspecting one of the two tennis courts at 'Pownhope.' c.1890. (Wilding Collection, C.M. Ref.15188)
them.

The purchase and development of 'Fownhope' marked the Wildings' 'arrival' in a variety of ways, not the least of which was the setting it provided for the elaboration of Frederick's obsession with sport as the ultimate expression of Englishness. Nowhere was this more obvious than in the world of cricket. And 'as an essentially English' settlement, Canterbury was, even in the early 1880s, asserting its pre-eminence as the colony's cricketing heartland. 'Every young man who was any good at all was a cricketer', Frederick declared. In many ways Christchurch was something of a sporting paradise. Within months of the couple's arrival he had been snapped up by United - one of the city's leading cricket clubs. It was on the cricket field, moreover, that he established firm and lasting contact with the rising generation of middle-class professionals beginning to make their way in the city. The 'recruiting sergeants' who had sought him out were two young sportsmen, William Pember Reeves and Arthur

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88 'Life in New Zealand', Hereford Times, 27 December 1879.


90 Ibid.

'Fownhope': Top: The view from the back of the orchard. Below: (left) the swimming pool, built in 1890 and reputed to be one of the first in Christchurch; (right) the asphalt tennis court, completed in 1883 - the centre of tennis in Christchurch. (Myers, p.16)
Ollivier. Together the three young men became inseparable cricketing companions practising at Hagley Park four or five days a week after work before walking the several miles home to Opawa. The threesome was typical of the cricketing world in which they moved. As Wilding himself was later to write, they stood in the field alongside men who were to become the nucleus of the city’s civic and professional community. Among their number were solicitors, H.H.Loughnan and Henry Cotterill, W.H.Atack, who was to become the New Zealand Press Association Manager, and P.O.Loughnan, a future Stipendiary Magistrate.\(^2\)

Wilding’s performance on the cricket field established a local, even a national, reputation. In his first year in Christchurch he was selected to represent the province and was to do so continuously for some twenty years. He captained the Canterbury eighteen against Lillywhite’s English eleven in March 1888 and distinguished himself by taking eight wickets for twenty-one runs when England was bowled out for seventy-five in their first innings. His talent as an all rounder saw him become the first New Zealand cricketer to score one thousand runs and take one hundred wickets in first class cricket. In the 1896-97 season, he was chosen to play for New Zealand against the visiting Australian side.\(^3\)

\(^2\) Ibid.

\(^3\) Anthony Wilding’s ‘Life Events Diary’, vol.1, 29 November 1896, WFP, Box 20, Folder 92, Item 1; Fiona Hall, ‘Wilding, Frederick 1852-1945, The Dictionary of New Zealand
Wilding's sporting skill was equally evident on the tennis court. In the Old World tennis was the archetypal middle-class pastime, played behind the hedges away from the vulgar gaze. As a 'garden sport', its potential as a means of social intercourse among the middle classes was well-known. Many years later Frederick was to recollect with amusement his first experience of tennis in this social form. His introduction to the game, as he tells it, occurred on his wedding day in circumstances redolent of garden party rather than sporting contest:

It was on a court shaped like a flattened hourglass, with rackets that were of the dog's hind leg shape, and balls 'as destitute of any coverings as the back of a fashionable actress.' The men wore frock coats and bell-toppers, and the women kid gloves and long sweeping skirts that provided the most embarrassing hiding places for errant balls. Such were the conditions under which the game was played in royal England of 50 years ago.

In the early 1880s the profile of tennis in Christchurch was very much a replica of its English parent. The Wilding tennis courts at 'Fownhope' quickly became a mecca for the city's sporting elite. By 1884 Frederick and Julia's tennis parties were attended by as many as two hundred

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Newspaper clipping: 'Civic Reception to the Visitors, Empire's Prestige in the Game', WFP: 'Press Cuttings', Box 42, Item 3, p.185.
guests."96 Indeed the tennis courts was 'for a long time the centre of tennis in Canterbury.'97 Some writers have gone as far as to dub Wilding 'the father of lawn tennis in New Zealand.'98 Whatever justification such a claim may have, he performed with distinction on the tennis court. With R.D.Harman, he was five times doubles champion of New Zealand between 1887 and 1895 and, with E.Gordon, once mixed doubles champion in 1888-1889.99

Frederick was certainly pre-eminent among the band of Canterbury tennis buffs who presided over the game's gradual transition from social past-time to competitive sport. He was a member of the Cranmer Square Club in 1880 and he represented Canterbury in provincial matches. Such contests were usually held, as Frederick notes, either 'on the day before or the day after' provincial cricket matches.100 Frederick commonly took part in both, a feat which illustrates both his undoubted talent and the extent to which organized sport in Christchurch remained a

96 For example: Julia Wilding's 'Events Diary, 1879-1908', WFP, 6 May 1884, 24 December 1900.


100 Newspaper clipping: 'I Remember Early Canterbury Tennis. Interview with Mr.F.Wilding', WFP: 'Press Cuttings', Box 42, Item 3, p.112.
middle-class preserve.

The timing of Wilding’s entry into the Canterbury sporting scene was critical to his emergence as one of the city’s leading sportsmen. The 1880s was the decade which saw the increasing formalisation of competitive sport. As the urban population grew, the scope for regular and organised sport increased rapidly. Clubs, provincial and colony-wide bodies began to make their appearance. As a consequence, there was room for enthusiasts, who possessed both the sporting knowledge, recognised sporting skills, administrative ability and not least the money and time, to make their mark. And Wilding became one of the most energetic of the city’s sporting activists whose individual social positions and overlapping sporting interests created something of a Canterbury sporting elite. The impact of this group upon Christchurch’s civic life has not yet received its historical due.

Perhaps the group’s most visible monument is Lancaster Park. Its establishment in 1881 was to provide the basis for the city’s sporting development. Wilding was at the forefront of efforts to provide a ground that would not only become the ‘home of cricket and other sports’, but also enable sport’s clubs to become ‘self-supporting’, allow the promotion of ‘sports gatherings’ and provide a venue for visiting overseas teams.¹⁰¹ Indeed, such was Wilding’s belief in the efficacy of sport that when he was

unable to convince his fellow directors that they should purchase what became the South ground he bought the land himself and rented it to them until they finally purchased it in 1900. Establishing Lancaster Park as the city’s sporting centre was to be a lengthy affair which was not satisfactorily achieved until after World War One. Throughout the struggle to secure the ground’s pre-eminence, Wilding remained among its most persistent advocates.\footnote{Ibid., pp.17-24; A.T. Donnelly, \textit{The Late Mr. Frederick Wilding, K.C., Broadcast Tribute, Given from 3YA, Christchurch, on the 13th July, 1945} (Printed copy), pp.1-7, WFP: 'Pamphlets', Box 43, Folder 193, Item 56; Fiona Hall, 'Wilding, Frederick 1852-1945', p.576; Newspaper clipping: 'Save the Park. A Veteran's Opinions. Mr. F. Wilding interviewed', 30 June 1915; 'Playground or Building Site?', \textit{The Sun}; Newspaper Clipping: 'Lancaster Park - History of the Ground: Recollections of Mr. F. Wilding, K.C.'; 'Lancaster Park Debt Extinguished. Cheque Received by Board of Control', WFP: 'Press Cuttings', Box 42, Item 3, pp.140, 156-157.}

Sport did more than establish Frederick as a local figure. It also launched the Wilding family onto the colonial stage. As Greg Ryan has shown, such was the success of Canterbury's cricketing enthusiasts that Christchurch became and has remained the administrative headquarters of New Zealand cricket.\footnote{Greg Ryan, 'Where The Game Was Played By Decent Chaps', pp.121-154.} And as a leading administrator in Canterbury cricket, - he was president of the Canterbury Cricket Association for some 16 years - Wilding was involved in establishing the New Zealand Cricket Council. In the 1890s he served as a council
member and was president in 1896.\(^{104}\) His enthusiasm for athletics led him to play a similar role in the formation and early years of the New Zealand Amateur Athletic Association.\(^{105}\)

In this way sport provides a context which defined the Wildings' place in the public life of the city and, increasingly, of the colony at large. Together with Frederick's expanding legal career, it helped usher the pair into the mainstream of city life and that of the province at large. Sport, however, was more than a past-time, it was a way of life. The Wildings had, as we have seen in the previous chapter, imbibed the games ethic which was making itself felt amongst the educated English middle classes of the Victorian era. Indeed, their belief in human perfectibility had been at the heart of their decision to emigrate. As Frederick saw it, in the New World the opportunities to achieve the ideal marriage of physical and mental development were enhanced greatly. New Zealand possessed the capacity to preserve and improve upon the advantages which he perceived the British race to possess over all others. To Frederick, there existed 'no finer race under the sun than the New Zealand born Englishmen.'\(^{106}\) There was, he believed, an obligation for

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\(^{104}\) Hall, pp.576-577; Neely, p.38.

\(^{105}\) Newspaper clipping: 'Athletic Team Welcome Home', 5 July 1890, WPP: 'Press Cuttings', Box 41, Item 1, 1878-1907.

\(^{106}\) Ibid.
the current generation to make certain that this continued to be so. The simplest way to guarantee this was to ensure that the 'grand old English sports' were preserved as native born Europeans came to dominate the new colony.  

Time devoted to the advocacy of games, as he told officials of the Canterbury Cricket Association, was spent wisely. Community leaders, he suggested:

might devote time and attention to various public matters, they might even dabble in politics, and all sorts of schemes of benefit to humanity, and they might do more harm than good; but in fostering cricket and its best interests they need have no fear but that they would be doing right - they would be fostering the real British sport, that had carried the flag in the tropics, and which sent England's sons to the Arctic and Antarctica.  

Work for the cause of cricket was thus work in the cause of the Empire.

Sport and physical culture was undoubtedly central to Frederick's thinking. It was an attitude widely shared amongst the urban elite of which the Wilding family had become such an integral part. The speed with which the family had found their place within local 'society' took relations at 'Home' by surprise. In 1881, scarcely eighteen months after their arrival in Christchurch 'Clara', an elderly cousin of Julia's living in Manchester, wrote: 'I learn that you are surrounded by the rich & intellectual & have soared far from my sphere, so

\[107\] Ibid.

that the letters of a poor old maid can only be a bore.'

The Wildings had indeed quickly established a network of friends and acquaintances which allowed them to replicate in the new world the broad pattern of their lives in the old. If 'tennis days' attracted the sporting fraternity to Fownhope then, in the traditional manner of the ultimate garden sport, it also provided the setting for wider social intercourse.

Throughout the 1880s the visitors to 'Fownhope' read like a 'Who's Who' of the Canterbury society. To the Wilding home came members of the Rutherford, the Acland, the Torlesse and the Rhodes families. There also and more regularly were the city's leading real estate figures R.D.Harman (with whom Frederick won many tennis doubles titles) and John Stevens (one of the founders of Canterbury Cricket and one of Frederick's team mates). The industrial community was represented by the Andersons whose wealth came from a successful iron foundry. And increasingly the Wildings' social network came to include a cross section of the city's educational and cultural

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109 Letter to Julia Wilding from cousin Clara, Manchester, 25 February 1881, WFP: 'Correspondence to Julia Wilding and miscellaneous 1881-1935', Box 12, Folder 63, Item 63.

110 Julia Wilding's 'Events Diary, 1879-1908.'


community. Gerrit Van Asch, who established the School for the Deaf, became a close friend as did Edward Seagar, the Superintendent of Sunnyside Asylum and advocate of rehabilitation rather than incarceration for the mentally ill.\textsuperscript{113} John Macmillan Brown,\textsuperscript{114} the foundation professor of classics and English at the newly established Canterbury College and C.E. Bevan Brown, the headmaster of Christchurch Boys' High School, also became part of the Wilding circle.

The Wildings were able to find their own niche within this diverse group. The unconventionality and independence which had characterised their thinking in Britain was, in some respects, given freer reign in the Christchurch of the 1880s and 1890s. As non-believers, they stood outside the mainstream of the Anglican establishment. Frederick delighted in the discomfort Sunday tennis afternoons at 'Fownhope' caused those who wanted the Lord's day strictly observed.\textsuperscript{115} He enjoyed even more the surreptitious visits of the Anglican Bishop to smoke a quiet pipe behind the tennis court of a Sunday afternoon.\textsuperscript{116} Both Frederick and Julia nonetheless acknowledged the greater tolerance which

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{113} Sherwood Young, 'Seagar, Edward William 1828-1922', \textit{The Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, Volume One}, pp.385-386.
\item \textsuperscript{114} Cherry Hankin, 'Brown, John Macmillan 1845-1935, \textit{The Dictionary of Biography, Volume Two}, 1870-1900, pp.57-59.
\item \textsuperscript{115} Newspaper clipping: 'Birthday Greetings to Stalwart of Cricket...Prominent in Tennis, Too.', 20 November 1942, WPP: 'Press Cuttings', Box 42, Item 3.
\item \textsuperscript{116} Myers, p.41.
\end{itemize}
Christchurch offered the 'unbelievers' and the willingness of civic authorities to keep the public library and museum open on Sundays. In this respect their arrival in New Zealand had coincided with, what one historian has described as, the liberalisation of Sunday observance. The process had begun in Otago in 1874 and spread quickly throughout the colonies. Hereford had not been so tolerant.\textsuperscript{117}

The Wildings were perhaps a touch surprised at the ease in which they made the transition from Hereford to Christchurch and sought an explanation in what Frederick called the 'freedom of social life.'\textsuperscript{118} Compared with Britain, he believed, New Zealand was

\textit{a young country where there is no overgrown state church rank with time-honoured abuses, where the law of primogeniture and a host of other feudal absurdities which still disgrace the English jurisprudence have been swept away...}\textsuperscript{119}

It was a young country where wealth mattered less. 'Different sets' existed, but they were defined not so much by wealth as by a 'community of tastes, habits and manners.'\textsuperscript{120} As a consequence the colony was largely freed from the 'mad competition in comfortless extravagance which brings ruin on so many an English middle-class


\textsuperscript{118} 'Life in New Zealand', \textit{Hereford Times}, 17 July 1880.

\textsuperscript{119} \textit{Ibid}.

\textsuperscript{120} \textit{Ibid}.\n
Opposition to social pretension and restrictions upon individual freedom were but one expression of the 'liberalism' which had characterised the Wildings' attitude to English society. They were attitudes which drew them into Christchurch's liberal-reformist middle-class circle which grew up in the mid-1880s around the emerging political star of William Pember Reeves. Frederick's initial reaction to New Zealand political life was blunt. It was dull and populated by 'second rate opportunists.' In New Zealand, as he put it:

the best men in the country, as a rule are too much engrossed in making money by professional, agricultural or mercantile pursuits to care much for politics, and the reins of power are thus often left to the control of the selfish, needy adventurers, too ignorant, if they had the will, satisfactorily to discharge the high functions entrusted to them.\textsuperscript{122}

Political contests were about 'men and not measures.'\textsuperscript{123} Consequently parliamentary alignments commonly took the form of the 'ins' versus the 'outs.' Yet, even in 1880, he identified two broad parties: a conservative one 'mainly supported by the large proprietors, the powerful and the greedy class of land speculators and adventurers, and the bulk of the capitalists'; and the 'Opposition' led by Sir George Grey, 'the best abused man in the colony', and based upon the 'working classes and small tradesmen with a

\textsuperscript{121} \textit{Ibid.}, 22 May 1880.

\textsuperscript{122} \textit{Ibid.}, 17 July 1880.

\textsuperscript{123} \textit{Ibid.}
fair sprinkling of Radicals of position and wealth.'\textsuperscript{124} Here he was adopting the characterisation of politics developed, as Edmund Bohan has pointed out, by opponents of Sir John Hall and his followers.\textsuperscript{125} And while the Wildings were never to become political activists, the acceptance of this construction of political events placed them amongst the varied ranks of urban radicalism. In practical and immediate terms this meant throwing their support behind Reeves. The young neighbour and cricketing companion was, as Frederick later admitted, too 'advanced' in his 'political opinions' for 'most of his own social class.'\textsuperscript{126} Indeed, 'only a few of his cricketing friends who knew him best, supported him.'\textsuperscript{127}

The prospect of a political career in the new colony must surely have presented itself to Wilding. He had departed Hereford amidst public predictions that he would return one day as Attorney-General or 'something greater.'\textsuperscript{128} His involvement in Reeves' campaigns brought

\textsuperscript{124} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{126} 'Script of a radio broadcast given by Frederick Wilding on William Pember Reeves', 29 November 1937, WFP: 'Frederick Wilding 1919-1937', Box 43, Folder 194, Item 61 A, p.4.

\textsuperscript{127} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{128} 'Hereford Liberal Association Presentation of a Testimonial to Mr. Frederick Wilding.', \textit{Hereford Times}, 28 June 1879, p.6.
him into contact with like-minded urban radicals. Moreover the Lib-Lab alliance which attained political office in 1890 seemed to offer a congenial political home for such men as Wilding. The political mood, however, changed quickly. The Premier, John Ballance, died, and his successor, Richard John Seddon, had shouldered aside Sir Robert Stout\(^1\) whom Wilding supported.\(^2\) Then, in 1896, Reeves read the political mood correctly and, urged on by his wife, Maud, accepted appointment as Agent-General in London.\(^3\) Thus, by 1897 a political career would have looked less appealing to Wilding. In any case, by now Frederick was firmly established in the local sporting and legal fraternities. Life was full and fascinating.

III

The independence and vigour which can be observed in the public activities of the Wildings is visible also in their shared domestic world. Here, as we have noted earlier, Julia was preoccupied at first, with establishing a household in a new environment. Yet the overlap between the domestic and the public worlds was considerable and


\(^2\) ‘Life in New Zealand’, *Hereford Times*, 29 November 1879, p. 6; Julia Wilding’s ‘Events Diary, 1879-1908’, WFP, 22 and 29 March 1886.

most obvious in the relationship with the Reeves family. 'Pownhope' and 'Risingholme', the Reeves' family home, were adjacent properties and Julia's entry into domestic management and social life was made much easier by the tutelage she received in colonial ways from Ellen Pember Reeves.\(^{132}\) The pair had much in common. Both were cultured and educated women with considerable musical talents.\(^{133}\) Ellen was 'a woman of strong character' whose chief ambition in life was, according to Frederick, 'the welfare and success of her children'\(^{134}\) and she came to assume in her relationship with Julia something of a matriarchal role. Julia found the companionship of the four Reeves' daughters congenial. The Wildings came to be regarded as 'family', and for many years spent almost every Christmas Day at Risingholme.\(^{135}\)

The connection with the Reeves family was, if anything, strengthened when the young Pember married the nineteen year old Maud Robison in 1885. Born in Mudgee, New South Wales, she was the daughter of an Australian banker who had come to Christchurch as the manager of the bank of New South Wales.\(^{136}\) And for the rest of the 1880s

\(^{132}\) Ibid., p.1.

\(^{133}\) Ibid., pp.8, 9, 29, 30, 36.

\(^{134}\) 'Script of a radio broadcast given by Frederick Wilding on William Pember Reeves', WFP, p.1.

\(^{135}\) See Julia Wilding's 'Events Diary, 1879-1908', WFP.

and early 1890s Julia and Maud were constant companions. More than forty years later Maud was to recall for the now middle-aged Cora Wilding, with a mixture of nostalgia and affection, the lazy days she and Julia had spent together at Fownhope: 'Cricket - apples - cider - lawn tennis - bathing pool - dozens of recollections come into my mind where they lay buried.' To Frederick her reminiscences were both more personal and evocative:

Can you imagine the plunge back into the Lancaster Park Days? I feel dizzy with it. You and Will and Arthur Ollivier out on the wicket - we keeping scores with blunt pencils in the stand. No, Arthur was not playing he was coming up and down the steps of the pavilion telling us what would happen next. The fresh, lovely excitement of it...I can see you with your springy step and your silk shirt sending down ball after ball 'till at last you get the wicket and we write it down in our absurd scores which are always wrong.

Mrs Wilding at the tea table with an enormous mug of daffodils in front of her...It has brought such a rush of feeling that I can't be sure whether I am 72 or 22...''

Personal experience aside, Maud's recollection of leisurely times is accurate enough. Julia's 'Tennis Wednesdays' as she called them, became an institution and the site of domestic and social discourse. On Sundays the degree of organisation was sometimes sacrificed as competitions were arranged and a variety of entertainments added to the occasion. At times, as many as 200 guests descended upon 'Fownhope' to enjoy a leisurely summer

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137 Letter to Cora Wilding from Maud Reeves, 30 January 1938, WFP, Box 43, Folder 194, Item 60.

138 Letter to Frederick Wilding from Maud Reeves, 27 January 1938, 31 Pembroke Square, W8, WFP, Box 43, Folder 194, Item 60.
afternoon playing tennis, croquet or bowls, swimming in the crystal clear artesian water of the family pool or simply lounging on the sidelines listening to music or engaging in idle chat.\textsuperscript{139} Julia was commonly enough called upon to host entire visiting sports teams. Many an international cricketer was to make his lawn tennis debut at 'Fownhope.' Often timed so as to coincide with major sporting fixtures, Julia's 'music and tennis' parties became a feature of the city's social and sporting calendar.\textsuperscript{140}

Tennis was an admirable setting for a woman to make her mark in society. It was a respectable past-time able to be pursued privately. The tennis afternoon, nonetheless, provided a launching pad for a gradual involvement in the public sphere. It was but a short step from domestic tennis to spectating at the Cranmer Square Tennis Club, sitting in the ladies' pavilion at Hagley Oval or keeping the score at Lancaster Park.\textsuperscript{141} More visible still was involvement in public fund-raising ventures. Given the rudimentary nature of the sporting scene, there was much scope for middle-class women to fill the auxiliary role of volunteer helper. And, throughout the 1880s, Julia became heavily involved in organising fetes

\textsuperscript{139} Myers, p.13.

\textsuperscript{140} See Julia Wilding's 'Events Diary 1879-1908.'

\textsuperscript{141} Newspaper clippings: 'Prominent Men in New Zealand Cricket. Frederick Wilding.'; 'Obituary. Mrs Wilding', The Press, 29 August 1936, WFP: 'Press Cuttings', Box 42, Item 3, p.102.
for tennis and cricket clubs.\textsuperscript{142} She took her turn in operating the ‘tea tent’ at Lancaster Park and clearly supported Frederick’s sporting activities.\textsuperscript{143} Making the tea, raising money and recording scores were clearly not playing the game, but such activities provided a social lubricant which smoothed the way for women, with obvious talent, to expand what we might call their zone of participation. Measured in individual terms, involvement in the social and sporting life of the city brought Julia a wider acceptance and something of a public profile.

Apart from the expanded social role which Julia naturally assumed as the wife of a successful lawyer and sportsman, her involvement in the public sphere did not go beyond that which she had experienced in Hereford. She put aside the budding career as a writer on social issues which she had begun in the \textit{Hereford Times} and, in doing so, limited her direct involvement in the emergent suffrage movement. Privately her opinions and attitudes were to help strengthen the resolve of such radical activists as Maud Reeves. The latter subsequently acknowledged that it was Julia who, by introducing her to ‘a little book’ written by her brother (\textit{The Social and Political Dependence of Women}, 1867), provided ‘the first eye opener I had on the subject of women’s suffrage. From

\textsuperscript{142} For examples see Julia’s notes on the organisation of the Lancaster Park Pete held on 14 November 1885 and the Cranmer Square Tennis Club Pete held on 14 April 1894, WPP, ‘Correspondence to Julia Wilding and Miscellaneous’, Box 12, Folder 63, Items 168 and 170.

\textsuperscript{143} See Julia Wilding’s ‘Events Diary, 1879-1908.’
the moment I read it I knew that it should come and I worked for it in both New Zealand and Britain.'¹⁴⁴ Family concerns came to dominate Julia's existence. This did not of course mean that she eschewed all independent activity outside the confines of the family. Rather such individual engagement in the wider world as Julia permitted herself was seen as complementary to her promotion of the family as the fundamental building block of a better society.

Within this broadly self-denying ordinance Julia nonetheless possessed the talent and the social opportunity to establish a name for herself in the world of music. She played an active part in the forming of a 'musical club' which met for recitals in the homes of its participants.¹⁴⁵ Growing directly and naturally from the tennis and musical afternoons at 'Fownhope', the group was an assembly of men and women drawn from the sporting, legal educational and intellectual circles of the city.¹⁴⁶ From this base, Julia established her musical credentials and began to perform as a piano soloist in public concerts. In 1889 she pursued her interest more vigorously and began to take fortnightly lessons¹⁴⁷ with F.M.Wallace,

¹⁴⁴ Letter to Cora Wilding from Maud Reeves, 30 January 1938.


¹⁴⁶ See WFP: 'Music', Box 12, Folders 57-60, Items 57-137.

¹⁴⁷ Julia Wilding's 'Events Diary, 1879-1908.'
the conductor and musical director of the Christchurch Musical Society. A cousin of the noted English composer, Sir Alexander MacKenzie, Wallace was arguably the dominant figure in the city's musical world, and his insistence that Julia perform in a series of Chamber Music Concerts in the winters of 1893 and 1894 marked her arrival on the local music scene. A music critic described her performance as 'brilliant' and as possessing 'a beautifully crisp touch' coupled with an 'artistic intuition' which was 'enjoyable to the true lovers of music.' Subsequently her services were sought out by such notable composers as the Australian, Alfred F. Hill.

IV

By taking as our vantage point that moment in October 1897 when Julia sat alongside the newly born Edwyn, we have been able to tease out in broad terms what 'married and gone to New Zealand' meant for the Wildings. Whether

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149 Invitation for subscriptions to a series of chamber music concerts from F.M. Wallace, 1 June 1893, WFP, Box 12, Folder 59, Item 96.

150 Newspaper clipping: 'The Chamber Concert Series', 15 September 1893, WFP, Box 12, Folder 61, Item 143.

measured in terms of material or personal advancement, the foundation years in Christchurch clearly exceeded the couple’s best hopes. The change involved a greater transformation in Julia’s life than in Frederick’s. The relative freedom which the life of an upper middle-class young woman with impeccable local family connections entailed, gave way to the more constrained existence of wife and mother. It was no idle existence and, while freely chosen, it involved a re-ordering of priorities. Put simply, Julia’s zone of participation in the public sphere expanded in the social and sporting sphere and shrank in the political or polemical. Nowhere is this more obvious than on the ‘woman question.’ In the pages of the Hereford Times she had adopted the suffrage issue with a proselytizing zeal. By contrast, she was scarcely visible in the campaigns which saw New Zealand women achieve the vote in 1893. Behind the scenes she quietly assumed the role of encourager and advisor. The family had now become her major preoccupation and the domestic world the absorber of her energies.
CHAPTER THREE

*Mistress of the Household*

Julia Wilding was the mistress of 'Fownhope' for more than half a century. Through her household diaries we can observe her development from a largely inexperienced immigrant newcomer struggling with unfamiliar circumstances and lacking the support of family and friends to a confident and competent mistress of the household. The transformation did not simply come with the efflux of time. Rather it stemmed from a conscious and sustained attention to the task at hand. In short, Julia brought to the role of mistress the same drive for rationality and order that marked her wider approach to life. Industry and efficiency were the key elements to an approach which is as far removed from any notion of the idle Victorian woman as it is possible to imagine.

Historians examining women’s lives in colonial New Zealand have, of course, long since recognised the incompatibility of the 'domestic ideology associated with the Victorian "leisured lady"'\(^1\) and the realities of life for most women in a new and raw society. A perpetual shortage of domestic servants meant that few women, irrespective of class, status or financial position, were

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able to escape the drudgery of manual labour. To date the focus of historical research has been upon married rural women - the pioneer settler’s wife running a modest but self-sufficient household. The predominant image that emerges is of the ‘useful woman’ - Raewyn Dalziel’s ‘colonial helpmeet.’ These women were the lynch-pin of a domestic economy. They managed small households, participated in day to day household chores and raised their families. Their labour was ‘essential to the business of colonisation’ but it did not, as Dalziel points out, ensure that women were seen as ‘essential as individuals.’ Rather, women came to be defined in terms of their occupational roles of ‘wives, mothers, homemakers and housekeepers.’ Yet if recognition of women’s domestic labour was hard won, conversely, there was little scope

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3 Toynbee, pp.90-92; Dalziel, p.59.

4 Dalziel, p.57.

5 Ibid.
for the notion of the idle woman to take root. Indeed, as Macdonald points out, even in those early colonial households which employed servants, there was little probability of an 'idle or leisured elite' emerging. Mistresses in such domestic settings 'lived in greater comfort and enjoyed more leisure than the women they employed' but their lives remained full ones dominated by 'cooking, sewing, nursing and managing the household.'

If the 'useful' or essential woman dominates the historiography, the notion of the idle Victorian woman makes its appearance in the person of the 'station lady.' Nowhere is this stereotype more fully developed than in Stevan Eldred-Grigg's *Southern Gentry.* By his account, station ladies lived a life of languid idleness: 'She supervised her servants, strolled in the garden, bred heirs and acted as a hostess.' Such 'ladies might pat at bits of pastry', but 'none of them performed any really hard housework.' Some may have filled their lives with philanthropic and charitable work and served on

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6 Macdonald, p.120.


innumerable committees" but they and their husbands remained 'fundamentally leisured and gentlefolk' who 'could drop their self-appointed tasks whenever they chose.' Rich runholders' wives are thus presented as embodying the essential characteristics of the domestic ideology of idle Victorian womanhood.

Thus, have historians erected two stereotypical colonial mistresses of the household - the active, engaged colonial helpmeet and the 'idle station lady.' Both are derived from the pioneering phase. Neither, however, has much direct relevance to the realities which confronted Julia Wilding. As a member of Christchurch's urban professional middle class, which was reaching its full flowering in the 1880s and 1890s, she would appear to stand, in wealth and circumstance, somewhere between Dalziel's 'colonial helpmeet' and the station lady of Stevan Eldred-Grigg's *Southern Gentry.* To define her place on this spectrum we need first to turn our attention briefly to the Victorian ideal of middle-class womanhood - its elaboration, its limitations and its relevance to the life of the professional classes of urban New Zealand.

British historians writing in the 1970s, shortly before Eldred-Grigg, similarly saw a convergence between 'ideal' and the reality of life for the Victorian middle-class woman. They characterised her as a passive, idle and functionless creature whose role in the family and within

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society was a purely ornamental or decorative one. Increased prosperity enabled middle-class families to employ a growing number of domestic servants. Simultaneously the separation of the work-place from the home rendered middle-class Victorian married women 'idle and redundant.' As Frank Huggett puts it, their 'new-found wealth made it unnecessary' for women 'to work outside the home and the ready supply of cheap labour made it equally unnecessary for' them 'to work within it.' Freed from the drudgery of the household, and anxious to use their newly won wealth as a springboard up the social scale, middle-class women strove to imitate the perceived life-styles of the upper classes. Thus the construction of an elaborate household, replete with all the 'paraphernalia of gentility', dominated the lives of the aspirant middle classes.

The search for status was accompanied by the elaboration of a new concept of femininity and a new domestic ideology. The life of the leisured lady was held up as the ideal to which middle-class women should aspire.


17 Branca, p.6.
'Ladies did not soil their hands with household tasks'\(^{18}\) - that was what servants were for.\(^{19}\) Instead, the 'perfect lady' merely supervised her servants, bred heirs whose day to day care was left to nurses, nannies and governesses, and 'secured the domestic comforts'\(^{20}\) for the male head of the household. She was the 'angel in the house', charged with the responsibility of providing 'a sanctuary of well-ordered comfort and peace'\(^{21}\) for a husband who spent his days in the 'cruel harsh competitive outside world.'\(^{22}\) She became, as Branca has written, 'the guardian of morality, the citadel of respectability.'\(^{23}\) Indeed, the daily life of the middle-class Victorian woman 'has been dismissed as a "mass of trifles"'\(^{24}\) and very largely ignored.

The stereotype has been subjected to critical reassessment. In her seminal work, *Silent Sisterhood: Middle Class Women in the Victorian Home*, published in 1975, Patricia Branca contends that, in their dismissive treatment of middle-class women, British historians have

\(^{18}\) Huggett, p.11.

\(^{19}\) Dawes, p.24.


\(^{22}\) Branca, p.7.


created a construed practice from ideology.\textsuperscript{25} By belittling the middle-class woman they have ignored both the importance which contemporaries attached to the role of the middle-class mistress of the household\textsuperscript{26} and the reality of these households.\textsuperscript{27} Most middle-class Victorian families could afford only one domestic servant - a 'maid of all work.' Her presence was not sufficient to free the mistress of the household from the drudgery of household work. In Branca's opinion, the 'sheer physical labour involved'\textsuperscript{28} in caring for a large home and family, as well as maintaining the newly established middle-class standards of living, required the full participation of the mistress. She rejects totally the 'pampered woman of leisure' and sees the typical middle-class mistress as occupying a position at the hub of the household, an 'active agent'\textsuperscript{29} in a demanding and diverse enterprise:

Within the context of the family, her role was not only functional but central and crucial. One could not possibly understand anything about the Victorian family without understanding the woman in the family, who nurtured it, who managed it, who comforted it. In her role as mistress of the house, in her relationship with domestics and most importantly, in


\textsuperscript{26} Branca, Silent Sisterhood, pp.22-33.

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., pp.47-57.

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., pp.53, 56.

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., p.22.
her role as mother, the middle-class woman of the nineteenth century defined herself.\textsuperscript{30}

Branca's study focused on household mistresses on a limited income - families struggling to maintain their current social positions. How far her generalisation holds good for wealthier and more socially secure women is problematic. Studies of somewhat wealthier women, however, counsel caution against dismissing such mistresses as 'ornamental', 'incompetent social butterfl[ies].'\textsuperscript{31} Here the argument emphasises not so much participation in the household management as involvement in socially prescribed philanthropic activity. As American historian, Daniel E. Sutherland, for example, has argued:

Incumbent upon the wealthiest and most leisured ladies was the obligation of assuming duties outside the home. Ladies were civic and social leaders, humanitarians and altruists. Temperance meetings, charity bazaars, and organizations promoting relief of the homeless and indigent all demanded a lady's attention.\textsuperscript{32}

Whatever motivations led individual 'ladies' to engage in such activities, the outcome was the same. They were drawn outside the home and required help in the household.\textsuperscript{33} The lives of the aspirant middle-class mistress and her richer counterpart might be equally, but differently, busy. The

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., p.144.


\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., pp.12-13.

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., p.13.
stereotype of the idle decorative Victorian woman clearly stands in the way of coming to grips with a fuller understanding of the diversity of such women's lives.

I

Julia Wilding's experience as the mistress of 'Fownhope' underlines this diversity. Her conception of her place in the household was based securely, as we have seen, on a freely chosen and clearly articulated acceptance of a domestic, rather than a public, role. It was a task embraced with all the thoroughness and earnestness which one might normally associate with a paid career. Nowhere is this more clearly seen than in Julia's meticulously detailed 'household diaries' which she kept from the time of her arrival in New Zealand until her death in 1936.34 They reveal the rhythm and texture of domestic life and daily routines within the Wilding household. Business-like in tone, the entries record daily, weekly, monthly and yearly household consumption and expenditure, the amounts of butter churned, eggs laid and sold, jam-making and the preserving and selling of fruit. They chart also the comings and goings of servants and workmen, the duties they performed and wages they were paid. As journals of record rather than reminiscence or reflection they tell us little about the trials and

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tribulations involved in running a home. Yet, despite their silences, the diaries reveal Julia's centrality in the affairs of the household. As mistress of the household, she was a veritable mistress of all trades: household manager, domestic worker, employer and supervisor, financial administrator/accountant and farm manager. Recording all this in meticulous and business-like detail constituted, as Miles Fairburn has commented about the diaries of an itinerant labourer, both an act of financial and personal accounting. Whatever their purpose, the fulfilment of these 'domestic duties' called for a conscientious commitment and persistence - attributes scarcely consistent with the prevailing mythology.

There was, however, an apprenticeship to be served. And here the past could weigh heavily upon a relatively youthful and inexperienced colonial mistress bent upon replicating Old World practices. In Hereford, for example, Julia had enjoyed a comfortable, if active, existence in a large household staffed by a generous number of servants who took care of every aspect of the domestic routine. Julia's mother and later her step-mother, as mistress,

35 Millen, p.84.


gave instructions to a housekeeper, who in turn, coordinated the work of all servants, dealt with financial accounts and generally managed the household. In this context Julia was rarely called upon to do any cooking or household work. Nor did she have much in the way of direct dealings with the domestic staff. It is possible that after the death of her step-mother, in 1875, Julia and her sister assumed the position of joint-mistress of household. Any experience she may have gained in this role, however, was limited and it is more likely that the housekeeper was called upon to assume more responsibility than was normal.

Thus did Julia Wilding arrive in New Zealand, in 1879, devoid of housework or cooking skills and inexperienced in the art of household management. She was faced with the responsibility of reproducing an English professional class household and lifestyle in an environment somewhat more constrained than that which she experienced in Hereford. In this respect, she was following in the footsteps of such notable middle-class female migrants as Jane Maria Atkinson and Sarah Courage.38 There was less money, domestic servants were in short supply and equipment was hard to come by. It was a challenging situation which called for versatility and adaptability. Experience was, indeed, hard won.

The shock of learning on the job was softened in a number of ways. There were household manuals such as Isabella Beeton’s *Book of Household Management*\(^{39}\) to pour over. Neighbouring household mistresses like Ellen Pember Reeves might be consulted. Yet, Julia, like all new mistresses, was very much on her own. 'Events' and 'Household' diary records show that she approached her task, as she did everything else she undertook, with a mixture of earnestness and energy. We may date the beginning of Julia’s career as Mistress from 18 October 1879 when the Wildings rented a house at Opawa 'one and a half miles from Christchurch.'\(^{40}\) It was here that the pregnant Julia set about establishing her first household. She arranged their home, organized the kitchen and dairy, purchased furniture and set about obtaining the tools and implements necessary to run a small farmlet. Then she procured farmyard animals - a cow, calf, poultry and pigs, and helped Frederick and their 'odd-job man' establish a vegetable garden and orchard.\(^{41}\) Above all else, the settling-in phase revealed Julia’s practical-mindedness and thoroughness: a brief, bare entry in her household


\(^{40}\) Julia Wilding’s 'Events Diary, 1879-1908', WFP, Box 11, Folder 54, Item 54.

\(^{41}\) For examples see Julia Wilding’s 'Events Diary': 27 October 1879, 29 October 1879, 8 November 1879, 19 December 1879; 'Household Diary' for 1880: 20 January 1880, 22 January 1880, 10 May 1880, 9 June 1880, 11 June 1880.
diary for 18 June 1880 recording the purchase of a ‘Book on pigs’ is followed a week later by the equally stark entry: ‘Bought 2 pigs 20/each £2.0.0.’ An entry on 2 September 1880 shows Julia committing herself to six dress-making lessons. Similarly, she was forced to cope in the house without domestic help for more than a month; shopping, cooking, cleaning and performing all necessary housework herself. Life was clearly busy but orderly.

Three and a half years after the creation of this first household, the Wildings purchased their own home, ‘Fownhope’ in Opawa and the process of establishing a household had to be repeated. It was, however, a less arduous procedure than the first. Julia had gained valuable experience in setting up a home and the task of purchasing animals and domestic implements, tools and furniture had already been completed. Nevertheless, she was kept busy arranging furniture, organizing the kitchen and dairy as well as directing the tradesmen she had employed to do alterations to the house soon after they had moved in.

Now the process of managing a household started in earnest. Julia set about imposing a firm domestic routine. In doing so, she began to appreciate more fully the

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42 'Household Diary' for 1880: 26 June.
43 'Events Diary': 18 October 1880-25 November 1880.
44 Ibid., 21 April 1883, 22 May 1883.
45 Ibid., 22 May 1883; 'Household Diary' for 1880: May to August.
demands of her position. As mistress, she was responsible for controlling the household budget, framing the domestic routine and supervising the servants. In sum, the harmonious and smooth operation of the family’s domestic world was in her hands. Potentially, she controlled every minute detail of daily domestic life. And, as Julia soon discovered, the key to achieving and maintaining order lay in the establishment of rigorous procedures. Fundamental to this was careful accounting and monitoring of family consumption and expenditure.  

In short, the ideal mistress needed to be a 'superb administrator' with a 'mastery of managerial skills.'  

Julia approached the procedural aspects of her position with her customary efficiency. She recorded in meticulous detail daily income and family expenditure. With great care she set out 'every shilling and sixpence' spent with accompanying weekly, monthly and yearly totals. Initially she even went so far as to provide a cumulative analysis of the total yearly expenditure into quarterly sections. As well, every pound of butter churned, every egg laid and later sold, were subject to the same systematic attention. Such records reveal a high degree of

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46 Branca, Silent Sisterhood pp.22, 53; Dyhouse, pp.27, 32-33; Lewis, pp.7-8; Sutherland, pp.11, 89.

47 Sutherland, p.12.


49 See, for example, the list of total yearly expenditure in the 'Household Diaries' for 1881 and 1882.
mathematical ability, skilful accounting and, above all else, minute attention to detail. 50 By such means, Julia was able to trace every shilling of household income and expenditure. Sophisticated procedures like these would seem to sit uneasily upon the shoulders of a young and inexperienced mistress. They clearly lay at the heart of household management 51 and, when pursued with the earnestness and energy which Julia invested in them, represent a salutary corrective to the notion of the idle or decorative Victorian woman.

Julia's personal and highly developed sense of duty should not lead us to see her as standing apart from common experience. It may, indeed, be more accurate to locate her approach to running her household firmly in the mainstream of Victorian middle-class practice. Patricia Branca, for example, has argued that in Britain the "detailed planning and careful keeping of accounts became the norm for the middle class in running their households as in their businesses." 52 In her view, the outcome was the creation of a veritable new science - 'domestic economy.' 53 The latter was underpinned by a myriad of household management manuals offering advice and instructions on financial management for the novice mistress. They urged

50 Branca, Silent Sisterhood, p.29.
51 Ibid., pp.22-26.
52 Ibid., pp.25-26.
53 Ibid., p.25.
the Victorian household mistress to keep 'an account of all her daily expenditures' so as to make it possible for a woman to 'look at her financial situation as a whole and in detail.' Only by these means, the writers claimed, could a mistress hope 'to take the mystery out of managing finances.'

At the centre of the theory of 'domestic economy', hand in hand with accounting, was budgeting. Indeed, as Branca makes clear, it was the budgetary aspect which gave the new 'domestic economy' 'the appearance of being an exact science.' The stress laid upon frugality and careful use of resources was aimed particularly at a lower middle-class audience - households struggling to maintain their social position. The Wildings were more secure economically than Branca's families, but it is clear, nonetheless, that Julia's household records were a model of their kind and consistent with the new domestic economic science. Above all else Julia and Frederick Wilding, it seems, put their faith in rationality - the capacity of the individual by intellectual application to systematize and organize their private world.

Julia's adherence to the more formulaic aspects of domestic management paid dividends in terms of increased authority in the household more generally. All family

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55 Ibid.
56 Ibid.
expenditure passed through her hands. Frederick provided the money to run the household but it was Julia who determined how this money was allocated. She monitored consumption and expenditure\(^{57}\), regulated stores and provisions\(^{58}\) and supervised general maintenance. She also continued to see to it that farm animals were fed, eggs collected, cows milked, butter churned and produce sold. It was she who hired, fired, paid and instructed domestic servants. Moreover, in many ways she acted as Frederick’s ‘personal assistant’; she maintained his subscriptions to sports clubs, ordered his newspapers and books and ensured that his public life went as smoothly as possible by planning and organising his wardrobe.\(^{59}\) No aspect of household activity escaped the mistress’ attention. Together knowledge and control of the purse brought power.

Julia’s managerial style was characterised by two apparently contradicting tendencies - relative affluence and an inherent frugality. In the establishment phase the family outlays were especially substantial ones. Between their arrival in September 1879 and the year’s end more

\(^{57}\) Dyhouse, p.27.

\(^{58}\) Sutherland, p.89.

\(^{59}\) For example: ‘Household Diary’ for 1880: ‘30 January -Tobacco 60d.’, ‘7 May - Subscription to Debating Society £1.1.0’, ‘3 July - Trousers Cleaned 40d.’, ‘17 September - Years Subscription to Canterbury Cricket Club £2’, ‘14 October - County Athletic Club £1’, ‘8 November - Repair Clocks, & Fritz’s watch £1.14.0’; ‘Household Diary’ for 1881: ‘6 May - Cricket 50d., Tobacco 1s.0, Repairing hat of Fritz’, ‘8 June - Subscription to Tennis Club £2.2.0.’
than £300 was spent, largely on household furniture. Expenditure reached its peak in 1880 as more than £1000 was spent establishing Frederick’s legal practice. Until 1896 household expenses commonly ran at between £500 and £650. Thereafter the combined pressure of providing for the upbringing and education of children and employing a growing number of servants pushed total yearly expenditure beyond £1000. The success of Frederick’s legal practice undoubtedly explains the relative ease with which rising costs were absorbed. But Julia’s frugality and careful accounting played their part. The careful husbandry of resources was an essential ingredient in the methodology propounded by the new ‘domestic economy’ which, as we have seen, shaped household management techniques. In Julia’s case it seems likely that we are observing a convergence of personal preference and recommended practice. By temperament and rational decision she put substance ahead of style: waste was anathema to her.

The spurning of ostentation in household management was strengthened by the determination of the Wildings to

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60 List of expenditure for 1879 in ‘Household Diary’ for 1880.

61 List of total expenditure for 1880 in ‘Household Diary’ for 1880.

62 Lists of total yearly expenditures in ‘Household Diaries’ 1881-1897.

63 Lists of total yearly expenditure in ‘Household Diaries’ 1903-1916.

provide an ideal environment for their children. It was a commitment which put demands on the family's resources. Reduced to purely monetary terms, this preoccupation can be measured in the growing slice of household expenditure devoted to the educational, cultural and physical development of their children. Quite aside from money spent providing a challenging physical environment at 'Fownhope', the Wildings commonly devoted more than £60 a year specifically to enhancing their children's experiences, even in their youngest years.\(^65\) It was an investment which grew steadily as the children reached their teens and sharply as the oldest moved beyond school to university. In 1903, when Gladys was twenty-two and Anthony was twenty years of age, the Wildings devoted £490.10.0 to helping their children. Family support remained at this level for many years and peaked in 1905 at £690.15.0 when the eldest were in Britain, Anthony studying Law at Cambridge and Gladys on a social visit. Sustaining the return 'Home' of the two Wilding siblings pushed yearly household and family expenditure to £1651.7.0, its highest level since the Wildings' first full year in Christchurch.\(^66\) Thereafter, money allocated to the children seldom fell below £150 and was normally in

\(^{65}\) See total expenditure lists in 'Household Diaries' for 1880, 1892, 1894, 1895, 1896, 1897, 1898.

\(^{66}\) See list of total expenditure for 1905 in 'Household Diary' for 1905.
excess of £200 a year.\textsuperscript{67} Such expenditure was not, of course, the product of Julia’s independent decision but followed considerable family deliberation. Whatever her precise part in the larger and perhaps abnormal expenditure, the role of keeper of the books ensured that Julia was an active rather than passive participant in the process.

The zone of expenditure in which Julia possessed most independence, however, was the determination and payment of wages to household staff. It was an area which grew as family demands increased. In 1880 Julia spent a total of £52.8.6 on wages.\textsuperscript{68} By 1884 her wages’ bill had more than doubled to £105.18.4.\textsuperscript{69} It continued to hover between £105 and £110 for more than ten years.\textsuperscript{70} Then in 1898, paralleling expenditure on the family itself, the amount jumped to £125.11.0 and continued to rise until it reached a high of £285.10.0 in 1905.\textsuperscript{71} Thereafter, the total expenditure on wages fluctuated between £160 and £235.\textsuperscript{72}

\textsuperscript{67} See lists of total yearly expenditure in ‘Household Diaries’ 1906-1917.

\textsuperscript{68} See list of total yearly expenditure in ‘Household Diary’ for 1880.

\textsuperscript{69} See list of total yearly expenditure in ‘Household Diary’ for 1884.

\textsuperscript{70} See list of total yearly expenditure in ‘Household Diaries’ 1885-1898.

\textsuperscript{71} See list of total yearly expenditure in ‘Household Diaries’ for 1898-1905.

\textsuperscript{72} See list for total yearly expenditure in ‘Household Diaries’ for 1906-1918.
The increasing cost of home-help stemmed primarily from a growth in household staff numbers, but also from changing market forces. While always scarce in New Zealand, the shortage of domestic servants grew more pronounced in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and household workers were able to command higher wages. Nevertheless, with an increasingly secure income from Frederick’s legal practice, Julia was rarely under financial constraints in her negotiations with domestic servants.

II

The smooth, harmonious operation of the household, however, depended not only upon meticulous accounting but even more crucially upon the skilful management of household labour. Julia was not only responsible for hiring and paying servants but also for managing and supervising their work. And the Wilding household staff was sizeable for an urban professional family. Most commonly the family employed two female live-in domestic servants - a nursemaid and domestic servant. A male general hand was permanently employed for gardening and maintenance work around the property. Casual labour was hired for specific tasks such as fruit picking and tree felling. For extra 'hands' were also taken on during

73 For examples see 'Household Diary' for 1880: '21 June Man for Pruning', 7 July 'Man for killing calf 2.6', '17 July Man for cutting Hay.'
especially busy phases of family or social life.\textsuperscript{74}

Without a doubt, it was the co-ordination of the household staff that both pre-occupied Julia and gave her most concern. By its very nature, her relationship with domestic workers was personalized and there was considerable familiarity between mistress and maid. Consequently, her own character and temperament largely shaped household industrial relations. Negotiating the intricacies and tensions inherent in the relationship between a small group of individuals working in a private and confined setting lay at the heart of household management. An array of time-consuming strategies had to be developed if family life was to pass smoothly. Julia, as a new, inexperienced mistress and mother, largely cut-off from any wider family support, initially found the task of managing servants challenging. In this predicament she was not alone. Dealing with domestic servants, in New Zealand as elsewhere, came to be seen by the middle classes as an enduring and debilitating 'problem.'\textsuperscript{75}

The major determinant of household dynamics was undoubtedly the individual mistress' capacity to cope with her 'domestic duties.' Skill and experience in performing

\textsuperscript{74} For examples see 'Household Diary' for 1892: '8 April - Eva Kerr for afternoon and evening 3.6', '28 May 1892 - Eva for evening 2.6 (tennis, dinner, music evening.)'

\textsuperscript{75} Paula Hamilton, 'Domestic Dilemmas: Representations of servants and employers in the popular press', S.Magarey, S.Rowley and S.Sheridan(eds), \textit{Debutante nation: Feminism contests the 1890s}, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1993, pp.75-76.
and managing household tasks gave a mistress the confidence and authority which enabled her, for the most part, to command the respect and obedience of her staff. Knowledge was power. A versatile, experienced mistress was also the better equipped to keep a supervisory eye on her staff. Competence and confidence were essential attributes in circumstances which frequently dictated that a mistress work alongside her servants. The process of acquiring them was often painful. At first, Julia tried to minimise her direct involvement in household duties, leaving the heavier work to her servants. The Wilding household’s urban context allowed Julia to lessen the workload of her general servant by employing part-time assistants and, at the same time, camouflage her own inexperience. Specialist staff could be brought in readily enough for particular duties. A washing woman, for example, came in to do the laundry once a week.76 Extra servants were also employed on a temporary basis when the Wildings hosted large social functions. Bread and other baking was purchased from a bakery rather than made on the premises.77 There were

76 See for example 'Household Diary' for 1880: ‘Saturday 10 January - Mrs Fudge for washing 11.0’, Saturday 17 January - Washing (Mrs Fudge) 6.11.’ ‘Washing’ features in Julia Wilding’s records of total yearly expenditure as a category in itself, separate from that of ‘Wages.’ (See ‘Household Diaries, 1880-1880-1936.’) Washing was, therefore, clearly not included among the servants’ duties at ‘Fownhope.’

77 Expenditure at the bakery was entered by Julia Wilding into the ‘Household Diaries’ weekly - for example: ‘Monday 5 [January 1880] - Bakers Bill 2.3’, ‘Monday 12 [January 1880] - Bakers Bill 2.0’, ‘Monday 19 [January 1880] - Bakers Bill 2.6.’ Expenditure on baking featured as a category in the total yearly expenditure lists
nevertheless many occasions when the sheer volume of household work overwhelmed her general servant and then Julia, somewhat nervously, had to join the front line.

Like her servants, the colonial mistress, as Julia was to find, had to be adaptable. While there was less work to be done on the miniature farmlet on the urban fringes of Christchurch than on an isolated farm or sheep station, there was still much to be done. Domestic duties included sewing, cooking, cleaning, butter making, feeding hens and collecting eggs. And the level of Julia’s involvement in the more physical labour could increase without warning when normal household arrangements were disrupted. If a servant left suddenly or was ill and Julia had difficulty securing a replacement, it was she who filled the gap in the workforce. On days when there was butter to be made or spring cleaning to be done Julia often worked alongside her servants. Similarly she often found herself in the thick of preparations for the increasingly frequent social occasions at ‘Fownhope.’ The level of Julia’s involvement also varied seasonally. At the height of the summer when the ripening fruit in the orchard needed to be picked, stoned, preserved, or made

separate to that of ‘Wages’, thereby indicating that baking was not included amongst the servants’ duties. For examples see the record of total yearly expenditure for 1880 in the ‘Household Diaries’ for 1880, 1881, 1882, 1883, 1884.

78 Cora Wilding’s ‘Life Events Diary’, 15 November 1888-4 April 1931, WFP, Box 35, Folder 162, Item 1, 10 June 1905, 6 December 1906; Letter to Julia Wilding from Gladys Wilding, 23 June 1905, 11 July 1905, Shoreham, England, WFP, Box 35, Folder 162, Item 1.
into jam, Julia was often forced to lend a hand. In such circumstances there was ample opportunity for her inexperience or lack of skill to be exposed.

Throughout these awkward learning years Julia’s household diaries remain cryptic and matter-of-fact in tone. There is little sense of the anxiety which pervades the reminiscences of other colonial women thrust into the role of household manager. The experience of Sarah Courage, the mistress of a remote rural Canterbury homestead who arrived in New Zealand in 1864 as a nineteen year old with one child, may be taken as representative of the ‘anxious’ mistress. Her relationship with her household staff could be depicted as a power struggle, with Courage on one side attempting to assert her authority and control and the servants, in turn, defiantly standing their ground, relatively safe in the knowledge that in the working sphere they were superior to their mistress. Mrs Bacchus, the cook, resented suddenly having a novice like Courage giving her orders and proceeded to show her disapproval by burning meals and by adopting a resentful silence. Similarly, the nursemaid, Jane,

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79 Courage, pp.1-19, 117.


proved anything but servile. 'If asked to help', Courage complained, 'she sighed like a steam valve and did it with a bad grace. It was terribly uphill work.' Such open defiance, Courage acknowledged, demonstrated 'that servants as a rule feel contempt for a mistress who knows nothing. "Missus was inexperienced and expected too much", they would say, "and they knew their business". ' It was, as another harassed mistress, Lady Barker, author and wife of a 'life-style' runholder near Whitecliffs in the 1860s, has written, necessary 'to know how everything should be done; it is not sufficient to give an order, you must also be in a position to explain how it is carried out.'

Experience was hard won and lack of it clearly tilted the balance of power away from the mistress. The age of both the mistress and maid was thus often crucial in determining the balance of authority in the household. Julia Wilding, at 26, was seven years older than Sarah Courage when she assumed the mantle of mistress. Her domestic servants were, perhaps fortuitously, usually young girls or teenagers. Skill came largely with age and

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82 Ibid., p.48.

83 Ibid., p.75.


experience and few urban servants stayed in domestic service long enough to accumulate much tradeable skill. It was rarer for urban servants consciously to exploit the 'skill gap' in efforts to enhance their wages or conditions. Thus, from the start, Julia possessed an element of authority over her servants which only age could bring. Moreover, Julia possessed advantages over all rural mistresses, younger or older: she had neighbours to turn to. Ellen Pember Reeves at 'Risingholme' was especially helpful. It may well be that it was to her, rather than her diaries, that Julia poured out her anxieties.

The age gap increasingly allowed Julia to build a benevolent and maternalistic relationship with younger maids, many of whom were away from home for the first time. Perhaps, as a mother of two daughters herself, Julia felt an instinctive maternal concern for the welfare of young servant girls living under her roof. But if maternalism was, in part, a product of the youthfulness of servants, it was often sustained by a wider relationship with a servant's family. From the outset when 'Grace and Sarah Mills came to us as general servant and nurse', Julia seems commonly to have employed sisters. At times, when a servant left abruptly and there were problems

86 'Household Diary' for 1880: 20 April 1880; 'Household Diary' for 1913: 'Wednesday 12 February - Sadie and Nellie Clancy came as housemaid & under'; 'Household Diary' for 1914: '8 September - Jessie and Lizzie Hay came.', 'Thursday 29 January - Johanna & Alice Cavanagh came as Cook & housemaid.'
getting a replacement, a servant’s mother helped bridge the gap.\textsuperscript{87}

The fact that, in the urban context, many of her servants’ families lived close by heightened Julia’s sense of social obligation and responsibility towards her employees. When servants were ill, Julia usually arranged their return home - although this could amount to their loss of a job for a replacement was usually found for them.\textsuperscript{88} And she freely conceded to parents the power to summon daughters home immediately in times of family crises, illnesses or deaths. On 6 November 1882, for example, Julia was forced to part with Clara Henley, a nurse who was ‘leaving on account of her father’s illness.’\textsuperscript{89} Similarly, on 4 August 1913, Julia recorded in her household diary the death of her servants’ (Sadie and Nellie) mother. The entry was followed the next day by another: ‘Sadie went home by the early train.’\textsuperscript{90} Clearly the hiring of younger servants involved reciprocal obligations for both mistress and maid.

\textsuperscript{87} For example - ‘Household Diary’ for 1893: ‘Tuesday 17 January - Annie Welsh [a servant] was taken away to Sunnyside. Lillie’s [nurse] mother came.’


\textsuperscript{89} ‘Household Diary’ for 1882.

\textsuperscript{90} ‘Household Diary’ for 1913.
Whatever the source of Julia's concern for her servants, it made her task as mistress of the household more complicated and time-consuming. In September 1880, for example, she persuaded Frederick to represent her nurse, Sarah Mills, in a court case in a successful attempt to secure wages owing to her from a former employer.\textsuperscript{91} She took another nurse, Clara Henley, to the dentist and paid for her treatment.\textsuperscript{92} Servants' birthdays were noted in Julia's household diary\textsuperscript{93} and they occasionally received a present from their employer. Sarah and Grace Mills, nurse and general servant, each received a dress from Julia in 1881.\textsuperscript{44} Acts of kindness and concern such as these went far beyond Julia's responsibilities as an employer. They may, of course, be depicted more cynically as a means of instilling loyalty among servant ranks by creating a sense of obligation. Undoubtedly the realities of the labour market encouraged thoughtfulness, but it would be a harsh judgement to cast Julia's dealings with her servants in this light. There was more concern than calculation in her actions. This is not to imply that Julia's dealings with her servants were devoid of either artifice or middle-class moral judgement. What they do suggest, however, is that the specific circumstances of

\textsuperscript{91} 'Household Diary' for 1880, 4 September.

\textsuperscript{92} 'Household Diary' for 1882, 12 April.

\textsuperscript{93} For examples see the 'Household Diary' for 1882: 15 October and 14 November.

\textsuperscript{44} 'Household Diary' for 1881.
Julia's household may have provided fewer opportunities - even for an employer determined to exploit them - for the extension of a mistress' authority.

As mistress in an urban setting Julia plainly possessed less scope than her counterpart on an isolated country station for exercising moral suasion over an individual servant. A mistress like Frances Caverhill, on a station household north of Christchurch95, could more freely attempt to mould and shape her servants' lives according to her own middle-class standards of behaviour. She gave them religious instruction96, reading, writing and arithmetic lessons,97 weighed them regularly98 and dispensed unsolicited advice on personal matters.99 She sought also to instil frugality in her servants by personally taking them to the bank to deposit their savings.100 Sarah Courage was, perhaps, even more

95 Jo-Anne Smith, 'Caverhill, Hannah Rebecca Frances', Dictionary of New Zealand Biography - Volume One, pp.75-75.

96 'Frances Caverhill's Diaries 1851-1896' (22 volumes), CMA, Boxes 1-5, Folders 1-22, Items 1-22. For examples see entries for Sunday 30 July 1860 and Tuesday 14 October 1860 in Diary for 15 April 1857-26 July 1857 and 1 June 1860-12 February 1861, Box 1, Folder 4, Item 4.

97 Ibid., Diary for 25 February 1873 - 31 December 1873: Thursday 23 October, Box 3, Folder 13, Item 13.

98 Ibid., Diary for 1 January 1874 - 30 December 1874: Saturday 21 January, Sunday 19 July, Friday 2 November, Box 14, Folder 14, Item 14.

99 Ibid., Diary for 25 February 1873 - 31 December 1873: 11 May.

100 Ibid. For example see entry for 22 April 1873.
deliberate in her attempts to mould and shape her younger and more submissive servants to fit her middle-class notions of respectability. She disapproved of her servant, Rose’s taste for ‘cheap novels’ \(^{101}\) and ordered her to burn them, telling her ‘it was a waste of time reading such rubbish and offered to lend her some cheerful instructive books if she was fond of reading.’ \(^{102}\) Courage also instructed servants on how to dress respectfully and according to their position. \(^{103}\) Indeed, she felt that there was ‘great room for improvement’ \(^{104}\) in many of her household staff. Clearly the meddlesome mistress could intrude upon all areas of a servant’s life. \(^{105}\)

Julia Wilding, whatever her personal predilections, was more constrained in what influence she might wield over her servants’ lives. Despite on occasion working alongside her general servant, she did so somewhat less than her country counterparts. This resulted in a less personalised relationship. Indeed, whatever the degree of maternalism evident in Julia’s dealings with her younger servants, the city context produced a tendency towards a more formal relationship. Her servants possessed a much

\(^{101}\) Courage, p.167.

\(^{102}\) Ibid., p.152.

\(^{103}\) Ibid., pp.128, 167.

\(^{104}\) Courage, p.167.

\(^{105}\) See literature on the nature of the mistress/maid relationship in nineteenth century America and Britain. For example: Katzman, pp.154-157 and Huggett, pp.65-70.
wider zone of independence than their upcountry sisters. When servants on rural, isolated sheep stations or farms were given time off their lack of transport meant that they often remained on the property where it was difficult to escape the watchful, controlling eye of their employer. 'Fownhope' servants could spend their leisure time in the town and preserve some semblance of a 'private life.' The closeness of many of Julia's servants' families, as we have noted earlier, also altered the nature of the relationship. A servant may well have felt hemmed in between mother and mistress, but the latter might equally regard parental proximity as placing limits upon her ability to exercise an improving influence. Put simply, an urban mistress who desired to inculcate middle-class moral values or behaviour, did not possess quite the same opportunities as her country counterpart.

Indeed, there is evidence to support the view that Julia, in some ways, found a business-like and formal approach to her servants more congenial. It brought to household labour relations a degree of rationality and tidiness. In this view, she stands at some remove from trends observed by historians who have typically seen household mistresses as plaintively protesting against the erosion of the personal ties between mistress and servant and its replacement by a simple wage labour nexus.  

Julia, the servant problem was one of supply. She recognised that a shortage of labour would force up wages and that, in the new world of market-mediated labour relations, servants would increasingly shop for the best situation. Nonetheless, without being self-sacrificial, she seems to have had little difficulty in adjusting to the changing style of wage relations. It is certainly difficult to cast her in the role of 'bourgeois woman' bemoaning the passing of a golden age when servants knew their place. To Julia, the new 'economic woman', working the market to her best advantage, was not so much evidence of 'decline' as a sign of women's growing independence.

If Julia was less troubled by the servant problem than most of her contemporaries, she nonetheless strove to maintain lines of status and class within the household. Unlike her isolated and sometimes lonely rural sisters, Julia had less need to seek the companionship of her servants. Friends and neighbours were close by. Nor did Julia treat her servants like one of the family. A degree of formality was maintained. When not on duty, servants were confined to a separate area of the house, away from the Wilding family. The kitchen was their domain. It was here that they took their breaks and ate their meals,

Winter 1987, pp.5-22; Sutherland, pp.xi-xii, 3-8.

Lasser, p.22.

For examples see Courage, p.63; Caverhill Diary for 1 January 1865 - 31 December 1865; Diary for 1 January 1866 - 31 December 1866 and Diary for 1 January 1867 - 31 December 1867, Box 2, Folder 5, Item 5; Folder 6, Item 6; Folder 7, Item 7.
separate from Julia and Frederick. The maids' bedrooms were located on the lower floor while the family slept upstairs. A bell system was employed by Julia to summon maids to her presence. And while she did not demand cringing servility, servants were expected to address the Wilding family members with the degree of deference and respect appropriate to their social status. Julia was referred to as 'Ma’am' or 'Mrs Wilding' while her children were addressed, for example, as 'Miss Cora' or 'Master Anthony.' In these ways Julia maintained the pattern of domestic relations between the employing family and the maids which she had been accustomed to in Britain.

If there is one area of household management in which formality was abandoned, it was the nursery. Julia's dealings with the nursemaids charged with the care of her children were more personalized and emotional. The departure of a nursemaid often brought protestations of genuine regret in the 'Life Events Diaries' which Julia kept for each of her children. She was 'dreadfully sorry

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109 See Julia Wilding's list of instructions to her servants - loose paper found in the 'Household Diary' for 1890.

110 See Julia Wilding's list of duties for her servants in the 'Household Diary' for 1905.

111 See Julia Wilding's list of instructions to her servants in the 'Household Diary' for 1925.

to lose'\textsuperscript{113} Clara, 'an extremely nice girl'\textsuperscript{114} who was a nursemaid in 1882. Emma Tuersley, described as 'a very nice kind girl...nice-tempered & patient...& good to be with children'\textsuperscript{115}, stayed for three and a half years and became especially close to her mistress. She left, however to become a nurse at Wellington hospital. While being 'dreadfully sorry to lose her',\textsuperscript{116} Julia also seemed genuinely pleased for her. At times Julia's relationship with her nurses extended beyond their term of employment in the Wilding household. She wrote to them and sent them photos of the children.\textsuperscript{117} And it was more commonly nursemaids, rather than general servants, who returned to visit her.\textsuperscript{118}

Significantly the only suggestion of disharmony in mistress/maid relations also concerned the nursery. After spending many weeks worrying about baby Cora's continual 'crying which I thought was from hunger', Julia concluded that her nurse, Mary, was responsible for the baby's distress. It arose through wind - & from having other food. One day we found Mary the nurse giving her some horribly

\textsuperscript{113} Gladys Wilding's 'Life Events Diary', vol.1, WFP, Box 14, Folder 64, Item 1, 6 November 1882.

\textsuperscript{114} Ibid., 8 July 1882.

\textsuperscript{115} Ibid., 3 September 1884.

\textsuperscript{116} Ibid., October 23 1887.

\textsuperscript{117} 'Household Diary' for 1883: 2 April 1883.

\textsuperscript{118} 'Household Diary' for 1889: 19 February; 'Household Diary' for 1892: 16 December 1892.
thick nasty looking barley water, quite enough to give her a pain, & as we found her doing so that once, there is no knowing how often she had done it before. Of course Mary is going, I could never trust her again, & now baby is as well as possible...\textsuperscript{19}

Yet, even here, it is unclear whether the nurse’s action was a deliberate attempt to defy orders or an unintentional mistake resulting from ignorance or inexperience. If anything, Mary’s dismissal tells us as much about Julia’s close involvement in the nursing of her children as it does about her wider relationship with domestic staff.

The anxiety which clearly intrudes into the management of the nursery was born of bitter experience. Frederick Archibald, her first child, born shortly after she and Frederick arrived in New Zealand, died before his first birthday. This personal tragedy, coupled with Julia’s intense desire to make a success of family life, bred a natural reluctance to pass over the care of her children to any nurse. Over time some of the anxiety diminished, but in the children’s ‘Life Events Diaries’ the undertones long remained. In 1882 Julia observed in Gladys’ diary: ‘Mary Sommersville, baby’s new nurse came to-day. She is not such a taking girl as Clara, but she seems careful & fond of baby, & I hope will do.’\textsuperscript{120}

\textsuperscript{19} Cora Wilding’s ‘Life Events Diary’, 12 January 1889.

\textsuperscript{120} Gladys Wilding’s ‘Life Events Diary’, Vol.1, 12 November 1882.
years later in Anthony’s diary she expresses similar concerns:

Anthony has had a nasty feverish attack the last two days. It was I am sure going out in the cold & damp when he had that bad cough, & without a coat too. I was upstairs, & did not know of it, & we have a new nurse, & Anthony is very self-willed & goes out without asking leave as he ought.\textsuperscript{121}

Ultimately, as the children flourished and as Julia’s confidence in her own judgement increased, she acknowledged the reality that experienced nursemaids were hard to come by. Increasingly she became prepared to settle for nurses who, while not necessarily good at handling the children, were nonetheless ‘nice-tempered’, well-meaning and above all, fond of them:

\textit{Emma our new nurse is a very nice kind girl, but she has not the slightest control over Gladys - Letty had. I am satisfied with Emma though - she is a nice-tempered and patient girl & good to be with children I think.}\textsuperscript{122}

The greatest problems indeed arose when a competent and reliable nurse was rejected by one of the children: ‘Cora has not taken well yet to Lottie the new nurse, & I am having great trouble with her. She cries if I go out, & wants me to undress & do everything for her.’\textsuperscript{123} It was a dilemma which Julia could rarely resolve to her own satisfaction. Clearly, Julia Wilding was the very

\textsuperscript{121} Anthony Wilding’s ‘Life Events Diary’, vol.1, WFP, Box 20, Folder 92, Item 1, 25 August 1892.

\textsuperscript{122} Gladys Wilding’s ‘Life Events Diary’, vol.1, 3 September 1884.

\textsuperscript{123} Cora Wilding’s ‘Life Events Diary’, 28 January 1892.
antithesis of the stereotypical Victorian middle-class mother who distanced herself from the nursery and her children.

The intensity of Julia's commitment to domestic and family management undoubtedly absorbed much of her energy. It also raises the issue of whether or not dedication and efficiency might shade into the exploitation of servants. Duty lists outlining servants' duties certainly reveal a methodical, if not demanding exactness:

Every morning before breakfast sweep out verandah, hall & dining room, & dust & tidy dining room & hall. In winter of course light fire, & if used the day before lay the fire in drawing-room. Lay table & prepare breakfast. Kitchen breakfast at 1/2 past seven. Dining room at eight.

Monday
Washing. Nurse takes in dining room breakfast, washes up & does upstairs in the morning - general servant. To be tidy to answer the door & take in afternoon tea on Monday afternoon.

Tuesday
Ironing (churning to-day or Friday.)

Wednesday
In the morning clean & wash out upstairs bedrooms & dressing room, landing and stairs, bath room and own bedroom. Rub over windows and mirrors. In the afternoon clean and count all silver.

Thursday
In the morning clean out drawing room, afternoon dining room. Rub over windows & mirrors.

Friday
Scrub verandah & wash out Hall. (Churning to-day or Tuesday.)

Saturday
Cooking for Sunday. Clean thoroughly kitchen & all back premises.
Children's & kitchen dinner at one o'clock, dining room 6 to 1/2 past in winter, - 7 in summer.\textsuperscript{124} A perfectionist, Julia set high standards not only for herself but for her servants as well. She expected her domestic staff to rise early - no later than 6 am - and work long days. The nurse was on duty from the moment her charges awoke until the time they went to sleep at night. She was often required to remain on duty through the night and slept in the nursery with a baby once it had been weaned.\textsuperscript{125} The general servant's work was more physically demanding and when Julia and Frederick entertained in the evenings she could not retire until they did. At times, Julia added extra work to her servants' normal duties by lending their services to charity functions and refreshment tents at sporting events. They did, however, receive extra payment for such work.\textsuperscript{126} Yet Julia was only as hard on her servants as she was on herself. She was described by a friend as

a woman of superabundant energy. The first up in the morning, she is the last to go to bed at night. Whatever her hands find to do, that she does with all her might. Nothing ever ruffles her...serenity of

\textsuperscript{124} Julia Wilding's list of duties for her servants, a loose paper found in the 'Household Diary' for 1890.

\textsuperscript{125} For examples see Gladys Wilding's 'Life Events Diary', vol.1, 27 August 1882, 28 September 1882, 10 May 1883; Anthony Wilding's 'Life Events Diary', vol.1, 10 April 1884, 28 April 1884; Cora Wilding's 'Life Events Diary': 1 October 1889, 9 February 1891.

\textsuperscript{126} For example, 'Household Diary' for 1882: '3 November - Clara & Annie [nurse and general servant] at Fancy Fair 2.0.'
disposition...power of concentration. She has an infallible regard for method and detail.\textsuperscript{127}

Furthermore, her servants had less work to do in the urban household than their rural, isolated counterparts. Indeed, the more formalized relationship which they had with their employer may have benefitted the servants rather more than the highly personalized one which characterised 'up-country' households. With business-like efficiency, Julia ensured that her servants were paid more regularly\textsuperscript{128} and had regular time off - alternate Sundays plus one extra day off per month.\textsuperscript{129} In addition, those who stayed a full year also had one complete week's holiday.\textsuperscript{130}

The Wildings' lifestyle also made some aspects of the nurse's duties rather more appealing than that of the general servant. While the nurse had to perform all the menial tasks involved in caring for young children, she


\textsuperscript{128} Julia Wilding paid her servants' wages in quarterly amounts i.e. every four months. (See, for example, her 'Household Diary' for 1882: 19 May, 26 July, 31 August, 1 September, 28 December.) The annual wage rate paid by Julia Wilding varied between £25 and £35 per servant. (See 'Household Diaries' for examples.)

\textsuperscript{129} For example: 'Household Diary' for 1882: 'Saturday 4 February - Clara's day out', 'Saturday 25 February - Annie's day out.', 'Saturday 4 March - Clara's day out.'; Anthony Wilding's 'Life Events Diary', vol.1, 22 September 1885: 'Boy is immensely fond of Emma his nurse, but when she is out on a Sunday...', 28 April 28 1889: 'Minnie (the nurse) is out to-day and to-night...It took all Mary's [general servant] & my efforts to undress him [Anthony].'

\textsuperscript{130} For examples see 'Household Diaries' for 1895, 1897 and 1900: Thursday 14 February 1895, 26 December 1897, 31 May 1900.
was often also required to accompany Julia when she took
the children with her on outings. Thus, the nursemaid
often left the confines of the household and visited the
homes of wealthy and socially prominent individuals, as
well as exhibitions of various kinds and sporting events.\textsuperscript{131}
She also accompanied the family when they went on summer
holidays.\textsuperscript{132} In 1899 Julia took her infant son Edwyn's
nurse, Lillie, with her to England for eight months.\textsuperscript{133}
Julia's nurses were thus exposed to a wider range of
experiences than they might normally have expected. The
closer and more personalised relationship between
nursemaid and mistress was, moreover, often a lasting one.
Former nursemaids visited Julia socially years after they
had left the household.\textsuperscript{134}

\textbf{III}

Such then was the nature of the household management
of Julia Wilding. As an exercise in organization and
labour relations, it reached its zenith in the late 1890s.

\textsuperscript{131} See the 'Life Events Diaries' for Gladys, Anthony
and Cora Wilding.

\textsuperscript{132} For example see Gladys Wilding's 'Life Events
Diary', vol.2, 19 February 1886 ; Anthony Wilding's 'Life
Events Diary', vol.1, 10 January 1885, 9 February 1886, 11
February 1887, 28 December 1891; Cora Wilding's 'Life
Events Diary', 15 March 1889.

\textsuperscript{133} See Gladys Wilding's 'Life Events Diary', vol.3, 20
October 1898 and 12 April 1899.

\textsuperscript{134} 'Household Diaries' for 1889 and 1892: 19 February
1889, 16 December 1892.
By the first decade of the twentieth century, however, we begin to see a new set of difficulties emerging, most of them associated with a gradually emptying nest. Increasingly, the dominant concerns related less to children and their development and more to those of an ageing couple. This change in the nature of the household coincided with an intensification of what contemporaries saw as the 'servant problem.' Colonial mistresses had long been familiar with the difficulty of obtaining and retaining 'good servants.' Indeed, Julia Wilding's household diaries, which chart the comings and goings of her servants, confirm that her greatest 'problem' with domestic employees was their rapid turnover rate. Servants remained with Julia from anything between one week and three and a half years. At one point Julia lost the services of three general servants in the space of four months. On average the majority of her household workers stayed three to four months only. Some left for family reasons. A few gave a month's notice. Others seem to have departed without warning. Whatever their reasons for leaving, the constant turnover was the essence of the 'servant problem.' A mistress like Julia had, in Branca's words, 'to face the probability that by the time she

135 Holland, pp.8-29; Millen, pp.82, 95.

136 'Household Diary' for 1893, July-December.

137 For example - 'Household Diary' for 1883: '2 April - Annie gave notice as she is going to Wellington', '17 November - Mary gave notice'; 'Household Diary' for 1884: '14 July - Letty gave notice.'
worked out a suitable relationship with her girl, the girl would leave her for another position. Hence her problem with domestic servants was never-ending.'\textsuperscript{138}

As an urban employer, Julia had less trouble obtaining servants than her country sisters who often complained of having to offer inducements to overcome the widespread reluctance of maids to leave the city\textsuperscript{139} - especially in the 1880s and early 1890s. Nonetheless, Julia was a frequent visitor to the city's Servant Registries. On occasion she was able to replace a servant on the very day of their departure, or if she had prior warning, the day before.\textsuperscript{140} Clearly the abundant supply of labour allowed urban households to dispense with maids thought to be unsatisfactory. Rural mistresses, on the other hand, were often forced to retain allegedly second-rate servants at times when it was not possible to make the long journey to the city to find a replacement.\textsuperscript{141} On balance, however, Julia's urban situation both strengthened and constrained her negotiating hand. She was in competition with other mistresses for the best servants and this had a tendency to push up wage rates. While it

\textsuperscript{138} Branca, \textit{Silent Sisterhood}, p.57.

\textsuperscript{139} For examples see Caverhill Diary for 25 February 1873-31 December 1873, entries 30 July - 19 August.

\textsuperscript{140} For example- 'Household Diary' for 1883: 'Tuesday 13 February - Mary Sommersville left & Letty Pearson came as Nurse', 'Tuesday 4 December - Mary left & Bridget Gavern came as General Servant.'

\textsuperscript{141} For examples see Courage, pp.56-58, 97-98, 142-145, 184-188.
was difficult for mistresses in isolated areas to secure domestic workers, it was also more awkward for servants to leave than it was for the more mobile urban maid who could shop around for the best situation. Conversely, where isolation was not a factor, domestic servants were quick to grasp the opportunities the market offered to escape the confines of 'service' and work within the wage-labour nexus typical of the workplace.\textsuperscript{142} The heavy dependence upon servants could undermine the household's bargaining power.

By the 1890s the realities of the growing shortage of domestic servants began to set in for the Wildings. For five months during 1893, for example, Julia had considerable problems securing a replacement general servant and was forced to employ temporary staff such as servant's mothers, sisters or former employees who had left the household.\textsuperscript{143} More and more frequently she had to take the place of a servant for days at a time until a suitable servant could be found. By the early twentieth century her 'servant problem' had worsened. 1905 was a particularly difficult year: 'Just now we are without a servant, & cannot hear of any, & girlie [Cora] does a lot to help me in the house.'\textsuperscript{144} It was a state of affairs which continued for several months and was clearly a matter of

\textsuperscript{142} Lasser, pp.5-22.
\textsuperscript{143} 'Household Diary' for 1893: July-December.
\textsuperscript{144} Cora Wilding's 'Life Events Diary', 10 June 1905.
great concern for Julia, whose established way of life depended upon having help within the household. Repeated comments about her 'servant bother' were made by her daughter, Gladys, in letters from England throughout the year: 'I am so sorry about poor you and Cora and no servant. I do hope you'll get one soon. And I suppose you can't even get one to come in from 8 to 5 every day - that would be something.'\(^{145}\) 'Of course it would be horrid for you, poor mother, if there was still any servant bother, you must not on any account run the risk of having all the housework put on your shoulders.'\(^{146}\) Such comments demonstrate the extent to which the servant 'problem' had become embedded in the Wilding family's consciousness.

It is also clear that the difficulties finding domestic help produced a growing awareness that society was changing. The time would inevitably come when middle-class families like theirs would have to provide their own household labour. Accordingly, in 1901, twelve year old Cora began having cooking lessons every Saturday morning.\(^{147}\) Similarly, in 1905 Gladys, now a young woman on a visit 'Home', announced her intention to have cooking lessons when she returned to 'Fownhope' to help the family cope

\(^{145}\) Letter to Julia Wilding from Gladys Wilding, 23 June 1905, Shoreham, England, WFP, Box 17, Folder 83, Item 117.

\(^{146}\) Ibid., 11 July 1905, WFP, Box 17, Folder 83, Item 118.

\(^{147}\) Cora Wilding's 'Life Events Diary', 16 March 1901.
with 'this servant bother.'\textsuperscript{148} And after the Wildings' return from a six month visit in England in 1906, Julia lamented that 'We have been home some days now, but we could not get maids at first (now we have only one) and Cora & I have been very busy.'\textsuperscript{149} Clearly, as the Wildings moved into their third decade in New Zealand, it was increasingly harder to maintain the style of management which had become characteristic of the 'Fownhope' household.

The difficulties of the labour market clearly coincided with an important transition within the Wilding household. The rationale behind its organisation had always been the family. And by the outbreak of World War One the 'nest', if not empty, was nearly so. The talented Gladys had died tragically and suddenly, at 23, when visiting Britain in 1905. Anthony had, since 1902, been making his way in the world of international tennis and completing a law degree at Cambridge. Frank (28) was now in a legal partnership with his father. Cora had spent 1911-1912 in Britain and Europe and was less frequently at 'Fownhope.' Only the youngest, Edwyn (17), a boarder at Christ's College, remained totally dependent. As a consequence, Julia was faced with the need to reshape her attitudes to household management.

\textsuperscript{148} Letter to Julia Wilding from Gladys Wilding, 5 June 1905, Shoreham, England, WFP, Box 17, Folder 83, Item 115.

\textsuperscript{149} Cora Wilding's 'Life Events Diary', 6 December 1906.
Julia and Ethel - domestic servants at 'Fownhope', January 1912. (Wilding Collection, C.M: Ref.10356)
The diminishing family demands upon the household were, to some extent, balanced by life-cycle changes. Julia was now in her early sixties and looking for ways to lessen her physical involvement in day-to-day household chores. As a consequence, she sought to increase the size of her household staff at the very time the market for domestic labour was tightening. Instead of a single general servant, two domestic servants - a 'Cook General' and a 'housemaid' - now shared the housework between them.\textsuperscript{130} Julia was thus able to adopt a more supervisory role. To some extent, this diminished participation in the more physical aspects of domestic work was offset by a greater involvement in philanthropic work. When World War One broke out in August 1914, for example, Julia and the 'house sewing maid' worked together sewing and knitting for the war effort.\textsuperscript{131} Charitable work and cultural activities came to assume a larger slice of Julia's life. Clearly Julia's household had now passed into a new phase and moved beyond the concerns of the family which had fashioned it.

Any assessment of Julia Wilding's career as the mistress of 'Pownhope' needs to acknowledge its intellectual basis. In the interests of providing the ideal family context, Julia approached her tasks with a cool rationality and attention to detail. Progress in the domestic sphere, as well as in life more generally, was,

\textsuperscript{130} See 'Household Diaries' for 1914, ff.

\textsuperscript{131} Ibid.
she believed, best achieved by a systematic and disciplined concern for efficiency. The Wilding household was organised so as to function like a 'well-oiled machine'\textsuperscript{152} - quietly and without fuss. The impression given, and intended to be given, to the casual observer, was of a mistress standing coolly apart from the day to day functioning of the household. Historians, it seems, have been slow to look behind such carefully constructed facades. Julia Wilding's experience, so meticulously and regularly recorded, has allowed us to glimpse the industry, planning and managerial expertise that lay behind it. The mistress of 'Fownhope' was clearly 'no idle woman.'

\footnote{\textsuperscript{152} Dyhouse, p.32.}
CHAPTER FOUR

Family Dynamics and the 'Life Events Diaries'

The importance which Julia Wilding attached to family led her to become the recorder of life at 'Fownhope.' In the process she provides the historian with a narrative of middle class life. Every letter or postcard sent to her by her children, every newspaper article about her husband or children's activities, every photo taken, - in fact every tangible documentation of her children's lives was faithfully kept. By far the most valuable of her compilations are the 'Life Events Diaries.' Julia maintained for each of her surviving five children from the moment they were born until Julia's own death in 1936. These diaries are central to any understanding of the Wilding family. In contrast to the brief, businesslike recordings of the 'Household' and 'Events Diaries', the 'Life Events Diaries' are written in a prose form which is intimate, even confessional in tone, and frequently rich in detail. The regular, frequently daily, entries provide meticulous observations of each child's intellectual,

1 Wilding Family Papers, Canterbury Museum Archives hold the 'Life Events Diaries' for Gladys, Anthony and Cora Wilding: 'Life Events Diary' of Gladys Wilding, volume one: 1 November 1881-1 November 1885, volume two: 28 November 1885-13 May 1896, volume 3: 1 May 1896-24 November 1905, Box 14, Folders 64-66, Items 1-3; 'Life Events Diary' of Anthony Wilding: volume one: 31 October 1883-26 February 1899, volume two: 15 February 1899-9 May 1915, Box 20, Folders 92-93, Items 1-2; 'Life Events Diary' of Cora Wilding, one volume:15 November 1888-4 April 1931, Box 35, Folder 162, Item 1. Frank and Edwyn Wilding's 'Life Events Diaries' are held in the possession of relatives.
physical and social development. Analyses of character
traits and behaviour, interactions between parent and
child and of relationships between siblings pepper their
pages alongside the emotional jottings of an anxious and
devoted parent. In essence the diaries provide us with a
literary narrative of every aspect of the Wilding
children's upbringing.

The 'Life Events Diaries' do more than provide a
valuable source of information about the individual
Wilding children, they offer a rare and unique insight
into the family life of an exceptional set of individuals.
The family has been recognised as 'the primary and most
powerful agency of socialization' of children. It largely
determines their social outlook, belief and value systems,
ideologies, ambitions and concepts of class and gender.
Yet historians are not at all sure how these processes
occur or how the family functions. Thus, the 'Life Events
Diaries' kept by Julia Wilding, grant 'us access to a
world normally hidden from view.' The historian gains a
detailed sense of the texture of family life in the
Wilding home, the dynamics operating within the household
and the socialization processes at work within the family.
For the diaries are as much about the parents as they are
about the Wilding children - revealing their beliefs,

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ideologies and social outlook. Exceptional individuals in their own right, Frederick and Julia Wilding reared equally unconventional children whose various talents may be shown to be rooted in their common upbringing. This chapter attempts to explore the historical precedents which led Julia to compose her 'Life Events Diaries', the influences which shaped them and the broad contours of family life which emerges from their pages. The three chapters which follow will examine the extent to which 'the family', so created, moulded the lives of the first two children, Gladys and Anthony.

I

It was common enough, as a number of writers have pointed out, for women in the past to assume the role of family historian. Their diaries have been seen as providing 'a communal chronicle of domestic life.' Most devoted some space to their children. Separate diaries detailing children's lives were rare but the practice of keeping them was not unknown. Historians who discuss the English woman's diary, however, build most of their discussion of mothers who kept such specialized diaries on

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5 Simons, p.5.
just two women: Hester Thrale (1741-1821) and Elizabeth Gaskell (1810-1865). Hester Thrale, wife of businessman and M.P. for Streatham and a close family friend of Samuel Johnson, kept a 'Family Book' from 1766 until 1788, 'specifically to document the growth and progress' of her twelve children, of whom only five daughters survived. She noted special occasions such as birthday parties, recorded physical growth, childhood illnesses and achievements and provided, in the words of one commentator, 'ample evidence of the agitation and traumas of maternal experience.'

Elizabeth Gaskell, the mother of six children, of whom only four survived, began a diary of her eldest daughter, Marianne: 'My Diary: The Early Years of My Daughter Marianne' in even more reflective vein:

as a token of her mother's love and extreme anxiety in the formation of her little daughter's character. If that little daughter should in time become a mother herself, she may take an interest in the experience of another; at any rate she will perhaps like to become acquainted with her character in its earliest form. I wish that (if ever she sees this) I could give her the slightest idea of the love and the hope that is bound up in her.

In their preoccupations and sentiments these early samples of the genre prefigure later developments. They remained,

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7 Simons, p5.

8 Ibid.

9 Blodgett, Englishwoman's Diary, p.315; Blodgett, Centuries of Female Days, p.284.

10 Blodgett, Englishwoman's Diary, p.316.
however, part of an unseen literary manifestation, hidden from history until twentieth century researchers with new agendas prized them out.

A more direct and discernible influence on Julia's practice of keeping diaries for each of her children can be detected in published observations of late eighteenth and nineteenth century child development theorists. Julia's familiarity with educational theory and child-rearing practices had been clearly revealed in her articles in the Hereford Times during the 1870s. This research recognised childhood as a 'separate phase of the life-cycle'\textsuperscript{11} and stressed the need to understand the psychological development of individual children. One consequence of these findings was that 'children came to be regarded as proper subjects for study.'\textsuperscript{12} Biologists and educators, as we have noted earlier\textsuperscript{13}, began to test their theories by 'observing' their own children. Thus was born a new type of scientific methodology - observation. In 1774, Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, a Swiss educator, now regarded as the 'father of modern pedagogy'\textsuperscript{14}, published notes from a diary which traced the development of his

\textsuperscript{11} Mussen et al, Child Development and Personality, p.4.

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., p.8.

\textsuperscript{13} Chapter One, pp.47-48.

three-and-a-half-year-old son. It was followed, thirteen years later (1787), by the publication of Dieterich Tiedemann's 'diary of infant behaviour' which detailed the 'intellectual growth of a single infant during the first two and a half years.' Such studies excited, as Mussen et al have written, 'widespread interest in the scientific study of children' and during the nineteenth century the practice of keeping diaries of infant behaviour or 'baby biographies' became more common.

The most influential 'baby' diary, both in terms of its effect on Julia Wilding in particular, and on the history of child psychology in general, was that of Charles Darwin. The controversial evolutionist published the diary observations of his first born - William Erasmus' early development (made in 1840 and 1841) in 1877. In doing so he legitimized the 'baby diary' as a 'scientific document.' To Darwin the child was a rich source of information about the nature of man - 'by careful observation of the infant and child, one could see

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15 J.H. Pestalozzi, How Father Pestalozzi Instructed His Three-and-a-Half Year Old Son (1774), cited by Downs, Pestalozzi, p.28.

16 Mussen et al, p.8; Dieterich Tiedemann, Record of an Infant's Life, Altenburg;Bonde, 1787.

17 Mussen et al., p.9.


19 Ibid; Kessen, pp.113-118.
the descent of man."\textsuperscript{20} Julia, as we have noted\textsuperscript{21}, had been introduced to Darwin's \textit{On the Origin of the Species} (1859) by her brothers. Her diary entries contain obvious scientific undertones and an awareness of modern theoretical concepts of child psychology and development. She watched closely over the unfolding characters of her children, convinced by the ideas of Darwin and others that one could see anticipations of the adult in the child.\textsuperscript{22} If managed properly, their highest qualities would come to dominate their personalities.

Darwin's evolutionary theories also provided the foundation of her belief in the ultimate perfectibility of humanity and its concomitant - the inevitable development of an ideal society. Her diaries may be seen as recording her own attempts to mould and shape her children into 'ideal' citizens who might further progress towards the better realisation of the future. And she was to give this notion of social betterment, in so far as it might be attached to child development, a gendered form. The education of a daughter provided the opportunity to create an idealised 'New Woman' capable of commanding a fuller role in all aspects of life. Conversely, raising a son was the chance to mould a 'noble gentleman' - a useful and good citizen.

\textsuperscript{20} Mussen et al., p.8.

\textsuperscript{21} Chapter One, p.30.

II

Julia's 'Life Events Diaries' focus on her children. They are, nonetheless, as much about Julia herself - 'the mother' - as they are about her family. The pages of the diaries record what was important to Julia, and in doing so, they provide 'a revealing psychological portrait of [their] author.' More than anything else they establish that her children and family were unequivocally and deliberately the focus of Julia Wilding's life. The essence of her being was tied up with motherhood. It was her 'career', her 'profession', and she approached it with all the earnestness, dedication and energy she could muster. And, it is in the completeness of Julia's involvement that we are able to unravel the thinking which drove her to adopt the role of diarist. A subtle blending of the conscious and the unconscious, the functional and the idealistic, the diaries nevertheless reveal an identifiable array of motives. Perhaps the most obvious was the sentimental desire, as a devoted mother, to capture in words incidents involving her children; the amusing things they did and said, their achievements and the meaningful moments she shared with them. Julia's diaries were unambiguously enjoyed by her as a repository of memories.

\[23\] Blodgett, Centuries of Female Days, p.5.

\[24\] Simons, p.5.

A growing family: the Wildings in May 1886. Four year old Gladys stands beside her father, Frederick, at the back of the photo. In the front row sit Julia with Anthony, aged 2½, and a nurse holding the newly-born Frank. (Wilding Collection, C.M: Ref.12438)
Julia's diaries are, nonetheless, constructions. Margo Culley has reminded us that 'Even the most self-deprecating of women's diaries are grounded in some sense of the importance of making a record of [their] life.'\textsuperscript{26} All diarists are, to some degree egocentric. By keeping diaries which focus on her experiences as a mother, Julia was both staking out a persona of her own and asserting the importance of motherhood and the family more generally.\textsuperscript{27}

Implicit also in this wider social purpose or motivation is a sense of accountability - the acknowledgement of a wider responsibility. Given her commitment to motherhood, the diaries of her children's upbringing stood as a permanent evidence of her life's work as a mother. They were, as Harriet Blodgett has written of women's diaries more generally, a 'concrete memorial to her significance.'\textsuperscript{28} The diaries provide, as it were, a balance sheet by which Julia and those who read them subsequently, might measure successes and failures and arrive at a considered verdict. In this sense, when Julia adopted the role of diarist she did so for defensive as much as assertive reasons.

Defensive as Julia frequently was, she was rarely self-deprecating. Her sense that parenthood came with

\textsuperscript{26} Culley, p.20.

\textsuperscript{27} Blodgett, \textit{Centuries of Female Days}, pp.71, 86-90.

\textsuperscript{28} \textit{Ibid.}, p.90.
social obligations was accompanied by the lofty goal of attempting no less than to mould and shape her children into 'ideal' citizens capable of contributing to the march of social progress. This element of Julia's thinking, as we shall see in subsequent chapters, became more prevalent as the children became successful young adults whose activities and accomplishments merited recording. Thus, Julia used her diaries not only as a record of 'creative process' but also to celebrate the achievements of the 'products' themselves.

Julia also used the diaries more mechanistically. They provided a means of self-examination - a place where she could record her perceived failings and successes with a view to correcting mistakes or modifying practices.\(^{29}\) In this functional way, the diaries of each of her five children chart her development and growth as a parent. Her comments as a busy parent on the run allow us to see the tensions between theory and practice as Julia struggles to implement her understanding of her intellectual mentors, most notably, British social philosopher, Herbert Spencer. His work: *Education: Intellectual, Moral and Physical*\(^{30}\) with its bold declaration that 'the last stage in the mental development of each man and woman' could 'be reached only through a proper discharge of the


parental duties, was, to Julia, both a challenge and a warning. To educate a child properly, in his opinion, called upon the 'higher attributes of human nature' and required ingenuity, patience and self-control. Parents would, in essence, 'have to carry on [their] own higher education' while raising their children. Such counsels to perfection could lead a conscientious mother, such as Julia, to subject her day to day care for her children to intense, if not debilitating, scrutiny.

Yet the 'Life Events Diaries' also provided a much needed means of 'psychological release.' They were a place where Julia could unburden herself of her anxieties and concerns about her children's upbringing and their behaviour. They could be used as a 'sounding board' for her child management ideas and a journal to which she could return when thinking through problems relating to her children. Perhaps, on a subconscious level at least, she was also motivated by the notion that each child would one day, after reading their diary in adulthood, come to understand her efforts as a mother. It was, in a sense, comforting to see the diaries as the vehicle through which children might come to understand and appreciate her

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31 Ibid., p.172.
32 Ibid., p.173.
33 Ibid., p.172.
34 Simons, p.6.
35 Blodgett, Centuries of Female Days, p.82.
actions and, if necessary, forgive her mistakes.\textsuperscript{36}

The 'Life Events Diaries' also served Julia in more immediate ways. They could be used as reference points for factual information about each child - satisfying Julia's urge to possess accurate data about their development. When they were infants, for example, Julia recorded daily diet and sleeping patterns. Illnesses were noted and details of symptoms routinely observed. Weight and height measurements were entered on a growth chart at the back of each child's diary. School reports, subjects studied and marks gained, and sporting achievements, were amongst the plethora of factual details which Julia accumulated about her children's lives.

As well as recording the routine and charting development, the diaries also served as an aid to discipline or behaviour management.\textsuperscript{37} The Wilding children were aware of the existence of the diaries and knew that their mother wrote regularly about their activities and behaviour. On one occasion Cora, for example, approached Julia with a drawing she had completed and asked whether it was 'good enough to put in my book?'\textsuperscript{38} Similarly, Julia was sometimes taken aback when one of the children revealed an awareness of her displeasure which could only have been gained by reading what she had written about

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., p.73.

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., pp.37, 64-64, 76.

\textsuperscript{38} Cora Wilding's 'Life Events Diary', 19 June 1895.
them in their diaries.\textsuperscript{39} The knowledge that their actions and behaviour were being closely monitored and that any misdemeanours on their part would be recorded on paper as a permanent black mark against their name, was a powerful means of control. Functioning as a type of 'second conscience'\textsuperscript{40}, the diaries could serve as a moral check against any 'wrong-doing' and an encouragement to self-control.

There is clear evidence that Julia was aware that literary precedents existed for using diaries in this way. She was, for example, an admirer of Louisa May Alcott's writing. And the central character in her novel, \textit{Little Men}\textsuperscript{41} (1871), Jo Bhaer, maintains a 'Conscience Book'\textsuperscript{42} in which she records the behaviour of the boys at 'Plumfield', a small boarding school. Every Sunday night each boy was taken aside by Jo and shown his record of behaviour for the week - in the hope that the experience would encourage self-discipline and moral awareness.\textsuperscript{43} The moral imperatives which guided Louisa May Alcott's fictional school were those of her father, Bronson Alcott, an educationalist and transcendentalist who had kept

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\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., 10 March 1895, 1 February 1895.

\textsuperscript{40} Blodgett, \textit{Centuries of Female Days}, p.37.


\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., p.31.

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., pp.30-31.
\end{flushright}
'Observation on the life' diaries for his daughters. Christian perfection was his goal and his observations were designed to 'isolate and define the soul when it first made its appearance.' By contrast, Julia's objectives were defined in more secular terms: the ideal citizen embodied her sense of perfection. Whatever the different emphases, there remained in Julia's diaries the suggestion of a conscience book.

The forces which impelled Julia Wilding to the diarist's desk were thus a blending of the preoccupations of the moment and future hopes. The 'Life Events Diaries', in essence, serve a dual purpose - a mother's needs and a child's record. Neither element prevails in any unambiguous way and each is imbued with the element of literary artifice which characterises diary writing as a phenomenon. Each time Julia penned an entry constituted a 'literary occasion' and her awareness of a reader at her shoulder has important consequences, determining subject matter, approach, tone and context. And, as we have noted, Julia Wilding clearly kept the diaries so that her


46 Saxton, p.72.

47 Blodgett, Centuries of Female Days, p.7.

48 Ibid., pp.4-9,13-15; Simons, pp.1-18.
children might the better understand their upbringing and their parents. This awareness that the words being written will be read by her children many years after the moment of their composition removes the constraints implicit in the presence of 'an immediate reader or a public audience.'\(^{49}\) It allows 'some sense of present privacy'\(^{50}\), enabling the writer to be a little more open about her thoughts and feelings and portraying herself and her children more honestly.

There remains, nonetheless, an ever present concern to present a 'personally acceptable image'\(^{51}\) of herself as a mother and her children. And, as Blodgett asserts, 'One's self-image is never the whole portrait.'\(^{52}\) Yet the extent to which Julia's 'Life Events Diaries' constitute highly selective and self-conscious literary texts does not materially diminish their value to historians. Like all written records, they require readers to be aware of the silences and conscious of the events and preoccupations shaping the entries. We learn, for example, little about the children's views on their world away from Julia's vigilant gaze. At the very least, however, the diaries offer what one woman took to be true about


\(^{50}\) *Ibid.*


herself, her children and her family life. Within the limitations imposed by the nature of the diaries we can explore further the blending of motives which propelled Julia Wilding to the diarist’s desk and distil something of the family dynamics at ‘Fownhope.’

III

The most enduring and basic motivation implicit in the ’Life Events Diaries’ is the desire to record the personal delights of motherhood. The death of her first child, Frederick Archibald (March 1880- December 31 1880) heightened Julia’s awareness of the fragility of life itself, and made the children who followed especially precious. She was clearly determined to savour in the pages of the diaries every moment spent with her children. On occasion, the joy of her children bubbles over: ‘How I love and worship them all, and how the love of them, makes the world all bright and radiant.’ She is concerned least her ‘love of them’ made her ‘selfish & lead me to think not too much of them , that could not be - but not enough of others.’ The desire to avoid the pitfalls of the ‘doting mother’ underscores the degree of critical self-analysis with which the diaries are imbued. It did not always meet with success.

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53 Ibid., p.18.

54 Letter to Julia Wilding from Julia Wilding, 8 October 1897, CWP, MBL.
Delight in her children is especially obvious when they are infants. Page after page in the diaries is unashamedly filled with outpourings of love and affection for and pride in her children:

Baby [Gladys] is such a darling now. I don’t believe she will ever be more interesting & sweet than she is now, & I don’t believe there ever lived such a darling as she is. She has the sweetest little ways now. She pats your face with her hands, knocks any two things together to make a noise, & does all sorts of funny little things, always looking the sweetest little pet imaginable...is so pretty, she has a lovely colour, & such bright eyes, everyone admires her. She is immensely merry and good tempered & takes a good deal of notice."

Similarly, Anthony was deemed to be a ‘darling little man’ and ‘really the finest, strongest, dearest little fellow in the world.’ At times the extent of her love for her children proves overwhelming: ‘Baby [Gladys] is 10 months old to-day, & such a darling she is that I do not know how to write about her. Every day she gets fresh sweet little ways.’ Such was the strength of her delight in her children, especially in their earliest years, that she found herself at times wishing they could remain young forever. Gladys, she wrote, ‘is such a sweetie that I almost wish she would always stay as she is & never grow

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55 Gladys Wilding’s ‘Life Events Diary’, vol.1, 8 June 1882.

56 Anthony Wilding’s ‘Life Events Diary’, vol.1, 26 November 1883.

57 Ibid, 29 February 1884.

58 Gladys Wilding’s ‘Life Events Diary’, vol.1, 1 September 1882.
up.' 59 Such thoughts moved her to ponder upon the transitory joys of motherhood:

I often look forward to the future, and think how lovely it will be when the children are grown up, and then sometimes I have misgivings. Now I feel that they are wholly mine, and that I have all their confidences and love. Later, outside interests will come in, they will have their own friends etc, and will there be the same love and confidences on their side? I fear not! The future however lies in the laps of the Gods, and I will not go forward and anticipate disappointment, but make the most of my present happiness. 60

Her delight and devotion ran unabated.

The intensity of Julia’s devotion to her children was not materially compromised by the engagement of a live-in nurse. In the Wilding household a nurse was never allowed to assume, as she is commonly claimed to have done elsewhere, the role of a surrogate parent. Indeed she was cast very much as an auxiliary - ‘a mother’s aid’ who helped Julia with the care of the children. It was a role which allowed little room for initiative. The nurse was required to carry out her employer’s detailed instructions and worked under close supervision. To the nurse fell the more menial duties involved in caring for young children - she changed nappies, fed the babies once they had been weaned, washed and dressed them, prepared them for bed at night and minded them when Julia’s attentions were required elsewhere. Generally, also, the nurse supervised their mealtimes in the nursery or kitchen. This was

59 Ibid, 6 June 1882.

60 Letter to Julia Wilding from Julia Wilding, 8 October 1897, CWP, MBL.
particularly the case with the evening meal when the younger children were unable to wait until their father came home from work. The nurse also helped Julia tend to the children on public outings, and fetched Frank & Cora from Kindergarten where they had been delivered earlier in the morning by Julia. Authority over the children clearly resided with the mother rather than the nurse. There was no abrogation of responsibility but a rationalisation of time. Julia may not always have been with her children but she determined their day. And while she did not routinely perform the basic childcare duties herself, Julia did her share. She insisted on giving her children one bath a week herself and assumed the nurse’s duties during her day off. When the children were sick she cared for them personally. Thus employing a nurse was not a means of avoiding aspects of parenting; rather it allowed for more thoughtful and less hurried involvement in it.

Despite the obvious intensity of her emotional attachment, there was nothing haphazard or impulsive about the manner in which Julia approached the task of raising her children. Indeed, the 'Life Events Diaries' reveal a deliberative, self-conscious and purposeful mother. Almost clinical in emphasis, her approach to the education of her children was a rational and considered system rooted in modern educational theory. Julia’s interest in educational theory and practice had been kindled during time spent in Germany in the 1870s. There she was introduced to the intellectual ferment of ideas sparked by Johann Heinrich
Pestalozzi and his disciples, such as Friedrich Froebel (1782-1852), 'the founder of the Kindergarten system.' Fundamental to their thinking was the belief 'that a child's education begins from the moment of his birth'. The mother was thus the first and most important of educators and therefore needed to be trained for this role. Pestalozzi believed that a child's first years in the home environment laid the foundation 'upon which education in the school must be built.' The home 'furnished a background' for a child's moral, intellectual and physical development. The family was thus the foundation stone of society and the child who learnt to become 'a dutiful and efficient member of the family' would 'become a dutiful and efficient member of society.'


63 Downs, *Froebel*, p.56.
64 Downs, *Pestalozzi*, p.80.
66 Julia Wilding's 'Household Diary' for 1884, WFP, Box 3, Folder 16, Item 16.

Clearly the theorist to most influence Julia was Herbert Spencer. His Education incorporated much of the spirit of Pestalozzi's and Froebel's educational theories. In his view, the family was the fundamental building block of the 'good society':

since the goodness of a society ultimately depends on the nature of its citizens; and since the nature of its citizens is more modifiable by early training than by anything else; we must conclude that the welfare of the family underlies the welfare of society.67

He lamented the lack of training and preparation given to potential parents and thought 'Some acquaintance with the first principles of physiology and the elementary truths of psychology...indispensable.'68 Accordingly, parenthood became 'the hardest task which devolves on adult life.'69 His advice was prescriptive in tone; since 'the development of children in body and mind follows certain laws' it was imperative that they were 'conformed to by parents.' Failure to follow these fundamental laws would produce 'serious physical and mental defects' and a corresponding social decay.70 Here we can clearly see the

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67 Spencer, p.12.
68 Ibid., p.38.
69 Ibid., p.171.
70 Ibid., p.38.
theoretical imperatives which underlay Julia’s ideal citizen’ and ‘noble gentleman.’

It was with these precepts in mind that Julia educated Gladys and Anthony at home until the age of six and four respectively. It is difficult to imagine a closer relationship between theory and practice than that which existed in the early education of the Wilding children. Julia devoted considerable time and energy to organising the children’s day in stimulating ways. Both she and Frederick were conscientious in their efforts to plan games and activities and provide books and toys which stimulated development. The role of parent, as they saw it, was to develop their children’s innate abilities to their maximum potential and to aid self-evolution by providing an appropriate environment. 71 They were, indeed, specially conscious of the need for children to have what Froebel termed ‘unrestricted and unregimented play.’ 72 And ‘Fownhope’s spacious grounds provided the most encouraging of environments.

Nowhere is the link with theory clearer than in Julia’s provision of task-orientated activities. Employing the very terminology of Froebel, she deliberately set up ‘occupations.’ 73 Gladys and Anthony were provided with scissors and paste, needle and thread, shapes and puzzles

71 Downs, Froebel, pp.38-39, 40-47, 57, 60; Downs, Pestalozzi, pp.79-80, 85, 113.

72 Downs, Froebel, p.51. (See also pp.46, 53, 57, 61.)

73 Ibid., pp.44-45, 47-54.
all with the purpose of developing skills and co-
coordination. As each task was achieved, Julia set new and
more challenging ones. Similarly her more ‘directed’
lessons reflected the spirit of Pestalozzi’s teaching
which stressed that ‘actual sensory experience’ was ‘the
only sound basis of instruction.’
Julia, for example, took the children on nature walks and to the beach where
she taught them to count by playing games with shells at
the seaside. And the emphasis she placed upon the physical
development of her children was grounded explicitly in the
Athenian ideal of human perfection so admired by her
mentors, Pestalozzi and Froebel.
Likewise, we can observe in the ‘Life Events Diaries’, a direct link
between the theoreticians and Julia’s attitude to
behavioural development. Here she was especially
influenced by Froebel’s concern to both recognise and
nurture individuality.
The comparisons of her children’s
behaviour which pepper the diaries reflect a recognition
of the differences between them rather than any desire to
instil uniformity or stifle individuality.

The new educational theories placed great demands
upon parents and most directly on the mother. They
required her to be actively involved, able to observe the
developmental process and ready to make judgements about

74 Downs, Pestalozzi, p.83.
75 Ibid., pp.80, 85, 134, 136; Downs, Froebel, pp.38, 43-46, 58.
76 Downs, Froebel, pp.32, 44, 53.
the mix of environmental stimulus - physical or intellectual - needed at any given moment. It was precisely at this point that the personalities of Julia and Frederick bear directly upon the manner in which they raised their family. Julia's belief in the equality of the sexes was an important determinant of the way in which the daughters in the family, especially, were raised and educated. Indeed, the 'Life Events Diaries' of Gladys and Cora make it obvious that Julia took particular care in her guidance of her daughters' education. Here was a deliberate attempt to create a new type of woman who could stand her ground against her male counterparts - in every walk of life. Such a woman was an example of just what might be achieved in life given the right education, environment and will. In this determination to break new ground there existed the possibility of the 'involved' mother becoming the prescriptive mother. We shall examine how far Julia resisted this temptation in the chapters which follow.

The earnestness which pervaded Julia's attention to the intellectual growth of her children was carried over to her concern for their physical development. The belief in the efficacy of a healthy lifestyle shaped her own childhood in Hereford. It was to become a much commented upon feature of life at 'Fownhope.' The loss of their first child intensified the Wildings' concern to 'build up
the bodies of [their] children scientifically.’ 77 Julia watched almost anxiously over each child’s physical development and well-being. She charted yearly weight and height measurements and kept detailed records of childhood ailments. Illnesses were treated by a combination of scientific-medical methods and natural remedies. Close attention was also paid to the children’s diet. Julia made a point of breastfeeding all her children as infants and when they grew older reared them on a wholesome diet consisting mainly of plain foods such as wholemeal, fresh fruit and vegetables, milk and water. She was reluctant to allow her children to eat meat when they were very young.

The life-style of the Wilding family was a hardy, if not Spartan, one. Windows were kept open whatever the season and the children - even during infancy - were given cold baths. One warm bath was permitted per week. They were allowed to run around outside barefooted summer and winter. Physical activities were an integral part of the daily routine Julia maintained for her children. Indeed, the robust, invigorating lifestyle which Julia imposed upon herself and encouraged her family to share, led her children, as Cora was later to observe, to regard ‘ill-health and colds...as something to be rather ashamed of.’ 78 Some sense of Julia’s commitment to the healthy life is


78 Cora Wilding, ‘Julia Wilding: Notes on her Life.’
captured in a somewhat guiltily expressed concession she allowed herself in 1932:

I have taken to a hot water bottle every night this winter - for the first time. I wish I could have waited until next winter to begin, when I shall be 80, but I found my feet got so cold & the bottle is so cosy. I am also having my morning bath luke warm instead of cold now.  

The admiration bestowed upon the Wilding children's physique and healthy appearance when they were young was both a source of pride for their mother and a confirmation of the validity of her attitudes towards plain living. She delighted in recording in the 'Life Events Diaries' the compliments she had received about her children's robust good health: 'Baby has paid several calls with me lately & everyone admires her so much, & says she is the picture of health too.' At times Julia's preoccupation with well-being led her to anxious comparisons with other children. It was, for example, with a definite sense of satisfaction that she was able to record:

I was lunching with Lady Wilson to-day & the children came with the carriage to fetch me in the afternoon. Mrs Wilson's baby boy is 13 months old, but though our little man is only 10 months he is a good deal bigger, & Gladys too, 6 months younger than their little Irene, is much stouter & taller. Both ours too are such a contrast to them in firmness of flesh & rosiness of skin. I really feel very proud of our pair. They have such perfect health & are so strong - certainly so far they promise to be very good specimens of humanity, - physically.

79 Julia Wilding's 'Events Diary', 1909-1942, 1 July 1932.

80 Gladys Wilding's 'Life Events Diary', vol.1, 21 July 1882.

81 Anthony Wilding's 'Life Events Diary', vol.1, 3 September 1884.
How far comparison stemmed from a desire for reassurance, as opposed to a competitive desire that her children excel, is unclear. As the Wilding children grew older their academic, cultural and sporting abilities are, however, constantly compared - either to each other or to other children. Julia plainly strove to instil the search for excellence in her children. A perfectionist by nature, she had high expectations not only of herself - as a mother- but of her children also.

IV

The 'Life Events Diaries', generated by Julia, place the mother at the centre of family life and somewhat marginalize the father, Frederick. Yet there is enough in the diaries to flesh out the part he played in the household. His successful legal and sporting career frequently drew him away from 'Fownhope', thus Julia became the constant, dominant parental presence in the Wilding children's lives. Indeed, his absences became a familiar and much noted feature of family life. Provincial and national cricket and tennis matches disrupted summer holidays. Even family Christmas Days might give way to sport. The 'Life Events Diaries' abound in observations of the family disappointment. On the surface, it would seem that Frederick's role was that of the stereotypical Victorian father: preoccupied with the public world, in this case, of work and play.
Yet for all his absences and outside commitments, Frederick Wilding was far from the remote, paternal figure of the prevailing stereotype. The 'Life Events Diaries' reveal him to be a warm, affectionate and supportive father whose infectious enthusiasm for energetic outdoor pursuits complemented his wife's quiet, earnest nature. Play bordering on the boisterous was his specialty. When the children were very young, Frederick made a point of playing with them each day. Gladys particularly delighted in this morning routine with her dad: 'She is so immensely active now, & is never still for a moment. She loves being jumped up very high, & is not a bit frightened when her father turns her head over heels.' Similarly, 'she screams with delight all the way' when each morning he carried her down stairs to breakfast 'on his shoulders.' All the children eagerly awaited his return from work at the end of the day for their nightly 'romp' with him.

Their special delight is for him to pretend to be a train, they get one on each knee, he rides them up and down & off they go to Dunedin, Timaru etc; They are immensely fond of 'train'...& 'Here we go Luby Light', which Lady v Haast taught them, they want to do nearly every evening when their father comes home.\[85\]

Frederick clearly had no qualms about putting adult

\[82\] Gladys Wilding's 'Life Events Diary', vol.1, 27 August 1882.

\[83\] Ibid., 28 September 1882.

\[84\] Anthony Wilding's 'Life Events Diary', vol.1, 12 July 1886.

\[85\] Ibid., 5 September 1887.
sophistication aside in play with his children. But his involvement with them went further than the routine. He made a special effort to be present for children’s birthday parties and other special occasions where his party tricks included making fireballs, organising bonfires, taking the children for pony rides and playing tug-of-war.

A sports and fitness enthusiast, Frederick attempted to create an environment at ‘Fownhope’ which was both fun for the children and encouraged them to lead a healthy, energetic, outdoor lifestyle. He indulged his children with gifts of rollerskates, a rowing boat, a pony and cart, bicycles and pet dogs. And the spacious lawns, swimming pool, tennis courts, croquet lawns and cricket pitch which he had installed provided opportunities for hours of fun, exercise and instruction. He taught his children how to swim, play tennis and cricket and painstakingly persevered as they learned to ride a horse or bicycle or practised a variety of athletic skills. Above all, his enthusiasm and example inspired the children to follow in his sporting footsteps. They proudly watched his performances on the cricket field at Lancaster Park and the tennis court at Cranmer Square.

Sports and games were by no means the only area of Frederick’s involvement in his children’s upbringing. He also took his young children on purely fun family outings. Together they went on picnics, spent days at the seaside, attended ‘the show’, fireworks displays, children’s fancy
dress balls, circuses and imbibed a little culture at theatrical and operatic productions and musical concerts in Christchurch. As the children grew older Frederick, always the health and exercise enthusiast, took his family on long walks, over the Bridle path, for example. And, over the years, Frederick developed a few special treats which he and the children enjoyed together. There was the Christmas trip into town to buy presents and see the Christmas lights and decorations, while in the summer and autumn he and the children had their morning ritual of gathering ripe fruit from the ‘Fownhope’ garden before breakfast.

At times Frederick’s enthusiasm and adventurousness ran ahead of Julia’s tolerance. He was inclined to sanction activities which, in her view, placed the children at risk. The ‘Life Events Diaries’ are sprinkled with Julia’s protestations:

Gladys & Anthony often now go right on to the top of the tanks, & it frightens me so much, though their father says it is all right. It is so high up, & some of the rungs of the ladder are rather insecure.\(^6\)

The weight of her fears, as conveyed in the diaries, concern her ‘boys’ rather than her ‘little women.’ The combination of Frederick’s enthusiasm and Anthony’s apparent fearlessness provoked particular anxieties:

Anthony had a narrow escape to-day; he had a fall off Athole Daisy...I do not think it is at all safe for a boy Anthony’s age to go alone on a big horse like Athole, & I only hope this will make Fritz more careful about letting him go alone. Anthony is

\(^6\) Gladys Wilding’s ‘Life Events Diary’, vol.2, 4 August 1890.
immensely fond of riding, & I only wish we had a pony for him.  

Frederick Wilding was more than the 'playful' father. At a practical level, he did not stand aloof from menial childcare duties. As the son of a surgeon, he seems to have absorbed a great deal of practical medical knowledge which he put to good effect tending to injuries sustained by his children during the course of play. It was to him that the children came to have thorns removed from their feet - a frequent occurrence as they were encouraged to run about outside barefooted. He treated their everyday cuts and bruises as well as responding to serious mishaps. It was Frederick, rather than Julia, who left Lancaster Park during a cricket match after receiving word that Gladys had been struck by a croquet mallet, bathed the wound and telephoned a doctor before returning to his game.  

Similarly, he helped the children through illnesses. When nine year old Gladys, suffering with inflamed and enlarged tonsils, could not manage to gargle, Julia tells us that it was Frederick who 'paints her tonsils with some liniment night and morning.'  

It was he, also, who removed the children's loose teeth. Frederick was an attentive and involved parent.

Frederick's involvement also extended to the more

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87 Anthony Wilding's 'Life Events Diary', vol.1, 16 July 1891.

88 Gladys Wilding's 'Life Events Diary', vol.2, 3 October 1891.

89 Ibid., 30 August 1891.
intellectual aspects of his children’s lives. He clearly valued education just as highly as Julia and attempted, with varying degrees of success, to encourage his children’s learning. His specific role in the day to day education of the children was inevitably a secondary one. Here he was guided by Julia’s educational views. He trusted her judgement and actively supported her efforts to provide stimulating activities for the children. He read to them, sang rhymes with them and joined in the ‘educational games’ which Julia had designed. Indeed, his own fondness for music, singing and drama led him to value them highly as an important aspect of his children’s upbringing. He enthusiastically played music with them in the evenings and arranged family visits to the opera, musical concerts and theatrical productions. Thus, he no doubt, fully approved of Julia’s instigation of music and dance lessons and recitation afternoons for them.

Frederick’s views on the education of his daughters were progressive ones. This was especially the case where games and physical exercise were concerned. He encouraged Gladys and Cora to regard them, as we shall see in the following chapter, as the natural domain of both sexes. His enthusiasms knew no boundaries - gender or otherwise. The same might be said, with only minor qualification, of his attitude to the more formal education of the children. On one hand, he encouraged all to pursue academic study. Yet he was prepared, in the case of his daughters, to defer to Julia. Indeed, if there was a gender specific
element in the educational thinking of the Wildings, it came from Julia rather than Frederick. The desire to push at community understandings of what was acceptable and desirable for young women led her to become more prescriptive and determined in the education of her daughters. By contrast, Frederick seems to have brought a more relaxed tone to family deliberations and seems to have played a more confident and decisive hand where his sons were concerned.

It was to Frederick that befell the role of ultimate disciplinarian. For the most part, he was content to allow Julia the freedom to put her behaviour management theories into practice and simply reinforced her actions. Her success in this area meant that Frederick was seldom called upon. Discipline was nonetheless sometimes needed. When Cora got into one of her 'naughty little tempers', for example, Julia let Frederick take over, declaring that she was 'more difficult to manage than any of the other children at her age, & Father can manage her better than anyone when she gets in her passions.'\(^9\) Similarly, when the young Anthony disobeyed his mother and worked himself into a violent temper Julia sometimes felt justified in getting Frederick to smack him.

\(^9\) Cora Wilding's 'Life Events Diary', 20 September 1892.
do it myself, but sometimes I think it is really necessary.  

We never learn how Frederick felt when called in as a disciplinarian of last resort, but it was a rare enough occurrence for the issue to fade quickly into the ebb and flow of family life.

In many respects, the manner in which Julia and Frederick dealt with the issue of discipline, typifies the functioning of family life. The dynamics at 'Pownhope' make such terms as 'patriarchal' and 'matriarchal' if not irrelevant, then at least in need of substantial modification. The reality was more complex than either concept allows. There existed a clear acceptance by Julia and Frederick of where their individual talents lay. And where the children were concerned we witness something of a pooling of all talents. Major decisions were presented by Julia in the 'Life Events Diaries' as having been made jointly: 'Fritz and I took Gladys & Anthony this morning to see Mr. Firth's gymnasium class held at the Normal School. We think of letting Gladys join next term'; 'We decided to send Gladys to Mrs Mannering's school at Summer for a term to try and get rid of her cough'; 'We have

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91 Anthony Wilding's 'Life Events Diary', vol.1, 5 May 1889.

92 Gladys Wilding's 'Life Events Diary', vol.2, 18 August 1888.

93 Ibid., 27 May 1892.
taken Anthony from Mr Cook’s school; ‘Cora began
to-day going as a day scholar to the Girls’ High School.
We have had a great deal of difficulty in deciding what
would be best to do with Cora, & I do hope sending her
here will prove a success; ‘We have just decided to send
Cora to Nelson College next year. We think the discipline
& going away from home for a while will be good for her.’
As readers, of course, we are not privy to the discussions
which gave rise to these joint-decisions but, as the
subsequent chapters show, Julia’s hand in these
negotiations was a strong one.

In the broadest sense then, it is clear that the
dynamics of the Wilding household depart markedly from the
stereotype which encases family life in Victorian and
Edwardian times. Neither parent stood at a distance,
remote or removed from their children whose upbringing was
plainly too important a matter to be left to others.
Behind the day-by-day decisions which the Wildings made
lay not only reading and reflection but also a sense of
duty to the wider society. It was a sense of social
responsibility assumed willingly, even enthusiastically.
To Julia there was the opportunity to break down, through
her daughters, the prevailing stereotypes of what was
appropriate for young women of the day. For Frederick,

\[94\] Anthony Wilding’s ‘Life Events Diary’, vol.1, 29 May
1895.

\[95\] Cora Wilding’s ‘Life Events Diary’, 31 January 1901.

\[96\] Ibid., 26 September 1902.
children were prospective inductees into the world of
games and physical culture which was so much a part of his
life and personality. To a degree, both parents were
'progressives' who sought to nudge society in new
directions. In this sense they offer us the chance to
glimpse, in cameo and in advance, changing attitudes
towards the family within the middle classes.
CHAPTER FIVE

The Making of a New Woman I:
Educating Gladys

Julia Wilding took an extremely serious and deliberative approach to the upbringing of her two daughters, Gladys and Cora. In them she saw the opportunity to create her version of the 'New Woman' - a woman who would challenge the social conventions of a patriarchal society. This superior type of woman would be intellectually orientated, university educated, cultured, physically fit, spirited and self-reliant. The 'new woman' would regard equality with men and the ability to pursue a career or profession outside the home as a right. To her, ambition and a competitive drive would be perfectly acceptable traits in a woman. Politically aware and knowledgable about the world around her, the 'new woman' of Julia's making would be a broadminded and independent thinker. Such a woman would have the world at her feet, with a myriad of choices and opportunities available to her.

The creative process of moulding her daughters into her version of the 'new woman' required of Julia constant vigilance and a prescriptive attention to detail. Every aspect of their education - academic, cultural, moral and physical - was carefully calculated to achieve Julia's goal. She instilled in them the notion that they were equal to men, treated them in a similar manner to their brothers and convinced them that they could achieve anything in life. Both she and Frederick made obvious to
their daughters their high expectations of them. Yet for all its prescriptiveness the ultimate objective was equality of opportunity. Gladys and Cora were free to choose their own paths through life and it was a choice which did not necessarily consign marriage and motherhood to the margins. Indeed, as Julia confided in a letter in 1897: 'My one prayer...is that my darlings, Gladys and Cora, may some day meet good true men who will make them good husbands.' Family and domestic life were for Julia not only the scene of her own personal happiness but also the site of social transformation and betterment. Furthermore, the possibility that Gladys and Cora might, as mothers, possess the same capacity to shape the future served to bring a greater intensity to the relationship between mother and daughter.

It is in the upbringing of Gladys, her eldest child and first-born daughter, that Julia can be seen at her most insistent. There was an anxiousness and intensity in Julia's involvement in Gladys' life which was less evident in that of her subsequent children. For approximately the first two years of Gladys' life - before her siblings began to arrive on the scene - Julia was able to focus her maternal attentions solely on her. And it was the persistent pursuit of academic excellence which characterised the educating of Gladys.

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1 Letter to Julia Wilding from Julia Wilding, 8 October 1897, CWP, MBL.

2 Gladys Julia Wilding was born on 1 November 1881.
From the moment Gladys was born Julia and Frederick did everything in their power to stimulate her intellectual development. Julia watched anxiously over the newly-born baby for signs of intelligence. She was delighted to note how alert and observant three week old Gladys appeared to be: 'She takes a great deal of notice already & stares about her with eyes so wide open.' Both parents endeavoured to exercise the infant Gladys' sensory perceptions. They talked constantly to her, read her stories and showed her pictures. Julia sang and played the piano for her, took her for walks, held flowers up to her to smell and gave her objects to play with.

Gladys' 'Life Events Diaries' reveal not only an informed mother but an observant one. Sensitive to the most subtle of changes, she recorded them enthusiastically: 'The little woman gets on fast in every way. She quite raises her head & turns it each way to look about her, & she does no end of talking & laughing.' A week later we learn that Gladys readily recognised and distinguished between her mother, father and her nurse. At five months Gladys was, Julia notes, 'so observant now, & will catch hold of and play with anything we give her.' She was convinced that Gladys was 'getting more knowing

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3 Gladys Wilding's 'Life Events Diary', vol.1, 23 November 1881.
4 Ibid., 3 March 1881.
5 Ibid., 11 March 1882.
6 Ibid., 1 April 1882.
Julia Wilding and daughter, Gladys, aged 14 months. 1 January 1883. (Wilding Collection, C.M: Ref.15197)
every day.'

Julia gave her objects to play with and noted her daughter's discovery of how to produce a variety of sounds: 'she knocks any two things together to make a noise.'

When just eight months old Gladys uttered her first word and Julia and Frederick were encouraged in their belief that their infant daughter was unusually intelligent and quick-witted.

The parents set out even more deliberately to extend her intellectually. They constantly tested her level of comprehension and range of skills. By having Gladys continually at her side while she was going about her everyday tasks at 'Fownhope', Julia was able to talk continuously to her daughter. In this way, she sought to accelerate Gladys' learning process and encourage her to imitate their actions. At ten months Julia noted that 'Baby now shakes her little hand for ta-ta as she goes out of the room. When she has a flower too she always puts it up to our noses to smell.'

When Gladys was just over a year old, Julia wrote that when she 'held a watch to her, she always blows on it to make it open.'

Gladys' level of comprehension and powers of recognition continually impressed her mother: 'She points out everything in books

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7 Ibid., 23 April 1882.
8 Ibid., 8 June 1882.
9 Ibid., 20 June 1882.
10 Ibid., 9 September 1882.
11 Ibid., 27 December 1882.
that we ask her.'

Upon discovering that one and a half year old Gladys possessed a good memory, her parents began to set her little routine tasks and observed the ease with which she carried them out:

She is so immensely intelligent & quick now, & understands everything. She goes from the dining room into another little room to get her father's boots for him every morning, & then takes his slippers away, & she is so proud of it.

Indeed, Julia found that Gladys was becoming 'quite useful & will fetch or carry anything we tell her, - she understands everything we say.'

Nowhere is direct parental involvement in Gladys' development clearer than in the area of speech development. Both Julia and Frederick constantly sought to extend Gladys' vocabulary by teaching her new words, testing her understanding of them and encouraging her to use them in conversation. As a result, Gladys came to possess very advanced communication skills for her age.

Julia, in particular, watched closely over Gladys' developing verbal skills and recorded her rapid improvement from the time she uttered her first word at the age of eight months: 'she says a great many words now,'

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12 Ibid., 3 February 1883.
13 Ibid., 1 May 1883.
14 Ibid., 16 July 1882.
15 Odette Holton, Rosemary Hargreaves, Joanne Ballinger, Pam Cosgriff, Verna Stewart, Children's Development: Birth to Seven Years, Christchurch Teachers College, Christchurch, 1988, pp.1-17.
though no sentences yet'\textsuperscript{18}; 'Baby said two words together 'no more' for the first time to-day. She has said lots of single words for a long time'; 'woman is getting on fast with her talking, indeed, in every way'\textsuperscript{18}; 'She is getting on splendidly with her talking, & says new words every day now.'\textsuperscript{19} And Julia's own love of music led her to use nursery rhymes and songs to further stimulate Gladys' language skills. Mother and daughter spent hours at the piano and, Julia noted, with considerable satisfaction, that at two and a half years old Gladys could say '‘Ba ba black sheep’ & 'Ding Dong Bell’ all off by heart now. She cannot talk quite distinctly yet, but we can quite understand what she says.'\textsuperscript{20} Six months later she recorded substantial progress:

Gladys has been able to say several little nursery rhymes 'Ba Ba Black sheep' 'Jack and Jill' 'Ding Dong Bell' etc for several weeks now, & she is very fond of my singing them to her, & singing them herself in her own fashion which I must confess has not much tune in it yet.'\textsuperscript{21}

By the time she had reached her third birthday, Gladys, as Julia fondly acknowledged, was clearly precocious. She was 'such a darling, interesting little companion. She is

\textsuperscript{16} Gladys Wilding's 'Life Events Diary'. vol.1, 29 July 1883.

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 13 August 1883.

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., 30 October 1883.

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., 16 November 1883.

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 14 May 1884.

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., 18 June 1884.
very fond of going for a walk with me, & I love to have her, & she is so observant & intelligent.'  

Gladys' obvious eagerness encouraged Julia to become even more directly and formally involved in her daughter's education. At the beginning of 1885 she initiated formal teaching sessions. Each morning Julia devoted at least one hour to elementary reading lessons. She brought fun as well as organisation to the sessions:

I have been teaching Gladys her letters a little..& now she can point out & name any letter of the alphabet in a book. I have tried to do it as an amusement, & should not have attempted it if she did not like it, but everyday, of herself, she asks me to do the letters with her. She only knows the capital letters yet, & to-day she was looking through a book & noticed all the dots over the 'i's', & she asks me "what all those little black balls were for?"  

Progress was, by Julia's account, equally pleasing in the numeracy sphere where Gladys could count up to 20 and by 'playing with shells' was 'learning just the elementary rules of addition, subtraction & multiplication.' It was clear also that if Gladys was, as her mother claimed, 'extremely fond of doing all these things', so too was Julia. She derived great enjoyment from the lessons, noting with pride how 'Gladdie gets on splendidly with her little things with me, & can quite read a little now', and was so 'remarkably quick & intelligent..so observant, &

22 Ibid., 16 December 1884.
23 Ibid., 1 February 1885.
24 Ibid.
25 Ibid.
interested in everything.'\textsuperscript{26} Gladys was, in her mother's words, 'such a darling to teach.'\textsuperscript{27}

Julia's deliberate intervention in her daughter's education extended beyond the intellectual core of reading, writing and arithmetic to the encouragement of motor skills and dexterity. Taking her cue from Froebel, she set up a 'kindergarten occupations' corner.\textsuperscript{28} Gladys was encouraged to complete small tasks such as cutting paper with scissors, pasting and threading beads with wool - skills designed to develop fine muscle control. Here, too, Gladys was quick to learn and was soon handling 'kindergarten work' independently: 'I marked out the pattern & then she sewed in the wool entirely by herself. She is so pleased with this sort of work.'\textsuperscript{29} And, in addition to these structured 'kindergarten' sessions, Julia sought to stimulate her daughter's awareness of the natural world of plants, animals and the night sky by taking her on nature rambles.

While Julia made a point of attempting to make the lessons with Gladys enjoyable, there was a seriousness of intent which, from time to time, verged on the excessive. Much was clearly expected of Gladys. Julia was especially sensitive to any apparent wavering of Gladys' attention or

\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., 1 March 1885.

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{28} See chapter four, pp.175-176.

\textsuperscript{29} Gladys Wilding's 'Life Events Diary', vol.1, 3 June 1885.
enthusiasm. Shortly after her fourth birthday, for example, Julia became convinced that new strategies were needed to retain what she saw as her daughter’s waning interest. At first she allowed Gladys ‘a few days’ holiday from her lessons: ‘she has not been so good at them just lately & I think she will begin again better perhaps.’\(^3\)\(^0\) When this failed to achieve the desired result a more coercive element became evident. A reward system for attentiveness, good behaviour and good work was introduced: ‘I began to-day giving Gladys a good or bad mark every day after her lessons, & when she has 40 good marks, she is to have a little book or prize.’\(^3\)\(^1\) It was a system designed to appeal to Gladys’ innate desire to be ‘good’ and please her mother. At the same time, it provided Julia with a means of encouraging self-discipline and the desire to excel.

The system soon began to have its desired effect:

Gladys likes having the marks, & has been very good at lessons. She has nearly all good marks at present, but she always cries & is very unhappy when she does get a bad one. Gladys will not always give her attention to lessons, but when she does she is remarkably quick & very observant, & is certainly getting on.\(^3\)\(^2\)

Despite the obvious tensions, Julia strictly adhered to the incentive system and recorded her daughter’s first prize . . a scrapbook. I give her a good or bad mark every day after lessons, & she was to have a

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\(^3\)\(^0\) Gladys Wilding’s ‘Life Events Diary’, vol.2, 25 December 1885.

\(^3\)\(^1\) Ibid., 28 December 1885.

\(^3\)\(^2\) Ibid., 10 January 1886.
prize when she had 40 good ones. To-day she got her 48th good mark, as she had 8 bad ones & had to get the extra 8 good ones to counterbalance them & make up the 40 good. Woman was so delighted with her prize, & got Fanny [servant] to make her some paste at once, so as to begin pasting pictures in. She has been cutting pictures out that I give her for a long while past."

Obviously pleased with the outcome, Julia noted that Frederick and a family friend, 'Mr Lewis':

both promised Gladys that they will give her a prize if she gets 40 good marks without a single bad one. She is most anxious about it, & she has already about 20 good marks, - without a bad one.\(^34\)

Yet for all its intensity, Julia’s involvement in her daughter’s intellectual growth was, to some extent, moderated by her considerable knowledge of progressive views on child development. She was careful not to attempt to push Gladys beyond her present capabilities, only introducing new concepts, subjects or tasks when she judged her to be developmentally ‘ready’ for them.\(^35\) She took care to build on skills and knowledge already acquired.\(^36\) It was in this sense that, in 1886, Julia added copy-writing lessons to Gladys’ curriculum of arithmetic, reading, kindergarten work and elementary science. But, even here, there is an evident tension between enthusiasm and enjoyment on one hand and excessive

\(^{33}\) Ibid., 27 May 1886.

\(^{34}\) Ibid., 12 July 1886.

\(^{35}\) Downs, Froebel, pp.38-39, 60; Downs, Pestalozzi, pp.79-80, 84-85.

\(^{36}\) Gladys Wilding’s ‘Life Events Diary’, vol.2, 12 July 1886.
ambition on the other. Julia encouraged four year old Gladys to write to the 'Children's Corner' of the Christchurch *Weekly Press*. As she tells it, little prompting was needed for Gladys to write her first letter:

She composed & wrote it entirely herself, the only help I gave her being to tell her how to spell the words. She had read the letters of other little children about their pets in this paper, & was very anxious to write one too."

Julia could not resist adding, however, that at four-and-three-quarter years 'Gladys is younger than any of the other children who have written, - the next youngest to Gladys which appeared being seven.' A second letter published in the *Weekly Press* - once again all in capital letters - brought forth a sharper response. 'She [Gladys] is immensely fond of writing letters', Julia wrote, ' but does not much like her copy book lessons, only real letters all written in capitals, but I tell her she will never write properly until she can make small letters too.'

It was with considerable reluctance but the customary thoughtfulness that Julia decided, as Gladys approached six years of age, to curtail her direct involvement in her daughter's education. In January 1888 she noted that Gladys had been:

so good at lessons since Christmas, but I am sorry to say that I am going to give up teaching her all but music & a little kindergarten work. She is going to join Mrs Anderson's two little girls in learning from Miss Tabart. We think it will be better for her, &

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37 Ibid., 18 September 1886.

38 Ibid., 9 October 1886.
give her an increased stimulus & interest in her lessons, & we hear that Miss Tabart teaches exceedingly well. I am sorry to give up though, but any way it is an experiment we can but try.  

It was a cautious, considered decision. Gladys would now attend a small private school in the house of a trusted neighbour, where she would join eight to ten boys and girls of a similar social background. Julia hoped that the presence of other children might add a beneficial competitive element.

The new arrangement did not bring about any significant lessening in Julia’s influence over Gladys’ education. She remained in close contact with her teacher, Miss Tabart and was delighted to learn that Miss Tabart had ‘never seen such a clever child. She certainly is marvellously quick at learning & grasping things.’ Moreover, consultation extended to shaping Gladys’s course of study. New subjects were introduced only with Julia’s approval, even direction. She specified, for example, that six year old Gladys should receive lessons in arithmetic, spelling, writing, reading, general science and drawing and wanted Botany added the following year. And it was Julia who decided when it was time for Gladys to start learning Latin. It was a symbolic statement for Julia was well aware that studying Latin was the first step in

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39 Ibid., 7 January 1888.
40 Ibid., 12 May 1889.
41 Ibid., 6 March 1889.
42 Ibid., 28 May 1889.
the road to unlocking the 'door to professions which
demanded university degrees.'

As well as determining Gladys' course of study with
Miss Tabart, Julia continued to monitor Gladys' progress
closely. The 'Life Events Diaries' reveal a detailed and
precise knowledge of her daughter's school work:

She is very forward in arithmetic, and has just got
to squares & cubes in Hamlin Smith's book; Gladys is
in Fractions in arithmetic now; Gladys has just begun flowers in Botany, she has only done leaves
before.

Moreover, tuition away from 'Fownhope' did not mean that
Julia ceased to be actively involved in Gladys' education.
She supplemented and extended the knowledge and skills
gained at school. Frequently she read scientific books to
her daughter:

I got Miss Buckland's *Fairyland of Science* in our box
from England yesterday, & have begun to read it aloud
to the children. Gladys seems very interested in it I
am glad to say, & enjoys hearing it very much, & she
always reads over to herself afterwards what I have
already read - I do not allow her to go on further.

She also taught Gladys to play chess and played other
educational games with her in a conscious attempt to

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43 Ruth Fry, *It's Different for Daughters: A History of
*the Curriculum for Girls in New Zealand Schools, 1900-1975,*

44 Gladys Wilding's 'Life Events Diary', vol.2, 28 July 1889.

45 Ibid., 20 May 1890.

46 Ibid., 15 September 1898.

47 Ibid., 31 July 1888.
provide intellectual stimulation. A game they often played, wrote Julia,

is thinking of as many words as you can out of a long word. To-day out for a walk we had 'gossamer', & out of it we made 50 words, each of us finding a word alternately, & Gladys found them quite as quickly and well as me.\[48\]

As Gladys grew older she also took her to exhibitions and lectures on various subjects: 'I took Gladys to-night to hear Stanley's Lecture on "The Cannibals & Pygmies of the Dark Forest." It was very interesting, & I think Gladys enjoyed it, especially the Lime Light view.'\[49\]

On occasion Julia's teaching of Gladys ran to more formal lessons. During school holidays she supervised lessons for an hour each morning: 'Gladys' holidays with Miss Tabart begin to-day, & she is going to do a little lessons with me everyday while they last.'\[50\] In practice, the lessons were rarely so 'little': ' I give her [Gladys] about an hour every morning. She really does arithmetic wonderfully well, & this morning she did 6 sums of all different sorts without a mistake. Her spelling too is excellent.'\[51\] Clearly the extra tuition provided Julia with a means of both monitoring Gladys' progress and checking the quality of Miss Tabart's teaching.

By sending Gladys to a school Julia was also able to

\[48\] Ibid., 15 October 1889.
\[49\] Ibid., 28 January 1892.
\[50\] Ibid., 27-28 August 1888.
\[51\] Ibid., 12 May 1889.
compare her scholastic performance with others. Indeed, as Gladys grew a little older, a more competitive element becomes evident in comments about her daughter’s achievements. In October 1889 Julia noted proudly that her eight year old daughter ‘really writes extremely well, & I am sure I do not exaggerate in saying that her composition & writing is equal to that of many girls of 12.’

Prize givings and examination results became occasions for special comment:

Gladys & her fellow pupils are having examinations with Miss Tabart now, & Gladys likes them so much. She got the highest number of marks for arithmetic, 22 - with Gladys Anderson next with 19, & her essays on Domestic Economy & History are very good we think.  

Julia was especially conscious of Gladys’ ability to consistently outperform older children:

Gladys’ half term examinations are just over, & we are so pleased, she has a higher number of marks than any of the other pupils in the school, she is the youngest girl there. Gladys is only 10 & is first with 243 marks, Jenny Yorke a girl of 14 is second with 221, & they all of course had exactly the same papers & questions to answer. They are 5 altogether, & I am so delighted Gladys has come off so well, & it was distinctly a disadvantage for her being her first term at Mrs Mannering’s School, & nearly all the books used were different from those she was accustomed to with Miss Tabart, Gladys is first also in History, geography, Latin & poetry, & 2nd & 3rd in spelling & science. Arithmetic she is further on in than the other girls & as they were all in different stages, they could not have the same questions & marks as in the other subjects. We feel very proud of our girlie & she is certainly very ambitious, & anxious to get on.

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52 Ibid., 15 October 1889.
53 Ibid., 2 May 1892.
54 Ibid., 15 July 1892.
The extent to which Julia intruded herself into the formal education of her daughter is most starkly illustrated when a new teacher was engaged. In February 1893, when twelve year old Gladys returned to Miss Tabart's school, after spending two terms at a private school in Summer, Julia arranged for a specialist tutor to provide weekly arithmetic lessons. Not only did Julia engage the teacher, Miss Tindall, but she insisted on sitting in on her first lesson. And when Miss Tindall left to take up an appointment at Southland High School, in June 1893, Julia was less certain about the replacement - 'Miss Mulholland' - whom, she wrote 'seems a nice girl, but is not so clever as Miss Tindall.'

In addition to choosing teachers Julia also continued to oversee the range of subjects which Gladys was taught and increasingly became immersed in the competitive ethos of examinations. Indeed, Gladys' continued academic successes seem to have fuelled her mother's competitive desire to compare. At times, it became plainly both intrusive and excessive:

At school this morning with Miss Tabart they had dictation, when the other children had respectively 54, 25, 36 mistakes & Gladys had only 1. She has always been wonderfully good at spelling.

Indeed, on occasions, Julia's comments reveal a growing sense of expectation which, if it were communicated to

55 Ibid., 2 February 1893, 13 February 1893.
56 Ibid., 22 June 1893.
57 Ibid., 5 March 1893.
Gladys, as it almost certainly was, undoubtedly would have placed considerable pressure upon her:

Gladys was top again. She attained 237 marks. Mabel came next with 208, & Gladys Anderson followed with 163. In four out of their eight subjects too, namely grammar, arithmetic, dictation & Latin, Gladys had more advanced & difficult examinations than the others, & even then she was higher than them. 58

Clearly, by the time she was thirteen, Gladys was, to use her mother’s words, ‘a clever girlie.’ 59

How to harness this undoubted talent and allow it to flourish fully exercised Julia’s mind. In many ways, she saw a ‘daily governess’ as offering the best way of tapping Gladys’ talent. Such a solution would, of course, have allowed Julia an even closer involvement in the education of her daughter. Ultimately, however, the search for a ‘suitable’ governess was abandoned and Gladys was enrolled as a ‘day scholar’ at Mr. Wilson’s private Cranmer House School. 60 It was a decision which Frederick and Julia considered experimental ‘we are going to try this & I do hope it will be successful.’ 61 This was Gladys’ first experience of a male teacher and Julia was clearly somewhat apprehensive. Within weeks, however, Julia noted that Gladys ‘is getting on splendidly & seems so happy there’ and that ‘the teaching seems to be very

58 Ibid., 4 May 1893.
59 Ibid., 4 May 1893.
60 Ibid., 25 March 1894.
61 Ibid.
good, & Gladys seems to be high up in all her lessons.'

It was the academic emphasis of the school which had
attracted the Wildings and, despite Gladys being taught in
all-female classes, needlework, drawing and singing were
the only concessions to the traditional female
accomplishments. At Cranmer House the curriculum Gladys
experienced was wide ranging, if thinner in its coverage
of the sciences and comprised: Arithmetic, Algebra,
Euclid, English composition, English grammar, English
literature, Geography, History, reading, writing, spelling
& dictation, Latin, French, Botany, Physiology and drill.

The move to Cranmer House School marks the full
realisation of Gladys' academic potential. Indeed, in
1895, she was considered to be so far in advance of her
classmates that she was 'almost entirely withdrawn from
the ordinary classes in order to pursue her special course
of study for Matriculation.'

Under the private tutelage
of Mr. W. Wilson she prepared herself for her examinations
in Latin, French, English, Algebra, Arithmetic, Euclid and
Geography. There was pride and apprehension in Julia's
reaction. Concerned least Gladys exhaust herself, she
monitored her daughter's study even more closely. In
March, she noted contentedly that Gladys was 'not working
too hard yet.' By mid-year she observed, with perhaps a

62 Ibid., 4 April 1894.

63 A letter to Frederick Wilding from W. Wilson dated 2
May 1895 and enclosed in Gladys' 'Life Events Diary', vol.2.

64 Gladys Wilding's 'Life Events Diary', vol.2, 10
March 1895.
mixture of anxiety and admiration, that Gladys was now 'preparing lessons until she goes to bed at 9.' Maternal concern was finally put to rest in the face of her daughter's obvious anticipation of the examination: 'She has been in the greatest spirits about it & so looking forward to it for the past several weeks.' Gladys was clearly 'excited about her Matriculation', but, as Julia observed, 'quite confident of passing' and 'thoroughly enjoyed' the seven three-hour examinations she sat, within a week, in early December 1895.

The eagerness with which mother and daughter awaited the results of the examinations underlines the importance both attached to them. Gladys was relatively certain that she had passed all seven. She was right. Julia celebrated 'the delightful news': 'We are so pleased & proud of our girlie, & really it is an achievement for a girl of only just over 14, I don't think there are many who have passed so young.' The knowledge that Gladys had succeeded in the exams only served to make the parents and daughter keener to see the marks achieved. 'At last', exclaimed Julia:

we have got Gladys' percentage of marks for the Matriculation (through Prof. Browning) & it is very

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65 Ibid., 31 July 1895.
66 Ibid., 10 December 1895.
67 Ibid., 2 March 1895.
68 Ibid., 10 December 1895.
69 Ibid., 31 January 1896.
good it is, & we have certainly every reason to be proud of our girlie... She passed in them all & she was 16 marks above the necessary pass in her lowest subject & 52 above her highest - algebra. An average of nearly 70 per cent is certainly very good.\(^70\)

The results were exceptional for a girl of fourteen and they pointed to a university education. Nonetheless, Julia 'sent Glad's papers home to Edwyn, & shall be very curious to hear what he thinks of them.'\(^71\) A mathematician and scholar, her brother was well-qualified to give an opinion, but there was an element of 'colonial insecurity' in Julia's seeking of an endorsement from 'Home.' She was 'very pleased indeed' with Edwyn's response:

I had a letter from Edwyn to-day about Gladys, her matriculation work etc. He thinks very highly of her abilities, & strongly advises us to let her go on for her degrees etc. I sent him home Gladys' matriculation papers to see, & he has sent me the London University Matriculation papers for us to compare with them.\(^72\)

Clearly, at fourteen years of age, the young Gladys stood on the brink of achieving all that her mother could have hoped for. Here was a precociously gifted young woman who had not only absorbed the family commitment to education but also possessed a temperament to match.

The obvious blossoming of Gladys in the academic sphere stimulated her mother to new levels of enthusiasm. At the end of 1896 she sat at her diary and set out a list

\(^{70}\) Ibid., 8 March 1896.

\(^{71}\) Ibid.

\(^{72}\) Gladys Wilding's 'Life Events Diary', vol.3, 26 September 1896.
of essential reading for her fifteen year old daughter." It has the appearance of having been hastily constructed or at least set down without reference to the family library. There is nothing random, however, about the works listed. They represent what Julia held to be the core of contemporary liberal thought. Heading it, perhaps somewhat surprisingly, was the 'Personal Recollections of Mary Somerville' written by her daughter, Martha. A well-published writer on mathematics and the physical sciences, Somerville was admired by Julia, at least partly, because she was a woman operating in the scientific world. Then followed, more predictably, 'Darwin's works' and the French astronomer Camille Flammanian's Astronomie Populaire, which had quickly attracted a wide readership after it was first published in 1880. The great bulk of the prescribed texts, however, were the historical and philosophical writings which had shaped Julia's own education: the 'works' of T.B.Macaulay and J.S.Mill, W.E.H. Lecky's European Morals and History of Rationalism (1865) and Buckle's History of Civilisation.

It is difficult to know how firmly the reading list was pressed upon Gladys. Over the next few years, whether at 'Fownhope' or at Canterbury College, the writers certainly became part of her intellectual framework. More

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73 Ibid., vol.2.


75 Ibid., vol.5, p.163.
important here, however, is the need to recognise that Julia’s apparent prescriptiveness was rooted in a wider attempt to inculcate the habit of reading. Books always loomed large in the Wilding household. Rarely did a birthday pass without a book featuring as a present and both parents, as we have noted, frequently read to all the children. When Gladys was in her ninth year Julia helped organise a system of weekly ‘girls’ reading meetings.’  

Shortly after her tenth birthday she was given, by her mother, a ‘little book’ in which to record the titles of all she read. The encouragement worked. Gladys, in her mother’s words, became a ‘tremendous child for reading & will sit for hours with books, - I have to forbid her reading half as much as she would like.’ Clearly, Julia knew not only how much her daughter was reading but also precisely what she was reading. We learn, for example, that Gladys was ‘so fond of Miss Alcott’s books’ and especially pleased when her father gave her Little Men, a book she had ‘been wanting to have for a long time’,” and that when she decided to buy ‘Tennyson’s poems’ her mother

76 Julia Wilding’s ‘Events Diary, 1879-1908’, 26 May and 29 September 1891, WFP, Box 11, Folder 54, Item 54.


78 Ibid., 5 November 1892.

79 Ibid.

80 Ibid., 1 November 1893.
arranged to 'get a nicely bound copy' from 'Home.'

Success opened up new possibilities and Gladys was quick to seize them. During the years from 1896 to 1898 she single-mindedly prepared herself for the New Zealand University Junior Scholarship examinations. She continued to take private lessons with Mr W Wilson for two or three days a week and studied at home by herself for the rest of the time. Julia was watchful and cautious. At the beginning of 1898 she noted:

This is the year she is going up for junior scholarship, & she will have to work hard. The results of last years Junior Scholarships have just been published, & the top by Leo Taming got 4238 marks. I wonder will Gladys get anything like that number.

Gladys was, by her mother's account, aiming high: 'Girlie has set her heart on not only winning a scholarship but also coming out at the head of the list, a position which so far, no girl has attained.' The importance of performing to one's maximum potential had attained the status of a family motto and in Gladys it seems to have achieved full expression.

As the examinations approached maternal anxiety grew. Worried least a proposed trip with her to England might prove a distraction, Julia wrote anxiously: 'The excitement about England is very bad for Gladys' work. Her examination comes off in three weeks now, - I do hope

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81 Ibid., vol.3, 6 November 1897.
82 Ibid., 3 February 1898.
83 Ibid.
Gladys will be successful. 

When Gladys developed a slight toothache which was keeping her awake at nights four days before her exams began, she was placed in a Convalescent Home to study for a week 'as it is so important about her examinations, we thought the little change might take it away.' Julia fretted lest her daughter's expectations were dashed and after the first examination wrote with evident anguish:

Gladys is not altogether satisfied the papers were so long & difficult that she had not time to do nearly all the questions. What she did do, she seems to think are all right, but she is very annoyed at not having time to do more. We comfort her by saying everyone is in the same boat, & probably no one had time to do all the questions, & Mr Wilson who also went up to see Gladys this evening, says that he never remembers such long & difficult papers as the Mathematical ones given this year. There were 12 long questions in each paper.

When Gladys said she was 'quite satisfied' with her performance in the exams which followed, Julia's hopes grew: 'As far as we can tell, I think girlie has passed the examinations most successfully & there seems every chance of her having gained a scholarship.' In the event, Gladys failed to gain a scholarship, finishing sixth on the credit list. Julia was disappointed but realistic. 'I think we really ought to be satisfied, as

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84 Ibid., 8 November 1898.
85 Ibid., 2 December 1898.
86 Ibid., 6 December 1898.
87 Ibid., 7 December 1898.
88 Ibid., 13 December 1898.
girlie is only just seventeen, & so many go in two or even three times.’ Gladys, quite undeterred, was determined to try again in 1899.

While admiring her daughter’s tenacity and perseverance, Julia was rather dumbfounded by this decision: ‘Gladys quite means to have another try this year, but I don’t see how she can possibly gain one, as she will not be able to work very much while we are in England.’ Gladys’ tenacity knew few bounds. During the steamship voyage to England and throughout her six-month stay she spent three hours every morning on her lessons although, as Julia noted, ‘it is very difficult to fit in, with all our goings about.’ While in Hereford her Uncle Edwyn took her ‘in hand with her mathematics & gives her a little time to them every day.’ He thought ‘very highly of her abilities’ and Julia tells us that if Gladys could study ‘regularly at Mathematics with him for a few months, he is positive she would come out very high on the list of scholarships, perhaps even head it.’ Julia also arranged a lesson a week in Latin for Gladys at the Hereford Cathedral School.

89 Ibid., 3 February 1899.
90 Ibid.
91 Ibid., 15 May 1899.
92 Ibid.
93 Ibid.
94 Ibid.
The failure to win a scholarship at first attempt had rendered even the irrepressible Gladys a little unsure. Looking back on the exams, which she sat a mere two weeks after returning to New Zealand, Gladys was circumspect in her assessment, judging that she 'has done her papers fairly well & ought to get a slightly higher percentage of marks than last year.'\(^95\) Julia was restrained and preferred to: 'profess our souls in patience until the end of the month when the results will be known.'\(^96\) Gladys, who continued after the examinations to do some 'work & reading everyday, but not so much'\(^97\), came sixth and, along with thirteen others, was awarded a New Zealand University Junior Scholarship.\(^98\) A delighted Julia was 'so pleased about it' and thought

\[\text{it extremely creditable to girlie as she had such a broken year & been able to do so little real work. Gladys is very happy about it though she says she cannot be perfectly satisfied, as she did not head the list, - her great ambition. I think if she had been working steadily all this year, she would probably have come out top; but I am quite satisfied.}\]

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Here we glimpse briefly and tantalizingly the image of a proud yet restrained mother and a determined daughter beginning to assert her own individuality.

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\(^95\) Ibid., 12 December 1899.

\(^96\) Ibid.

\(^97\) Ibid., 26 December 1899.

\(^98\) Ibid., 24 January 1900.

\(^99\) Ibid., 25 January 1900.
By the time she was eighteen years of age Gladys had emerged as a scholar of considerable promise. Yet, important as intellectual development was to her upbringing, it was never pursued at the expense of social and cultural pursuits. Julia conscientiously endeavoured to instil in her daughter all the skills and social graces regarded as appropriate for a 'cultured' young woman of her social standing. There was nothing frivolous or superficial about the 'cultural education' she imparted to her daughter. In her view, music, art and the traditional craft-based women's art-forms, such as needlework and sewing, were demeaned by the term 'accomplishments.' Individually and collectively they possessed the potential to expand the individual's experience of life and contribute to the enrichment of society at large. And such was her commitment to music, in particular, that it can come as no surprise that her passion was visited upon her children in ways that could easily shade from enthusiastic encouragement to prescriptive persuasion.

It was music which dominated Gladys' cultural education. Not surprisingly the piano took pride of place. There was certainly no doubt in Julia's mind as to which musical instrument her children should learn. To Julia, piano playing was much more than merely a lady-like accomplishment - it was a highly skilled art form which had the potential to enrich lives. Accordingly, Julia was
quick to search out signs of musical talent in her children. She tested Gladys’ knowledge of different Nursery rhymes and judged her to have a ‘good ear’ and to be ‘very fond of my singing...to her.’[^100] When Gladys was four and a half years old, Julia introduced her to some elementary level musical theory and found her to be a quick learner but one who much preferred the practical lessons she had begun with her mother in 1887. There was a critical, if not demanding tone in Julia’s initial observations of her daughter’s musical ability:

> I began with Gladys to-day just to play the first-five exercise on the piano. Of course her little fingers do not go very well at present, but she is very proud of beginning to "play" as she calls it, & I think will get on.[^101]

And six weeks later she noted that Gladys had performed the ‘first five-five fingered exercise with both hands together to-day’ and did so ‘very fairly considering.’[^102]

The importance Julia attached to her daughter’s musical education is underscored by her persistent personal involvement in it. In 1888, when she ceased her direct involvement in her daughter’s general education and sent her to school, she continued to give Gladys piano lessons at home. Indeed, they were more earnestly pursued: ‘I keep on with her music, & I think she is getting on with it. She plays (with me) the first duet in Diabellis’s book very nicely indeed, & she reveals music & counts time

[^100]: Ibid., vol.1, 22 June 1884.
[^102]: Ibid., 4 March 1887.
very well too.'\textsuperscript{103} She insisted on Gladys practising the exercises 'she likes...least'\textsuperscript{104} and arranged additional daily music lessons at Miss Tabart's school. Moreover, while Julia was prepared to allow Gladys a short break from her academic lessons during the school holidays, the music lessons continued. By the time she was seven Gladys was judged ready to perform. She played a duet - 'Diabollis Sonata' - with her mother for family friends, who, Julia reported, 'thought she played exceedingly well for her age.'\textsuperscript{105} Larger audiences followed: 'Last Friday Gladys went with me to the Hospital, & played 'Rule Britannia' with me as a duet, to the patients...Gladys played her part (the treble) very well, & I was quite satisfied with her.'\textsuperscript{106}

Julia continued to take the piano lessons she gave Gladys very seriously, carefully planning in advance the exercises and music Gladys was to learn. By October 1890 she was deemed ready to play a duet with her mother in a concert for patients at Christchurch hospital. 'It was one of Viabellis' sonatas, & womane managed very well.'\textsuperscript{107} A

\textsuperscript{103} Ibid., 2 February 1888.

\textsuperscript{104} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{105} Ibid., 7 June 1889.

\textsuperscript{106} Ibid., 15 October 1889.

\textsuperscript{107} Ibid., 7 October 1890.
year later she played before a more knowledgeable and critical audience at the Rose Show:

Mrs Stevens asked me to play at the kind of promenade concert they had in the afternoon. I took Gladys, & when I was asked to play a second time she played the Gondoliere of Leon D'Ouville with me as a duet. She really did it very well, & without any pitch or breakdown, & all the people around applauded her when we finished, & several congratulated me. There was a great crowd there, & it was the first time Gladys has played before a lot of people.\textsuperscript{108}

Moreover, when not performing herself, Gladys frequently 'turned over' musical score for her mother at chamber concert practices.\textsuperscript{109}

Gladys' 'coming out' as a performing pianist coincided with an intensification of the practice regime. At the beginning of 1892 Julia arranged longer music lessons at school. She also wrote 'out a table of exactly what she [Gladys] is to practise every day.'\textsuperscript{110} When Gladys boarded at Mrs Mannering's school, in Sumner, for two terms, Julia saw to it that a daily music lesson of one and a half hours was included in her school programme. Upon her return to Miss Tabart's school, in 1893, Julia once more arranged for a daily piano lesson at 'Fownhope' with 'Miss Hannah' every afternoon. This arrangement allowed Julia to keep a watchful eye over both Gladys' performance as well as the quality of the teaching she received: 'I like Miss Hannah's way of making her practise

\textsuperscript{108} Ibid., 3 December 1891.

\textsuperscript{109} Ibid., 22 July 1890.

\textsuperscript{110} Ibid., 25 January 1892.
& manner very much, - she makes her play very carefully & slowly.'\textsuperscript{111} If at all uncertain about a teacher Julia had few qualms replacing her. After engaging Miss Gardiner in May 1893 she noted that Gladys seemed to be 'getting on very nicely' with her new teacher and was now 'much more careful & correct in her playing.'\textsuperscript{112} To this regime of twice-weekly piano lesson and daily practice, weekly singing lessons with 'the two Miss Gardiners' were added. In all of these arrangements Julia was an active and continuing presence.

Julia's obvious desire to shape both her daughter's musical and academic development created tensions. The issue was thrown into focus by the decision that Gladys should begin working towards gaining the first stage of a junior musical certificate from Canterbury College early in 1894. At first Julia insisted that her daughter practise the piano every day after school before commencing her homework.\textsuperscript{113} Beyond this she ensured that music lessons did not become too time-consuming. Gladys began working for the Junior Music exam only one month before it was due to take place and, unlike most candidates, did not attend the Canterbury College music lectures relevant to the exam. Thus, as Julia claimed Gladys 'has really given very little time to it though, &

\textsuperscript{111} Ibid., 3 February 1893.
\textsuperscript{112} Ibid., 17 July 1893.
\textsuperscript{113} Ibid., 11 July 1894.
I shall feel quite proud of Gladys if she has passed.'¹¹⁴ The ever competitive mother and daughter were indeed, delighted when success followed¹¹⁵, but both were disappointed not to be told the marks which would have enabled them to compare Gladys' performance with that of other candidates.

Increasingly, however, the demands of academic study limited the time available for music. Somewhat reluctantly Julia moderated her demands. During the winter months of 1895, as Gladys prepared for her matriculation papers, Julia resignedly declared:

[I] am afraid I must make up my mind to her making no progress this term. I do not like to make her get up & practise these cold mornings, & when she comes home from school, she is preparing lessons until she goes to bed at 9, so most days she really does not touch the piano at all. Next term I hope she will get a little daily practise at all events, when the mornings are lighter & warmer.¹¹⁶

The spring thankfully allowed morning practice to resume and Julia observed that Gladys was now 'getting on so well too with her music.'¹¹⁷ With Matriculation behind her and scholarship exams a year or so away the time available for music grew again. Mother and daughter returned to the performance circuit and played a duet at a public concert.¹¹⁸ Gladys resumed her piano lessons and also

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 29 October 1894.
¹¹⁵ Ibid., 8 November 1894.
¹¹⁶ Ibid., 31 July 1895.
¹¹⁷ Ibid., 18 September 1895.
¹¹⁸ Ibid.
attended music lectures at Canterbury College on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Significantly it was Julia who admitted, as Gladys' second year music exams approached, to 'getting quite anxious about it.'\textsuperscript{119} She was genuinely delighted when news of Gladys' success arrived. Both mother and daughter were again disappointed when the actual marks gained by the candidates were not printed in the newspaper, preventing a comparative assessment of Gladys' performance.

Gladys ultimately gained her music certificate in 1897. While Julia acknowledged that preparation for the New Zealand University Junior Scholarship would dominate in 1898, she nonetheless expected Gladys to continue her music: 'She is not going to have any music lessons this year but will of course keep up her music & practice by herself.'\textsuperscript{120} As the year progressed, it was Julia who became increasingly frustrated as music slipped further from the forefront of her daughter's attentions. There was comfort though 'in the evenings' watching Gladys & her father with the flute, do all sorts of songs, dance music, & from the geisha, Shop girls etc. Considering how little play she gets, she keeps up her music wonderfully I think & reads as well as ever from sight.'\textsuperscript{121}

When Gladys succeeded, at her second attempt, to win a university scholarship in 1899, her mother was 'glad to

\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., 18 October 1896.

\textsuperscript{120} Ibid., vol.3, 3 February 1898.

\textsuperscript{121} Ibid., 24 September 1898.
say’ that her daughter had begun to do a ‘little music practise’ once more.\textsuperscript{122}

The pursuit of academic and musical achievement was accompanied by due attention to those of the traditional female accomplishments which Julia prized. As we have already noted, Gladys was encouraged in the feminine arts of sewing and needlework from an early age. The ‘kindergarten work’ her mother initiated was designed primarily to develop muscle control and dexterity.\textsuperscript{123} Over time, however, Gladys was encouraged to aim at making perfectly wearable articles of clothing. And, as a nine year old, with the assistance of weekly sewing lessons at school, she next produced ‘a little wool jacket’\textsuperscript{124} for a baby cousin and a ‘pair of slippers in leather’\textsuperscript{125} for her father’s birthday. As well, she became proficient at crochet, knitting and needlework. Such were the other demands on her time that these skills were to become little more than a hobby in Gladys’ life. Her instruction in them, nonetheless, indicates something of the thoroughness of the all-round education her mother fashioned for her.

The attention given to cultivating whatever artistic talent Gladys possessed highlights Julia’s conception of

\textsuperscript{122} Ibid., 26 December 1899.

\textsuperscript{123} See chapter four, p.175.

\textsuperscript{124} Gladys Wilding’s ‘Life Events Diary’, vol.2, 20 May 1890.

\textsuperscript{125} Ibid., 20 November 1890.
what was thought appropriate for an educated young woman. After a teacher reported the six year old Gladys to be 'especially good at drawing'\textsuperscript{126} Julia arranged lessons for her every Saturday morning from an art teacher, 'Miss Gee.' She kept a close eye on what they did in these classes and the progress Gladys was making: 'Gladys has had 3 drawing lesson now, & continues to like them immensely. She has scroll leaves to do during the week and Miss Gee says she is getting on very well.'\textsuperscript{127} And Julia was especially pleased to note that: 'Last Saturday Gladys began painting with Miss Gee, she has only done drawing before. She likes it immensely, & is always getting flowers from the garden, & drawing and painting them.'\textsuperscript{128}

Julia also saw to it that her daughter acquired all the deportment skills and graces necessary to participate fully in the upper middle-class social life of the city. The nine year old Gladys was taken to 'recitation' or public performance afternoons. Before an audience of other pupils, each child was required 'to do something, play or recite or anything they like to have prepared, but it must be entirely by themselves.'\textsuperscript{129} Gladys usually played a piece of music from memory or recited poems. Between the ages of ten and fifteen Gladys attended regular dancing

\textsuperscript{126} Ibid., 21 December 1888.
\textsuperscript{127} Ibid., 14 June 1891.
\textsuperscript{128} Ibid., 26 October 1891.
\textsuperscript{129} Ibid., 24 June 1890.
lessons. At that point, elocution lessons were added to the array of accomplishments to which Gladys was exposed.\textsuperscript{130} The emphasis of Julia’s grooming of her first daughter was not so much upon preparation for the domestic world as upon developing the skills needed in the public sphere. Training in household management and domestic work was, by comparison, minimal. There was elementary instruction in ‘Domestic Economy’ at Miss Tabart’s school. And there was the experience of managing her own finances when her parents decided to give her a yearly allowance of three pounds, out of which she was expected to buy her own books and gloves. Julia required her to keep a record of her spending in an account book which she gave her especially for this purpose.\textsuperscript{131} Housework, however, did not loom large in Gladys’ life. From the age of eight she received payment for dusting the drawing room and piano daily and for gathering flowers and fruit for her mother’s breakfast plate. She also assisted her mother when the household was short of domestic servants and on social occasions when extra hands were required. Put simply, her time and energies were channelled into the educational programme Julia prescribed for her.

The inculcation of skills thought appropriate to motherhood was, however, part of Gladys’ domestic education. As the eldest, she was inevitably drawn into helping Julia in caring for the subsequent Wilding

\textsuperscript{130} Ibid., vol.3, 5 April 1897.

\textsuperscript{131} Ibid., vol.2, 5 January 1895.
children. Julia frequently praised Gladys' motherly attitude towards her siblings. After Anthony was born in October 1883, Julia noted approvingly that three year old Gladys was already 'such a loving little woman...so motherly & good & careful with baby brother.' 132 As she grew older she continued to be 'a great help' in caring for the younger children and, in Julia's words, 'quite a little mother.' 133 By the time she had reached her teenage years Gladys was able to take care of the entire family for Julia when necessary. Indeed, she came to assume something of the role of educator so highly developed in her mother. At the age of fourteen she took it upon herself to prepare lessons for her brothers and sister during their summer school holidays. During the evenings Gladys, an avid newspaper reader, who had been taught by her mother that keeping up with current events was a daily duty, began to recount to Frank and Cora in teacher-story teller mode 'any little interesting items or news she reads.' 134 Similarly, she introduced her brother and sister to 'Shakespeare's plays as stories & does it all so well, & they enjoy listening to her immensely.' 135 Julia's 'little woman' had, indeed, become 'quite a little mother.'

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132 Ibid., vol.1, 16 December 1884.
133 Ibid., vol.2, 2 June 1886.
134 Ibid., vol.3, 20 September 1898.
135 Ibid.
The eighteen year-old Gladys who stood ready to enter Canterbury College in 1900 was no idle young woman. She had imbibed to the full her parents contempt for the idle classes, 'the vagrant rich' and 'the vagrant poor', as her father labelled them. Both Frederick and Julia reserved their strongest criticism for the lifestyles adopted by the women of the richest families. 'Bridge, racing, golf and social amusements of the most frivolous kinds' were, in Frederick's words, 'absorbing the best energies of our high-class society women-folk.' There was no room for such frivolity in Gladys’ life. In 1898, as she approached her university years, she adopted 'Labor omnia vincit' (Labour conquers all) as her personal motto. Her notebooks abound in quotes on the 'virtue' of industry and the 'sin' of idleness. It was a determined, industrious and able eighteen year old who, in the summer of 1899-1900, as she prepared herself for Canterbury College, transcribed from Wordsworth's 'Excursion', Book 2, the lines:

But know we not that he, who intermits
The appointed task and duties of the day;
Untunes full oft the pleasures of the day;
Checking the finer spirits that refuse
To flow, when purposes are lightly charged?

136 'Death Duties', Letter to the Editor, Lyttelton Times, 29 November 1905.

137 Gladys Wilding's notebook, WFP, Box 17, Folder 87, Item 166.

CHAPTER SIX

The Making of a New Woman II:
Beyond 'Fownhope'

Amongst those who sought to prise open the doors of higher education so that women might participate more fully, physical preparedness assumed a new importance. To repudiate the pseudo-medical opinion that biology made women unsuited for the sustained mental exertion involved in study, it was necessary to demonstrate that the female body was physically robust enough for the task. Here the Wildings were clearly in the advance guard of progressive thought in the colony. As we have seen in chapter four, their children - male and female alike - were subject to a strict health regimen which included wholesome plain food, cold baths, fresh air, sunlight and daily exercise.¹ There was no distinction between what was thought appropriate for their sons and daughters. Knowledgable about the workings of the body, Frederick and Julia totally rejected the idea of woman as permanently incapacitated by her biological makeup and doomed to a life of sickness and inactivity.² The notion of the women as pale, fragile,

¹ See chapter four, pp.177-179.

sickly and lethargic creatures did not meet with either
dad’s ideal of femininity. They intended to raise their
daughters to be healthy, fit and strong - full of vigour
and energy, with hearty appetites, rosy complexions and
capable of engaging in an energetic lifestyle. The
possibility that Gladys and her sister Cora might one day
become mothers as well as scholars, in Julia and
Frederick’s view, heightened the need for this physical
preparedness. Exercise and sporting activities
consequently came to occupy a central place in Gladys and
Cora’s lives.

I

Physical activities became part of Gladys’ programme
from an early age. Julia saw to it that her three year old
daughter went on daily afternoon walks. By the time Gladys
was four she could manage quite long and physically
demanding rambles: ‘Last Sunday Gladys went for a walk
with her father to the top of the hills along the Coast, &
she did enjoy it so much, & did not get tired a bit.’ The
keenly encouraging parents were quick to provide sporting
equipment such as balls, a skipping rope and hoop to

1870-1914, University Press of Kentucky, Kentucky, 1988,
pp.192-212; Geraldine Ryan, ‘Muscular Maidens’: The
Development of Sport and Exercise in Girls’ Schools in
N.Z.’, Long Essay for Master of Arts degree, University of

3 Gladys Wilding’s ‘Life Events Diary’, vol.2, 2 March
1886.
stimulate her evident interest and natural exuberance. And
the ever observant Julia noted that Gladys could skip '50
times consecutively' and was 'very fond of skipping and
bowling her hoop.'

Parental example proved a powerful ingredient in
shaping a sporting enthusiasm. After watching her father
play in cricket matches for a number of years, the six
year old was ecstatic when he began to teach her to play:

Gladys had great fun to-day playing cricket with her
father. They had 3 sticks for wickets, a tennis ball
& Anthony's cricket bat. Gladys made 26 & 12 &
really has a little idea of batting, & she likes
playing immensely.'

Throughout the summer of 1888 both parents were regularly
pressed into garden cricket contests with their daughter
who was an eager spectator when her father appeared at
Lancaster Park. According to her mother, Gladys had
developed a good understanding of the game. She quickly
grasped 'the figures up on the board too', and as Julia
proudly noted, 'she can follow & understand my scoring in
the cricket score book.' Moreover when Frederick did well
she shared the triumph: 'Fritz made 85 last Saturday which
delighted Gladys & Anthony very much.' There was also the

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4 Ibid., 28 June 1887.
5 Ibid., 7 January 1888.
6 Ibid., 29 January 1888.
7 Ibid.
excitement and spectacle of the big occasion to whet the
young appetites:

The children went to Lancaster Park to-day to see a
little of the cricket match - Lillywhite's English 11
v Canterbury. Fritz took 8 wickets for 20 runs, &
the Englishmen were all out for 75. I did feel so
proud of Fritz & he was so applauded. 

And, after the triumphs of the playing fields, there was
the fun of the socialising that followed. International
cricketing stars made their way to 'Pownhope' and the
Wilding children were soon at the centre of things:

Mr. A.E. Stoddart, the cricketer who played with Mr.
Vernon's team spent yesterday with us, & Mr C.
Armitage too, & they had such splendid games with the
children in the afternoon, cricket, throwing &
catching balls & all sorts of things. The chicks
enjoyed it so much. 

The cricketing world to which the young Gladys was
introduced was a dominantly male domain, but it was not
exclusively so. Middle-class women were beginning to find
a place for themselves at the wicket. Gladys was soon a
keen spectator at 'ladies' cricket matches. 

Cricket lessons were accompanied by deliberate
attempts to cultivate wider athletic skills. Frederick set
up high jumps in the garden and taught Gladys the correct
technique. Both he and Julia agreed that Gladys possessed
genuine sporting ability. As ever, Julia was quick to

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8 Ibid., 30 March 1888.

9 Ibid., 16 April 1888. During 1888 two privately
organised English cricket sides toured Australia and New
Zealand. One side was captained, initially, by Martin Bladen
(Lord Hawke) and then by George F. Vernon. The other English
side, organised by the partnership of Lillywhite, Shaw and
Shrewsbury, was captained by C. Aubrey Smith.

10 Ibid., 7 March 1888.
measure the progress: 'Fritz has put up some nice jumping sticks for the children, & Gladys can clear 1ft 10½ inches which we think very good for a little woman of her age.'"

Encouragement was soon complemented by formal lessons away from 'Fownhope.' At six years of age Gladys was enrolled in a private gymnasium class held at the Normal School in Cranmer Square. There, along with 29 other children, she experienced 'drilling & then swinging on rings, ladders, jumping, sliding board etc etc etc.' In Julia's view, Gladys 'managed very well indeed for her first attempt' and looked 'so pretty in her gymnasium dress- navy blue flannel knickerbockers, & loose yoked [top] & belt, all trimmed with narrow white braid.' For her part, Gladys seemed to enjoy the gymnastics classes and was 'always practising all sorts of things at home now on the bough of one tree in the garden.' Her enthusiasm for going head over heels on the bough led to a safer bar being created in the garden for her to practise on. As

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11 Ibid., 2 February 1888.
12 Ibid., 22 February 1888.
13 Ibid., 22 September 1888.
14 Ibid.
15 Ibid., 17 October 1888.
Gladys extended her gymnastics routines, Julia was impressed by the range of her skills and the level of fitness:

She does a lot of things on the bar in our garden, swinging immensely high standing up, & is altogether a very active little woman. She can go through any amount of exertion without getting tired, & has the most perfect health.\(^{16}\)

Julia judged eight year old Gladys to be 'a very active, supple little woman'\(^{17}\) possessing greater muscular strength than most girls her age.

Conservative opinion at the time saw energetic physical activity as acceptable for young children - male or female - but questioned its appropriateness for girls approaching pubescence. At this point, vigorous exercise came to be described as 'unladylike' and condemned in some quarters as likely to produce 'muscular maidens.'\(^{18}\) Julia was, nonetheless, extremely proud of her daughter’s physical prowess and athletic agility. She applauded the vigourousness of the exercise: 'Gladys does well at the gymnasium. She puts her legs through the rings and hangs head down or stands up in them, the vaulting with the parallel bars, jumping & everything she is getting on with.'\(^{19}\) There was visible evidence of progress to compare

\(^{16}\) Ibid., 27 September 1889.

\(^{17}\) Ibid., 17 December 1889.

\(^{18}\) Geraldine Ryan, "Muscular Maidens": The Development of Sport and Exercise in Girls' Schools in N.Z.', p.5.

\(^{19}\) Gladys Wilding’s ‘Life Events Diary’, vol.2, 26 June 1890.
and measure:

Gladys was praised so much at the gymnasium to-day. The girls had to draw themselves straight up to the bar with their arms quite still & stiff, & Gladys did it so well, far better than any of the biggest girls there. She drew herself up & down three times without stopping, & all the girls called out how well she did it, & Mr Firth cried "very good, very good."20

And Julia was quite prepared to accept comparisons which crossed gender boundaries. When 'Mr. Firth' observed after the lesson that 'Gladys' muscles are getting as hard as a boys'21 Julia accepted the remark as it was intended - as a compliment. Robust good health rather than the tyranny of slender frailty was her objective.

The Wildings invested enthusiasm, time and money in providing sporting opportunities for their children. Tennis, a decorous and respectable sport was, as we have noted, the archetypal sport for middle-class families with garden space.22 It was Frederick's enthusiasm and skill that lay behind the preparation of the 'Fownhope' courts. In 1890 his friend Ralph Slazenger, the English tennis racquet manufacturer, sent Gladys a children's tennis set. Thereafter Julia and Frederick began to teach her how to hit the ball and she and Anthony were constantly practising. The construction of the courts was an early expression of the Wildings' determination to provide sporting opportunities for their children. Others followed quickly. In the same year as Gladys began to play tennis a

20 Ibid., 5 July 1890.

21 Ibid.

22 See chapter two, p.87.
swimming pool, thought to be one of the first in Christchurch, was completed at the rear of the 'Fownhope' orchard. Therefore swimming found a critical place in the children's physical development. Frederick gave both Gladys and Anthony swimming lessons - much to Julia's pleasure: 'I am so delighted at the thought of all the children being able to swim.' She took particular satisfaction from swimming as a family activity:

In the morning we all bathed in the swimming baths for the first time. Father had a pole & band from it, & began to teach Gladys and Anthony to swim. The baths are a great success & it is delightful bathing in them.  

During the following year Frederick purchased a pony and both Gladys and Anthony were soon enjoying daily rides. Later, the purchase of a canoe and rowing boat enabled the pair to explore the Heathcote River which flowed by 'Fownhope.' Thus, by the time she was ten years of age, Gladys was involved in a diverse array of sporting pastimes.

It was tennis which provided the best opportunity for the family to come together in play. Gladys frequently played tennis with her mother and Julia conceded that 'really we are nearly equal, & she beats me as often as I

25 Ibid., 7 November 1890; Cora Wilding's notes on radio talk given by Frank Wilding about Anthony Wilding, WFP, Box 31, Folder 148, Item 696.

24 Gladys Wilding's 'Life Events Diary', vol.2, 7 October 1890.

25 Ibid., 7 November 1890.

26 Ibid., 1 November 1891.
do her.'

There were also vociferous croquet games. Long walks became a favoured family activity: 'We have such lovely ones & all enjoy them so much, & Gladys is such a splendid little walker. She never seems to get the least bit tired.'

Often the walks became longer hikes sometimes over the Bridle path to Sumner and to Governors Bay and back. The rowing boat which Frederick had bought for the children proved to be 'an immense source of attraction.' Julia thought the rowing 'very good' for Gladys' physical fitness and applauded her daughter's ability to 'row people a long way all alone.'

If all these activities were not enough there was always roller skating. Gladys had mastered the new skill in less than a week and enjoyed it 'immensely.' Clearly, the 'idle days of summer' had a special meaning in the Wilding household.

The love of games and physical activity instilled in early childhood survived the teenage years and the growing concentration upon academic concerns. It could scarcely have been otherwise if Julia was to succeed in her desire to create a robust 'new woman.' The coming of the bicycle to 'Fownhope' clearly illustrates the point. In November

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27 Ibid., 26 October 1891.
28 Ibid., 14 December 1891.
29 Ibid., 8 March 1896.
30 Ibid., 9 April 1896.
31 Ibid., vol.3, 12 June 1896.
1896\(^{32}\), only five years after the first women cyclists in Christchurch caused consternation amongst the more conservative sectors of the city\(^{33}\), Frederick Wilding gave fifteen year old Gladys her first lesson on his bicycle. She quickly mastered the art and in 1897 her father brought her a £25 Lea & Francis bicycle of her own.\(^{34}\) The use of the bicycle by women was seen in feminist circles of the day as a symbolic assertion of their right to freedom and independence or, as modern historians put it, an invasion of men’s space. The Wildings saw things in more pragmatic terms. To them cycling was a useful means of exercise and a convenient form of transport. Julia, who was later also to ride a bicycle, observed without apparent fuss that ‘Gladys uses her bicycle a great deal & likes it immensely. She often rides to town twice in the day, & always goes to school on it, she never seems to get tired.’\(^{35}\) To her, the health benefits were obvious and overrode all else: ‘I am so glad girlie has it. I am sure it is splendid for her & she enjoys it so much.’\(^{36}\) Indeed, Gladys became very fit cycling and went with either her

\(^{32}\) Ibid., 29 November 1896.

\(^{33}\) Lovell-Smith, Plain Living High Thinking, pp.84-85; Geraldine Ryan, ‘Muscular Maidens’, pp.8-9, 35-39, 40-44; Atkinson, ‘Fitness, Feminism and Schooling’, Mangan and Park (eds), From ‘Fair Sex’ to Feminism, pp.120-123.

\(^{34}\) Gladys Wilding’s ‘Life Events Diary’, vol.3, 12 April 1897.

\(^{35}\) Ibid., 24 April 1897.

\(^{36}\) Ibid.
father or brother, Anthony, on long rides out of Christchurch - once as far as Springfield - a distance of some 100 kilometres.\textsuperscript{37}

Tennis not only continued to hold its attraction for Gladys - it took on, in her teenage years, a greater social significance. With Anthony, she hosted mixed doubles tennis tournaments at 'Fownhope' for their friends. Garden or homestead tennis appealed to middle-class parents as a safe means of social intercourse for their daughters.\textsuperscript{38} And the Wildings undoubtedly found this dimension of tennis attractive. A mildly competitive spirit, nevertheless, prevailed as the couples vied for the prizes which their hosts provided: a silver racquet brooch for the girls and silver racquet cuff links for the boys.\textsuperscript{39} Gladys' commitment to her academic endeavours undoubtedly meant that she had an ever decreasing amount of time to devote to tennis in any serious sense. Yet she continued to practise during holiday periods, moving her mother to note 'she improves fast when she practises.'\textsuperscript{40} Her games with Frederick and Anthony became somewhat less

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., 13 May 1897.

\textsuperscript{38} Geraldine Ryan, 'Muscular Maidens', pp.5-6, 32-34; Jennifer Hargreaves, 'Victorian Familism and the Formative Years of Female Sport', Mangan and Roberts (eds), \textit{From 'Fair Sex' to Feminism}, pp.132-133; Virginia O'Farrell, 'Australian Tennis - Aspects and Themes c.1874-c.1926', unpublished Ph.D., University of New South Wales, 1995, pp.29-49, 196-231.

\textsuperscript{39} For examples, see Gladys Wilding's 'Life Events Diary', vol.3: 15 and 18 September 1897.

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., 24 May 1898.
frequent as examinations became more pressing - a trend Julia understood but lamented because 'girlie has the makings of a good player if she could practice regularly.'

Cricket, however, remained a family passion which mother and daughter shared. After years of watching her father and brother Anthony play in cricket matches at Lancaster and Hagley Park and keeping the scores, Gladys, with the support and encouragement of her family, broke into the public sports arena herself. On 11 February 1899, after a cricket game at Lancaster Park had come to end, a scratch 'ladies' cricket match' had been hastily arranged. Gladys played and 'quite enjoyed it.' The predominantly young aspiring cricketers decided to plan a more serious game - '11 girls a side & 2 innings each.' Gladys put together and captained a Lancaster Park XI which contained a veritable who's who of Christchurch's middle-class cricketing families. They took to the field against a Hagley Park XI led by Dora Harman, like Gladys, the

41 Ibid.

42 Ibid., 11 February 1899.

43 Ibid.

44 The members of this Lancaster Park XI were G.Wilding (captain), A.Cholmondeley, A.van Asch, M.Tabart, K.van Asch, B.Kitson, H.Denniston, M.Ollivier, C.Gardner, M.Mathias, and P. Preston.

daughter of a prominent city cricketer. Gladys viewed the match rather seriously and organised practices for her team at 'Fownhope.'

On the afternoon of Saturday 25 February 1899 the eagerly awaited cricket match took place at Lancaster Park and a large crowd saw Hagley Park triumph by one run. Julia judged it to be 'a great success' and 'Gladys managed capitally, made top score in both innings & took wickets [9 wickets for 66] too.' Something of the game's standing can be gauged by the report in a city newspaper:

LADIES CRICKET MATCH
A great number of people assembled last Saturday afternoon at Lancaster Park to witness the match, Hagley Park v Lancaster Park, which was played on the eastern portion of the tennis courts. The Hagley Park team wore the colours of the U.C.C.C. (red and black). Both teams looked well in blouses and skirts of white, and straw hats bearing their colours, and the numerous supporters of either side could be distinguished by their rosettes. Miss Dora Harman captained the Hagley Park Team and Miss Gladys Wilding acted in a similar capacity for Lancaster Park. From the outset it appeared the match would be a close one, and this proved to be the case, Hagley Park winning by three wickets, but as it was decided to finish the innings the game was continued and no more runs were made.

Sport was never to become the dominant element in Gladys' life but she clearly enjoyed the role of active participant rather than that of decorous spectator.

The intellectual and physical development of children

45 Gladys Wilding's 'Life Events Diary', vol.3, 16 February 1899.

47 Ibid., 26 February 1899.

48 A newspaper clipping stuck into Gladys Wilding's 'Life Events Diary', vol.3, next to the entry for 26 February 1899.
Sunday afternoon tennis at 'Fownhope', 23 November 1902. Second row: Julia Wilding is seated on the far left while Gladys Wilding is on the far right. Front row, from left to right: Cora Wilding, Frank Wilding(?) and Frederick Wilding. (Wilding Collection, C.M: Ref.15194)
was, in the Wildings' view, inextricably interwoven, with what contemporaries called, moral growth. A disciplined mind and healthy body enabled the individual to contribute to social progress. They were necessary pre-conditions for an individual's fuller participation in society. The sheltered, middle-class family life at 'Fownhope' bore little resemblance to that of the wider society. The process of allowing the young Gladys to move from the security of the home to participate independently in community social life was one that Julia confronted with a mixture of maternal anxiety and equanimity. The gradual movement away from family-centred social life can be traced through the teenage years. The first tentative shift came with the appearance of outings with the children of family friends. Together with boys and girls, of social backgrounds similar to her own, Gladys went on long walks, picnics and other expeditions. On other occasions, there were outings under the watchful eye of family friends. The thirteen year old Gladys, for example, went canoeing on a river with the Wilsons: 'She seems to have managed capitally', wrote her mother, '& enjoyed it immensely. They boiled a kettle on the river bank, had afternoon tea, strawberries, & cream etc and altogether had a very happy time, - glads came home quite radiant.'

The next step, still within the framework of the close-knit middle-class community, was the evening dance.

49 Gladys Wilding's 'Life Events Diary', vol.2, 18 November 1894.
Gladys Wilding (on the right) with a friend. c.1895. (Wilding Collection, C.M: Ref.15208)
Gladys began to attend a series of such dances held for young people during the Winter Season of 1896 when she was fourteen. Although they were chaperoned by the teenage host’s parents, Julia was a little apprehensive about them. When her daughter and a friend, Gladys Anderson, set off to a dance given by the Izards in the Avonside boathouse from 8 to 11, Julia ‘hope[d]’ and ‘believed’ that it was ‘purely a children’s dance.’\(^{50}\) She was relieved to learn later that ‘it was a sensible dance, no grown up people, & also no very little children.’\(^{51}\) She was less than pleased about another dance in the Avonside boatsheds given by ‘the Laurence boys.’ Gladys, wrote Julia, ‘was not back till 12 o’clock, much too late I think.’\(^{52}\) Four days later, when Gladys and Anthony attended a dance at the Art Gallery, Julia could not resist calling in. Observing privately that it was a ‘great dissipation’ for Gladys to be going to so many dances, she, nonetheless, continued to indulge her daughter and took comfort in the view that the dances were ‘really children’s parties, no grown ups, though of course big boys and girls.’\(^{53}\) She was undoubtedly more at ease when Gladys and Anthony hosted thirty-six guests on 19

\(^{50}\) Ibid., 1 May 1896.

\(^{51}\) Ibid., vol. 3, 13 May 1896.

\(^{52}\) Ibid., 24 July 1896.

\(^{53}\) Ibid., 28 July 1896.
September 1896 from 7.30 till twelve pm, at 'Fownhope', under her watchful eye.

II

When the eighteen year old Gladys entered Canterbury College on 9 March 1900, she was entering into a receptive environment. Female students were becoming a familiar and acceptable sight at Canterbury College. Under the influence of John Macmillan Brown it had become the first university in Australasia to offer 'degree classes for women on an equal basis with men.' And, in, Gardner's words, it had established a 'reputation as a place where women might expect both academic equality and social decorum.' All matriculated students were required to wear cap and gown on the college site, an 'historically male garb', but one which 'identified the degree student without distinction of sex.' Canterbury College indeed remained the frontrunner as 'a "women's" university until about 1900.' Between 1877, the year the first female university student graduated with a B.A. from a New Zealand university, and 1914, women constituted almost


56 Ibid.

57 Ibid., p.106.
half (46.4%) of all arts graduates. Indeed, in some years women arts graduates outnumbered men and women predominated in the total college enrolment. 58

Gladys entered a university where women’s place had been dramatically sealed by the achievements of a generation of talented individuals. Kate Edger became Australasia’s first female university graduate [B.A. 1877] and Helen Connon achieved the distinction of being not only the first female Canterbury College student, matriculating in 1876, but of becoming, in 1881, the first woman in the British Empire to graduate with a Master of Arts degree. Connon, in W.J. Gardner’s view, had by her ‘combination of scholarship and dignity’ undeniably ‘placed a seal on the vocation of student for other young women.’ 59 The customs which initially distinguished between male and female students at Canterbury College nonetheless continued. Women, for example, continued to occupy the front seats in the lecture rooms. Separate social facilities for male and female students - a ‘Women’s cottage, ‘strictly out of bounds to the men’ 60, and a ‘Men’s club’ - remained intact. If Gladys encountered resistance or antagonism from male students she kept it to herself.

58 Ibid.


60 Ibid., pp.157-158.
Gladys, of course, possessed advantages which aided her passage through university. She came from a prominent and well-respected Christchurch professional family. The Wilding name was held in high esteem amongst the legal, sporting and musical fraternities. Her academic achievements were well-known within university circles and she continued to prove her intellectual worth. The fact that she enrolled for an arts degree rather than the more traditional ‘male preserves’ of science, medicine and the professions also made her appear less threatening to male students. She was, in fact, perfectly placed to follow in the footsteps of the pathbreaking generation of female students.

Conversely, Canterbury College provided the ideal environment for Gladys. She thrived on a diet of thirteen hours of lectures per week and attended Canterbury College every day but Sunday. As well as taking the compulsory subjects of mathematics and Latin, Gladys also studied Jurisprudence, Constitutional History, English and French languages and literature. She was ‘especially interested’, Julia wrote, in her English courses.61 Always watchful over Gladys’ intellectual progress, Julia read her essays after they had been marked and noted the lecturers’ comments: ‘On each one so far, Prof. Wall has written a word of praise “good, sane essay”, “good, neat essay”

61 Gladys Wilding’s ‘Life Events Diary’, vol.3, 6 May 1900.
etc. 62 And Julia, herself, thought that Gladys 'does them very well.' 63 It was, nonetheless, to be a year disrupted by illness. A painful back condition resulted in irregular lecture attendances in July, August and September. Despite the disruptions to her studies Gladys successfully passed her first year College examinations.

Gladys was to suffer intermittently from this painful and debilitating back problem, believed to be muscular in origin, for the rest of her university career. And, increasingly, it interfered with her studies and made daily attendance at Canterbury College more difficult. In April 1901 College authorities agreed to regard her attendance at five lectures a week - the minimum requirement for the retention of her scholarship - as full-time enrolment. In practice, her maths and Latin tutor, Professor Haslam, gave her his notes after lectures and 'count[ed] it as attendance at two lectures' 64 and Gladys attended only three lectures each week. For the remainder of the time Gladys worked by herself at home. The following year, however, when she attended four lectures at Canterbury College per week she was required to relinquish the scholarship. The illness and the loss of the scholarship meant increased dependence upon her parents and friends, curbed her enjoyment of physical

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62 Ibid., 6 May 1900.
63 Ibid.
64 Ibid., 26 April 1901.
activities but did little to dull her enthusiasm for study.

Gladys’ health problems had the effect of drawing her even closer to her mother. Julia, who had placed so much importance on a healthy lifestyle and conscientiously sought to ensure that her children were strong, fit and healthy, found the illness particularly distressing. She was especially upset to watch as Gladys was required to lie still for days, sometimes weeks at a time and turned increasingly to natural health treatments. She called upon Maria Pike, a ‘natural healer’ and mother of the Christchurch suffragist, Ada Wells, to give Gladys regular massage and hydropathy - water-based treatments such as hot soapy sitz baths. Always a great believer in the benefits of fresh air and a bracing environment, Julia frequently sent Gladys away from the damp surroundings of Opawa to stay with friends:

Gladys has gone to-day to Sumner to stay with the van Asches...She is much better now, & I hope the change will set her up...Gladys stayed two weeks at the [Convalescent] Home [in the hills], & then 2 days after coming home went for a week to Otahuna to stay with Mr & Mrs Heaton Rhodes...We hope next week she will go somewhere else for a little more change.

And, in June 1902, Julia and Frederick seized

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65 Ibid., December 1900-February 1901.
66 Ibid., for example: September 1900, 9 December 100, 14 January 1901, 16 March 1901; Lovell-Smith, p.87.
67 Gladys Wilding’s ‘Life Events Diary’, vol.3, 3 September 1900, 7 February 1901.
68 Ibid., 21 June 1902.
enthusiastically upon a doctor’s recommendation of a
course of exercises and arranged sessions at the
Christchurch School of Physical Culture.

Frederick was especially keen. He had become a
disciple of the internationally recognised physical
culturalist, Eugene Sandow and when a young Irishman, Fred
Hornibrook, who had studied at the Sandow School in
London, established a centre in Christchurch he had been
amongst the first to enrol.69 Those who attended the
school regarded themselves as ‘forward thinking’70 and
sending Gladys was thought unconventional. Julia,
nonetheless, professed ‘the greatest faith’ in
Hornibrook’s treatment and felt ‘confident that he will
cure her.’71 Hornibrook was similarly confident and Julia
was quick to declare Gladys ‘decidedly better already.’72
She was especially encouraged by Hornibrook’s comments
that Gladys did ‘the exercises so well’ and had ‘such
strong arms.’73 Throughout the summer of 1903-1904 Gladys
was once more troubled by intermittent bouts of intense
pain which rendered one leg almost immobile.

Despite the health problems and the disruption they

69 Jane Tolerton, A Life of Ettie Rout, Penguin Books

70 Ibid., p.37.

71 Gladys Wilding’s ‘Life Events Diary’, vol.3, 21
June 1902.

72 Ibid.

73 Ibid.
caused, Gladys' progress at Canterbury College was outstanding. She distinguished herself as a brilliant scholar and won a number of academic prizes. In February 1902 she was awarded the University of New Zealand's Bowen Prize for her essay on 'The Indian Mutiny of 1857: its causes and results' - an essay which so pleased her father that he had it printed. And, at the end of the year, she was awarded first class honours in English as well as gaining the French Exhibition (College) prize of £20. In February 1903 she received the University of New Zealand Senior Scholarship and proceeded to a Master of Arts course in French and English. At the 1903 capping ceremony on 27 June 1903, at which Gladys graduated B.A. in literature and languages, her fellow students gave her public recognition: 'Gladys was clapped a lot & they called for "3 cheers for Miss Wilding" as she came down.'

No student, wrote Ella Moire, a student contemporary, 'ever received more ungrudging applause from her fellow students as Gladys.' When she graduated with her Master of Arts degree with first class honours in French and English in 1904, Julia and Frederick acknowledged the achievement with unrestrained pride: 'We are so very pleased. She has got all she wanted & worked for now & it

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74 Ibid., 27 June 1903.

75 Letter to Julia Wilding from Ella Moire written after Gladys Wilding's death, no date given, WFP: 'Letters of sympathy - Death of Gladys 1905-1906', Box 17, Folder 84, Item 154.
is a splendid winding up to her university career. ’76

Life at University brought few changes to Gladys’
life. Her dependence upon her parents had, if anything,
increased and her place in the family remained largely
unchanged. Indeed, in some ways, life in the cloistered
academic environment of Canterbury College was a natural
extension of that at ‘Fownhope.’ When she first began
attending Canterbury College she found that there were ‘no
strong [female] tennis players there’77, and little effort
was required to become Canterbury College’s ‘first
representative’78 in women’s tennis. She continued to
represent the College at tennis and, during Easter 1902,
participated in the first Inter-University Athletic
Tournament organised by the College Athletic Club and held
at Lancaster Park. Gladys also managed a dance held during
the tournament for the athletes. And here the smallness
and intimate nature of the city’s middle class was evident
in her mother’s involvement - providing tea for the tennis
players.79

Ailments to some extent limited Gladys’ appearances
on the tennis court, but did not prevent her from fuller
participation in cultural and intellectual life outside
the lecture hall. The affairs of the Dialectic Society

76 Gladys Wilding’s ‘Life Events Diary’, vol.3, 17
February 1904.
77 Ibid., 6 May 1900.
78 Ibid.
79 Ibid., 14 April 1902.
absorbed much of her energies. She was an active debater and in September 1903 gained third place out of fourteen contestants in an impromptu speaking competition during the Society’s ‘Olla Podrida’ evening.  

Gladys enjoyed these occasions, described by Gardner as ‘more or less informal literary contests’ and ‘perhaps’ the society’s ‘most lively functions.’  

They, too, suited Gladys’ personality and can be seen as an extension of parlour games of ‘Fownhope.’

Unlike many of her less financially secure fellow students, Gladys was also able to maintain a social life outside the university cloisters befitting that of a young middle-class woman. During the winter months she regularly found time for a series of dances. Frequently the College year ended just as the traditional Christchurch ‘Show Week’ social events were in full swing and freed Gladys, as her mother noted, ‘just in time for all the gaieties.’  

Indeed, ‘Show Week’ became the traditional week for ‘the coming out’ of the city’s young women. On 7 November 1900 the nineteen year old Gladys made her formal social debut into adult society at the Jockey Club Ball, wearing ‘a Liberty White Satin [dress] trimmed with pearls.’ The ever observant Julia noted that ‘she had lots of partners, &

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80 Ibid., 13 September 1903.


82 Gladys Wilding’s ‘Life Events Diary’, vol. 3, 31 October 1900.
enjoyed it all very much.

Summer vacations also provided Gladys with an opportunity to travel, both within New Zealand and abroad. Significantly, trips away from Christchurch typically occurred within a family and sporting framework. During 1901 she toured the North Island with her father and went with the family to Tasmania where she attended a Science Congress in Hobart. During the summer of 1903 she accompanied Frederick to a tennis championship in Nelson with her father and returned via the West Coast. A few weeks later, in January 1904, she travelled to Dunedin for another Scientific Congress. Life as a student was full, but involved only the most modest shift in her position in family life at 'Fownhope.'

III

Perhaps the most significant marker of Gladys' 'coming of age' was her trip 'Home.' The European grand tour had long been considered almost obligatory for young men and women of Gladys' social position. It was seen as providing the essential finishing touches to a complete education. On 1 July 1904, eight days after Gladys had received her Master of Arts degree, she sailed from Christchurch on the SS Victoria, bound for England. It was to be a predominantly social visit although Gladys hoped to practise her language skills in France and Germany. In

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Ibid., 7 November 1900.
1899, as we observed earlier, Gladys had travelled to England with her mother to meet her relations. On this occasion, however, the twenty-two year old set out alone, unchaperoned as an independent 'new woman'. En route to England, she spent a few days in Sydney, visiting family friends and then three weeks travelling around America. Her independence and 'bravery' delighted her mother:

We had a most tremendously interesting letter from Gladys to-day, - from New York posted the day before she sailed for England. It told all about her journeyings through Canada, the Lakes, Niagara, Hudson River, & the towns of Boston, Philadelphia & New York. She went everywhere & saw an immense deal. & I really feel very proud of her letter, & also of the girlie being able to see & do all she has, quite alone. She seems to have thoroughly enjoyed everything, & America even exceeded her expectations in point of interest.  

Gladys arrived in England on 2 September 1904 and was met by her brother Anthony, now studying law at Cambridge. These were exciting times.

After a few weeks travelling with Anthony to tennis tournaments at Brighton and Eastbourne, all her plans were put on hold. The back problem which had proved so debilitating in the past flared up again. A London doctor advised six weeks to three months 'perfect rest.' Recovery, however, proved to be depressingly slow and Gladys spent the rest of her time in England lying still, cared for by a nurse, firstly with her father's cousins,

84 See chapter five, pp.212-215.
85 Ibid., 28 September 1904.
86 Ibid., 1 November 1904.
the Despreys, in Shoreham, Kent and later, at a boarding house in the seaside town of Eastbourne. Suffering no pain or discomfort from her back affliction, and being otherwise in perfect health, Gladys stoically bore her prolonged period of rest. She busied herself sewing, studying, reading and writing.

Above all else, the enforced rest gave her time to think. And the frequent lengthy letters she wrote to her mother allow us to gain a fuller picture of the young woman from 'Fownhope' than might otherwise have been the case. An opinionated young woman, her strong views and observations were to range widely. As well as passing judgement on English society and the role of class, religion and politics within it, she offered her views on literature, women's rights, the proper education for young men and women of her social position, how her siblings should live their lives and a mother's duties to her daughters. In doing so, she provides a revealing psychological self-portrait. With almost unnerving consistency and clarity, what emerges is a picture of a young, articulate, middle-class woman who is, in almost every respect, her mother's daughter.

Gladys was unimpressed by what she had gleaned 'by reading and hearsay.' To her middle-class eyes the 'immorality' of the lower strata of society was 'shocking' and pervasive. 'Pauperisation' was, in her view, 'extreme' in town and country alike. The large amount of 'relief

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87 Gladys was moved to Eastbourne on 27 July 1905.
given to the poor she judged to sap their energy and promote idleness.

They expect and demand as their right from the Lord of the Manor & any wealthy people in the neighbourhood, coals, food & every luxury when they are ill. There is generally a village nurse paid either by the squire or by the village authorities to attend the sick free of charge. More and more demands are made on the Poor Rate which has here reached 2/4 in the £. In the cities there are homes and hospitals for every crime and disease under the sun - which really put a premium on the sin or illness in man & woman. If they fall to the lowest depths they know they will be rescued by some charitable persons or society. They have no independence or self-reliance, but sit idle and ask for what they want.88

Idleness bred 'immorality' - especially amongst the 'submerged tenth, the criminal & poverty stricken classes of the great cities.' But it was evident also in 'the slightly higher class, labourers and so forth.' She found working-class life in Shoreham, the small country village where she was recuperating, 'shocking', though she preferred not to elaborate.89 Her comments here were those of a young woman whose contacts with working-class life had been few. We will never know what impact friendship with Maud Reeves might have had on Gladys' responses to the life of the poorer sections of society. Reeves' Round About A Pound A Week90 (1913) with its emphasis upon state intervention rather than self-reliance would undoubtedly

88 Letter to Julia Wilding from Gladys Wilding, 11 March 1905, Shoreham, England, WFP: 'Gladys Wilding's Correspondence 1889-1905', Box 17, Folder 82, Item 104.

89 Ibid.

have given Gladys pause for thought.

Within the upper classes, Gladys found 'not the immorality of course but faults of another kind.' Here was idleness of a different type. She was critical of the ease with which the elite placed leisure ahead of all else. The young males of that class thought of 'nothing but sport', Gladys complained. And 'the public schools of Oxford & Cambridge teach him nothing - not even to write and spell - unless he is really in earnest about learning.' There was little Gladys could find that was good in the lifestyle of the idle rich:

most young fellows take no interest in work or business - 'it is a lamentable necessity, and the less said & thought about it the better' they think. A man who cares about politics, books or anything intellectual is looked down upon. They read first and always The Sportsman & if they have any idle time in a long railway journey The Daily Mirror, a 1/2 d shrieker which is not worth half a quarter of the leading dailies. Of course they improve as they get older and acquire a little more sense, but they cannot in middle age learn the energy, promptness & resourcefulness that mark the American & German who from the first concentrate their best energies on work not play."

Young upper-class English women did not escape Gladys' wrath. 'Badly educated', they 'know and care to know nothing.' They led frivolous and empty lives, rarely stirring themselves: 'Housework is beneath them & they do none unless obliged to.' Like their male counterparts, they preferred leisure pastimes to work: 'a great many do nothing but play tennis, hockey etc.' The great majority, she believed, were idling away their time before marriage.

91 Letter to Julia Wilding from Gladys Wilding, 11 March 1905.
Most were acutely aware that a 'distasteful life' stretched before them if they failed to find a husband 'so they run after all the eligible men (who are very much in the minority) and do all they can to "catch" them.' In this, they were no better than those Gladys dubbed the 'real aristocracy' who, she tartly observed, spent 'all their time playing Bridge and running after other peoples' husbands and wives.'

Gladys' sympathies clearly lay with the middle and lower middle classes. There existed, she believed, 'so many thousands' of industrious, hard working, educated people 'who seem unable to get enough to keep them comfortably out of their business or profession alone.' Her greatest sympathy was reserved for the genteel poor. She pointed, by way of example, to a woman 'who earns a pittance by teaching', and unable to afford domestic servants, 'has to do everything at home.' In contrast with those living on poor relief, such women clearly constituted, in Gladys' mind, a 'deserving' or 'respectable' poor whose industry and self-reliance were admirable. 'It is among such people as these', she wrote, 'and in those a little better off that one finds the

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92 Ibid.

93 Letter to Julia Wilding from Gladys Wilding, 7 April 1905, Shoreham, England, WFP, Box 17, Folder 82, Item 108.

94 Letter to Julia Wilding from Gladys Wilding, 28 March 1905, Shoreham, England, WFP, Box 17, Folder 82, Item 107.
noblest characters & most self-denial & kindness." 95 Quite clearly, she had imbibed well her parents' distaste for idleness and especially that exhibited by the wealthy and leisured classes 'who have nothing to do but kill time.' 96

On occasion Gladys' middle-class values led to preciousness. For example, when her cousin Henry set about employing a nurse to care for her, she insisted that 'no-one is to come unless she is a lady and really well-educated.' 97 She dismissed 'Nurse Heath' because

She has not "the seeing eye, the ready ear, the informing heart"...When she reads aloud, one hears no "soft-voiced cadences", but the accent thrown on a diversity of syllables, seldom on the right one..I needed an intelligent pleasant companion quite as much as a good nurse. 98

Conversely, while convalescing in an Eastbourne boarding house she found that some of the other guests, such as the Ballins, were not quite as 'respectable' as she would have liked:

[Mrs Ballins] has a position of a certain kind, goes out a lot and knows a great many people - chiefly journalists, musicians, actors, writers etc etc. She belongs to a large class of Bohemians; the corresponding class a little higher up the social scale would be very interesting & would include many nice people - but this class of Mrs Ballin's will not pass. Of course, she has ability, I suppose, & is good-natured in her way, but vulgar,& does not mince

95 Ibid.
96 Letter to Julia Wilding from Gladys Wilding, 7 April 1905.
97 Letter to Julia Wilding from Gladys Wilding, 28 March 1905.
her words. She says some awful things occasionally, I believe, & Mrs Broune's eyebrows go up higher and higher. 99

Yet, Gladys's comments were without malice and indeed, for someone at the mercy of her minders, remarkably tolerant.

The dictates of middle-class respectability did not prevent Gladys from taking an unpopular position on religion. She shared her parents' sceptical rationalism although, by her own account, she was less cynical in her assessment of individual Christians than Frederick. Indeed, the 'religious people' she met in Britain led her to become 'more and more' convinced 'that Father goes ever so much too far in his denouncing all religious people as fools or hypocrites.' She was quick, nonetheless, to reassure her parents that the rebuke did not mean she had succumbed: 'I don't wish you to understand by this that I am growing pious because I'm not.' 100 Indeed, she delighted in recounting how she engaged 'believers' in theological discussions in which she teased them by feigning ignorance on religious matters and allowing them to 'enlighten' her. She told her mother, for example, of 'an amusing conversation' with a 'new curate at Oxford':

as I wanted to know his point of view I put him several leading questions about the Bible & missionary work etc etc. He talked away & explained all sorts of things - I fancy he thought he was helping a poor lost sheep to find her way back to the


100 Letter to Julia Wilding from Gladys Wilding, 9 November 1904, Shoreham, England, WFP, Box 17, Folder 81, Item 93.
fold, who had strayed & was bewildered by the intricacies and conflicting opinions of modern critics and writers.\textsuperscript{101}

The experience of English society clearly allowed Gladys to test her firmly held convictions.

More than anything else, Gladys’ letters home reveal a young woman whose talents and disposition mirrored her mother’s. The resemblance is most obvious in the ease with which she assumed the role of mentor to her younger siblings. She responded to news about her younger brother and sister, Frank and Cora, by offering them unsolicited advice. In the process she sets out firmly what she believes is the appropriate education for girls and boys of their social position. A well-balanced and thorough general education was, she wrote, imperative. Their ultimate goal should be to become as ‘cultured’ as possible. Sixteen year old Cora, who Gladys feared was doing too much socializing, was sternly warned to concentrate on her studies in order to become a ‘cultural woman’:

Cora... must stick to work now & not think too much about going out and dress. She is not yet grown up, and if she doesn’t get a groundwork of knowledge & capacity for intellectual enjoyment now (as Father would say), she won’t get it later. And then though she might be just as well off as the average girl, she will miss a lot in later life, and be very sorry for it. The most ignorant girls I have met, though they might be quite happy in their way, always wish for a wider circle of interest, so that they could be more in touch with the infinitely varied men and things that make up the world they always feel a want, and wish they had learned more, when they had

\textsuperscript{101} Letter to Julia Wilding from Gladys Wilding, 11 July 1905, Shoreham, England, WFP, Box 17, Folder 83, Item 118.
the opportunity. This I know for a fact because I have known plenty of girls. The fuller one’s life is the happier it is. Of course, I don’t mean this to apply to mere book knowledge, but knowledge obtained from books forms the surest groundwork of interest in men whether in the sphere of politics, sport, war, exploration & general topics of the day, & in things in nature which is a never failing source of pleasure to those who will not ignore her. Geography, history, literature, also are essential to the cultural man & woman - and "culture" everyone should aim at. (Don’t you think I could preach a sermon if I tried.)

The self-deprecating humour not withstanding, Gladys’ pursuit of ‘culture’ was as thorough-going as her mother’s.

Nor did her law student brother, Frank, escape Gladys’ demanding eye. ‘Tell Frank he must make sure of matriculating this year’, wrote Gladys to her mother. She implored him to write to her because it was ‘of great importance for a solicitor or barrister to be able to put his ideas into words and letter writing is valuable practice.’ Yet when he did write to her, she proceeded to criticise his expression and spelling and declared his handwriting illegible: ‘I have not succeeded in properly deciphering his letter yet’; he should ‘get a typewriter.’ When he did so she observed: ‘It will be

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102 Letter to Julia Wilding from Gladys Wilding, 22 May 1905, Shoreham, England, WFP, Box 17, Folder 82, Item 113.

103 Letter to Julia Wilding from Gladys Wilding, 7 April 1905.

104 Letter to Julia Wilding from Gladys Wilding, 10 October 1904, Shoreham, England, WFP, Box 17, Folder 81, Item 89.

105 Letter to Julia Wilding from Gladys Wilding, Easter Monday 1905, WFP, Box 17, Folder 82.
very good for his spelling (I noticed an improvement in
this one even) for he can’t scrawl & dash, so that neither
he nor anyone else will be able to see how he has
spelled.’ And, she added a little tartly: ‘he should sign
his name’ for ‘no-one ever types his signature.’ 106 She
later acknowledged a gradual improvement in Frank’s
letters: ‘This one I was able to comprehend on the second
reading.’ But a satisfactory standard would only be
reached when he ‘succeeded in ridding himself of his
verbiage, redundancy & circumambient locution’ 107 and began
to ‘study spelling.’ 108

It was, in Gladys’ view, Frank’s duty to society to
ensure he became a ‘cultured gentleman’. She warned him
not to:

enshroud himself in the intricacies of law, but to
let as much light of the literae humaniores as
possible fall upon him. He must resolutely aim at
obtaining some of the culture that is possessed by a
well-educated & well- read Englishman. 109

He would then in the future ‘be able to take his place
confidently among the leaders in any branch of life’ and
carry more weight both in his profession and in any

106 Letter to Julia Wilding from Gladys Wilding, 22 May
1905.

107 Letter to Julia Wilding from Gladys Wilding, 23
June 1905, Shoreham, England, WFP, Box 17, Folder 83, Item
117.

108 Letter to Julia Wilding from Gladys Wilding, 5
August 1905, Eastbourne, England, WFP, Box 17, Folder
83, Item 122.

109 Letter to Julia Wilding from Gladys Wilding, 23 June
1905.
society.' History, geography, science and literature (prose and poetry) were the essentials of this cultural preparation and Frank 'should read some of Macaulay's Essays' and become 'acquainted with some of the best of English poetry, despise it though he may. Shakespeare of course, & Tennyson's Idylls of the King.' Such then was her prescription for producing a 'cultured gentleman.'

During her long stay at Mrs Broune's boarding house in Eastbourne, Gladys also devised a list of appropriate reading material for the owner's sixteen year old daughter, Frankie. It was a task which Gladys believed to be every mother's duty and she took it upon herself to fill the void left by the lax parent. She explained her interventions to Julia in terms which must have amused and delighted. It was, in Gladys' view, the mother's task to provide guidance for her daughter, to teach her the proper modes of behaviour, help her to recognise and bring out her best qualities and to minimise her worst, assist her realize her full potential, supervise her education and plan her reading material. Frankie's problems were rooted, Gladys argued, in the failings of her mother:

She has many gifts, and will develop a lot in the next few years. But unfortunately she has no-one to guide her. Her mother is devoted to her and very proud of her but does not really look after her or understand her. She always likes her to stand out and be more conspicuous than other girls, makes her sing

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110 Ibid.

111 Letter to Julia Wilding from Gladys Wilding, 5 August 1905.
and play a lot, encourages her to make fun and be up to her pranks (and her fun is often a little forced.)

What dismayed Gladys most was the apparent parental indifference: 'really there is a great deal in her which her mother never seems to realize. She reads & thinks a good deal, but no-one seems to know or care what she reads or thinks.' It mattered to Gladys that a mother could miss the opportunity to awaken her daughter to the intellectual issues of the day. In this, as in much else, she was espousing viewpoints even more strongly than her mother.

IV

The sojourn in Britain also offered Gladys as the colonial-born daughter of English parents the opportunity to define her own sense of identity. As we have already observed, there was much in current English society that she disliked. The past, however, provided much to admire. The notion of a golden past having given way to an unacceptable present is most clearly evident in her attitude to literature. She was, as we have seen, deeply attached to the 'classics' of English literature. On the other hand, she deemed the literary products of

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112 Letter to Julia Wilding from Gladys Wilding, 22 August 1905, Eastbourne, WFP, Box 17, Folder 83, Item 123.
113 Ibid.
contemporary Britain to be 'rubbish'\textsuperscript{114} which lacked the 'healthy energy and interest' of American writing.\textsuperscript{115} It is tempting to see in this judgement the notion of 'New World Vigour' counterpoised by 'Old World' decay and lifelessness. There is much evidence that Gladys believed this to be the case, but she did not think the British malaise prevailed in Europe as a whole and considered France and Germany to be particularly vigorous societies. Moreover, there was as yet, no body of 'New Zealand' literature for Gladys to place against the British. Indeed, if there was any branch of colonial writing that absorbed her interest it was that which focused on the natural world rather than the imaginative one.

Perhaps our best source for unravelling Gladys' emerging sense of identity is the unfinished manuscript of a novel, 'Leaves From A Mad Cap's Journal'\textsuperscript{116}, which she began while recuperating. Set in New Zealand, the two incomplete episodes have autobiographical overtones. The first deals with the experiences of a wealthy landowning family and the second with those of a lower middle-class young woman. Each focuses upon the themes of British migration to New Zealand and the delineation of the

\textsuperscript{114} Letter to Julia Wilding from Gladys Wilding, 30 July 1905, Eastbourne, England, WFP, Box 17, Folder 83, Item 120.

\textsuperscript{115} Letter to Julia Wilding from Gladys Wilding, 11 March 1905.

\textsuperscript{116} Gladys Wilding, 'Leaves From A Mad Cap's Journal' (1904-1905) - unfinished manuscript draft of a novel, WFP: 'Manuscript', Box 19, Folder 90, Item 169.
similarities and differences between New Zealand and Britain. Both reveal the tensions and ambiguities involved in Gladys’ perception of herself. At times she writes unequivocally as a New Zealander. On other occasions the cultural voice is either British/Colonial or English/British or somewhere in between. In short, she writes - as she lived - in the twilight zone between the world of her parents and the land of her birth.

The first episode in Gladys’ ‘Leaves from a Mad Cap’s Journal’ centres upon the activities of Mr. Maldis, a wealthy landowner and parliamentarian who lives with his wife and daughter, Flora, in Christchurch. The son of a poor English farmer, Maldis had emigrated to New Zealand as a young man ‘fired by accounts of Americans who had risen from gutterboys to millionaires.’ He arrived with ‘practically nothing’ and by sheer hard work and determination rose from the level of a shepherd and labourer to that of a wealthy landholder. After marrying a neighbouring runholder’s daughter, he entered politics as a follower of the premier, Richard John Seddon. Maldis, described by Gladys as a radical ‘crank’ whose democratic ideas were ‘strengthened in New Zealand’, supports the progressive causes of the day. Gladys, for example, constructs a discussion with a shop worker to highlight his endorsement of shop workers’ demands for sick pay, medical insurance and free medical attention. To Maldis, wrote Gladys:

the motto that had everlasting meaning was "Liberté, Fraternité, Égalité" - but he never could realize
that liberty was not to be touched by multitudinous legal restrictions, even if they were all in favour of raising the labourer to the level of the employer. \footnote{117}

Here Gladys seems to be striking a classically liberal position; intervention by the state ought to be kept to a minimum. Despite the implied criticism, she was critical of Christchurch 'society' which 'ignored him except as a public man when of course he had to be considered & addressed politely especially as he was a friend of King Dick's.' \footnote{118}

The remainder of the episode focuses upon Maldit's daughter, Flora. A twenty-one year old Canterbury College graduate who has had 'radical ideas drummed into her head' by her father, Flora was a staunch champion of women's rights. An independent spirit, 'there was no doubt that Flora was fascinating', Gladys wrote, 'so bright & lively' and without 'a spark of malice.' While 'a few straight-laced dames did not approve of her' most people 'closed their eyes to her whims & caprices.' Perhaps using Flora as a mouthpiece for her own sense of relief at having graduated successfully, Gladys has her expressing a determination 'to enjoy myself this year - no lectures, no work, no practice, but fun, fun, fun.' Similarly, with more than a hint of autobiographical detail, she recounts how Flora, a Canterbury College tennis representative, enjoyed teasing a patronizing male who unwittingly and

\footnote{117} Ibid.

\footnote{118} Ibid.
arrogantly offered his coaching services.\textsuperscript{119}

The third and final scene explores the conservatism of established society. Here Flora helps serve afternoon tea at a cricket match. A 'few elder ladies' condemn as outrageous demands by Christchurch shop employees' that their employers be compelled 'to defray the cost of medical attention & chance for recovery whenever their employees were ill.' In a parody of middle-class indignation Gladys has one of the women protest that

My husband says that he's going to make all our boys shop employees. - They get a good living wage, insurance if they have an accident, old age pension when they are past work & free medical attendance if ill...And the next thing will be that they will have to be lodged & fed & clothed by their employers.\textsuperscript{120}

Gladys got no further with this scene but it seems clear that the Maldis interludes were intended to reveal something of the attitudes which prevailed in the middle class circles with which Gladys was familiar.

A second and unfinished section in the manuscript focuses upon the character of Charlotte, a young lower middle-class English woman who travels to New Zealand in the hope of finding work as a governess. Gladys essentially uses this as an opportunity to compare the colony with Britain and as a means of pointing up the distinguishing features of New Zealand towns. Charlotte is introduced arriving in New Zealand on a steamship sailing into Auckland Harbour. A New Zealander returning on the

\textsuperscript{119} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{120} Ibid.
ship asks her what she thinks of 'our country.' She replies:

Well, it is so strangely like & yet unlike England. The big town, & wharves busy with ocean steamers & tugs whizzing across the harbours to the North Shore is Liverpool over again on a smaller scale. But this brilliant sun, the brown hills, these wooden houses with iron roofs dotted about the outskirts, those are not English ..at any rate you could not tell that all those people waiting for us were not born & bred in England.  

In Auckland Charlotte slips easily into the traditional round of 'colonial hospitality': luncheons, tennis parties and yachting picnics are presented by Gladys as distinctive features of the city's social life. Charlotte secures a position as a governess on a sheep station fifty miles from Christchurch and the shift south is used to explore the city during 'Show Week.' The young English woman finds the 'West end of the town' - the Avon river and its surroundings - remarkably 'English' in appearance. To her the Museum and University 'of grey stone with weeping ivy might have belonged to an English Cathedral town.'

From this point, the unfinished manuscript slips into note form but it is possible to construct the broad outline of how Gladys intended to depict the New Zealand she knew. Auckland was distinguished, in her view, by its yacht-racing and Jewish inhabitants. Rotorua had its Maoris and tourists. Wellington was the political centre where parliament was assembled and its society consisted

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111 Ibid.

112 Ibid.
of 'cliques.' The influence of up-country stations, different social sets, sports and athletics were what made Christchurch different. Dunedin deserved a mention for its 'Scotch hospitality, lakes, sounds & trippers.' Everywhere wooden houses with verandahs dominated. Holidays were 'not so regular' but people were more creative in the types of holidays they took; camping trips were more common. New Zealanders, on the whole, were more hospitable and egalitarian.\(^{123}\)

The final jottings contain in embryo the outlines of what was already becoming regarded as the colony's progressive achievements. The phrase 'social equality' is underlined as though to signify special importance. And under a heading 'politics' she has listed 'Women's suffrage,' 'Old Age Pensions' and 'Employees' Insurance' - measures which stood at the heart of an emergent welfare state. Not surprisingly, the universities warranted a separate listing. Gladys, as we have noted, was acutely aware of having been the beneficiary of a society which led the world in opening the doors of higher education to women.\(^ {124}\)

This quiet sense of pride in the colony's achievements, pervades 'Leaves From a Mad Cap's Journal' and it is in this that we can see the germ of a young woman's conception of what being a New Zealander meant. Her 'society' was forging ahead of the Old Country and,

\(^{123}\) Ibid.

\(^{124}\) Ibid.
especially, in its progress towards a more equal society. Gladys' 'nationalism' was that of the comfortable middle classes. It celebrated the widening opportunities the colony gave to the industrious classes, the self-reliant individuals determined to build a new society. By its very nature Gladys' sense of belonging to New Zealand may be judged, in its own way, to be both socially 'exclusive' and rooted in a cultural Britishness, if not Englishness. It was a 'sense of identity' ridden with silences. There was little awareness of rival senses of belonging, whether they be working class or Maori. It could scarcely have been otherwise.

Loyalty to the British monarchy and its Empire was central to the world view of both of her parents. The stream of sporting teams from Britain and Australia who were invited to 'Fownhope' were the visible signs of the Empire at play. Gladys imbibed their attitudes fully. Indeed, encouraged by her father, fifteen year old Gladys had written a letter to the newspaper on the eve of Christchurch's Queen Victoria Diamond Jubilee festivities in which she sought to persuade people to join in the choruses of the 'National Songs' which were a part of the programme: 'God Save the Queen', 'Rule Britannia', 'Long Live Victoria', and 'The Red, White and Blue'. 'I know from experience', she told the readers, that when they were performed either in England or on the Continent... the enthusiasm is intense; shouts and cheers & the wildest excitement prevail, and almost every person
does his best to swell the chorus, singing with all the fervour he is capable of.\textsuperscript{125}

She conceded that 'such excitement is not to be looked for in a colonial audience, the greater part of which has never seen London or her Majesty' but thought 'the least we can do to show our loyalty is to join heartily in the chorus of our national songs.'\textsuperscript{126}

A loyal and patriotic member of the British Empire, Gladys accepted the superiority of the British race and supported Britain's imperialistic ventures. In 1901 when she was nineteen years old, she had written an essay for the New Zealand University Bowen Essay competition on 'The Indian Mutiny of 1857; - its causes and results' in which she praised Britain's successful suppression of the Indians. She ended the essay with a flourish on Imperial mission:

To our success in India is due much of the Imperialistic spirit of the British race of to-day, and the widespread conviction that it is the destiny of the Anglo-Saxons to carry the blessings of their civilisation into many remote corners of the globe. But for the results following on the suppression of the Mutiny, Egypt would probably never had cause to rejoice at the benefits derived from British intervention. The position in South Africa would have been totally different. The Boers might have preserved their independence, and the expansion of

\textsuperscript{125} A newspaper clipping stuck into Gladys Wilding's 'Life Events Diary', vol.3, after an entry written by her mother on 20 June 1897. The letter was printed in the Christchurch \textit{Press} on 19 June 1897.

\textsuperscript{126} Ibid.
the Anglo-Saxon race in Africa which promises to assume such vast proportions would never have been possible.\textsuperscript{127}

By her argument, 'the little bands of soldiers who conquered and held in subjection so vast a country' as India, had performed 'heroic deeds.' Great as the purely military achievement was, Gladys attributed the successful outcome to the high sense of duty, integrity of purpose, and untiring energy' of the 'civil administration.'\textsuperscript{128} Such was the historical orthodoxy of her day.

Implicit in the imperialism which Gladys had clearly espoused, was a belief in the racial supremacy of the Anglo-Saxon race. Her few comments on indigenous peoples reveal the same ethnocentrism. After her first encounter with Maori, which took place in Rotorua when she was nineteen years old, for example, she wrote to her mother: 'they were very amusing to watch. They all seemed so good humoured and were jabbering away in Maori as fast as they could.'\textsuperscript{129} Later, after watching slides of an Aboriginal ceremonial dance during a public lecture on Aborigines she observed: 'It was a grotesque performance & showed well their primitive ideas & intelligences.'\textsuperscript{130}


\textsuperscript{128} \textit{Ibid}.

\textsuperscript{129} Letter to Julia Wilding from Gladys Wilding, 12 September 1901, Rotorua, WFP: 'Gladys Wilding Correspondence, 1889-1905', Box 16, Folder 79, Item 60.

\textsuperscript{130} Gladys Wilding's 'Travel Diary, 31 August 1901- 15 January 1904', WFP, Box 15, Folder 73, Item 10, entry: 7
During her voyage to England in 1904 she stopped off in Fiji and judged the native inhabitants to be

a fine looking lot of men on the whole so lithe and vigorous...They seem such a merry contented lot and are perfectly honest...They are very lazy though and do scarcely any work.\(^{131}\)

While in Boston she became 'quite used to being waited on by niggers now; they abound...I suppose they must be made use of somehow.'\(^ {132}\) She felt much more comfortable in Washington where there were 'no negro waiters.'\(^ {133}\) Such comments were the honest responses of a young woman whose life experiences had not moved far from Christchurch's sheltered middle class enclave.

There was never any doubt, however, that Gladys saw her future in New Zealand. Her illness gave her time to map out a career. In the short term, she thought, work in her father's legal office as a secretary would enable her 'to feel capable of earning a little myself.'\(^ {134}\) But there were bigger ideas taking shape. There was a book on New Zealand native birds, animals, insects, flowers and plants she wanted to write. To this end, she had spent much of her convalescence 'laying the foundation of a general

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January 1904.

\(^{131}\) Ibid., 1 July 1904-1 March 1905', WFP, Box 16, Folder 74, Item 11, entry: 18 July 1904.

\(^{132}\) Ibid., 17 August 1904.

\(^{133}\) Ibid., 20 August 1904.

\(^{134}\) Letter to Julia Wilding from Gladys Wilding, 11 March 1905.
knowledge of Botany and Zoology.' 135 Her enthusiasm had been especially whetted during time spent proof-reading, editing and compiling the index for a book, Two Years in the Antarctic, written by a close friend, Albert Armitage. 136 Behind this specific objective there lurked a tantalising ambition: a lectureship in English and French literature and languages at Canterbury College. Often hinted at rather than put directly, the desire to become one of the few female university lecturers at Canterbury College and, indeed, the world ran strongly in her mind. Was it a realistic one? Between 1877 and 1914 only two of the 181 female Canterbury College graduates became university lecturers. Elizabeth M. Herring and Alice Candy were appointed to lectureships - both at Canterbury College - in Biology and History in 1916 and 1921 respectively. 137 The odds were thus long, but not impossibly so. How to improve them plainly exercised Gladys’ mind. Should she first enrol for a Bachelor of Science degree so as to ensure she had a well-rounded university education? ‘Do you think it would be worthwhile?’, she asked her mother. Or perhaps, 'the time


136 Letter to Julia Wilding from Gladys Wilding, 22 August 1905.

might be more usefully spent in working up my own subject.'\textsuperscript{138} In some respects Gladys' desire to return to the known and cloistered world of Canterbury College could be seen as indicating a reluctance to engage with the world outside the sheltered middle-class enclave in which she grew up. Such an interpretation would be a harsh one. The determined young university graduate was setting her sights on a path where few women had gone before. There were challenges a plenty awaiting the talented Gladys - or so it seemed.

\section*{V}

In early October 1905 the twenty-three year old Gladys was diagnosed as having tubercular meningitis. She died two weeks later at 11.15 pm on 19 October 1905, in Eastbourne, with her brother, Anthony, at her side. She was buried in Eastbourne at what was described, by her English cousin Teddy Anthony, as 'a beautiful and peaceful spot. A dear old windmill faces her and to the side there is a range of hills, a truly wonderful outlook, almost New Zealand in character.'\textsuperscript{139}

Letter after letter of sympathy arrived at 'Fownhope' from all over the world. Through them ran a common

\textsuperscript{138} Letter to Julia Wilding from Gladys Wilding, 5 June 1905.

refrain: here was an exceptional talent 'snatched away'\textsuperscript{140} as an 'unusually brilliant career'\textsuperscript{141} was about to begin. The letter writers grieved not only for themselves and the Wilding family but also for their country and for humanity in general. Harry O. Forbes wrote to Frederick and Julia that Gladys' academic achievements had done 'so [much] honour to you both and to her native land.'\textsuperscript{142} In 1913 Canterbury College acknowledged her achievements and those of her friend, Gladys Wilson, the daughter of her teacher, in a brass memorial tablet which was set in the entrance porch of the Canterbury College Hall.\textsuperscript{143} And, in 1923, the Canterbury College Board of Governors established biennial lectures, 'on some important topic relating to 'Woman in Education and Society', in her memory.\textsuperscript{144}

The public recognition of Gladys' achievements was a comfort to Julia and Frederick. So too were the private expressions of loss from trusted friends and relations. A

\textsuperscript{140} Letter to Julia Wilding from Hettie Hurst Seager, 28 October 1905, Christchurch, WFP:'Letters of sympathy - Death of Gladys Wilding 1905-1906', Item 139.

\textsuperscript{141} Letter from P.J.Cocks to Julia Wilding, 23 October 1905, Christchurch, WFP:'Letters of sympathy: Death of Gladys Wilding 1905-1906', Item 133.

\textsuperscript{142} Letter to Frederick Wilding from Harry O.Fourbe, 21 October 1905, Liverpool, WFP:'Letters of sympathy - Death of Gladys Wilding 1905-1906', Item 126.

\textsuperscript{143} Newspaper clipping, heading: 'In Memorial', 12 September 1913, (name of newspaper not available), WFP:'Press Cuttings', Box 42, Item 3.

common theme, and one which would have had special meaning for Julia, was the attention drawn to her daughter’s modesty and unassuming nature. Here Agnes von Haling’s comments capture the general tone:

[She] always seemed quite unconscious of her own merits...with all her brilliant attainments, could anyone have been more modest, or less vain or less self-conscious? I never heard her talk of her achievements, or show the slightest ostentation about them, in spite of their being so strikingly brilliant; and therefore they were all the more to be admired, and no-one could help delighting in her success, for it was so well-deserved and so modestly borne.¹⁴⁵

Talent, fully, gracefully and unostentatiously cultivated was an affirmation of a central tenet of Julia’s life. Nothing could have given her greater solace than its endorsement by her brother and mentor Charles Anthony:

her lovely life and character - tender, concerned, gifted, true - simple, industrious, beautiful - had won the heart and respect of a hard and careworn man of the world, who has still never lost his appreciation for whatever is divine in human nature.¹⁴⁶

It was a sentiment shared by Gladys’ cousin, Teddy Anthony ‘Hers was indeed a noble character, one that should inspire us all to better things.’¹⁴⁷ The clear and unanimous affirmations of admiration and loss represent a poignant recognition that Gladys was all her mother


¹⁴⁷ Letter to Julia Wilding from Teddy Anthony, 26 October 1905.
desired; she was the embodiment of the educated 'new woman' Julia had hoped might further progress towards a better society.
CHAPTER SEVEN

Anthony: Shaping a Noble Gentleman

While Julia moulded Gladys into her version of the 'New Woman', in her eldest son, Anthony, she sought to create a 'noble gentleman'.¹ Such a man would be well-educated, cultured and athletic. He would possess strength of character and physique. Liberal in his political outlook, Julia's ideal male would be progressive in his attitude towards women's emancipation. This accomplished young man would be socially useful. In this way, her use of the term 'nobility' may be seen as transcending the older meaning of the word which emphasised individual accomplishment, social superiority and leisured indulgence. Usefulness and active engagement in the pursuit of a better society were to mark off Julia's noble male. To this end, she conscientiously endeavoured to ensure that Anthony received an upbringing which cultivated all aspects of his development - intellectual, cultural, physical, emotional and 'moral.'

The precise meaning she attached to each of these aspects remained broadly constant for all the Wilding children. Such variations as developed were largely a response to perceived differences between them. The young Anthony proved less malleable and co-operative than his sister Gladys and Julia's response was to adopt a less

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¹ Anthony Wilding's 'Life Events Diary', vol.1, 14 June 1891. Julia Wilding came to call her ideal male variously the 'noble gentleman' or the 'noble man.'
prescriptive approach. To some extent the discernible variation in the intensity of Julia's approach reflects her acknowledgement that there was less need for change in the traditional education of middle-class males. There were few, if any, entrenched social barriers standing in their paths; there was less need to challenge existing orthodoxies. It also registers the greater involvement of Frederick in the education of his sons. Nonetheless, such differences as may be observed in Julia's involvement in the education of Gladys and Anthony are ones of degree. Her efforts to raise the 'noble gentleman' were as attentive and persistent as her attempt to shape a 'new woman'.

I

Born on 31 October 1883, Anthony travelled in the shadow of an exceptional elder sister. Gladys' intellectual progress was the yardstick against which he was constantly measured. Julia watched as anxiously over her newborn son as she had over Gladys, looking all the while for early signs of intelligence. She was delighted with the initial indications. When Anthony was just two-and-a-half months old, Julia thought him more advanced than Gladys had been at the same age, particularly in his speech development. 'He will lie for ever so long together talking to & laughing to himself, & if anything I think he almost makes
talking noises more than Gladys did at his age.'

Four months later she declared: 'altogether I think he is rather more forward than she was at his age.' Infant Anthony continued to impress his parents and by the time he reached his first birthday they were convinced he possessed considerable intellectual ability.

Anthony's second year was less remarkable. Indeed, Julia and Frederick noticed their son becoming less receptive to quiet, controlled activities such as story - reading, nursery rhymes and musical games. He found it impossible to stay still for long. His once rapid speech development slowed considerably. At first, Julia expressed her concern with a mixture of fond amusement and anxiety. She found it: 'funny to hear boy talking about jam. He is very fond of it, & cannot pronounce the j, & he goes about calling out 'damm damm' as loud as he can.' She was amused that he 'says such a funny little word "Dadless", it sounds like for Gladys now.' Heartened to find that, by his second birthday, he was 'beginning to talk more', she acknowledged, he was 'certainly backward with his talking.'

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2 Anthony Wilding's 'Life Events Diary', vol.1, 14 January 1884.
3 Ibid., 14 May 1884.
4 Ibid., 16 December 1884.
5 Ibid., 26 July 1885.
6 Ibid., 20 August 1885.
7 Ibid., 25 December 1885.
Implicit in these observations was comparison with the precocious elder sister, Gladys. Yet Julia's knowledge of human intellectual development prevented her from allowing the comparison to obscure the individualised and erratic nature of human growth and development. Nonetheless, it was with obvious relief that she noted improvements in Anthony's speech: 'to-day Tony said all of himself 'Naughty Dadda go Unedin out Mammy; boy whip Dadda, dadda tome ome.' There was a good long pause between the 1st & second part of the sentence, but it is the longest & most connected he has said yet.' 8 From this point onwards, Julia seems to have accepted the pace and pattern of Anthony's language development.

The parental concern about the comparatively slow development of Anthony's verbal skills was symptomatic of developing doubts about his intellectual curiosity more generally. Julia waited anxiously for Anthony to display some signs of desire to read, write and count. She was greatly relieved when her almost four year old son wanted to recite the alphabet: 'Anthony is beginning to learn his letters at last.' 9 She quickly 'took boy in to town & bought him a picture alphabet book' but noted that while he 'likes to learn a little bit...he does not know them

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8 Ibid., 27 May 1886. Translation: 'Naughty Daddy go [to] Dunedin [with]out Mummy; boy whip Daddy, Daddy come home.'

9 Anthony Wilding's 'Life Events Diary', vol.1, 5 September 1887.
all yet.'

Gladys had mastered the alphabet almost a year earlier than Anthony faltering began learning his 'letters.' Similarly, whereas Julia had introduced daily lessons for Gladys when she was two and a half, Anthony was four before he was judged ready to begin.

Even then Julia was frustrated by his lack of interest and dissatisfied with his rate of intellectual progress: 'I give boy a tiny bit of lessons every day now, but he does not get on very fast. He enjoys having them but does not really try to learn & plays & makes fun.' While Julia had employed incentives to maintain Gladys' enthusiasm similar tactics were deemed futile in Anthony's case. And, when his six year old sister Gladys began attending Miss Tabart's school, Julia sent Anthony along too for modest, fifteen-minute, daily lessons in the hope that the change might work some good. She judged the move a success and thought Anthony seemed 'to like going in.' Perhaps encouraged by this, Julia persisted in giving Anthony 'Kindergarten lessons' every morning and taught him during the school holidays alongside Gladys. There was, nonetheless, a measure of disappointment in her judgement: 'if he likes he can learn very quickly, but he

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid., 23 December 1887.

12 Ibid., 1 February 1888.

13 Ibid., 20 February 1888.

14 Ibid., for examples see 28-29 August 1888.
is not nearly as fond of learning as Gladys was at his age.'

There was, briefly, more success in Julia’s efforts to stimulate Anthony’s musical abilities. She regarded the art of piano playing as much more than a traditional female accomplishment and gave lessons to all her children - male and female alike. Watching his mother play prompted Anthony to a degree of enthusiasm. Julia cautiously gave the six year old his first lesson: ‘I only give him 5 minutes a day’, she wrote, ‘& we are doing the notes of course.’ She thought him a quick learner and gradually increased the intensity of his musical tuition and organised daily ten-minute lessons from his school teacher. But his interest soon waned and outdoor activities came to hold a greater appeal: ‘I am afraid Anthony is not getting on well with his music with Miss Smith.’ Thereafter Anthony’s musical progress was fitful. By 1897 Julia had despaired:

I am sorry to say that Anthony has given up learning music this term. He began the term again with Miss Taylor, but went most irregularly for his lessons, & never practised, & Miss Taylor complained of him & it was evidently not the least use of his continuing so very reluctantly, I have given them up altogether.

As a fifteen year old Anthony made one last effort to resume his piano lessons and for a brief while he was, in

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15 Ibid., 20 February 1888.
16 Ibid., 18 January 1888.
17 Ibid., 24 July 1894.
18 Ibid., 6 April 1897.
Julia's view, 'regular & persevering in his little bit of practise every day.' The new enthusiasm was short lived.

Other attempts to provide cultural experiences for Anthony similarly failed and nowhere more disastrously than in the case of dancing lessons. Julia had sent the eight year old Anthony, under protest, along with Gladys to his first dancing lesson. 'Anthony was very naughty about going', she conceded, '& did not want to at all.' He was prepared to go to almost any lengths to avoid them. On one occasion he rode off on his pony shortly after breakfast, returning at eight o'clock that evening, conveniently missing his lesson. At this point, Julia let the dance lessons lapse. More successful were the 'performance' classes which he attended with Gladys for six months during 1890. Here Anthony was required to recite poems, play a musical instrument or act out skits in front of an audience of children. These classes were intended to make Anthony feel more comfortable in later public speaking roles. Clearly, Julia's best hopes were scarcely realised in her early attempts to provide Anthony with the social skills she thought appropriate.

It was Anthony's relative lack of interest in his schoolwork that caused most concern. The lessons with Miss

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19 Ibid., 31 October 1898.
20 Ibid., 6 February 1892.
21 Ibid., 21 February 1892.
22 Ibid., 24 July 1890.
Tabart continued and had been extended to two hours each morning when Anthony was five. Julia was no more than moderately satisfied with his progress: 'I think Anthony is getting on with his lessons with Miss Tabart [and] he has often lately been at the top of the class.' She was to add, however, that 'the class only consists of himself, Ruth and Fred.'

There was resignation in her observation: 'He can learn when he likes but generally he does not care to take the trouble.'

The difficulties winning Anthony over to her educational programme persisted. There was resistance when his school day lengthened to include afternoon as well as morning lessons. The new arrangement antagonised the eight year old who much preferred the freedom of outdoor play. 'Old boy does not like this at all', Julia wryly confided to her diary. Both parents had by now accepted that the contrasting temperaments of their first two children required different nurturing. Anthony's clear preference for the physical rather than the cerebral came to be accepted as placing limits on the balance that could be struck between the cultivation of mind and body. The management of his subsequent schooling to achieve this end proved to be a difficult and absorbing task.

The teenage years which saw Gladys establish her

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23 Ibid., 15 October 1889.
24 Ibid.
25 Ibid., 20 September 1892.
academic credentials were more problematic for Anthony. In September 1893, just before his tenth birthday, he was enrolled at a private boy’s preparatory school, Warwick House. ‘He is a day boarder,’26 wrote Julia, who was not surprised that he found ‘the lesson hours rather long’ and wished ‘there were not quite so many.’27 Both parents were under no illusions: the greatest attraction of the school for Anthony was sport.28 The standard curriculum of English, Mathematics, Classics, History, Geography, Science, ‘Sacred History’ and later, Latin, kept Anthony busy, if not happy. His school report for the second term in 1894 reveals that he was a little younger than his classmates and that his performance in most subjects was, on the whole, average. The headmaster’s remark on the report told Frederick and Julia something they knew only too well: Anthony was ‘capable of doing better were he to give more attention to his work.’29

After less than two years at Warwick House Anthony was placed elsewhere. Julia had been delighted with Gladys’ progress at Mr Wilson’s Cranmer House School and thought Anthony might ‘make better progress there, as he

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26 Ibid., 25 September 1893.
27 Ibid., 28 September 1893.
28 Ibid., 31 October 1893.
29 Anthony Wilding’s Warwick House School report for the second term of 1894, enclosed in his ‘Life Events Diary’, vol.1, after the entry for 5 September 1894.
will get much more individual attention.'

She watched nervously over Anthony's academic performance in the new environment and searched for signs of improvements in attitude and achievement. 'His strongest point at present', she noted shortly after Anthony began at Cranmer House, is 'arithmetic, he does that & likes it best of all his lessons.'

She was, nonetheless, surprised when twelve year old Anthony received his first academic prize at the end of the school year: 'Anthony's school broke up to-day, & old boy actually got a prize', she exclaimed incredulously. Like his teachers, Julia believed that Anthony could do much better if only he applied himself more. And from time to time school reports point to a young boy whose interests lay elsewhere. The third term report for 1897 awarded Anthony four marks out of nine for general conduct. He 'loses marks', his headmaster explained, by 'chattering to Arthur Van Asch', a practice which 'just threw him out of the prize list.'

The warning, which was taken to heart by Julia and Frederick, if not by Anthony, was to sharpen anxieties about his chances in the rapidly approaching matriculation examinations for Canterbury College.

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30 Anthony Wilding's 'Life Events Diary', vol.1, 29 May 1895.

31 Ibid., 31 July 1895.

32 Ibid., 13 December 1895.

33 Anthony Wilding's Cranmer House Boys School third term report for 1897, enclosed in Julia Wilding's 'Household Diary' for 1897.
Julia had been quite confident of Gladys’ ability to pass the matriculation exams as a fourteen year old. She plainly doubted Anthony’s prospects. His lack of eagerness to return to school after his summer holidays did not go unnoticed: ‘school has begun again, rather to Anthony’s sorrow.’ At mid-year there was a glimmering of hope and Julia confided to her diaries: ‘Anthony is working well at his lessons now & I do hope he will matriculate all right.’ Two months later, however, as the matriculation exams loomed closer, Julia began to fear that Anthony was doing more socializing than studying. ‘Anthony has been to such a lot of dances lately - 5 within 2 months’ and she was ‘afraid lessons do not get as much attention as they ought.’ Shortly after Anthony’s last matriculation examination, Julia privately observed that she and Frederick were ‘very doubtful whether he has passed or not.’ News of his failure was ultimately recorded baldly: ‘The matriculation results were in yesterday’s papers & Anthony has not passed.’ Failure produced prompt and definitive action. Frederick and Julia had much earlier determined that Anthony should undertake a degree course at University and preferably in Law. They now

34 Anthony Wilding’s ‘Life Events Diary’, vol.2, 2 February 1900.
35 Ibid., 29 June 1900.
36 Ibid., 31 August 1900.
37 Ibid., 8 December 1900.
38 Ibid., 30 January 1901.
insisted he tackle the matriculation exams again.

While in the past inclined to use methods of gentle persuasion to bring Anthony to study, they now took a stricter line. Frederick was to increase his involvement in his son’s education. A private tutor was engaged and required to provide regular written reports. Anthony would do most of his studying at his father’s legal offices in Hereford Street where Frederick could keep a watchful eye over him. The rules were, as Julia outlines them, firm and the routine fixed:

Anthony began lessons with Mr Smith to-day. He is to go to him every morning from 8.30 to 9.30 & then he goes to his Father’s office where he has a room to himself to work in. He works till 12, then comes home to lunch, & then works again from 2 to 4. We hope he will really work well this year.\(^{39}\)

By mid-year the plan seemed to be working. Julia acknowledged a ‘very satisfactory letter’ from Anthony’s tutor, who reported him to be ‘working well, & making good progress.’\(^{40}\) Anthony dutifully co-operated and this time passed his Matriculation exams: ‘We are so very pleased’,\(^{41}\) declared Julia with some feeling. Anthony was now poised to commence university studies.

II

Anthony’s formal education had plainly caused Julia

\(^{39}\) Ibid., 4 February 1901.

\(^{40}\) Ibid., 15 June 1901.

\(^{41}\) Ibid., 25 January 1902.
considerable anxiety. She had attempted to engage him in the same broadly liberal/classical education as his sister, Gladys. There was, however, at least until the crisis surrounding the matriculation examination, a less prescriptive tone to her involvement. In part, this was a response to the young Anthony’s temperament and interests. But it seems also to be explicable in terms of the implicitly gendered nature of her objectives. The concept of the ‘noble gentleman’ placed considerable emphasis upon physical valour. And, while Julia had striven to break down the barriers which kept the sporting sphere in the male domain, she accepted Anthony’s enjoyment of physical activity as possessing a validity of its own. Games, exercise and sport more generally were not virtuous in themselves but they could become so, when pursued by an educated and noble male. It was this conception which allowed Julia to become less demanding in her supervision of Anthony’s education. At the same time, it also allowed Frederick a greater role in the upbringing of the male children.

The cultivation of physical strength, fitness and proficiency in sport generally was in keeping with both parents’ concept of masculinity. They were especially eager for Anthony to participate in traditional English games and believed they inculcated admirable and ‘manly’ character traits which would be useful in other areas of life. Julia and Frederick exerted different, though equally significant, influences over their son’s physical
education. As a talented all-round sportsman, Frederick was a source of inspiration in cricket and tennis. Julia, meanwhile, watched over Anthony’s general health and fitness from the moment he was born. She monitored his growth and physical development and provided a way of life which was plain, even Spartan, in nature. In doing so she instilled in him a belief in the value of physical fitness. Together, whether they realized it or not, Frederick and Julia were laying the groundwork which would later produce a unique sporting figure.

Julia concerned herself with the health of all her children but Anthony’s robust physique and considerable muscular strength drew special attention. A large baby, by any standard, Anthony weighed ten pounds the day after his birth. ‘He is such a strong healthy little fellow’, Julia wrote four days later, and predicted, on the basis of her reading on human physical development, that he would ‘be very big & tall.’42 Her belief in the need for a daily regimen of cold baths, outdoor exercise, fresh air and wholesome foods was, if anything, strengthened by the potential Anthony seemed to offer.

Throughout Anthony’s infant years Julia continued to be impressed by his rate of growth, size, strength, muscular development and vigour. Whereas her diary comments about Gladys had concentrated upon the development of intellectual awareness, those for Anthony

42 Anthony Wilding’s ‘Life Events Diary’, vol.1, 4 February 1893.
dwelt on physicality. Indeed, Anthony seemed to fulfil her ideal of the perfect physical specimen of boyhood: 'he is so strong & active'; 'I never did see such a strong active boy as baby.'

She enjoyed comparing Anthony's rate of growth and physical development with others. He was 'much more forward with his walking than darling little Gladys was at his age, & he is much more venturesome too.' After holding a children's Christmas party at 'Fownhope' in 1884 she observed that thirteen and a half month old Anthony 'was twice as big & strong as any of the other children the same age as himself.'

Family friends soon nicknamed Anthony 'the little Hercules' and his physique continued to draw comment.

While the young Anthony possessed a remarkable level of physical fitness, Julia's role as guardian of her son's health was not without its challenges. Indeed, his relative fearlessness, intrepid and boisterous nature sometimes caused alarm. It was virtually impossible to protect him from injuries. Worrying as they were, such exploits were interpreted as consistent with masculine characteristics. Anthony was, Julia decided, 'a very brave

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43 Ibid., 27 December 1883.
44 Ibid., 5 August 1884.
45 Ibid., 19 November 1884.
46 Ibid., 22 December 1884.
47 Ibid., 26 January 1885.
An early introduction to the bicycle. Anthony Wilding with his father, Frederick. c.1886.
(Wilding Collection, C.M.: Ref.15198)
little man,"48 'so immensely sturdy & independent'49 and constantly 'covered nearly with bruises & scratches seems to be his normal state, but he does not mind a bit & a tumble or a hurt never prevents him doing what he is bent on.'50 Moreover, his quick recoveries confirmed Julia's faith in her health regime: 'Anthony's cut has healed wonderfully quickly, & its nearly well now - it shows the old boy is in perfect health.'51

Health, fitness and all-manner of sporting activities were central elements of life at 'Fownhope.' And there was little difference between the physical education experienced by Anthony and his sister, Gladys. Both were exposed to a wide variety of outdoor games and sports. Together they went for long walks on the nearby hills with their mother, played ball games, and jumped over 'hurdles' which Frederick placed for them in their yard. But there were early signs that the young Anthony was responding to his father's obsession with cricket. Handed a cricket bat and ball by a family friend when accompanying his mother to Lancaster Park where Frederick was playing, the three year old

Boy was so pleased and proud of it, it is the first bat he has ever had & when we got to Lancaster Park & his father was at the wickets batting, what did the little man do but go right out in the field & up to

48 Ibid., 11 December 1884.
49 Ibid., 1 May 1885.
50 Ibid., 11 December 1884.
51 Ibid., 14 September 1890.
his father to show him his bat. Needless to say everyone was very amused. Fritz is to begin to teach Anthony cricket to-morrow, & my old boy is very excited about it.\textsuperscript{52}

Cricket was a shared passion at 'Fownhope' and Anthony’s desire to emulate his father’s cricketing prowess was undoubtedly further stimulated by his mother’s unabashed enthusiasm. After the family had watched Frederick represent Canterbury in a cricket match against Lillywhite’s English team in March 1888 she wrote in Anthony’s ‘Life Events Diary’:

The children all went to Lancaster Park for a little to-day while the cricket match England v Canterbury 18 was going on. I was so delighted about it, for Fritz did so immensely well, he took 8 wickets for 20 runs (the highest average on record here in such matches) & he was so applauded. All the Englishmen were out for 75, & they included such good players, - Shrewsbury Ullgeth, Maurice Reed, Briggs, Newham Smith etc etc. Anthony is getting quite interested in cricket now & often talks of when he will play like his father.\textsuperscript{53}

A cricket and ball throwing and catching lesson which he and Gladys received from one of the English cricketers after the match brought great excitement.\textsuperscript{54} Julia took care to take both Gladys and Anthony to watch a ‘Ladies cricket match’ at Lancaster Park, hoping to underline her belief in sport for all.\textsuperscript{55}

The obvious enthusiasm which Anthony displayed for

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 8 October 1887.

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., 30 March 1888.

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., 16 April 1888.

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., 10 March 1888.
cricket was quickly seized upon by both parents. By his fifth birthday he was deemed old enough to begin learning in earnest:

His father & I gave him as his birthday present a box of cricket, 2 bats, ball set of stumps balls, & a little cricketing suit complete. It is all white flannel (we made it at home) and comprises knickerbockers, shirt, belt, coat, shoes & cap. He does look such a dear little man in them, & is quite proud of himself, & his father now is going to teach him cricket.56

Julia was especially eager, it seems, for Anthony to excel at what she regarded as the finest of English games. As she watched Frederick’s exploits on the cricket field she dreamed of the day when her six year old son might follow in his footsteps.

The cricket match Canterbury v New South Wales began to-day & Fritz made 88. He is the captain, & when he went in 6 wickets were down for 40, & when Fritz went out he & De Mans had brought the score up to 168 for 2...It was simply delicious watching Father, & I could not help wondering & thinking so much whether I should ever see our Anthony or Frank doing the same.57

She did not have long to wait.

While Anthony was particularly eager to learn cricket he displayed an aptitude for all manner of sports and outdoor games. His interest bordered upon the insatiable. Taken to the gymnasium to watch Gladys, the six year old became almost uncontrollable:

I took Anthony to the gymnasium to watch Gladys to-day, but I do not think I shall again until he joins. He would not sit with me, but would climb up the ladders etc. He went to the tip-top of one & was going to climb over the beam & go down another ladder on the other side of it, but I managed to make him

56 Ibid., 31 October 1888.
57 Ibid., 7 February 1890.
come down instead with great difficulty. He kept me quite nervous the whole time.58

Six months later Julia took Anthony with Gladys to the gymnasium for his first lesson.59

Constant activity seemed the best way to soak up his energy and curb his wilder enthusiasms. Tennis was helpful here and when a family friend and tennis racquet manufacturer, Ralph Slazenger, sent out a children's tennis set for Gladys in December 1889, Frederick quickly taught Anthony, also, to play. Thereafter, brother and sister were constantly on the tennis court.60 Julia added long walks to the regime, and by the time he was six years old, Anthony easily managed a thirteen mile walk with his mother, Gladys and friends over the hills to Governors Bay and on to Lyttelton. 'I am glad to say', wrote Julia, 'Gladys & Anthony both walked splendidly & did not get tired at all.'61 A go-cart which Julia purchased for him absorbed his energies giving rides to his friends and siblings. Stilts were another attempt to pre-occupy the tireless Anthony, although, not without causing Julia a few anxious moments: 'A few days ago he got down from the verandah onto the ground & now he has once done it, I am afraid he often will.'62

58 Ibid., 20 November 1889.
59 Ibid., 30 May 1890.
60 Ibid., 4 February 1890.
61 Ibid., 15 April 1890.
62 Ibid., 30 August 1890.
While the emphasis of Anthony's early physical education had been placed upon fun activities and enjoyment, after his seventh birthday, under Frederick's influence, sport began to be taken more seriously. Anthony's natural athletic ability caught Frederick's sporting imagination. At the same time, he saw an opportunity to use Anthony's interest in and enthusiasm for sport to instil the discipline, self-control, perseverance and competitive instinct which were less evident in his schoolwork. As A. Wallis Myers has aptly observed Frederick regarded sport as possessing the potential to inculcate 'other things besides strokes and tactics.' 63 Not that this stopped him employing a reward system as a means of encouraging perseverance. It worked, as Julia observed: 'Anthony swam across the broadest end of the swimming baths today for the first time, - quite alone, - & earned 3d which his father promised him as soon as he could do it.' 64 On Christmas Day 1890 he earned a further five shillings by swimming 'from the deep end to the beginning of the shallow end' of the pool. The irony of one of amateurism's staunchest advocates 'paying for play' seems to have passed Frederick by.

Sporting achievements were, however, also used to teach financial management skills, the value of money and the virtues of saving. Money earned by athletic feats was

63 Myers, Captain Anthony Wilding, p. 42.

64 Anthony Wilding's 'Life Events Diary', vol. 1, 21 December 1890.
channelled into the purchase of desired objects, especially sporting equipment. The bicycle craze which swept the country in the 1890s captured Anthony's imagination and acquiring and updating them was the site of numerous financial transactions:

To-day we have bought Anthony a bicycle, at least he has bought it himself all except 7/ which I have lent him. He [had] 10/ in the bank which he drew out, & 5 from his father for swimming, 25 s in all, & I gave him 7/6 to make up the price 32s/d.\(^{65}\)

Money could also be used to make good misdemeanours. Frederick and Julia withheld money derived from the sale of Anthony's green stone axe 'to cover the expenses of losing Jack [Anthony's pony] at Kowai Bush last Summer' and one pound 'for the repair of Mr Wason's gun' which Anthony had broken.\(^{66}\) On his fifteenth birthday a complicated financing arrangement was struck to make his dream of 'an Anglo-Special' a reality.\(^{67}\)

A reward system was neither practical nor necessary where cricket and tennis were concerned. Frederick became Anthony's mentor, training partner and coach in cricket and to a lesser extent, in tennis. A perfectionist by nature, Frederick was a hard taskmaster and insisted upon regular practice of basic skills and techniques. And there was always room, he insisted, for improvement. Together they began to spend many hours perfecting Anthony's

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\(^{65}\) Ibid., 8 January 1891.

\(^{66}\) Ibid., 6 April 1897.

\(^{67}\) Ibid., 31 October 1898.
bowling, batting, catching and throwing skills in cricket and to a lesser extent, his serve and other tennis strokes. In the process, Frederick instilled in his young son self-discipline, control, the powers of intense concentration and taught him the value of patience and commitment. And under his father’s influence the youthful Anthony came to apply the same dedication and earnestness to his sporting activities as Gladys applied to her more intellectual pursuits. Like his sister, he imbibed, albeit in his case through sports, the notion that perfection and true enjoyment required work. Julia had been especially delighted to find that her nine year old son was ‘always practising cricket now.’

Enrolment at Warwick House, in September 1893, offered greater scope for Anthony’s developing sporting interests. It also provided Julia with the opportunity to observe and compare her son’s performance. And it may have been Anthony’s consciousness of his mother at his shoulder that led him to baulk at his first school athletic sports day:

Anthony was in great excitement about them...I went & took Frank to Lancaster Park to see them, but we were disappointed not to see Anthony run. We wanted him to, but because he thought he would be behind all the others, he would not try. He did run in one in the morning when I was not there but he got a bad start & was very much behind, & I believe that disheartened him.\footnote{Ibid., 25 December 1892.}

Undeterred, Julia was soon noting Anthony’s first cricket

\footnote{Ibid., 20 October 1893.}
game for his school: 'Mr Cook's third against the Cathedral School third.' Ever eager for him to do well, she was a little deflated at the outcome: 'Anthony made 1 & 2 in the two innings but he was very proud of being chosen to play & did as well as all except 2 or 3 boys.'\(^70\) She was, nonetheless, 'glad to say', that 'Anthony is very fond of cricket...& plays a lot both at school, & at home.'\(^71\)

It was upon cricket that mother and son heaped their greatest hopes. Julia attended every match in which Anthony played, recorded faithfully the improvements in his performance and applauded his devotion to practice. Few details escaped her diarist's pen. After his first match of the 1895 season, 'Cook's School 4th' against 'High School 4th', we learn that:

Anthony in the first innings bowled 3, caught 2 out & made 2. In the 2nd innings he bowled 2, & made 16, top score of the 4 innings, the next highest being 12. So Anthony did serve splendidly all round, & Cook's school won by 5 wickets. I was so pleased that he did do well, & I so enjoyed watching him.\(^72\)

Similarly, when Lancaster Park began their 1895/6 cricket season, we are told that her eleven year old son had played 'for the rest' of the Club against the 'First 13' and are presented with a sober analysis of his performance:

He had not much to do though for the rest of the club

\(^70\) Ibid., 16 December 1893.

\(^71\) Ibid., 5 February 1894.

\(^72\) Ibid., 9 March 1895.
were batting all the afternoon. Anthony went in about 15th wicket down & he went out 4th ball, [bowled] Gunthorpe c Labatt behind the wickets. He stood up well to the bowling though & of course we did not expect him to make any runs.\textsuperscript{73}

The extent of the Wilding’s involvement in the sporting development of their children is especially obvious in Frederick’s decision to introduce the young Anthony to the gymnasium. An ardent physical culturist, Frederick justified the activity as beneficial in its own right, as a means of disciplining both the body and the mind and also as a general conditioning for the rigours of both team and individual sports. In his public letter attempting to persuade other Christchurch fathers and sons to join him and Anthony at a city gymnasium during the August school holidays of 1896 we glimpse the enthusiast in full flight:

Comparatively few people are aware that we have a large and well-appointed gymnasium in Christchurch, with all the necessary appliances and two well-qualified instructors in Mr & Mrs Matthews. May I suggest that a more extended use should be made of these advantages for physical training of the young by the formation of a large class of school boys for regular training during the approaching holidays in gymnastics... A good deal of progress could be made by devoting, say, four afternoons a week to training under competent instruction, and I venture to think the boys would find their holidays pass all the more pleasantly if they met together with the common object of attaining proficiency in exercises and discipline, wholesome alike for mind and body, and in which it is the ambition of most English boys to excel... Strict discipline would be maintained in the class, and the youngsters should be taught systematically from the start and kept to exercises... adapted to their ages and strength.\textsuperscript{74}

\textsuperscript{73} Ibid., 28 September 1895.

\textsuperscript{74} Newspaper clipping: 'Holidays', dated 8 August 1896, WFP: 'Press cuttings, 1879-1907', Box 41, Item 1.
We do not hear how successful the call to the gym was, but Anthony and Frederick were soon hard at it.

It was in cricket above all else, however, that the sporting partnership between father and son flourished. Julia’s interest in its progress was unflagging. At times she struggled proudly to watch her husband and son playing simultaneously in different cricket matches at Lancaster Park:

Anthony played in one of the President’s Cup teams to-day, & scored 22, the highest total he has ever made. Fritz was bowling in the Senior 11 at the same time, & it was quite difficult to keep count of Anthony’s runs, & Father’s wickets.\(^{75}\)

Others were now beginning to take note of twelve year old Anthony’s cricketing development. On the eve of his fourteenth birthday he was chosen to play, alongside his father, for Christchurch against Ashburton. Julia was delighted:

it looks so funny to see in the paper in the same innings F.Wilding & A.Wilding. Fritz made 62, & Anthony 15 & took 3 wickets. Anthony had a fine time & enjoyed it all immensely I think.\(^{76}\)

Four days later\(^{77}\) Anthony scored his first century - 126 not out for his school side playing against a High School eleven - and was presented by the Cranmer House School principal ‘with a beautiful cricket bat’ inscribed with

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\(^{75}\) Anthony Wilding’s ‘Life Events Diary’, vol.1, 3 October 1896.

\(^{76}\) Ibid., 3 October 1896.

\(^{77}\) Ibid., 4 November 1897.
the date and number of runs.\textsuperscript{78}

Anthony's interest in tennis grew alongside his successes on the cricket field. He had begun his tennis education serving as a ball-boy during his father's Sunday afternoon doubles matches at 'Fownhope.' In later years he was to recall that he 'looked upon scouting for my father as a great honour, something to go to bed and dream about.'\textsuperscript{79} It was at 'Fownhope' that the fourteen year old Anthony had his first appearance in competitive tennis. It came about, as Anthony later recalled, because

the fourth player was a little late in turning up. Then my father made me take a hand. You can imagine my excitement. But I was a little anxious, for my double faults never failed to evoke enthusiasm on the part of my father. He was always very fair in admonishing, and any excusable mistake went unnoticed, but a double fault or the missing of a 'sitter' never failed to call forth, 'Boy, what are you doing?' and a somewhat lengthy homily on the enormity of my offence.\textsuperscript{80}

At the end of 1898 Frederick entered Anthony in the National Handicap Doubles and Singles Tennis Championships to be held in Dunedin. They played together in the Doubles Handicap until beaten in the third round. In the men's singles father and son met in the first round and, according to Julia, Frederick sacrificed his chances and allowed Anthony to beat him.\textsuperscript{81}

\textsuperscript{78} Ibid., 19 October 1898.


\textsuperscript{80} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{81} Anthony Wilding's 'Life Events Diary', vol.1, 31 December 1898.
Anthony Wilding playing tennis at 'Fownhope.'
c.1898. (Wilding Collection, C.M: Ref.15206)
The gradual unfolding of Anthony's sporting potential in cricket and tennis encouraged Frederick to introduce a more strenuous conditioning programme. Success in team sports, Frederick told his son, depended upon physical fitness. During the winter months the pair threw themselves energetically into the famous English physical culturist, Eugene Sandow's system of physical development.\textsuperscript{82} Built around weight lifting, gymnastics, skipping, boxing and wrestling and appropriate breathing exercises, the system was stimulated in Christchurch in 1900 by the arrival of Fred Hornibrook, a former student of Sandow's.\textsuperscript{83} Anthony and Frederick were among the first students at his Christchurch School of Physical Culture. Thus the seventeen year old Anthony was well nurtured in all aspects of physical culture. Many a sports writer was subsequently to see in attention to fitness the key to his sporting success.

As the new century dawned, Anthony displayed signs of developing into a versatile sportsman. In January 1901, he was chosen to represent Canterbury against an Auckland team \textsuperscript{84}, displacing his fifty year old father - much to

\textsuperscript{82} Ibid., vol.2, 15 November 1899, 29 June 1900.

\textsuperscript{83} Lovell-Smith, \textit{Plain Living High Thinking}, p.84; Tolerton, \textit{Ettie Rout}, pp.37-41.

\textsuperscript{84} Anthony Wilding’s ‘Life Events Diary’, vol.2, 6 January 1901.
Frederick’s delight. Joining him in his debut was his friend, Geoffrey Ollivier, and both rewarded the selectors with promising performances. As one sporting scribe puts it:

They have both got a lot of cricket in them, & I confidently expect that in the future they will worthily fill the places in the Canterbury eleven so long occupied by their fathers...Wilding put the creditable number of 28 to his credit, and in the bowling department he proved that he was a trundler of no mean order. Indeed, had his skipper set him more to do, it is more than likely that his record would have been even better, as the batsmen never had him beaten.

The phenomenon of fathers being replaced by sons spoke volumes about the nature of the city’s cricketing community. An enclave of middle class families dominated its ranks and provided its stars.

The tennis court was the scene of further triumphs. In the same year Anthony won his first tennis tournament - the Canterbury Championship - beating the veteran, Richard Harman. The title holder for the previous seven consecutive years, Harman had been Frederick Wilding’s former doubles partner at the provincial and national level. Julia admitted that she and Frederick were ‘quite proud about his winning’ as Anthony would ‘not be 18 for more than a month and was thus,’ much the youngest who has

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86 Newspaper clipping stuck into Anthony Wilding’s ‘Life Events Diary’, vol.2, after the entry for 6 January 1901.
ever won the Cup.’

Physical fitness was the cornerstone of Anthony’s victory. Spurred on by his father, Anthony had, he later admitted, ‘trained as for a marathon race during the previous six weeks’, regularly running up the steep Rapaki Track to the Summit Road beyond ‘Fownhope.’

The young Anthony had clearly arrived as a local sportsman of great promise.

Competitive sport - whether team or individual - was the dominant element of Anthony’s athletic activity. Yet his wider recreational interests extended to encompass the older, and more traditional, male sports of hunting, fishing and horse riding. Frederick taught him how to shoot and fish. And while Julia was an experienced horse rider, it was Frederick, also, who had taught the seven year old Anthony to ride. Like the bicycle, the horse offered the young boy the potential of personal independence, freedom to get about. Anthony seized every chance and the question of how much independence he could squeeze out became an issue between his parents. Frederick permitted his fearless son to go riding alone at the age of seven, Julia did ‘not think it at all safe for a boy Anthony’s age to go alone on a big horse like Athole.’

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88 Anthony Wilding, On the Court and Off, p.90.

89 Myers, p.43.

90 Anthony Wilding’s ‘Life Events Diary’, vol.1, 16 July 1891.
She persuaded Frederick to buy a, hopefully, safer pony. 'Jack', as he was known, proved rather too 'frisky' and Anthony's long rides alone or with friends continued to make Julia 'feel nervous.'91 She was especially upset when some larrikin boys beat the pony from behind, pulled his tail, & made him shy & bolt'92 throwing Anthony as he did so. Long horse rides, nonetheless, remained a feature of Anthony's childhood and Julia came to see it as a 'manly' stamina building exercise, even if at times the pony provided a means by which Anthony escaped dreaded dance lessons.

When he was not indulging his passion for horseriding, the young Anthony spent much time hunting and fishing. As a seven year old he joined his father on day-long fishing trips. Rather to Julia's alarm, Frederick, at the same time, taught Anthony to use a gun and took him hunting for rabbits and hares in the Port Hills at the back of 'Fownhope.' As a teenager, he and his friends camped out in the bush and hills during school holidays where they sometimes slept by day and fished and hunted by night.93 Often anxious about the boys during such camping trips, Julia, nevertheless, endorsed Frederick's view that they were essential for the development of the

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91 Ibid., 13 November 1891.
92 Ibid., 6 December 1891.
93 Anthony Wilding, On the Court and Off, p.93; Myers, pp.38-39.
'The Three Swaggers.' Anthony Wilding (on the far right) during a camping and hunting expedition with his friends, the Harper boys. c.1897. (Wilding Collection, C.M: Ref.15207)
independence and self-reliance each thought desirable in a young male.

As important as such attributes were, they could easily shade into less desirable behaviour if experienced in too full a measure. And there is no doubt that Julia was more preoccupied with the issue of behavioural difficulties in her son’s upbringing than in that of her daughter. Here her desire to shape a ‘noble gentleman’ possessing the most exalted of ‘masculine’ traits created problems of its own. Where did high spirits and youthful playfulness end and unacceptable behaviour begin? From an early stage, she had been quick to find what she believed were very ‘masculine’ characteristics in Anthony’s behaviour and declared the five month old to be a ‘most thorough boy’ who ‘will have a great deal of character & determination & very high spirits.’ While these characteristics would, she believed, eventually enable him to achieve great feats, they were precisely the personality traits which would make him difficult to manage. ‘I really believe’, she wrote, that, ‘the little man will do something one day - he has such a decided character, & is so immensely vigorous & strong in every way.’ It was this early realization which imposed considerable pressure upon her parenting skills. Would she

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94 Anthony Wilding’s ‘Life Events Diary’, vol.1, 14 June 1891.

95 Ibid., 14 May 1884.

96 Ibid., 30 August 1884.
be able to manage him in ways that would bring his best qualities to the fore?

At first, Julia attributed Anthony's mischievous ways to an excess of energy. She thought him to be braver and 'much more venturesome than Gladys' and associated these traits with masculinity. Courageous and physically robust, the young Anthony let little stand in his way. Julia approved of such displays of character and thought they were tempered by an affectionate nature. Yet, by the time Anthony was three years old, Julia acknowledged that her son had 'a tremendous temper' and gave vent to regular 'crying fit[s] of passion.' He had become, as she wryly put it, a 'fearfully mischievous & very dirty little pickle.' Reluctant to restrain Anthony to any great degree, she put much thought into preventing such behaviour from dominating his personality.

The pages of Anthony's 'Life Events Diaries' are heavy with Julia's reflections on the problem of his behaviour and her planned strategies for coping with it. Her comments reveal both her theories on child management and the seriousness with which she approached her perceived responsibilities as a mother. Both are clearly

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97 Ibid., 19 November 1884.

98 Ibid., 31 October 1886.

99 Ibid.
evident in the agonising which surrounded her recourse to corporal punishment:

Anthony is such a little pickle, & is always up to something of mischief. His spirits are so high sometimes that he does not know how to give them sufficient vent, & all sorts of mischievous tricks are the result. We do not like curbing the little man too much, but he has to be punished sometimes. His will is so strong, & when he has made up his mind to do anything, he is quite violent & so resolute, when he is not allowed to have his own way, that I am obliged sometimes to lock him in a little cupboard place we have. I find it brings him to reason more than anything else, & of course I only keep him there a few minutes. He will be a difficult boy to manage, & I am sure that with him, much will depend on the way he is treated & brought up. How earnestly I hope that we may manage him in the right way.100

Indeed, throughout Anthony’s boyhood, periods of calm are punctuated with behavioural incidents which disturbed Julia and provoked lengthy diary entries in which she analyses her handling of specific outbursts and attempts to develop ways of dealing with them.

She clearly demanded obedience from Anthony and, at times, became locked in a battle of wills. On occasions, Frederick was called upon to administer physical punishments.

Minnie (the nurse) is out to-day & to-night when going to bed Anthony was very naughty & got into a dreadful passion. He did not want his feet & knees washed (which were very dirty) & he got so violent, screamed, kicked, pinched etc etc. It required all Mary’s & my efforts to undress him, & when that was done, & I lifted him into bed he tore all the clothes off the bed & was really very naughty. Frederick...had to give him a good smacking. I do not like it at all, but really sometimes it is necessary with boy, he gets so violent. When his father went away, I stayed, sat by his bed, & told him a little story & when I had finished he was as good & quiet as possible,

100 Ibid., 28 January 1888.
asked questions about the story & kissed me good night. 101

The incident clearly upset Julia and brought feelings of inadequacy.

Well versed in educational theories as she was, Julia nonetheless wondered what good they were when 'a very affectionate boy' with 'a very fine disposition' also had 'a violent temper':

I am sure that the proper way to manage him is to lead him through his affections, & to lead not force him. But it is much easier to have theories as to how to treat children than it is to carry them out, & I feel more & more every day how very difficult it is to manage & lead one's children wisely & well as one ought. 102

Believing that Anthony was not an inherently naughty child, she continued to hold herself largely responsible for his outbursts. The theme of personal inadequacy returns again and again in her diary entries:

If only we could always manage him just as we ought but he has tremendous animal spirits, & I am afraid we sometimes curb him, when we ought really only to direct his energies into a proper channel. I am quite sure that more than half the naughtiness of children is simply through not giving them something to interest & occupy them. 103

Educational theorists might have applauded the sentiments; few of them would have been able to match the persistence and inventiveness of Julia's efforts.

Anthony's increasingly defiant behaviour ultimately brought a firmer response. While in the past Julia had

101 Ibid., 28 April 1888.
102 Ibid.
103 Ibid., 12 September 1889.
called for Frederick’s assistance during the worst of Anthony’s tantrums, she now decided to dispense physical punishments herself:

Last Sunday I gave Anthony his first beating. He is very disobedient sometimes, & if I scold or slap him, he gets worse & is very rude & even violent to me, so I thought it was really necessary to take strong measures. I have an old riding whip of mine, & when he was rude & disobedient on Sunday (I had warned him some days before), I got it & gave him a good beating with it on the calves of his legs. He struggled & tried to kick for some time, but finally I mastered him & made him cry & he was quiet afterwards.¹⁰⁴

She ‘did not like doing it at all & felt quite done up afterwards.’¹⁰⁵ The incident preyed on her mind. She was certain ‘it did him good’ and hoped that the whip would be ‘very rarely’ used in the future.¹⁰⁶ A month later she acknowledged another beating but reported:

I have found Anthony much more obedient since I have taken to use the whip with him myself. I have only had to use it twice yet, & he is a good old boy altogether, but of course he has tremendously high spirits, & is very mischievous, but it is not good to curb children too much.¹⁰⁷

Determined to use means other than whipping to control Anthony, she prepared herself for a prolonged struggle the next time a crisis occurred. On Christmas Day 1891, during ‘a very naughty fit’ when Anthony refused to wear his coat to the beach during some heavy rain, Julia

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 15 April 1891.
¹⁰⁵ Ibid.
¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 19 April 1891.
¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 20 May 1891.
stayed in the house with him for nearly two hours and refused to
give way to him, & I did not want to beat him if possible, so I sent the other children with Eva to the beach... He would not give in for a long time, & tried every possible way to get out of the room & was very naughty, but at last about the end of an hour & a half, he put on his coat, promised not to take it off until I told him he might, & he has been very good for the rest of the day. I nearly cried & felt quite done up when it was all over, for it was really very trying. I did not whip him at all, but tried gentleness & persuasion every way I could, though of course I had to be firm, & he would constantly make darts to the door or window & get quite violent. I feel it is very necessary that he should be made to obey, & yet I often feel now that he is getting beyond my control... I do so wish I could manage him better... he really is very naughty sometimes & no doubt it is because I do not manage him properly.\textsuperscript{108}

Full of self-doubt, and written on the day of the incident, the passage reflects Julia’s troubled state of mind. Three weeks later she was able to take a much calmer view. She now reasoned that most boys were keen to assert their independence and went through a stage where they were defiant and difficult to manage. In this sense, she consoled herself with the thought that Anthony’s outbursts were not signs of poor character but reflected that he was: ‘getting to a difficult age to manage, & he is so determined, passionate & independent.’\textsuperscript{109} Her tolerance continued, however, to be tested. More than once she expressed her relief when the school holidays ended and

\textsuperscript{108} Ibid., 25 December 1891.

\textsuperscript{109} Ibid., 10 January 1892.
the 'obstreperous'\textsuperscript{110} and 'troublesome'\textsuperscript{111} Anthony returned to the classroom.

By the time Anthony reached thirteen years of age, Julia’s problems managing his behaviour had largely dissipated. With increasing age came a growing maturity, self-discipline and self-control - qualities which Frederick stressed as he increasingly became involved in Anthony’s sporting development. By the time he was sixteen Julia proclaimed her son to be ‘quite a society boy’, he likes going out very much, & is really popular, I think, - he has his father’s old way with him I am glad to think.’\textsuperscript{112} The ease with which he moved among Christchurch’s middle class society and especially, its sporting elite, suggested a young man perfectly attuned to his environment. He was well on his way to fulfilling his mother’s ideal of the ‘noble gentleman.’ The university and a law degree beckoned.

III

It was at Julia’s insistence that Anthony was sent 'Home' to obtain a law degree at Cambridge:

Fritz has just decided that Anthony is to go home to Cambridge in August. Anthony is most tremendously keen to go himself, & I do hope & trust that his going will turn out for the best in every way. I feel

\textsuperscript{110} Ibid., 25 January 1892.

\textsuperscript{111} Ibid., 4 June 1894.

\textsuperscript{112} Anthony Wilding’s ‘Life Events Diary’, vol.2, 8 March 1900.
too rather responsible about it, for Fritz does not agree so much with his going as I do, & has really given his consent partly to please me & against his own judgement. How fervently I pray that my dear son will justify the faith I have in him, & will do well in every way.\textsuperscript{113}

Both parents agreed that Anthony should, at the completion of his law degree, return to Christchurch and join his father’s law practice. Frederick, however, had been content for Anthony to work his way through Canterbury College, undoubtedly relishing the thought of watching his son cement his place in the colonial sporting scene. It was Julia who was acutely aware of the social advantages of a degree from one of the traditional British universities. She had sought advice from her brother Edwyn as to the relative merits of Oxford and Cambridge and accepted his endorsement of Trinity College, Cambridge. In her view, time spent in the ‘Old Country’ would allow Anthony to make contact with family, absorb English ways and round out his education.

It was a decision which came at a cost. Frederick and Julia accepted the estimation of a young relative and Cambridge graduate that, provided Anthony was ‘not a man with extravagant tastes or inclinations’, an allowance of £250 a year would be needed to sustain him at Cambridge.\textsuperscript{114} It was a financial arrangement which intensified Anthony’s dependence on his parents and prolonged their

\textsuperscript{113} Ibid., 11 March 1902.

\textsuperscript{114} Letter to Teddy Anthony (author’s name unreadable), 14 March 1902, WFP:‘Correspondence about Anthony Wilding attending Cambridge University,1902’, Box 31, Folder 147, Item 686.
involvement in his education. They insisted that, before his departure for England in July 1902, Anthony spend the first term at Canterbury College to prepare himself for preliminary examinations at Cambridge. In reality, as Anthony himself later admitted, his 'irregularity at lectures was in a measure compensated for by my zest on behalf of the university at lawn tennis and Rugby football.'\textsuperscript{115} Julia thought the time at Canterbury College was some value and pointed to Anthony's first tentative steps in public speaking in a college debate. His speech, she noted, was:

all written out, & Anthony read it mostly, here and there saying a little by heart. The matter was excellent, & on the whole Anthony did very well for a first attempt; if he practices, I think he has the makings of a good speaker.\textsuperscript{116}

To her diaries she added a simple caveat: 'Gladys's it was chiefly.'\textsuperscript{117}

Even the journey 'Home' was shaped by parental concerns for their son's academic capacities. As Anthony put it:

Far-seeing parents sent me home on a big boat carrying only four passengers and 100,000 carcasses of frozen mutton. I had to defeat the examiners of the "Little Go" at Cambridge in Greek, a language quite dead in New Zealand; and as I knew nothing about St.Mark's Gospel in Greek or Latin Prose my

\textsuperscript{115} Anthony Wilding, \textit{On the Court and Off}, p.91.

\textsuperscript{116} Anthony Wilding's 'Life Events Diary', vol.2, 21 June 1902.

\textsuperscript{117} Ibid.
Thus, when Anthony sailed out of Wellington Harbour on 26 July 1902 on board the SS Delphic, he was well aware of the variety of expectations which accompanied him. The bonds of family and dependence were lightly borne by the young student. His relationship with his mother had always been a close one and he became a regular and dutiful correspondent. His frequently lengthy letters allow us to glimpse something of student life for a first generation colonial at Cambridge and to observe the continuing family dialogue. There were family and New Zealand friends to visit. The most notable of the latter were William Pember and Maud Reeves who, until 1890, had been near neighbours of the Wilding family in Opawa. The pair were to play an important role in easing the young colonial student into English society. But Anthony was soon established at a cramming institution at Hunstanton, Norfolk, preparing for the Trinity College entrance examination and the 'Little Go’. Having surmounted the first, he found lodgings in Cambridge and was plainly delighted when his tutor arranged rooms in New Court; 'the most sought after court in Trinity, & I might also add

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118 Anthony Wilding, On the Court and Off, pp.95-96.

119 William Pember Reeves was appointed to represent New Zealand in London as Agent-General in 1896. When the office was abolished in 1905 Reeves became New Zealand’s first High Commissioner.
Cambridge.'¹²⁰ The 'present King' and the 'Duke of Marlborough', he unashamedly told his mother, were Trinity men.¹²¹

How one became a 'Trinity man' was a matter which occupied much of Anthony's thinking. He soon discovered that sporting prowess was to open doors and hasten his acceptance. A try he scored in a Freshman's rugby match, in October 1902, he told his mother, 'was well spoken of in the papers'¹²² and 'helped me along a lot'.¹²³ Without such demonstrations of ability Anthony confessed:

If a man can't do anything & is a bit of a fool at Trinity not a soul will call on him; or take any notice of him. Each public school will have its own set and pretty well keep to themselves.¹²⁴

Indeed, the Cambridge tradition of reserving the afternoons for sports and exercise greatly appealed to him. He freely admitted to his mother that such was the richness of the sporting and associated social opportunities that he 'was not doing quite as much work as I would like.' Ever conscious of his mother's concern that he succeed at Cambridge, he quickly added the reassurance


¹²¹ Letter to Julia Wilding from Anthony Wilding, 26 September 1902, Beaconsfield, Norfolk, England, WFP, Box 20, Folder 95, Item 12.

¹²² Anthony Wilding's 'Life Events Diary', vol.2, 28 November 1902.


¹²⁴ Ibid.
that he never failed 'to get my good 4 hrs in', and insisted that this was 'a jolly sight more than the majority' managed.  

125 Julia was partially convinced, noting simply that Anthony was 'combining work and pleasure well I think.'

It was in sport, nonetheless, that Anthony initially made his mark at Cambridge. In doing so, he also rid himself of whatever lingering doubts he possessed that his performances as a colonial athlete might not match those of his Cambridge contemporaries. He won the Freshman’s tennis tournament in March 1903 and continued to win almost every match he played. The standard of tennis was such, he believed, that 'if I bought a new racket, chucked up cricket, & set my heart on tennis I would not have a very great difficulty in getting my blue this my first year.'  

127 But his form was so impressive in Freshman’s cricket that he was thrust immediately into the Trinity XI. And, if his opinion of sporting standards prevailing at Cambridge was low, he was not much more impressed with

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125 Letter to Julia Wilding from Anthony Wilding, 29 October 1902, Cambridge, England, WFP, Box 20, Folder 95, Item 15.

126 Anthony Wilding’s 'Life Events Diary’, vol.2, 28 November 1902.

Anthony's Cambridge days. The Trinity College 1st XI, c.1903.


**Middle row**: F.W. Payne, F.B. Wilson, R. Lambert, Hon. G.W. Lyttelton, E.W. Mann.

**Front row**: L. Meapin (?), (?) Powers.

(Wilding Collection, C.M: Ref.15209)
the attitudes struck by some of the cricketers he played alongside:

Cricket, especially at this college is a very funny game. All our players are entirely Eton & Harrow & as far as possible they put their own school mates in the teams...Some of the members of the Trin 1st 11 are very much after the style of Lord Hawke's team, & I can quite easily imagine them thinking themselves too high and mighty to speak to Johnny Fowke and men like him. Mac Corquodale, Elden & some others are something awful. They are always spotlessly clean with their hair parted exactly down the centre, & cab to and fro the ground. Talk Lardy da don't you know.\textsuperscript{128}

It was not long before the cricket and tennis clubs were vying for his services. He chose cricket - a decision his parents applauded - and, in 1903, he was selected for the 'Crusaders', a club made up of the best College players. Julia was delighted to record that Anthony averaged 35 with the bat and 'captured 28 wickets for 9 runs a piece' and thought he would 'get his blue next year or the year after.'\textsuperscript{129}

During the Cambridge summer vacation, however, there was time for tennis. His appearance in nine tournaments on the British competitive circuit won warm praise from sportswriters and fourteen prizes. When he defeated F.W.Payn, the English champion, at Sheffield, a 'new star' was hailed. Commentators praised his 'powerful backhand' and thought his forehand drive, when returning service,

\textsuperscript{128} Letter to Julia Wilding from Anthony Wilding, 3 May 1903, Trinity College, Cambridge, England, WFP, Box 21, Folder 98, Item 30.

\textsuperscript{129} Anthony Wilding's 'Life Events Diary', vol.2, 20 July 1903.
'terrific.' Subsequent victories at Newcastle brought forth a prediction that 'the All-England Championship is not out of his reach if he can find time to take up the game.' Success encouraged greater attention to the game and throughout the winter of 1903-4 he was at the forefront of efforts to improve practice facilities at Cambridge. In February 1904, for example, he persuaded the Cambridge Municipal Council to allow the university club to use the Corn Exchange Building for indoor tennis. Such enterprise earned him the secretaryship of the club and, subsequently, the presidency and marked a shift in his sporting commitments from cricket to tennis. In June he competed for the first time in the All-England Tennis Championship at Wimbledon and in September became the youngest player ever to win the Scottish Tennis Championship. By the end of 1904 he had emerged as a national tennis figure and the much respected *C.B.Fry's Magazine* predicted that at 'his present rate of improvement the highest honours among tennis players should be his shortly.'

The problem of balancing sporting and academic

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130 Newspaper clipping (no date or title) enclosed in Anthony Wilding's 'Life Events Diary', vol.2, after the entry for 1 September 1903.

131 Newspaper clipping (no date or title given) enclosed in Anthony Wilding's 'Life Events Diary', vol.2, after the entry for 31 October 1903.

132 *C.B.Fry's Magazine*: 'Rising Tennis Player', (no date given), enclosed in Anthony Wilding's 'Life Events Diary', vol.2 after the entry for 30 October 1904.
elements of Cambridge life remained a struggle for the young New Zealander. Anthony frequently acknowledged to his parents his awareness that his Cambridge experience was a privileged one. Unlike his sister Gladys whose experience of 'Home' was more that of an outsider looking in, Anthony slipped easily into English middle class society. He was conscious of his New Zealand identity but rarely made an issue of it. The word 'Colonial' was, in his view, merely a 'name for an "Englishman" living outside the United Kingdom.' He nonetheless maintained a degree of solidarity with antipodeans at Cambridge. In February 1905, for example, he helped launch the Australasian Club and served on its inaugural committee. Yet he plainly avoided making his New Zealand birth a matter of display and was critical of those who did. He explained to his mother that his friend and sometimes tennis companion, F.M.B Fisher, the M.P. for Wellington Central and prominent member of the radical ginger group, the New Liberals, needed to contain his national pride:

He harks on N.Z. I'm a N[ew] Zealander, a most praiseworthy theme, but when he comes to have dealings with other nations or even brother colonies he will have to occasionally eat humble pie & assent & not dictate terms...I am convinced that a man can never attain to the greatest political success in any

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colony without a certain amount of knowledge of Englishmen & English methods of Government.  

These were more moderately expressed sentiments than those penned, at much the same time, by his sister, Gladys, and they reflected a man at ease with his surroundings.

Frederick and Julia would have understood and valued their son's views on national identity and the fundamental Britishness of Antipodean society. His pronouncements on women and their right to university education might have provoked more spirited debate at 'Fownhope.' The male culture of Cambridge clearly appealed to Anthony and he was forthright in his defence of the preservation of Cambridge and Oxford as traditional male universities. He poured out his convictions to his mother in colourful terms:

Trixie [Marshall] is an Oxford girl, don't you know & quite gets on my nerves at times. Gladys can get a degree & all that sort of thing & be a girl without saying what a fine lot the female students of Canterbury College are. Miss Trixy tries to use varsity language & talk "exactly" as if she had been a man up there. Talks about brekkers, coffees, freshers, blues etc etc & wears an Oxford blue hat band... You would think the St.Hildas, Lady Margaret Halls etc etc were "Oxford" & the Colleges Christchurch etc sort of afterthoughts. If she knew how little notice we take of Girton & Newnham...she would be rather surprised. It is really rather a condescension on the part of the University to allow the existence of these Colleges. Why should a pack of uninteresting (noble exceptions of course) females on practically nothing be allowed to come 'up', & enjoy the privileges of all our advantages in the shape of lectures etc when we have to pay about £300 per annum & value our degree as much on the social advantage it has given us as on the knowledge acquired. Don't for a minute misunderstand me. If Oxford & Cambridge were

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the only places in the world that gave degrees to women, then by all means let them all come. But when there are literally hundreds of other universities giving equally good degrees...why, I want to know, can't they keep away from just Oxford & Cambridge & let us maintain our old & historical distinction of being "the" two universities of the world for men...That girls ought to have occupations & get degrees there is no doubt whatever & I thoroughly believe in it but I don’t like them treading on our grass which we buy so dearly & enjoy so much.\textsuperscript{136}

We do not learn how Gladys or Julia responded but there was enough here to arouse suspicions that Anthony had, indeed, become a 'Trinity man.'

The place of religious observance at Cambridge was another of Anthony’s concerns but one his parents would have shared. 'I am afraid', he confided to his mother, 'I follow in Father’s footsteps & would if asked describe myself as a "Hopeful Agnostic".'\textsuperscript{137} He did his utmost to avoid Chapel: 'If you go about it in an intellectual way it is wonderful how you can get off them without trouble.'\textsuperscript{138} Even so, the Dean warned that he had 'the worst record of any 1st or 2nd y[ea]r man in Trinity.'\textsuperscript{139}

\textsuperscript{136} Letter to Julia Wilding from Anthony Wilding, 26 December 1903, Ross on Wye, England, WFP, Box 22, Folder 100, Item 57.


\textsuperscript{138} Letter to Julia Wilding from Anthony Wilding, 10 November 1903, Cambridge, England, WFP, Box 22, Folder 100, Item 52.

\textsuperscript{139} Letter to Julia Wilding from Anthony Wilding, 22 February 1904, Cambridge, England, WFP, Box 22, Folder 101, Item 63.
Anthony thought it 'a very honourable distinction' and asked his father to write to his tutor indicating that he did not 'desire me to go to chapels unless I wanted to.' When he did attend, he assured his parents, it would be 'from an elocutionary point of view.' 'I am an agnostic', he reiterated.

The most difficult element in Anthony's relationship with his parents remained, as always, the question of his academic progress. Frederick's initial scepticism about sending his son to Cambridge had been based on fears that Anthony might succumb to social temptations. It was better, he believed, for him to complete his degree in New Zealand and spend time in Britain afterwards. Once their son was ensconced at Cambridge, Frederick and Julia had called upon friends and relations in Britain to keep them informed of his activities. There were also periodic reports from Anthony's tutor. In the main, however, they were dependent upon what Anthony chose to tell them. His expectations had always been realistic ones: 'I hope sincerely to get some degree with Honours, & I will think myself quite good if I get a 3rd or 2nd. To get a 1st you

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140 Ibid.


143 Cora Wilding's notes on radio talk about Anthony Wilding given by Frank Wilding, no date, WFP: 'Information and radio interviews with Frank and Cora Wilding about Anthony Wilding', Box 31, Folder 148, Item 696.
have to chuck up practically everything & grind.’

His success, at second attempt, in the ‘Little Go’ examination had been encouraging and throughout his first year he continued to devote four or five hours a day to his academic work. Both parents were, Julia wrote, ‘very proud’ of ‘& satisfied’ with his efforts to sustain this regime.

The first signs of trouble appeared in May 1903 when Anthony failed to pass his law examinations. He was thus required to proceed with the ‘general and law special’ rather than the Law tripos. Anthony was, he explained to his mother, ‘really frightfully sorry for you both.’ He conceded that he had ‘been very silly foolish etc not to have worked very hard to get through.’ In mitigation he offered the handicap of having to devote much of the first term to passing the ‘Little Go’ and the fact that ‘Athletics wasted very many whole days work.’ It was possible also, he argued, to assess the year in a ‘different way’; he was in ‘perfect health’, had experienced a ‘splendid life’, been ‘improved a lot’ by it and had not ‘learnt any vices smoking etc’. Conscious of the cost to his parents, he ended his analysis with the claim that he had, during the course of the year, ‘learnt the value of money & have found out what a very long way a

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little will go.'

Julia was neither unduly concerned nor surprised with the outcome. Doing 'so well at cricket and tennis', she and Frederick conceded, had 'prevent[ed] Anthony working as hard as he otherwise would have done, & we shall be quite satisfied if he takes his degree.' Indeed, Julia now measured her son's achievements at Cambridge in wider terms than the purely academic. Her conception of the all-round man put great store upon learning but did not regard the book variety as its only manifestation. To pursue learning at the expense of all else was to limit one's experience of life. She, nonetheless, sought confirmation of her judgement from her Hereford-based brother, Edwyn. He responded with a reassuring and perceptive assessment:

    I think you are wise not to urge too much about books. 'Tony' has plenty of intelligence - all men with unusual energy and a strong will must almost of necessity have - and he will probably settle down into an excellent lawyer. But he is not what you would call a "bookish" man. Therefore I should not urge him further in that direction than to let him know that you wish him to keep abreast with his examinations, that is to say, that at every stage of his course he should be about where the majority of men are, who do not seek particular distinction but who take their degrees about the usual time.

If Julia harboured any doubts about her insistence on

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146 Letter to Julia Wilding from Anthony Wilding, Cambridge, England, 7 December 1903, WFP, Box 22, Folder 100, Item 55.


sending Anthony to Cambridge, her brother’s letter allayed them. It made her ‘tremendously happy, though I knew before that Anthony is the best boy in the world.’

Anthony’s subsequent academic successes bore out Julia’s best hopes. In April 1905, he passed both parts of his Bar examinations and, at the end of May, successfully completed his final B.A. examination. No one appreciated the discipline and effort more than Julia. Neither she nor Frederick had expected Anthony to pass his final B.A. examination so soon after the Bar examination. Here was unquestionable evidence that he had achieved that balance between intellectual and physical pursuits which both of them thought so desirable. It was a point well taken by his Trinity College tutor, who acknowledged, in a letter to Frederick, that he had initially worried lest Anthony’s ‘passion for athletics might prove incompatible with his other duties.’ Anthony had, he conceded, plainly demonstrated what a ‘useful, vigorous man’ he had become.

Anthony’s Cambridge days were over but there remained two final law exams for the Inner Temple to negotiate. He took rooms in Crown Office Row, London, and employed a coach to help him prepare. It was a difficult time. By now

149 Anthony Wilding’s ‘Life Events Diary’, vol.2, 10 September 1904.

150 Ibid., 16 June 1905.

Gladys was in England and, as her health deteriorated, Anthony became more and more absorbed in caring for her. The two had been especially close and Anthony was to find the trauma of dealing with her death debilitating. His steadfastness in the face of tragedy was much remarked. Julia, still grieving deeply after the loss of Gladys, wrote movingly: 'We are awfully pleased, & proud of our darling boy, for he has had so much to contend with these past three months.' It was clearly a time for decisions to be made. There was a long standing expectation that Anthony would return to New Zealand and join Frederick in his law practice. There had also been talk of his pursuing a political career. All speculation ended, however, when Anthony announced: 'I am now going to see what I can do in the tennis line.'

IV

Between 1905 and 1914 Anthony Wilding became the first 'matinee idol' the tennis world had ever known. In Britain, continental Europe, the U.S.A, South Africa and throughout Australia and New Zealand his name became synonymous with tennis. Wimbledon singles champion in four successive years (1910-1913), his meteoric rise was

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152 Anthony Wilding's 'Life Events Diary', vol.2, 16 June 1905.

(Wilding Collection, C.M: Ref.15190)
universally celebrated. He was, proclaimed by the London Times, 'one of the greatest players ever known.'\textsuperscript{154} The British tennis world claimed him as their own. A colonial by birth, it was at Cambridge that he honed his skills.\textsuperscript{155} His hard work and application were 'the stuff Empire builders are made of.'\textsuperscript{156} His role as a member of the victorious Australasian Davis Cup sides which wrested the game's pre-eminent trophy from Britain and the U.S.A. made him arguably New Zealand's first national sporting hero. He came to be seen as the embodiment of an emerging national sporting stereotype: physically strong and determined, the product of assiduous training and pure living, modest in victory, stoical in defeat, a gentleman at play. These were phrases which were synonymous with the catalogue of attributes which made up Julia's 'noble gentleman' and they fitted comfortably alongside the values Frederick associated with sport and games.

Tennis critics were agreed that Anthony's success rested upon a unique combination of intellectual and

\textsuperscript{154} Newspaper clipping: London Times, 20 October 1913, enclosed in Anthony Wilding's 'Life Events Diary', vol.2, after the entry for 13 September 1913.

\textsuperscript{155} Newspaper clipping: 'Lawn Tennis Champion 1913', (no date or name of newspaper given), enclosed in Anthony Wilding's 'Life Events Diary', vol.2, after the entry for 13 September 1913.

Anthony Wilding (left) with Norman Brookes: Australasia’s representatives in the Davis Cup contests of 1905, 1907, 1908, 1909 and 1914. Brookes wrested the All-England Championship title from Wilding in 1914. (Wilding Collection, C.M: Ref.15210)
physical discipline. In 1907 after his fourth unsuccessful attempt to win at Wimbledon, he anticipated such judgements in a letter to his mother:

I am improving my game splendidly; by next year if I stick at it I think I will be better than any of them. I feel myself gradually making certain of strokes which for years I have thought out but never could use consistently. Another improvement is in my head work and adaptability ie I am no longer hopeless on a wet court.\textsuperscript{157}

Conversely, in 1914 after his fourth Wimbledon victory \textit{C.B.Fry’s Magazine} might have been paraphrasing Julia when it explained his lawn tennis ‘genius’ thus:

He never tired of practice; he never tired of learning something from someone else. His object was to discover all that there was to be learnt about lawn tennis, and with this object in view he never spent his time avoiding labour, because he discovered that true happiness resulted from labour - the labour that means final perfection - itself.\textsuperscript{158}

Defeat on the tennis court, as in life itself, should never be the result of poor preparation.

The lessons of ‘Pownhope’ lay behind the triumphs on the centre court. There were times when the ingrained habits from childhood were not universally shared. His preoccupation with fresh air surprised hosts who watched as the young colonial slept on verandahs in preference to bedrooms and provoked arguments with fellow train passengers who preferred train windows to be closed rather

\textsuperscript{157} Letter to Julia Wilding from Anthony Wilding, 21 June 1907, Surbiton, England, WFP, Box 25, Folder 114, Item 189.

\textsuperscript{158} W.Burton Baldry, ‘Anthony Wilding: The Lawn Tennis Player and the Man.’
than open.\footnote{Myers, p.74; Newspaper clipping:‘New Stars in the Firmament’ enclosed in Anthony Wilding’s ‘Life Events Diary’, vol.2, after the entry for 2 January 1906.} But the preoccupation with physical fitness continued undaunted. The unfit body had simply become anathema to him. His training was rigorous and combined the disciplined repetitions of the tennis court with running, skipping, work on the punch ball and gym sessions. Commentators were quick to note that the physical strength so gained brought returns on the court against men who were, in playing skills, very much his equal.\footnote{180 For examples see newspaper clippings:‘The Victorian Tournament: Singles Championship Won by Wilding, Melbourne, 23 November 1908’, ‘Wilding v Brookes’, enclosed in Anthony Wilding’s ‘Life Events Diary’, vol.2, after the entries for 22 November 1908 and 18 November 1909; ‘Wilding beats American Maurice McLoughlin, 4 July 1913’, WFP: ‘Press cuttings’, Box 33, Item 815.} In the tennis world of the times this was revolutionary stuff and it is a measure of Wilding’s dominance of the tennis world that his methods set the benchmark for the champions of the post-war years.

The rise to prominence in the world of tennis altered the nature of the relationship between Anthony and his parents. At the financial level tennis gave him greater independence than he had known. Precarious at first, earnings from tennis and associated activities grew with his reputation. There were small amounts of prize money available (commonly £20 to £40) and later payments for articles contributed to a variety of sporting magazines. To this he was able to add earnings from tutoring and royalties from the sale of tennis racquets designed by him.
Anthony Wilding with his pupils - Bela and Antal Lipthay, Lovrin, Southern Hungary. December 1907. (Wilding Collection, C.M: Ref.12439)
and bearing his name. But it was not until 1911 when he was employed by the British wood pulp firm, Henderson, Craig & Company Ltd, at an annual salary of £250, that his earnings were either reliable or substantial.\textsuperscript{161} His tennis fame undoubtedly lay behind an appointment in 1913 as Continental Director of the Victor Tyre Company which also carried a £250 annual fee.\textsuperscript{162}

It was a lifestyle which for all the inherent discipline of training occasioned a degree of parental concern. Nowhere was this more manifest than in Julia and Frederick’s response to his tutoring engagement in Europe. Tennis had made Anthony a desirable house-guest for the ‘fashionable set’. He spent weekends in stately homes shooting, riding, playing tennis and socialising with the guests. Here he came into direct contact with the British and European elites. In 1907 he spent some six months as a tutor to the children of Baron and Baroness Lipthay in Lovrin, Hungary. Julia and Frederick were doubtful about the value of such arrangements.\textsuperscript{163} There were concerns, also, about his passion for the motor cycle. As his biographer has observed, ‘a continuous ride of five

\textsuperscript{161} Letter to Julia Wilding from Anthony Wilding, 7 August 1911, Dorchester, England, WFP, Box 27, Folder 124, Item 283.

\textsuperscript{162} Letter to Frederick Wilding from Anthony Wilding, 12 December 1913, London, WFP, Box 28, Folder 126, Item 310.

\textsuperscript{163} Letter to Julia and Frederick Wilding from Anthony Wilding, 5 December 1907, 14 December 1907, WFP, Box 25, Folder 116, Items 209, 210.
Anthony Wilding, the intrepid motorcyclist, before leaving Yorkshire for Wiesbaden, Germany, May 1908. (Wilding Collection, C.M: Ref.15211)
hundred miles' was a commonplace for Anthony. And between 1905 and 1914 he came to know the roads of Europe 'better than most mapmakers.'

The vision of a life frittered away in this manner sat uneasily with his parents' conception of useful labour. They were concerns, however, which passed, quickly enough, as the tennis victories accumulated.

Indeed, Anthony's tennis achievements came to be seen by Julia as embodying in a very public way the virtues of the noble gentleman she had sought to instil. Just as she had done when Anthony was a youngster at 'Fownhope', she kept a record of every tournament, noted all scores and prizes won and saved every newspaper clipping she could. Her celebration of Anthony's victories, at least within the confines of her diaries, knew few bounds: 'Hurrah, hurrah - dear old Tony has been victorious, and I am the proud and happy mother of the All England Champion for 1910.'

With each successive Wimbledon victory her excitement grew:

Hurrah, hurrah our darling boy is Champion of the World again, & for the fourth time. Champion of the Hard Courts too, it is too lovely. I am almost prouder than I have ever been before, for McLoughlin's in tremendous form, & has beaten everyone else at Wimbledon easily. And Tony beats him three sets straight!!!

In part, as she privately acknowledged, Julia's almost

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164 Myers, p.110.

165 Anthony Wilding's 'Life Events Diary', vol.2, 1 July 1910.

166 Ibid., 5 July 1913.
The trophies of a champion. Some of Anthony's many prizes displayed at 'Fownhope.'
(Wilding Collection, C.M: Ref.15212)
obsessive immersion in Anthony’s tennis career was a way of coping with the death of Gladys: ‘I am altogether too proud & pleased for words, and a great delight like this is better than any tonic.’

On occasion her desire for success clearly outran that of Anthony. Her quest for victory seems to have been at its strongest in Davis Cup ties where Australasians confronted the USA. In 1907 when Anthony lost a singles match in a first round game against the American, Beals Wright, and then, in combination with Norman Brookes, dropped the doubles, Julia made her disappointment a little too obvious. And subsequently after Anthony had lost to A.W.Gore in the challenge round against Britain, won by the Australasians, her expression of disappointment provoked a sharp rebuke from her son:

Surely the object was to win the Cup for Australasia & not to win glory for myself. I think you took quite the wrong view. I played as well as I could & you know very well if I had not won any singles you could not have captured the Cup. The doubles were certainly not all my fault. As to saying we thought you could easily beat the Americans it’s always dangerous to criticise one’s opponents especially when 13,000 miles away... You should not take these reverses to heart.

Despite the censure, Julia was persistently to underestimate the Americans, much to Anthony’s annoyance. The lesson in sporting ethics implicit in Anthony’s rebuke would not have been lost on either Frederick or

167 Ibid., 11 December 1908.

168 Letter to Julia Wilding from Anthony Wilding, 8 September 1907, Baden Baden, WFP, Box 25, Folder 115, Item 200.
Julia. Victory was to make the role of proud yet modest mother easier to play and Julia quickly resumed it although she remained always a confident supporter. When news arrived of the occasional reversal she was unbelieving and ‘sure that when the details come, we shall find that Anthony had some hard luck against him, was not so well or something.’\(^{169}\) While she became more circumspect in her comments to Anthony, Julia admitted to ‘really feeling very sanguine about his winning all along the line this year, but do not like to say too much or seem too sanguine beforehand.’\(^{170}\) And, for his part, Anthony understood only too well that his mother’s desire for success had intensified with the trauma of Gladys’ death in 1905. He frequently acknowledged the role she and Frederick played in his tennis career. In *On the Court and Off*, published in 1912, he wrote of his first victory at Wimbledon in 1910:

> My chief delight was in knowing the joy it would give my father & mother in New Zealand. Such a result had always been their ambition. I fondly believe that if I had been elected Prime Minister of England it would not have given them more pleasure.\(^{171}\)

Tennis was clearly an acceptable way of realising and demonstrating values which Julia held dear. Pre-eminent amongst them was the notion of chivalrous athleticism - a harmonising of gentlemanly behaviour with physical and

\(^{169}\) Anthony Wilding’s ‘Life Events Diary’, vol.2, 4 July 1908.

\(^{170}\) Ibid., 22 June 1910.

The athletic Wilding in action at Wimbledon, June 1910. (Wilding Collection, C.M: Ref.6243)
intellectual endeavour. And, in the judgement of his contemporaries, Anthony was universally regarded as a noble sportsman, modest in victory, gallant and generous in defeat. To the Johannesburg Star, he was ‘a prince among tennis players’ and ‘as keen as a schoolboy to win’, but ‘as chivalrous as a knight when he has won.’

South African tennis officials were just as lavish in their praises of the ‘immensely popular’ New Zealander. They were, the president of the South African Lawn Tennis Association wrote:

not a bit sorry that he has annexed our championship. On the contrary we are pleased that so distinguished a player & so thorough a sportsman and gentleman has won...No more popular sportsman has visited us, & a warm welcome awaits him whenever he pays us another visit.

Chivalry when merged with ‘handsome and robust’ features helped make Wilding, what Alan Trengove has called, ‘the game’s first matinee idol.’ He cut a debonair figure in his ‘immaculate flannels and sweater trimmed with the blue of his Cambridge University’

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175 Newspaper clipping: ‘The Davis Cup Sydney 1909’ (newspaper’s name and date not given), WFP: ‘Press Cuttings’, Box 33, Item 816.
Anthony Wilding: 'the game’s first matinee idol.'
c.1910. (Wilding Collection, C.M: Ref.12437)
women spectators flocked to watch him. At the Wimbledon Championships of 1913, the crush to see Wilding became so great that swooning women 'had to be laid out on the court by the roller until they could be removed.'\textsuperscript{176} Norman Brookes, who brought Anthony's Wimbledon reign to an end in 1914, later acknowledged that his triumph over the New Zealander was not well received in some quarters: 'Quite a few of his lady friends who were watching with my wife were in tears at the end of the match, much to her dismay.'\textsuperscript{177} A gregarious extrovert by temperament, Wilding found such attention annoying and complained frequently to Julia about the empty-headed behaviour of women spectators. Popularity clearly came at a price. If his mother had any views on such matters she kept them to herself.

By 1914 it was clear that the tennis years were drawing to an end. The need to establish a career was becoming increasingly more pressing. In 1907, after a six-week visit to Fownhope, Anthony had returned to Britain determined to prepare himself for the qualifying examinations which would enable him to practice law in New Zealand. Two years later he returned to Christchurch and successfully passed the examination. And, at least until 1911, it was generally expected that he would ultimately return to the city and join Frederick's law practice.

\textsuperscript{176} Trengove, p.55.

\textsuperscript{177} Typescript of Norman E. Brookes’ talk on Anthony Wilding, WFP: 'Letters about Anthony Wilding 1918-1936', Box 29, Folder 136, Item 530.
Father and son playing in the New Zealand Open Doubles Tennis Championships, Dunedin 1909, which they eventually won. (Wilding Collection, C.M: Ref.15193)
Thereafter, however, the attractions of the tennis circuit, especially the lure of Wimbledon, together with his unabashed enjoyment of the social life available, drew him to look for opportunities in the British and European business world. Life after tennis seemed, more and more, to be taking an Old World hue. There was periodic talk, it is true, of a political career in New Zealand. His natural home in the Liberal Party would, however, have looked less and less appealing as that party’s dominance crumbled before the assaults of Reform and Labour. Moreover there were attachments developing which prompted his friend and biographer, A. Wallis Myers, to suggest that marriage prospects played a significant part in the decisions which were being made.\textsuperscript{178} Before any resolution could be found the world was plunged into the disaster that was World War One.

V

When war broke out Anthony was in New York playing a Davis Cup Challenge against the U.S.A. After helping to win the cup for Australasia he immediately returned to England and volunteered. Taking the advice of Winston Churchill, whom he had met at society tennis weekends, he sought to be placed in the Royal Marines where he hoped to find a posting in a projected armoured car division. Announcing his decision to enlist to his mother he

\textsuperscript{178} Myers, p.200.
insisted that 'soldiering doesn’t appeal to me very strongly' and that 'it would take a braver man to stand down than become a soldier.' As he went on to explain, 'it would have been comfortable & easy to have stayed in America but I fortunately never considered that course.'¹⁷⁹ Julia was unsurprised: 'We were sure that he would volunteer.'¹⁸⁰ It was a 'cruelly anxious time'¹⁸¹ but she was 'positive' Anthony would prove 'brave & capable.'¹⁸²

Stationed initially in France with the Royal Marines, he was subsequently transferred to the Headquarters Intelligence Corps stationed in Dunkirk. His knowledge of Europe’s network of roads, gained on his motorcycle sojourns on the continent, made him especially useful operating armoured vehicles in reconnaissance work close to the German border. His elevation to the rank of Lieutenant, in October 1914, prompted Julia to write:

Never have I felt so proud and delighted. It is of course a cruelly anxious time now, but I feel frightfully proud of our darling, & he is doing what I love him to do, fighting for his country & liberty & Right.¹⁸³

At the end of October he was assigned to the armoured cars auxiliary division of the Royal Naval Air Service. Six


¹⁸⁰ Anthony Wilding’s ‘Life Events Diary’, vol.2, 6 October 1914.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 26 October 1914.

¹⁸² Ibid., 6 October 1914.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 26 October 1914.
HMS Aniche: one of the armoured cars Anthony drove on reconnaissance missions near the German front at Dunkirk, W.W.I, October 1914. (Wilding Collection, C.M: Ref. 15189)
months later he was given a command of his own and moved closer to the firing line. On 2 May 1915 he was promoted to the rank of captain. A week later, after destroying an enemy machine gun post which threatened a projected advance, he was forced to take shelter in a dug out. He died moments later after a shell exploded on the roof.¹⁸⁴ The Wilding family took what solace they could from the notion that a noble son had met his death in a noble cause.

¹⁸⁴ Anthony Wilding was killed on 9 May 1915 near Neuve-Chapelle, France.
Death in a noble cause. Anthony Wilding's final resting place: Rue-des-Berceaux military cemetery, France. Flowers mark his grave. (Wilding Collection, C.M: Ref.15203)
EPilogue

The death of Anthony in Europe, in 1915, marks a critical juncture in the history of the Wilding family. It is a point from which we can take stock of the attempt of Julia and Frederick to provide in the New World a nurturing environment for their children. With the earlier deaths of Gladys in 1905 and of the infant Frederick in 1889, it was the third loss endured at 'Fownhope.' Now in their sixties, the parents faced, like so many of their generation, a world gone awry. The optimism that had imbued their departure from Hereford and the subsequent years of family building was now sorely tested. The sense of personal loss mixed with the wider sense of social loss which enveloped the nation as the lists of casualties lengthened. The war and the crisis of confidence which went with it left few who lived through it unscarred.

Julia, as her daughter Cora was to write, was never 'quite the same' again. The depth of her personal hurt is poignantly captured in a note discovered amongst her music, shortly after her death, in 1936:

All my music which I have played myself so often, and loved so much, I should like someone to have who is genuinely musical. None of my people realise how deep my love of music is, or how much it has meant to me during my life in all its aspects, - the happiest, and the saddest. Some of Grieg's and other pieces which Gladys used to play, are to me now, ever since her death, part of her, and it gives me a deep though sad joy to play them over. Then there are many pieces and gramophone records which Tony used to love, or which are to me part of him, and again a joy to play or hear.

All fine music is uplifting. Love of humanity,

\[1\] Cora Wilding, 'Julia Wilding: Notes on her Life', WFP.
striving after better things, high ideals of life, to me are all embodied or expressed in Beethoven’s Symphonies, Mendelssohn’s concerted music etc etc. Yes, music is a joy - sacred, ennobling, soothing, stimulating, and it means more to me than anything in the world, except Love, in its widest sense.¹

Music had undoubtedly been a central part of Julia’s life at ‘Fownhope’ and it was to become more so.

In the aftermath of Anthony’s death, public and private worlds converged in ways that made the loss in some ways more bearable and, in others, more traumatic. In life, as we have seen, Anthony, as tennis player, had been acclaimed throughout the sporting world. In death he was appropriated by the nation. Leader writers strove to present him as the ideal New Zealander. The Lyttelton Times suggested

if some ethnologist, plotting out the characteristics of the race of New Zealanders had searched for a type he could not have found one more truly representative of the best qualities of the young colonial than Anthony Wilding. Captain Wilding was an exceptional athlete, but still a representative one. He had the physique, the love of the open air, the passion for the healthy, trained body that one looks for in the typical New Zealander. Mentally he had the resourcefulness of the race. Whatever he did, he faced his task earnestly. His victories he accepted modestly, his defeats honestly...[and] the manner of his death was the manner that every true young New Zealander would desire.³

In a similar vein, the Press declared Wilding to be ‘the

¹ Typed copy of a note by Julia Wilding about her music, dated January 1924, WFP: ‘Correspondence And Miscellaneous Notes Concerning Music 1896-1935’, Box 12, Folder 61, Item 142.

beau ideal of what every young New Zealander ought to be.’
His fitness, tenacity and temperament were singled out for
special praise. Above all else, however, he came to be
presented to a community, wracked as it was by the news of
Gallipoli, as a stoical battler who had ‘not [been] cast
down by temporary defeat.’ Thus, by his death, Anthony
Wilding became not simply the hero of the centre court but
a national hero in a nobler cause. As one mourner put it,
in a private letter of condolence, ‘instead of worshipping
him as one of our greatest athletes, I worship him as one
of our noblest heroes.’ And few at the time failed to
note the contrast with his Australian rival, Norman
Brookes, who had wrested the Wimbledon title from the New
Zealander in 1914. As Virginia O’Farrell notes, Brookes’
attitude to the war was ‘relatively selfish’, displayed ‘a
mixture of cunning and self-concern’ and ensured that he
survived ‘with his world intact.’ By comparison, Wilding
‘represented tennis as the heroic’ - a site ‘where sport
was a game played as practice for life.’

Public and private accolades did something to soothe

4 Newspaper clipping from The Press: ‘Anthony Wilding’,
WFP: 'Press Cuttings’, Box 33, Item 816.

5 Ibid.

6 Letter to Frederick Wilding from J.T. Laurenson, 12
May 1915, Selwyn College, Dunedin, WFP: 'Death of Anthony
Wilding - Letters of Sympathy 11-12 May 1915', Box 28,
Folder 128, Item 336.

7 O’Farrell, p.146.

8 Ibid.
the sense of loss. Duty bravely borne was a concept Julia both knew and accepted, but in war the price was impossibly high. She watched as her two remaining sons enlisted. Frank, now 29, and a qualified lawyer in partnership with his father, had enlisted soon after the war broke out, and scarcely a month after Anthony's death, was on his way to Gallipoli and France. Edwyn, the youngest of the Wilding children - just sixteen when the war broke out - joined up as soon as he was of age and, in 1917, was serving in the Air Force in Egypt. Despite the obvious emotional and physical strain, Julia, encouraged and assisted by Cora, involved herself in the voluntary war effort. In January 1915 she had been elected vice president of the Opawa Branch of the Red Cross and she threw herself into its efforts, making clothes for servicemen and for displaced children in Europe. Here her meticulousness as a recorder was put to good use; she maintained detailed inventories of articles made and despatched. There were weekly sewing bees at 'Fownhope.'

In short, Julia assumed the role of leadership and patronage that the war offered and, in a sense, demanded of women of her social position.

It was here too that Cora, in her mid twenties, became integrated into the war effort. To some extent, she had lived in the shadow of her elder sister, Gladys, but

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9 Cora Wilding, 'Julia Wilding: Notes on her Life.'

10 WFP: 'War Work: St Martin's Sewing Bee/ Opawa Branch of the Red Cross', Box 12, Folder 62, Items 148-161.
had gradually found her niche in the world of art. After studying painting at Canterbury College’s School of Art, she had travelled to Europe in 1911 to further her training. When war broke out she was back at ‘Fownhope’ where a studio had been built for her. As a daughter still financially dependent upon her parents, Cora’s initial engagement in voluntary work took place alongside her mother. Increasingly, however, she carved out a role for herself. She worked several days a week for the Red Cross as well as knitting and sewing clothing for soldiers and refugee children and taking part in a host of fund-raising programmes. She also held first aid classes for girls. By September 1916 she had qualified as a nursing sister and worked for the St John’s Ambulance Brigade. The following year she began training in physiotherapy in Dunedin. Qualifying in October 1918, she found work in the orthopaedic department of Christchurch Hospital. From there, on Sundays, she was to bring wounded soldiers home to ‘Fownhope’ for tennis afternoons.¹¹ The war clearly changed her life. Julia had noted the commitment which infused her efforts: ‘she is a very good girlie, but of course it is only her duty, everyone ought to do their very utmost in these times.’¹²

The war years were no less traumatic for Frederick. In public, at least, his faith in the righteousness of the cause appeared unshaken. Little more than a month after

¹¹ ‘Life Events Diary’ of Cora Wilding, 1907-1918.

Anthony's death he reminded a meeting called to discuss the future of Lancaster Park, a cause in which he had invested much time and energy over more than forty years, of the seriousness of their deliberations. In her hour of need England had, he said, appealed to her sportsmen and, while no one yet knew the outcome, an answer was:

coming ringing across the seas from the Plains of Flanders, and the bloodstained hills of Gallipoli, and it is fitting that at this juncture we, in condemning the fate of a great playground, should remember with pride that among the leaders against fearful odds which have evoked the astonishment and admiration of the whole world were Canterbury boys, whose magnificent physique and fiery courage had been in part at least fostered upon Lancaster Park.  

These were sentiments widely shared in the sporting community. Here, their status was enhanced by the speaker's credentials as both sportsman and as father of a sporting son who had so recently lost his life at the front. And increasingly thereafter Frederick came to assume the role of a founding father - someone to whom the emerging generation of sportsmen turned for historical validation of their past.

If the war confirmed Frederick's place in Christchurch sporting circles in terms that recognised past achievements and endorsed prevailing attitudes, it also ushered in some significant changes in attitude at 'Fownhope.' Nowhere was this clearer than on the drink question. Previously the Wildings had rejected the argument for prohibition as being inconsistent with the

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preservation of personal liberty. In Frederick’s words, the more fanatical temperance exponents were engaged in a form of ‘bullying.’ The temperance connections of the early feminist movement had also created concern for Julia. If the couple had any sympathy for the anti-drink position it was grounded in their desire to live a pure and healthy life. The war, however, raised for them questions about the compatibility of alcoholic consumption with personal and, therefore, national efficiency. It was this thinking which prompted Frederick to throw his public support behind a growing demand that hotels be closed at six each evening and to proclaim publicly his intention to banish drink from ‘Fownhope’ for the duration of the war. It was but a short step to support the prohibition cause. In 1919, during the referendum which accompanied the general election, he campaigned on the anti-drink platform. The greater cause of war had clearly elevated purity and efficiency above issues of personal liberty.\footnote{Newspaper clippings: Letter to the editor from Frederick Wilding - ‘To Athletes and Sportsmen’, October 1901, WFP: ‘Press cuttings’, Box 42, Item 1.}

More than anything else, the war demonstrated that if the Wildings are correctly identified as belonging to the city’s elite they were an active rather than a leisured

part of it. In this sense family 'involvement' reflected the efforts of Julia and Frederick to instil notions of usefulness and active participation in community affairs. Public recognition of the family's position in city life came initially from the Opawa/St Martin's community which knew them best. In 1917 the Anderson family, whose son Frederick was killed in action at Messines, constructed a memorial seat on Witch Hill on the city's Summit Road. It commemorated the lives of their son, his special friend, Anthony Wilding, and those of Noel Burnett, Henry Bowron and Edward Bachelor, three young men 'whose homes were at the foot of the Hills at St Martins.'

Perched as it is above the Rapaki track on which, as youngsters, Anthony and Frederick had shared many an adventure, the chair looks out across the city to the north. Constructed from stone quarried from the very hill slopes the boys had scrambled around, it stands four square on a rocky outcrop, a sturdy and robust testimony to the energy and vitality of youth and to the industry and steadfastness of their families and the community they had made for themselves. The tennis fraternity was also quick to acknowledge both the loss of a sporting champion and Frederick and Julia's contribution to the game in the city and nationally. In 1926 they named their new sporting complex Wilding Park and its gates were formally opened on

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The memorial seat on Witch Hill overlooking the Rapaki track commemorating the lives of Frederick Anderson, his close friend Anthony Wilding, Noel Burnett, Henry Bowron and Edward Bachelor who were killed in World War One. The seat was completed in 1917.
16 December 1927.¹⁷ These were the visible signs which have given the Wilding family a continuing presence in the collective memory of the city.

I

Thus in a number of ways, the war and Anthony’s death provide a point at which we can review the journey from Hereford to ‘Fownhope.’ Above all else it clarifies the family’s position in the city. The Wildings had arrived in the colony as an educated, professional couple who were leaving behind them a secure place in local society. In many respects they represent a segment of middle-class England which was more optimistic about a future in the settler communities of the Empire than they were of those at ‘Home.’ Their migration was systematic and planned. The newly-weds saw New Zealand not so much as offering greater material wealth, but as providing an environment in which the family might assume a more central place in shaping the future. It was a lofty conception which saw social progress as being rooted in the cultivation of a new generation of educated, gracious and active human beings. It was an objective which called for committed and industrious parents. Above all else, it required an attentive and involved mother.

Julia Wilding was well matched to the task. An educated young woman from one of Hereford’s leading

¹⁷ Cora Wilding, ‘Julia Wilding: Notes on her Life.’
families, she came to New Zealand well-versed in current theories of child development. The latter had come to emphasise both the importance of the early childhood years and to call for a greater involvement of parents in the nurturing of their children. In Julia they had a devoted disciple. Her observations of her children, dutifully recorded in the separate 'Life Events Diaries' maintained for each child, enable us to see in intimate detail the process by which she attempted to mould the future adults her children would become. The picture that emerges is one of a woman totally immersed in the education of her children. It was simply too important a matter to be left to others and especially so during their infant years. Moreover, her conception of education was a broad one which aimed at nothing less than developing cultured and informed human beings capable of exploiting their intellectual and physical potential. Such an agenda required, if it was to have any hope of being realised, a diligent, observant and dedicated mother. Julia Wilding was all of these.

'Fownhope' was clearly not the terrain of a leisured and decorative mistress of the household whose involvement in the day-to-day lives of her children was minimal. In Julia's case motherhood was a career freely chosen and pursued with the same thoroughness as any other. The pages of the 'Life Events Diaries' reveal a woman intellectually engaged in the every-day events of childhood. There we have found her endeavouring to square the theorists'
counsels of perfection with the practical and constraining realities presented by the individual character of her children. And, at the same time, there was a household to run. The income generated by a thriving law practice enabled the employment of several servants and freed Julia to devote more time to what she and Frederick saw as the higher duty of educating the children.

It did not, however, mean that the mistress at 'Fownhope' was able to withdraw from the domestic labour force. Household management absorbed a great deal of her time. It was pursued with as much application and attention to detail as marked her involvement in other spheres of family life. Economy, efficiency and careful recording were the hallmarks of running the Wilding household. Julia Wilding brought to the management of the domestic economy the techniques and attitudes commonly associated with a Victorian business ethos. In this, she was both asserting her usefulness and providing a balance sheet against which her stewardship could be judged. This concern to present a record of activity was ridden through with a desire to stake out a claim to belong to the industrious and active segment of society rather than the idle and leisured elites. Put simply, Julia Wilding saw her activities in the household, no less than elsewhere, as making a contribution to the realisation of 'better things.'

It is in the education of Gladys and Anthony that we can best observe the intensity with which Julia sought to
achieve this end. It is here that we see a mother completely absorbed in developing the potential of her children. We see also a gradual unfolding conception of the ideal male and female of the future. Above all else, the ‘new woman’ of Julia’s liking was educated, cultured, well-versed in the issues of the day and robustly energetic. Such a woman stood ready either to launch herself fully into the world of affairs or to devote her career, as Julia herself had done, to the family. Whatever the choice, there was no room in this for what Julia saw as the frivolous or ostentatious displays of female independence. Smoking, drinking and loud behaviour did nothing to enhance the individual. Rather they obscured the more important issues of women’s involvement in the wider society. Put simply, the ‘new woman’ was to be a useful, active and involved member of the community.

Complementing the ‘new woman’, as we have seen, Julia Wilding envisaged a ‘noble man.’ Her concept of nobility drew heavily upon the prevailing notion of ‘manliness’ with its emphasis upon chivalry, courage, fortitude and steadfastness. Implicit in this ideal was an endorsement of the ‘active’ and engaged individual. Julia’s determination to build the useful family led her to put particular stress upon the latter. Her earlier acceptance of the need for physical activity amongst children was driven primarily by her concern for their health. Frederick’s passion for games and Anthony’s sporting achievements led her to acknowledge that games demanded,
especially at their higher levels, a level of persistence and dedication she normally associated with more intellectual pursuits. In this way they were the more readily accommodated in her pursuit of the useful. Indeed it might be argued that her competitive instincts came to be as engaged by Anthony’s activities on the centre court as they were by Gladys’ academic successes.

Moreover the financial circumstances of the Wilding family extended the duration of Julia’s direct influence in her children’s lives. It was the family coffers which sustained the children in a comfortable lifestyle well into their adult years. Put another way, Gladys and Anthony remained dependent upon their parents for much longer than was normal; Gladys for her entire life and Anthony at least until the end of his Cambridge days. As a consequence, the sense of family pervaded their lives more intimately than might otherwise have been the case. It was a situation which allowed Julia to stand, as it were, alongside her adult children and to continue to act as confidante and encourager. She was able consequently to observe, albeit sometimes indirectly, her adult children’s engagement with the wider world. And, as we have seen, she was frequently a critical influence shaping their lives. It was Julia, for example, who managed Gladys’ way through university when illness struck and she who ensured that Anthony took his degree at Cambridge rather than Canterbury College.

It was in this phase of her relationship with her
children that Julia was able to observe, reflected back as it were, in their comments upon people, places and problems, an endorsement of attitudes dearly held. This is clearly demonstrated in the 'letters home' of Gladys and Anthony. In the considered views of her ailing daughter, Julia could applaud the condemnation of the idle rich, leisured gargoyles and gadflies, dizzy and decorative women and all who wasted their talents. She would have recognised, also, the endorsement of useful toil in Gladys' approving comments upon the solidly industrious middle class and skilled artisans she encountered in England. As a migrant whose decision to leave England was based on an optimistic assessment of colonial life, Julia would also have savoured her daughter's quiet pride in the place of her birth. Gladys' espousal of New Zealand was couched in terms which exhibited the imperial sentiments of her parents and endorsed what she saw as the colony's progressive tendencies. Most of all, Julia would have taken special pleasure from the fulsome and direct way her daughter expressed her views on the role and duty of the mother in the education of a daughter. Here was a daughter ready to embark on the life of her choosing.

Julia's relationship with her peripatetic son Anthony had more time to develop. Anthony was a dutiful correspondent and a fulsome one. Moreover, as his reputation on the tennis court grew and he became public property, she saw her son as others did. She plainly
enjoyed his success and popularity, but more important to her were the terms in which the public appraisal was expressed. There was universal agreement amongst the international sporting fraternity that Anthony was not so much a natural tennis player as one who had, by hard work and discipline, made himself a champion. Here was a young man who had developed his sporting potential to the full and had done so with grace and good humour. These were accolades which sat easily alongside Julia's notion of nobility and she savoured them. That they were bestowed by the British tennis fraternity added to their lustre; they offered Julia and Frederick reassurance that the optimism and idealism which had surrounded the decision to construct a family afresh in a colonial environment had not been misplaced.

II

In her 'striving after better things' Julia Wilding demanded much of herself. Such was the level of her absorption that it is difficult to imagine that her experience was anything other than exceptional. Yet, in a number of ways, her striving offers an insight into a slice of family life rarely available to the historian. There has been a tendency to lump uncritically together the lives of women of what Eldred-Grigg has called the landed gentry\(^1\) and those of the conspicuous urban elites.

\(^{1}\) Eldred-Grigg, *A Southern Gentry*, passim.
Superficially the two groups appeared to have much in common. Each had the wealth to sustain a paid domestic labour force and lived in circumstances which visibly set them apart. Moreover, whatever the accuracy of the characterisation of landed women as 'ladies of leisure', its application to their city counterparts needs considerable caution. There was a distinction to be drawn between what Frederick and Julia Wilding called the idle and the active classes. Wealth was neither the only, nor the most important, determinant of these categories. More significant in defining a family's place within the urban elite was its 'interests.' An active and involved family would quickly find itself drawn into communities of the like-minded. Frequently overlapping in their composition, these groupings provided a distinct and energising component of city life whose family basis provided a context in which an energetic and committed woman might flourish.

Within these fractions of the urban elite, loosely bound together by common interests and sufficient wealth to exploit them, family life could become expansive and absorbing. Indeed, it is tempting to argue that an emergent colonial city like Christchurch, in the latter part of the nineteenth century, provided an ideal setting for such developments. The growing city was small enough and new enough for its social structure to be sufficiently fluid for newcomers to find space. The Wilding family were amongst the more spectacular beneficiaries of this happy
conjunction of opportunity and capacity to exploit it. Using the terminology employed by McAloon in his study of the wealthy in colonial Otago and Canterbury, the Wildings are aptly seen as an upper middle-class urban professional family. Such a categorisation could just as accurately be used to describe their social position in Hereford in the 1870s. In short, migration did not alter significantly either their social rank or their material circumstances. What we witness in their years at ‘Fownhope’ is the accumulation of a level of wealth not uncommon amongst professional people blessed with longevity and aided, to a degree, by family capital. Precisely how wealthy the Wildings became in New Zealand is difficult to determine but their lifestyle was plainly one in which there were few financial constraints. When Frederick died in 1945 he left £29,490: £2500 to his daughter, Cora; £50 each to the married couple who tended his garden; and the remainder to a trust for his grandchildren. Julia, who had predeceased her husband by almost ten years, left no will but died with a declared estate of £3723. Clearly the Wildings left behind them a considerable fortune.

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20 Probate records of Frederick Wilding, Probate register: Christchurch 24606/1945, Christchurch branch of National Archives.

21 Letters of administration regarding Julia Wilding’s estate, Probate Register: Christchurch 18558/1936, Certificate No.1936/915, Christchurch branch of National Archives.
It was, however, not wealth but the breadth of their interests and enthusiasms which placed them close to the hub of an emergent circle of similarly affluent and active city families. It was a circle, moreover, which was rich in talented individuals whose efforts and example provided both inspiration and stimulation. Nowhere was this more obvious than in the education of children. It was here that active and engaged parents were able to draw upon each other in their effort to offer their children more and better learning experiences. To a degree, this involvement in the wider education of their children was one of necessity or at least perceived necessity. The constant searching for appropriate schooling, which characterised Julia’s monitoring of her children’s education, was widely shared.

Within this cluster of urban families Julia Wilding was a woman of substance. Her endeavours stand as a salutary reminder that such a woman could choose to devote her life to the domestic sphere primarily because she saw the family as providing a site where enduring social progress might be initiated. And central to this wider purpose was the advancement of women. Julia Wilding’s marriage and migration to New Zealand had been explicitly predicated on the notion that a lifetime devoted to family and children was the surest way of achieving a progressive society. By her definition, the freedom for women to participate fully in the public sphere lay at the heart of social advancement. Her labours at ‘Fownhope’
thus need to be seen as a riposte to those who would
depict the women of the urban elite as the decorative do-
nothings of the domestic sphere. They serve also as a
reminder that the cause of women could be advanced on a
variety of fronts and not solely or even mainly in the
public arena. Julia’s rationalist beliefs and her espousal
of a career in motherhood placed her outside the
mainstream of the embryonic New Zealand women’s movement,
linked as it was to the churches and the temperance cause
and with its emphasis on the public contribution of women.
Yet it is a part of the intriguing paradox of Julia
Wilding that she makes good her claim - made in Hereford
in the 1870s - that motherhood and commitment to the
family offered a legitimate means of realising the goals
of the women’s movement. In her hands the family became an
important site of social reconstruction.
Julia Wilding in a moment of reflection, 1916. (Myers, p.29.)
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