

by writing about his own wife as though she were an in-law. It was not a particularly happy marriage.

Frank probably received a better medical education in London than he would have received in Sydney at that time, though whether he personally gained from it is more doubtful. His obituaries in medical journals emphasise what a good chap he was and how active in the British Medical Association. I doubt if he was a particularly good doctor and I doubt if his thirty years at the Stores, sole doctor on the staff, stimulated him. He missed his family and as he grew older he began to regret the life style which had been denied him. A few weeks before he died, when he must have known that the end was near, he wrote to Agnes, 'I sometimes regret that one's parents took one away from the land and its amenities for which one was so well suited and seemed to be inherent in ones own nature'.¹⁷

The distancing style—'one's parents'—was not the way he usually wrote. Was the severance from his family, forced upon him in his teens, something which he could not contemplate except in a remote way?

Alf went into his father's office and worked for the rest of his life in the Department of Roads and Bridges, steadily failing exams. There is very little about him in the letters. He died at the age of twenty-five. The meagre information about his death is compatible with something like pneumonia. His schooling in England can have had little effect on his later life.¹⁸

Wal worked in the wool trade in a Sydney office. In his mother's letters he appears as the most normal and mischievous of the boys, who is hardly recognisable in the man he became. A bed wetter at sixteen, presumably as a result of the family tensions, Wal was pushed by his father's death into too many responsibilities. After Alf's death when Wal was not yet twenty-four, Wal was the only adult male in the family in Australia. He took on most of the work involved in the family trust and showed considerable financial flair. In time the family got useful small incomes from the trust and as some of them died, the rest became comfortably off. Wal became increasingly involved with the trust; his letters to Agnes sometimes contain nothing but financial information. He aged quickly. If I had to choose one word to describe Wal it would be 'self-punishing'; although generous to others he was very hard on himself. He was Agnes Bennett's favourite brother and was much loved by his half-sister Mary.¹⁹

His English schooling can have made little difference to his career. The emotional maelstrom which followed his father's remarriage and his responsibilities for others in the family, seem to me to have spoiled his life up to a point.

Agnes was considered by her parents to be the brightest of the children. She was the only one to have an outstanding career, though it seems to have been her character rather than exceptional intellectual