WOMAN, SPORT AND SOCIETY

IN VICTORIAN ENGLAND

by

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A Dissertation Submitted to
the Faculty of the Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

Greensboro
1974

Approved by

Dissertation Adviser

APPROVAL PAGE

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March 25, 1974
Date of Examination

KENNARD, JUNE ARIANNA. Woman, Sport and Society in Victorian England. (1974)
Directed by: Dr. Celeste Ulrich. Pp. 197

The stereotype of the Victorian woman does not suggest that she was very active in sport. On the contrary, sources, which included autobiographical works, periodicals, photographs and reports of public meetings, revealed that Victorian women were involved in such activities as rifle shooting, long-distance swimming and scores of golf tournaments.

The central theme of the study concerned how the Victorian woman, particularly the middle-class woman, behaved in a sport situation, how this affected her role as woman, and conversely, how her role as woman affected her sports participation.

Sport is juxtaposed with the feminine ideal: sport came into conflict with the feminine ideal and the reasons for this disparity are examined. The characteristics embodied in the feminine ideal polarized sex roles and served to obviate competition with men. In a social system which comprised cooperative unequals, participation in sport by women was disturbing. Sport was physical and masculine, and therefore outside woman's sphere which was emotional and spiritual. Sport entailed a degree of competition surpassing that sanctioned for women in the marriage market.

Victorian girlhood, family relationships and childhood games in the socialization process were examined. After 1870, girls

increasingly received a school education, and the emphasis in training shifted away from the "accomplishments" toward theoretical study. Physical education in the schools promoted competitive games, and extended the age up to which it could be considered appropriate for young women to participate in sports.

With the expansion in girls' and women's sport, there arose the problem of a suitable costume which could simultaneously accommodate free movement and preserve the feminine ideal. For the most part, women wore the ordinary fashions of the day for sports activities, but the incipient design of a special outfit for sport was apparent.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, middle-class women walked for recreation and rode horseback if affluent. The most significant feature of sport in the latter half of the century was its growth and organization. More and more women took part in an increasing variety of sport activities. The formal organization of sport was realized, and most important, competition was established.

A close inspection of the protagonists of women's sport reveals that the medical profession was one of the first groups to advocate physical exercise for women. They were later joined by educators, feminists and socially prominent women. The most vociferous antagonists of women's sport were the anti-feminists. They pointed to the contradiction between womanhood and sport, and through their arguments, the issue raised by women's sport can be clearly viewed.

In spite of opposition, Victorian women organized sport, developed comprehensive physical education programs, encouraged physical emancipation through sport, and instituted competition. By the end of the century, women were competitors at Wimbledon, they were entered in scores of golf tournaments, and school girls were playing team games.

Woman's sport became an instrument of social change by modifying and defining woman's larger role in society. At the same time, woman's sport was subject to the conditions of the feminine ideal. Sport militated against the feminine ideal and gave rise to a conflict between womanhood and sport. The conflict fostered ambivalence, and its resolution involved compromise which dictated that women participate in sport under handicaps which curtailed skillful play. Victorian women clung to their symbol of womanhood, their skirts, and played sports with ladylike motions.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The researcher would like to express appreciation to those people who contributed to the completion of this study. Gratitude is extended to Dr. Celeste Ulrich, Chairwoman of the Graduate Committee, for her insights, time and guidance in the investigation and writing of this study. Appreciation is extended to Dr. Ann Pottinger Saab, member of the Committee, for the benefit of her knowledge and time. Helpful suggestions from Dr. Pauline Loeffler, Dr. Rosemary McGee and Dr. Elizabeth Umstead, members of the Committee, are appreciated. Special thanks go to Dr. Ann Dixon for her advice and assistance.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The idea for this research stemmed from an interest in Victorian history and women's studies which combined with an older interest in the history of sport. In order to make the topic more manageable, the inquiry concentrated on the middle-class woman in Victorian society. The central theme of the study concerned how the Victorian woman, particularly the middle-class woman, behaved in a sport[1] situation, how this affected her role as woman, and conversely, how her role as woman affected her sports participation. The study covered the time period of Queen Victoria's reign (1837-1901) with reference to preceding and following years when appropriate.

Those women who participated in sport and those people who wrote about women in sport belonged primarily to the aristocracy and the middle class. They tended either to live in an urban area or to spend a great deal of time in town. Sportswomen were frequently active in a number of social roles which included philanthropy, journalism, public speaking and teaching.

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[1] For the purpose of this paper, sport is defined as a game, pastime or playful activity involving a reasonable degree of physical exertion, and for which learning and practice are necessary.

At first glance it seemed that the topic might lack sufficient reference material to warrant study. The stereotype of the Victorian woman does not suggest that she was very active in sport. On the contrary, research revealed that Victorian women were involved in many activities such as rifle shooting, long-distance swimming and scores of golf tournaments. Of course, what the Victorian woman did not do because of public disapproval was also important. Perhaps of most significance were the conditions under which she participated.

This study provided an opportunity to explore Victorian society using sport as a reflecting glass. Conversely, the study offered the possibility of examining the effects of woman upon sport. The playing of sports by Victorian women militated against the feminine ideal, and therefore, presented itself as a possible instrument of social change. On the other hand, the feminine ideal largely dictated the conditions under which sports were played. Therefore, a major purpose of this paper was to examine the interaction of woman and sport in Victorian society.

One of the major purposes of any historical inquiry is to study the past in order to understand the present. While the body of knowledge concerning women and sport has been augmented in recent years, large gaps remain. A range of human emotions has been expressed with regard to the sportswoman: she has been treated with admiration, silliness, contempt and ambivalence. It is not fully comprehended

why this is so or how it came to be. Therefore, an important purpose of this investigation has been to try to identify and understand significant long-term factors which relate to woman, sport and society.

One of the difficulties encountered in the study involved its organization. A chronological approach and a biological model corresponding to life stages were both considered, but abandoned. These approaches would have resulted in a truncated study and would not have provided a comprehensive view in a time period of rapid change. Therefore, a conceptual structure was adopted. This format sometimes led to overlap, but every effort has been made to keep repetition to a minimum.

Another problem which required resolution involved the selection of the most significant factors related to the topic. An outline was constructed which was subsequently altered a number of times as some factors gained in importance while others receded. An example of a problem in selection procedure involved the relationship between anti-feminism and sport. At first, this seemed to justify a chapter, but it became increasingly clear that anti-feminism permeated the entire subject and could not be treated separately. An example in reverse was provided by sport costume for women. While sport costume was ubiquitous, it lent itself to separate treatment.

A further difficulty encountered in the research involved the sources. Because of the nature of the subject, this problem has been

faced by most sport historians. People seldom give lengthy expositions about what they do for recreation or why they do it. Therefore, this research in many instances entailed piecing together a wide assortment of references which may have occasioned stretching a point or misinterpreting scant remarks. However, the researcher believes that major suppositions are well-substantiated. In some cases, interpretation of original sources called for caution. One example was the situation in which sports enthusiasts were promoting a favorite pastime. They were prone to make extravagant claims about what the sport could do for the individual, and they often provided testimonials about famous personages who were participants. However, taken for what they were, they became valuable sources.

Primary sources used for the research were confined to those printed in English. They included books, autobiographies, biographies, reminiscences, newspapers, magazines, photographs and reports of public meetings. The (London) Times was useful as a guide to note trends in women's sport; in addition, it was helpful for reports on women's activities and the content of women's sport events. Punch, a weekly magazine, was useful for its social comment. The sportswoman as a frequent object of satire revealed anxieties about the possible subversion of woman's role occasioned by her participation in sport. There were a number of worthwhile autobiographical works which captured the ethos of the Victorian period. Two of the best

were From One Century to Another by Elizabeth S. Haldane and A London Family 1870-1900 by M. Vivian Hughes.[2]

A number of books were published at the end of the century which concerned women's sport and which were in many cases written by sportswomen. Among them were Every Girl's Book of Sport, Occupation and Pastime, The Gentlewoman's Book of Sports, Our Lady of the Green, and The Sportswoman's Library.[3] Two works which included women's sport were The Encyclopaedia of Sport and The Sports of the World.[4] The Badminton Library of Sports and Pastimes series was a valuable source as well as the Badminton Magazine of Sports and Pastimes. Another useful source was Eugen Sandow's magazine, Physical Culture.

The major difficulty with secondary sources was twofold. Sport as the subject of serious academic study has been taboo, and women, until recently, have been presumed to be historically insignificant.

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[2]Elizabeth S. Haldane, From One Century to Another: the Reminiscences of Elizabeth S. Haldane (London: Alexander Maclehose & Co., 1937); M. Vivian Hughes, A London Family 1870-1900 (London: Oxford University Press, 1946).

[3]Every Girl's Book of Sport, Occupation and Pastime, ed. Mary Whitley (London: George Routledge Sons, 1897); The Gentlewoman's Book of Sports, ed. Lady Greville (London: Henry & Co., n. d.)[ca. 1892] Louie Mackern and M. Boys, Our Lady of the Green: a Book of Ladies' Golf (London: Lawrence & Bullen, 1899): The Sportswoman's Library, ed. Frances E. Slaughter, 2 vols. (Westminster: Archibald Constable & Co., 1898).

[4]The Encyclopaedia of Sport, ed. Earl of Suffolk and Berkshire and F. G. Aflalo, 2 vols. (London: Lawrence and Bullen, 1898); The Sports of the World, ed. F. G. Aflalo, 2 vols. (London: Cassell & Co., n. d.).

Historians of a particular sport often found it difficult to locate information about women participants. As a consequence, in many instances women have been ignored completely or a scant footnote provided the only information.

To the knowledge of the researcher, there are no studies which deal with the Victorian woman in sport as a central theme. For this study, Dennis Brailsford's Sport and Society: Elizabeth to Anne[5] is an excellent model of historical inquiry as well as valuable for its background history for the nineteenth century. In his book, Sport in Society,[6] Peter McIntosh delineates the pattern of nineteenth century sport and analyzes the middle-class inspired revolution in sport. He has a useful chapter about the development of girls' physical education in his book, Physical Education in England Since 1800.[7] An excellent source not only for its comprehensive study of costume, but for designating trends in women's sport is English Costume for Sports and Outdoor Recreation[8] by Phillis Cunnington and Alan Mansfield. These

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[5]Dennis Brailsford, Sport and Society: Elizabeth to Anne (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969).

[6]P. C. McIntosh, Sport in Society (London: C. A. Watts & Co., 1971), Part 1, Chapters 6, 7.

[7]Peter C. McIntosh, Physical Education in England Since 1800 (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1968), Chapter 8.

[8]Phillis Cunnington and Alan Mansfield, English Costume for Sports and Outdoor Recreation: From the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Centuries (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1970).

were the most relevant sources for the research project. Other studies worthy of note have been pointed out in the text of the paper and are cited in the bibliography.

Selected topics form the chapter headings, but prior to their introduction, there are several themes which run throughout the paper which require some explanation. The study emphasizes the middle-class woman. While it is difficult to define the parameters of the middle class, it must be assumed that the social status and social mobility of a woman was determined for the most part by the most significant males in her life. The upper reaches of the middle class included wives and daughters of prosperous clergymen, non-aristocratic members of Parliament, the more affluent doctors, and headmasters of the public schools. The lower range of the middle class included wives and daughters of the poorer clergy, prosperous tradesmen, factory managers and grammar school teachers.

The nineteenth century witnessed a rise in wealth, power and numbers of the middle class. With the increase in power and prosperity came the dominance of middle-class values and the ethos which has been associated with Victorian society. Most writers agree that the prudery of which the Victorians have been accused originated with the new middle class who emulated their social superiors while they avoided copying their easy ways. Coarse behavior coming from the middle class could too easily be interpreted as behavior befitting

a lower station. "Respectability" became a way of life. While respectability was the hallmark of behavior, the trappings of conspicuous consumption were collected: the middle class, as far as affluence would permit, bought carriages, hired servants, and took holidays. Perhaps most importantly, the middle-class wife became her husband's symbol of conspicuous consumption; she did not work. The "lady" of the house was not compatible with a working woman.

The ideal "lady" of the house was a pleasing conversationalist, and she was accomplished at playing the piano, singing, drawing and speaking a foreign language. In her intercourse with servants, she was kind without losing their respect; she was not haughty toward her social inferiors; at the same time, she did not display pretensions above her rank. The ideal woman had special sensibilities of an emotional nature, and it was she who inherently possessed the capability as guardian of the moral virtues to temper man's evil drives and his pursuit of mammon: she was the antithesis of and antidote to man. Her natural pre-disposition was to marry and have children; the lot of a spinster was to be pitied, and she was viewed as a hanger-on administering to the needs of relatives and employing herself in works of charity. In terms of woman's sexuality, it was unthinkable for her to enjoy sexual relations with her husband; but it was her duty to submit to this "last familiarity."

The psychological rigidity of the feminine ideal and the vacuity of life as the lady of the drawing room provided a stimulus for feminism. But perhaps more important was an economic reality which arose in the middle class. The middle class could not or would not support all of its females in idleness and luxury. Unmarried women or widowed women who were forced to support either themselves or their families had few alternatives. There were emigration schemes for unsupported women, but they largely failed. Some women resorted to prostitution, while others virtually starved to death living as "genteel poor." Many of these women turned to governessing - the only employment they could pursue and still retain a semblance of social status. An effort to improve the plight of poorly-paid governesses and the other poor of the middle class became a more generalized movement to improve the education of all middle-class girls and enlarge the opportunities for employment.

Feminism will be defined as the effort, whether conscious or unconscious, to improve the status of women in Victorian society. On the one hand, one objective of the feminist movement was to gain the rights enjoyed by males. On the other hand, feminists attempted to pressure males into conforming to the female standard of sexual purity. After mid-century, feminists attempted to improve the status of women with regard to educational and employment opportunities and legal and political rights. While in some cases the attempts clearly

involved radical politics, this was not always so. There were avowed feminists who deliberately and obviously agitated to improve the status of women. There were avowed anti-feminists who were by their demeanor, and often by their employment in man's world, the antithesis of the ideal woman they praised. It would be fair to say that many Victorian women, including the Queen, took a stand against "women's rights," but by their counteractive behavior advanced the cause of women - and saw no contradiction.

The feminist movement paralleled the growth of women's sport, but the interaction is difficult to assess. Although there were feminists who were active supporters of sport, there was no well-organized campaign for its promotion. What made the relationship between women and sport conspicuous was the issue made of the sportswoman by the anti-feminists. The anti-feminists saw a sharp contradiction between womanhood and sport, and it is this contradiction in varying degrees which is the pivotal point on which the study of women in sport rests.

The text commences with Victorian notions about womanhood, and an exploration of the function served by the feminine ideal in Victorian society. Sport is juxtaposed with the feminine ideal: sport came into conflict with the feminine ideal and the reasons for this disparity are examined.

Of all social institutions, none was closer to the hearts of the Victorians than that of the Family. The Victorian family was conjugal and closely-knit. While the intimacy of family relationships was a comfort and source of happiness to some, to others it was a suffocating tyranny. The Victorian father was theoretically an absolute ruler in his household, and daughters especially were expected to idolize him. The Victorian mother was meant to exert her influence by indirect and subtle means from her pedestal of moral virtue. Victorian boys were to be educated for the world, while girls would become "accomplished" for the marriage market. The emphases of this chapter center around girlhood, education at home, childhood games in the socialization process and the role of the young, unmarried female in the family.

After 1860, the institution of school education became an important means of indoctrinating girls into the role of adulthood. Prior to mid-century, there were no universities, no "public" schools and only a very few endowed schools for girls. Upper-class and middle-class girls were typically educated at home by a governess, and if affluence permitted, they were sent for a year or so to a "finishing" school. There was a lack of systematic education, and the "accomplishments" were stressed. Agitation for improved girls' education began in mid-century which culminated in the establishment of day schools, "public" schools and colleges. From their inception, the schools included

physical education [9] in their curricula. Of importance were the development and objectives of girls' physical education as they related to the sanctioning of physical exercise and sport for girls.

A suitable costume for sport emerged as an issue with the growth of women's sport participation. Among other things, costume served as a reflector of status, a corporate part of the feminine mystique, and a constrictor of movement. The wearing of appropriate clothing to accommodate the motion of sport coupled with the necessity of appearing "feminine" made the subject of costume a point of contention.

The pattern of nineteenth century women's sport is next examined. In the first half of the century, women's sport consisted of traditional aristocratic and rural pastimes. After mid-century, the most outstanding feature of women's sport was its growth in variety, increase in number of participants and its organization. One significant trend in sport was the increasing involvement of middle-class women. Another important development was the movement toward competitive sport for women. There was also a trend toward the development of games in which men and women could play together. With the growth of women's sport came resistance. While growth dominated the opposition, women's sport continued to be subject to the conditional

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[9] Physical education will be used in the study in its broadest sense. It refers to physical education in a school and includes free-play time, organized instruction in gymnastics, dance and sport, as well as "games" (team sports) played within the school or with outside competitors.

requisites of "femininity."

Some of the issues in women's sport involved the effect of sport upon women and the effect of woman upon sport. On the one hand, it was argued that sport might destroy the sweet simplicity of woman's nature and on the other hand, woman's nature threatened to violate the integrity of games. Some arguments were based on scientific evidence which often reflected society's view of what womanhood should be. The design of some sports equipment for the "weaker sex" militated against the economy of movement necessary for the skillful playing of a sport: however, it fostered the feminine ideal. Also in this chapter, there is a closer inspection of the protagonists and antagonists of women's sport.

Almost all the issues involving woman and sport came to the forefront when bicycling became the rage in the 1890's. The technological development of the safety bicycle presented opportunities to explore the social ramifications of the bicycle, and particularly, its impact upon women. Perhaps the most outstanding reason why the bicycle warranted study was that many Victorians attached a great deal of importance to the "iron steed" as emancipator of women. The bicycling craze of the nineties is perhaps a fitting climax of the study of "Woman, Sport and Society in Victorian England."

CHAPTER II

VICTORIAN CONCEPTS OF WOMANHOOD

Part I.

Empress of Heart and Home

> Man for the field and woman for the hearth:
> Man for the sword and for the needle she:
> Man with the head and woman with the heart:
> Man to command and woman to obey;
> All else confusion. [1]

In the age of respectability when an unguarded word or gesture could ruin a reputation, the demeanor of the lady of the house was of critical importance. It was of consequence to know the right people and behave correctly. In a time of rapid social mobility, guidelines could serve a useful purpose for members of the middle class who were to some extent anonymous. The upper class socialized and intermarried within their own cliquish groups. Therefore, members of the middle class were forced to copy their social superiors from a distance and this was fraught with possibilities of poor imitation. However, there were a host of teachers who provided instructions for the new middle class, one of whom was Mrs. Ellis.

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[1] Alfred Tennyson, "The Princess," Poetical Works (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), pp. 154-202. [Originally published in 1847.]

In 1839, Mrs. Ellis published Women of England, her first in a series of books which dealt with correct attitudes and behavior for middle-class women. Daughters of England was published in 1843, Wives of England in 1843, and Mothers of England in 1845. Women of England underwent sixteen editions in its first two years and was re-published a number of times in the next decade.[2] In Women of England, Mrs. Ellis defined her audience as

> . . . those who belong to that great mass of the population of England which is connected with trade and manufacturers' - or, in order to make the application more direct, to that portion of it who are restricted to the services of from one to four domestics - who, on the one hand, enjoy the advantages of a liberal education, and on the other, have no pretension to family rank.[3]

While Mrs. Ellis concentrated on attitudes and behavior, other instructors directed their readers in practical methods of domestic economy. Mrs. Isabella Beeton's, The Book of Household Management (1861) sold over 60,000 copies in its first year. Mrs. Beeton's book gave a detailed description of the manner in which a mistress of the house should conduct herself and in addition contained a plethora of practical information for employees of the household from

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[2]Duncan Crow, The Victorian Woman (New York: Stein and Day, 1972), p. 48.

[3]Sarah Stickney Ellis, Women of England: their Social Duties and Domestic Habits (New York: J. & H. G. Langley, 1846), p. 8. (This edition included the entire series.)

footmen to wet nurses.[4] Mrs. Beeton's Every-day Cookery and Housekeeping Book (ca. 1872) provided precise information for the lady of the house:

> It is seldom requisite that a mistress should perform other work than that of supervising her household. . . . but it is imperative that she should not be the dupe of designing servants . . . .
>
> On entering the kitchen invariably say "Good Morning Cook" . . . go into the larder - do not give a mere glance, careless or nervous, as the case may be, but examine every article there.[5]

In 1852, Samuel Beeton (Isabella's husband) launched The Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine which was the first inexpensive magazine for ladies, and therefore, aimed at the readership of the middle class. It sold at twopence a copy (prior to this, prices averaged one shilling) and was an instant success. Within two years, sales reached 25,000 copies per month and by 1860, circulation reached 50,000.[6] It was the first magazine to deal systematically with domestic management, and its contents were intended as "a fund of practical information and advice tending to promote habits of industry and usefulness, without which no home can be rendered virtuous or happy."[7]

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[4]Crow, Victorian Woman, pp. 133-136.

[5]Mrs. Isabella Mary Beeton, Beeton's Every-day Cookery and Housekeeping Book (New York: D. Appleton and Co., n.d.), i-iii.

[6]Cynthia L. White, Women's Magazines 1693-1968 (London: Michael Joseph, 1970), pp. 44-46.

[7]Quoted in White, Women's Magazines, p. 44.

In her sociological study of women's magazines, Cynthia White found that by 1825, journals covering domestic and foreign news, politics and public affairs had been superseded by magazines concentrating on fiction, fashion, needlework and cookery. Their aim was to provide innocent amusement; newspapers were by now considered too tainted for feminine eyes.[8] White also discovered that the leading women's magazines were careful to avoid the women's rights issue;[9] even the orthodox "women's" magazines could not hope to survive if a positive stand was taken.[10] Women's magazines reinforced the status quo of woman as wife and mother in the domestic sphere, while man's sphere was the outside world.

The idea of the two distinct and separate spheres, home and the outside world, had its origins in the biological differences between the sexes. From this reference point, it was an easy step to extend these differences into a moral and social context, and very often, to confuse the two. That biology was destiny was reinforced by Mrs. Ellis in her message to young women who would soon be taking their place as women in English society:

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[8]Ibid., pp. 38-40.

[9]Excluding the feminist press.

[10]Ibid., p. 47.

> I must now take it for granted, that the youthful reader of these pages has reflected seriously upon her position in society as a woman, has acknowledged her inferiority to man, has examined her own nature, and found there a capability of feeling, a quickness of perception, and a facility of adaption, beyond, what he possesses, and which, consequently, fit her for a distinct and separate sphere;[11]

"Woman's sphere was personal and not general, domestic and not public," said Mr. Frederic Harrison in an address before the English Positivist Society. Her task of family and home required all her energies and was "too sacred to mix . . . these duties with the grosser occupations of state and industry." Woman's true function was not only to educate children, but to educate men to a higher civilization by her spirit of self-restraint, self-sacrifice, her fidelity and purity. In body, mind and spirit, woman was "by nature" designed to play a different role from that of man.[12] Woman's "true function" was elaborated in numerous different circumstances - in public meetings, magazines, instructive books, paintings and in novels.

In literature, the character of Amelia Osborne (Vanity Fair, 1848) was an embodiment of the feminine ideal. Though Thackeray displayed more respect for the amoral Becky Sharp, it was the loving,

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[11] Ellis, Daughters of England, p. 6.

[12] Mr. Frederic Harrison, in an address before the English Positivist Society commemorating the death of Comte, "Woman's True Function," The (London) Times, 7 September, 1891.

pious and defenseless Amelia who was the ideal. Thackeray suggested the type of woman that men admire and women envy:

> . . . and though, very likely, the heroic female character which ladies admire is a more glorious and beautiful object than the kind, fresh, smiling, artless, tender little domestic goddess, whom men are inclined to worship - yet the latter and inferior sort of women must have this consolation - that the men do admire them after all . . . . I am tempted to think that to be despised by her sex is a very great compliment to a woman.[13]

Amelia Osborne and Becky Sharp were standard stereotypes of women in novels. Millicent Garrett Fawcett, an ardent feminist, utilized these character sketches as a justification for a different socialization of females. She suggested that there must be truth in the impressions of keen observers like Thackeray who constantly portrayed women as "unprincipled schemers or affectionate fools:"

> If we are forced to the conclusion that the present training of women tends to produce creatures like Becky Sharp or Amelia Osborne, it is the duty of all who are for the welfare of mankind to strive earnestly after every reform that may effect an improvement in that training. The first thing to be sought is education.[14]

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[13]William Makepeace Thackeray, Vanity Fair (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1943), pp. 122-123.

[14]Millicent Garrett Fawcett, "Education of Women," Macmillan's Magazine quoted in Victoria Magazine 11 (1868): 161.

Not all Victorian novelists portrayed women as essentially negative types; there were some like George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans) who developed more noble female characters. And, there were some writers, especially authoresses, who used their novels as platforms to criticize what they considered woman's narrow and artificial sphere. Charlotte Brontë, in Shirley (1849), lamented woman's lack of alternatives and the ugly consequences brought about by keen competition on the marriage market:

> Men of England! look at your poor girls, many of them fading around you, dropping off in consumption or decline; or, what is worse, degenerating to sour old maids, - envious, backbiting, wretched, because life is a desert to them; or what is worst of all, reduced to strive, by scarce modest coquetry and debasing artifice, to gain that position and consideration by marriage, which to celibacy is denied. Fathers! cannot you alter these things?[15]

Other critics of the feminine ideal questioned the logic of the biological deterministic view. In his Subjection of Women (1869), John Stuart Mill attacked the belief that women should not be allowed outside their natural sphere of wifery and motherhood:

> One thing we may be certain of - that what is contrary to women's nature to do, they never will be made to do by simply giving their nature free play. . . . What women

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[15] Charlotte Brontë, Shirley, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: John Grant, 1905), 2:110.

> by nature cannot do, it is quite superfluous to forbid them from doing.[16]

While Mr. Mill's Subjection of Women was received favorably in some quarters out of respect for his immense stature in England, it also met with considerable hostility. Mrs. Margaret Oliphant wrote that "the tone of this work is so surpassingly insolent towards the whole human race; it involves such an insult not only to men, but to women as we love and admire them and desire to keep them."[17] That Mr. Mill attributed sex differences primarily to social conditioning clashed with Victorian notions about differences owing to divine appointment and physical constitutions.

If it could be demonstrated that alternatives to woman as a dependent being were unnatural to her domain, then all types of aspirations might be deterred. The use of scientific knowledge lent a degree of objective probity to support the social organization: woman's biology could not be altered, and she would always be inferior to man. An example of the scientific view was a paper read before the Anthropological Society of London by J. M. Allan in 1869. In his address, Allan spoke at great length about woman's inferiority to man, and his

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[16] John Stuart Mill, On the Subjection of Women (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1970), p. 27.

[17] Mrs. Margaret Oliphant, "Mr. Mill on the Subjection of Women," Blackwood's Magazine, 106 (1869), 310.

arguments often deteriorated into vicious attacks upon women which appeared only remotely connected with woman's "natural" inferiority. Even though his remarks at times verged on hysteria, his basic positions were not challenged in the discussion that followed the reading. Allan's main supposition was reflected in one of his opening remarks: "Man is an animal; woman is the female of man."[18] He went on to say that in some respects, woman was closer than man to animals as evidenced by her menstrual discharge; this, he hypothesized, she might have in common with apes and other mammalia.[19] At any rate, he continued:

> [During the menstrual period,] women are unfit for any great mental or physical labour. They suffer under a languor and depression which disqualify them for thought or action, and render it extremely doubtful how far they can be considered responsible beings while the crisis lasts.[20]

Because of the disintegrating effects of menstruation, "woman is doubly entitled to man's protection; not only is she smaller and weaker than himself, [but she is] more or less always unwell."[21]

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[18] J. McGrigor Allan, "On the Real Differences in the Minds of Men and Women," in a paper read to the Anthropological Society of London, in Anthropological Review, 7 (1869): 197.

[19] Whether apes or other mammalia menstruated was apparently not known as the point was debated in the discussion following the reading.

[20] Ibid., p. 198.

[21] Ibid., p. 199.

Mentally, woman's resemblance to animals was even more decided as seen in her superior instinct; and, to educate women would destroy this power. The male's later onset of puberty reflected his latent reasoning not yet developed; this was in keeping with the thesis that the slower developing organism was the more complex animal. Woman's inferiority could further be demonstrated by her lack of accomplishment in painting, music composition, and literature. With regard to literature, it was of little merit to use popularity as a criterion.[22] Allan did grant that woman had a natural aptitude for singing, dancing and acting, the latter of which was undoubtedly enhanced by her ability to tell lies. The sum total of woman physically, mentally and morally, was equivalent to an adult child . "Woman craves to be a mother, knowing that she is an imperfect undeveloped being, until she has borne a child."[23]

In polite society, woman's biology and anatomy were not discussed; on the occasions when it did arise in a social context, her legs were "limbs," breasts were her "bosom," her undergarments were unmentionable, and her childbearing was "confinement" or "lying-in." In terms of her sexuality, the ideal dictated that the middle-class woman was passionless; only women of the "lower ranks" were passionate.

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[22] Some of the most popular novels were written by women.

[23] Ibid., p. 201.

In 1857, Dr. William Acton wrote his best known and most popular book, The Function and Disorders of the Reproductive Organs (1857). With the exception of two brief passages about women, the book concerned men and male sexuality.[24] However, what Dr. Acton wrote of female sexuality was probably a fair representation of Victorian views on the subject. He informs the reader that "I should say that the majority of women (happily for them) are not very much troubled with sexual feeling of any kind." Directing his remarks to male readers, whom he assumes will have had sexual experience with "vulgar" women prior to marriage, he urges that they not jump to the conclusion that all women "have at least as strong passions as himself . . . it is from these erroneous notions that so many young men think that the marital duties they will have to undertake are beyond their exhausted strength."[25]

> The best mothers, wives and managers of households, know little or nothing of sexual indulgences. Love of home, children, and domestic duties, are the only passions they feel. As a rule, a modest woman seldom desires any sexual gratification for herself. She submits to her husband but only to please him; and but for the desire of maternity, would far rather be relieved of his attentions.[26]

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[24] Steven Marcus, The Other Victorians: a Study of Sexuality and Pornography in Mid-Nineteenth Century England (New York: Basic Books, 1966), p. 13.

[25] William Acton, The Function and Disorders of the Reproductive Organs, in Child Hood, Youth, Adult Age, and Advanced Life, Considered in their Physiological, Social and Moral Relations, quoted in Marcus, The Other Victorians, p. 31.

[26] Ibid.

Lay attitudes were in concert with scientific opinions, and both reflected the moral values of the times. In one magazine article, woman's "physical insensibilities," were exampled by her comparative infrequency of sexual psychopathy, her willingness to accept either polygamy or monogamy with apparent indifference, and the fact that chastity was a feminine virtue. In conclusion, the author wrote that "it is . . . an undoubted fact that the maternal instinct in woman is far more powerful than the erotic tendency, which is, in a so much greater degree, connected with the physical sensibilities."[27]

In terms of the "maternal instinct," Queen Victoria was exemplary with her brood of nine children. With regard to her feelings about sexuality, the Queen was probably not unlike a good many of her female subjects. She referred to procreation and childbearing as "the shadow side of marriage."[28] She had grave doubts about childbirth " ' for it is such a complete violence of all one's feelings of propriety (which God knows receive a shock enough to marriage alone).' "[29] One gift that she bequeathed to her female subjects was that by agreeing to the use of chloroform at the birth of her eighth

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[27] C. Lombroso, "The Physical Insensibility of Women," Fortnightly Review 57 (1892): 357.

[28] Elizabeth Longford, Queen Victoria: Born to Succeed (New York: Pyramid Books, 1971), p. 154.

[29] Kronberg Letters; "Dearest Child," 21 April 1858, quoted in Longford, Born to Succeed, p. 270.

child, she rejected the notion that pain at childbirth was divinely appointed.[30]

Queen Victoria was very much a woman of her times and in many respects, she epitomized the Victorian woman - the dutiful wife and mother. Like most women, she disapproved (theoretically) of female leaders, female careers and female insubordination. Like most women, she objected to any wavering from the correct moral standard which "lowered the tone" of society. However, ideals are not static, and the Queen herself exemplified a changing social outlook. She grudgingly came to condone betrothed couples going about unchaperoned, and she came to believe in a policy of parental non-intervention after a couple married.[31] She took to new inventions like the telephone, and in 1881 she reportedly even took a spin on a tricycle.[32] She abhorred the habit of smoking even for gentlemen. When her sons entered her drawing room on one occasion they apologized profusely for appearing in their smoking jackets. Yet at times, the smoking taboo was relaxed:

> In the 'fifties it was considered out of the question for the Queen, a woman, so much as to touch with her lips an oriental pipe of friendship on board an Egyptian ship at Southampton. . . . Twenty years later Queen Victoria, Princess Beatrice and

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[30] Ibid., pp. 233-234.

[31] Ibid., p. 423.

[32] Ibid., p. 568.

Horatia Stopford were blithely smoking cigarettes on a picnic at Balmoral to keep the midges away.[33]

While the feminine ideal continued to embrace wifery and motherhood as woman's special sphere, it became less rigid. The swooning and vapid caricature of the early Victorian woman was not in style at the century's end, and the healthy, athletic English girl became an acceptable type. Advertising was directed at the "New Woman" who was more assertive and independent. Some brides were dropping the "obey" clause from the matrimonial contract. It became more acceptable for middle-class women to work before marriage, and women were employed in more occupations than heretofore. To teaching was added nursing,[34] clerical work and some distributive trades. It was possible for women to obtain a school education, and in some few British universities, they could take degrees. There were now tea shops in which a lady could take refreshment, she could ride the omnibus unescorted, and she could participate in a wider range of leisure activities from the theatre to sports. Nevertheless, the basic structure of the feminine ideal remained: woman's special place continued to be home, and she continued to exercise her influence by "indirect" means.

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[33] Ibid., p. 417.

[34] The status of nursing was raised to respectable employment through the efforts of Florence Nightingale.

The feminine ideal maximized the differences between the sexes, and this polarization of sex roles provided a tidy social organization of leaders and followers. First and foremost, this division would not place women in competition with men. Competition would have been difficult in a social scheme in which power resources were unequally distributed.

Women as a group had little in the way of power resources: they lacked economic power, they had few political rights, and they possessed limited legal rights (particularly married women). Woman's sexuality was her marketable commodity, and through the marriage market, women competed for male resources. Women were able to make their sexuality a scarce commodity by insisting on a wedding contract as the only legitimated sexuality.[35]

The feminine ideal, along with notions of family, private households, the repression and idealization of sexuality, and bureaucratic control over violence[36] emerged around the fifteenth century. This development was essentially middle-class inspired, and it was in the nineteenth century that there were enough middle-class families to

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[35]This helps to explain feminine conservatism with regard to prostitution. For the ideas presented here about female sexuality as a resource and for an excellent discussion of the feminine ideal, the reader is referred to Randall Collins, "A Conflict Theory of Sexual Stratification," Social Problems 19 (Summer, 1971): 3-21.

[36]In order that female sexuality be used as a scarce commodity women needed protection from male violence. This could only happen when the State exercised a monopoly over the legitimate use of violence.

dominate the values of the society. The cluster of values surrounding women, family and home, combined with the importance of the middle class, gave the Victorian period some of its special characteristics.

One advantage to Victorian women provided by the feminine ideal was that it gave them a degree of autonomy in their own affairs. While the basic strategy of the feminist movement was an attempt to reduce sex differences based on social conditioning, the notion of differences as a benefit was not missed. Some of the pioneer educators, while advocating quality education for girls (basically modelled on that for boys) allowed for sex differences and by assuming a position of compromise, they were able to accomplish their aim and autonomy.

While the feminine ideal did raise the status of women by conferring upon them a "special" place, it precluded access to the world of economics and politics. Marriage was the key to woman's status, but it also meant entrapment to the conformity of the feminine ideal. Neither celibacy nor independence were sanctioned:

> Men do not like, and would not seek, to mate with an independent factor, who at anytime could quit - and who at times would be tempted to neglect - the tedious duties of training and bringing up children, [and household management] for the more lucrative returns of the desk or counter. It is not in the interest of States, and it is not therefore true social policy, to encourage the existence, as a rule, of women who are other than entirely dependent on man as well for subsistence as for protection and love.[37]

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[37] "Queen Bees or Working Bees?" Criticism of a paper read before the Social Science Congress by Bessie Parkes, Saturday Review 8 (12 November 1859): 576.

Those Victorians who viewed woman as a being with individual and equal rights or even as a relative creature rather than as an opposite of man, met with hostility because the feminine ideal implied cooperation between opposites, rather than competition with unequals.

Part II.

Sport as the Antithesis of Ideal Womanhood

> Fashion has decreed that at the present time it is the right and proper thing for its female votaries to adopt manly occupations, . . . mode of conversation, sports, . . . imitations of the male garments, not to mention the more serious movements on foot for women to share in the political life of men and in the government of their country.[38]

If sport was a male prerogative, and if the ideal woman was the opposite of man, then sport was clearly "unnatural" to woman and well outside the pale of her sphere. The very notion of woman competing in the male world of sport was a travesty of the ideal. Sports were active and manly, and the sportswoman epitomized woman's encroachment on male privilege. It was further argued that because sports were unnatural to women, those who played them might destroy the integrity of a game.

When woman stepped beyond the boundary of "The Sex" by participation in sport, she invited damage to her anatomy, physiology and special nature. Her participation in sport would not only be detrimental to herself, but could lead to deterioration of the entire race. Because of her emotional nature, enthusiastic involvement in sport might lead to excess. There was a fear that she could not (or would not) perform her duties of motherhood.

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[38]"Manly Women," Saturday Review 67 (22 June 1889): 757.

The important point concerning the advisability of whether a woman should indulge in sport hinged on the question of femininity as expressed in a magazine article of 1885:

> Does a particular sport or pastime tend to impair or tend to enhance the special qualities which society values in women? . . . [In the former case,] it is certain to be condemned. This sense of disapproval of what is unwomanly is as sound as it is deep-rooted, for its sanction is nothing less than the preservation of the race.[39]

Dr. Arabella Kenealy, a figure fairly well-known to the public, would have agreed with the above statement, but she would have included all sports. She believed that the playing of sports would "unsex" women, and that by developing muscle power, women would lose their ability to merge their nature into another's for help and comfort. One of her favorite theses was that energy expended in one part of the body would be not only lost in another part, but would be harmful to the entire mechanism. If the latent opposite sex existing in every human being was artificially stimulated (e.g., by sport) the result would be a race of effeminate men and masculine women, i.e., "abortive and poor copies of the race." This would culminate in the deterioration of the race.

Dr. Kenealy combined social Darwinism with her medical practice, and she used the prestige of her profession to support her

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[39]Norman Pearson, "Athletics for Ladies," London Society 48 (1885): 71.

theories. She hypothesized that sex differences were meant to be greater in civilized societies; this explained the physical robustness of savage women. Sex differentiation in the evolutionary scale also explained differences between working-class women and women of the higher orders. Lower-class women needed physical strength in order to work, but women of the higher orders should use their mental and social attributes to advance civilization.

While Dr. Kenealy granted that the old system of air and exercise was probably inadequate, she doubted that "it was as pernicious in results or subversive of domestic happiness and welfare of the race as the present system which sets our mothers bicycling all day and dancing all night and our grandmothers playing golf."[40] About the destiny of woman in her noble sphere, she had no doubts:

> Nature has no vain-glorious ambitions as to a race of female wranglers or golfers; she is not concerned with Amazons, physical or intellectual. She is a one-idea'd, uncompromising old person, and her one idea is the race as embodied in the Baby.[41]

If Mother Nature was not concerned about Amazons, a lot of people were. "Amazons" was one of the most common expressions associated with sportswomen, and behind the opprobrious use of the

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[40]Dr. Arabella Kenealy, "Woman as an Athlete," Nineteenth Century 45 (1899): 644.

[41]Ibid., 642.

term, lay fear. Amazons and sports were Physical: they represented the New Woman who had invaded male prerogative, and there was no way of knowing where it might end.

In the book, Revolted Woman, which is a tirade against woman's emancipation by Charles Harper, the New Woman forgot that her "Mission was Submission." This disaster was no doubt "the inevitable outcome, in this age of toleration and 'laissez faire,' of the Bloomerite agitation, the Women's Rights frenzy, the Girl of the Period furore, and the Divided Skirt Craze."[42]

According to Mr. Harper, representatives of the New Woman included: Lady Cricketers; Mrs. Josephine Butler (activist feminist) and her "following of Barren women;" Miss M. M. Dowie, a mountaineer, whose adventures added nothing to the gaiety of her readers or to the world of science, but who only climbed the Carpathian Mountains in search of a "little cheap notoriety;" and unmarried women who started the heresy that woman's mission is Domination. These New Amazons, or Women Warriors, were "apparently . . . not sufficiently well read in classic lore to know what the strict following of the Amazons' practice implied."[43]

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[42]Charles G. Harper, Revolted Woman (London: Elkin Mathews, 1894), p. 2.

[43]Ibid., p. 3.

The New Woman was anathema to Mrs. E. Lynn Linton, one of feminism's most formidable opponents. Mrs. E. Lynn Linton's name was a household word: in her lifetime she wrote more than thirty novels and hundreds of magazine articles. While on the staff of the highly respected Saturday Review, she wrote one of the most discussed and well-known articles of the era entitled, "The Girl of the Period," and so coined the phrase. The Girl of the Period dyed her hair, painted her face, and her main objects in life were fun and luxury.[44] The New Woman was an object of distaste to Mrs. Linton, with the sportswoman representing one of her favorite targets:

> Not content with croquet and lawn tennis, . . . they have taken to golf and cricket. . . . The prettiest woman in the world loses her beauty when at these violent exercises. Hot and damp, . . . she has lost that sense of repose, that delicate self-restraint, which belong to the ideal woman. . . . She has . . . abandoned all that makes her lovely for the uncomely roughness of pastimes wherein she cannot excel, and of which it was never intended she would be a partaker. . . . We have not yet heard of women polo-players; but that will come. In the absurd endeavour to be like men, these modern homasses will leave nothing untried.[45]

The Saturday Review, consistently anti-feminist, and supporter of the maligned ideal, employed a caustic humor or scathing attacks

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[44]Mrs. E. Lynn Linton, Modern Women and What is Said of Them: a Reprint of a Series of Articles in the Saturday Review (New York: J. S. Redfield, 1868), pp. 25-32.

[45]E. Lynn Linton, "The Wild Women as Social Insurgents," Nineteenth Century 30 (1891): 597-599.

often through the vehicle of the sportswoman. In one of their articles, The Gentlewoman's Book of Sports was reviewed. The authoresses were castigated for excluding croquet from their book:

> We freely admit that the game does not necessitate the wearing of 'knickerbockers' . . . and that the situations in which it is possible to play, have all the tameness of the common or domestic lawn, yet we will maintain . . . that it is a 'Sport' . . . [It is] one of the few remaining 'Sports' which women do not spoil by insisting on learning to play indifferently well.[46]

With regard to the playing of golf, the Saturday Review maintained that they will never do more than play very tolerably for women. "This may be only one of the many misfortunes attending heredity, or it may be the result of the incurable mistakes in the anatomy of women."[47] The sports of cricket and fencing were out of the question:

> Cricket and fencing must be numbered among the sports which the very few attempt, and in which no women can be experts. They may play the one, and practise the other, but they will have all the interest of 'monstrosities' attaching to them, and can in the nature of things never be authorities.[48]

With backhanded approval, the critique concluded that the book was sensibly written as long as the enthusiasm and prowess of the authoresses were not taken too seriously.

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[46]"The Gentlewoman's Book of Sports," Saturday Review 73 (1892): 369.

[47]Ibid.

[48]Ibid.

Women in sport faced a dilemma: if they took sports seriously, they were freaks of nature; if they did not, they would ruin the game. There were very few pastimes in which women participated that escaped criticism. By and large, woman's "femininity" was a handicap in sport.

Miss L. Dod, Ladies' Champion at Wimbledon in 1887-88 wrote that when lawn tennis became popular in the 1880's, there was a danger that separate rules would be adopted for men and women. There was some resistance to women playing tennis because it was thought they would not be able to play well, that their dress was a burden, and that they would never understand the scoring system.[49]

According to H. Wilberforce, the prospects of mixed doubles championships were rather dim. "No one ever saw a lady 'smash' a ball; few, if any, ladies can volley with effect, and the efforts of most to take a back-hand result in nothing better than a graceful scoop."[50] Mr. Wilberforce maintained that lady tennis players lacked judgment and did not think beyond the stroke of the moment. The sum total of a mixed-doubles match was a perpetual attempt on the part of the male players to keep the ball at the lady opponents.[51]

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[49]Miss L. Dod, "Ladies' Lawn Tennis," Tennis: Lawn Tennis and Rackets; Fives: Badminton Library of Sports and Pastimes, ed. Duke of Beaufort (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1890), pp. 336-337.

[50]H. W. W. Wilberforce, "The Four-handed or Double Game," Tennis: Lawn Tennis and Rackets; Fives: Badminton Library of Sports and Pastimes, ed. Duke of Beaufort (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1890), p. 291.

[51]Ibid., pp. 291-292.

In the magazine entitled, Physical Culture,[52] which was supportive of physical exercise for women, Agnes Hood discussed "women's natural inabilities" with regard to sport. Women were without any natural capacity for athletics or real understanding of sport because of something missing in their physical constitutions. Though the authoress did not explain what was lacking, she did grant that "athletic feats could be achieved by exceptional women at an enormous expenditure of nerve power, and with ten times the exertion they would cost a man." Some young girls who were raised with boys could hold their own, but their excellence was acquired and imitative. To account for those women to whom sports did seem natural, she explained that "A few women . . . are undoubtedly born with an almost masculine appreciation of sport, but they are rare and cannot be called average women, but are freaks of nature, as much as was Joan of Arc or George Eliot."[53] Finally, she said that women simply did not look particularly nice in the heat of a sport event:

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[52] Physical Culture was a magazine under the editorship of Mr. Eugen Sandow, a self-styled physical culturist. Mr. Sandow advocated the building of muscle, and the pages of his magazine are filled with flex-muscled young men. (The state of their undress throws a different light on the so-called prudish Victorians.) Mr. Sandow recommended a system of exercise for women, often with the use of light dumb-bells. There was a great deal of emphasis on the development of the muscles of the chest and abdomen. Mr. Sandow's most prominent conviction was that women needed to be healthy for childbearing.

[53] Agnes Hood, "Women's Natural Inabilities," Physical Culture 2 (1899): 103-104.

> Anyone who has seen professional women cyclists racing, and watched their strained faces, and their heated shaking bodies when they dismount, must admit that it is a repulsive sight, and a warning to women not to carry their physical ambition too far.[54]

If woman carried her physical ambition too far, she usually heard about it. An article taken from the "Volunteer Service Gazette" which appeared in The Times included a statement lamenting an increasing desire on the part of Englishwomen to take up rifle shooting. This would serve no useful purpose because in the event of an invasion, there would be plenty of work for women to occupy themselves. Apart from this aspect of the situation, rifle shooting might be harmful to female anatomy. Rifles had been designed especially for men; had they been intended for women the stock would have been constructed differently. "The recoil of a long-range rifle with the ordinary or even a smaller charge of powder, may be productive of grave and permanent injury to a woman, too dreaded to be named."[55] While it was agreed that women had proven to have a good eye and steady hand, it was recommended that in future, women leave rifle shooting to the Volunteers and stick to archery.

The pastime of shooting at targets with bows was condoned, and there was but mild antagonism when women shot at targets with

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[54] Ibid., 103.

[55] The (London) Times 19 August 1862.

rifles. However, the hunting of animals with a rifle came under increasing criticism, primarily for the effect it would have upon woman's "angel instincts."

In the world of fiction, Charlotte Yonge (1823-1901) appears to be representative in her treatment of women in sport. Her biographers wrote that as a rule, Yonge did not permit her more admirable heroines to take part in sports which involved killing, though this was not applicable to her heroes; shooting parties for her heroes were a matter of course. She did not really approve of women hunting, though they could ride to the meet. In a fishing episode which involves two female characters in Ireland, Yonge does not disapprove of the sport itself, but of the young women going unprotected; however, she makes the reader feel that the two are connected.[56]

These, then, were examples of how sport was perceived by the Victorians as the antithesis of ideal womanhood, and it is of course, in the more extreme positions that the contradiction was more sharply drawn. Naturally, there were real women who could have been considered ideal: these women resolved the conflict by wearing their ordinary dress for sport and by acting with ladylike demeanor.

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[56]Margaret Mare and Alicia C. Percival, Victorian Best-Seller: the World of Charlotte M. Yonge (London: George G. Harrap & Co., Ltd., 1949), p. 265.

However, sports participation by women could be upsetting to a social order in which men were strong protectors and women were submissive help-mates. The sportswoman denied woman's spatial boundaries of home and her kinetic limitations of encumbered motion. From woman's point of view, the frankness of sport threatened to reveal woman's bipedalism which she shared with man, an admission of commonality. At the same time, acknowledgment of "two-limbness" either by exposure or suggestion of vigorous movement could be sexually provocative. Vigorous movement was not only mannish, it simultaneously could tarnish the altar of Hymen. The feminine ideal suggested that it was best to avoid sports altogether.

CHAPTER III

THE VICTORIAN FAMILY AND CHILDHOOD

> Women don't consider themselves as human beings at all. There is absolutely no God, no country, no duty to them at all, except family. . . . I know [of] nothing like the petty grinding tyranny of a good English family. And the only alleviation is that the tyrannized submits with a heart full of affection.
>
> Florence Nightingale in a private note, ca. 1851[1]

The average mid-Victorian family included five or six children, but after the 1870's, the higher socio-economic groups began to practice family limitation; by the 1925-29 period, the average number of children was 2.2 per married couple.[2] According to J. A. Banks, the retreat from parenthood was primarily due to the rising standard of living which required increased expenditure in order to maintain social status. The cost of raising children was one factor which promoted family limitation. More children now reached adulthood, and they required an increasingly longer period of education which had become an important key to upward mobility. Employment now depended

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[1] Quoted in Cecil Woodham-Smith, Florence Nightingale, 1820-1910. (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1951), p. 62.

[2] J. A. Banks, Prosperity and Parenthood: a Study of Family Planning Among the Victorian Middle Classes. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), pp. 3-5.

more upon ability and performance and less upon birth. The increased cost of educating children in addition to greater expenditures for the trappings of gentility promoted the practice of family planning.[3]

The material conditions of the middle class varied, but there were minimal symbols of status required to differentiate the middle class from its social inferiors. One servant would barely place a family within the lower boundaries of the middle class, whereas the upper reaches of the middle class might employ more than half a dozen servants. If a family were in doubt about the number of servants they should employ, books of domestic instruction were available which detailed the number and type of servants commensurate with a given annual income. The outlay of expense for food and drink expanded as the middle class entertained more lavishly and consumed wine and costlier foods. The possession of horses was desirable, and if affluence permitted, a carriage. It was fashionable to take a holiday, so money had to be set aside. While the upper-middle class family took their holidays on the Continent, the lower-middle class family spent a fortnight at an English seaside resort.

The ideals surrounding the family were of special significance to the Victorians, for family represented the foundation of society.

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[3]J. A. Banks, Prosperity and Parenthood. These are the conclusions drawn by Banks in this careful analysis.

The family was conjugal, relationships were intimate but characterized by formality. To some, the closeness was a source of joy and a buffer against the outside world, while to others, the intimacy was stifling. The familiarity of the family was such that any minor altercation sent shock waves reverberating throughout the household.

The father was indisputable head of household. To his children, he was awesome and somewhat remote. He was involved in his work, and his children saw him only at special times of the day. Children regarded it as a special treat when their father spent time with them either reading to them or taking them on long walks. The Victorian mother often acted as intermediary between her husband and children, and she was the mitigator of family emotions.

The notion of family and home so revered by the Victorians was middle-class inspired and had been developing over the course of a number of centuries. In the Middle Ages, little value was attached to the family as a social institution. Life was lived in public; family along with apprentices and sundry visitors occupied great public rooms in the household. Gradually, the family began to withdraw into privacy, and social distance increased between family, employees and those of different social status. Houses were redesigned and divided into rooms laid out according to function. By the nineteenth century, distinctions on the basis of age and class were fully developed, and they were reflected in work, leisure, schooling and costume. The

concept of childhood as a special time of life was part of the evolution of the modern family. Children of the Middle Ages mingled with adults in work and recreation which were not regarded as separate activities. As soon as swaddling clothes were abandoned, children dressed as adults, played the same games, and there was no discrimination with regard to age at schools. The notion of childhood as a special period of life and the idea that children were innocent and needed moral protection gained substance. Distinctions of childhood were first made with very young boys as though their age separated them from adulthood more than that of girls; therefore, boys enjoyed status as children before girls. Segregation by age as well as by class occurred in schooling, and was reflected in costume and in play activities. For children, games of chance were either ruled out entirely or modified so that the element of chance was drastically reduced. By the nineteenth century, stages of childhood were well-differentiated.[4]

For most middle-class Victorian children, life began in the nursery, often in the company of brothers, sisters and nursemaid. It was in the nursery that intimate relationships among siblings were established. The innocence and purity of childhood portrayed in the

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[4]Phillippe Ariès, Centuries of Childhood: a Social History of Family Life, trans. Robert Baldick (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1962). These are some of the conclusions drawn by Ariès. This is an excellent study utilizing a wide array of sources.

rhapsodic books designed for women were balanced by Victorian recollections: the usual hostilities comprising any childhood society were present, complete with hitting, scratching and the tyranny of the elder over the younger. Though socialization into her sex role undoubtedly began at a tender age, the young female would find more freedom of action in the nursery than she would encounter as an older child. For the young girl, there were certain advantages in having older brothers in terms of participation in games, but on the other hand, she also became aware at an early age of the disadvantages arising from her sex. The solidarity established in the nursery weakened when older brothers were sent off to school. Male prerogative with regard to educational and social privileges would be reinforced, and the young female would gradually become aware that she would not share her brothers' experience.

Victorian parents typically conducted the early education of their children, then, if the family budget permitted, a governess was hired when the eldest child reached about eight years of age. Thereafter, sons generally were sent to boarding school in about their twelfth year while daughters remained at home. In some cases, the father taught his daughters the classics or mathematics, but for the most part, fathers did not believe in a theoretical education for their female offspring. If the wealth of the family permitted, a young girl learned the "accomplishments" under special teachers of music, dancing,

drawing, deportment and foreign languages. If the family could not afford to hire these special teachers, the governess was meant to cover the gamut. Adolescent daughters of wealthy parents were sent to "finishing" schools for a year or more to complete their education. However, for most girls, especially in the early and mid-Victorian periods, education outside the home was brief, intermittent and expensive. The young woman tended to remain an integral part of the family and home with little outside experience until her marriage.

Undoubtedly, the manner in which girls were educated was satisfactory to most Victorian parents, but for some girls, learning "accomplishments" was banal compared to the wide world of their brothers. Virginia Woolf's biographer, Quentin Bell, wrote that it was when Thoby (her oldest brother) returned home from his first school talking about the Greeks, that Virginia probably realized that the Greeks belonged to him in a way they would not belong to her, "that they formed a part of the great male province of education . . . from which she and Vanessa [her sister] were to be excluded."[5]

To the young girl with an inquisitive and able intellect, the restrictions placed upon her reading (novels were frowned upon) and the barring of her father's library filled her with frustration. Furthermore, the lack of privacy and economic independence of which

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[5]Quentin Bell, Virginia Woolf: a Biography (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1972), p. 27.

Virginia Woolf bitterly complained in A Room of One's Own (1929) intensified the adverse conditions faced by a talented woman. There were innumerable outstanding Victorian women who acquired knowledge and expressed their talents surreptitiously. The brilliant mathematician, Mary Somerville (1780-1872), tried to teach herself algebra while shivering under bedclothes at dawn before the household awoke. The efforts of Florence Nightingale (1820-1910) to become a nurse and to establish nursing as a legitimate occupation for women were continually thwarted by a demanding family; furthermore, despite the Nightingale's great wealth, Florence was not given an allowance until well after her thirtieth birthday. When the Brontë sisters began to publish their works, they kept their action from their father and brother. By using masculine pseudonyms, they hoped to avoid disapproval by male relatives and society in general.

Whether talented or not, daughters were expected to either direct or assist in the functionings of domesticity. In the motherless household of the Stephen[6] family, Virginia and Vanessa had some time to themselves, but their own interests were secondary to those of their male relatives:

> [Virginia] and her sister might spend the mornings studying Greek or drawing. . . but their afternoons and their evenings were given up to those occupations which the men of the

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[6]Virginia Woolf's family name.

> family thought suitable; looking after the house, presiding at the teatable, making conversation, being agreeable [to friends and relatives.][7]

Life for the young Victorian female was not all submission and self-sacrifice. There were girls who received an excellent education from their parents, and there were those whose fathers, brothers and uncles encouraged defiance of the Victorian conventions which oppressed women. However important these exceptions to the rule, an attempt must be made to generalize about girlhood in the Victorian middle class. In as far as it is possible to be typical, Molly Thomas,[8] born in London in 1866, was probably representative of that class.

Molly was a member of a large family; there were already four sons by the time she arrived. Her father was on the Stock Exchange, and Molly wrote that the family finances wavered between great affluence and extreme poverty.[9] There were times when the family had several servants, and at times, none. On at least one occasion, the gas was cut off. While religion was an important part of life, Molly's family took a light-hearted view of it; if Sunday turned out to

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[7] Ibid., p. 70.

[8] Molly Thomas Hughes became Headmistress of Bedford College in 1892.

[9] Talk of poverty must be measured in terms of Victorian middle-class standards and aspirations. There was a time in 1885 (by this time Molly's father was dead) when Molly was struggling to obtain an education. She was often hungry and lacked bus fare, but the family still had one servant.

be a nice day, the family might be diverted and go for a long walk in the sunshine. As for training the boys, Molly's father believed that they should see the world; Molly was to remain within the shelter of home. The children seemed to undergo no harsh punishments at the hands of their parents; they were to go to bed when told to do so, eat everything on their plates, and they were not to be rude to the servants.

A typical day in young Molly's life included tuition by her mother in the mornings after the chores. After her father set off for work and her brothers were sent to school, Mrs. Thomas put out sheets, counted the wash, ordered dinner and made arrangements with tradesmen. Following this routine, Molly's mother summoned her for studies, which included Latin, French, English grammar, poetry, history and reading the Bible. Following study, Mrs. Thomas painted, while Molly read, sewed, wrote or recited English and French poetry. This arrangement was not rigid, for on nice days, Molly and her mother took long walks, shopped, sketched outdoors or visited art galleries. Once in a while, mother and daughter treated themselves to a carriage ride through Hyde Park.

In terms of leisure activities, the family went on walking excursions, and in the summer they took a trip to the seaside. One of the aspirations of the Victorian middle-class family was a summer holiday, but for a large family, trips to the seaside were expensive.

Molly's family travelled by train to Cornwall when they could afford it; when they couldn't bear the expense of Cornwall, they either withstood the heat of London or spent a fortnight at Walton-on-the-Naze. At the seaside, Molly and her brothers bathed separately, and the boys were allowed to go out in fishing boats.

When the children were young, their basic toys included bricks, soldiers, marbles and hoops. They had their own playroom, and as they grew older, books and magazines lined the playroom walls. For her fifth birthday, Molly was presented with a wooden horse and cart. For indoor recreations, the children put on plays, played charades and such games as whist, dominoes and draughts (checkers), except on Sunday when games were outlawed. For outdoor recreations, the children played the usual games of hide and seek and other imaginary games. Whenever the occasion arose, Molly joined her brothers for a game of cricket in the backyard. When her brothers walked on walls embedded with glass or swung in the trees, Molly was in the audience. In the winter, there were fewer recreations; the boys skated and slid on the ice, and they attended the theater or music halls to which Molly was not allowed. In spite of her interest in the Cambridge vs. Oxford boat race, Molly never saw it; nor did she visit the Tower of London, Crystal Palace or Madame Tussaud's - all places to which her brothers were assigned to conduct tours for country cousins. Molly wrote that "my outside amusements were mainly pale

reflections of what the boys told me about theirs."[10]

Victorian children played games common to today's children. Games of chance were less tolerated than games emphasizing physical skill and strategy, although there was variation among families. In some homes, cards and dice were absolutely taboo. For most families, play on Sunday was forbidden. In addition to parlor games like Musical Chairs and Hunt the Slipper, such hobbies as pressing leaves and collecting minerals, butterflies and birds' eggs were popular among children. Undoubtedly, summer holidays were favored by the children as it greatly increased their scope for play activities. A number of Victorians recollected the boredom of winter. Gwen Raverat[11] wrote that "our daily walks with the governess were quite paralysing with dulness; for in winter our only form of exercise was walking, now that we were growing too old for playing pirates and climbing trees."[12]

For the Victorian girl, play activities followed the pattern of gradual socialization into woman's role. As she grew older, play

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[10] M. Vivian Hughes, A London Family 1870-1900 (London: Oxford University Press, 1946), p. 30.

[11] Gwen Raverat, born in 1885, was the granddaughter of Charles Darwin.

[12] Gwen Raverat, Period Piece: a Cambridge Childhood (London: Faber and Faber, Ltd., 1970), p. 62.

emphasizing physical skill or strategy and the combination of the two declined. A young girl's play was primarily restricted to the confines of the house or to within close proximity when outdoors. She was frequently an onlooker to daring physical feats of her brothers'. As she approached adolescence, her activities were curtailed by Victorian propriety. According to her biographers, Charlotte Yonge's childhood ended at age thirteen. From that time on, she "was forbidden any such unmaidenly action as writing to her boy cousins . . . and by the middle 'teens it was considered hoydenish to take the wet day's exercise of a game of ball or battledore[13] in anything but female company."[14]

The changes in girlhood activities which occurred over the sixty-four year span of Victoria's reign, were characterized by an increasing emphasis upon independence and the adoption of games formerly enjoyed primarily by boys. While the young female was not particularly coddled in the early Victorian period, there was an increasing tendency to encourage more uninhibited physical vigor. In an 1888 article, Mrs. Oscar Wilde reflected a late Victorian sentiment when she said that she was glad to say that 'plush' clothing, which was "scarcely suitable for the free physical life that is so absolutely necessary to a

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[13]Battledore was a forerunner of badminton.

[14]Mare and Percival, World of Yonge, p. 33.

healthy child,"[15] had been replaced by "rough" clothes for outdoors. Mrs. Wilde hoped that all mothers who wished their girls to "grow up healthy and happy," would adopt the Rational Dress Society Kindergarten costume, which included a divided skirt!

Another indication of the growing acceptance of the independent athletic girl was exemplified in Every Girl's Book of Sport, Occupation and Pastime, published in 1897. Included in the book was information about such activities as riding, driving (a carriage with horses), cycling, rowing, swimming, dairy farming,[16] cricket, fencing; in addition, there were articles concerning everything from care of the sick to wood-carving. In her introduction to the book, Mrs. Whitley remarked on the change from the "ill-educated and limp female" of the early nineteenth century to the educated and outdoor girl of 1897. While encouraging vigorous outdoor activities (in moderation), Mrs. Whitley simultaneously urged her young reader to "guard and cultivate the gentleness and sweet reasonableness" of her sex, and to avoid grotesque behavior like she "who affects a fine contempt for man, and yet attires herself in a close imitation of his garments,

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[15]Constance Wilde, "Children's Dress in This Century," Woman's World 1 (1888): 416.

[16]Prior to the Agrarian and Industrial Revolutions, dairy farming was a female specialty, and one by which women contributed to the earnings of the family, and thereby had a sense of economic independence.

crops her hair close, and rides a bicycle in a so-called 'rational dress.' "[17]

In addition to a mode of demeanor to be adopted in sports, Mrs. Whitley recommended that girls choose a profession or trade in the same way boys would do. Undoubtedly, married life was the ideal existence, but Mrs. Whitley raised the question of what would happen if a girl did not marry or her parents died. "What is to stand between a girl and starvation, save only the living on richer relations, which, to a girl of any character or spirit, must always be altogether intolerable?" It was now possible to insure against the grim spectre of poverty. "In these days, when women are no longer looked upon as brainless dolls, there are many avenues open to them, and even trades, which are followed with credit and success by well-born and highly-educated women."[18]

Surely, this was a message of a different kind to young girls: to have suggested an independent spirit, career preparation, and "driving a pair" in the park to young females would have been tantamount to treason in an earlier time. In addition to books such as Every Girl's Book of Sport, which influences may have been negligible, middle-class girls in greater numbers were being indoctrinated into adulthood from an increasingly powerful institution - the school.

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[17]Whitley, Every Girl's Book of Sport, p. 1.

[18]Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

THE SCHOOLS

Part I.

Education

> I believe that I may say . . . on behalf of the advocates of female education, that any objector is welcome to assert anything he likes about the inferiority of the female intellect. . . . We are not encumbered by theories about equality or inequality of mental powers in the sexes. All we claim is that the intelligence of women, be it great or small, shall have full and free development. And we claim it not specially in the interest of women, but as essential to the growth of the human race.[1]
>
> Emily Davies, 1864

In the mid-nineteenth century, there were no universities, no "public"[2] schools, and only a few endowed[3] schools for girls of the upper and middle classes. Depending upon family financial

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[1] Emily Davies, "On Secondary Instruction as Relating to Girls," read at the Annual Meeting of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science, in Thoughts on Some Questions Relating to Women, 1860-1908 by Emily Davies (New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1971), pp. 72-73.

[2] "Public" schools were the province of the upper class, and in the nineteenth century, their doors were opened to the middle class. For the most part, the old-established public schools were originally endowed for educating poor boys and girls. They outgrew their local associations and became fee-paying, boarding schools for boys.

[3] Endowed schools were self-supporting.

resources, girls were educated by daily or resident governesses, and upper classes were sent to public schools, while children of the poor received schooling (if at all) in religious, charity or state-supported schools.

Agitation for the improvement of middle-class girls' education began in mid-century. In addition to the value placed on education in itself, there was a feminist motivation to open the professions to women; this required an education similar to that offered to males. The paucity of education, the uselessness of the "accomplishments," and the lack of systematic education were all attacked. If education were to be improved, then schools had to be established and teachers trained. The market was already flooded with governesses, but they were inclined to be poorly-trained and poorly-paid.

The Governesses' Benevolent Institution was established in 1841 to "afford assistance privately and delicately to ladies in temporary distress." The original intent was to lend financial support in cases of need and to act as a placement agency. When the Institution became active in 1843, it was so overwhelmed by applications from "distressed gentlewomen" that it was able to handle only a small part of the requests for help. It soon became clear that governesses were so poorly educated that in order to secure a decent livelihood from teaching, they needed better qualifications. The purpose of the organization altered to that of improving educational

standards.[4]

Through the Institution, F. D. Maurice, then a professor at King's College, and Charles Kingsley, along with other fellow Christian Socialists, inaugurated a series of lectures. The lectures were successful and widely attended (not only by governesses), and out of this success grew the idea of Queen's College which became a reality in 1848. Permission for the name of the College was granted by Queen Victoria, and it was hoped that this would help placate adversaries of higher education for women.[5]

In the year that Queen's College opened its doors, a young woman by the name of Dorothea Beale commenced her training as a teacher. Dorothea Beale (1831-1906) had been attending an expensive Parisian boarding school, but the Revolutions of 1848 hastened her return to England at which time she entered Queen's College as a student.

Having met certification requirements, Miss Beale remained at Queen's College for seven years, first as a mathematics and then as a classical tutor. She then took up a new post as head teacher at

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[4]There was also a desire to maintain the social status of governesses by limiting the profession to "gentlewomen." There was some evidence that daughters of tradesmen were being prepared as governesses, a move not warmly received by the middle class.

[5]Crow, Victorian Woman, p. 152.

Casterton,[6] but the situation there was an unhappy one. Among other problems, Miss Beale was assigned to teach too many subjects, and not content to "hear lessons" in the old method, she resigned after one year.

At her next post in 1858, Miss Beale became Headmistress of Cheltenham Ladies' College, a position she retained for nearly fifty years. Cheltenham (established in 1853) was the first women's boarding school of the "public" school type. Miss Beale had numerous ideas about how girls' education ought to be changed, but believing that evolution was the better part of revolution, she proceeded slowly in the adoption of her reforms. At first she was content to teach modern languages, but in time she established the classics. Under the guise of "physical geography," which was acceptable because few boys learned it, she taught the sciences. Miss Beale believed that girls' education should be different from that of boys, particularly with regard to examinations. She never overcame her suspicion of competitive examinations, prizes and scholarships, and she wished to avoid fostering rivalry among girls.

The philosophy toward competitive examinations was the basic point on which the early women educators differed. Competitiveness

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[6]The school at Casterton was the Clergymen's Daughters' School which had been moved from Cowan Bridge. Cowan Bridge was the school known as Lowood in Jane Eyre, and was the one attended by the Brontë girls. At the time, it was one of the few endowed schools in existence.

conflicted with the feminine ideal, and its sanction was distasteful to many of the early educators. However, the tide of opinion favored competitive examinations in girls' education. Furthermore, it was argued that girls should take the same examinations as boys: otherwise, there would be little chance that their academic qualifications would be taken seriously. One of the early educators who was in concert with this philosophy was Frances Mary Buss.

Frances Mary Buss (1827-1895) was one of the earliest pupils at Queen's College and a contemporary of Dorothea Beale. Prior to her attendance at Queen's College, she had already become involved in a teaching career, having commenced teaching at the age of fourteen, and opening her own school four years later. Following her attendance at Queen's College, Miss Buss opened the North London Collegiate School for Girls in 1850. She started with thirty-five pupils, and by the end of the first year, one-hundred and fifteen were enrolled. The school was primarily a day school and the fees were two guineas per quarter.[7] Miss Buss also instituted scholarships for the less-affluent of her students, but perhaps her greatest achievement was to establish schools on a self-supporting basis. It was a tribute to her success when in 1871, The Girls' Public Day School Trust, modelled on the Buss system, made secondary education for middle-class girls

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[7] A guinea equalled one pound and one shilling. This was quite reasonable, especially when compared with boarding schools.

a reality.[8]

One of the students of the North London Collegiate was Molly Thomas. By the time Molly enrolled in Miss Buss's school in 1883, she was sixteen and her attendance at the North London Collegiate was the result of an important decision. She was now fatherless, and her mother asked her to choose between living as a leisured lady (along with her mother) supported by her brothers, or to strike out on her own and find a means of self-support. She chose the latter alternative, but in 1883 options for a "lady" were limited to teaching. Accordingly, Molly set out to prepare herself, and entered the North London Collegiate.

In retrospect, Molly wrote the following account of the North London Collegiate School:

> Coming into the school at the age of sixteen I saw its glaring faults and absurdities. . . . I didn't see then, as I saw later, that Miss Buss was faced by a herculean task. . . . She was a pioneer, and almost single-handed, in getting some kind of systematic education for girls. She had no school to copy, no precedent of any kind.[9]

Girls were to be taught something, but what? "Negatively, the problem was easy. All the hitherto satisfactory ideals of

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[8]The Annual Report of the Girls' Public Day School Trust indicated that in 1898, there were 7,039 girls in thirty-four schools. Reported in The (London) Times, 23 February 1899.

[9]Hughes, A London Family, p. 179.

accomplishments and 'finishing' must be wiped out, but what was to take their place?"[10] Molly was critical of Miss Buss's solution of the problem which involved seizing what was at hand: girls learned the same subjects as boys, and she applied the stimulus of outside examinations by which the curriculum was ready-made.

While Molly Thomas believed that the Buss approach to girls' education resulted in a feeble imitation of the boys', others were of the opinion that this was the only course of action. Sara Burstall,[11] another pupil at the North London Collegiate, concurred with the Buss philosophy:

> Girls and women, if they wished to do good work, earn good pay and keep an honourable standing in the professions like men, must be allowed to take the same examinations and keep the same rules. . . . Progress would have been impossible without it.[12]

There was antagonism toward the idea of women entering the professions, and as women made inroads into higher education, the opposition intensified. Feminists viewed education as the key to improve the status of women, and consequently were active in the educational reform movement. At the center of this movement was

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[10] Ibid.

[11] Sara Burstall became Headmistress of the Manchester High School for Girls in 1898.

[12] Sara Annie Burstall, Retrospect and Prospect: Sixty Years of Women's Education (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1933), p. 55.

Emily Davies. Millicent Garrett Fawcett wrote:

> Miss Davies . . . had early in her own life set before herself as a definite object the improvement of the whole social and political status of women. . . . Her best route towards her ultimate goal was, she was convinced, through education. . . . Firstly, improved education for women was good in itself and would arouse the minimum of opposition. Secondly, education was a necessary preliminary to enable women to occupy the place in national life . . . which Miss Davies aimed for them.[13]

Outwardly Miss Davies was a quiet, demure, rector's daughter, but underneath she possessed a masterful and persuasive character. Emily Davies, Dorothea Beale and Frances Mary Buss gave evidence before the Taunton Commission (School's Inquiry Commission) in 1864, but it was Emily Davies who convinced the Commission to consider middle-class girls' education. The Commission was important because it was the first official inquiry into the status of girls' education, and it stimulated such reforms as the Endowed Schools Act of 1869 which was designed to improve benefits for girls.[14]

Miss Davies led the fight to secure admission of women to university examinations, and the first Cambridge Local Exam was opened to girls in 1863. She was instrumental in founding the School Mistresses Association in 1866, but one of her most important

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[13]Millicent Garrett Fawcett, What I Remember (London: T. Unwin, Ltd., 1925), p. 40.

[14]Heretofore, endowments which had been originally intended for both boys and girls were not shared equitably; girls received virtually no benefits from the endowments.

activities involved the opening of Girton College (at Cambridge) in 1869. Girton was a residential college for women designed along university lines.

Girton students (as well as other female college students) were under close scrutiny by the public as a college education for women was deemed "unladylike." Sara Burstall, who was selected in 1878 to be a Girton College student, recalled the honor and responsibility attending the young Girton women:

> We were conscious of our privilege, as members, however young and obscure, in a great forward movement for the women's cause. We must be worthy of it. Two things mattered intensely; first that we should do well in our work, and justify the hopes of our founders; second, that we should avoid giving offence or injuring the cause by any breach of conventional behaviour.[15]

While the early educators made progress in terms of establishing schools and providing their students with a quality education, they encountered greater obstacles as they approached the university level. The most difficult battle waged in this connection was the attempt to gain the privilege of taking degrees, and in this, the pioneers were largely unsuccessful.[16]

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[15]Burstall, Retrospect, p. 65.

[16]It was not until 1920 that Oxford admitted women to degrees, and it was not until 1947 that Cambridge admitted women to full university membership.

Bitter arguments were exchanged between proponents and opponents of women's education, but the early female educators tended to avoid direct confrontation or open competition with men. While the educators designed a different education for girls in the sense that they included some of the domestic arts in their curricula, for the most part they copied what they considered to be the best features of education enjoyed by males. Opposition to education for women weakened, and the aim of schooling moved away from the "accomplishments" toward theoretical study.

In their efforts to raise the standard of girls' education, the reformers left few stones unturned. One of the subjects they established was that of physical education. They faced the problem of finding a system of physical education, but it was not long before they developed comprehensive programs.

Part II.

Physical Education

> Let us once for all discard man as a physical trainer of women; let us send the drill sergeant right about face to his awkward squad. This work we women do better, as our very success in training depends upon our having felt like women, able to calculate the possibilities of our sex, knowing our weakness and our strength.[17]
>
> Madame Bergman-Österberg, 1899

Two traditions of physical education grew up in nineteenth century Britain: a "games" tradition which was considered recreational and character building, and gymnastics which was deemed good training for physical development. Boys of the public schools developed the games tradition outside the school authority. With the reform of boys' public schools after 1830, games came to be viewed as a means of discipline, and were thus institutionalized. Games became valued as training in self-government and were so wholeheartedly encouraged that they gave rise to the "cult of athleticism." Although gymnastics were not unknown in Britain, they were not indigenous, having been imported from Germany and Sweden. Gymnastics on a large scale found their way into the physical education of Britain by way of the state-supported elementary schools in the 1870's. Gymnastics were seized upon as a

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[17] Madame Bergman-Österberg, "Remarks to International Congress of Women," quoted in McIntosh, Physical Education in England, pp. 137-138.

method of disciplining the masses of unruly boys and girls, and they were favored over games because they could be used with younger children, needed less equipment and required less space. Peter McIntosh pointed out that although games and gymnastics were both employed to discipline disorderly children, the differing socio-economic circumstances in which the traditions developed assigned them a class orientation: games for the rulers and gymnastics for the masses.[18]

Against this background of games and gymnastics, girls' physical education evolved within the school setting. After 1870, the girls' high schools (like those of the Girls' Public Day School Trust), public schools and colleges played an important role in blending the two traditions into comprehensive physical education programs.[19] Physical education taught in girls' schools at the end of the century was a long way from the "two-and-two walk"[20] of earlier times.

Until the educational reform of the 1860's, little had changed in girls' physical education since 1790 when Mary Somerville attended

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[18]McIntosh, Physical Education in England, pp. 118-119. The interested reader is also referred to P. C. McIntosh, "Games and Gymnastics for Two Nations in One," in J. G. Dixon et al., Landmarks in the History of Physical Education (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), chapter 8.

[19]McIntosh, Physical Education in England, chapter 8.

[20]The "two-and-two walk," also called the crocodile walk, was simply a double file; orderliness was suggested.

boarding school. Mary Somerville was ten years old when she entered the school in Musselburgh (Scotland), and she found that one of the aims of "physical education" was to affect a fine carriage. In the following excerpt, she described the backboard which was used well into the nineteenth century:

> A few days after my arrival, although perfectly straight and well-made, I was enclosed in stiff stays with a steel busk in front, while, above my frock, bands drew my shoulders back till the shoulder-blades met. Then a steel rod, with a semi-circle which went under the chin, was clasped to the steel busk in my stays. In this constrained state, I and most of the younger girls, had to prepare our lessons.[21]

During play time at school, Mary wrote that the girls played ball, marbles, and 'Scotch and English,' "a game which represented a raid on the debatable land, or Border between Scotland and England, in which each party tried to rob the other of their playthings."[22]

Almost fifty years later, little change was evident in physical education. Frances Power Cobbe wrote of her Brighton boarding school in 1836 that "no time whatever was allowed for recreation, unless the dreary hour of walking with our teachers . . . could be so described by a fantastic imagination."[23] Frances took dancing

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[21]Martha Somerville, Personal Recollections of Mary Somerville (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1874), pp. 21-22.

[22]Ibid., pp. 22-23.

[23]Frances Power Cobbe, Life of Frances Power Cobbe, 2 vols. (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1895), 1:53.

lessons for the sake of "accomplishment," and calisthenics for beauty, health and obedience training. She wrote of her physical education:

> Beside the dancing we had 'calisthenic' lessons every week from a 'capitaine' Somebody, who put us through manifold exercises with poles and dumbbells. How much better a few good country scrambles would have been than all those calisthenics it is needless to say, but our dismal walks were confined to parading the esplanade and neighboring terraces.[24]

A walk under the supervision of the governess was the main characteristic of physical education cited by the early Victorians.

Apart from a few educational philosophers, the medical profession was the only segment of the population who displayed interest in physical education for health's sake. In 1833, the Penny Magazine printed an article with excerpts from the writings of doctors. The aim of the article was to inform the public about the poor status of girls' physical education in the boarding schools:

> There is no branch of education which stands more in need of revision and improvement than that which related to the bodily health. . . of children . . . which is now commonly known by the name of Physical Education. This is more especially true of the education of girls, particularly . . . at boarding schools.[25]

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[24]Ibid., p. 57.

[25]"On the Ill Effects of Insufficient Exercise, Constrained Positions, and Tight Stays on the Health of Young Women," Penny Magazine 2 (1833): 77.

In one of the more highly-rated schools investigated by a physician, the time allotted for exercise was from six to seven P. M. at which time the girls "walked arm-in-arm on the high road, many with books in hand and reading." It is to be remarked that they "never go out unless the weather is quite fine at the particular hours allotted for walking."[26]

By mid-century, the social climate was changing, and in contradiction to the feminine ideal, the female was more frequently regarded as the same species as the male. Consequently, she also might benefit from physical activity. A larger portion of the population became concerned with physical education, amongst whom the pioneer educators were of particular importance. One of these innovators was a Scot, Archibald MacLaren. He developed a system of physical education for the military based on gymnastics, and he also devised a system for the schools based on both games and gymnastics. Although MacLaren was primarily involved with the physical training of males, he turned his attention to girls' physical education in an 1864 magazine article. He contrasted a boy's healthy, active growth to maturity with that of his sister's - after the nursery, her advance to maturity became "dull and languishing." MacLaren's remarks about the two-and-two walk were representative of what had now become a widespread attack

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[26]Ibid., 78.

on the limited physical activity of girls:

> Having attired themselves in bonnet and mantle, linked together arm-in-arm, two and two, they go forth - for a walk! As they did yesterday, as they will do tomorrow, and the next day . . . at the same hour, in the same order, the same road, the same distance. . .. And no one must laugh or speak except to her companion, and then only in an undertone, because loud speaking is unladylike; and no one must quit the path, or run or jump because all romping is unladylike.[27]

His criticism of the neglect of physical exercise had been echoed before, but his suggestions for activities indicated an atmosphere in which girls' physical education might be expanded. He recommended swimming which hitherto had not been encouraged, and he also suggested handball, battledore, grass-hoops and rackets. He disapproved of cricket and football (soccer), and "there are excellent reasons against leap frog."[28]

Although men like MacLaren supported more vigorous physical activity for girls, the early female educators gave physical education its impetus. Misses Beale, Buss and Davies gave evidence at the Schools' Inquiries Commission of 1864 with regard to the status of girls' education. At that Inquiry, they expressed dissatisfaction with

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[27]Archibald MacLaren, "Girls' Schools," Macmillan's Magazine 10 (September, 1864), 410.

[28]Ibid., 414. Presumably leap frog could damage the reproductive organs, but one is led to suspect that disapproval of such activities was also motivated by a fear of spoiling virginity.

the paucity of the physical activity of girls, and some members of the Commission displayed a similar concern. Mr. James Bryce, M.P., stated:

> Though undoubtedly, under the name of 'callisthenics' it is duly encouraged in the better schools, yet . . . the want of systematic and well-directed physical education [is] often the cause of failures in health and impediment to successful study.[29]

Mr. Bryce's philosophy of physical education was shared by the women pioneers: physical education was to be a means to an end. The dualism espoused by John Locke, "a sound mind in a sound body," was expressed by Emily Davies in a paper read before the Birmingham Higher Education Association in 1878. She said physical sport "is an advantage we cannot afford to despise, looking upon it as an aid towards the development of a vigorous 'physique,' the sound body fit for the habitation of the sound mind."[30]

Miss Davies' contemporary Dorothea Beale, Headmistress of Cheltenham Ladies' College, was committed to the physical education of girls, but she held grave reservations about the effects of competitive sports. In 1894, she remarked:

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[29]Quoted in Josephine Kamm, How Different From Us: a Biography of Miss Buss and Miss Beale (London: Bodley Head, Ltd., 1959), p. 87.

[30]Emily Davies, "Home and the Higher Education," paper read at the Annual Meeting of the Birmingham Higher Education Association, 1878, in Davies, Thoughts on Some Questions Relating to Women, p. 149.

> The Physical Education . . . is much advanced, . . . and many take lessons in the Swedish Gymnasium[31]. . . . Our twenty-six tennis grounds, and our new playground, give facilities for outdoor games which are much appreciated, but I am anxious that girls not over-exert themselves, or become absorbed in athletic rivalries, and therefore we do not play against other schools.[32]

Miss Beale disallowed matches between the College and other schools because she feared they "would do nothing but foster the very evils of competition and emulation which she was at so much pains to discourage in the classroom."[33] However, under the growing pressures for outside competition, Miss Beale compromised by permitting outside hockey matches with women's clubs, the first of which was played at Cheltenham in 1890. Presumably, she believed that matches between the College and a club would be less prone to give rise to rivalry than contests between schools.

Miss Beale's attitude toward sports competition was consistent with her philosophy that girls' education should be different from that of boys'. As far as she was concerned

> walking and gentle callisthenics provided exercise enough. Her initial distaste for the same intellectual training for girls

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[31]Miss Beale was proud that Cheltenham possessed the only "fully equipped" Swedish gymnasium in the neighborhood.

[32]Quoted in Kamm, How Different From Us, p. 223.

[33]Kamm, How Different From Us, p. 222.

> as boys was reflected in her distaste at the thought of girls indulging in men's sports. When she was persuaded that the introduction of games was inevitable she gave way - with grace as always - and it is typical of her that she acted at once.[34]

Although Miss Beale never lost her antipathy toward games, she moved with the tide of opinion which favored competitive sports. Miss Beale's fellow educator, Frances Mary Buss, was one of the people who was enthusiastically contributing to the movement toward competitive games for girls. The ideology encompassing games was well suited to the educational philosophy of Miss Buss. From the inception of her North London Collegiate School, she began to build a physical education program. It appears that it was she who instigated, or at least put into practice many of the procedures which gained currency in physical education programs. One of her former students, Sara Burstall, wrote in 1933 of the North London Collegiate School of the 1870's:

> After the school meal, we were encouraged to run about and play in the garden, . . . even though we were no longer children, which was quite a liberal idea for those times. . . . We had simple calisthenic lessons most days for short periods, with marching. Swimming was encouraged, the local swimming bath, through Miss Buss's efforts, being reserved for girls and women on Saturday mornings. . . . In the 'seventies, well-to-do women rode, practised archery, and played croquet,

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[34]Ibid., pp. 221-222.

> but games in the modern sense would have been considered outrageous. The pioneers had to go very gently; perhaps that is why they succeeded so well.[35]

It appears that Miss Buss adopted a combination of German and Swedish gymnastics with musical accompaniment, and she also included remedial exercises for girls with anatomical disabilities. "An annual medical inspection by a woman doctor was started in 1882, possibly at the instigation of Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, who had become a Governor a few years earlier."[36] In addition to the medical examination in 1882 and the issuance of a school health certificate in 1888, Miss Buss initiated health lectures for pupils, parents and teachers.[37]

A sports club was established at the Buss school in 1885 which offered ninepins for those who preferred a quiet game. For girls who desired more energetic exercise, there was a variety of games including badminton, battledore, shuttlecock and fives.[38] When the time came for team game competitions to be sanctioned, Miss Buss was in the lead.

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[35]Burstall, Retrospect and Prospect, pp. 50-51.

[36]Kamm, How Different From Us, p. 224. Kamm is probably correct in her assumption that the doctor was Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, as she took an interest in physical education.

[37]Ibid., p. 226.

[38]Ibid., p. 224. "Fives" was a form of handball.

> [She] had no . . . reservations or inhibitions about the evils of competition, and placed no restrictions on the playing of outside matches. In 1890 she agreed to the games captain's suggestion that the School should hold a sports day - an almost unprecedented departure from the conventions; and she hired a field at Epping.[39]

In the last two decades of the century, games competitions became more widespread. Matches were staged among the women's colleges of Newnham and Girton at Cambridge and Lady Margaret and Somerville Halls at Oxford. Young women graduates of the colleges took their sports and games with them to new teaching posts. In addition to the growth of women's colleges, there was a proliferation of new girls' high schools which from their inception included games and gymnastics in the curricula. The spread of physical education programs created a demand for qualified teachers. The woman most responsible for catering to this demand was Madame Bergman-Österberg.

In 1882 the London School Board appointed Madame Bergman-Österberg as Lady Superintendent of Physical Education to replace a fellow Swede, Miss Concordia Löfving, who had been assigned the post in 1878. This appointment was significant because it marked the rise of the Swedish gymnastic system which dominated physical education in state-supported schools for decades. The assignment

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[39]Ibid., p. 223.

was also important because it was the beginning of women's influence in the development of physical education in England.[40]

The Swedish system, particularly under Madame Bergman-Österberg, replaced military drill which hitherto served as physical education in the state-supported schools. During the course of Madame's six-year service with the London School Board, she trained 1,312 teachers and introduced her system into 276 schools.[41] However, her association with Board schools identified her system with the poorer classes. She remarked:

> Is it not funny . . . that you here in England think that what is good for the poor cannot be good for the rich? . . . This argument did not impede me for long. I built the College and Gymnasium in 1885 and since then have been steadily working to improve the development of women of the upper and middle classes.[42]

Madame Bergman-Österberg was referring to the women's physical training college which she opened in 1885.[43] With only four students in the first year, the institution was the first residential

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[40]McIntosh in Dixon, Landmarks in Physical Education, p. 195.

[41]McIntosh, Physical Education in England, p. 115.

[42]M. Österberg, Professional Women on Their Professions, 1891, quoted by Jonathan May, "The Bergman-Österberg Physical Training College," in McIntosh, Physical Education in England, p. 288.

[43]The College was opened in Hampstead and was moved to more suitable grounds at Dartford in 1895; it became known as the Dartford College of Physical Training.

college for the training of physical education specialists in England. Madame selected girls with a sound educational and social background, and this in addition to high fees, limited recruitment to middle and upper class girls. She established a fine reputation, and her students were invariably placed before completion of the two-year course. Thus, the class bias associated with gymnastics was tempered, and the new occupation of physical education specialist was added to the employment possibilities for middle-class girls.

In spite of Madame Bergman-Österberg's training in Swedish gymnastics, she equipped her gymnasium with German apparatus as well as experimenting with apparatus of her own design. Not only did she take an eclectic approach to gymnastics, she included games in her curriculum. As early as 1884 she advocated the inclusion of games in physical education, and eventually her course of study contained cricket, hockey and lacrosse. She introduced the American game of basketball to England, and her students modified the game to netball which was more suited to the grounds at Dartford. In addition to gymnastics and team games, the curriculum included theoretical studies in anatomy and allied subjects and dancing, swimming and tennis.[44]

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[44]May, "The Bergman-Österberg Physical Training College," in McIntosh, Physical Education in England, pp. 288-292.

Among the many innovations that emerged from the Dartford Physical Training College was the development of a gym tunic (much like the hockey tunic worn today). Victorian women's costume was ill-suited to vigorous physical activity, and the adoption of the gym tunic had far-reaching implications not only in terms of freedom of movement, but for the social acceptance of a special costume for sport. The gym tunic was adopted not only in many English girls' schools, but it quickly gained approval in other parts of the world.[45]

Madame Bergman-Österberg's success with her physical training college paved the way for the opening of other colleges at the end of the century. Modelled on the Dartford system, among the best known were Stansfield at Bedford, Anstey in Birmingham and Adair Impey at Chelsea.[46]

The opening of these physical training colleges was a result of the demand created by new girls' schools founded after the Endowed Schools Act of 1869. While some of the schools were modelled on the lines of the Girls' Public Day School Trust, others like St. Leonard's, Wycombe Abbey and Roedean were imitative of the boys' public schools. These schools copied the cult of games practiced at the boys' public schools, but they also included gymnastics and dance.

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[45]Ibid., p. 291.

[46]Ibid., p. 295.

Indicative of the attention paid to physical education was the first prospectus of Roedean which opened in 1885:

> The aim of the School will be to give a thorough education, physical, intellectual, and moral. Special pains will be taken to guard against overwork, and from two to three hours daily will be allotted to outdoor exercise and games.[47]

Dorothy de Zouche, authoress of Roedean School, wrote that the amount of physical activity cited in the prospectus no doubt contributed to the wide-spread belief that Roedean students made games their chief occupation. The two to three hours listed in the prospectus was somewhat exaggerated, but "what was true was that they played games from the first, and played them, no private ground being available, in the open."[48] In spite of adverse criticism, the Headmistress continued to emphasize physical activity in the prospectus because "it was the part of girls' education still so often neglected even when their intellectual needs had won recognition."[49]

That girls should be physically as well as intellectually emancipated was a radical doctrine: that girls should play competitive team sports represented an even more penetrating invasion of male prerogative. The Headmistress of Wycombe Abbey, Jane Frances

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[47]Quoted in Dorothy E. de Zouche, Roedean School 1885-1955 (Brighton: Dolphin Press, Ltd., 1955), p. 27.

[48]de Zouche, Roedean School, p. 35.

[49]Quoted in de Zouche, Roedean School, p. 36.

Dove, wrote an article entitled "Cultivation of the Body" in which she enunciated the importance of games. Inherent in one of her supportive remarks concerning games was the nationalism which had been associated with boys' public schools for half a century. Games were to the nationalism of England what gymnastics were to that of Germany and Sweden. The association between games and Empire had now been insinuated as one justification of girls' team sports. If the English were to continue to be a powerful race, then women as well as men must be strong and healthy. Girls, too, would share responsibilities of Empire:

> I think I do not speak too strongly when I say that games, i.e., active games in the open air, are essential to a healthy existence, and that most of the qualities, if not all, that conduce to the supremacy of our country in so many quarters of the globe, are fostered, if not solely developed, by means of games.[50]

According to Miss Dove, games not only developed qualities of leadership, but they fostered courage, rapidity of thought and action, and unselfishness. She maintained that games counteracted women's natural tendency toward a narrow view not extending beyond her family. As the family was the basic unit of society, it was argued that the corporate action of games would benefit the nation. For this

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[50]Jane Frances Dove, "Cultivation of the Body," in Dorothea Beale, Lucy H. M. Soulsby and Jane Frances Dove, Work and Play in Girls' Schools (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1898), p. 398.

development of "esprit de corps," Miss Dove recommended organized team games such as cricket, hockey and lacrosse, the last of which was deemed a good substitute for football which was unacceptable for girls. Miss Dove suggested that these games be made seasonal so that outside matches could be scheduled; there were few activities that tended to "strongly keep up the 'esprit de corps' of a school as meeting other schools on the playing field."[51] Students who wished to play these vigorous games must be required to undergo systematic gymnastic training; but in any case, no student should be exempt from gymnastics.

For smaller groups, Miss Dove advocated such activities as tennis, basketball, golf, swimming and toboganning. "Let these games also be encouraged by means of tournaments and competitions . . . and let prizes or challenge cups be offered for success in these competitions."[52] For individual exercise, riding, rowing, or bicycling were preferable to "ordinary walking" because they were far more interesting.

Miss Dove's slight of "ordinary walking" may have been a negative reaction to the two-and-two walk of earlier times. Her recommendations for girls' sport reflected a drastic change in attitude. Girls were not only encouraged to participate in vigorous and

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[51]Ibid., p. 405.

[52]Ibid., p. 400.

uninhibited physical activity, but they were authorized to play team sports. The physical emancipation from the constraints of the two-and-two walk was a departure from the feminine ideal, but the institutionalization of competitive sports categorically opposed it. Competition among women was not encouraged outside the marriage market. Team games required loyalty and combined effort, characteristics which among women, were generally frowned upon by society.

The early women educators, despite a lack of precedent and in the face of opposition, initiated and developed comprehensive physical education programs. Sara Burstall summarized their contributions toward this development:

> It was an important part of the ideals of the pioneer women in education that girls should be healthy and strong. . . . In the days when feminine weakness and physical delicacy were thought to be womanly charms such a standard [was] needed . . . . The teaching of hygiene, and . . . gymnastic exercises were marked characteristics of the high schools from their very beginning. . . . Organised games did not come at first; that would have been too great a breach of continuity with the past;but when . . . college women began to come into the schools as . . . mistresses, they brought games with them.[53]

The combination of intellectual and physical education struck a blow at the feminine ideal, and weakened its grip on the conventional beliefs with regard to how women ought to behave.

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[53]Sara Annie Burstall, English High Schools for Girls: Their Aims, Organisation and Management (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1907), p. 90.

Figure 1. Rational Dress. Reproduced from Physical Culture 1 (1898): 123.

CHAPTER V

COSTUME AND WOMEN'S SPORT

> That monstrosity of fashion, the divided skirt, is an outrage not to be countenanced - an unnatural costume which must be productive of unwomanly ways which are to be deprecated. Moreover, as it approaches the trouser in form and in use, it must engender an increase in the heat of the body which is most undesirable.[1]
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> Lancet, 1883.

Body adornment in the form of skin decoration, jewelry and clothing has functioned as an indicator of status within a social group and has signified such positions as sex, age and marital status with concomitant responsibilities and privileges of each position. Most students of fashion point to "conspicuous consumption" as a prime mover of body decoration. Clothing has been designed to connote idle leisure by restriction of movement and by utilization of fabrics unsuitable for work activities. Furthermore, wealth and position have been implied by the quality and volume of clothing materials.

Historically, the main themes of feminine fashion have involved constriction of the waist and expansion of the breasts and hips. Devices which have been used to distort the body image include bustles,

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[1]Quoted in Ada S. Ballin, The Science of Dress in Theory and Practice (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1885), p. 181.

crinolines and corsets. All three implements were used in the nineteenth century, and though their use was critized by certain segments of society, fashion reigned supreme. Corsets were most denounced, particularly by medical men. An article of 1833 condemned the practice of tight-lacing for the purpose of "social appearance," and warned of the consequences of continued use:

> [There is] an obvious impediment to the motions of the ribs . . . . In proportion as respiration is impeded, is the blood imperfectly vitalised; . . . The heart, too, becomes excited, the pulse accelerated, and palpitation is in time superadded. [The spine becomes deranged] and the stomach and liver are compressed. . . . Thus, almost every function of the body becomes more or less depraved.[2]

Despite protests from the medical profession, physical educators and advocates of "rational dress", corseting continued throughout the century. Complaints regarding tight-lacing were still to be heard by century's end, although criticism of the practice was not always as explicit as that of Mr. Eugen Sandow, physical culturist:

> The modern corset is responsible for many of the untold evils in woman's physique. The artificial splints in which her trunk is encased prevent the development of either organs or muscles. The pectorals become so flabby they cannot sustain

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[2] "On the Ill Effects of Insufficient Exercise, Constrained Positions, and Tight Stays on the Health of Young Women," Penny Magazine 2 (1833): 79-80.

> the weight of the breast; the abdominal muscles so weak that there is not adequate expulsive power.[3]

Even though denunciations of corseting were more vociferous when sport activities were involved, women tended to wear the same supportive garments that they utilized for everyday wear.

Development of a specialized sports costume for women proceeded at a slower pace than the evolution of men's sporting wear. Early stages of a costume for women were evident in the latter half of the nineteenth century when women's sports began to proliferate. With few exceptions, women tended to wear their ordinary clothing for sports activities. Raiments worn for sports followed the general trend of feminine costume which at the start of the century were of classical or pseudo-classical style on simplistic lines. The dress began to widen at the bottom until mid-century when it reached its extreme (ca. 1860) and required great crinolines to support the volumes of material. The skirt then narrowed down, the front part was flattened, and a bustle was added around 1870. One significant pattern of women's clothes for outdoors was the increasing masculinization of apparel covering the upper-half of the body. By the end of the century, women had adopted masculine jackets, stiff collars, ties and hats. The other important aspect of women's sporting clothes

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[3]Eugen Sandow, "The Physical Development of Women," Physical Culture 3 (1899): 103.

was the appearance of a bifurcated garment which caused controversy, and aroused ambivalence which was usually expressed in a dual garment covered by a skirt. The late nineteenth century trend of women's fashions, while retaining the impedimenta and trappings of femininity, evinced styles which provided greater freedom of movement. The aping of male attire pointed towards utility and perhaps indicated the attempt by a low-status group to gain the rights and privileges of a high-status group.

The earliest sport costume designed for women appears to have been the riding habit which emerged in the latter part of the sixteenth century. Women began to wear cloaks and an overskirt (called a "safeguard") as protection against the weather, boots, caps, and a mask or half-mask to protect the complexion.[4] In the seventeenth century, they wore jackets, waistcoats and coats which closely resembled the corresponding male apparel. In the eighteenth century, women's riding coats and waistcoats buttoned left over right in the masculine fashion, and in the last two decades of the century some ladies' habits were modelled on military uniforms. At the beginning of the nineteenth century women wore clinging clothes, fewer petticoats, and in the 1830's they began to wear underdrawers beneath their habits. Late in the century, paralleling the general trend of

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[4]Cunnington and Mansfield, English Costume for Sports, p. 99.

Figure 2. Past and Present. Punch 100-101 (18 July 1891): 6. Reproduced by courtesy of Punch.

fashion, riding dress became less voluminous and ornate in the skirt and more masculine in the bodice. A few daring souls donned divided skirts or breeches with an apron or calf-length coat to conceal the bifurcation. In women's clothing, the evolution of the riding habit was the most obvious in its copy of male dress. By the end of Victoria's reign, women were well on their way toward appropriation of male attire in its entirety.

Aside from the distinguishing features of the riding habit, women wore special colors or particular trimmings for sport events. For archery in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, women wore green in their dresses and feathers in their hats. Cunnington and Mansfield found the earliest mention of women cricketeers in 1745: the players were dressed in white with one eleven wearing blue ribbons in their hair and the other team wearing red ribbons.[5] In the seventeenth century, women wore loose-fitting gowns for bathing in fresh-water spas. For bathing in the open sea, they wore nothing until the beginning of the nineteenth century at which time they seemingly adopted gowns. The bathing gown, riding habit and special trimmings represented the earliest stages in the evolution of sports costume.

In the late nineteenth century, occasional concessions were made for sports in the form of shortened skirts; a shortened skirt usually

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[5]Ibid., p. 39.

meant to within several inches of the ground. Women donned peaked caps and boater hats (see Fig. 2) for sporting activities as well as club ties for team sports and special trimmings for yachting dress and cricket outfits.

The "walking dress" appeared in the late 1850's. Dresses were extremely heavy and the adoption of the cage crinoline, though it increased the weight of the clothing which was already substantial, allowed the wearer greater freedom of leg movement. The walking dress also had a device by which the huge and heavy skirt could be hitched up over the crinoline. This enabled the wearer to play croquet which had become popular in the 1860's (see Fig. 2). The walking dress was worn on walking excursions which had become a fashionable exercise by this time, and it was also worn for climbing mountains. Although the walking dress sounded utilitarian, walking or any active pastime must have been difficult for in the 1870's and 1880's, dresses were heavily trimmed, and skirts were often tight and trained. In the 1890's, the Alston Dress Suspender supported the train and left the wearer free to use both arms.[6] The English "tailor-made" dress appeared in the 1870's, and it was obvious in its copy of masculine attire and design for freedom of movement. It was worn for outdoor activities and excursions into the "country." When

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[6]Ibid., pp. 338-344.

lawn tennis became popular in the 1880's, one minor addition to the ordinary outfit was an apron that formed a large pocket to hold tennis balls.

Perhaps the most important development in sports outfits for women involved the bifurcated garment. It was significant in terms of its implications for freedom of movement, but it was controversial because of its symbolic association with manhood. It appears that the bifurcated garment for women emerged in the form of underdrawers early in the nineteenth century. Prior to this time, Englishwomen wore no underdrawers. When first introduced, they were considered immodest, but by the 1830's, the wearing of underdrawers was generally accepted.[7] It seems that the most crucial point involving the two-legged garment was whether or not it was visible; controversy was directly proportional to the degree of visibility.

The first great dispute regarding trousered women came with Mrs. Bloomer's attempt to popularize long, Turkish trousers frilled about the ankles. "Bloomers" made a brief debut in America and England in the 1850's, but the strength of public ridicule dealt the

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[7]C. Willett Cunnington and Phillis Cunnington, The History of Underclothes (London: Michael Joseph, 1951), p. 68. There is a conflict in the literature concerning the time of social acceptance of underdrawers. Some authors would put the date later than 1830. It is difficult to discover facts about underclothes; they were not discussed in polite society and the array of euphemisms is somewhat bewildering.

outfit a swift death. An article of 1851 predicted that bloomers would "never be generally adopted," that there would always be strong opposition, and that the wearing of them would be associated with "the bold, resolute, the uncompromising."[8]

Bloomers emerged in the bathing costumes of the 1860's, but this did not stimulate debate. Perhaps the added decency compensated for the former sacklike, bottomless gowns which were fraught with possibilities of exposure as in the situation at Ramsgate in 1856:

> The water is black with bathers - should the sea be rather rough, the females do not venture beyond the serf, and lay themselves on their backs, waiting for the coming waves, . . . The waves come, and in the majority of instances, not only cover the fair bathers, but literally carry their dresses up to their necks, so that, as far as decency is concerned, they might as well be without any dresses at all. . . and all this takes place in the presence of thousands of spectators.[9]

Theoretically the sexes were segregated for bathing, but of course in practice, this was not always the case. The innovation of bathing machines sometime after 1750 helped protect the bather from public view. Bathing machines were enclosed wagons which were rolled into the sea at which time the bather exited directly into the

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[8]"Bloomerism; or, the Female Invasion," Bentley's Miscellany 30 (1851): 644.

[9]The Observer, quoted in Cunnington and Mansfield, English Costume for Sports, p. 263.

sea. In 1847, Queen Victoria experienced the pleasures of sea bathing:

> On hot days a loud grating sound would break the stillness of the woods. It was the Queen's bathing machine running down a sloping pier to the shore. Having donned voluminous bathing apparel by the dim light of two frosted-glass windows high up under its eaves, Her Majesty would step out on to a closely curtained verandah and descending five wooden steps, drop into the sea. It was only after the waves had taken over the concealing duty of the curtains that the machine would be removed.[10]

The Queen recorded the experience in her Journal:

> Drove down to the beach with my maid & went into the bathing machine, where I undressed & bathed in the sea (for the first time in my life), a very nice bathing woman attending me, I thought it was delightful till I put my head under the water, when I thought I should be stifled.[11]

Toward the end of the century people began to distinguish between the "real" athlete and the dilettante. A prominent member of the Brighton Ladies' Swimming Club remarked that "bobbers" or "mere paddlers" could wear elaborate costumes which the "real" swimmer would find an impediment. Poor swimmers could be content with the ordinary shop suit, but proper swimmers should place convenience and comfort first. The real swimmer's costume should be sleeveless, the knickers quite short above the knees, and the top cut

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[10] Longford, Queen Victoria, pp. 210-211.

[11] Queen Victoria's Journal, 1 August 1847, quoted in Longford, Queen Victoria, p. 211.

so as not to fill with water.[12]

Pressure for the adoption of a more functional sport costume came from several quarters, but the most active promoters were the advocates of "rational dress!" When this term was first used in the 1880's, it referred to baggy knickerbockers covered by a long skirt. The phrase became an umbrella term embracing all types of bifurcated garments, while the term, "bloomers," also continued to be used. In 1882, the Rational Dress Society exhibited a divided skirt:

> At the Hygienic Wearing Apparel Exhibition, the chief object of attraction was Lady Harberton's 'divided skirt', a skirt divided to clothe each leg separately, the underclothing being arranged as most convenient. Over it an ordinary dress skirt is worn.[13]

The disciples of rational dress like Lady Harberton and Ada Ballin in her Science of Dress (1885) experienced little success in persuading women to their point of view. This was in spite of the fact that many of the styles were indistinguishable from the ordinary dress. According to Elizabeth Haldane,[14] the impetus for the adoption of rational dress came from another quarter:

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[12]"Neptune," "Swimming as a Pastime for Women," Physical Culture 3 (1899): 50.

[13]Quoted in Alan Bott, This Was England (New York: Doubleday, Doran and Co., 1931), p. 52.

[14]Elizabeth Haldane (1862-1937) became the first woman Justice of the Peace in Scotland in 1920.

> Divided skirts advocated by Lady Harberton came in another way uninspired by her . . . . It was the necessities of games, not convictions, that brought about the change of garb. . . . It took a great war to make these practical garments usual and popular.[15]

The bifurcated costume appeared in the physical education classes of schools. In 1885, a gym tunic was designed at Madame Bergman-Österberg's Physical Training College. From that time onward, the tunic was increasingly favored in the schools and public gymnasiums. At Roedean School, the games and gymnastic dress of the 1890's consisted of a short skirt and sailor blouse of blue serge, with a "dickey" front attached by tapes.[16] Bathers wore knickers and short-sleeved tunics of alpaca, "a material admirable except in its quality of scratchiness."[17] At the North London Collegiate School of Miss Buss, girls on a sports day in 1890 wore a special uniform which consisted of "light-coloured knee-length skirts, white blouses belted loosely at the waist, and blue-striped caps if they were devotees of the Arts - red if worshippers at the shrine of Science."[18] Gwen Raverat who attended boarding school in the 1890's wrote that for hockey, "we played in white blouses and blue skirts, which had to clear

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[15]Haldane, From One Century to Another, p. 140.

[16]de Zouche, Roedean School, p. 37.

[17]Ibid., p. 34.

[18]Kamm, How Different From Us, p. 223.

the ground by six inches; and our waist-belts were very neat and trim over our tight stays."[19]

At one of the best patronized gymnasiums in London, girls from twelve to twenty years of age wore blue serge gymnastic costumes. The director of the gymnasium remarked that "we do not advocate a skirtless costume for our lady pupils. . . . I know that at several gymnasiums and generally speaking on the Continent skirtless costumes are worn. [Though they admittedly are practical,] they are not so nice looking or graceful as when a short skirt is added."[20] For the most part, the divided garment in the gymnasium context did not excite too much remark, and this was perhaps due to a more limited public view of the outfit.

While it is true that the bifurcated garment was a point of contention from the inception of bloomers, it became a full blown controversy when cycling became the rage in the 1890's. Cycling no doubt found its way into the hotbed of debate because it was public, immensely popular, and because it provided an excuse for wearing trousers. To some Victorians, this was bloomerism re-visited with more substance:

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[19]Raverat, Period Piece, p. 71.

[20]C. Holland, "The Physical Education of Girls," Physical Culture 1 (1898): 333.

> if the cycle had not been so democratic a plaything, this latest experiment in dress reform would have been little heard of. Rational dress as seen on the flying females who pedal down the roads today is only Bloomerism with a difference.[21]

What was a disturbing possibility to some was welcomed by others: the cycling costume might translate into everyday wear. Speculating on the prospect of this happening, Mrs. Fenwick-Miller of the Illustrated London News wrote that she had been impressed with the acceptance of rational dress for women in Paris. In addition to women clad in the outfit on their bicycles, she witnessed great numbers of "lady-like" pedestrians also clothed in rational dress. As the wearer of the bifurcated garment was frequently seen "utterly apart from her machine," a lady who was not a cyclist could wear it "without attracting remark." Mrs. Fenwick-Miller wondered "if we shall ever come to this in England?"[22]

Criticism checked the adoption of rational dress for cycling and everyday wear. The unrelenting lampoons heaped upon the garment betrayed fear of the Amazons:

> She is upon us, The Emancipated Woman. . . . Clad in Rational Dress, she is preparing to leap the few remaining barriers of convention. . . . Such symbols of independence as latch-keys and loose language are already hers; and if she does not presently

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[21]Harper, Revolted Woman, p. 43.

[22]Florence Fenwick-Miller, Illustrated London News, 15 May 1897.

> begin to wear trousers upon the streets. . .we shall assume that . . . womankind are, generally speaking, knock-kneed. and are unwilling to discover the fact to a censorious world.[23]

The world would have to wait to discover whether womankind in general was knock-kneed. Most women would have agreed with Lady Jeune when she said

> there is no doubt to some minds a pleasure and excitement in donning the dress of our masters, and in meeting them on equal terms, which women undoubtedly do in bicycling; but those who do this lose so much in personal appearance and charm.[24]

Sports became a vehicle by which women might adopt the costume of their masters, but only the intrepid dared defy convention. For the most part, women wore the current fashions of the day; they climbed mountains in caged crinolines, played tennis in dresses weighing ten pounds, and caught their flowing draperies in the wheels of their cycles. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, a movement toward a special costume for sports was in the making, but women clung to their symbol of femininity, the skirt, and did not wear costumes truly suited to the motion of sport until after World War I.

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[23]Harper, Revolted Woman, pp. 1-2.

[24]Lady Jeune, "Cycling for Women," Badminton Magazine of Sports and Pastimes 1 (1895): 411.

"TRAILING CLOUDS OF GLORY": A Ladies' Hockey Club at play, from the picture by Lucien Davis, exhibited in London. (1894)

Figure 3. A Ladies' Hockey Club at Play. Alan Bott, This Was England (New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1931), p. 203. Reproduced by courtesy of Doubleday & Co., Inc., Copyright, 1931, by Doubleday, Doran & Co., Inc.

CHAPTER VI

PATTERN OF NINETEENTH CENTURY WOMEN'S SPORT

> Mrs. Dunn, a married woman, 31 years of age, has commenced the task of walking 1,000 miles in 1,000 hours, in an enclosure adjoining the Star Hotel, Cock Ferry. She is attired in the bloomer costume, having a short blue jacket, pink trousers, and straw hat. She is a woman of short stature, about 5 feet in height, though somewhat muscular in appearance.[1]
>
> The (London) Times, 1854

In the first half of the nineteenth century, women's sport comprised traditional aristocratic and rural pastimes. After mid-century, the most outstanding feature of women's sport was its growth. This was characterized by an increase in the variety of sports and number of participants. One of the most significant trends in women's sport was its organization into clubs and the institution of competition.

In the first half of the century, middle-class women were noticeable by their absence in sport activities. Their involvement consisted primarily of walking, riding and an occasional game of battledore. While women of the aristocracy hunted, fished, rode, and shot with bow and arrow, women of the lower class engaged in rural pastimes, although with the growth of urban centers and industralization, these

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[1] Liverpool Standard, quoted in The (London) Times, 13 July 1854.

faded in importance.

Traditional rural pastimes were often connected with holidays, fairs and events marking the agricultural calendar, and they included foot and horse races, football, wrestling, cricket and dancing. Women were active participants in foot races, dancing, stool-ball[2] and even boxing. Although it is unlikely that women played football in the nineteenth century, they, as well as children, had once participated along with men. Football, long associated with the celebration of Shrove Tuesday, was a violent pastime played in open fields and through town streets, and the playing of it resulted in damage to limb and property. The custom persisted well into the nineteenth century, but its eventual demise reflected the refinement of behavior and the waning of rural pastimes. In 1840 in the western portions of Middlesex and Surrey, so many inhabitants objected to the fracas wrought by football, that the new Police Act was enlisted to suppress the activity, at which time some of the mob was captured and fined.[3]

Spectators at cockfights and animal baitings included all classes, although by the nineteenth century, gentlewomen were not among them. In the seventeenth century, Puritans attempted to repress "blood sports," but it took the dominance of nineteenth century Puritanism to

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[2] Stool-ball was a forerunner of cricket.

[3] The (London) Times, 6 March 1840.

abolish them. Animal baiting was illegalized in 1835, bull-running[4] in 1840, and cock-fighting in 1849. Despite the abolition of these pastimes, they persisted surreptitiously.

In terms of other activities which drew spectators, horse-racing, prize fighting and pedestrian feats[5] engaged large crowds. Horse-racing was fairly well-controlledby the Jockey Club (an aristocratic organization) which formed around 1750, but boxing and pedestrianism, which were not under control of such groups, became corrupt and faded until their reorganization later in the century.

Women's sports events occasionally drew large crowds, but these affairs tended to be exhibitionistic. While gentlewomen played cricket in the eighteenth century, and privately in the nineteenth century, the public playing of cricket tended toward spectacle. In 1811, a match arranged by two nobles was played between Surrey and Hampshire women for five hundred guineas a side. The youngest player was fourteen years old, while the best bowler was a lady of sixty. The players were dressed in short-fringed petticoats coming down to their knees and light flannel waistcoats with sashes around their

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[4]The most famous bull-run was the one at Stamford. A bull was turned loose in the town streets and it was harassed by dogs and chased and beaten by a mob of men, women and children armed with clubs and staves. The object was to force the bull to jump off the bridge into the river. Eventually, the bull was roasted.

[5]Walking or running races often over long distances.

waists. The costumes worn by the players, in addition to the large wager involved, suggests that the match was an exhibition.[6]

In another cricket match in 1838, married women played single women "in a field at the rear of a newly-erected pub in Hampshire." Although this type of contest was not novel, by 1838 it must have been irregular because the report stated that "good weather and the novelty" drew a crowd of not less than 3,000. The level of skill reportedly was admirable, but "the peculiar manner of the ladies in stopping and catching, or attempting to catch the ball was highly amusing."[7] Tea was served following the match, and the day's sport concluded with a dance in the evening. None of the features of the match was new, but it appears that this sort of contest was now viewed as extraordinary.

Throughout the century, women of the aristocracy pursued such sports as hunting, fishing, archery, and riding. As an excellent horsewoman, Queen Victoria set the example in her favorite recreation of riding. On one occasion in 1837, Victoria wanted to review her troops by horseback, but objections were raised by her mother, the Duchess of Kent, and Prime Minister Melbourne. The Queen had not ridden since a recent illness, but perhaps more importantly, a review by carriage would permit accompaniment by a female attendant. A

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[6]Christina Hole, English Sports and Pastimes (London: B. T. Batsford, Ltd., 1949), pp. 62-63.

[7]The (London) Times, 8 October 1838.

review by horseback would preclude a female chaperon, and it would mean that the young Queen would be flanked by the Duke of Wellington and Lord Hill. Queen Victoria was so enthused by the latter prospect that she insisted upon a review by horseback. There was no review, and reasons for its cancellation leaked to the press and amused her subjects:

> I will have a Horse, I'm determined on that
> If there is to be a review
> No horse, no review, my Lord Melbourne, that's flat,
> In spite of Mama and of you. [8]

However, two months later, the Queen reviewed her troops sitting "Leopold" for two and one-half hours. Following the ceremony, the Queen rode "Barbara" (who provided more excitement because she was difficult to handle) for an hour and a half canter. [9]

At Balmoral, the Queen's residence in Scotland, Victoria was often seen riding and driving, and she was very fond of walking over the hills surrounding the castle. She was a spectator at the Highland Games and distributed the principal prizes. [10] The Queen and the Prince Consort often fished, and she frequently accompanied him on hunting expeditions. Although it does not appear that the Queen actually

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[8] Mrs. J. S. Haldane's papers, Miss Haldane, 1838, quoted in Longford, Queen Victoria, p. 76.

[9] Longford, Queen Victoria, p. 76.

[10] Harry S. Lumsden, "Queen Victoria a Promoter of Out-door Amusements and Sports," Physical Culture 6 (1901): 207-209.

participated in the shooting of animals, many aristocratic women did as a matter of course. It was not unusual to see a report such as "in a shooting party on the Blenheim domain the Duchess of Marlborough this week brought down eight head of game with her own gun."[11]

Ladies of the aristocracy also participated in the sport of archery. It appears that the first significant archery tournament in the Victorian period took place in 1845. Lady Greville recorded that the first Grand National Archery Meeting, the "great public event of the year," was held at Knavesmire, near York in 1844. Ladies did not shoot in that year, but in the following year, eleven women came to the targets and shot from sixty yards.[12] Though they did not compete against each other, ladies and gentlemen shot in the same tournaments, and men were the judges of ladies' events.

The aristocracy organized horseracing, golf and cricket in the eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries. By the end of the nineteenth century, the organization of sport was dominated by the middle class. Peter McIntosh, in his book Sport in Society,[13] viewed the middle-class takeover of sport as a revolution which was

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[11] The (London) Times, 30 October 1846.

[12] Lady Greville, The Gentlewoman's Book of Sports (London: Henry & Co., n.d.)[ca. 1892], p. 187.

[13] McIntosh, Sport in Society, Part 1: Chapter 6.

first evident in the public schools. By 1860, sport as reformed and developed by the middle class was well established in the public schools and universities. The middle class took the pastimes of hunting and steeple-chasing and transformed them into cross-country running (hounds and hares) and hurdle racing. From the populace they took the brutish mob violence of football and changed it to a sport of skill with gentlemanly rules of conduct. They made hockey, track and field, competitive swimming and lawn tennis sports of their own; and they organized rowing and cycling. By century's end, the middle class had determined the laws and techniques of sport not only for themselves, but for the rest of the population. Adoption of these sports by the working class took place for the most part between 1870-1890 which coincided with a reduction in working hours and the Saturday half-holiday.

Cricket and golf which had had few participants and spectators in the early part of the century, now had a great number of followers, and both sports supported a considerable body of professional players and teachers. In terms of participants and spectators, none exceeded the popularity of football. The first Football Association challenge cup match was played in 1871-72 with 2,000 spectators in attendance. At the competition in 1900-01, there were 110,802 spectators.[14]

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[14]Ibid., pp. 62-74.

The rise of sport was dependent upon a number of important factors. In many cases, sports had to await the technological development of such things as improved metals, e.g., in cycles, and construction of artificial ice rinks. Mass-produced sports equipment, e.g., croquet sets, put many pastimes within reach of a large portion of the population. An increase in urban population, prosperity, and leisure time made mass participation a reality, while social levels of aspiration made numerous pastimes desirable. Improved communication and transportation facilitated the organization of large numbers of people who shared a common interest in a pastime, and traveling to tournaments became feasible.

If women of the middle-class enjoyed limited recreational opportunities in the first half of the century, the 1860's would ring in a change with the mild diversion of croquet. The game was introduced in the early 1850's, and from that time onwards, the playing of croquet was of sufficient consequence to stimulate the mass manufacture of equipment. Croquet was popular for lawn parties because both sexes could play, and the game accommodated up to 16 people. The first public match in 1867 at Evesham in Worcestershire was symptomatic of the game having taken root, as was the formation of the All-England Croquet Club at Wimbledon in 1868. Ladies' competitions and mixed competitions soon followed men's contests.

The playing of croquet on a mass scale was indicative of the increase in numbers and prosperity of the middle class, as this was the first time that the middle class was fully represented in a recreational activity. The playing of the game was hailed as a social revolution because it provided a pastime in which men and women could play together. Heretofore, Victorian convention limited the mixing of the sexes to the more formal occasions of dinners and balls. In addition to croquet, other games in which men and women could play together were developed. Games such as badminton and lawn tennis were played either leisurely or in formal competitive settings. In addition, men and women were members of non-competitive organizations such as the British (Cycling) Touring Club.

The most outstanding feature of sport in the latter half of the nineteenth century was its organization. The institutionalization of competition in women's sport represented a marked deviation from the feminine ideal, and its sanction was evident in girls' schools and in a wide array of sports for adult women. Furthermore, whether or not there was a conscious effort to change the weakness of the feminine ideal to one of strength, a movement toward physical emancipation became evident in women's sport in the 1860's.

An awakening interest in swimming for women could be detected in the 1860's. Prior to the seventeenth century, there is little evidence that women swam or bathed for either medicinal or

recreational purposes. Bathing as a medical treatment was revived in the seventeenth century and brought about an increase in the visiting of fresh-water spas. In the eighteenth century, the virtues of sea water were extolled, and seaside hamlets such as Brighton and Lyme Regis became retreats for the wealthy. In the nineteenth century, visits to the seaside became fashionable for the middle class. The functional and recreational aspects of swimming were explored, developed, and the art of swimming came into its own.

Although an interest in swimming for girls and women grew, there were few teachers and facilities in which to learn swimming. The situation occasioned Harriet Martineau, well-known authoress and economist, to write an article in which she recommended that if parents displayed a desire for their daughters to learn swimming, the instructors and facilities would be instituted. She wrote "the generation which has multiplied baths and washhouses and drinking-fountains, can enable children to swim."[15]

Miss Martineau's article stimulated a response by way of a letter to the Editor of The Times. The contributor praised Miss Martineau's "excellent remarks upon the necessity of women being taught to swim," and the letter revealed that there was but one swimming bath in London to which women could go. It was suggested that

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[15]Harriet Martineau, "How to Learn to Swim" Once A Week 1 (15 October 1859): 327.

> the plunging baths attached to our baths and washhouses should be set apart for women on one or two days in each week, and female attendants and proper dresses (jackets and trousers) provided.[16]

The development of facilities for women lagged behind that for men, but by 1902 in London, there were ten baths for "ladies' only," and fifty baths which offered special days for ladies.[17]

The first occasion when women were admitted as spectators to a swimming exhibition was in 1861 when the male members of the Ilex Swim Club put on a special demonstration. In the past, men bathed in the nude, so drawers and vests had to be made for the swimmers. The performers were instructed to keep their bathing costumes on and not to change their clothes in public.[18] It was at this time that the pressure of public opinion forced men to adopt bathing costumes, a movement which they resisted.

Although interest in women's swimming was sporadic, it grew in the following decades. Swimming competitions were staged in the 1880's and thereafter, but attempts to develop and organize the sport were largely the work of isolated individuals. One competition was

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[16] The (London) Times, 27 September 1859.

[17] Ralph Thomas, Swimming (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Co., 1904), p. 162.

[18] Ibid., pp. 162-163.

arranged by Mrs. Cecilia Samuda at her own home in Shipton Court in 1890, and it involved six days of swimming and diving events.[19]

While the first men's national swimming club, the Amateur Metropolitan Swimming Association, was established in 1869, it is not clear when women formed organizations or were allowed to join existing men's associations. Evidence suggests that the national men's organization claimed the right to govern women's swimming, even to the point of costume, but seemed in no hurry to institute women's competitions. Although women appeared to be involved in men's organizations, the connection is not clear. In 1902, a Mrs. Vautier was the first and only woman on the executive committee of the Life Saving Society and had received their highest distinction, a diploma of the society. It appears that women eventually organized their own competitions. In 1900, the Perseverance Ladies' Swim Club planned to stage an annual one-hundred yard "Championship of London."[20] If ladies' swimming lagged behind that of men's,women were not long in following men to the Olympic Games. Men's swimming was an event in the first modern Games in 1896, while diving was added in 1904. Women's swimming and diving events became a feature in the Olympics

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[19]Archibald Sinclair and William Henry, Swimming: the Badminton Library of Sports and Pastimes (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1893), pp. 155-157.

[20]"Ladies' Aquatic Championship of London," Physical Culture 5 (1900): p. 303.

of 1912.

Long-distance swimming received a stimulus in 1875 when Matthew Webb created a sensation by being the first person to swim the English Channel. Agnes Beckwith swam twenty miles on the Thames "without any assistance whatsoever," in 1878, for which she received the British Legion of Honour.[21] A "Swim Through London" was instituted in 1907 with thirty-four starters of whom twenty-one swimmers finished. The report did not indicate how many females were involved, but Lilliam M. Smith arrived at the finish in fourteenth place.[22]

At the seaside, men and women bathed separately for most of the nineteenth century. In Aberdovey (Wales) in 1888,

> women had to bathe in a secluded nook up the estuary, and only at stated times (varying according to the tide). The town crier walked up and down the front, proclaiming, first in Welsh and then in English: 'Ladies to be bathed. . . . at Penhelig. . . . From 11 to 1.'[23]

Toward the end of the century, there was some mixed bathing, but those who participated were considered progressive. Molly Hughes wrote that a good friend of hers, who typified the "modern" girl had

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[21] Robert Patrick Watson, "Famous Long Distance Swimmers," Sports of the World, ed. F. G. Aflalo, 2 vols. (London: Cassell & Co., n.d.), 2: 373.

[22] Encyclopaedia Britannica, 11th ed., s.v. "Swimming."

[23] Hughes, A London Family, p. 352.

been "one of the first women to ride a bicycle, to go on the top of a bus, and to indulge in mixed bathing."[24]

Britain's geography lent itself to various forms of water sports in summer, while the frozen waters of winter offered possibilities from ice skating to curling. After mid-century, women took up ice skating, but it appears that they confined their activities to figure skating and did not become involved in speed skating as men did in the 1870's. The pleasures of ice skating had a limited following, but in 1896, the fashion writer for the Illustrated London News wrote that "it is perhaps, not amazing, the fervour with which the fashionable woman skates nowadays, when three artificial ice areas exist in the Metropolis for her special pleasure."[25]

Roller skating was introduced by James L. Plimpton in America in 1863. New York society quickly made roller skating fashionable, and it was not long before a skating "craze" swept the country. In the 1870's, roller skating took England by storm, and rinks were built in all the principal towns. For a while the pastime flourished, but it fell into disrepute owing to poor management of the rinks. Roller skating was revived again by improved skates and the opening of a well-run rink in Kensington in 1893. Shortly after the opening of the rink, the

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[24]Ibid., p. 377.

[25]Illustrated London News, 19 December 1896.

National Skating Association took roller skating in hand and instituted proficiency tests modelled on the competency tests which were used for ice figure skating.[26] Both ice skating and roller skating for men and women enjoyed spurts of popularity in the last three decades of the century.

Skates provided the fastest means of locomotion under self-propelled power until the advent of the bicycle. The first pedal-driven bicycle was developed in 1839, but it was largely an experimental vehicle until the high wheeler (Ordinary or Penny-Farthing[27]) appeared in the 1870's. However, owing to the danger and difficulty in riding the high wheeler, it was largely a vehicle for athletic young men, and only a few daring women attempted to ride it. In the 1880's, the tricycle appeared as the first cycle considered suitable for women. While tricycling attracted the attention of a good number of women, it was eclipsed by the invention of the safety bicycle in 1885 and the Dunlop pneumatic tire in 1888. The bicycling "craze" arrived in the nineties, and its impact upon women will be examined in a later chapter.

By the time cycling became popular in the 1890's, a decade in which women's sport blossomed, women had been playing tennis for

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[26] E. Syers, "Roller Skating," The Encyclopaedia of Sport, ed. Earl of Suffolk and Berkshire and F. G. Aflalo, 2 vols. (London: Lawrence and Bullen, 1898), 2: 377.

[27] Penny-Farthing, so-named after the coins which were greatly disparate in size.

about fifteen years. The development of modern tennis began when Major Wingfield patented "Sphairistike" in 1873, and the game became popular in the 1880's. Elizabeth Haldane recalled that lawn tennis was

> a new game entered into with zeal, but not taken in the serious way that came to pass later on. The players were content with ordinary grass courts, not too well rolled, and small racquets, but everone was good natured, which they were not in games of croquet - a game irritating to the temper.[28]

Gwen Raverat also recollected the unsophisticated early game. The court at her parents' home was too small for the "fury of the modern game, but it was quite big enough for the pat-ball tennis of those primitive times, when young and old hopped about together in a gentler and unprofessional manner."[29] Like croquet, tennis was hailed as a social revolution in which men and women could play together. In addition, lawn tennis was enthusiastically received as a recreation which provided something livelier for women than croquet.

Tennis quickly became popular and it was not long in becoming an organized sport. The first men's championship was held under the auspices of the All-England Croquet Association at Wimbledon in 1877. In the same year, the modern court and scoring system were established, and the club at Wimbledon changed its name to the All-England Croquet and Lawn Tennis Association. The first important match for

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[28]Haldane, From One Century to Another, p. 26.

[29]Raverat, Period Piece, p. 37.

women took place in Dublin in 1879, and it included a ladies' singles championship and a mixed doubles match. Other competitions were quickly instituted, and the first ladies' singles championship at Wimbledon was in 1884 when Maud Watson became the All-England Ladies' Champion. The first men's covered court championship was held in 1885, and the women's competition followed in 1890.

Tennis for women became organized in the schools and colleges. The Lancashire Girls' School Lawn Tennis League was founded in 1894 by representatives of thirteen Lancashire schools and the first tournament was held in 1895. By 1899, sixteen schools had joined the league, and in 1908, the league was divided into two sections.[30]

Another racket sport, badminton, had been played since the 1860's, and it became fully organized in 1898 when the Badminton Association comprising thirty clubs was established. The organization from the beginning included men and women. A tournament sponsored in 1899 included ladies' doubles, men's doubles and mixed doubles. In 1900, championships in ladies' and men's singles were added.[31]

One of the most highly organized sports for women was golf. The earliest club for women appears to have been St. Andrew's Ladies'

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[30]Sara A. Burstall, The Story of the Manchester High School for Girls, 1871-1911 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1911), p. 212.

[31]Muriel Lucas, "Badminton," Sports of the World, ed. F. G. Aflalo, 2 vols. (London: Cassell & Co., n.d.), 2: 240.

Golf Club which formed in 1867. Following closely were Westward Ho! and North Devon Ladies' Golf Club in 1868. While men were never far away from women's sport in the roles of consultants or organizers, a significant feature of many of the early women's golf clubs was their independence of male clubs; not a few had their own club houses and courses.[32] The first Amateur Championship in 1886 attracted more notice to the game, and by 1899, the number of ladies' clubs, not counting those men's clubs to which ladies were admitted, was two-hundred and twenty.[33]

Modern women's golf began in 1893 when several ardent members of the Wimbledon Ladies' Golf Club established the Ladies' Golf Union with representation from thirteen clubs; the Union instituted a championship in the same year. The Ladies' Golf Union published an annual with names and addresses of players, rules, results of tournaments and maps of golf courses. One of the stated purposes of the Union was to draw golfers together for common aims, "for in games, as in most other things, women are prone to lose sight of the 'general' good through a certain smallness of outlook."[34]

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[32]Robert Browning, A History of Golf (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1955), p. 125.

[33]I. Pearson, "Introduction," Our Lady of the Green, ed. Louie Mackern and M. Boys (London: Lawrence & Bullen, 1899), p. 3.

[34]L. Mackern, "The Ladies' Golf Union," Our Lady of the Green, ed. Louie Mackern and M. Boys (London: Lawrence & Bullen, 1899), p. 16.

One achievement of the early Golf Union was the gradual establishment of a national system of handicapping for both men and women's golf. One weakness of the Union was the lack of skilled players. However, this is not surprising as most of the top golfers had only commenced playing a few years prior to the founding of the Union. Most were either self-taught or had limited tuition from a male professional or from fathers and brothers.[35]

Evidence that women's golf was well organized was reflected in the possibility of women becoming professional:

> No doubt the pioneer lady pro will meet with many difficulties, and considerable opposition at the start, but, as in all cases of similar innovations, time will smooth over the strangeness, until it is a recognized thing for each lady's golf club to have its own woman club-maker and professional duly certified by the Ladies' Golf Union. This will be a good means of self-support if she is obliged.[36]

Golf was one of the few sports in which the idea of a woman as a professional player (in the modern sense) was considered. The distinction between amateur and professional in men's sport altered over the course of the century. Until about 1870, gentleman and amateur were convertible terms. Pecuniary profit was not involved

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[35] I. Pearson et al., "Scratch Lady Players," Our Lady of the Green, ed. Louie Mackern and M. Boys (London: Lawrence & Bullen, 1899), pp. 74-93.

[36] M. Boys, "Ladies as Golf Professionals," Our Lady of the Green, ed. Louie Mackern and M. Boys (London: Lawrence & Bullen, 1899), p. 100.

in the definition; amateurs accepted money wagers as a matter of course and amateur status was determined by social class. Between 1870 and 1890 amateur status came to be defined in terms of rewards and payments.[37] For the most part, these distinctions did not arise in women's sport. In women's sport, particularly in the last two decades of the century, distinctions were made between the "real" athlete and the dilettante, or the "professional" player and the dabbler.

"The Original English Lady Cricketers," organized in 1890 (see Fig. 4), were professional in both the women's sport context and modern sense of the word. The team was illustrative of the fine line between play and display, and the contradiction between woman and sport. The statement in the notice, "every effort is made to keep this organisation in every respect select and refined,"suggested that maintaining a high degree of integrity in terms of the players and the sport might be an impossible task. In her book, Cricket for Women and Girls, Pollard found it difficult to find information about the identity of the "Lady Cricketers" and where they played; she concluded that the organization was an exploitative enterprise.[38] It is possible that this was the group reported in The Times in 1892 as having gone to court to force payment of £11 from the defendant who had taken the ladies

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[37]McIntosh, Sport in Society, pp. 178-180.

[38]Marjorie Pollard, Cricket for Women and Girls (London: Hutchinson & Co., n.d.) [ca. 1933], p. 16.

as a financial speculation on tour around the provinces.[39]

As a rule, society did not countenance the playing of team sports by women. Of all sports, football was considered the most unacceptable, and the playing of it tended toward exhibitionism. An 1895 women's football match was such an example:

> A match, under Association rules between teams of ladies was played at Nightingale-lane, Hornsey, . . . the title of the game being North v. South. Great curiosity was aroused, and the ground was thronged with some 7,000 people. The football was of a very harmless nature, and its novelty soon grew irksome to many of the spectators. The North won by seven goals to one.[40]

No doubt the vigor and roughness of the game, in addition to football's past association with mob violence, contributed to its censure. Perhaps the combination of roughness, necessary endurance, and what may have been perceived as an "Army of Amazons" stimulated revulsion to the playing of the game by women.

One team sport played by women that escaped severe criticism was field hockey. The men's hockey association was established in 1886; girls' schools and ladies' clubs formed about the same time or shortly thereafter. For a time in the 1890's, there was experimentation with mixed male/female teams. This seemed to find success in rural areas where two full teams of one sex were difficult to muster.

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[39] The (London) Times, 16 March 1892.

[40] Ibid., 25 March 1895.

SEASON 1890.

With the object of proving the suitability of the National Game as a pastime for the fair sex in preference to Lawn Tennis and other less scientific games.

THE ENGLISH CRICKET AND ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION LIMITED,

Have organized two complete elevens of female players under the title of

"THE ORIGINAL ENGLISH LADY CRICKETERS"

Trained by W. Matthews, S. B. Lohmann, and qualified assistants (under the personal supervision of G. G. HEARNE, MAURICE READ, and other Leading Professionals), equipped with

Regulation Outfit by Messrs. Lillywhite, Frowd and Co.,

And elegantly and appropriately attired.

N.B.—Every effort is made to keep this organisation in every respect select and refined. A matron accompanies each eleven to all engagements.

During the forthcoming season Exhibition Matches will be given in the principal Towns of the United Kingdom.

COLONIAL TOUR TO FOLLOW.

Private Engagements of one or both Elevens can be arranged for Complete Match, or to meet Lady Amateurs.

For Terms address— THE MANAGER,

E. C. AND A. ASSOCIATION, LIMITED,

13, CHESTERFIELD GROVE, LONDON, S.E.

Figure 4. "The Original English Lady Cricketers." Marjorie Pollard, Cricket for Women and Girls (London: Hutchinson & Co., n.d.), facing p. 16. Reproduced by courtesy of Hutchinson and Co., Ltd.

However, judging by the cartoons in Punch, games between mixed teams for the most part were seen as a comic venture. By the mid 1890's, women's field hockey was well established. The All-England Hockey Association was formed in 1896, and the first international match was staged in the same year. Enthusiastic English hockey players exported their game to the women of America.

While field hockey enjoyed a limited following, those pastimes which involved mass participation on the part of women were croquet in the 1860's, lawn tennis in the 1880's, and bicycling in the 1890's. All three were viewed as social revolutions which provided women and men with opportunities to meet on informal grounds. All were discussed in light of opportunities for women in physical recreation, and of the three, cycling was the most significant to women with regard to mobility and independence.

The variety of recreational activities in which women engaged toward the end of the nineteenth century contrasted sharply with the more limited activities of earlier times. The rise of sport in the latter half of the century depended upon an increase in wealth and leisure time, and improved technology in terms of sports equipment, communication and transportation. For women, specifically, the social climate became more favorable for sports participation.

Two of the most outstanding features of sport were its growth which reached a zenith in the last decade of the century, and its

organization into clubs and competitions. Of significance to women was the role played by sport in terms of changing the weak and fragile feminine ideal of earlier times to an image of woman possessing strength and vitality. The institutionalization of competitive sports for women was a dramatic departure from the feminine ideal and the combination of encouraging physical emancipation and the sanctioning of competition was a powerful counter-attack to the ideal.

Men were involved in women's sport, either behind the scenes as advisors or as organizers of a particular club or competition. The sponsorship by men undoubtedly helped women overcome the criticism which they so often faced in sport activities. However, sport engaged the support of large numbers of women, many of whom were prominent, and their endorsement and participation encouraged otherwise more timid women to brave the inevitable opposition.

TABLE 1.

SOME DATES IN ORGANIZED COMPETITIVE SPORTS FOR WOMEN

Archery	Grand National Archery Meeting	1845
Golf	St. Andrew's Ladies' Golf Club	1867
	Amateur Championship	1886
	Ladies' Golf Union & Championship	1893
Tennis	Ireland Tennis Championship	1879
	All-England Ladies' Championship (Wimbledon)	1884
Yachting	Castle Club Yacht Racing	1887
Cricket	White Heath Women's Cricket Club (Ireland)	1887
	Women's Cricket Association	1920
Hockey	All-England Hockey Association	1896
	International Tournament	1896
Badminton	Badminton Association Tournament	1899
Swimming	Various competitions	1900

CHAPTER VII

PROTAGONISM, ANTAGONISM AND COMPROMISE

The New Amazon

RIDE-A-Cock horse
To Banbury Cross.
To see a young Lady
A-straddle o' course
If the new notion
Very far goes
What she'll do next
Nobody knows. [1]

Punch, 1890.

Protagonists of women's sport generally justified their positions on the bases of health, recreation and individual rights. Antagonists argued that women's participation in sport threatened womanhood and represented an invasion of male prerogative. However, the case for women's sport was not always clear cut: ambivalence commonly characterized the attitudes which were conditioned by the feminine ideal. The ambivalence was expressed in connection with the effects sport might have upon women, and conversely, the effects women might have upon sport. The ambivalence was a product of the contradiction between womanhood and sport, and it resulted in compromise. The compromise was manifested in women's hampering clothing, in

[1] Punch, 98-99 (1890): 143.

shortened golf courses out of deference to female weakness, and in ideologies which attributed woman's athletic shortcomings to her anatomy and special nature as opposed to lack of opportunity and practice. Degrees of approval or disapproval varied on a general level, while some sports were more acceptable than others.

Those pastimes which met with little opposition were mainly individual sports and they included skating, croquet, badminton, lawn tennis, fencing, archery, riding and angling. The last three activities had been institutionalized for centuries as pastimes of the nobility, and riding in particular, was considered a desirable "accomplishment." Golf aroused slight irritation, but not serious opposition. Cycling met with resistance initially, but popularity overwhelmed the critism. Field hockey met with but a few disgruntled remarks. Swimming was approved and usually justified for its function in the prevention of drowning. There must have been a feeling that swimming for women needed approval, because justifications were inevitably put forth. Cricket was satisfactory for girls, but it was considered an "imitative trick" and a caricature of the men's game when played by women.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, hunting with rifles on the part of women came under attack. Criticism rarely entailed the morality of killing animals, but it usually involved the possible detrimental effects upon women's "nature," and the effects women would have upon the sport. The Saturday Review admonished

huntswomen in an article which was a larger attack on feminism:

> Ladies are now engaging in shooting parties and not only do they spoil the spirit and proceedings of the party, but it is by no means a feminine occupation. . . it must be deteriorating to watch the sufferings of the unfortunate wounded, and is sure to produce a callousness to suffering that is most contrary to the true womanly instinct of gentleness.[2]

Despite the Saturday Review's criticism of huntswomen and the implication that hunting by women was a relatively new pastime, ladies had been hunting for centuries, and continued to do so throughout the nineteenth century. Lady Greville's Gentlewoman's Book of Sports (ca. 1892) excluded hunting and shooting, but this was an exception to most other sporting books and magazines. The Badminton Magazine of Sports and Pastimes and the Sportswoman's Library (1898) included all varieties of hunting from chasing the fox to hunting the otter. If the upper-class women (who constituted the participants of hunting) felt the sting of castigation, they did not display it.

While there were shades of opinion with regard to women's involvement in many sports, football was unequivocally denounced. Mrs. E. Lynn Linton, who was ever on the prowl for "Advancing Woman," remonstrated about an illustration of lady footballers in the Daily Graphic (ca. 1866-1868). In a letter to the Editor of the Graphic, she unloaded her venom:

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[2]"Manly Women," Saturday Review 67 (22 June 1889): 757.

> The illustration you gave . . . of the lady footballers at play, is one to make all but the most advanced of the sexless men and unsexed women who head this disastrous movement pause in dismay at the lengths to which it has gone. Has, indeed, all sense of fitness, of feminine delicacy - not to speak of decency - left these misguided girls and women, whose sole endeavour seems to be to make themselves bad copies of men, while throwing off every attribute that constitutes the charm of women?[3]

Mrs. Linton did not deny that women should be brave and strong nor was she opposed to all sports for women. In a private letter to her friend and biographer, George Layard, she responded to his question about whether he should provide swimming lessons for his daughter:

> I have always said all women should learn (1) to swim, (2) to load and fire a pistol or gun, (3) to climb up a ladder without losing her head, (4) to ride - and they need not be new women any the more for all these accomplishments![4]

To Mrs. Linton, the New Woman represented the disappearance of Old World modesties, and woman's abandonment of her duties of motherhood and domesticity. She viewed the woman's movement as a disaster which would destroy the virtues of both sexes and make women hard and men hysterical. She did not deny women the right to work, though she believed that motherhood and homelife was the best part of womanhood.

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[3]E. Lynn Linton, quoted in George Somes Layard, Mrs. Lynn Linton (London: Methuen & Co., 1901), p. 149.

[4]Ibid., p. 148.

She also thought that married women should have the right to own property and that motherhood should have legal equality with paternity.

In private intercourse, Mrs. Linton was a warm, gentle and considerate person, but in her public writings she unveiled an aggressive hatred of her sex. In many ways, she epitomized the woman she disparaged. As a young woman, she rebelled against her father and left home in search of a job. Until she and her husband separated, she periodically supported him and his brood of children by a previous marriage. Oddly enough, Mrs. Linton identified herself (correctly) with the woman's movement in her younger years; but she later reversed her position and became decidedly reactionary.[5]

Dr. Arabella Kenealy[6] was another who represented a paradox. She was a physician and a rabid anti-feminist. As a doctor, she was a member of the group that gave feminists their greatest battle with regard to their attempts to enter the professions. However, Dr. Kenealy was not representative of the medical profession in her

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[5]Mrs. Linton's biographer, George Layard, wrote that her change of heart involved a realization on her part that emancipation and license in man's world were poor substitutes for the duties and happiness of wifehood and motherhood. (See Layard, Mrs. Lynn Linton, p. 141) While this may have been true, it is less than satisfying as an explanation for Mrs. Linton's reversal. It would be difficult to imagine Mrs. Linton in any other life pattern than the one she chose and seemingly enjoyed. Furthermore, the hysterical outrage which she heaped upon women suggested that she protested too much.

[6]Arabella Kenealy, b. 1864, studied at a university in Dublin and the London School of Medicine for Women and practiced medicine from 1886 to 1894. She was also a novelist.

attitudes toward sports for women. To her way of thinking, sports for women were a disaster to the functions of motherhood and ultimately to society. According to one of her theories, the greater the stress and disability suffered by the mother in childbirth, the finer in physique and brain would be the offspring. The early Victorian with her "backboard and gentle accomplishments, " and without the aid of drugs produced remarkably stronger and more clever children than the over-educated and athletic woman, "whose muscles of arms and legs have sapped the powers of important internal muscles . . . making them incapable of bringing their infants into life without instrumental aid. "[7]

Dr. Kenealy was fascinated with opposites: the right side of the body was masculine while the left side was feminine; white hens produced more eggs because the color was a feminine, recessive characteristic. Women supported their infants with the left arm (woman-limb) because it was better suited for this motherly function. It comes as no surprise that Dr. Kenealy believed that sports stimulated the masculine part of the body:

> A woman who wins golf or hockey-matches may be said . . . to energise her muscles with the potential manhood of possible sons. With their potential existence indeed, since over-strenuous pursuits may sterilise women absolutely as regards male offspring.[8]

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[7] Arabella Kenealy, Feminism and Sex-Extinction (London: T. Fisher Unwin, Ltd., 1922), pp. 236-237.

[8] Ibid., p. 69.

Dr. Kenealy and Mrs. Linton espoused extreme views which nevertheless clearly pointed to the contradiction between woman and sport. People like Dr. Kenealy and Mrs. Linton, who felt antipathy toward the New Woman, found in the sportswoman a symbol of independence, "fastness,"[9] and freedom. To these people, the New Woman spelled calamity to society. However, those who felt antagonized by the sportswoman were not alone in seeing her as a model of woman's advance. The sportswoman also epitomized the New Woman to those who welcomed the change toward greater freedom, and she often figured in their descriptions of change:

> In the days when Lord Byron 'could not endure to see a woman eat,' fashionable ladies lived, or tried to live, on next to nothing; robust health was vulgar, and exercise never dreamt of by those who did not wish to be supposed capable of doing anything beyond lying on a sofa, pretending to read the Corsair. Our modern young lady, on the contrary, has been taught to ride, drive, walk, [and] skate.[10]

Justification of women's sport militated against the feminine ideal by suggesting there should be less emphasis on sex differences. The following letter to the Editor of The Times proposed that every child learn to swim and that the reasons for doing so were the same for both sexes:

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[9]The connotation of "fastness" has not altered appreciably.

[10]Agnes T. Harrison, "Two Girls of the Period," Macmillan's Magazine 19 (1869): 325.

> English women have four limbs, and live in an island, and make voyages, and practise sea-bathing, and need exercise in the water at school and at home, and go out in boats - in short, run the universal risk in regard to water; and therefore, they have a claim to be taught to swim.[11]

This justification sounds very much like feminist ideology, and it would be fair to say that feminists in general supported women's sport. Victoria Magazine, a feminist organ, promoted physical education for girls. Mrs. Fenwick-Miller, journalist on the staff of the Illustrated London News, was a defender of women in sport. Emily Davies, Headmistress of Girton College, endorsed sport and physical education for girls and women. Mrs. L. Ormiston Chant, preacher, lecturer, writer and public advocate of women's suffrage endorsed sport, and she participated in cycling, lawn tennis and billiards. In one of her articles, she praised the work of that "high priestess of physical righteousness," Madame Bergman-Österberg, and promoted physical education for girls:

> Not that girls need physical training more than boys; but for boys it has been accepted as a necessary part of their education, while for girls it has still to be debated. . . . The non-understanding of the differences created by difference of sex has led humanity into strange blunders and prejudices, but none much more pernicious than the superstition that has denied

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[11] The (London) Times, 23 September 1859.

> physical and mental opportunity of progress to the sister, but conceded them to her brother.[12]

On another occasion, Mrs. Chant took Dr. Kenealy to task with regard to an article written by the latter entitled, "Woman as an Athlete."[13] Dr. Kenealy had made one of her typical pronouncements that sport unsexed women, and that energy spent in sport drained woman's nature and resulted in selfishness. In her opening remarks, Mrs. Chant took a swing at both Mrs. Linton and Dr. Kenealy by saying that

> It is too bad that just as the 'modern woman' is enjoying a well-merited peace after the somewhat savage but witty attacks made upon her by the lamented writer of the 'the Girl of the Period,'[14] she should be harassed by minor foes, who, though neither savage nor witty, are very solemn, owing doubtless to a lack of humour.[15]

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[12]L. Ormiston Chant, "The Gymnasium for girls," Woman's World 2 (1889): 329.

[13]See Arabella Kenealy, "Woman as an Athlete," pp. 633-645; L. Ormiston Chant, "Woman as an Athlete; a Reply to Dr. Arabella Kenealy,"pp. 745-754; Arabella Kenealy, "Woman as an Athlete: a Rejoinder," pp. 915-929, Nineteenth Century 45 (1899).

[14]The writer referred to was Mrs. Linton who was dead by this time.

[15]L. Ormiston Chant, "Woman as an Athlete: a Reply to Dr. Arabella Kenealy," Nineteenth Century 45 (1899): 745.

In answer to Dr. Kenealy's charge about female athleticism and consequent selfishness, Mrs. Chant argued that "development of muscle does not suddenly bring about a radical change in character and turn a conscientious unselfish girl into a cold and unfeeling lump of human clay."[16] After picking Dr. Kenealy's arguments apart, Mrs. Chant concluded on the note that sport and womanhood were quite compatible:

> Let us modern women take heart of grace, and go on doing the best we can to develop muscular vigour, along with a sneaking fondness for frills and pleatings, and an openly avowed adhesion to the Eternal Baby and its father.[17]

Many upper and middle-class women instituted and participated in recreational programs for the poor as part of their charitable works, and thus were protagonists of sport. In these situations, sport was primarily a means to an end. In the words of Mrs. Humphry Ward, "play does more to save our growing boys and girls from hooliganism and degradation than any simple reform."[18] Mrs. Ward,[19] a novelist, had been impressed by the project of a "Recreational School," established in 1894 at the Passmore Edwards Settlement in Bloomsbury.

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[16] Ibid., p. 748.

[17] Ibid., p. 754.

[18] Mrs. Humphry Ward, quoted in H. Hamilton Frye, "The Child's Happy Hour," London Magazine 23 (1909): 50.

[19] Mrs. Ward was the granddaughter of Dr. Thomas Arnold of Rugby School.

Children of the district were invited to attend during Board School holidays, after school hours, and on Saturday mornings. The success of the Recreation School attracted the attention of Mrs. Ward who thought there ought to be similar programs set up all over London. Mrs. Ward and fellow workers organized "Play Centers" in 1897. By 1909 there were twelve centers which catered to nearly 25,000 children. At the centers, girls were taught such activities as needlework and boys were taught carpentry, cobbling and boxing. All the children performed simple gymnastics, and in the summer they played cricket, rounders[20] and battledore in the playground.

Another project for poor children was the "Children's Happy Evenings," which was established to get slum children off the streets at night. Lady Jeune, one of the organizers of "Children's Happy Evenings," participated in a wide range of works for the poor. In an article directed at young girls of the upper and middle classes, Lady Jeune encouraged her young readers to become involved in helping people less fortunate than themselves. She listed as possible avenues for charitable endeavors, the "Children's Happy Evenings," volunteer action in the workhouses, and working girls' clubs which were designed to bring girls together for the purposes of instruction, recreation and

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[20]Rounders appears to have been a forerunner of baseball and softball.

friendship. She informed her readers that such work entailed dedication and sincerity, but that it was extremely rewarding:

> The lives of working girls in England are very hard and full of privations and temptations, and there is no better or more satisfactory mission than devoting one's time and leisure to brighten their lives and to make them less sombre.[21]

Lady Jeune was but one of many titled ladies who were keen sportswomen as evidenced by innumerable references to their activities in newspapers, books and magazines. They were also frequent contributors of articles to books and magazines involving women's sport. The Gentlewoman's Book of Sports, edited by Lady Greville, included such recreations as angling, boating, cricket, golf and fencing. In the introduction to the book, Lady Greville informed her readers that the contributors were authorities in their sports "as far as their sex was concerned," and she hoped that their experiences would "encourage other women, as feminine but more timid, to imitate their achievements, and to acquire a keen zest for and sympathy with outdoor pursuits."[22]

At the top of the "Upper Ten Thousand" was the Royal family, and of its female members, the Princess of Wales and Princess Louise were

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[21] Lady Jeune, "Work Among the Poor," Every Girl's Book of Sport, Occupation and Pastime. ed, Mary Whitley (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1897), p. 15.

[22] Greville, Gentlewoman's Book of Sports, p. 6.

active supporters of women's sport. The Princess of Wales and her daughters set the example in angling as enthusiastic fisherwomen of Scotland's salmon rivers. The Princess of Wales was also a supportive spectator. On one such occasion, she put in an appearance at the Royal Westminster Aquarium when Agnes Beckwith performed "a 100 hours' swim in six days with five periods of rest, amounting to only 37 minutes and 30 seconds."[23]

The degree to which the endorsement of well-known society ladies was effective is difficult to measure, but many Victorians believed it had validity. Support by the Royal family appeared to augur well for the new recreation of tricycling in the 1880's:

> The ladies of the Royal family have set a good example to the women of England. . . . The Princess Mary, Duchess of Teck, took the initiative; then the Queen presented two machines to her young grand-daughters, the Princesses of Hesse; the Princess of Wales next gave her eldest daughter one for a birthday present; and the Princess Louise rides one herself.[24]

One of the most active and earliest groups to advocate physical exercise for women was the medical profession. Medical men took an early interest in gymnastics owing to the therapeutic aspects of the exercises. As early as the 1830's, they railed against the lack of exercise provided by the girls' boarding schools. From the 1850's,

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[23]Watson, "Famous Long Distance Swimmers," p. 373

[24]Ballin, Science of Dress, p. 218.

Dr. Mathias Roth pressured Parliament, and wrote books and pamphlets in support of Swedish gymnastics for school children. It was largely through his influence that the London School Board hired Miss Löfving, followed by Madame Bergman-Österberg as Lady Superintendents of Physical Education, and so instituted Swedish gymnastics in the schools.

Medical practitioners also turned their attention to gymnastics for adults:

> Upwards of 1,000 ladies with about thirty of the leading medical men of Liverpool assembled at a gymnasium to witness a series of exercises gone through by a large number of ladies' classes. Dr. Grimsdale presided and after the exercises delivered an address on the importance of physical education for women.[25]

Throughout the Victorian period, physicians generally promoted physical exercise and sport for women. They typically urged moderation in any pastime, and they categorically remonstrated against the wearing of tight stays and high-heeled boots. Many physicians were ardent sportsmen, and they frequently contributed articles to magazines in which they espoused views concerning the relative merits and possible dangers of a particular sport activity.

There were times when medical opinion vacillated with regard to the desirability of a particular activity for women, and in many ways,

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[25] The (London) Times, 23 December 1867.

medical beliefs reflected social attitudes toward womanhood. Sir B. W. Richardson, an advocate of sport for women, was quoted as stating that in his student days in mid-century, "it was taught in all sobriety by anatomical authorities that the joint of a woman's shoulder was more shallow than a man's, so that she was almost sure to dislocate it if she threw a ball with force."[26]

This was a long way from the endorsement of girls' games by the medical journal, Lancet, in 1885. The announcement of a cricket match between a girls' school and women's club prompted a discussion on the wearing of chest protectors by the players. The article stated that "doubtless a severe blow on the breast might lead to serious consequences in fully-developed women by excitation of any latent tendency to cancer, and in young girls by arresting the development of the mammary gland."[27] However, the risk would be minimal if players at the wicket and in the field wore a well-padded corset. In view of the Lancet's decidedly conservative position on the divided skirt issue in 1883, the full support of cricket and other sports was somewhat surprising:

> We should regret that a game, really well suited as an exercise for girls should be discouraged simply on account of a risk that could be guarded against. We have repeatedly in our columns advocated the advantages to be gained, in the physical education

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[26]Dove, Work and Play in Girls' Schools, p. 408.

[27]Quoted in Ballin, Science of Dress, p. 211.

> of girls, in the introduction of a well-regulated and moderate athleticism by allowing them to join in pastimes at present mostly limited to boys, such as swimming, rowing (not boat races), and cricket.[28]

The article went on to say that thorough development of the female frame would do much to offset the special diseases common to females in "after life."[29]

Most physicians hailed what seemed to be the improved health of females in the last several decades of the century, and would have agreed with Dr. Richardson when he said that "the health of women generally is improving . . . there is among women generally less bloodlessness, less of what the old fiction writers called swooning; less of lassitude, . . . nervousness . . . and hysteria."[30]

Woman's anatomy and physiology were subjects of concern in connection with riding, whether the beast of burden was a cycle or a horse. Questions raised were characterized by misgivings about possible detriment to the reproductive system because of jolting movements and the propriety of a woman straddling a horse or iron steed. Straddling could be termed immodest and mannish at the same time.

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[28] Ibid., pp. 211-212.

[29] Those years in life after young adulthood.

[30] B. W. Richardson, "Physical Exercise for Women," Young Woman quoted in Review of Reviews 6 (1892-93): 480.

While few women rode horses cross-saddle, the winds of change were blowing at the end of the century, as evidenced by debate on the issue.

Tricycling, until it was outmoded in the 1890's by the safety bicycle, was popular with both sexes in the 1880's. Ada Ballin in her Science of Dress recommended tricycling over horseback riding for women:

> The tricycle affords both healthy and delightful exercise for women, for whom it is especially suited by the absence of jolting, and the manner in which the body is supported, which two characteristics render it more healthful for our sex than horse-riding.[31]

In both tricycling and bicycling, there was a preoccupation with the design of the saddle. In an article entitled, "A Medical View of Cycling for Ladies," W. H. Fenton considered the saddle the most important part of the ladies' bicycle. He recommended that the fork be short and sufficiently sunk to receive none of the body weight, and that the seat be wide to accommodate a woman's hips.[32] Mrs. Humphry, an advocate of bicycling for women, emphasized the importance of choosing a correct saddle because "an uncomfortable one may prove to be absolutely dangerous to health,"[33] and she predicted that the

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[31] Ballin, Science of Dress, pp. 216-217.

[32] W. H. Fenton, "A Medical View of Cycling for Ladies," Nineteenth Century 39 (May, 1896): 801.

[33] Mrs. Humphry, "Women on Wheels," Idler 8 (1895): 74.

saddle would be made larger for women in future. She was also certain that the recent invention of a sliding-seat would revolutionize cycling. The sliding-seat,[34] which would work on the same principle as those found in boats, would economize one's strength and "secure freedom from vibration." While it is not clear how a bicycle could have been ridden other than astride, the position must have caused anxiety among some prospective lady riders; but Mrs. Humphry alleviated the fear:

> Among those who know nothing practically about bicycling, an impression prevails that it is necessary to sit astride. This is, of course, quite erroneous, but the number of people who are deterred from wheeling by this mistake is very great.[35]

Although horseback riding had fewer middle-class participants than did cycling owing to the expense involved, its long association with nobility rendered it desirable as an "accomplishment." As to the effect of riding upon females, opinion was divided. While some doctors favored the exercise, "[many] . . . recommended that growing girls . . . abstain from equestrian exercises from the time they enter upon their 'teens until they have attained their full growth."[36]

Anatomical and physiological considerations apart, a woman's position on horseback posed some problems related to the feminine ideal. Although a few women began to ride astride toward the end of

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[34]The sliding-seat was not a success.

[35]Ibid., 71-72.

[36]Ballin, Science of Dress, p. 214.

the nineteenth century, most rode sidesaddle until after World War I. In her book, Riding Astride for Girls (1924), Ivy Maddison wrote:

> Twenty years ago a girl who rode astride was looked on as a hoydenish creature with a shocking lack of modesty whose only reason for adopting this style must be a desire to ape masculine ways. . . . In England such riders were not permitted in 'The Row' in Hyde Park during the hours when King Edward was present and until the War the same rule prevailed with the present King and Queen.[37]

By comparison of the two positions, it becomes obvious that riding astride was much the better method for a number of reasons. Riding astride was easier to learn; most girls were taught cross-saddle prior to learning sidesaddle. Riding astride was safer, and in case of a fall, there was less chance of injury. Riding sidesaddle presented the inconvenience of requiring assistance to mount and dismount. Finally, riding astride was more comfortable for the horse.

The disadvantages posed by the sidesaddle raise the question of how and why it was adopted. It would appear that its appropriation on a large scale in the fifteenth century was the result of the emulation of aristocratic women[38] who initiated use of the sidesaddle. The subsequent evolution of the sidesaddle suggests that its design was motivated by considerations of "femininity," and this was part of the compromise

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[37]Ivy Maddison, Riding Astride for Girls (London: Hutchinson and Co., 1924), p. 19.

[38]Anne of Bohemia reputedly introduced the sidesaddle into England in 1392.

between woman and sport.

During the course of the nineteenth century, improvements were made in the design of the sidesaddle. About 1830, the leaping head (or third pommel) was introduced which enabled the rider to make jumps without strain and without losing her seat. Slipper-stirrups were replaced by more practical substitutes variously called "safety" types. These stirrups were slightly roughened to prevent slipping and equipped with release gadgets in case of a fall. They were heavily lined with leather or sheepskin to "protect" the woman's feet. However, "safety" stirrups were abandoned around 1870 and replaced "when horsemen throughout the world began to realize that, after all, the safest stirrup in the world was the simplest - a man's plain iron."[39] Also around 1870, the saddle was re-designed with the removal of superfluous padding which placed the rider in closer contact with her horse and virtually eliminated wrung withers for the horse.[40]

After 1870, women began to use reins like those used by men where they formerly had used narrow reins. Some women began to wear bifurcated riding habits and some adopted the astride position. Improvements in the design of the sidesaddle, in addition to the movement toward appropriation of the cross-saddle and masculine

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[39]Lida Fleitmann Bloodgood, The Saddle of Queens: the Story of the Side-Saddle (London: J. A. Allen & Co., 1959), p. 58.

[40]Ibid., pp. 56-57.

riding attire, may be seen as a gradual emancipation from physical encumbrances and emotional submissiveness.

Women's sport was conditioned by the powerful bias of the feminine ideal in relation to techniques, equipment, clothing and playing facilities. The more attention the sportswoman paid to these requisites, the more favorable was public opinion. Even the most ardent protagonists ofwomen's sport held some reservations in connection with strenuousness, roughness and endurance, particularly with reference to team sports.

Protagonists of women's sport included educators, writers, physicians, feminists and women of social position. Antagonists were generally anti-feminists who were the most vociferous in condemnation of sports for women. Both the protagonists and antagonists found in the sportswomen a prototype of the changing women. This changing woman shed some of the more restrictive measures of the feminine ideal. Her sport became more active and varied, her costume more suitable, and her equipment more functional.

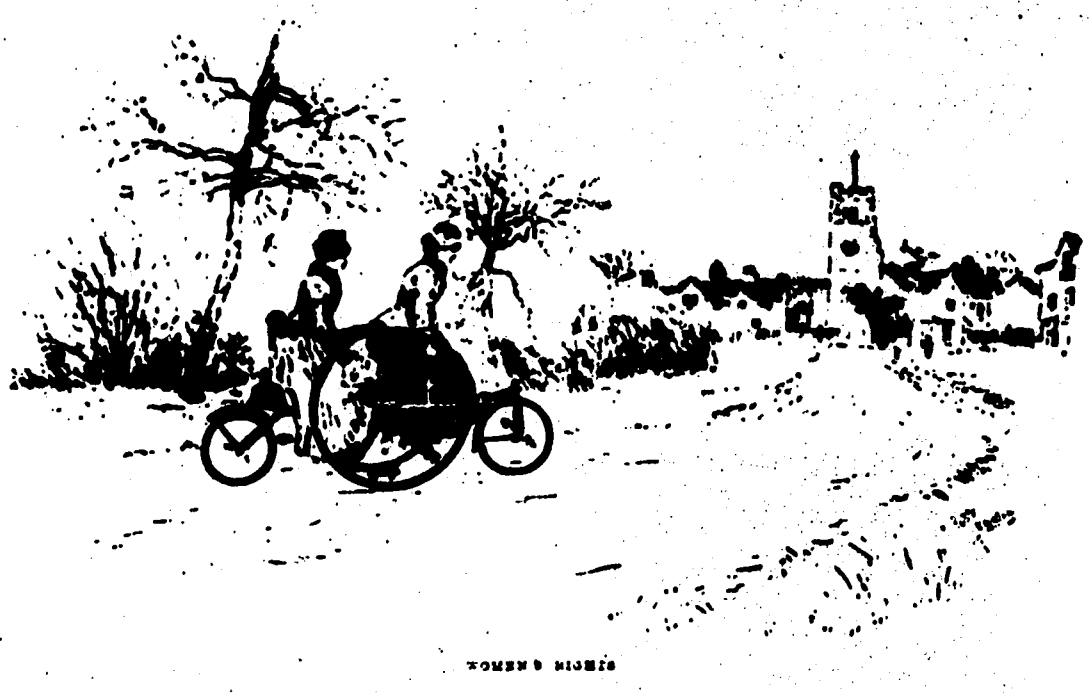

Figure 5. Women's Rights. Reproduced from [William C. K. Albermarle] and G. Lacy Hillier, Cycling: [the Badminton Library of Sports and Pastimes,] ed. Duke of Beaufort (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1887), facing p. 292.

CHAPTER VIII

SYNTHESIS OF VICTORIAN WOMAN'S SPORT: THE IRON STEED

Mother's out upon her bike, enjoying of the fun,
Sister and her beau have gone to take a little run.
The housemaid and the cook are both a-riding on their wheels;
And Daddy's in the kitchen a-cooking of the meals.[1]

Anyone reading British magazines published in the mid 1890's would think that a whole nation had fallen in love with the bicycle. Cyclomania had arrived. In addition to the bicycle itself, any number of accessories could be purchased from a diamond bicycling brooch to a wicker and cane cycle crate for traveling by rail. A cornucopia of information was available which included items to be taken on a cycling tour, ranging from Muscatel raisins to woolen underwear. An interested party could learn to cycle at a riding school, read books on anything from how to fix a flat tire to the proper etiquette for passing fellow cyclists.

The effects of the bicycle were far reaching in many areas: from a technological point of view to its social consequences. Women attached a special significance to the bicycle. Sara Burstall wrote,

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[1] Flora Thompson, Lark Rise to Candleford (London: Oxford University Press, 1946), p. 493.

"the courage and vigour native to our northern stock was no longer repressed, and we might show our kinship with saga women of the Valkyries, on our swift steeds of steel."[2] For both sexes and all ages the bicycle had popular appeal, but the mass movement awheel had had to await better roads and improvements in the design of the bicycle. The modern history of the bicycle began in 1865 with the velocipede or "boneshaker."

The velocipede consisted of two iron-tired wooden wheels, a wooden frame, handle bars for steering and pedals on the front-wheel axle. However, the velocipede did not become popular because it was structurally unreliable, had no brakes and weighed nearly 150 pounds.

The first successful bicycle by popular standards appeared in 1869 as the ordinary (or Penny-farthing). The front wheel had a maximum diameter of sixty inches, while the small,rear, trailing wheel acted as a stabilizer. Instead of wood, the ordinary was made of iron and equipped with solid rubber tires. Metal-covered pedals which were located on the front-wheel axle were replaced by rubber-covered pedals. Compared to the weight of the velocipede, the ordinary was light, weighing approximately fifty pounds. The ordinary had to be custom-made as leg length dictated the size of the wheel. The wheel size was directly proportional to the speed: the larger the wheel, the faster

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[2]Burstall, Retrospect and Prospect, p. 131.

the speed. However, the ordinary was dangerous, primarily because of the high and forward position of the cyclist, and striking a small stone could send the rider flying into a "header."

In 1884 the first commercially successful safety bicycle, the Starley Rover, appeared. This cycle was in essence the bicycle of today. The wheels were of almost equal size and the seat was near the middle of the machine. The Rover was propelled by a chain running over a pedal-driven sprocket and gears on the rear-wheel axle. While the safety bicycle was not as fast as the ordinary, it was easier to ride and less dangerous. The safety bicycle was better for climbing hills, the steering was unaffected by pressures of pedaling, the incidence of side slips was reduced, and the terror of downhill coasting was eliminated.

The next important development in connection with the bicycle came with the introduction of the Dunlop pneumatic tire in 1888. This made riding vastly more comfortable. Within five years solid and semi-hollow tires were a thing of the past.

The technological implications of the bicycle were extensive. Experimentation with the bicycle led to the development of motor cars and airplanes. From about 1870, important innovations in the design of the bicycle included ball bearings, differential gears, variable speed transmission and cable-brake control. Also of importance, and primarily the result of experimentation with the bicycle, were

improvements made in metals, machine tools, engineering techniques, and production and marketing methods.

Cyclists organized into clubs, and they brought pressure to bear and were successful in their endeavors regarding road improvements. They instituted the use of road signs to warn other cyclists of dangerous curves and other road hazards, and they established rules of the road with regard to rights of way. They stimulated the business of country inns which had sagged since the advent of the railroad. They published maps, designed tours and recommended hotels.

By 1893, the design of the safety bicycle had been stabilized, and in 1895, the nation was awheel. A measure of the cycle's mass appeal could be seen in the increase of bicycle manufacturers. In 1888 within a four-mile radius of Charing Cross, the number of manufacturers and makers of accessories listed in the London Post Office Directory was sixty-one. In 1894, the number had grown to 196; by 1897, the number totaled 521.[3]

The first young, male cyclists on their ordinaries encountered public opposition. The novelty of the strange machine undoubtedly frightened many people; here was a noiseless, swift vehicle that could compete with a horse. Contempt for the early "cads on casters" included accusations that they startled horses, that they were reckless

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[3]Duncans, "Cycle Industry," Contemporary Review 73 (April, 1898): 501.

drivers and indifferent to the rights of other users of the road. Despite opposition to pioneers of the iron steeds, cycling became extremely popular in the last decade of the century. Elizabeth Haldane remembered the development:

> In 1879 I wrote from London of an extraordinary sight, a lady attired in a sort of riding habit tricycling, unconcerned, down Oxford Street. That was the beginning of what developed during the next ten or twelve years, till in the nineties, bicycling, not tricycling, became the rage.[4]

There had been attempts to develop an ordinary for women, but generally they failed. Not only were ordinaries dangerous and difficult to ride, but they were considered improper for ladies. Some of the designs placed the rider in an awkward position, and the cyclist needed assistance to mount and dismount.

Because the ordinary was almost out of the question for ladies, the tricycle in the 1880's attracted their attention. Albermarle and Hillier wrote that there was much opposition to ladies' tricycling and that "medical men without any practical knowledge of cycling, tabooed it, and any number of ills were confidently promised to ladies who rode the new machines." Furthermore, women's progress was checked because the most unsuitable machines on the market were "ladies" tricycles. Albermarle and Hillier wrote that ladies' tricycles had

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[4]Haldane, From One Century to Another, p. 96.

inadequate brake power and rear steering, and as the cyclist "was usually provided with a seat placed well behind her work and too close to it, the pioneer lady cyclists did not have a fair chance."[5]

The tricycle was the only machine deemed appropriate for a woman until the early 1890's. While a few tandems with dropped frames were put on the market, they were considered indecorous and hazardous for ladies. Compared to bicycle riding, tricycle riding was more easily learned, but the tricycle was heavier, required more power to propel, was liable to overturn on sharp curves, and gave the rider a more jolting experience. Improvements in the safety bicycle and the addition of pneumatic tires doomed the tricycle to obsolescence after the 1880's:

> Tricycles for ladies have for the last ten or fifteen years been condoned, or, at least, tolerated by most; and before long, I believe that it cannot fail to be recognized that bicycles, while not one whit more mannish, are infinitely prettier and more graceful than the three-wheelers.[6]

Women mounted the two-wheeled iron steeds, and objections were immediately raised. Flora Thompson wrote that the male sex tried to keep the privilege of cycling for themselves. "If a man saw

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[5][William C. K. Albermarle] and G. Lacy Hillier, Cycling: [the Badminton Library of Sports and Pastimes,] ed. Duke of Beaufort (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1887), pp. 290-291.

[6]"Ladies on the Road," All the Year Round, 3rd series, 10 (29 July 1893): 105.

or heard a woman riding he was horrified. 'Unwomanly. Most Unwomanly! God knows what the world's coming to.' "[7] However, women seized the opportunity, and the men's "protestations were unavailing; one woman after another appeared riding a glittering new bicycle."[8] Lady Jeune remarked that in England it had always been the fashion to be horrified when women participated in any new form of recreation hitherto considered the monopoly of men. Her justification of sportswomen rested on the point of costume:

> Every amusement in which women participate ought to be governed by the question whether she can wear her ordinary clothing. . . . The bicycle can safely and gracefully be ridden in a skirt, and that fact at once disposes of any objection on the ground of its being an unwomanly amusement.[9]

Women, men, young and old were awheel, and bicycling reached its peak of popularity in the mid-nineties. Most books and articles on the subject were written in this period, and they included such topics as trick riding and execution of military drills to the accompaniment of music.[10] In London, an International Ladies' Tournament was held in 1895, and The Times reported that it was "a wonderful exhibition of

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[7]Thompson, Lark Rise to Candleford, p. 492.

[8]Ibid., p. 493.

[9]Jeune, "Cycling for Women," p. 408.

[10]See for example, Caroline Cryke, "Fancy Cycling for Ladies," Nineteenth Century 42 (September, 1897), 447-453.

fast and graceful riding, and the costumes are of a character to which no exception could be taken."[11] However, the idea of high-level competition was short-lived. In the following year, a ladies' competition was relegated to circus amusement. A ladies' cycle race, "All-England v. the Champions" for £50 was one event of the entertainment which also featured waltzing elephants, the Countess X - unarmed in a den of lions, and questionable animated photography.[12]

What would have to be described as a higher-toned exhibition was a ladies' cycling procession in honor of the Queen's Jubilee. A group of prominent ladies planned the procession, but a snag in the plan occurred when it was rumored that ladies would not be permitted to ride unless they wore skirts. Organizers of the affair denied the validity of the assertion and maintained that the decision would be left to the cyclists.[13] Part of the dilemma no doubt concerned propriety, and women who wished to pay tribute to Queen Victoria exercised prudence with regard to any activity which smacked of women's rights.

The cycling "mania" touched a large part of the population from members of the Royal family to working-class girls on whose behalf

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[11] The (London) Times, 19 November 1895.

[12] Ibid., 14 December 1896.

[13] Fenwick-Miller, Illustrated London News, 19 June 1897.

cycling clubs were established.[14] Cycling was the subject of concern at such meetings as the Matron's Council in 1898 when it was debated whether private nurses should take their bicycles on their cases. Most of the ladies agreed that while cycling was a desirable recreation for a nurse, she "should not come to a house where sickness had suddenly spread misery and dismay with a means of amusement prominently displayed,"[15] except if prior arrangements had been made to accommodate the machine.

It is of interest to note that despite the obvious functional attributes of the bicycle, it was primarily considered as a source of recreation. Of course, utility unquestionably contributed to the overwhelming success of cycling. Cycling fostered a mobile population, and neighboring towns were now within easy reach. The design of the safety bicycle made it practical for both sexes and all ages. Bicycles were mass-produced which placed their purchase within range of a sizable part of the population. Moreover, the bicycle was a cheaper form of city transport than the railway or omnibus and was less expensive to maintain than a horse. Not the least important in the popularization of cycling was the fact that Society took to the wheel.

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[14] Countess of Malmesbury, "Cycling," Encyclopaedia of Sport, ed. Earl of Suffolk and Berkshire and F. G. Aflalo, 2 vols. (London: Lawrence and Bullen, 1898) 1: 291.

[15] Fenwick-Miller, Illustrated London News, 9 July 1898.

Gwen Raverat wrote that soon after the appearance of the pneumatic tire, "everyone had bicycles, ladies and all; and bicycling became the smart thing in Society, and the lords and ladies had their pictures in the papers, riding along in the park, in straw boater hats."[16] The Princess of Wales, her daughters and other members of the Royal family photographed alongside their cycles were found in the pages of the Illustrated London News with the comment that "thousands of our readers . . . will be gratified to see for themselves how strong is the hold which the popular pastime of the period has taken upon the taste of the younger members of our royal family."[17] However, there was the possibility that the novelty might wear thin, and Lady Jeune predicted that "the craze for bicycling among the 'upper ten' will die like other crazes of a similar kind, and be relegated to the limbo of popular amusements, as rinking & c. have been."[18] A fashion writer for the Illustrated London News, while dwelling upon "the needs of the cyclist whose numbers grow hourly in the land," revealed that by 1897, cycling was no longer an elitist activity; the "upper ten" had become complacent:

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[16]Raverat, Period Piece, p. 238.

[17]Illustrated London News, 14 March 1896.

[18]Jeune, "Cycling for Women," p. 414. Rinking was ice or roller skating.

> Of cycling as an amusement we of the elect are perhaps no longer entirely enthusiastic, but we all cycle as a matter of course; we do not pursue the pastime ardently; but with moderation and with more elegance than we did.[19]

Endorsement of cycling by the "upper ten thousand" aided in popularizing the pastime for men and women, though women were more affected by their sanctioning of cycling. For women, specifically, there were added reasons why cycling appealed. The safety bicycle did not necessitate a change of costume though there was a danger of a dress catching in the wheel. Equally important, public opinion by the 1890's had grown more receptive to females in sport. The swoons were gone; the hysteria was gone: the athletic English girl had become an acceptable type. Many Victorians hailed the bicycle as a means of healthy recreation for women. To some, the bicycle was nothing less than the great emancipator of women. Among them was Elizabeth Haldane who thought that the inventor of the bicycle should have a national memorial committed to his memory and that women should largely subscribe.

> No young woman of the present day realizes the sudden sense of emancipation that it gave . . . to the countrywoman, who . . . often never got more than a mile . . . from home. To the women of the well-to-do classes, so-called, it meant a revolution in their

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[19]Paulina Pry, Illustrated London News, 1 May 1897.

> mode of life, enabling them to visit friends . . . and above all to go easily to a neighbouring town.[20]

To Sara Burstall the bicycle typified the "breaking up of Victorianism;" the cycle was an instrument which had pierced the constraints imposed on women. She suggested that women of the 1890's, especially middle-class women, "were ready for a mechanical device which gave them independence physically, as their education had given many of them some measure of mental independence and self-control."[21] She also reflected that it would be difficult for the modern woman driving her car or steering her airplane to realize how important was the bicycle to those women who were in the prime of their lives in the nineties. "We could buy a machine, go about and take care of ourselves, and with a few pounds in our pocket see something of the world."[22]

Another who sang the praises of the bicycle as woman's liberator was Flora Thompson. In her book, Lark Rise to Candleford, she recollected the sense of independence afforded by the iron steed:

> To cleave the air as though on wings, defying time and space by putting what had been a day's journey on foot behind one in a couple of hours! Of passing garrulous acquaintances who had formerly held one in one-sided conversation by the roadside

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[20] Haldane, From One Century to Another, p. 145.

[21] Burstall, Retrospect and Prospect, p. 131.

[22] Ibid., pp. 131-132.

> for an hour, with a light ting, ting of the bell and a casual wave of recognition.[23]

This spirit of independence was anathema to those who fought to retain the delicate repose of the feminine ideal. Mrs. E. Lynn Linton was now an old lady, but still quite capable of mustering an attack on the New Woman who

> has discarded home duties as degrading, , . . wifely respect she despises as the sign of craven submission, . . . children she dislikes as hindrances. . . . what she wants is freedom to do as she likes. . . . She cultivates her . . . biceps, plays cricket and golf, . . . hunts, . . . drives a pair in the park, and goes on a bicycle through the crowded streets of London.[24]

There was probably no other sporting activity in which women were involved that better symbolized the New Woman. It was no accident that when the Cambridge Masters of Arts voted against the privilege of women taking honors in degree examinations, the undergraduates decapitated an effigy of a female cyclist in spectacles and rationals, and then carried the remains in moblike fashion to jeer the female students.[25]

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[23]Thompson, Lark Rise to Candleford, p. 493.

[24]Mrs. Lynn Linton, " 'In Custody' and 'Emancipation,' " Illustrated London News, 20 February 1892.

[25]Fenwick-Miller, Illustrated London News, 12 June 1897.

Cycling was popular and public, and the symbolism that it evoked was powerful. It is not difficult to see why cycling was particularly disturbing. Woman was dependent; on the bicycle she was independent. Burdened by long dresses, corsets and high-heeled shoes, woman's pace was meant to be slow, but her pace on the bicycle was "fast."[26] Woman's mystique was shrouded in voluminous skirts; on the bicycle she proved she was bipedal after all. She rode astride under self-propelled power, and she needed no assistance to mount and dismount. Woman's virtue was protected by a chaperon; on the iron steed she left her chaperon behind.

The problem of chaperonage came to the forefront when cycling grew popular. "Some mothers," wrote Mrs. Humphry, "have had perforce to take to cycling in order to perform their duties as chaperons."[27] Other mothers were content to send along a groom, "also on wheels," but

> some take just as keen a pleasure as the girls themselves in the rapid motion and the exhilarating exercise. Lady Jeune is one of these. With her two charming daughters she enjoys many an agreeable ride, and uses her iron steed for shopping excursions as well.[28]

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[26]Woman's speed was equated with moral turpitude.

[27]Humphry, "Women on Wheels," p. 71.

[28]Ibid.

Not all mothers found the easy resolution of chaperonage employed by Lady Jeune. Elizabeth Haldane recalled that though not quite proper, young men and women cycling together eventually came to be tacitly permitted. The feelings of correctness on the part of anxious mothers were modified by the sense of added safety provided by male companionship. Mothers "were assured that the thought and attention required to guide successfully this strange machine obviated any desire to carry on frivolous conversation."[29]

Of all the new problems of social etiquette posed by cycling, none excited more controversy than that of an appropriate costume for lady cyclists. Woman met with little resistance to masculine stiff collars, jackets and sailor hats, but that portion of the costume which clothed her lower extremities was a particularly delicate matter. Knickerbockers, which would allow free knee action, accompanied by gaiters or high-fitted boots would have been ideal for cycling. A dress or skirt was not only impractical owing to the danger of its catching in the wheel,[30] but the skirt had a tendency to fly up with the wind, improperly exposing the leg. Though trousers would have been practical and would have avoided a display of leg which was an important consideration in the Victorian period, trousers represented manhood.

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[29]Haldane, From One Century to Another, pp. 145-146.

[30]Many cycles had skirt guards, but skirts were still caught in the wheel.

Paulina Pry, fashion writer for the Illustrated London News, was kept busy during the cycling craze advising her readers about a cycling costume. She found the skirt for cycling problematical, but at last found a divided skirt with apron in front which she could recommend. At any rate, she wrote, we do look nicer than the Parisians "who have elected to follow this fashion in 'too too obvious' knickerbockers."[31]

Florence Fenwick-Miller, could not agree: "The Frenchwoman is a better dresser than the Englishwoman, in large part, because she will wear what she finds most suitable for the purpose in hand."[32] Mrs. Fenwick-Miller was critical of the efforts of lady cyclists to exploit the advantages of rational dress, and yet try to hide the fact. At an exhibition in Cardiff, prizes were awarded on the basis of the designers' cleverness in concealing the bifurcation. "No doubt," Mrs. Fenwick-Miller remarked, "this is all very ingenious, but we can hardly wonder if it confirms our French neighbours in the settled belief that we are a hypocritical nation."[33]

The adoption of rational dress was checked by criticism. Those who feared that rational dress might be appropriated for cycling expressed satisfaction:

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[31]Pry, Illustrated London News, 4 January 1896.

[32]Fenwick-Miller, Illustrated London News, 11 April, 1896.

[33]Ibid., 7 November, 1896.

> The correct instincts of English (and I believe American) women having relegated all unfeminine costumes to the limbo of bad style, and resolutely vindicated the supremacy of the skirt, there is no longer anything for nice scruples to boggle at.[34]

While fear of the Amazon image had been mitigated by women staying in their skirts, they wore fewer petticoats, loosened their corsets and shortened their skirts to within several inches of the ground. To keep a cyclist's skirt from blowing up with the wind, the feet were put through a strap which lay against the inside hem, or alternatively, weights were placed within the hem of the skirt. The Countess of Malmesbury recommended a properly cut skirt to conceal the ugly action of the knees, but for "professional" riders and for women unable to afford the cost of a well-cut skirt, knickerbockers were the only alternative.[35] To lessen movement of the knees, the Sportswoman's Library suggested "ankling," which not only looked more graceful, but helped to keep the skirt hanging well. In addition to "ankling," the legs were to move straight up and down for a more tasteful display.[36] Despite the mechanical disadvantage involved, Lady Jeune suggested

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[34]A. Shadwell, "The Hidden Dangers of Cycling," National Review quoted in Living Age 212 (20 March 1897): 827.

[35]Malmesbury, "Cycling," p. 291.

[36]Lillian J. Hills, "Cycling," The Sportswoman's Library, ed. Frances E. Slaughter, 2 vols. (Westminster: Archibald Constable & Co., 1898): 2: 270. "Ankling" was utilizing movement of the ankles to best advantage; this would also lessen movement of the knees, and therefore look more ladylike.

that a graceful appearance depended upon a low saddle; to appear perched on a high seat would be ungainly. The lady cyclist would derive more pleasure from doing "what she can in a womanly way than by aping the appearance and the style of men, which she can never do well."[37]

The notion of trying to execute motor skills in a "womanly" manner, though not efficient, was part of the feminine ideal which maximized the differences between the sexes. Notwithstanding the loss in economy of movement inherent in both lady-like movements and costume, these affectations presumably helped to make the lady cyclist more socially acceptable and cycling more socially acceptable to ladies.

That cycling became not only acceptable for ladies, but fashionable, was facilitated by a number of contributing factors. The design of the safety bicycle along with the use of pneumatic tires made the cycle fairly comfortable and relatively easy to ride. Furthermore, the safety bicycle permitted women to wear their ordinary costume. Adoption of wheeling by prominent women helped sanction the pastime for other women, while the relative inexpensiveness of owning a cycle put it within reach of those above the poverty line. Finally, the public had grown more receptive to women in sports, and cycling was considered by most people a healthy and enjoyable recreation. In fact, all sorts

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[37]Jeune, "Cycling for Women," p. 413.

of claims were made about the healthful effects of cycling. The alleged benefits were quite comprehensive and included the alleviation of such conditions as varicose veins, gout, "nerves," "petty miseries of the liver," and morbid fancies and appetites common in adolescent girls.[38]

Cycling was significant for woman and sport because it brought to a head and focused attention on all the issues surrounding woman's sport. It called into question once again notions of femininity and the problems of costume and chaperonage. The female cyclist was an "active" symbol of the New Woman who was mobile and independent. While there was opposition to woman on the iron steed, she had too much momentum to be stopped. She withstood the criticism and resolved the conflict by pedaling with ladylike motion and clinging to her symbol of womanhood - her skirt.

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[38]Fenton, "A Medical View of Cycling for Ladies," p. 800.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

Woman's sport in Victorian England affected her status as a woman, and her status affected her sports participation. Woman's sport became an instrument of social change by modifying and defining woman's larger role in society. At the same time, woman's sport was subject to the conditions of the feminine ideal. Sport militated against the feminine ideal and gave rise to a conflict between womanhood and sport. The conflict fostered ambivalence, and its resolution involved compromise which dictated that women participate in sport under handicaps which curtailed skillful play.

The characteristics embodied in the feminine ideal polarized sex roles and served to obviate competition with men. Victorian women possessed few power resources, and it did not behoove them to compete in circumstances embracing exceedingly unequal odds. In a social system which comprised cooperative unequals, participation in sport by women was disturbing. Sport was physical and masculine, and therefore outside women's sphere which was emotional and spiritual. Sport required space and implied such male characteristics as strength and speed; its movements could be sensual. At times, sport required concentration and determination which precluded emotionalism.

Sport entailed a degree of competition surpassing that sanctioned for women in the marriage market. Team sports called into action loyalty and cooperation, characteristics not generally encouraged among women.

The physical aspects of sport encouraged strength, speed and endurance, while the psychological aspects called for self reliance, courage and loyalty. Women's participation in sport counteracted the feminine ideal, and thus was compatible with the goals of feminism which sought to diminish the importance of sex differences. Although there was no well-organized campaign by feminists for the promotion of sport, they actively supported it. To her protagonists, the sportswoman typified the change from the frailty of the feminine ideal of earlier times to an image of vitality in the late Victorian period. To her antagonists, the sportswoman represented a threat to the social order and an invasion of male prerogative. Sport would "unsex" woman and destroy her ability and desire to perform her duties as wife and mother. To both protagonists and antagonists, the sportswoman represented the New Woman.

Victorian society could not wholeheartedly encourage women's sport because it represented a disruptive force of the social fabric. However, social systems possess discordant elements and disparities between the ideal and the real and are fertile fields for change. The feminine ideal was a psychological vacuum which offered little scope

for development, and it cracked under the stress of its own rigidity. Perhaps of more importance in altering the status of women was the economic situation which arose in the middle class. With its emphasis on individualism and self-reliance, the middle class could not or would not support its females in idleness. Middle-class women who needed employment as a means of support were incompatible with the ideal that women should not work; nevertheless, if they did not "earn their keep," they were viewed as hangers-on. Thus, economic reality plus the constraints of the feminine ideal provided stimuli for feminism.

Women's sport participation was affected by modifications in the family, which to the Victorians, was one of their most important institutions. The early Victorian family deified home and emphasized the inner source of happiness provided by inter-family relationships. The late Victorian family was more gregarious, and social climbing was more evident. The father continued to be ruler of the household, but he became a less-inflated, less-romanticized figure. The mother, who had been depicted as a passive matron, now became more active and assertive. After 1870, middle-class parents began to limit the size of families. The standard of living had reached a point where it became very expensive to maintain social status. One way to cut family expenses was to practice family planning. More children now reached adulthood, and it was costly to feed, clothe and educate them. Boys continued to be educated for the world, and they continued to receive

the lion's share of educational expenditure. Girls continued to become "accomplished" for the marriage market, and they were expected to make sacrifices and attend to the wishes of the family, particularly their male relatives. While marriage continued to be the goal of a girl's training, preparation for a career, should the necessity for self-support arise, became acceptable.

Throughout the Victorian period, the physically energetic young female was tolerated, but as she grew older, she was gradually pressured to act like a lady. The age limit up to which it was considered proper for young girls to be physically active was extended, and there was also a tendency for more girls to play the same games as their brothers. The playing of games by older girls was reinforced by physical education in the schools.

During the Victorian period, sons of the middle class were sent to the existing public schools and those which were newly established to meet the demands of the swelling ranks of the affluent. Upper and middle-class girls were often educated by poorly-trained governesses, and if family circumstances permitted, were sent to finishing schools which frequently lacked high standards of education. From mid-century, the middle class agitated for improved education for girls. Feminists, the most active reformers, attacked the emphasis on "accomplishments" and lack of systematic education. Organizations such as the Governesses' Benevolent Institution, out of which grew Queen's College,

organized and lobbied for improved education.

Endowed schools, public schools, colleges and scholarship funds were established for girls, but these were not unopposed. As young women made inroads into the ranks of higher education, the opposition grew more intense. It was argued that a wife and mother did not need a school education, especially a university one. The early women educators avoided the inevitable argument with regard to differences in mental abilities between the sexes. They maintained that whatever their talents, girls should be educated for the betterment of society.

There was a great deal of pressure on young women students to perform well, especially after they gained the right to take university examinations. Had they failed, girls' education would have received a setback. As it happened, they did well, and the attempt made by early educators to institute a theoretical curriculum gained substance. The early schools for girls included physical education in their programs, and when their students went out to become headmistresses, they took their sports and games with them.

In the boys' public schools, games had been organized by the boys outside the school, and were later sanctioned and institutionalized. In the girls' schools, physical education was established by the early women educators and was an intrinsic part of the educational setting. The calisthenics, dancing and occasional free play time that had been characteristic of the early boarding schools were continued, but the

scope of physical education was enlarged. The educators, later joined by physical education specialists, added gymnastic programs which had already found their way into the state-supported schools. Time and equipment were provided for such activities as ninepins, racket games and handball. Medical examinations, corrective gymnastics and health lectures were instituted. In the last two decades of the century, sports clubs were formed, and perhaps most important, competitive games such as tennis, cricket, field hockey and lacrosse became established.

As physical education programs expanded, a demand for qualified teachers was created. The woman most responsible for meeting this demand was Madame Bergman-Österberg. She opened the first residential college of physical training in 1885. Madame recruited students from the middle and upper classes and set high standards in her program which included gymnastics, sport and dance. The success of her college led to the founding of other physical training colleges and the opening of a new employment option for women as physical education specialists.

Physical education in school programs extended the age up to which it could be considered appropriate for young women to participate in sport, and promoted competitive games. Many of the women who sanctioned physical education probably did not consider it more than a healthy recreation and a means of developing character. But, some also saw sport activity and gymnastics as a radical doctrine of physical emancipation, and gave it their blessing.

With the expansion of girls' and women's sport, there arose the problem of a suitable costume which would simultaneously accomodate free movement and preserve the feminine ideal. For the most part, women wore the ordinary fashions of the day for sport activities. However, the incipient design of a special outfit for sport could be seen when sports began to proliferate in the second half of the century. One significant trend in women's outdoor clothing was the increasing simplicity and masculinization of apparel covering the upper half of the body. The other important theme in women's clothing was the appearance of the bifurcated garment which provoked controversy. Women began to wear underdrawers around 1830, a fashion that was initially resisted on grounds of immodesty.[1] However, there was no great debate over the issue until the bifurcation appeared in an outer garment in the early 1850's. When the American, Amelia Bloomer, attempted to popularize "bloomers," long, Turkish trousers frilled about the ankles, the intensity of public hostility doomed the garment to a rapid demise. In the early 1880's, the Rational Dress Society rekindled the debate by exhibiting divided skirts. By this time, bifurcated costumes were sometimes called "bloomers," but the more common expression was "rationals."

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[1] Perhaps this reaction was due to the novelty of wearing underdrawers, but maybe it suggested that women had legs.

Rationals appeared in bathing costumes, in physical education classes in the form of the gym tunic, and in riding habits as a divided skirt with an apron concealing the bifurcation. The issue of rational dress smoldered under the surface, but exploded into full-fledged controversy when cycling became popular in the nineties. Cycling was not only popular, it was public; and it provided the greatest opening yet for the sanctioning of threatening trousered women. Most female cyclists avoided the sensitive issue by staying in their skirts as they did for other sports. Nevertheless, the way was prepared for the adoption of trousers by women. In the twentieth century, bifurcated garments increasingly appeared in sports costumes, and everyday wear, finally meeting with full social approval in the second great wave of feminism in the late 1960's.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, women's sport comprised traditional aristocratic and rural pastimes. For recreation, women of the middle class walked, played an occasional game of battledore, and rode horseback if affluent. The most significant feature of sport in the latter half of the century was its growth and organization. More and more women took part in an increasing variety of sport activities. The formal organization of sport was realized and competition established. Participation in a wide range of sports, some of which were strenuous, combined with the institution of competitive sports, provided a powerful counterattack to the feminine ideal.

The popularity of croquet in the 1860's, demonstrates the increasing involvement of middle-class women in recreational pastimes. It also signaled the trend toward development of games which men and women could play together. Croquet clubs, whose members included both men and women, soon formed and competitions were organized for men, women and mixed teams. The establishment of clubs and competitive matches for both sexes was repeated in a variety of sports from cycling to lawn tennis.

Mass participation in many pastimes was facilitated by a number of factors in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Mass production of sports equipment put its purchase within reach of a sizable portion of the population. After 1870, despite periodic depressions, the population enjoyed more wealth and leisure time. Levels of economic and social aspirations rose with prosperity and many recreations became desirable as reflectors of social status. Families took trips to the seaside, and friends assembled on lawns to play croquet or tennis. Technological developments involving improvements in such materials as metals and rubber transformed cumbersome and heavy sports equipment into durable and lightweight instruments. Improved communication and transportation facilitated the organization of large numbers of people with a common interest in a pastime, and travel to tournaments became practical.

The tendency to distinguish between amateur and professional players arose shortly after women's sport became organized. As applied to women, amateur referred to the dilettante, and professional to the individual who competed, or played more seriously. The few attempts to organize professional teams in the modern sense ended in spectacle. The modern concept of professionalism arose in the sport of golf, one of the most highly organized sports, and provided the first hint of future trends.

The institution of women's sport clubs and competitions often involved men as organizers or advisors. Male endorsement of women's sport activities undoubtedly helped gain social approval and buffer the criticism so frequently encountered by sportswomen. In addition to male patronage, and perhaps of more importance, sport engaged the support of large numbers of women, many of whom were socially prominent, and their participation and endorsement encouraged more timid women to brave the inevitable opposition.

A close inspection of the protagonists of women's sport reveals that the medical profession was one of the first groups to advocate physical exercise for women. They were later joined by educators, writers, feminists and women of high social position. While many of the advocates were from the middle class, an impressive number of titled ladies actively promoted sport by their participation and through their writings. Philanthropy had long been acceptable for

women, and as a natural consequence, upper and middle-class women took recreations to the poor. The protagonists of women's sport generally based their justifications on improvement and maintenance of health, the value of recreation, and the right of the individual to pursue a pleasurable pastime.

The most vociferous antagonists of women's sport were the anti-feminists. In their more extreme arguments, the invidious distinctions they drew evoked not only the dark gods of sexism, but racism and nationalism as well. Nevertheless, the anti-feminists pointed to the contradiction between womanhood and sport, and through their arguments, the issues raised by women's sport can be more clearly viewed. Despite the strength of their convictions, the anti-feminists fluctuated in their attitudes toward women's sport. They might on one occasion approve of tennis and disapprove of golf with no apparent reason for the distinction. It is possible that one sport seemed more "womanly" than another, but this reasoning loses credence because the anti-feminists were not always in agreement over the "womanliness" of specific sports. Furthermore, it is conceivable that attacks on participation in elitist sports such as hunting and golf were in part motivated by economic envy.

The anti-feminists were not alone in their vacillating attitudes toward women's sport. It would be fair to say that the majority of people felt ambivalence toward sportswomen. Recurring themes

involved the effects of sport upon women and of women upon sport. In the former case, the issue usually entailed possible detriment to female anatomy or woman's nature. In the latter, woman's nature might spoil the integrity of a game. Medical men unconsciously revealed that scientific knowledge was in many ways conditioned by the social views of womanhood. Frequently their pronouncements, ostensibly based on anatomy and physiology, were more akin to moral judgments. Even the most ardent protagonists of women's sport held some reservations, usually in connection with a specific sport. Combative sports, activities which involved bodily contact, and sports which required great strength, speed and endurance were not countenanced by the majority.

Ambivalence, which was a product of the contradiction between womanhood and sport, resulted in compromise. The compromise was expressed in restrictive clothing, design of inefficient sports equipment, special rules and techniques, and ideologies which attributed woman's athletic shortcomings to her anatomy and nature. The affectations of women's sport corroborated the feminine ideal, and coupled with the frequent predictions that women would never be able to play a sport well, helped ensure the proper proportions of success and failure.

Of all sport activities for women, none created more of a sensation than that provided by the free-ranging bicycle. Cycling brought to a head and focused attention on all the issues involving

women and sport. It entailed costume, invasion of male prerogative, design of sports equipment, and chaperonage. Cycling evoked the powerful imagery of speed, independence and mobility, and not a few Victorian women named the bicycle as their great emancipator.

The bicycle was important for the entire population because it was functional and could be ridden by both sexes and all ages. It was a cheaper form of city transport than the omnibus or train, and less expensive to maintain than a horse. Technologically, the bicycle was important because experimentation with cycles led to the development of motor cars and airplanes. Development of the bicycle also had significant applications in engineering, manufacturing and marketing techniques. Organized cyclists' clubs successfully pressured for improvement of roads which made the motor car a practical vehicle.

The issues surrounding ladies' cycling exemplified the modifications in women's status and forecast the trend of women's sport. Cycling drew attention to such issues as the rational dress debate because it was public and popular, but bifurcated garments were already appearing in sports costumes by the time cycling became popular. Horse-riding costumes possessed a concealed bifurcation, and women were well on their way toward appropriation of the masculine riding habit in its entirety. Not only was a change of costume apparent, but women were beginning to ride horses astride; some women credited the bicycle with paving the way for adoption of the

cross-saddle position. For those women who aspired to the flying of balloons and airplanes, the bicycle tempered the notion that women were physically and emotionally incapable of managing the flying machines. For young men and women, the bicycle hastened the extinction of the chaperon. Although women began to dodge the watchful eye of the chaperon on the croquet lawns of the 1860's, young male and female cyclists easily evaded surveillance. Perhaps it may be said that development of the bicycle quickened the pulse of social change and signaled the rapidity of change with which the twentieth century would have to cope.

The mass appeal of ladies' cycling epitomized the expansion and vigor of women's sport. By the 1890's, women were competitors at Wimbledon, they were entered in scores of golf tournaments, and school girls were playing team sports. On a larger scale, the growth of women's sport could be seen as part of a broader social change in which women, especially middle-class women, were university students, nurses, bank clerks and elected members of school boards. Women could vote in municipal elections and married women could own property. Some women traveled unescorted on public transport, they attended the theatre, and there were now tea shops in which a lady could take refreshment. On the one hand, women's sport could be viewed as an appropriate measure of this social change, and on the other, sportswomen helped define this change and condition the public to women's

wider world.

According to many Victorians, one of the important consequences of sport was its role in the emancipation of women. If emancipation may be taken to mean freedom from the restraints of Victorian prudery, then it may be fairly stated that sport acted as an agent in the physical and emotional emancipation of women. To women, especially middle-class women, who felt bound by Victorian convention, the alteration must have been dramatic.

Yet, in terms of the feminist goals to gain the rights and privileges of males, sport, and feminism, for that matter, won the battle, but lost the war. Women gained the right to participate in sport, thus lessening the sex differences which were felt to discriminate unduly against women. However, women's status did not undergo revolutionary change. Women continued to be held responsible for the duties of family and domesticity. There was no marked increase in their power resources, and for the most part, they continued to be denied access to the political and economic world.

In spite of these frustrations, women on their iron steeds were a long way from the two-and-two walk of earlier times. Within a few years following the Queen's death, English sportswomen removed the encumbrances of long dresses and abandoned some of the affectations of ladylike motions. The sportswoman of today can look back to her Victorian sisters as pioneers in the modern history of women's sport.

Victorian women organized sport, developed comprehensive physical education programs, encouraged physical emancipation through sport, and instituted competition. They resolved the conflict between womanhood and sport by clinging to some of the dictates of the feminine ideal. The Victorian sportswoman made it possible for a female athlete to become a national heroine in England today. Nevertheless, it helps if she looks and acts like a "lady."

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