
SPENCE, Catherine Helen

PRG 88
Series List

Catherine Helen Spence was born in Scotland in 1825 to David and Helen Spence. In 1839 the family emigrated to South Australia to try and re-establish themselves after ill-advised financial dealings saw her father bankrupt. By 1840 she had established herself, as a governess, and by 1846, when her father died, she was running a small private school with the aid of her mother and sister.

By the mid-1840's Catherine Spence was regularly contributing letters and articles to both the *South Australian* and later to the *Adelaide Morning Chronicle*. When the latter ceased production in 1853 she had found another outlet through the *South Australian Register*, writing letters and verses for it.

Miss Spence's ambition was to be a great novelist, and she wrote eight major fiction works in the period 1854 to 1889. These were: *Clara Morrison; A Tale of South Australia* (published 1854); *Tender and True - A Colonial Tale* (1856); *Mr. Hogarth's Will* (1865); *Hugh Lindsay's Guest* (1867), serialised in the *Adelaide Observer*; *Gathered In* (serialised in the *Adelaide Observer* and the *Queenslander*); *Handfasted* (unpublished); *The Agnostic's Progress from the Known to the Unknown* (1884); and *A Creek in the Future* (1889).

While her attempts at fiction met with limited public acclaim, Miss Spence had, by 1878, established herself as a literary critic, continuing her practice of contributing articles and letters to newspapers of the day. She was also actively involved in campaigning for the introduction of reforms, particularly in the areas of education, child care and politics. In 1872 she helped Caroline Emily Clark to found the "Boarding Out Society" which undertook to place state wards into private homes rather than institutions. When this, and other functions were absorbed by the establishment of the State Children's Council in 1886, Miss Spence became a member of the Board. From the 1880's until her death, she served on many committees and boards, all of which were involved with humanitarian reform work or political lobby groups.

An article on Thomas Hare's system of proportional representation that she read in 1859 was to provide Catherine Spence with one of her major interests later in her life. In 1861 she published a pamphlet entitled *A Plea for Pure Democracy. Mr. Hare's Reform Bill Applied to South Australia*, but did not really follow up on the idea until 1892, when she started campaigning vigorously for it's introduction to South Australia in the form of the modified Hare-Spence system.

In 1856 Miss Spence left the Church of Scotland and became a member of the more liberal Unitarian Church. This led to another area of interest. In 1878, she was asked to read the sermon at service, and subsequently began to preach on a fairly regular basis. A trip to Britain and Europe in 1864-65 had given her a chance to meet many well-known people but it was her 1893 visit to the Chicago World Fair that shows the breadth of her interests. At this convention she spoke to the International Conference on Charities and Correction; the Proportional Representation Congress; the Single Tax Congress; and to a women's group. She then travelled across America lecturing and preaching, going on to Britain before returning to Australia in 1894.

Miss Spence was active in the suffragette movement, and encouraged the establishment of a local organisation affiliated with the International Council of Women. By the early 1900s her interests had extended to include the provision of kindergartens, and high school education for girls. She continued to play an active role in many diverse areas until her death in 1910.

Note:

1. This record group contains all written material held by the Archives; photographs can be found separately through the card index. As of 29/1/85, the references included were: B6759, B7106, B9881, and B11192.
2. In the items list for series 7, the "number of folios" refers to the number of sheets of paper - not the number of pages of writing.
3. Undated letters have been, to a large extent, integrated with dated ones. These are indicated with a ? after the date. While the address was used to help place these, it is acknowledged that the assigned date could well be out by several years. Dates marked with an asterisk were dated through the use of the day and a perpetual calendar.

Notes entitled "Some Recollections of Mother", including a brief outline of her immediate family tree. n.d. Manuscript, in bound exercise book. 2cm. Formerly M444.	<u>1</u>
Paper on "Things I have seen and people I have met". n.d. Manuscript. 41 folios. (c.1cm.) Formerly 556.	<u>2</u>
An unpublished novel called "Handfast", under the nom de plume of Hugh Victor Keith. n.d. Manuscript. 5cm. of loose folios. Formerly 359. Also included is a type written copy of the above produced by the Fisher Library at the University of Sydney. Formerly D3046.	<u>3</u>
Replies to a questionnaire regarding Catherine Spence's religious beliefs, with biographical particulars. n.d. Manuscript. 6 loose folios. Formerly A203.	<u>4</u>
Manuscripts of two sermons: one not titled but dated November 24, 1878 and noted as being the first sermon Miss Spence preached at Wakefield Street Church; the other "On the Basis of Belief" dated 25 December, 1898. 1878, 1898. Manuscript. 22 folios sewn into soft covered booklet. Formerly A201.	<u>5</u>
Autobiography of Catherine Helen Spence, edited and completed after her death by Mrs. Jeanne F. Young. 1825-1910. Manuscript bound volume. 4cm. [Formerly M1043.]	<u>6</u>

Letters from Catherine Helen Spence to Miss Alice Henry. See attached item list. 1900-1910. Manuscript, loose folios. 8cm. Formerly 1050 and D2475/1 - 69 (L).	<u>7</u>
Drafts of 58 sermons delivered at the Unitarian Church by Miss Spence. Majority are included in the Catherine Helen Spence Bibliography - See attached item listing. 1896-1908. Manuscript. Loose folios. 11cm. Formerly U1074.	<u>8</u>
Paper describing a visit to England (Incomplete). 1865-1866. Manuscript. 15 loose folios. Formerly A434.	<u>9</u>
Sermon delivered on the occasion of the death of J.H. Hartley – "The Children's Friend". n.d. Manuscript. 10 loose folios. Formerly A200.	<u>10</u>
Paper on "Australian Answers to some American Problems". Given at Boston on 8 December, 1893. 1893. Manuscript. 40 loose folios. Formerly A166.	<u>11</u>
Letter from members of the National Council of Women of the U.S. congratulating her on the success of her work in the cause of women's suffrage in South Australia. 1895. Manuscript. 1 folio. [o/s]. Formerly A971.	<u>12</u>
Letter written to Mrs. Elizabeth W. Nicholls concerning Miss Spence's efforts to secure the adoption of proportional representation. 1902. Manuscript. 1 folio. Formerly A1251.	<u>13</u>
Paper on Proportional Representation read before the Australian Association for the Advancement of Science. 1907. Manuscript. 24 loose folios. Also includes a printed pamphlet entitled " the Proportional Representation Society", annotated by Miss Spence. 1 folio. Formerly A433.	<u>14</u>
Paper on "Reform School for Boys". 1 June, 1907. Manuscript. 19 loose folios. Formerly A202.	<u>15</u>
Letter written to Miss Spence to Lady Symon re forwarding the book "The Silent Sea" to Lady Northcote. 19 June, 1906. Manuscript. 1 folio. Formerly D4417 (L).	<u>16</u>

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| Bound book in which is pasted the text of an address to the G.L. Society entitled "The People's Voice - We are a People. From Fable and Proverb up to Newspapers".
12/10/1902. Manuscript. 1cm.
Also includes printed review of Jeanne Young's biography of Catherine Helen Spence (1937) and a printed article by Miss Spence on proportional representation. | <u>17</u> |
| Reminiscences of Mrs. Lucy Spence Morice, about her aunt, Catherine Helen Spence.
n.d. Typewritten copy. 8 loose folios. Formerly A1051. | <u>18</u> |
| Biographical notes on Catherine Helen Spence by Lucy Spence Morice.
n.d. Typewritten copy. 6 loose folios. Formerly D2476 (Misc.). | <u>19</u> |
| Reminiscences of Harriet Cook about Catherine Helen Spence.
n.d. Typewritten copy. 3 folios. Formerly A1050. | <u>20</u> |
| Scrapbook created by Catherine Helen Spence containing cuttings of her published literary works. Each volume is indexed.
Volume 1: 1866-79, Volume 2: 1878-80, Volume 3: 1880-82, Volume 4: 1882-84. 1866-1884.
4 bound Volumes. 16cm. Formerly D2476 (misc). | <u>21</u> |
| Newspaper clippings, mostly undated and without indication of the Sources. Some are articles by Miss Spence, others were published after her death.
1900-10 (?). Printed loose papers. 1cm. Formerly D2476 (misc). | <u>22</u> |
| Article entitled "Why should the sordid side of the literary career strike one as so ugly? St Berle in Lord Beaconsfield's novel of Endymion".
nd. 4 folios. Manuscript. | <u>23</u> |
| Photographs used by C.H. Spence in her lectures. They include portraits and diagrams and relate to her interest in proportional representation.
ca.1900 15 items. | <u>24</u> |
| Point-lace collar worked by C.H. Spence (framed)
1910. OUTSIZE (artworks till).
Circular point-lace collar made by Catherine Helen Spence in the year of her death as a wedding present to Alfred Allen Simpson and Janet Doris Hubbe in 1910. The donor was their daughter.
Collar measures 52 cm across at widest point; frame dimensions 67 cm x 67 cm,, Photographic copy available for reference. | <u>25</u> |

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| Diary kept by Catherine Helen Spence
1894. 2.5 cm
The diary features daily entries (a day per page) and four enclosures: two newspaper cuttings featuring poems 'Fame is food that dead men eat' and 'The heart of the tree' (found in page opening 5th/6th February); and a photograph - of her brother? with a lithograph portrait with the inscription "J v. Gay. W.L. Coll Ph. Sc." (found in page opening 3rd/4th July). | <u>26</u> |
| Writings related to C.H. Spence's tour of America 1896-1897,
n.d. 0.5 cm.
Writings related to her tour of America 1893-1894.
The five parts are:
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Unstructured comments on language and social differences and people encountered;2. Notes for a lecture to be given at Waikerie in South Australia, 29 September 1896;3. Single page of notes and names of influential people;4. Notes for a talk to the Girls Literary Society, 11 June 1897;5. Notes for a report to the Government of South Australia
Formerly part of PRG 88/8. | <u>27</u> |
| Letter to Miss Hunter from C.H. Spence
1905. 0.5 cm 2 items
Letter dated 11 December 1905, written from North Norwood, with a Preamble relating to the ship <i>Palmyra</i> on which C.H. Spence travelled to South Australia in 1839, and two sonnets about (1) the arrival date of the ship, and (2) C.H. Spence seeing South Australia again on her return from Melbourne in 1854. Includes a transcript of all the mss items, prepared by the auction house from which they were purchased in 2012. | <u>28</u> |