

ANTI-CATHOLIC POLEMIC AT THE ORIGINS OF AUSTRALIA'S FIRST CATHOLIC NEWSPAPER

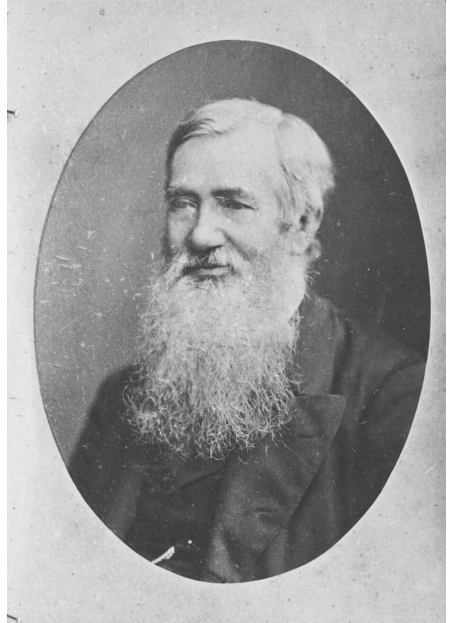
Colin Fowler*

1838 was a significant year for the progress of the Catholic community in Australia. The previous year Bishop John Bede Polding had sent his Vicar General, William Bernard Ullathorne, to Europe on a recruiting mission. He was extraordinarily successful, not in recruiting English Benedictines as Polding had hoped, but in signing up Irish diocesan clergy for the mission. During 1838, from February to December, a total of thirteen Irish priests arrived in Sydney. The *Sydney Gazette* had given a sour announcement of the July arrivals:

The Cecilia, from London, on Sunday last, has brought us eight additional Irish Roman Catholic Priests, being the 'first-fruits' of Dr Ullathorne's pamphlet, at a cost to the Colony, which he has calumniated and injured of only £1,200! - We expect shortly to see the Colony swarming with these adventurous spirits, if, as in the present instance our emigration fund is to be taxed with the payment of £150 to each Priest to defray the expense of his passage here, and to give the gentleman an 'out-fit', a system of robbery of which we shall say more on an early day.¹

As the priests arrived Polding wasted no time in dispersing them throughout

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William Augustine Duncan (1811-1885), by unknown photographer. NLA reference number: nla.obj-138018450

the country districts of the colony. One of the February 1838 arrivals, John Brady, was despatched to Penrith with the usual commission to build a church. Within months he would become the target of vicious sectarian journalism. A recent convert, Trinity College graduate, Charles Henry Chambers, would emerge as Brady's solicitor in the ensuing libel cases; in 1842 Chambers was appointed Sydney's first Town Clerk.

At the origins of this outburst of sectarianism was the mid-year arrival in the colony, not only of another batch of Irish clergy, but of a small book published in England by Ullathorne entitled *The Catholic Mission in Australasia*. The sixty page text had been produced in 1837 at Liverpool as a means of gaining the commitment of English and Irish bishops, priests and laity in supporting the Australian mission. It painted an alarming and pitiful picture of convict and emancipist life in the colony. Its impact on its intended audience was evident in the successful recruitment of priests and nuns. Its impact on the Sydney Tory establishment, the so-called 'Exclusives', was altogether negative. The *Gazette* announced the appearance of an 'eight-penny pamphlet' by the ultra-liberal Vicar General, 'the bosom friend of our late Governor Sir Richard Bourke', in which 'a most deplorable picture is given of the moral state of the Colony'.²

In a subsequent article the *Gazette* dedicated eleven columns to a mocking dismissal of the book's contents and its author. Six of the columns were taken up by direct quotes. Ullathorne was described as 'a dapper little gentleman of exceedingly mild and fascinating manners, more resembling in appearance what is generally called "a ladies' man" than a strict adherent of the stern doctrine of clerical celibacy'. The book was said 'to greatly resemble himself – having considerable more show than substance'. Ullathorne's purpose in condemning the transportation system was 'exposed': 'From the first page to the last, in every sentence, nay in every line, the one single aim and object – to work on the gullibility of simple John Bull, and finger his cash – is openly apparent'.³

The article highlighted and roundly rejected Ullathorne's description of convict conditions, drunken life in Sydney, the immorality of the native-born, the ineffectiveness of the Protestant clergy, the neglect of the aborigines. The criticism especially focused on those parts of the pamphlet which would put at risk the continuation of transportation. Debates about the future of the system were being held in the Westminster parliament and in the NSW Legislative Council. In April 1837 the British Parliament had established a Select Committee on Transportation chaired by the young radical parliamentarian, William Molesworth. On 8 and 12 February 1838

Ullathorne gave evidence to the committee to the effect that the system had failed altogether as a means of reformation of convicts, and that it led rather to their utter degradation. Following his appearance at the committee, Ullathorne published another pamphlet with the graphic title *The Horrors of Transportation Briefly Unfolded to the People*, a text that was yet to reach the colony.

Another Australian witness appearing at the Select Committee hearings in London was the Presbyterian minister, John Dunmore Lang, the eloquent opponent of the Exclusives. He mocked the Legislative Council, calling it 'our Colonial House of Lords'.⁴ He gave strong representation to the Molesworth Committee about the evils of transportation and assignment labour. His Sydney newspaper, *The Colonist*, was forthright in its opposition to the continuation of the system:

[W]e are decidedly of opinion, that the Transportation and Assignment System is in the present circumstances of this colony; utterly inefficient both as a system of penal discipline, and as a system of reformation, and that it ought therefore to be discontinued. This was the sum and substance of the evidence given by Dr. Lang, before the Transportation Committee in London.⁵

In its concluding report in August 1838 the Molesworth Committee recommended the 'immediate discontinuance of the practice of assigning convicts to settlers', the worst aspect of transportation, yet the one most profitable for the colonial establishment. Concerning transportation itself the committee recommended that it should be 'abolished and the penitentiary system of punishment be adopted in its stead as soon as practicable'.⁶ Transportation to NSW ceased in 1840, but continued in other colonies and penal settlements until 1868. However, not even agreement on as important a policy as opposition to continued convict transportation could overcome primitive sectarian divisions in Sydney. The *Colonist* joined the Tory press in rejecting Ullathorne's pamphlet, castigating it as the 'sixpenny pamphlet ... which so outrageously *outherrods* Dr Lang'.⁷

It was in this tense atmosphere of politics and sectarianism that a journalist focused on newly arrived Father John Brady of Penrith. In August 1838 the *Gazette* carried an article about Brady seeking a donation towards the building of his church from a local Protestant landowner named Cox, many of whose assigned servants were Irish Catholics.⁸ Brady had reason to expect a generous reception having already received offers of land for his church from two Protestant gentlemen of the district, Sir John Jamison and John Tindale. However, Cox refused to promote papist superstition and

attacked his visitor's religion with a volley of texts from the Bible. There are three candidates for 'Squire Cox' – one or other of the brothers George, Henry and Edward, sons of William Cox the builder of the first road over the mountains to Bathurst, and the recipient of generous Government grants of land in the Penrith district. Each of the brothers had acquired properties at Mulgoa and built stately homes named Winbourne, Glenmore and Fernhill.

The journalist prefaced the story with assertions about the ignorance of Irish Catholic priests - 'many of these men have never read the Bible, and some of them had never handled it'. He then proceeded to identify Brady as one of these 'hedge-priests'. Brady had penned a letter to the squire expressing his surprise and disappointment at the reception he had received. It was this letter which was printed in the *Gazette*, and held up as 'quite equal in point of literary merit and originality of conception to any production of any *Hedge Priest*'. The article proceeded to make great fun of Brady's syntax, spelling and punctuation.⁹

A spirited defence was mounted by a Penrith parishioner who wrote a letter to the *Australian*, a newspaper at times more sympathetic to the Catholic community, explaining his pastor's poor written English by the fact that Irish was Brady's first language, and that he had spent the past nineteen years as a missionary on the Indian Ocean island of Bourbon, later named Réunion, speaking French. He cheekily concluded that if the scriptural debate were to be continued it would best be conducted in Hebrew or Greek, both languages known by Brady.¹⁰ The *Gazette* simply fashioned more taunts from this explanation and continued the mockery of 'the Rev Father Jo Brady and his friends'.¹¹

The attacks reached a climax on 18 September when the *Gazette* reprinted an article that had appeared in the *Colonist* a few days before. It was headed 'The Confessional'. Here was a classic anti-Catholic theme. Without naming Brady it told the story of a less than enthusiastic Catholic convert, 'an old wife' in the Penrith district, who held confessional practice in 'utter abhorrence':

She got on tolerably well while there was no priest nearer than Parramatta or Windsor, because their visits to the district being only occasional, she was generally able to contrive some excuse for being out of the way, or shirking the duty. Latterly however a worthy priest has been stationed in the immediate neighbourhood, and such excuses being no longer of any use, go to confession she must.

Inevitably, as in every confessional story, the unnamed priest was accused of demanding money for his services, refusing 'to give her absolution unless

she would immediately pay him down the sum of five pounds'. The story concluded: 'The indignant dame was compelled to comply, but she left the confessional protesting that be Catholics who may, she was determined in future to shelter herself under the wing of Bishop Broughton.'¹²

There was little doubt about who the unnamed 'worthy priest' was - the only priest stationed in Penrith was the Rev Father John Brady. The copied article was a continuation of the *Gazette's* toying with 'Brady and Friends'. The harassment continued ten days after 'The Confessional' item in an article headed 'Father Jo Brady':

Father Jo is most indubitably destined 'to live in story' - what with his abilities as an *illigant* letter-writer, his genuine *Hibernian* French idiom, and his very peculiar notions on the subject of the *presumptuousness* of 'laymen expatiating on the scriptures in the presence of a RC clergyman who has received a special mission *ad hoc*'. Father Jo evidently bids fair to throw Dr Ullathorne himself into the shade ... Father Jo has turned agitator, and has been trying his hand at the commendable occupation of attempting to upset convict discipline.¹³

There followed the saga, revealed the previous day in a letter to the *Sydney Herald*, of the refusal of a local landowner to allow his Catholic cook, an assigned convict, to attend Sunday Mass being conducted by Father Brady at the Penrith Police Office. The cook defied his master and attended Mass. The Master had him apprehended, but Brady intervened with the local police magistrate who arranged for a hearing the next day. The indulgent magistrate allowed the defendant to state his case, and in the words of the *Gazette*, 'Cookey set off and delivered himself of a rambling defence as intelligible as the explanations of the lower order of Irish usually are'. This was followed by Father Brady complaining that the landowner always prohibited his convict servants from attending Mass. The final outcome was that the unfortunate cook was sentenced to receive fifty lashes. The *Gazette* could not refrain from a final concluding flourish of mockery linking Brady's encounters with the two Penrith Protestant squires:

Taught by sad experience the consequences of committing his ideas to paper, in a country where the French idiom is so very little understood as in Botany Bay, his Reverence resolved to try another plan, and attempted to bully Mr. Thompson into compliance by informing him that unless he did subscribe in aid of the erection of the Roman Catholic Chapel, his servants would not be allowed the benefit of clergy!!! That threat failing in its desired effect, Protestants not being

altogether so easily frightened at the bugbear of excommunication 'with bell, book, and candle' as would suit Father Jo's purposes, he seems to have fallen upon the plan of exciting insubordination among Mr. T's servants in order to bring him to reason.¹⁴

Unexpectedly on 13 October there was a change of tone with the appearance of an apology printed in the *Gazette*. It was occasioned by the editor's receipt of a letter on 8 October from 'a gentleman who acted on behalf of the Rev Mr Brady'. That gentleman was Brady's solicitor Charles Henry Chambers. The letter demanded the name of the author of the offending article and a copy of the manuscript which had reflected on the 'character and conduct of the Rev John Brady, who is clearly meant by "the priest stationed at Penrith".' This was unambiguously a letter preliminary to a libel action. The *Gazette's* apology was published five days later:

We think it but due to Mr Brady that we should at once retract the paragraph and apologise for having given it insertion. We do so the more readily because having bitterly had frequent occasion to come into contact with the same Rev gentleman, and having more than once handled his Reverence rather roughly, we would not willingly have it supposed that we would utter a syllable derogatory to his character except on the best possible authority. We shall be happy at all times to make the *amende honorable* whenever we find that we have inflicted a wound in error, or unintentionally.¹⁵

The apology was not accepted, and the cases for libel against the editors of *Colonist* and *Gazette* were finally heard in the Supreme Court in July 1839. The case against the editor of the *Colonist*, James McEachern, a Scottish school teacher who had been brought to the colony by Lang, the owner of the *Colonist*, came to court before Justice Alfred Stephen and a special jury on 9 October. Barristers for the plaintiff were Richard Windeyer, William Foster and the Attorney General, John Hubert Plunkett, who explained that he was a late substitute for Roger Therry. For the defendant were William a'Beckett and Edward Broadhurst. Bishop Polding was called as a witness in order to explain to the court the implications for the character and career of a priest accused of asking money as a condition of confessional absolution. The Bishop concluded that if Brady had been guilty of what was imputed of him in the newspaper article he would have been 'degraded to the last degree'.

The defence applied unsuccessfully for *nonsuit* or dismissal of the case on the grounds that 'the plaintiff had no *locus standi* as a Roman Catholic priest'. Judge Stephen ruled emphatically that:

The plaintiff, as a minister of religion, was as much entitled to damages as if he belonged to our own church; he was not to have the shield of justice removed from him because he differed from us in faith. While they remain subjects, all persons are entitled to the benefits of the laws, more especially a minister of the Christian faith - of a faith which, like our own, professes to be founded on Holy Writ.¹⁶

The principal defence was that the article was not a libel upon the individual, but a fair discussion on a public question, namely whether the practice of the confessional was the subject of ridicule and contempt, as Protestants contended. After instructions from the bench, the jury retired for fifteen minutes and returned a verdict in favour of the plaintiff and awarded damages of fifty pounds. The judge awarded costs against the defendant. Two days later the libel case against George Cavenagh of the *Gazette* came to the same court, with the Chief Justice, the recently knighted Sir James Dowling,¹⁷ presiding, with Plunkett and Windeyer for the plaintiff, and a'Beckett and Foster for the defendant. The claim for damages was five hundred pounds.

The plaintiff's barristers argued a stronger case against Cavenagh because he had not only reprinted the article, already found to be libellous, but had, in presenting the story, attested to its authenticity, thus giving it more credibility in the eyes of the public. Polding was again called and cross examined. The defence placed much emphasis on the printed apology and turned the focus on the plaintiff's attorney, CH Chambers. A series of letters exchanged between Chambers and Cavenagh's solicitors from October 1838 to February 1839 were produced with the intention of showing that, with the encouragement of his greedy attorney, the plaintiff's sole motivation in refusal of the apology and persevering with the case was to achieve monetary gain for himself and his solicitor. The Chief Justice's instructions to the jury left them with little option but to find for the plaintiff, but the jurors revealed their sympathy for the defendant by awarding damages of one farthing.¹⁸ The court eventually awarded costs against the defendant. Both the *Colonist* and the *Gazette* continued their attacks on Brady, and now included Chambers in their sights. The *Colonist* in a style worthy of John Dunmore Lang set the tone in an article entitled 'The Confessional and no mistake!' It began: 'Father Brady will not surely now attempt to deny that he stipulates, expects, and rigorously exacts money for confessions, if not from Popish devotees, at all events, from Protestant Editors, when he drags them into Court!' It concluded:

We have only to say, however, that both Mr McEachern and our

contemporary of *The Gazette* have been made to confess their editorial sins, both voluntarily and coercively; but they have at the same time demonstrated, or rather Father Jo himself has, that his object was not only to compel them to confess their fault, but also to make them pay pretty smartly for it, before he should absolve them from its consequences.¹⁹

The *Gazette* offered yet another reason for the libel cases, claiming that 'Father Jo Brady's action against the *Gazette* and *Colonist* newspapers was evidently got up in view of gagging the Protestant newspaper press of the Colony'. Chambers was described as Brady's 'compatriot', and in a footnote it was stated that 'Mr C H Chambers recently formally abjured the Protestant faith and turned Roman Catholic'.²⁰

The final act in the long saga was the overnight imprisonment of McEachern for failing to pay damages and costs. This brought forth a parting outburst against Catholics, 'our ancient foes', and their 'malignant agent', Charles Henry Chambers:

And how has our forbearance been rewarded by our ancient foes and their zealous, but malignant agents? Let our infamous and never-to-be-forgotten incarceration tell how ... Has he [Chambers] exculpated himself from the charge of ungentlemanly precipitancy and want of courtesy ... in resorting so unceremoniously to such inquisitorial measures, in order to gratify the malignant feelings either of himself or his Catholic constituents, by subjecting us to personal contumely and degradation? No!!! and until he does so, we 'hold his honour light'.²¹

In a final blast entitled 'A Parting Salute' the *Gazette* on 8 October 1839 wrote:

Mr Chambers has got his costs, but we question whether he would not now gladly give five times the amount could he but sink the whole affair in oblivion; he has got his 'pound of flesh', but he has lost caste in public estimation, and he will find it difficult to regain it. Father Jo, too, has got his verdict - but, alas it is only a farthing! - Avarice and revenge both sought for gratification, and both have been disappointed ... We have now done with Mr CHARLES HENRY CHAMBERS. In the attempt to victimize us, he has himself become the victim.²²

It was this one-sided power of press proprietors and editors to address, influence and persuade the public, and particularly in the onslaughts against Ullathorne and Brady, that led Bishop Polding to establish a Catholic newspaper which emerged in August 1839 as the *Australasian*

Chronicle. The proprietors were eight Irish emancipists. The Scottish convert, William Alexander Duncan, 28 years old, recruited by Ullathorne in England in 1838 for school teaching, and only nine months in the Colony, was appointed editor. Duncan, originally an aspirant to the Presbyterian ministry, was first attracted to Catholicism because of his disgust at newspaper onslaughts against the Church in Scotland, reasoning that such venom must point to something of great value.²³ In the first edition of the twice-weekly *Chronicle*, Friday 2 August, a 'prospectus' carried on the front page forcefully set out the purpose of the new publication:

It has long been a matter of deep regret among a great and respectable portion of the inhabitants of this Colony, that, notwithstanding the great number of Newspapers published in Sydney, by far the greater part are strongly fettered by party influence, while not one has appeared, expressive of the wishes, or devoted to the interests of the Catholic Population. Placed, by the laws, on a perfect equality with other denominations of Christians, forming a third of the entire population, and inferior to none in the exercise of all the duties of good citizens, we are treated by a certain party as if we were a degraded caste - a cipher in the population; and we almost seem, as if we still groaned under the rigour of the penal laws. The Pulpit and the Press appear to vie with each other in promulgating the calumnies of the three last centuries, in misrepresenting our principles and abusing our laborious, respected, and highly exemplary Clergy. And, if, occasionally, a pen has been taken up in our defence, it has been to demand for us, not justice but toleration. To those who have vindicated us, though it has been, sometimes, at the expense of much that we respect, we are not ungrateful, but we feel that we ought to take higher ground. We must take our cause into our own hands. We must explain and defend our principles - wipe off the aspersions that have been cast upon us, and prove to our separated brethren, that we are worthy to join with them, hand in hand, in promoting the public good. To explain and uphold the civil and religious principles of Catholics, and to maintain their rights, will, then, be the primary objects of *The Australasian Chronicle*.²⁴

In December Ullathorne boasted that the Church's victory over its press enemies in the Brady case had been a boon for the establishment of its own newspaper: 'The press which treated the Church with such unheard of violence is ruined ... The *Sydney Gazette*, the oldest paper in the Colony, backed by members of the [Legislative] Council and commercial influence - its Editor off to Port Phillip, and its materials, this day, put up for auction,

and the best of these will be bought in by our party.²⁵ In his autobiographical memoir, Duncan reminisced about the immediate impact of the *Chronicle*:

At the time the *Chronicle* was established, the press of Sydney teemed with the most scurrilous, lying and obscene attacks upon everything connected with Catholicism. It was my primary duty to grapple with this mass of calumny, which I did in a manner that obtained for me not only torrents of applause from the catholic colonists, but the esteem and respect of many protestants; and I had soon the satisfaction of putting an end to this system of abuse, and of contributing to give a better tone to the colonial press than it had hitherto adopted.²⁶

The *Chronicle* was available for the defence of Brady when the original *Gazette* article of August 1838 was repeated verbatim in the controversial book published by Judge William Westbrooke Burton, *The State of Religion and Education in New South Wales*.²⁷ The author had cited the story as an example of how Catholic clergy unscrupulously sought money to build their churches. Brady's 'unlettered' missive was lifted out of ephemeral newsprint and given permanency between the hard-covers of Burton's book. In response Ullathorne wrote a scathing pamphlet which was serialised in the *Australasian Chronicle*. He directly addressed the 'Hedge Priest' slur:

Mr. Burton introduces Fr Brady's letter into his book as a specimen of the education of a Catholic priest. Now, Mr Brady states in that letter that he was educated in France ... thence he passed to the Isle of Bourbon, where fifteen years of his life were spent in the ministry, daring which period he had not more than three or four opportunities of conversing in the almost forgotten tongue of his native country. When I first met the Rev Mr Brady in London, some two years previous to the date of that letter, he was from these circumstances unable to converse in English, and we were obliged to have recourse to the French language ... Let us suppose that Mr Burton's appointment had been to the Mauritius instead of to New South Wales. Let the first letter he should write in French after arrival, and address privately on private matters, be jeeringly thrown before the public through the channel of a newspaper, and be thence caught up by a grave dignitary and inserted in a work intended for permanency. Does this circumstance appear to Mr Burton as 'ludicrous', or as simply indecent?²⁸

Brady himself entered the lists again and wrote to the *Chronicle* asking that it publish his letter to the judge, written in French, accusing him of having 'borne false witness against. your neighbour'.²⁹ The reverend editor of the

Australian described the letter as 'libellous, calumnious, officious, insolent and ungentlemanlike'.³⁰ The feisty Duncan vigorously defended Brady, and so things continued.

One of the advantages of a Catholic press was the ability to print official church documents, such as the bishop's Pastoral Letters and pamphlets, which often contained more expansive responses to anti-Catholic publications. For example, for a shilling one could purchase 'A Reply to the Rev W Macintyre's *Candid Inquiry into the Doctrine maintained by Bishop Polding in his Pastoral Address*, by E. Hawksley', as advertised in the *Chronicle* of 10 April 1841.

Early in 1843 Duncan's editorship came to an abrupt end with his dismissal by the Vicar-General, Francis Murphy. Murphy was in charge of the Diocese while Duncan's patrons Polding and Ullathorne were absent in Europe. The Vicar-General acted against Duncan in the few remaining weeks before Polding's anticipated arrival back in Sydney. He claimed the support of all the clergy in his actions. In his letter to the Irish proprietors of the *Chronicle* explaining his decision he reiterated the reasons for establishing the newspaper:

We wish to stand well with persons of every creed and honest public opinion—we are anxious to concede to others what we claim for ourselves, 'freedom of thought and action'; we wish well to all men of liberal and enlightened views—we desire not to be active partisans of any—we want no Dictatorship in politics or polemics, and we feel it high time to give public expression to these our sentiments, and to dissever ourselves in the eye of the public from the imprudent and injudicious conduct of Mr Duncan in this matter; we consider his zeal to have led him beyond that 'sobriety' of opinion so much recommended in holy writ, and that, instead of serving the cause he has undertaken to defend, he is seriously injuring the same.

He even implicated the absent Polding in the sacking: 'On the eve of the departure of our revered Prelate, he wrote a letter expressing his fears and anxiety regarding the incautious and over-zealous temper of Mr Duncan, and wishing him to be admonished on this head. The time has arrived when this admonition becomes a duty.'³¹

Duncan, with his chief patron Ullathorne absent and, in fact, never to return to the Colony, was vulnerable, but not crushed. Within days following his sacking he announced to the public, via a notice in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, that 'arrangements will shortly be made for the re-appearance of the true *Chronicle*'.³² In March he wrote and had printed 'confidentially

for private use', *An Appeal from the Unjust Decision of the Very Rev Vicar General Murphy to His Grace the Archbishop of Sydney*.³³ He argued in detail that his 'removal was effected by a scandalous combination of ecclesiastical influence and brute force, both alike contrary to honour, justice and equity'.³⁴

Polding, on his arrival in Sydney as Archbishop and Metropolitan early in March, continued to be dependent on Duncan's adversarial skills; he commissioned him to produce a pamphlet in response to Bishop Broughton's attack on the pretensions and illegality of Polding's new titles.³⁵ However, Duncan soon realised that, because of the Archbishop's 'weakness' and 'timidity', he would not be reinstated as editor of the *Chronicle*: 'It was but too apparent that what the Archbishop was well inclined to do he dared not do in my behalf.' He sadly concluded: 'I who had been for three years his bosom friend, ceased altogether to visit the archiepiscopal residence, though often indirectly solicited to resume the intimacy'.³⁶

Within six months of his dismissal Duncan had established his own newspaper, the *Weekly Register of Politics, Facts, and General Literature*. In the first number of the new journal he was unrepentant, still displaying an 'incautious and over-zealous temper':

After having undergone a political martyrdom and having had our fabled deeds recorded in apocryphal Chronicles we rise again like the phoenix - somewhat emaciated in form, it will be perceived, as becomes our altered position and the state of the times, but unaltered in spirit, and firm as ever in our determination to contribute of such good sense, moderate acquirements, and honesty of purpose, as God has imparted to us, to support the rights and advance 'the position and interests of the people of our adopted country'.³⁷

The *Weekly Register* ceased publication in January 1845, and Duncan relocated to Moreton Bay.

In May 1883, the *Freeman's Journal*, from 1850 the successor to the *Australasian Chronicle* as Sydney's Catholic newspaper, published a letter from 'Cassius' addressed to the aged William Augustine Duncan CMS, with high praise for his youthful contribution to journalism in Australia: 'From '39 to '42, your conduct of the AUSTRALASIAN CHRONICLE on Liberal Catholic lines made that journal a real power in the land.' 'Cassius' concluded:

Disinterested, devoted, largely tolerant, affectionately loyal to your kind, watchful for their best and most vital interests, you bore the heat and burden of the day of crisis, with what a royal serenity of

mind, with what a high capacity for useful telling work, I sincerely trust the coming historian of this land will record with simple literal truth, nothing extenuating. Dowered with the hate of hate and scorn of scorn, in the fulness of your strength you wrought for and fought for the Just and the Right: hence it is that, though the grand results of your toil are not so generally credited to you as they should be, and will be, your old age is accompanied (as such an honoured age ought to be) with honour, love, obedience, troops of friends.³⁸

Duncan died at his Sydney home on 25 June 1885.

Notes

- 1 *Sydney Gazette*, 17 July 1838.
- 2 *Sydney Gazette*, 7 July 1838.
- 3 *Sydney Gazette*, 12 July 1838.
- 4 *Colonist*, 11 July 1838.
- 5 *Colonist*, 11 July 1838.
- 6 Sir William Molesworth, *Speech on transportation delivered in the House of Commons on the 5th May 1840*, London 1840, p 76.
- 7 *Colonist*, 11 July 1838.
- 8 *Sydney Gazette*, 28 August 1838.
- 9 *Sydney Gazette*, 28 August 1838.
- 10 *Australian*, 31 August 1838.
- 11 *Sydney Gazette*, 1 & 11 September 1838. The repeated use the taunting phrase 'Father Jo' arose from the way in which Brady had signed his letter to Cox; he had simply used 'Jo' as an abbreviated form of 'John'.
- 12 *Sydney Gazette*, 18 September 1838.
- 13 *Sydney Gazette*, 27 September 1838.
- 14 *Sydney Gazette*, 27 September 1838.
- 15 *Sydney Gazette*, 13 October 1838.
- 16 *Sydney Herald*, 10 July 1839.
- 17 Sir James commented on his new title: 'The nickname has made many people wondrous civil to me' (C H Currey, 'Dowling, Sir James [1787–1844]', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/dowling-sir-james-1989/text2421>, published in hardcopy 1966, accessed online 16 August 2016).
- 18 *Sydney Herald*, 12 July 1839
- 19 *Colonist*, 13 July 1839.
- 20 *Gazette*, 20 July 1839.
- 21 *Colonist*, 11 September 1839.

22 *Gazette*, 8 October 1839.

23 Margaret M Payten, *William Augustine Duncan, 1811-1885: a biography of a colonial reformer*, MA Thesis, University of New South Wales, 1965, p 10.

24 *Australasian Chronicle*, 2 August 1839.

25 Ullathorne to Brown, 4 December 1839. Quoted in Paul Collins, *William Bernard Ullathorne and the Foundation of Australian Catholicism 1815-1840*, Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the Australian National University, 1989, 232.

26 W A Duncan, 'Autobiographical memoir', 1854, manuscript in Mitchell Library, Sydney, NSW.

27 William Westbrooke Burton, *The State of Religion and Education in New South Wales*, London, 1840.

28 *Australasian Chronicle*, 3 October 1840.

29 *Australasian Chronicle*, 3 June 1841.

30 *Australian*, 8 June 1841.

31 *Australasian Chronicle*, 23 February 1843.

32 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 February 1843.

33 W A Duncan, *An Appeal from the Unjust Decision of the Very Rev Vicar General Murphy to His Grace the Archbishop of Sydney*, Sydney 1843.

34 Duncan, *An Appeal*, 13. See also J M O'Brien, 'W A Duncan, the Irish question and the NSW elections of 1843', *Journal of the Australian Catholic Historical Society*, 4 (1972), 40–57.

35 W A Duncan, *A letter to the Lord Bishop of Australia: containing remarks upon His Lordship's protest against the metropolitan and episcopal jurisdiction of His Grace the Archbishop of Sydney* (Sydney, 1843).

36 W A Duncan, 'Autobiographical memoir', 54–55.

37 *Weekly Register*, 29 July 1843.

38 *Freeman's Journal*, 5 May 1883. It has been suggested that 'Cassius' was the pen name of J H B Curtis, formerly Father Anselm OSB (Payten, *William Augustine Duncan*, p iv, n 1). The more likely candidate was John Cash Neild, as clearly identified by the *Freeman's* 'Flaneur' in his responses to the many letters of 'Cassius' addressed, 'per favour of the *Freeman's Journal*', to Sydney notables from 1882 to 1884.