

CATHOLIC RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL LIFE IN THE MACQUARIE ERA

ST. MARY'S CATHEDRAL

To the Editor of The Argus:

Sir,

In your issue of last Saturday, after giving an account of the terrible misfortune that has occurred to the city of Sydney by the burning of St. Mary's Cathedral, you gave a short account of the laying of the foundation-stone, etc., and as there are now but few alive who were present on that occasion, and none who had a better opportunity of seeing and hearing all that occurred than I had, I think I would be remiss if I did not give you such of the details of that day's proceedings as I can call to mind upon so short a notice.

But that your readers may form a correct idea of the herculean task undertaken by that saintly man, Father Therry, I will, with your permission, give a short account of the origin and progress of Catholicity in this country up to the day when the good Governor Macquarie laid the first stone of St. Mary's Church.

You, sir, are aware that in the latter part of last century the British Government determined upon sending some of their criminals to Botany Bay, as Sydney was then called, so that their return home would be nearly impossible. About ten years after the formation of the settlement by Governor Phillip, the whole of Ireland was convulsed by rebellion; and after the suppression of the rebellion, which lasted for some time, such of the rebels as were not hanged were sent out to Sydney. Amongst these exiles (for I do not think it fair to call them criminals) were many great and good men, men who loved their country more than they did their lives, and amongst them were more than one Catholic priest. I remember the "old hands" speaking of Father Dixon and Father Harold, both of whom were sent to the colony because they were suspected of being rebels. The slightest proof served as an excuse for hanging in those days. Besides the priests, there were numbers of well-educated men; in fact, Irish pioneers in the times to which

I refer were, as a rule, well-behaved, honest men. There were exceptions, no doubt, but they all loved their country and their religion to an extreme; so that when Father O'Flynn arrived he quite disturbed the order of things in the colony, without at all intending to do so. It was in this way: Once it was known to the Catholics, who as I said before loved the religion of their forefathers and were very impulsive, that Mass would be celebrated at any particular place, to Mass they would go, with or without leave; and it must be admitted that although there were some masters who acted kindly to those assigned them, and permitted their servants to go to Mass, there were others who cared more for a day's work than they did for any religion; and, what was worse, to let their men go join in worship with a real Popish priest, was a thing not to be talked of; the thought was enough to make them mad, so they besieged government house, and never gave poor old Governor Macquarie rest until he sent Father O'Flynn out of the colony. But the triumph of bigotry was of short duration; for some three years after this victory two Catholic clergymen were sent to Sydney, appointed and paid by the British Government to act as chaplains, with equal rank with the ministers of the Established Church. This was a terrible blow to the bigots, but it was a source of great rejoicing to the Catholics, who, having conscientious scruples against going to a Protestant place of worship, were nearly lost to their religion; for, as you are aware, "local preachers" are not tolerated in the Catholic Church. Therefore, we suffered more from the want of a properly ordained minister than would any of our separated brethren, had they been situated as we were.

From the departure of Father O'Flynn until the arrival of Fathers Connolly and Therry, the Catholics met in Sydney at the house of a good old man named James Dempsey, on all Sundays and holydays, and there offered up prayers to the Almighty in their own way. I remember about this time a French Frigate, called the *Urianna* or some such name, came into Port Jackson, having a French priest on board, who celebrated Mass for us during his stay, which was but short, but still his visit was looked upon by the Catholics as an especial blessing. Little did they think that they were so soon to have what they so ardently wished for, viz., a Catholic priest stationed amongst them.

The Rev. Philip Conolly and the Rev. John Joseph Therry were appointed by the home government, quite

independent of all colonial control; in fact, they were subject to no temporal power, excepting such as good citizens are always subject to. Their immediate spiritual superior was Doctor Slater, the Bishop of the Isle of France. In every other way Father Connolly, who was senior priest, was quite master of his own actions, and he, thinking the inhabitants of Van Diemen's Land ought to have the ministrations of religion as well as those of New South Wales, made up his mind to send his youthful coadjutor to Hobart Town. The revered Father Therry, who had no desire to choose any particular place for the scene of his labours, prepared with alacrity to go to Hobart Town. But an overruling Providence ordained that he should not then quit Sydney, and although he attempted upon two separate occasions to go, yet, as by a miracle, was he driven back again. Each time Father Connolly saw, or thought he saw, that it was not the will of God that Father Therry should leave Sydney, so he, knowing the religious destitution of the people of Van Diemen's Land (now Tasmania), went himself, and left Father Therry in full charge of New South Wales, much to the joy of the people, who loved him for his gentle and persuasive manners, which endeared him to all classes of the community, Protestant and Catholic, rich and poor, all loved good Father Therry, for he was not good old Father Therry then, which was 44 or 45 years ago.

Once this marvellous far-seeing priest found himself master of the position, he set to work to obtain a site for a church; and although bigotry prevented him getting the site he wanted, he got the present site of that building, which a week ago was an ornament to Sydney. I have no desire, to rip up old grievances, but the truth ought to be told when speaking or writing matters of history. But to return. The Governor was anxious to wipe out the insult he had given the Catholics by sending away Father O'Flynn, and moreover Father Therry's winning ways could not be resisted, so he would have given him any vacant site about Sydney, but there were some of his advisers who were not so well disposed towards the priest, so he was obliged to take what he could get. The Catholics were now become a numerous body, for besides men who had retired from the army and navy, there were numbers of the public officers Catholics—many of whom, it must be admitted, were afraid to avow openly their religion, as doing so would have led to their dismissal—but it was not until the Catholic Emancipation Act was passed in 1829 and the arrival in this

colony about 1830 of Mr. Commissioner Roger Therry (Therry was an ominous name to bigotry) who boldly avowed himself a Catholic, that Catholicity could be tolerated at all in genteel society. Let Roger Therry have whatsoever faults he may as a public writer, he wrote at that period one pamphlet which deserves immortal praise. It was an answer to an attack on Catholicity made by the famous Sir Edward Parry of North Pole celebrity, who happened to be in charge of the Port Stephens Company's establishment at that time. Poor Sir Edward could not stand it, so he cut and run, and bigotry hid its diminished head. In fact, Roger Therry had but just arrived in the colony when, at a St. Patrick's day dinner, he (to use the words of old Monitor Hall, who published an account of the dinner at the time) "made a speech defending the liberty of the press, that scotched tyranny as St. Patrick did the snakes." But I must return. The Catholics were badly off for a church, but Father Therry, who was a far-seeing man, would not be satisfied with a small one. This led to dissension among the Catholics, many of whom could not enter into his views or see any necessity for so large a church as he intended to build. Among these was Mr. Greenaway, the architect, employed to make the plans. He said, what was true, that Father Therry was but a young man, and did not know what such a building would cost, that any one must be mad who could suppose that the Catholics of Sydney would require such a large building for the next hundred years at least. Many such arguments were used by well-disposed persons, but Father Therry was firm, and at last his plan was adopted by the Catholic committee. I may mention en passant, that one of that committee now rests in peace in Goulburn churchyard—poor Roger Murphy—who in those days was one of the finest looking men in the colony, and a great friend of Father Therry's. Father Therry had by his conciliatory manners made friends of all those with whom he came in contact. Not that he was at all wanting in firmness; quite the contrary; for in later years he resented encroachments upon his religion, threw up his salary, and put Governor Darling at defiance. But in the days of Governor Macquarie all was sunshine amongst the officials. Father Therry could count many friends, and one of these was an Irish gentleman named John Thomas Campbell, the then Colonial Secretary, who no doubt gave his counsel in favour of concessions to the Catholics. At all events the Governor consented to lay the first stone of the first Catholic church in Australia. The

day was fixed, and every one of the officials, taking the cue from government house, tried who could do most to forward the work. Father Therry, who never put his light under a bushel, strained every nerve to make the scene an imposing one. The trenches were dug out, and a large quantity of stone placed on the ground; a marquee was erected, in which Mass was celebrated, and a procession formed which made a round of the site, while the choir chanted the various hymns appropriate for the occasion.

Father Therry was a great man. Other clergymen would have hesitated at that time in making such displays as he did of the grand ceremonies of our religion, such as Benedictions, Processions and Consecrations, but he feared nothing; and it was no unusual thing to see the Catholics in those days form into a procession by day or night and follow the Banner of the Cross from one part of Sydney to St. Mary's and back.

There were Catholics from all parts of the colony at the ceremony of laying the first stone, and they added not only to the appearance, but also to the subscription list. I was then a boy serving at Mass, and it was part of my duty to hold the trowel until the time came for Father Therry to present it to the Governor. The blade of the trowel was pure silver; the handle was ivory; and there was engraved on it, as near as I can recollect, the following inscription: "This trowel was presented by the Catholics of New South Wales to Major-General Lachlan Macquarie, Governor-in-Chief, &c., on the auspicious occasion of his laying the foundation stone of St. Mary's Catholic Church." This word "church" gave offence to many at that time, for they thought it was presumptuous on our part to call our place of worship a church, and I have no doubt Governor Macquarie lost many friends in consequence of that day's proceedings, for I have heard people say that he ought to have resented our using the word "church." Even some of the Catholics were scandalized at the term, which was quite new to them. Whether it was on purpose to conciliate Catholics, or from a paternal regard for the people over whom he was placed, or whatever his motives were, Governor Macquarie, acted well upon that occasion; and when he had finished laying the stone, Father Therry wanted to wipe the trowel, but the good old Governor took out his own handkerchief, wiped the trowel, and then put it into his bosom, saying as he did so—"You must know, Mr. Therry, that although I never laid the first stone of a Catholic church before, I am a very old mason

(meaning he was a freemason) and I shall keep this trowel as long as I live, in remembrance of this day, and I wish you and your flock every success in your pious undertaking.”—After this there was a great cheering for the Governor and his lady, and everyone subscribed according to his means from the Governor down; in fact, everything went on swimmingly with St. Mary’s for a time.

But I find my letter is quite long enough, so I will conclude for the present, and give you on some future occasion a few jottings of the progress and completion of that unfortunate building.

I remain your obedient servant,

C. FITZPATRICK.

July 3rd, 1865.

P.S. I forgot to mention one fact which ought not to be let sink into oblivion, viz: Father Therry won the esteem of Mr. Commissioner Bigge, who was sent out by the home government to enquire into abuses said to exist in some of the government departments, and he made Father Therry a present of two silver branch candlesticks of great value for the especial use of St. Mary’s church. Strange to say, the gentleman who acted as secretary to Mr. Bigge on that occasion was in after years sent out to this country as Archdeacon Scott, and was Father Therry’s bitterest enemy.

C.F.

To the Editor of The Argus:

Sir,

I promised you when concluding my last letter, on the laying of the first stone of St. Mary’s, to give you as my leisure served some further of my recollections on the progress of Catholicity in this country, as exemplified by the unremitting efforts made by Father Therry and his flock to complete in spite of every obstacle so noble a monument of their piety and of his zeal and wisdom.

You, sir, must pardon me if I am a little prolix when writing on a subject so dear to me—in every way so interesting to society so doubly dear to every Irish Catholic—as an account of the means by which, under God, the

religion of our forefathers, that religion for which so many of them suffered and bled, was resuscitated, nurtured, and established in this country by that sainted man who is now enjoying the reward of his labours. I am further induced to write on this subject from the fact that there are now persons in Sydney publishing garbled accounts of these matters, of which they know nothing personally and of which they are but ill-informed. Nothing can be more unfair than for a man who sets himself up to write history—that is, the giving an account of such matters as I am now writing of—to set forth certain statements as facts without taking the necessary care to see that he is well informed on the subject, lest he might by inadvertence be guilty of suppressing the truth, which is nearly as bad as making false statements. I am led to this train of thought by reading a little work, published in Sydney, bearing the title of “St. Mary’s,” the writer of which not only makes several mistakes, but he does what is infinitely worse—he entirely ignores the heroic conduct of men who, by their virtuous lives and their unconquerable fidelity to religion, served as a beacon to the wavering of their own creed and gained the esteem and friendship of their separated brethren. In speaking of Father O’Flynn, the writer of “St. Mary’s” calls him the Very Rev. W. Flinn. Now his name was the Very Rev. Jeremiah O’Flynn, and a very fine-looking man he was. He confirmed me, and I quite well remember him. Again the writer says that Father O’Flynn left the Blessed Eucharist in the house of a devoted Catholic near the present site of St. Patrick’s church. This is another mistake. Father O’Flynn left the Blessed Sacrament, in a pix, at the house of the late Mr. James Dempsey of Kent Street, near to Erskine Street, and next door to the then residence of Mr. Thomas Day, the boat-builder, which is not near St. Patrick’s church. When Father O’Flynn came to this country he found, amongst other good and zealous Catholics, the late Mr. James Dempsey, a stonemason by trade, and who, having neither wife nor children in this country, was enabled to devote the better part of his time to works of charity and religious exercises, thus fitting himself for the post he was so soon and unexpectedly called upon to fill; for when Father O’Flynn found that he would not be permitted to remain with his flock, he, in humble imitation of his Divine Master determined on leaving them the last pledge of his love; and he did so, for he left the Blessed Sacrament in a pix with Mr. Dempsey, who consecrated the best room in his house for the safe-keeping of what he prized more than

any earthly treasure. Father O'Flynn made a good selection when he chose Mr. Dempsey to be custodian to that sacred treasure he was about leaving to his bereaved flock, and well did Mr. Dempsey perform the duty imposed on him. To guard against any misfortunes, and to ensure the safe-keeping of the Blessed Sacrament, Mr. Dempsey secured the assistance of five or six other religious old men, whose whole duty and pleasure was to watch and pray in that room, in which an altar had been erected and a tabernacle placed to receive the holy pix. This room was converted into a little chapel, and it was no unusual thing on a Sunday, when Catholics could assemble to join in the prayers at Mass which were being read in that room, to see many of them kneeling under the verandah, aye even in the street, much to the amusement of the scoffers, who said we ought to be sun-struck; but despite all their scoffs the real Catholics still continued to meet at Mr. Dempsey's until the arrival of Father Conolly and Father Therry; in fact it was no unusual thing to see Catholics from the most distant part of the colony assembled there. After the departure of Father O'Flynn, the Catholics in the different parts of the colony formed themselves into committees, having for their centres Mr. Lacy, of Parramatta; Mr. Dwyer of Liverpool; Mr. Byrne, of Campbelltown; Mr. Kenny, of Appin, &c.; so that there was a union in prayer and an intercourse of intelligence amongst all classes of Catholics in the country, all emanating from or culminating to the great centre in Kent Street. In those days, when there was no railroad, no coaches, and very few horses, it was not counted a wonder to see a man walk from Campbelltown to Sydney, or from Windsor to Sydney, on purpose to hear from some of the late arrivals something about that home they loved so dearly. To these men Mr. Dempsey's house was more than St. Mary's was to us three months ago, seeing that they could not pray before the altar that they loved so much in their early days, but they could there get information on all those subjects nearest and dearest to them. Among the many who came from distant parts in those days, there was one who I particularly remember, on account of his not only being a very fine man but also a very fine singer; we used to sing all the vespers in those days as they did in St. Mary's lately; his name was Francis Kenny, and he was afterwards a very wealthy man in this district, and was the father of the present Kennys, of Kenny's Point. With him there used to come an old French gentleman we used to call Louis, but forget his name now, but he was of great service to the

Catholics. When a French frigate came into Sydney having on board a priest, who was not only surprised but delighted to find so many good and zealous Catholics in such a remote corner of the globe, where he expected to find nothing but sin and iniquity, Louis used to act as interpreter for the priest, who could not understand or speak English. There could be nothing in the course of events more fortunate for the Catholics than the arrival of this French priest at that time, as his communion with the Catholics showed our separated brethren one of the advantages of our religion, and raised the Catholics in the eyes of the Governor and the public, who were astonished to find that the enlightened gallant officers of the *Urianna* worshipped God at the same altar and in the same manner as did their poor and despised Catholic fellow-townsmen. That these officers, who were so polite and who were on visiting terms at Government House, should kneel down with the poor Irish—for there were no rich Catholics in those days—in that small room, in that obscure house, was to the Protestants a source of astonishment, but it was a fact, and they could not get over it.

When Father O'Flynn came to this colony Mr. Dempsey was a master-builder, and had gained by his industry and intelligence the goodwill of all classes from the Governor down, besides having made a competency for himself; and as he had no family, he was esteemed a well-to-do man. But when the dispute arose between the Governor and Father O'Flynn, and it was found that Mr. Dempsey sided with the priest against the Governor, he at once lost caste, and with it many of his influential friends. But after Father O'Flynn was sent out of the country, and it was proved that Mr. Dempsey not only refused to go to church, but that he kept an open house, wherein Popish rites (as they termed our devotions) were celebrated, and that publicly, he became at once an object of their aversion, if not their hatred, and he was put on the list of incorrigibles, as the professing Catholics were then called by persons in authority. Nor was this to be wondered at, if we take a dispassionate view of society as it then stood in this country. By the laws of England, in those days Catholics were incapacitated from holding any office of emolument or trust in any part of his Majesty's dominions, and as the majority of the Catholics in this country at that time were Irish rebels, or the descendants of Irish rebels, their conduct was watched narrowly by Governor Macquarie, who hated

rebels, whether English or Irish, on account of the way the rebellious colonists used his predecessor, the famous Governor Bligh, whom they put under an arrest and sent off home. Governor Macquarie had come to the homely conclusion that all those who were not with him were against him; and although he was as well disposed towards the Catholics as any man in his position could be, yet he, being quite unacquainted with Catholic feeling, could not understand how a man could be loyal who would not go to church, particularly when he bid him. The Governor himself had been in early life a Presbyterian, but when he became Governor he knew no religion but that by law established; and being a military man, and a great disciplinarian, he expected obedience. He could not understand our conscientious scruples, and never gave Catholics credit for sincerity when they pleaded them as an excuse for refusing his direct orders. But although the Governor could overlook the grown-up people refusing to go to church, he could not understand or forgive a parent who would refuse to have his child well done for, and reared a good and loyal subject. The Governor and parson Cowper were both great lovers of education, and had established day and Sunday schools, male and female orphan schools, and a large establishment at Parramatta for the aborigines. In introducing parson Cowper's name, I do so because it will be necessary to show the state of society at that time; and he being the only clergyman at that time in Sydney, it will be found that his name will occur often; but I can bear willing testimony that he performed his duties without ever interfering in any way with persons who differed from him. He was about the only man in Sydney of whom I have never yet heard an old hand complain; in fact I never yet heard that Dr. Lang has any complaint against him, and if his life had not been blameless, the doctor would have found a hole in his coat before now. The Governor was a patriarch, and loved the rising generation. He had established schools for them free of expense; and more than this, he would find out from the parson or the schoolmaster who went to school or who was absent, for in those days he knew every one, as he used to muster every one in his own district; so that no person could deceive him by saying his children went to school when they did not go, nor would he take any excuse for their absence, for if a parent pleaded poverty the Governor would at once put him on the stores—that is, give him an order to draw so much rations and slops, according to the number of children he had. If a parent said he wanted

employment, it was given him with one proviso, viz., "Be sure and send your children to school." Well, the routine of the schools were as follows: To learn the church catechism, read the Protestant version of the Bible, and attend church on Sundays; and as all these things are forbidden by the rules of the Catholic Church, the Catholic parents could not let their children attend the schools, or receive the favours intended for them by the good old Governor, who would have heaped favours on them if their parents would but allow him to bring them up in his own way. Just in proportion to his kindness was his severe displeasure dispensed to all those who frustrated his design by refusing to send their children to school. He could not understand how a well-disposed man could refuse to let his child read so good a book as the Bible, therefore he set their refusal down to an obstinate desire on their parts to frustrate his beneficial design of bringing up all the youth of the colony good and loyal subjects; and as the majority of the Catholics then in the country had been in their early life suspected of disloyalty, their refusal to let their children go to the schools provided for them filled up the measure of their iniquities and the vial of the Governor's wrath to overflowing, so they were one and all set down as a disaffected, stupid class, of whom little good might be expected. This being the state of things at head quarters, the petty tyrants and bigots who had authority in the remote districts commenced a system of persecution against every one suspected of favouring Catholicism. Some of these worthies persecuted their fellow-men from an innate hatred of Catholicism; some of them did so merely to please the Governor without caring one straw about religion; while some well-disposed but mistaken men did so with the charitable intention of coercing a set of poor ignorant men, as they termed the Catholics, to walk in the path that led to Government House, if not to heaven. From what I have already written, the reader will see that it was very hard for a Catholic in those days to escape the meshes of the law. Should a robbery have been committed, was it not more likely the authorities would suspect the Catholic who never went to church than the cunning rogue who took off his hat to the parson just before going into church the day before the robbery was committed? Again, suppose an orchard to have been robbed, was it not in the nature of things that suspicion would fall on the boy who never went to church or school rather than on the boy who attended church regularly and who stood at the head of his class? Thus those

noble-minded men who had the spirit to avow and maintain their religious opinions were frowned on by all the better classes, sneered at by their equals, and obliged to live such strict and virtuous lives as to be above suspicion. Well, by living an irreproachable life a Catholic might keep out of gaol, but how was he to get a living for his family? Suppose he wanted to get the grant of an allotment in Sydney; allotments were then being given to deserving men. Well he must apply in the usual way; that was, to get a petition which would set forth his name, calling, religion, and general character, and this petition must be signed by two magistrates and the parson, all of whom must certify to the knowledge of his worth, or the petition will not be received at all. If the petition were signed by six magistrates, but wanting the parson's signature, it would not be granted; therefore he must get the parson to sign, or go without. But how is this to be done? He knows the parson very well, but the parson has no knowledge of him except this—that he has taken notice for the last two or three years that the petitioner has never been at church. Thus the parson, with the best disposition, is in a fix; he must certify what he is not sure about, or refuse the man. This is one case out of many, but there were worse cases than this by far. But I have no desire to write anything that would open up old sores. All I want is to show the Catholics of the present day that they owe a great deal to the old Catholics of the country, and that standing out prominently before them all is James Dempsey's name, which ought to be inscribed on St. Mary's in letters of gold; seeing that all I have written about him was only an introduction of him, as his actual services did not begin until the building was commenced. He then it was who carried up those good old walls under every disadvantage a man could labour under, and yet the Catholics of today and their favourite writers quite ignore him and others something like him. Poor James Dempsey, may you rest in peace! I knew him when I was a boy; he was then a rich man, and used to often say nothing on earth gave him so much pleasure as to have it in his power to oblige a Catholic, more especially if that Catholic should happen to be a United Irishman.

I remain yours, &c.

C. FITZPATRICK.

REMINISCENCES OF CATHOLICISM IN THE EARLY DAYS OF THE COLONY

To the Editor of The Argus:

Sir,

As my previous letter about poor old Father Therry and the progress of Catholicity in this country have proved so acceptable to people from all parts, I am induced to continue the subject and give you some further of my early recollections. I am the more disposed to do so from a consciousness that there is no man living who has had so many and such great opportunities as I have had of seeing and hearing all that was in any way connected with our holy religion since the time Father O'Flynn came to this country. That you may fully understand how I became possessed of all this information, I may tell you that my mother was in her early life a Catholic schoolmistress in the City of Dublin, and that she followed my father to this country in 1811, when I was very young bringing an elder brother and myself with her. My mother had been reared a strict Catholic in times of persecutions in Ireland and had imbibed all the prejudices of that time against Government schools; she, therefore, determined at any and all risks to keep her children from schools where their Faith might be tampered with, and as there were none but Protestant schools in those days she was under the necessity of keeping us at home and teaching us herself, and as religion was in her opinion of paramount importance, she taught us not only our catechism and church services but also how to sing our hymns and vespers so that when Father Therry came to the colony he was surprised and delighted to find a couple of boys able to serve at Mass, and a good few people who could sing the church services, for my mother and a man named McGuire used to meet at Mr. Dempsey's to teach the youth of both sexes to sing, long before the arrival of Father Therry. No man on earth loved music more than Father Therry did; he could not celebrate Mass in comfort without singing; he therefore went to great trouble to get the Catholic bandsmen to come and play at Mass. Sometimes the Colonel of a regiment would be jealous of his men playing in our church when he wished them to play at the church he went to, and then it was that Father Therry shewed the world his ability at persuasion, and if that failed, his unflinching determination to wrest from the authorities liberty of conscience for the poor soldier. Many is the battle he fought

with majors, colonels, and governors on this subject, and often has he appealed to the Secretary for the Colonies or the Commander-in-Chief and as often as he did, so often did he gain a victory over these petty despots, and in four or five years after his arrival we had the finest choir in New South Wales. In 1825 there were a great number of soldiers in this country and as it happened, the Bandmaster (Mr. Cavanagh) of the 3rd Buffs was a Catholic, as also the Bandmaster (Mr. Richenberg) of the 40th Regiment, an Italian and a great musician. Both regiments were stationed in Sydney at that time, and as Mr. Richenberg was only a hired bandmaster to the 40th Regiment he used to devote all his leisure hours to the instruction and formation of a real good choir, and I can say with truth that his exertions were crowned with success, for he had taught us to sing with his bandsmen, and it was a common thing to have five or six clarinets, two bassoons, a serpent, two French horns, two flutes, a violincello, a first and tenor violin, and any amount of well-trained singers, all bursting forth in perfect harmony the beautiful music of our Church. Oh! it makes my heart thrill when I think of those happy days. I have since then heard the organ of Saint Mary's; I have seen Dr. Reid, who was a great man, assisted by his sisters, and Miss Lane and a great body of singers, but they could not equal the choir formed by Mr. Richenberg. I never heard anything like it except once, that was the day on which our venerated Archbishop first landed in Sydney. On that occasion Dr. Ullathorne, new Bishop of Birmingham, had made every preparation for a grand High Mass, and poor Cavendish (who was drowned with his sister off Bradley's Head in after years) had charge of the choir; he exerted himself to the utmost and secured the assistance of a great cantatrice (Mrs. Rust) who happened to be in the colony at that time. Mr. Clarke the architect who was a fine singer also lent his aid, and those with the assistance of the regular choristers quite astonished the Bishop. Dr. Polding was only Bishop at that time and he did not expect to hear Mozart's Mass sung in Botany Bay, and well sung too: he was accompanied by several rev. gentlemen, some of whom were fine singers, amongst those were the Rev. Mr. Spencer, who afterwards went home, and the Rev. Mr. Sumner, who was the first priest ordained in these colonies. He could sing very sweetly at that time, but neither these nor the Rev. Mr. Watkins, who took charge of the choir, could ever equal Mr. Richenberg's choir, for he had so many bandsmen, and they played with such precision that finer music could not

be found out of Europe. There being as I said before two Catholic bandmasters in Sydney at that time, there was a spirit of emulation in the bands to see who could do most for the Church, and as Mr. Cavanagh the bandmaster of the Buffs was a fine singer, he gave us the benefit of his voice in addition to playing the violincello. Such choruses I have never since heard; we used to disturb Archdeacon Scott who used to officiate at times with Parson Hill at St. James's, for our services were performed in the schoolroom in Castlereagh Street, which is quite close to St. James's, and although Archdeacon Scott and Parson Hill did all that men could do to seduce by promises of payment, by Government patronage or any other means, they never could induce one of our singers to apostatize, and although the bandsmen were allowed so much extra per day if they played in the church they would sooner play in the chapel for nothing, and I never knew of but one man who turned recreant, and even he got ashamed and came back after a while. I well remember how poor Pearson the organist of St. James's used to look after having his puny choir disturbed by one of our choruses, perhaps of a Christmas Day when our Gloria would be given with all the strength of our choir. Rich and poor, government officials and independent Protestants all came to hear the singing at Catholic Chapel, and often have I heard them say, "Well, really it is wonderful how these people can manage to get such a fine choir—we can't come near them." Nor could they; Father Therry had such a persuasive manner that if there was a man or woman worth having he would get them and that without payment too; for out of all the men and women who played or sung I never knew of but one man who accepted any remuneration for their services and that was poor old Charlie Kelly, and he got very little, for Father Therry had but little for himself in those days, yet his funds were like the widow's oil—they never became exhausted. He was an extraordinary man, without a doubt sent by an All wise Providence to establish Catholicity and call back those unfortunate people who, to please persons in authority or to make themselves appear like other respectable people, had been induced to wander out of the true path and go to a church they did not believe in; and yet, having once gone, they found it a difficult task to retrace their steps; for first there was the inconsistency of the thing to be got over; then again, it is much easier to live the life of a good Protestant than it is to live the life of a good Catholic, as fasting and abstinence had been

thrown aside as superstitious practices, and again, restitution is an unpleasant doctrine, and very unsuitable to some people's circumstances. And yet this doctrine is enforced in the old Faith; this, they know, and this made their conversion difficult but still Father Therry thrust his ministrations on them, sometimes in the shape of good advice given with an angelic sweetness, such as I have never seen in any other clergyman, for he never used a harsh word to the most abandoned. Sometimes the sounds of that choir I have already been describing smote their ear when they had no disposition to listen. Sometimes a grand procession would intercept them in the street and put them in mind of what they had given up. At another time one of his sermons, in the morning, or a chapter out of "Dr. Milner's End of Religious Controversy," in the evening, would awaken them to their perilous position; so that before many years he had won back all his lost sheep with a great accession from other flocks. And even some of those, who were ashamed to return publicly, were received by him when sickness or the fear of death reminded them how fleeting are the pleasures of this life; for he made it a rule never to refuse to go to any one that sent for him and he often went, unent for, aye, very long journeys to try to reclaim a sinner, or to heal a feud between two of his flock; and many a time has he rushed from one end of the colony to the other to prevent an unjust sentence being carried into effect, or to palliate the fault of some erring mortal, even should the offender be of a different religion to himself. Once, when a man was out on the scaffold, at the back of the gaol, in George Street, to be hanged, Father Therry persuaded the Sheriff to stay the execution for a quarter of an hour, while he went to Government House to communicate with the Governor, and seek a reprieve for the man. Well, the time was up and still the Sheriff waited, having the utmost confidence in his intercession. The suspense was dreadful—the crowd was more anxious than the man himself, for they all had faith in Father Therry—and just as the Sheriff said he could wait no longer Father Therry was seen to issue from the gate of Government House, waving his hat, and holding aloft a letter containing the desired reprieve. The man was removed to the cell, and his innocence established. Sir Thomas Brisbane, the then Governor, expressed his sincere thanks to Father Therry for saving the life of an innocent man. Had Father Therry gone to Government House in his gig, or had he gone there on horseback, it would have been a merciful act; but he could not wait for horse or gig—

the man's life was at stake—so off he started on foot, and run all the way there and all the way back. This was the way he won the love of all denominations, with the exception of a few bigots.

But I have been carried away by the thoughts of Father Therry's wonderful career, so that I did not explain to you how I became possessed of all my information. Well then, when Fathers Connolly and Therry came to the country I was a smart boy, but still too young to go to a trade, therefore my parents did not object to my going about with one or other of these good priests, for five or six years, during which time I have travelled many hundreds of miles, by sea and by land, and was then acquainted with every Catholic of any note, in this country or in Van Diemen's Land.

In 1822¹ I accompanied Father Connolly to the penal settlements, in the north. We got a passage in a little government brig called the "Lady Nelson" and made Newcastle without any difficulty, where we went on shore; but Major Morrisett, the commandant, was not fond of priests, so Father Connolly did not remain, but continued his voyage to Port Macquarie, where he met a very different reception from Captain Allman, the commandant of that place. Mr. Connolly was entitled to respect and attention, as an official chaplain going to minister to the religious wants of the soldiers and prisoners of his own religion; but, although Captain Allman had never met him before, he not only gave him all the honour due to his position, but he took him to his own table and made as much of him as if he had been a brother. In fact he did all in his power to make Father Connolly feel at home. I had fine times of it for the fortnight we remained there, and was very sorry we did not remain longer. I remember a great tall blackfellow, called Bob Barrett, they had at the settlement on purpose to catch bushrangers. Father Connolly was a very stout-hearted man or he would not have gone to Port Macquarie at that time, as steamers were not thought of then, and there is a very bad bar or sand bank at the entrance of the harbour, over which the surf beats at times in a fearful way; but his duty impelled him and he knew no fear. We had a severe squall off the Seal Rocks, but got back to Sydney without any accident. Shortly after this Father Connolly went back to Hobart Town, from which place he never returned. I went there to him in 1824, and remained

¹An error in the year. 1821.

about eighteen months with him, my principal business being to serve at Mass, until just as I left, a lad by the name of Hogan, from Sandy Bay, was drilled into that much goodness. When I went to Hobart Town there was another priest there, whose name was Father Coote; he came out as a missionary, and brought out a large quantity of books, vestments, and altar plate, from Dublin, for this mission; but, like Father O'Flynn, he came away without the necessary credentials, so that neither Father Connolly or Father Therry could acknowledge him as priest until he went to the Mauritius, where Dr. Slater, the bishop of that place, resided. I saw him in Sydney before he went, but he never returned to these colonies. During the five or six years I accompanied one or other of those priests I have witnessed most surprising things; Glorious triumphs over bigotry, heroic devotion, the most astonishing acts of self sacrifice, the most unbounded charity. Often have I seen Father Therry give the last coin he had to some poor old man or woman that he might meet on the road; and many is the time he has got out of his gig to let some weary traveller have a ride, and, lest they should feel distressed at his condescension, he would lift his hat and give thanks to God, saying, "It was very fortunate you came up, as it gives me an opportunity of doing a kind turn and reading my Office at the same time." These, and such acts of kindness won the hearts of the people—that is, the bulk of the people; but he had enemies, and they were men in authority. Some of them hated him because he was the most unflinching champion of civil and religious liberty, because he was a zealous Catholic priest, who would and did denounce the Governor when he attempted to interfere with his clerical duties. The loss of salary had no terrors for Father Therry; nor could the threat of sending him out of the country, made by Governor Darling, intimidate him in the slightest degree. When his salary was withdrawn, and strict orders given not to allow him into gaols or hospitals, still did he go and demand admission—still was he found at the bedside of the dying prisoner! Once he went to the military hospital, and was refused admission, and the sentry placed his gun with a fixed bayonet across the door to bar his entrance; but the good man engaged the sentry's attention, and slipped under his bayonet, and was beside the sick man before he knew where he was. He was the great opponent of all proselytizers, and would resist the merest attempt to force orphan children into schools where their faith would be jeopardised; and he would fly to any part of the country

to defend the poorest government man whose religious opinions were interfered with. And when his enemies found they could not coerce him to neglect his duty they offered him a large salary for life if he would abandon his flock and leave the country, but the only answer he deigned them was to read the letter containing their offer from the altar to his flock, and then telling them that nothing but brute force should ever separate him from those whom an All-wise Providence had placed under his care. Were I to write as long as I live, I could not tell the tenth part of what that sainted man did and suffered for his flock, to my own knowledge, for about seven or eight years. To his labours we may attribute the glorious change that has been effected in society. I can plainly see that the finger of God was directing him in all his undertakings. Oh, what a change in one short life! To see, as I have seen, the Catholic disabled by statute from holding any office of trust—derided by the bigot, and pitied by the well-disposed—to see him able to take his place amongst other men without any one daring to make allusion to his opinions; to see that religion, which in the days of my boyhood was a badge of disgrace, now the proud boast of men seeking parliamentary honours; to see it the religion of doctors, lawyers, judges, and governors; to see us allowed to educate our children as we like—this is indeed a change! This train of thought brings me back to Parramatta, and although I have not the slightest wish to write what would offend any one, I think I should not be doing justice to posterity if I did not mention one or two facts that may serve as a beacon to others, to warn them from interfering with that church with whom Christ has promised to remain until time shall be no more. Shortly after the deportation of Father O'Flynn, Hannibal McArthur, who was then the great man of Parramatta, met a poor Catholic man, and asked him why his children did not attend the Sunday school? The man said his wife was a free woman and that she would not allow him to interfere with the children. "Very well," said Mr. McArthur, "no odds; if your children are not at the Sunday school next Sunday, you may expect my severest displeasures." The man went home and told his wife all that had passed, but she was free, and started off with her children to Sydney where she and they were out of his reach, and where she reared them all strict Catholics, which they still remain. One of these children holds now a higher situation under Government than ever Mr. McArthur filled. But this is not all. Mr. McArthur was of all the public men about Parra-

matta the most bitter opponent of Catholicity; I hope and trust his opposition was conscientious. Well, what has been the consequence of this opposition? Why, an All-wise Providence has punished him in a way that may serve as a warning to others not to interfere with His church. By the working of an inscrutable Providence, that splendid mansion built by Mr. McArthur without care of the cost—that beautiful farm, on which he bestowed so much care to render worthy of the name he gave it, viz., the Vineyard—has been turned into what? Into a stockyard or into a brewery? No, but into what is much worse—into a hotbed for Popery; into a Benedictine Convent! Yes, the great man's Vineyard is turned into Subiaco; and now Archbishop Polding, the Pope's delegate, rules the Vineyard. There must be something in this! Well, so much for Parramatta. Now we will go past Subiaco on the steamer to Sydney; and as we near Sydney we see before us, a little to the right, a splendid mansion. What place is that? "Oh!" answers a fellow-pasenger, "that is what they call Lyndhurst." And well I know Lyndhurst, and the man who built it. He, too, was opposed to Catholicity; I hope it was conscientiously, but he was opposed to it without any mistake; and he, too, built a splendid mansion for himself. Dr. Bowman built it for his own private residence, and now it is converted just like the Vineyard, into a college for making young priests, for educating the rising youth in what the doctor would call Popery. Here again, at Lyndhurst, Archbishop Polding rules for the Pope. There is something strange in this! Now, Mr. Editor, these are facts patent to all us old hands, for I can appeal to Dr. Lang as to the truth of these statements; but how is it to be accounted for that two gentlemen, who above all others were pre-eminent for their opposition to Catholicity, should by some means or other be punished in this extraordinary manner? Is the finger of Providence possible here? I think it is.

I remain your obedient servant,

C. FITZPATRICK.

“RISE OF ROMAN CATHOLIC WORSHIP IN NEW SOUTH WALES”

To the Editor of *The Southern Argus*:

Sir,

In your last issue you gave some extracts from a work under the above heading, which corroborate in a most singular manner the narrative I gave in your widely-circulated journal some five years ago under the heading of “Reminiscences of Catholicism in the early days of this colony.” Singular they are coming from some gentleman living at the antipodes, who has given the world such a number of facts so similar to those contained in my communication to you some years ago. But as the author of this work has not had the opportunities I have had—namely, seeing and hearing the major part of the persons who figured in these eventful times—it is not to be wondered at that he has fallen into some slight mistakes as to dates. I would therefore feel obliged to you should you allow me to set him right in those matters wherein he is in error. I feel myself called upon to make these corrections, seeing that the dates mentioned by the author differ from those given by me in my former letters on this subject. I therefore take this opportunity of appealing to the few old colonists yet alive as to the correctness of my statements.

Your author’s apology for British institutions is quite natural and patriotic, and you will find a similar apology in my letters for those who carried out the law of the land in those days, but none for those bigots who perverted it. Writing of Governor Macquarie, I said: “The governor himself had been in early life a Presbyterian, but when he became governor he knew no religion but that by law established; and being a military man, and a strict disciplinarian, he expected implicit obedience,” &c. Thus far I agree with the author, whose account of the good old times is quite correct. As far as Father Dixon is concerned, his admissions (coming as they do from one who is not himself a Catholic) of the cruelties practised in those days, show him to be an honourable man. The doings of Governor King and Father Dixon’s times I only know by hearsay; a little further on I know of my own knowledge, therefore I can speak without fear of contradiction.

The author says that Father O’Flynn arrived here in 1808. This is a mistake, as I shall presently show. Governor Macquarie did not arrive in this colony until 1810, and

certainly it was Macquarie who allowed himself to be made a tool of by a set of tyrannical bigots, who made him against his better nature perform an act worthy of the days of Domitian—namely, imprison an innocent gentleman and forcibly deport him out of the country merely for being a priest. Now, had Father O'Flynn arrived here in 1808, I should not have known him, as I was not born at that time. And yet I knew him well. He administered the sacrament of Confirmation to me and many others in a house belonging at that time to Mr. John Lacy of Parramatta, and this certainly occurred in 1817; and as Father O'Flynn's sojourn in this country was but short, the author must be mistaken as to dates, although his statement of facts is quite correct, and he is well up in the history of those times; but if he wants to know who the parties were that made a cat's-paw of the governor, he had better read Wentworth's "Australasia." The author gives a quotation from an allusion to those times made by Dr. Ullathorne. I wrote as follows some years ago: "When Father O'Flynn found he would not be permitted to remain with his flock, he in humble imitation of his Divine Master, determined on leaving them the last pledge of his love; and he did so, for he left the Blessed Sacrament in a pix with Mr. Dempsey, who consecrated the best room in his house for the safe-keeping of what he prized more than earthly treasure."

Father O'Flynn made a good selection when he chose Mr. Dempsey to be custodian to that sacred treasure he was about leaving to his beloved flock, and well did Mr. Dempsey perform the duty imposed on him. To guard against any misfortune, and to ensure the safe-keeping of the Blessed Sacrament, Mr. Dempsey secured the assistance of five or six other religious old men, whose whole duty and pleasure was to watch and pray in that room, in which an altar had been erected and a tabernacle placed to receive the holy pix. This room was converted into a little chapel, and it was no unusual thing on a Sunday, when Catholics could assemble to join in the prayers at Mass which were being read in that room, to see many of them kneeling under the verandah—aye, even in the street—much to the amusement of the scoffers, who said, we ought to be sun-struck; but despite all their scoffs, the real Catholics still continued to meet at Mr. Dempsey's, until the arrival of Father Connolly and Father Therry.

The author's account of subsequent events are accurate in every particular, excepting the date at which Father Therry was deprived of his salary. He says it was in 1822.

This is a mistake, as I will show. When Governor Macquarie (who no doubt had good reason to regret his usage of Father O'Flynn) found the home government had appointed two Catholic chaplains, he at once entered into their views, and treated the chaplains well. In fact no governor could have acted better than he did. In like manner his successor, Sir Thomas Brisbane, who was another Presbyterian, treated Father Therry so well that he drew upon himself the ill-will of the celebrated Dr. Lang, for I well remember the answer he gave the doctor, who, applying for assistance to build a church, taunted Sir Thomas with giving the Catholics more than their share. Sir Thomas said: "The Catholics have deserved my assistance by the way in which they have exerted themselves; when you do as they have done, I will assist you." This was the purport of it, not the exact words of his answer. Sir Thomas remained in Sydney until the end of 1825; then Colonel Stuart acted as Governor for some months, and it was not until that infamous tyrant Sir Ralph Darling who could not be kind to any one, became governor, that Father Therry lost his salary. The governor joined the bigots, and about 1827 deprived Father Therry of his status as a government chaplain, but could not deprive him of his functions as a priest.

I remain, yours, &c.

C. FITZPATRICK.

1870

RISE OF ROMAN CATHOLIC WORSHIP IN NEW SOUTH WALES

(From *Curious Facts of Old Colonial Days*, by James Bonwick F.R.G.C.)

There are some passages in the following extracts which our readers will consider opposed to our convictions, and not altogether inoffensive to their religious sentiments; but if they bear in mind the fact that the author is a member of the Church of England, they will give him credit for no small amount of honesty and impartiality:

In the "good old times" the governmental religion only

was tolerated. It was the Greek Church in Russia, the Roman Catholic in Rome, Calvinism in Geneva, Lutheranism in Sweden, Presbyterianism in Scotland, Anglican Episcopacy in England. Gradually the Roman Catholic humbly craved protection in Russia, and stole into Geneva; the Lutheran acknowledged the existence of other Protestant bodies, and was himself admitted into the outer court of Roman Catholic realms; while the Scotch faith was allowed an unobtrusive sojourn under the shadow of English cathedrals, and the system of the Church of England crept northward to the Scottish moors, and camped among other mongrel dissenting sects there.

Whatever might be said of the exclusiveness of the Church of England, history must admit that it has been less harsh than most state churches. At any rate, these religious denominations opposed to its ritual were, by the spirit of the age, more quickly emancipated from serfdom than similar unorthodox communities were in other places. At the present time no subject of the Queen is hindered in the performance of his worship in any city of her dominions. It is to be regretted that this liberty is not reciprocated in some parts of Europe. The disabilities under which Roman Catholics groaned once in England are still the burden of Protestants in Rome.

On the shores of Port Jackson, at the formation of the penal colony, no thought of such freedom was entertained. The State Church of England naturally got transferred to the kangaroo land, which was regarded as an England over the way. Although the government thus favoured two establishments—Episcopacy in the South, and its opposite in North Britain—yet New South Wales was absolutely attached to the former. The Presbyterian was unrecognised any more than the Wesleyan. Under such circumstances the Roman Catholics could expect no favour.

All had to go to church: they were driven as sheep to the fold. Whatever their scruples, they had to go. Fallen as many were, they were not to be supposed aliens altogether in principle, and indifferent to faith. In some, the very consciousness of crime had developed an eagerness after faith, and that the faith they had known, the faith of a mother. But expostulations were unheeded. If a man humbly entreated to stay behind because he was a Presbyterian, he incurred the danger of a flogging. It is said that upon a similar appeal from another, who exclaimed, "I'm a Catholic," he was silenced by the cry of a clerical magistrate, "Go to church, or be flogged!"

Such, however, was the oppression or the indifference that we meet with few remonstrances from dissentients in very early times.

A government order, however, appeared on April 12th, 1803, calling for all professing Roman Catholic religion, throughout the colony, to attend at government house, Parramatta, on Wednesday, April 20th, at 10 o'clock in the morning. The day before the meeting another official proclamation was issued, which explained the purpose for which the assembly was called. An intimation was given that public worship was to be established for the Roman Catholics of the colony; that a clergyman, the Rev. W. Dixon, had taken the oaths of allegiance to His Majesty, and that the Governor had granted to that priest the indulgence of conditional pardon, to enable him more freely and fully to fulfil the duties of his calling among the people.

But, on the other hand, there was to be exacted from the Roman Catholics of the settlement obedience to the following conditions.

1st. That they observe with becoming gratitude that this extension of liberal toleration proceeds from the piety and benevolence of our most gracious Sovereign, to whom, as well as our parent country at large, we are, under Providence, indebted for the blessings we enjoy.

2nd. That the religious exercise of this worship may suffer no hindrance, it is expected that no seditious conversations that can in anywise injure His Majesty's government, or affect the tranquility of this colony, will ever happen, &c.

3rd: Commands settlers not to go from their own places, when service is not held there, to others where it may be performing. They were to wait the coming of the priest to their own quarters. Service was to take place in weekly rotation at Sydney, Parramatta and Hawkesbury.

5th. No improper behaviour to be permitted during the time of worship—the priest being held responsible not only for the good conduct of his people at Mass, but on their way to and from service, until they arrive at their respective homes.

6th. Police to be stationed at and about the places of worship.

7th. Regulation to punish the disturbers of any meeting, or for abusing the priest or teacher "of any tolerated sect."

Signed by the Governor, Phillip Gidley King.

The first actual meeting for Roman Catholic worship was held on May 15th, 1803, by the Rev. W. Dixon. This

gentleman was subsequently interrupted in his duties by the report that meetings for worship were gatherings of traitors, and the medium of communication for another attempted rebellion. An order closed the services. And yet, when the insurrection did burst forth, and a second Vinegar Hill battle took place on the other side of the world, Mr. Dixon accompanied the commanding officer, and exerted himself nobly on the side of order and humanity.

About the year 1808, he retired from the scene of his own conflicts and miseries, and spent the rest of his days in peace among his countrymen in the Isle of Beauty.

Meetings for religious worship were afterwards maintained by the laity themselves, in the court-house of Sydney and in private houses in Parramatta, Liverpool and the Hawkesbury. As no proper order was kept, and no division made between the free and the bond, the commanding officers refused to let the Roman Catholic soldiers attend these services.

As has been stated, the Rev. Mr. Dixon, a pardoned convict, was permitted to hold occasional service for his countrymen and co-religionists. Upon his departure in 1808, the rites of the Church were no longer performed.

In 1808, a clerical visitor arrived. He was a free man, a gentleman of education, and was directly appointed from Rome itself. This was the Rev. Jeremiah O'Flinn.

Informed of the necessity of a government sanction for going to the penal settlement, he sent in his application; but, as a vessel was just on the eve of sailing, and as no other was expected to go for several months, he directed a friend to forward the permit (which he viewed as a mere formality), and took his passage at once.

Upon his arrival at Sydney, he was warned by some of the Roman Catholics of the bondage in which they were placed, of the prejudice which would be excited against him as a priest, and of the certainty of his punishment if discovered without the government sanction to land on these shores. He therefore very prudently concealed himself. In the meanwhile, as several months must intervene before the next mail would arrive, the leading members of that communion got up a memorial to the governor, representing the case, and requesting his recognition of the priest's arrival. The presentees of the petition were coolly told that they were guilty of a piece of presumption.

Unfortunately, Father O'Flinn made too sure of success of the application, and incautiously presented himself out of his retreat. Certain parties were on the look-out and

caught him. He was immediately led, as a common felon, to gaol. As even then there was no law to punish him, for he was a British subject, it was resolved to get rid of him. A vessel was just on the point of sailing. When the sails were spread, the prisoner was carried on board and shipped back again to England.

The indignity and cruelty towards one of their own nation, and to a priest of their own faith, were enough to set the Irish Roman Catholics in rebellion against the colonial Government. They were, however, used to subjection, and yielded with ill-suppressed execrations against the authorities. Some over-zealous Protestant officials were accused of influencing the Governor to this despotic act.

The Rev. Dr. Ullathorne, afterwards nominated Bishop of Birmingham, makes an interesting allusion to the visits paid by the colonial Catholics to the consecrated wafer, left by Mr. O'Flinn at the house of a settler. Before this memorial they were accustomed to come for years, as the only symbol of their faith. "It was remarkably beautiful," said the priest, "to contemplate these men of sorrow round the Bread of Life, bowed down before the Crucified; no voice but the silent one of faith; not a priest within 10,000 miles to offer them that pledge of pardon to repentance, whose near presence they see and feel."

As Protestants we may not comprehend all this; but charity and justice oblige us to acknowledge that at least 300,000,000 of professing Christians in the world would view the condition of the Australian settlers with the deepest sympathy, and heartily condemn the cruelty of the British Government which denied to its own subjects and many of those its very criminals, the consolations of religion and the instructions of a clergyman.

From the very foundation of the colony, the oppressive enactment for the forced attendance at Protestant worship weighed heavily upon conscientious Dissenters. It would hardly be credited that the colonial law was 25 lashes for the first offence of non-attendance, 50 for the second, and the cruel endurance of the chains of renewed transportation for the third.

True it was that society was so degraded, and religion of any kind was so disregarded, that there was not sufficient conscientiousness or manly dignity to rise up martyrs for any faith. But this is rather a matter of regret to the Christian mind. The age of martyrs is the time of principle. Certainly the colonial government took the best means to

avoid the occasion of administering their law, by discouraging the presence of heretical teachers.

But even under old Tory regime such a summary eviction of a recognised clergyman could not be thought proper. The case was brought before the House of Commons, and warmly commented upon by the English press.

The mortal and spiritual condition of the convicts at Port Jackson was rather severely dwelt on; and the cruelty of leaving English, Irish and Scotch Catholics without the means of religious instruction and control was obvious to most people. Earl Bathurst yielded to the pressure and not only sanctioned the appointment of two priests for the colonies, in 1819, but consented to allow them a salary of £100 a year.

The Rev. John Joseph Therry and the Rev. Phillip Connolly arrived in 1820. The first was stationed in New South Wales and the other was appointed to Van Dieman's Land. Their first public act was to complain of the concubinage sanctioned by the officers in charge of the convict ship in which they came. The grossest and most shameless vice was permitted. The official exposure of such doings made enemies for the priests.

They received their instructions from Governor Macquarie. One ran thus: "Not to endeavour to make converts from the Established Church, and generally from the Protestant Church, but to confine their spiritual ministry exclusively to those who are of the Romish Church." They were never to hold a religious meeting of any kind without having first given notice to the government three days before, specifying the time and place. They were never to hold Mass except on Sundays, and upon the holidays according to the ritual of the Church of England, and then only at the same hours in which the Protestant chaplains held their service. They were on no account to interfere in the instruction of orphans and others in the government schools; for that these children, whatever their parentage, were "to be instructed in the faith and doctrines of the Church of England."

These were the harsh instructions enforced upon the observance of the first authorised clergymen of the Church of Rome.

The priest soon got into trouble. With all his submissiveness, and all his respect for the terrors of the law, he could not but express a little dissatisfaction at the educational question. He felt naturally sore to see the orphan children of his own flock carried off from his spiritual

charge, when removed to the orphan school, and there brought up in what he regarded as heretical views. He got up a "Catholic Education Society," so as to establish an orphanage that should be under his teaching.

In some letter to the newspaper about this undertaking, he was supposed to reflect upon the liberal character of the chaplain, the Rev. S. Marsden. For this he was reprimanded. He made an apology in the Sydney Gazette, and expressed his concern for the misunderstanding.

It was of no avail. He was suspended by the Governor. All public sanction of his clerical status was withdrawn, and his salary stopped. Again and again did he plead. Petition after petition was presented by his people; all was in vain. The Government was unmoved. Mr. Therry remained from 1822 to 1837 before justice was done him, or rather before the ban was removed.

Hospitals and gaols were closed against him. Even criminals sentenced to execution could only obtain his services by a special memorial. He had to go about by stealth in his ministrations. As with all our Protestant prejudices, we have a personal respect for the good old priest, we cannot but regret that twelve years' atonement was judged necessary for the utterance of a hasty word under some provocation.

This was a dark time for the colonial Roman Catholics. Archbishop Polding, in referring to the feeble clerical power, said: "Little could be done, except to keep from entire decay so much of the form and spirit of religion as had been preserved by the zealous labours of their predecessors; to run hastily from place to place, perhaps at great distances, to supply the most pressing wants of their flock; to administer the rights of religion to the child or to those in danger of death."

Father Power landed in 1826, but soon departed. Mr. Dowling came in 1829, and Messrs. McEncroe and Ullathorne in 1830. The Rev. Mr. McEncroe was a man of considerable learning and energy. Vicar Polding, of noble birth and a scholar, brought out three priests with him in 1835. Eight followed, including Father Georghegan, in 1838, after the celebrated Church Act of Freedom. The vicar revisited Rome, and returned in 1843 as "John Bede, by the grace of God and the Holy Apostolic See, Archbishop of Sydney, Vicar Apostolic of New Holland." A great change this from the times of the humble convict priest.

A TEST OF HISTORICAL ACCURACY

To the Editor of the Herald:

Sir,

In your issue of the 7th instant, under the heading of a curious incident, appears a statement made by some of your numerous correspondents, which is not quite correct. Your correspondent goes to say, "His name is Robert Coulthorpe, but it is difficult to say whether he is one of those of the 3rd Buffs who were brought out under Lieutenant-Colonel, afterwards Governor Macquarie, and who landed in Sydney on the 1st of January, 1810." Now, the fact is, the 73rd Regiment, under Colonel O'Connell, came out in 1810 with Governor Macquarie, and remained here until they were relieved by the 46th under Colonel Molle who in turn were relieved by the 48th, under Colonel Erskine; and about 1822 the 3rd Buffs, under Colonel Stewart, replaced the 48th, who went to India; so that the Buffs did not arrive here for twelve years after the time stated by your correspondent. This I know of my own knowledge.

I remain your obedient servant,

C. FITZPATRICK.

Goulburn, March 8, 1876.

THE LETTER OF AMBROSE FITZPATRICK

Following is a letter from Ambrose Fitzpatrick, who—with his brother, Columbus—in the last century maintained that the Sacred Host was left by Father Jeremiah O'Flynn, on his expulsion from Sydney Town in 1818, NOT in the cottage of William Davis at Church Hill, but in that of James Dempsey in Kent Street.

Ambrose Fitzpatrick wrote this letter—unearthed by the Sydney Diocesan Archivist and President of the Catholic Historical Society, Monsignor C. Duffy—to Cardinal (then Archbishop Moran) correcting what he considered a mistake made by the prelate in an address.

(Editor, *Catholic Weekly*.)

The letter reads:

Hunter's Hill,
November 30, 1884.

His Grace the Archbishop of Sydney,

My Lord,

Permit an humble member of the flock of which Your Grace is the Chief Shepherd to obtrude himself upon your notice for a minute.

I read with pleasure Your Grace's speech at St. Mary's in which you took some notice of our early history and of the fact of Our Lord finding a temporary tabernacle in the house of Mr. Davis (now the site of St. Patrick's).

This, My Lord, was a mistake. It was in the house of Mr. James Dempsey in Kent Street (the site is now being improved) where the Blessed Sacrament was housed for a short time.

Mr. Dempsey was a good moral man, one who deserved well of his country and his church. He bled for the one and gave his talents to the other.

He was exiled to this country for the '98 business (inscrutable are thy ways, O Lord), he came to assist the never-to-be-forgotten Father Therry in his great work of building the Church, Spiritual and Temporal.

To his house a few of the Catholics used to resort on Sunday evenings to hear or assist in singing the Vespers. (My mother, rest her soul, being the leader of the singing.)

Well do I recall, though only a child, how we were interdicted from entering one of the rooms and the awe with which I regarded this room.

The congregation used to kneel in an opposite room before the open door and in sight of the temporary tabernacle.

He had residing with him several old men who formed a little confraternity, as I was given to understand, who used to say the Rosary together on work days and the public came on Sunday evenings to join in the vespers.

A French ship of war arrived here and the chaplain (alas, they don't carry chaplains now) when he heard of the Blessed Host being kept in this unsafe way he expressed much surprise and deprived them of it.

The Great Patriarch of the Church in this colony arrived shortly after and with a heavenly zeal commenced the building of St. Mary's having the said James Dempsey as his ever willing and able assistant.

He was architect and foreman of works of the building. In some years after he, authorised by Father Therry, travelled to India to collect funds for its completion.

Your Grace will please pardon this long letter, but the desire to correct a mistake in a matter in which there should be no error prompted me to intrude upon you to such extent.

The sun of my life is near its setting and as I am one of the only two or three living who saw the things I write about, I am anxious to correct a mistake and give the honor to him who deserved it, James Dempsey.

I believe the Venerable Bishop of Birmingham was led into the same error and has helped to perpetuate it in his history of the Church in Australia.

Should Your Grace wish any further information on this subject I will on my return from a journey to Kempsey and the Macleay River in two or three weeks (please God) be your humble servant.

I remain your Grace's humble son in God,

AMBROSE FITZPATRICK.

ST. MARY'S CATHEDRAL BUILDING FUND

(From *Freeman's Journal*, no date, but in 1865.)

At the weekly meeting on Sunday night, in the Seminary, the attendance was good and the subscriptions liberal. Messrs. Fitzpatrick and O'Brien of the city of Goulburn were present, and addressed the meeting. In the way of early reminiscences and tradition, Mr. Fitzpatrick revealed some charming episodes in connection with the foundation and progress of the work of the old Cathedral. He witnessed the official ceremony of the laying of the foundation-stone of the old Cathedral; and instanced the names of the then several leading Protestant colonists who were present on the occasion, and materially aided in the erection of that edifice. Mr. Fitzpatrick was attentively listened to, and so was Mr. O'Brien, who zealously laboured to prove that in a work so stupendous and costly as the new Cathedral, all the Catholics of the land ought instantly to subscribe of their means, and that generously, towards the raising up of the walls, and the roofing in of the new Cathedral. Mr. O'Brien concluded a well-timed and intelligent address by handing to the treasurers his subscription of £5.

Mr. James Curtis and Mr. Forster likewise addressed the meeting, which closed with the announcement of £40 having been subscribed. Dean McCarthy, Father Mahony and the treasurers, Messrs Hollingdale and Mullins, were also present, and expressed their satisfaction at the result of the meeting, and their confidence, considering the arrangements—that the more public meeting of Monday night would terminate successfully.

Copyright of Full Text rests with the original copyright owner and, except as permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, copying this copyright material is prohibited without the permission of the owner or its exclusive licensee or agent or by way of a license from Copyright Agency Limited. For information about such licences contact Copyright Agency Limited on (02) 93947600 (ph) or (02) 93947601 (fax)