



# Sir Terence Aubrey Murray



It is autumn in Canberra, Australia's national capital, and the millions of exotic trees and bushes that have been planted are changing colour in a profusion of gold, brown and red leaves. This European landscape exists within a wider Australian one of eucalyptus and blue-grey hills in bright sunny vistas, yet the marriage of the old and the new, the indigenous and the exotic, works in harmony.

Terence Aubrey Murray, a pioneer of these parts, would have been pleased because he was a transplant from Limerick, who had taken root in this dry and ancient land, and, while his heart might have remained in Ireland, he put his mind and his talents to work in developing the new Australian nation. And harmony was what he sought between English, Irish and Scots, Catholic and Protestant, with opportunity for all to make what they wanted of themselves.

His aristocratic bearing belied his democratic spirit, although he was not always consistent, but what politician is?

Murray is a romantic figure. As a young man of nineteen, he was sent out into the bush, at the very frontier of civilisation in southern New South Wales, to hack out a pastoral holding for his father, Captain Murray, with only a party of assigned convict servants to help him. He worked hard, driven by family loyalty and a desire to rebuild its fortunes in a new country and, in time, became a magistrate and then the district's first member of parliament in 1843. He held ministerial office in the governments of New South Wales, almost became Premier and then settled for the position of Speaker of the House of Assembly and, finally, President of the Legislative Council. He was knighted in 1869. Two of his talented sons became famous in their own right: Sir Hubert Murray becoming Lt. Governor and Administrator of the Australian Territory of Papua for 32 years, and Gilbert Murray O.M., a classical scholar and disciple of world peace.

Like all men, Terence Murray was a product of the myths and legends of his family's past. In his case, the Murray's story was both romantic and tragic. Of Scottish origin, the Murrays had been ardent Royalists, and held estates in Antrim and Derry. They supported King James II, and lost six sons at the Battle of the Boyne, and all their estates; only

by Alan Fitzgerald

15 year old Denis Murray and his mother survived this debacle and fled to Limerick under the protection of General Patrick Sarsfield. Denis settled in the Barony of Lower Connelloe, married a Miss Creagh, and they had five sons. One of these sons Thomas Murray of Balliston, married Bridget O'Brien, and their son, Terence, was the father of Terence Aubrey Murray, pastoralist and politician of New South Wales.

Terence Murray Senior married Ellen Fitzgerald, daughter of James Fitzgerald of Movida, Co. Limerick. Two of her sisters also married two brothers of Terence Murray. If it was not enough to have one lot of rebels and romantics in the family, Ellen brought the genes of another set into Terence Aubrey's.

Terence Murray Senior remembered having to hold a lantern to enable a surgeon to amputate his father's leg after he had been injured in the Rebellion of 1798. Although determined to make his own way in life, he always remembered the injustice his family had suffered



Terence Aubrey Murray in 1850. Murray (40) was then the owner of Yarralumla and Winderradeen, two large pastoral properties in southern New South Wales. He was also the district's first Member of Parliament. He was subsequently Speaker of the NSW Legislative Assembly and President of the Legislative Council until his death in 1873. He was knighted in 1869.



because of their loyalty to Ireland and the Catholic faith.

He entered the British Army and became paymaster to the 2nd Brigade of Foot Guards in December, 1811. He went to Portugal and advanced with the Army through Spain and France before returning to England. He transferred to the 48th Regiment of Foot in 1815, and joined them at the Naos barracks. Subsequently, he sailed with the Regiment from Cork on 22nd March, 1817, for Sydney, New South Wales. Several years later he was posted to India and then returned to London seeking permission to retire on half-pay. Then, on hearing that half-pay officers were being urged to settle in New South Wales, he resolved to return there. His wife was dead and he, at 50, had his children's future to think of.

Captain Murray sailed for New South Wales with his sixteen year old son, Terence Aubrey, and his daughter, Anna Maria, aged eighteen, on the *Elizabeth* from Portsmouth on 26 November 1826.

Soon after arriving in Sydney, the Captain leased Erskine Park, to the west of the town, while looking about for a grant of land for himself to which he was entitled as a retired military officer.

On 20th September, 1827, Captain Murray was given permission to take possession of 2,560 acres of land, but unfortunately the land he selected in the Southern Tablelands of NSW in 1828 had already been promised to another. He did not discover this until after he had despatched his son Terence and a party of assigned convict servants to clear the land, plant crops and pasture stock. He was unwittingly trespassing on a grant made earlier to James Meehan, the Deputy Surveyor-General, who was an ex-convict, transported in 1800 for his minor part in the Irish rebellion of 1798. Captain Murray had no option but to remove his men and select another parcel of land in the Southern Tablelands, but within six months of his men developing a property at Mangamore he was told to quit yet again. An acrimonious correspondence with the Colonial Secretary followed but before he chose another site for his grant, his other son, Dr. James Fitzgerald Murray, aged 23, arrived in Sydney from Portsmouth on the *Elizabeth*.

The father and two sons then rode off into the new country south west of Sydney to find and nominate not one, but four sites for the Surveyor-General to consider. As compensation for the dislocations, he had twice been forced to suffer, Governor Darling offered to grant Murray's son, Terence, an additional 1,280 acres on condition that he was supplied with capital of one thousand pounds.



*Captain Terence Murray. He arrived in New South Wales in 1817 as paymaster of the 48th Regiment and remained until he was posted to India in 1825. He retired to England suffering ill-health but returned to New South Wales in 1827 with his son, Terence, to take advantage of a colonial offer of free land to officers who agreed to settle in NSW. He and his son established a property at Collector, where he was buried after his death in Sydney in 1835.*

Captain Murray had earlier given his daughter Anna Maria a dowry of that amount on her marriage to Captain George Bunn, but the opportunity was too good to pass up and he agreed to give his younger son a flock of sheep, cows and horses said to be worth more than that value.

Subsequently, in 1829, the father and son's adjoining grants, totalling 3,840 acres, were established at Collector, north of Lake George and about 150 miles from Sydney. In the same year Dr. James Murray took up an appointment at the Civic Hospital, The Rocks, on the western side of Sydney Cove.

Terence Murray, 19 years of age and six feet four inches in height, was given the responsibility of managing

the family property while his father remained in Sydney at Erskine Park. Terence built a small stone homestead on a rise beside the track to Goulburn and near permanent water, always a consideration in the dry inland areas of New South Wales. The building still stands today and is a private residence within the village of Collector that has grown up beside the Goulburn Road.

Alone, save for the company of his convict servants, Terence Murray read and re-read the classical books he had brought with him from Ireland, and developed a particular interest in philosophy and science. This interest, and his boyhood experiences in Ireland, led him to reject some of the dogmas of the Catholic Church and turn him



towards Unitarianism although he was to end his days in the Anglican Church.

The majority of Murray's assigned convicts were Catholics and Irish, as was John Hurley, a free man from Limerick, who had arrived in NSW with a letter of introduction to Terence's father. Hurley later became an inn-keeper outside Sydney and a successful pastoralist.

Terence kept a journal during these days in the bush, but was to destroy it years later on the grounds that it revealed the 'utter inanity of an eventless existence'.

Within four years of settling at Collector, Terence and his father were able to purchase additional land from the Crown: a necessity since free grants to gentlemen with capital and retired officers had been discontinued. Terence built a second homestead overlooking Lake George which he called Ajamatong, after the Aboriginal name for the area.

By this time, Sir Richard Bourke of Limerick had succeeded Darling as Governor of New South Wales and Captain Murray called upon his fellow officer and Limerick man, to present his son, Terence. Afterwards, Terence was appointed a magistrate for the lawless southern districts, then infested with runaway convicts turned bushrangers. This appointment meant that Terence had an additional reason to travel through the district, as well as supervising his deceased brother-in-law's Monaro estate. He was obliged to sit on Courts of Petty Sessions convened at different locations in the area where justice of a sort was dispensed, usually with the aid of a flogger.

The grave illness of Captain Murray in 1835 united his family for the last time. Terence had not seen his brother for five years, since he had accepted the appointment as medical superintendent at the Moreton Bay (Queensland) convict settlement. Captain Murray died at his widowed daughter's residence, Newstead House, overlooking Darling Harbour, on 31st May. His body was taken by dray to his property at Lake George and interred in a vault at Ondyong Point. It was the Captain's intention that his property should not pass out of the hands of his descendants, but the will was loosely drawn up and instead of it 'remaining an heirloom in the family forever', it was subsequently sold to meet debts incurred by Terence. Even the Captain's vault has vanished.

The following year Terence made his first public speech from the steps of St. Mary's Catholic Cathedral in Sydney in support of an appeal for funds to finish the building. He was now a substantial landowner, because the Murray estates had grown to 20,000 acres on which Terence ran 13,000 sheep and 1,500



*Agnes Anne Murray (nee Edwards), second wife of Terence Aubrey Murray, with their first child, John Hubert, in 1863. Hubert was to become Lieutenant-Governor of the Australian colonial territory of Papua from 1908 until his death in 1940.*

head of cattle. Murray had also started to build a third and much grander residence, 'Winderradeen' on the northern shore of Lake George. He planted oaks, elms, pines and magnolias in the grounds.

Australia is a dry continent and, although the early settlers had experienced periods of prolonged drought in the first forty years of European settlement, not even Murray could have believed that one day Lake George would completely dry up. This sheet of water, approximately 20 miles by 16 miles, was bone dry because of no rain and evaporation in 1837. It was probably this setback which caused Murray to consider the purchase of another property, Yarralumla, at Limestone Plains to the north west of Collector. Lacking capital, he borrowed money from Thomas Walker to acquire 2,560 acres beside the Molonglo River. The

site of the homestead is now the residence of Australia's Governor-General in the national capital, Canberra.

In the same year Terence's brother Dr. James, purchased a property nearby at Jerrabomberra which he named Woden, after the Nordic god of wisdom. Henceforth the two brothers would be within an hour's riding distance of each other at Limestone Plains.

It was an enterprising time for the Murrays because in 1838 their sister, Anna Maria, published anonymously, a novel called *The Guardian - A Tale Told by An Australian*. The book was dedicated to Edward Lytton Bulwer MP. Although a gothic melodrama with murder, incest and sudden death, it is remembered as the second novel to be published in Australia.

Terence, who was a fearless and excellent horseman, was driven by



years of drought to search for pastures for his sheep in the high country to the south of Yarralumla. In 1839 he led a party of six up over the mountains to the Coolman Plain. They pressed on further before turning back, lost their horses, and were obliged to stagger back through the mountains on foot until they met a friendly tribe of Aborigines, who sent word to Yarralumla that they needed fresh horses. This expedition led to the establishment of out-stations in the high country for his flocks which had to be moved to lower ground in winter to avoid the blizzards, snow and harsh winters of the Southern Alps.

The drought continued and the depression which gripped the colony made some of Murray's neighbours bankrupt, and forced his sister to lease her house to a tenant. She moved to Woden to live with her brother Dr. James, and her two sons were to benefit from the intellectual interests of their uncles at Woden and Yarralumla.

Terence Murray's resourcefulness and energy (and perhaps recklessness) were demonstrated in 1841. When obliged to go to Melbourne for business reasons, he decided to ride all the way because it was cheaper than travelling to Port Phillip from Sydney by ship. He set out with his Irish groom, Duggan, and his Irish overseer at Coolamine Station, early in February from Yarralumla. They rode over the mountains and on to Port Phillip and back again in only 18 days, covering a distance of 800 miles through rugged bush almost totally lacking in roads.

In 1843 Terence offered himself as a candidate for the Legislative Council in an advertisement published in the *Sydney Morning Herald*. The proposed Council, made up of elected and nominated members, replaced the totally nominated body that had hitherto provided colonial advice to the British Government. The new Council was a sop to the more democratic spirit prevailing in NSW, where free settlers and pastoralists wanted a say in their government and no longer saw the colony as just a gaol for Britain's surplus convicts. (Transportation of convicts had been halted by popular demand in 1840 to NSW.)

In his advertisement, Murray said: 'A new era is dawning in our country. We have passed our tutelage and are assuming the management of our own affairs. The elements of prosperity and greatness are lying dormant in the land, and the first object of legislation should be to arouse them to life and activity'.

In a second advertisement on 24th February, Murray assured his huge electorate that he knew neither Whig nor Tory, making no distinction between them. The welfare of the country,

liberal and equal laws for all parties and sects, would be the great objects of his life.

Before his unopposed election, however, Murray embarked on a greater adventure. He married Mary Gibbs, the daughter of the Collector of Customs, Colonel J.G. Gibbs. Murray was ten years older than his 23 year old bride when they were married at St. James Church of England in Sydney. His brother and sister did not attend the wedding.

Murray also did something that was to cause him anguish later in life. He settled Yarralumla and part of his Winderradeen estate on his wife. She, in turn, made a will naming her father and youngest brother, Augustus, as two of her three trustees. Her death, at the early age of 37, in 1858, caused Terence to lose control of his Yarralumla estate to his father-in-law and brother-in-law.

All this lay before him when he began his parliamentary career in 1843, expressing his concern about the price of land and the funding of free immigration through the sale of virgin Crown land. He believed this system only encouraged the settler without capital to come to the colony, whereas it would be better to give land free to those with the money to develop it. Ironically, given his subsequent bankruptcy, he spoke against a proposal to protect persons from their creditors during the current depression. His views did not go unchallenged and were criticised, particularly in the press.

Terence and Mary Murray's first child, Leila Alexandrina, was born on 7th May, 1844. Dr. Murray attended the birth at the Yarralumla homestead and subsequently Leila was baptised into the Church of England. A rift between the brothers began over a dispute about a flock of sheep. Terence claimed that a certain number of sheep grazing on James's Woden property belonged to him but James did not agree. Terence took legal action against his brother.

Just as his brother Terence employed mostly Irish Catholic immigrants and ex-convicts on Yarralumla, so also did James have a large number of Irish tenant farmers on his Woden property. They married and had large families, so there were a lot of children around the place. The younger Catholics scandalised their Protestant neighbours by playing cricket on Sundays.

Terence Murray sought to retire from public life in 1851, but his electors could think of no one better suited to represent them and so he changed his mind. Murray was appointed a member of a committee chaired by William Wentworth to prepare a Remonstrance to be despatched to the British government protesting against its power to

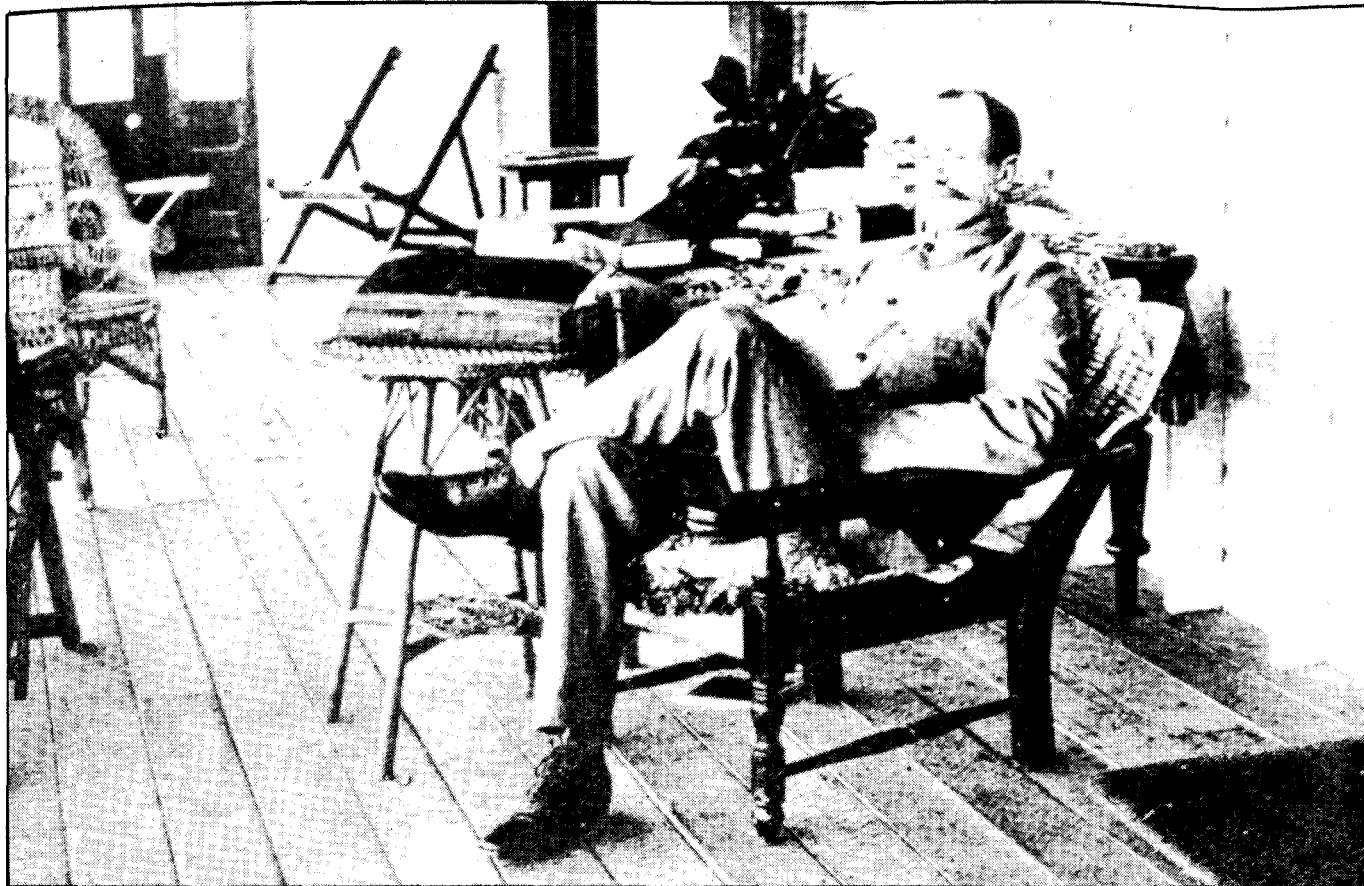
tax the people of the colony. The government responded by giving the Legislative Council of NSW the power to make alterations to the Constitution binding the colony, and consequently a select committee was established, with Murray as a member, to draft a new constitution for New South Wales. He was in favour of a parliament of two houses but opposed the establishment of an upper house similar to the House of Lords. In this attitude, he was allied to the democratic opinion which ridiculed the idea of a 'bunyip aristocracy', being brought into existence to fill it with Botany Bay magnificos.

In 1853 the *Empire* newspaper, published by Henry Parkes, carried a parliamentary sketch of Murray. His career, wrote Parkes, had been chequered by the damaging effects of a temper more or less unbending and a judgment often precipitate and perverse. Murray was said to be the very incarnation of independence itself, with an inclination towards liberalism, although somewhat pompous.

In 1854 Murray's fifth child, born five months earlier, died: the third to have failed to survive infancy. The following year he moved his family from Yarralumla to Winderradeen, a half a day's ride closer to Sydney. But perhaps the move had also been due to the melancholy associations that childbirth now had for his wife, Mary, at Yarralumla. Lake George had filled once again with water and Murray, an enthusiastic angler, had stocked it with cod and perch taken in barrels from the Molonglo River near his old homestead. (Lake George has gone dry in droughts since then and in 1988 sheep are grazing on its dry bed for as far as the eye can see).

In 1856 Murray stood for election for the new parliament that followed the granting of responsible government. He promised to promote the grandeur, happiness and nationality of the rising Australian nation, and wished to see impartial laws made without regard to any political or religious difference of opinion. He was elected unopposed and his brother James found himself appointed to the Upper House.

The ceremonial opening of the first Parliament for Responsible Government was made a grand affair in Sydney. The Governor, Sir William Denison, arrived in a state coach, accompanied by a procession of liveried retainers from Government House. The splendour of the occasion was somewhat undermined by Murray's contribution to the address-in-reply to the Governor's Speech, in which Murray quoted the English Revolution of 1688 as having established the sovereignty of people and parliament over the Crown. How then, he asked, could the Governor appoint a leader of the House or know who would command a major-



John Hubert Murray, Lieutenant-Governor of Papua, photographed on the verandah of Government House in 1908. Like his father before him, he was made a Knight of the British Empire.

ity? In his opinion the new ministry had taken office unconstitutionally. There was an uproar in the press about his remarks and some accused him of being a republican. Murray was appalled that anyone could think he would hold such views and quoted his family history as one of loyalty to the Crown: a loyalty that had cost it home, country and lives.

Within a few days of taking his seat in the Legislative Council (the Upper House) Dr. James Murray became very ill and determined to return home to Woden. Accompanied by Terence, he set out but only got as far as Winderradeen and could go no further. He died there on 24th June, 1856, at the age of 50. After a Requiem Mass at the homestead, his funeral procession, accompanied by one hundred horsemen, left for the family vault at Ondyong Point. Terence, who inherited his brother's Woden property, sold it at the end of the year.

The first Responsible Government lasted only three months. The more liberal ministry which replaced it contained Murray as Minister for Lands and Public Works and Auditor-General.

Throughout his life Murray was short of money. He promised to give one hundred pounds to the funding of St. John's Catholic College at Sydney University but it took him seven years to

honour his pledge.

In November, 1857, Murray's wife, Mary, gave birth to her first son, James, at Winderradeen, but she died on 2nd January, 1858, at the age of 37, leaving Murray with the infant and their two daughters, Leila, aged 12, and Evelyn, 8 years. This was a great blow to Murray who had been concerned about neglecting his family for his parliamentary duties.

Yet, in 1859, Murray was again elected to parliament and found that his old superintendent at Collector, the Limerick-born John Hurley, had also been elected. Hurley had become a wealthy squatter in the Lachlan district, as well as a pioneer of Cootamundra.

After the fall of the new government, Murray was commissioned by the Governor to form a ministry, but was unable to get enough members to back him and, rather than form 'a patch work quilt of a Ministry', he gave up.

Murray subsequently gave up any ambitions to become Premier and accepted the position of Speaker of the House of Assembly. He also married for a second time to Miss Agnes Edwards, a tall young woman in her twenties, who had been engaged to look after his young children. Miss Edwards was English, well educated and a cousin of W.S. Gilbert of Gilbert and Sullivan fame. This time there

were two ceremonies at Winderradeen, one Anglican and one Roman Catholic. The groom was fifty years of age.

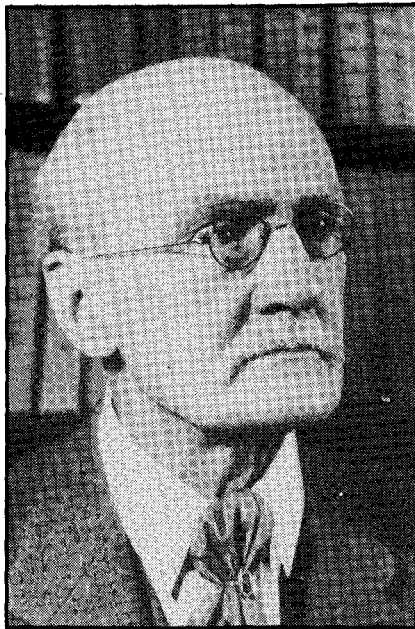
In the following year Murray acted as chairman of the St. Patrick's Day banquet in Sydney and proposed the toast to the Fatherland. In the course of his address, he said:

*It is in the present union and free intercourse of Englishmen, Irishmen and Scotsmen that I find some of my fondest hopes of my boyhood realised. How is it that Ireland, rich in territorial blessings, has been so unfortunate? History tells us that at one period she was foremost in the van of civilisation when Rome was a village; and in still later an age a country to which youth from all parts of Europe were sent to receive instruction in the higher branches of human knowledge.*

*Perhaps a lesson might be derived from the miseries of a country so gifted as this has been. The people are great in sterling worth, rank high among the nations of the earth, justly so, on account of their ability, industry and perseverance in all their pursuits. **The Times** might say there is something in the Celtic character opposed to its progression; but I point to the United States and Australia, and ask, are we not prog-*



ressive in a singularly high degree where ever we are free to act, as we are in these countries? It is all idle talk of one race of men being inferior to another whilst the freedom of one is put under restrictions. The great curse of the country of our birth has been chiefly the disqualification on the score of religious belief. In this colony nothing has been done which entitles the doers to a larger share of the gratitude of the people... than the removal of any such disqualification by the founders of Sir Richard Bourke's Church Act. It has protected the colonists against one of the greatest evils from which it could wish to be guarded. Filled with sweet recollections of my country, again I give you the Fatherland.



**Professor George Gilbert Aimee Murray, O.M. (1866-1957). The brother of John Hubert, 'Gilbert', as he was known, became Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford. He also assisted in the League of Nations Covenant and was a delegate to the Assembly for two years (1921-23). He was Chairman of the League of Nations Union (1923-39) and President of the United Nations Association until his death.**

Murray's pastoral empire continued to cause him concern and he lost 10,000 sheep because of foot rot in a wet season but at least he solved the problem of separation from his family by bringing them to live in Sydney at the seaside resort of Manly. It was here that Agnes Murray gave birth to a son, John Hubert Plunkett, who was later baptised in St. James Church of England, Sydney.

Murray's financial situation began to get worse, brought on as much by his generous spirit and hospitality as of neglect of the management of his properties. However, the fact that he had lost control over Yarralumla and part of his Lake George lands which were now vested in his first wife's trustees, made things even more difficult. The trustees would not agree to his proposals to use the properties as security in order to borrow more money for some investments.

In 1864 even his residence at Winderradeen was besieged by bushrangers and, later, although on the brink of ruin, he played host to the Governor of NSW who was on a tour of the southern districts.

He continued to behave like a reckless, improvident old Irish gentleman and engaged extra staff at Winderradeen, including a French cook. Shortly afterwards he could not pay his creditors and his possessions were seized by bailiffs at Winderradeen and his fine library taken to be sold for what it might fetch. However, his friends rallied around to save him from absolute disaster and he was able to retain his position of President of the Legislative Council. Soon afterwards Agnes Murray gave birth to her second son, George Gilbert Aimee, at Double Bay, Sydney. From then on the Murrays would move frequently and always to a lesser residence.

Murray was present at a picnic at Clontarf when a deranged Irishman named O'Farrell attempted to assassinate Queen Victoria's son, Prince

Alfred, the Duke of Edinburgh. Rumours of a Fenian plot were fanned by Henry Parkes, the Premier, and anti-Irish prejudice emerged. Murray, an opponent of capital punishment, felt obliged to call for the Fenian 'wretch' to be hanged, which he was, although the 'plot' was a fantasy created for political purposes. Prince Alfred recovered from his gunshot wound and continued his tour. Murray received the knighthood he had long felt was his due for his services both as Speaker of the House and President of the Legislative Council.

Sir Terence Murray died at his home, Richmond House, Darlinghurst on 22nd June, 1873, probably from cancer, at the age of 63 years. The funeral service was conducted by the Anglican Bishop of Sydney, and Murray was buried in the churchyard of St. Jude's Church of England, Randwick. His 38 year old widow was left almost penniless. She had two sons of her own, Hubert aged 11, and Gilbert, 7 years, stepson Aubrey, aged 15, but her stepdaughters, Leila and Evelyn were fortunately of an age when they could fend for themselves.

Evelyn chose to remain with her to help to raise the children, while Leila went to live at Yarralumla with her uncle Augustus Gibbes, and then travelled extensively in Europe. Lady Murray did the only thing she could then do.

With the help of friends, she took over a school and ran it successfully for five years, selling it at a profit. The proceeds from the sale of Springfield College enabled Lady Murray to travel to England in 1877 with her younger son, Gilbert. His brother, Hubert, remained behind to finish his schooling.

In London Lady Murray opened another school, but returned to Australia some twelve years later for the wedding of Hubert.

Hubert had graduated from Oxford with a double first in *Literae Humaniores*. He had been admitted to the bar at Inner Temple, and then returned to Sydney where he was admitted to the NSW bar. He was not successful as a lawyer, however, and shared some of his father's reputation for arrogance and aloofness. He was bored with colonial life, but was forced to become the state parliamentary draughtsman in order to survive. He also became a somewhat diffident Crown prosecutor. In the 1890s he raised a regiment of NSW Irish and volunteered to fight in the Boer War when it broke out in 1899. He was not happy in South Africa, where he saw active service, but returned with the rank of Lt. Colonel. Fortunately for him, the opportunity to take up an appointment as chief judicial officer in British New Guinea came up and he was to spend the rest of his life there, becoming Lieutenant Governor of Papua, when the British Territory was handed over to Australia. He was knighted and remained Administrator until his death in 1940, at the age of 79 years.

His younger brother, Gilbert, meanwhile had an excellent academic career, graduating from Oxford with distinctions in the classics. At the age of 23 years he became Professor of Greek at the University of Glasgow. In 1908 he was appointed Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford. Something of a prig, Murray was the model for Professor Adolphous Cusins in George Bernard Shaw's play *Major Barbara*. He became devoted to the cause of world peace and first through the League of Nations Association and then the United Nations Association spoke up for what in this century has appeared to be an increasingly lost cause.

Unlike his brother Hubert, who converted to the Roman Catholic faith and was proud of his Irish and Catholic background, Gilbert remained a pagan until the day he died. Or almost did. It is said that a Catholic priest was brought to his death-bed to bring him the consolation of Mother Church, but whether he joined the faith of his fathers is not known. But wherever the Murrays are in that other world, we can be sure that they are in Opposition to whatever established order exists - and perhaps in financial straits as well!