

A DARLING DOWNS QUARTET

Four Minor Queensland Politicians: George Clark, James Morgan, William Allan and Francis Kates

by

D. B. WATERSON, Ph.D.

Queensland political history — or rather mythology — has long been dominated by the clash of the nineteenth century titans, Griffith and McIlwraith, and by unusually superficial and over-simplified studies of the great controversies over the land question. Unrelated antiquarian group myths have transformed our very mixed bag of founding fathers from men into Governor Bowen's Centaurs.

The recent work of A. A. Morrison and B. R. Kingston is, however, beginning to remove old preconceptions and to lay the foundations for more sophisticated and scholarly analytical accounts of Queensland in the previous century. Primary source material is also becoming available in increasing quantities and other students are extracting, compiling and analysing a wide range of documents covering many facets of official and personal life in the nineteenth century. This does not mean, of course, that the old black and whites must inevitably give way to a universal grey blanket. Rainbows, one hopes, will replace both antiquarian sun worship and the fog of ignorance. As our imagination gropes with the more complex ideological, intellectual, personal and political issues, so do previously neglected or flattened archetype figures and incidents acquire depth and meaning.

The men then, those first political representatives of a pioneer nineteenth century British self-governing colony must not be seen merely as flat stereotypes reflecting the mores of the economic and sectional groups to whom they belong, but, rather in addition, as representatives of both common and competing ideas, attitudes and interests present and developing in every thread of the unfolding fabric of colonial life.

The primary objective of this account then, is to examine four minor Darling Downs political personalities and to relate their hitherto neglected personal stories to the environment in which they lived and died. This study, it is hoped, may pave the way for similar glances at other minor forgotten men of Queensland politics.¹ There are, naturally, frustrations and limitations implicit in the use of this technique, this primer in colonial Namierism. Personal source material in the form of diaries and private papers is missing in all four cases. This is not an unusual phenomenon in the oral and practical but hardly literate world of the Australian politician. Such a deficiency is an obstacle which can, however, be overcome if certain ideological assumptions about the nineteenth century colonial bourgeoisie and the clashing economic, ethnic and regional groups within it are accepted.

The clue to these four lives lies in their personal and group drive for the acquisition, commercial development, transfer and retention of landed property. Where they differed, one from another, lay in the social and political attitudes and organization each thought desirable to maintain or extend his position. In the pursuit of riches on earth two failed and two were successful. Ironically, however, it was the two agrarians who, though their dreams of wealth tragically evaporated as their lives closed, were ultimately victorious in attaining their goal of establishing a viable society of agricultural yeomanry and sturdy storekeepers on the Darling Downs. But by 1900 this was no longer a point in dispute. Fresh issues, new alignments and the impact of a growing colonial agricultural technology had made the dreams,

objectives and controversies not only obsolete, but irrelevant. The period of personal pragmatism really ended with the disasters and conflicts of 1891-1896.

I.

By the time that George John Edwin Clark and his brother, Charles [1830-1896] appeared on the Darling Downs in the mid-sixties, the twenty-year reign of the Pure Merinos was drawing to a close.² Those who had not failed, like Henry Stuart Russell of Cecil Plains, had retired either to ape the squire in England or to build new mansions on the shores of Sydney Harbour and along the banks of the Brisbane River.

It was left to the new men, King of Gowrie, W. B. Tooth of Clifton and the Clarks of Talgai, to deal with the problems created by the demand for agricultural selection, wholesale land purchases and the need to retain political control by the squatters.

Clark was admirably equipped for the first two tasks, but unlike Allan, was a failure in the third. With so many of his group — McLean, Hodgson and the Wienholt brothers — he entered politics out of a sense of duty to his class and through a determination to preserve a recently established way of life and an acceptable method of making money from the onslaught of the metropolitan and country-town bourgeoisie. This element, under the guise of idealistic paternalism, was seeking a wider distribution of landed property and the transformation of the Downs economy and landscape from grass to grain.

Unlike his great antagonist, James Morgan, and his successors, William Allan and Francis Kates, George Clark was an Australian native. A product of the Tasmanian gentry, he was born at the family estate, Ellinthorp Hall, Tasmania on 20 March, 1834. By birth, education, inclination and income, Clark was a colonial gentleman. His father, George Carr Clark [1789-1863] arrived in Tasmania in 1822, and two years later married Hannah Maria Davice [1794-1837], a cultured and able woman who was Tasmania's first trained school teacher. G. C. Clark, after a short but profitable career as a flour-miller, erected Ellinthorp Hall in 1826-27, and afterwards built up the surrounding estate near the Isis to more than 40,000 acres. He also invested considerable sums in Hobart mercantile and banking enterprises.³

Capital, then, was no great problem for his two orphaned sons, who, after 1864, gradually realized on their Tasmanian holdings and invested their inheritance in Talgai Station on the Darling Downs.

By 1873 East Talgai, fourteen miles north-west of Warwick, had been developed from a one-hut grazing leasehold to a well-ordered stud and fattening pastoral freehold. The brothers had acquired, through direct purchase, *bona-fide* selection and dummied, 32,000 acres of excellent land. All had been fenced and sub-divided into forty great paddocks, all watered by permanent creeks and man-made dams. Lucerne pastures had been sown, a twenty-stand freestone woolshed erected and a pastoral village of homestead, store, office, cottages and sheds had been established.⁴

Furthermore, although at least £40,000 must have been sunk in the venture, good prices, fair seasons and the opening of the Toowoomba-Warwick railway along the eastern boundary

of the run in 1871, seemed more than adequate cover for hidden perils possible in the future. Droughts and price fluctuations seemed far distant in 1874.

The pace of investment and development naturally slackened after the early seventies, but stock numbers were built up to about 20,000 sheep and 3,000 Devon cattle by 1880. About 600 acres were under lucerne and, ten years later, steam irrigating plants were spraying Dalrymple creek over parched pasture.⁵

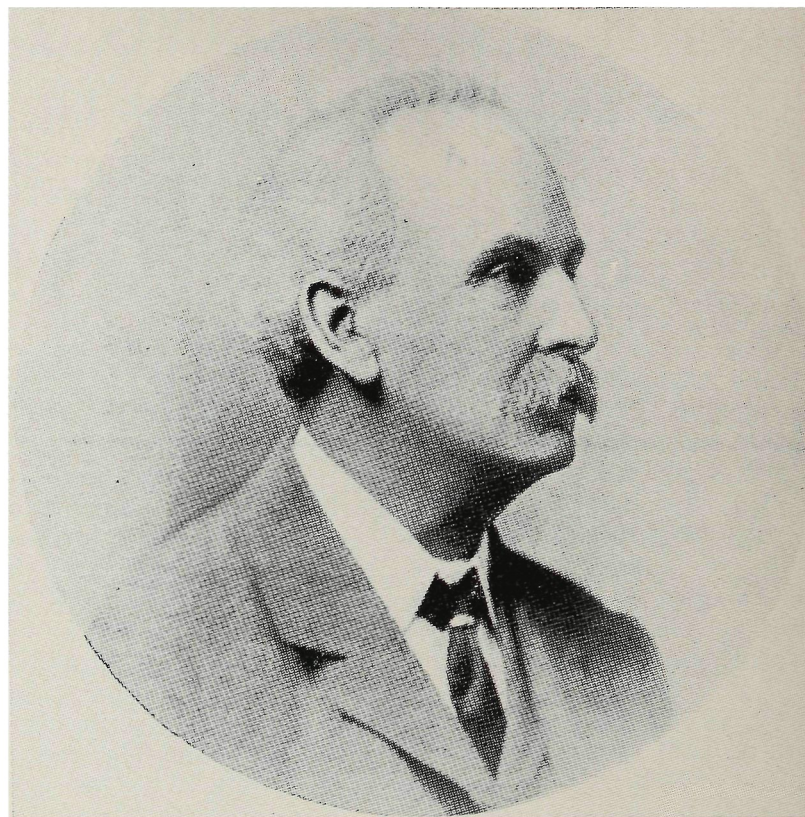
The Tasmanian saga of Ellinthorp Hall had, it appeared, been duplicated in the 'garden of Queensland'. But, for a multitude of geographical and human reasons, the Tasmanian establishment from which Clark sprang proved more enduring than that of the Downs squattocracy. Furthermore, considering the hazards of pastoral life on purchased acres on the Downs, Clark and his brother were lucky to escape complete ruin. In 1890 they were forced by financial pressures and a transient desire to revisit England to sell 24,250 of their Talgai acres to the Scottish, Australian Investment Company for a modest 34/- an acre. Compared to F. J. C. Wildash of Canning Downs, J. F. McDougall of Rosalie Plains and Sandeman and Whitchurch of Felton, Clark at least saved his original investment and fine stud from the wreckage.⁶

Why and how did Clark survive for so long on such expensive pastoral land? Educated in England, and married to one of his own class, Ellen Louisa Henrietta Smith, during a family visit to that country during 1863, Clark nevertheless underwent a long period of pastoral experience at Ellinthorp Hall. Here novel management and breeding techniques were investigated and adopted by pragmatists of intelligence and practical skill. By the time Clark was twenty, in 1854, his father had admitted him as partner in his grazing enterprise. Visits to Europe and New Zealand in the sixties deepened and refined early experience and gave him knowledge of mercantile and accounting techniques that were to stand him in good stead when red and black ink became almost as important as the sheep themselves. Furthermore his brother Charles's duplication on the Downs of his father's early mercantile career in Hobart increased the total family knowledge. When he arrived in 1861 as an experienced, modern pastoralist with considerable human and financial resources, Charles Clark immediately commenced business as a storekeeper and flour-miller. Indeed, the Ellinthorp Mill, erected by Charles and his partner, James McKeachie, was the first successful flour mill in Queensland.

George Clark came to the Downs in 1865 and over the next two years consolidated Talgai as a freehold pastoral estate, taking full advantage of the notorious Leasing Act of 1866, the 1868 Crown Lands Alienation Act and the pre-emptives allowed by the 1847 Orders-in-Council. On 25 June 1867, he was elected member of the Legislative Assembly for Warwick, but on 23 September of the following year was defeated by Macalister's adherent, the pseudo-agrarian pastoral 'dabbler', E. L. Thornton. His brother Charles, however, re-established the Clark representation in the Queensland Parliament with a further brief term as member for Warwick between 1871 and 1873.

Clark commenced his political career with an exploitation of two great initial advantages. He had a substantial interest in the *Warwick Examiner and Times*, and so could counteract Morgan's agrarian outpourings in the *Argus*, and, secondly, the electoral mechanism, in spite of its theoretical democratic intentions, worked in favour of landed property. Before the 1867 election, Clark had sat on the Revision Court Bench while the electoral rolls were being revised and had openly boasted 'that they had often ridden over the laws of the land on that Bench'. Again, in 1868, Clark deliberately disfranchised many Eastern Downs and Warwick Selectors, thus displaying 'a disgraceful elasticity of conscience in dealing with public matters which were likely to infringe on their private interest'.⁷

These actions combined with Clark's deliberate evasions of the intent and conditions of the 1866 and 1868 Land Acts



G. CLARK

raises, in a Queensland setting, those questions of private and public morality so brilliantly discussed by Margaret Kiddle in her study of the Western District of Victoria.⁸ Clark, like James Taylor of Cecil Plains and the Wienholts of Goomburra and Jondaryan, deliberately used his public position to further his private interests. Yet his private justifications were clear and difficult to refute if certain social and economic assumptions and objectives were accepted at the beginning. The State needed money, land was its only disposable asset, and should and could only be sold in large portions to those who could pay cash for it and 'would use it as they find it pays them best'.⁹

Agriculture in the hands of yeoman proprietors had no future on most parts of the Downs, whereas highly capitalized breeding and fattening freeholds were the logical successors to the old extensive grazing properties that had existed since 1841. Clark and his group viewed with dismay the prospects of a community of ignorant, illiterate peasants guided by country-town demagogues, subsisting on uneconomic selections and incapable of replacing the virtues of the master-and-man society they had displaced with an equal or superior social system of their own. It was not the barbarians of the countryside who were assailing the towns, the outposts and citadels of civilization but, in a reversal of both an old and a new thesis, the new Huns were the industrial outcasts of the British Isles and Germany, guided and spurred by the need of the urban middle-classes for political power and social prestige.

Clark, in his own mind and in the eyes of his class, was merely preserving a threatened social system which was apparently economically vital to Queensland's existence as a separate colony, and which held out the promise, denied by the gold rushes and urbanization in the south, of continued monopoly of power and influence. In a speech at the Warwick Court House on 17 September, 1868, Clark implied these views and defined his position. He acknowledged that he had little taste for politics and preferred private life, but that 'it was his duty to prevent the return of one who he thought unfit to represent the town... anyone who came to take up land [for agriculture] this side of Clifton was a great fool... reserved railway lands for selectors were a great farce and that the lessee had a moral and equitable right to graze over the resumed half of his run in preference to one thousand acre grazing selectors'.¹⁰

A year earlier, Clark had had the cheek to describe himself as really 'a moderate liberal'. So he was, in British terms, but his ultra-squatting views were anathema to the coming men of the towns and farms, to all electors, in fact, except the pastoral employees, their professional and mercantile associates and, probably more importantly in the short-term, the numerous Roman Catholics of Warwick and its Agricultural Reserve. Clark, at this time appears to have associated himself with Roman Catholicism.¹²

In 1867 this vote, combined with a split in the opposition camp, was decisive. The Warwick electorate accepted Clark's view expressed in the *Warwick Examiner and Times* that Clark 'with his liberal views, interest in agriculture . . . residential qualification, vast property and outlook of a practical man of business whose word we can trust' and elected him to the Legislative Assembly. Perhaps, too, those fifty or sixty farmers who had borrowed money from him 'at high rates of interest' were afraid to vote against him 'in case he put the screws on them'.¹³

In the event, Clark polled 126 votes to win the seat. His opponents, the 'well-dressed adventurer' and Queen Street carpet-bagging 'solicitor', F. A. Cooper, polled 86 votes and Simon Meyer, a successful Warwick storekeeper, 76. The pro-agrarian, pro-Macalister and Douglas Ministerial vote had been effectively split.¹⁴

Clark seldom spoke in Parliament and, except for urging a total stoppage of immigration, the temporary halting of the Warwick railway and what amounted to a completely laissez faire policy in Crown lands, took very little part in the great debates over representation and the Land Bill. A year later, on 26 September, 1868, his political career closed. This time there was no split vote for the Warwick seat, and Clark polled only 139 votes, forty less than his 'liberal' opponent, the 'young man of leisure and connections', Edmond Lambert Thornton.¹⁵

The agrarians had triumphed, but Thornton, the nominee of James Morgan and St. George Gore, was a political failure. In 1870 he was replaced as candidate by James Morgan and the great Warwick election contests of the early 'seventies between the squatters and the agrarian radicals began. Returning to the fray, Clark lost the first round to Morgan by a mere 18 votes in 1870. A year later, however, the result was reversed when his brother Charles defeated the newspaper proprietor. These contests, which ended with Morgan's great 1873 victory, however, more properly belong to the vignette of James Morgan, the agrarian trumpeteer of our Downs quartet.

What is certain, however, is that Clark was glad to quit politics. The strain on such a retiring, sensitive man was immense, the expenditure great, the rewards, after 1869, meagre. His violin and stockwork gave greater satisfactions.

Clark, then, was a reluctant politician, a man prepared to do his duty in stemming the threat of what to him appeared to be irresponsible agrarian anarchy whipped up by agitators such as James Morgan, W. H. Groom and other minor men of the country-towns and cynically manipulated by the new breed of colonial politicians, Macalister, Douglas, Palmer, Lilley and Pring, *et al*, who were replacing the gentlemen of Eton, All Souls, and pretentious squires of 'broad colonial acres'. Although familiar with the corridors of power, the Assembly, the Lands and Survey Office and the Bank, he was glad to relinquish overt political life in 1868 and to retire into a private world of sheep breeding, station improvement and esoteric private speculation and experience. Reacting against the dissenting 'improving' household of his childhood, Clark sympathetically abandoned the conventional respectability and order of St. Mark's Anglican Church at Warwick for the rarified Catholic Apostolic faith. After his retirement from public life he even became a minister of his 'Church of Christ, serving under the Apostles' and fitted up a private room at Talgai for use as a chapel. For Clark, religious observance was a private and personal thing — the chapel never became part of the homestead establish-

ment that the earlier squatters plainly intended their own Anglican Churches to be. This religious retreat by a man of such strong personality and opinion symbolized the end of the squatters' attempt to duplicate 18th century England on the Downs.

Again too, Clark even seems to have opted out of the pastoral and political establishment, making little attempt to play the squire at Talgai or the political and social conservative on the red leather benches of the Legislative Council.

On the Downs and in Queensland political life he will be remembered as one of the culprits of 1867-69, but, in Australian history as a whole, he deserves a more favourable and fuller assessment. 'A marvel with sheep' of which he was acknowledged by P. K. Gordon, Inspector of Stock for Queensland, to be one of the best judges of stock in Australia. Clark was the first to introduce the paddock system on the Downs. At one stroke he reduced his labour costs, raised the quality and weight of fleeces and dramatically lowered the mortality rate. Furthermore, the system proved an ideal forerunner to the lucerne fattening procedures which were developed in Headington Hill in the late 'seventies'.¹⁶

Nor were Clark's efforts confined to the mechanics of stock management. Breeding fine-woolled imports from Learmonth's Ercildoune flock and the Woorowryite stud of Western Victoria, he attempted to build up a flock of Merinos capable of stocking western runs and of raising the general standard of stock in the Settled District of the Darling Downs. This first attempt, however, failed as the sheep fell off in staple and covering. In 1870 Clark re-formed his stud on the basis of thirty ewes and three rams from Kermode's Mona Vale and Taylor's St. Johnstone Studs in Tasmania. These descendants of the great Saxon Merino 'Sir Thomas' were an immediate success on the Downs and by 1884, Clark was able to close the stud to outside imports and breed from within. His first consignment of four rams yielded an average price of £268 and he even exported to his native island, the original Australian home of the best Merinos. For a brief period in the 'eighties, Talgai was perhaps the greatest stud in Queensland, the stock proving hardy and adaptable to all regions of the State, hardy and disease resistant and growing a well-covered, dense fleece of an even, soft and good length fibre. Clark's achievement is summed up by the statement that 'in 1868 his average fleece weighed three and a half pounds, in 1886 each animal weighed seven and a half pounds'.¹⁷

Technically then, Clark was more than successful. Less so financially. When he died at East Talgai on 6 February, 1907, he left assets valued at £28,283. An additional £9242 was frozen stock in the Australian Joint Stock Bank which after 1893 had no immediate assessable value. He had, however, invested a further £3480 in productive Queensland public companies. In 1890 he transferred his remaining portion of East Talgai—about 9,000 acres of the best land along Dalrymple Creek—to his only son, George Carr Clark. Mortgages and a bond of this transaction were valued for probate at £23,237/18/9.¹⁸ This was largely a family matter as George had, in 1888, married his cousin. This briefly reinforced the family fight to retain Talgai, although, in 1910, the property was subdivided. Already, in 1906, one year before Charles's death, the 'Yanna' grazing farm, of 20,000 acres fifty miles south of Charville on the Warrego River had been purchased. The Clark family had found that their territorial base, and their economic position were irrelevant to the commercial agricultural economy and semi-rural bourgeois social and political structure now supreme on the Darling Downs.

George Clark, fortunately, did not live to see the end of his hopes for a Clark dynasty permanently ensconced at Talgai. On 6 February, 1907 he died in his fine freestone homestead, already conscious that large estates were doomed on the Downs and that his Tasmanian dreams of 1865 had lasted a mere forty-two years. The black soilers and their country-town allies

were already harvesting their wheat, grazing their dairy cows and building their little iron-roofed homesteads within sight of Talgai. Soon the menacing tide would engulf the pastoral island altogether.

II.

If George Clark always attempted to 'do his duty in the state of life to which it had pleased God to call him', his antagonist, James Morgan, acted as a prophet, a smasher of pastoral idols, rather than as a colonial gentleman with broad acres and large mortgages. Morgan was, in many ways, a more complex figure than Clark. Ever a man of intense personal drive and frantic energy, he became a fiery Irish editor and politician, tormented by violent personal hates and driven by deep convictions founded on private disappointments. This journalist is a fit subject for an historical novel. Morgan was a man of ambition, vigour and considerable intelligence. Yet his end was tragic, his motives often contradictory, his life, to use a fashionable phrase, was deeply flawed and his actions were occasionally petty and futile.

James Morgan, unlike his famous son, Sir Arthur, spent a mere ten years — the last decade of his life — involved in Queensland politics. But this period covered perhaps the most crucial and exciting stage in Downs political history. Morgan, fifty years old in 1866 when the struggle began in earnest, had already experienced a wide variety of colonial successes and failures.

He was born at Longford, County Longford, Ireland, on 29 September, 1816, the son of one Michael Morgan, a minor Anglican member of the Protestant community scattered within this marchlands county on the southern border of Ulster. Longford County, it may be noted, was the birthplace of Oliver Goldsmith, one of the Patron Saints of colonial agrarians and rural myth-makers. Although the County was a mere 263,645 acres in extent — thus equalling the size of a large Downs pastoral leasehold, it was, in the eighteenth century, as Arthur Young noted in 1777, 'a cheerless country of flat bog'.¹⁹ Much of it, however, was reclaimed by the time Morgan was born. The results of thirty years of steady investment in the development of physical resources was something the young Morgan could see all around him. Furthermore, his schooling at the remarkable private academy of Miss Edgeworth at Edgeworthstown, ten miles east of Longford, reinforced these impressions. The doctrine taught by Miss Edgeworth was the Victorian doctrine of human improvement and development by strenuous application of brain and body. This was an excellent apprenticeship for colonial life. For one who was obviously not a member of the Irish establishment, however, it must have been eventually frustrating once the pupil acquired ambitions above his station.

Longford was a small county of a mere 107,570 souls in 1821, a developing agricultural area whose social potential was stultified by obsolete landlord and tenant relationships.²⁰ In this county of caste and creed were sown the seeds of Morgan's hatred of titled landlords, his contempt, as a Protestant wedded to improvement, for the priest-ridden society of the Irish peasants and his frustration when he realized that Longford had no place for a man such as he. The irony of it all was that not only had he to fight the mental battles of his youth all over again in the Queensland political arena, but that in order to achieve 'the numbers' demanded by colonial politics he, a Freemason, Oddfellow and staunch Protestant, needed the support of Irish Catholics who were destined to become a substantial percentage of his new improving yeomanry on the Darling Downs. This fact of colonial political life he never really accepted.

Morgan, then, had no future in Longford. About 1835 he took up surveying and spent over three years attached to a party near Mount Snowden in Wales. This practical experience stood him in good stead during the agrarian disputes on the Darling Downs when a practical knowledge of the mechanics of selection often counted for more than an awareness of ideological assumptions behind the original legislation.

But surveying in England was a dead-end to Morgan with his lack of connections and capital. On 14 March, 1841 he arrived at Sydney on board the *Palestine*. He immediately plunged into rural life, spending three years in the Broken Bay area of New South Wales and then managing a pastoral property on the Namoi River for W. C. Wentworth. In 1848 he married Kate Barton, [30.10.30 - 24.2.07], an Irish immigrant from Mullingap, County Westmeath. By her he had a large family of six males and seven females, all of whom except a girl and boy survived him.²¹

Having acquired sufficient pastoral experience, Morgan and his growing family moved north to the Darling Downs in 1850. Here he took up management of Talgai for John and George Gammie and their successors, Hood and John Douglas. Talgai, then, was the first strand in the cable that was to link Morgan and Clark.

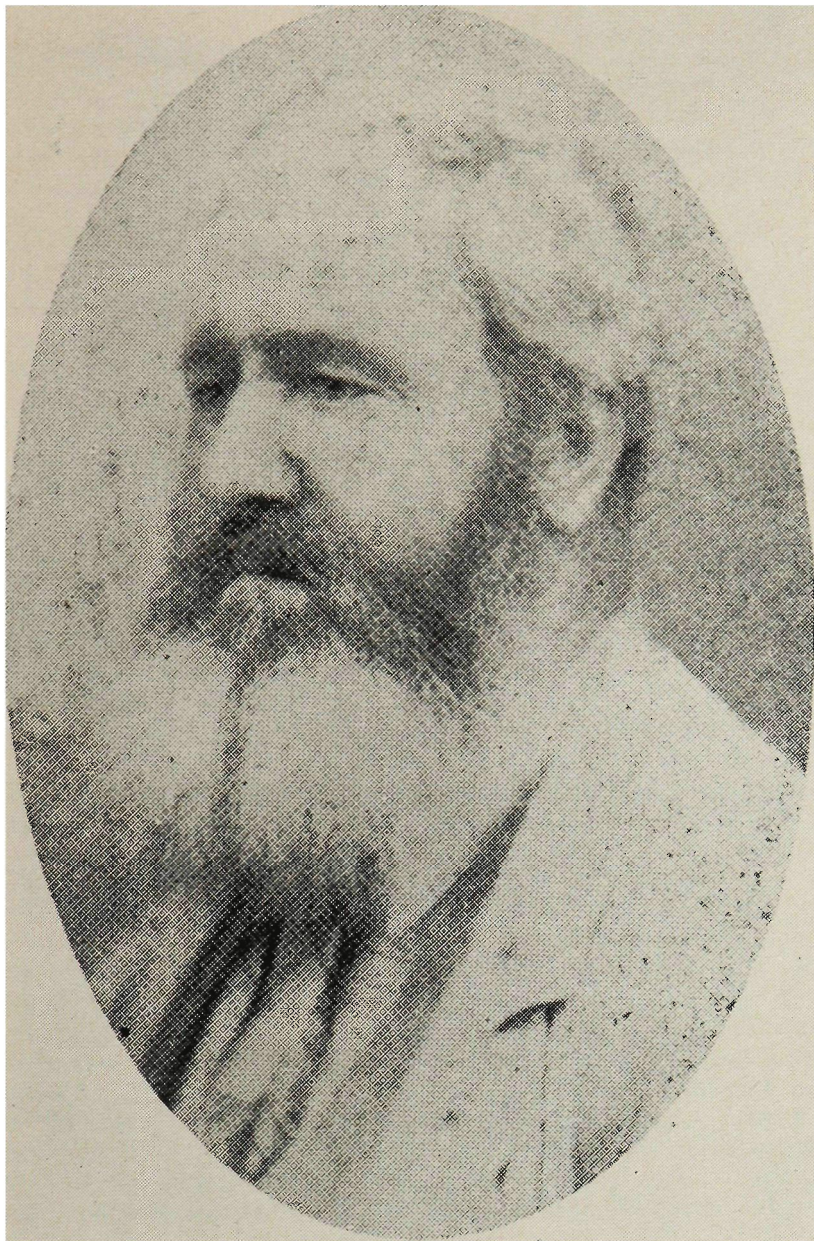
Four years later, in 1854, Morgan branched out on his own, leasing Crow's Nest Station north-east of Toowoomba from Pitts and Bolton. This venture failed within a year as sheep mortality was so high that his entire flock was decimated. In 1855 Morgan became T. de Lacy Moffatt's manager at Fraser's Creek and the following year took charge of Rosenthal for the British Australasian Company before forming North Toolburra Station for Massie in 1857. Three years later he purchased a small grazing property, "Summerhill" near Warwick, where he lived for about ten years.

Morgan, then, like Douglas and several other radical adherents to a liberal land policy favouring the small agricultural selector, was a failed squatter. The ferocity of his attacks on individuals, particularly the apparently successful 'Johnny come latelys' such as Wildash and the Clarks are partly explicable in terms of his personal experiences and by his failure to acquire the acres and stature of the Pure Merinos. These galling disappointments reinforced, as we have noticed, latent Irish agrarianism and anti-landlord prejudices.

Furthermore, needing a reliable cash income, Morgan secured the post of Government Scab Inspector for the Darling Downs. At a time when any beast that could stand was eagerly snapped up at a high price by lessees stocking northern and western runs, Morgan's 'faithful and impartial' interpretation of his duties brought him into immediate collision with the neighbouring squatters. Antagonized by his persistent efforts to prosecute for breaches of the Scab Act 'they spared neither trouble nor expense to make his position unbearable' and he was forced to resign towards the end of 1867. Here was another score to settle.²²

The Leasing Act and the Crown Lands Alienation Act of 1868 gave him his opportunity. *The Warwick Argus* which he purchased in March 1868 became his instrument. His aims were simple. Frustrated in his efforts to make a fortune and join that social world for which he believed himself by reason of talent and origins to be thoroughly qualified and eligible, Morgan became the hammer of the pastoralists. Not of all pastoralists — one great friend was Donald Gunn of Pikedale — but of those whom he felt were corruptly impeding agricultural settlement on suitable areas of the Darling Downs. And this antagonism was publicly reciprocated by the squatters and it flourished in their hearts. Morgan, to many Black Soilers, became little more than a social pariah and irrational fanatic. In short, a member of that outcast group whom all despised and most feared — an articulate masochist, a traitor to his class.

The Warwick Argus was the ideal medium for expressing his maverick views and personal dislikes, although it was some time before a shaky financial position caused by initial lack of capital and the presence of a competent rival, the *Examiner and Times* in this small community of about 2,000 adults, was remedied and Morgan freed from serious business worries. The barely literate and materialistic agrarian pioneers of the Downs regarded the country-town newspapers as their bibles. Furthermore, Morgan of Warwick and Groom of Toowoomba appealed



J. MORGAN

to many of the same notions and desires that the Harmsworth brothers were later to exploit when catering for the new English mass-democracy emerging as a result of the Education and Reform Acts.

In editorials and in the general columns of the *Argus* Morgan attacked the squatters, exposed their duplicities and advocated radical land policies which would undermine their position. As an example of this, his editorial attacks on Wildash during 1869 were unique for their ferocity and range. Morgan charged that Wildash had dummied, poisoned the Condamine with chemicals from his scouring shed, fenced off main roads and impounded selectors' stock.²³ These accusations were accompanied by strong personal remarks which indicated Morgan's hatred and contempt for certain pastoralists. Such strictures displayed an overall lack of balance and objectivity. Yet after all, as he pointed out in his great 1874 editorial on the morality of dummied, during two months in 1867, 60,000 acres of the best land was selected on the Downs of which over three-quarters was openly dummied by the squatters. Morgan was at his best when he adopted this crusading attitude, when he castigated the breakdown of morality on the part of those gentlemen of the Downs who should have known better. His words still deserve quotation:

Land stealing was one of the leading fashions and appeared more profitable than gold digging; it was, at all events, an occupation more congenial to the tastes of the "upper crust", because there was no pick and shovel drudgery

connected with it, and visions of stone breaking on the roads were only seen in the remote perspective, if seen at all . . . there was little or no difficulty in securing enough of them [dummies] on the street corners of Brisbane. Agents pounced on new arrivals, and some old ones too, with the agreeable tidings, 'that they could select 320 acres of rich black soil on their choice of four or five runs on the Downs; and if they happened to own a land order it could be utilized without any vexatious delays! It was only necessary to make a false declaration before a magistrate, sign a blank power of attorney, a form of transfer in blank also, and the bargain, such as it was, was complete . . .'²⁴

Yet, as these personal attacks demonstrate, he was never able to formulate and develop a consistent radical policy founded on a systematic and logical set of ideas. This deficiency was demonstrated by his growing conservatism after he became Chairman of Committees in the Assembly and by his role of exercising 'particularly in late years a moderating influence upon his party, to whom [however] he was always faithful.' Such a conclusion as supported by his defence of the Land Act of 1876 and his refusal, at any stage, to acknowledge any merit in the doctrine of free selection before survey.²⁵ Rather, by the time of his death, he was horrified by the collectivist implications in the speeches of some agrarian 'levellers'. In this conflict between theory and practice his essential opportunism and pragmatism were soon revealed. An assault on privilege could only be taken so far; after that it became a direct attack on property and, by implication, the social order. After 1874, he, as well as some other agrarian radicals, openly equated the two but others needed another twenty years of selections, strikes and socialism to convince them that the farmer and storekeeper was only old squatter writ small.

Morgan, then, although he perceived that a new equation, a new balance of property had been created, had no perception of the farmers' need for technical assistance, credit, marketing reforms and arrangements and group political action. Once they had secured their land his duty as an agrarian was done. The fire fed by resentment and failure could be allowed to flicker and die. Dangerous 'socialistic and anti-individualistic' notions had no place in the views of a man who, by 1876, was convinced that 'squattocracy is dying and a new landed interest is growing up which makes its revival improbable'.²⁶

Morgan, then, even when he fought his first election for Warwick against George Clark in 1870, stressed 'not the extreme and revolutionary views' that the *Examiner and Times* mistakenly believed he held but the technical abuses of the Land Acts which the Southern Downs squatters had cynically perpetrated. As had been described, he exposed abuses, fraud and undue pastoral, political and judicial influence whenever it was personally and politically expedient for him to do so.²⁷ In addition, Morgan stressed the need to elect local 'liberals' to Parliament in order to secure from the Ministry through pressure and cordial association, those public works which the storekeepers and farmers considered their due. Hence his rejection of the liberal 'Downs trotters' Thornton and Pring and his determination, in 1870, to contest the seat himself as a 'local man aware of the needs of the constituency'. These tactics were successful, Morgan defeating George Clark by eighteen votes. Charles Clark, however, reversed the decision less than a year later by an almost identical majority of seventeen. Morgan's defeat was due to the fact that he lost the Roman Catholic vote 'through the importation of religious feelings into the conflict'.²⁸

This was the most violent and hotly contested election campaign on the Downs culminating in an affray more characteristic of eighteenth-century English contests than the rather sedate colonial proceedings.

On the evening of 21 July, 1871, a large crowd of some 1800 or more gathered at the Warwick Court House to hear

the Pure Merino declared elected by seventeen votes. Bitter hostility towards the winning faction swept through the assembly at this unexpected defeat of the radical candidate. Clark's known adherents were kicked and punched and a whole street block was soon a 'regular melee'. The inoffensive English gentleman-farmer, Bertie Parr of Chiverton, was 'stoned and kicked from Horwitz's store to Queen's Park before being dragged to safety in Kingsford's Hotel'. Even the new Member was cuffed and stoned, and waddies and palings were freely employed. It was, remarked an overwrought correspondent, 'worse than street-fighting in Paris'. The five policemen were powerless. At eight-thirty the crowd, now a mob, stormed Bugden's Hotel, the squatters' headquarters. Stones and sticks were thrown through the windows, and some stalwarts attempted to demolish the verandah. Suddenly a shotgun, loaded with birdshot, was fired through the window. When the demonstrators advanced again, four more discharges peppered exposed backsides and dispersed the rioters. There were many sore heads in Warwick next morning.²⁹

Morgan, however, in spite of his views in favour of secular education, triumphed in 1873 when Clark refused to stand and no other squatter could be persuaded to take his place. The liberal was elected unopposed, and for the next five years represented Warwick in the Assembly.³⁰

Five years later, however, in spite of his sober and competent work in the House, Morgan was defeated by Jacob Horwitz, a Warwick storekeeper and miller of German birth and Jewish faith. Horwitz received 342 votes to Morgan's 263, a heavy defeat which revealed not only the growing urban vote, but the fact that 'the battles fought were decided by personal preferences or by local interests'.³¹ Nevertheless, it remains true that Morgan, by his adherence to the burnt-out Douglas Ministry, through his failure to secure more public expenditure in the town in the face of McIlwraith's expansionism, and through the intervention of W. H. Groom who split the agrarian vote by supporting Horwitz, was defeated at a time when the great agrarian battles of the past ten years were over and, to many, now irrelevant. Arthur Morgan's plea that his ill father 'was not a brilliant politician [but] . . . a thoroughly honest and conscientious one [who had] never used his position for personal gain . . . voted for the benefit of the majority and had fought many a hard battle for the poor man', could not, the electors felt, compensate for the fact that Warwick had lost the contest with Toowoomba for Downs urban supremacy and rapid growth.³²

The clank of a dry parish pump, combined with the intrinsic truth of the charge that 'they knew Morgan fought against persons and not for principles', defeated this immobile, prematurely aged and sick man on 19 November, 1878. Ten days later he was dead. Not from disappointment with the verdict but of the effects of a fall incurred when landing from the steamer 'Norseman' at a Brisbane wharf and from a serious organic liver disease. He left his widow a mere £612 although his main asset, the *Argus*, had been transferred to two of his sons shortly before his death.³³

Morgan's funeral was the largest ever seen in Warwick and was attended by over 1200 people as well as the Premier and government officials who arrived by special train. It was a fitting end to a colourful career; a life marked by financial failure, private disappointment and final political defeat. It was left to his tactful and more perceptive son, Arthur, to achieve that successful political consensus of Warwick opinion which his father, through temperament and the nature of his early political struggles, had failed to produce. Sir Arthur's urbane tact, charm, honesty and rather colourless liberalism eventually led him to the Premiership, Presidency of the Legislative Council and Lieutenant Governorship of his native State. An unbroken story of political success and social conformity which, however, pales before the more exciting, colourful and tragic tale of his father, the old Downs agrarian, James Morgan.

III.

William Allan, M.L.A. for Darling Downs (1881-1883) and Cunningham (1887-1896) was a representative of a group of shrewd, personally attractive, and politically successful squatters who managed to retain some measure of territorial representation long after the old numerical and ideological base of the pastoral interest had been swept away by agricultural selection. Allan's life, too, was one of almost uninterrupted private, social and political success; an excellent representative biography of that group of Scots Lowlanders who played such an influential part in Australian pastoral development.

He was born in Edinburgh during 1840, the son of two Highlanders, Alexander Allan and his wife Rebecca, nee Fraser. Alexander was a man of some means, a writer to the signet and, as an attorney could afford to give his son the usual excellent Scots secondary education. After a period at Mr Oliphant's School, Edinburgh, at Dunbar and at the Andersonian University at Glasgow, Allan emigrated to Victoria about 1857. Under the aegis of his influential uncle, Alexander William Campbell, M.L.C. of "The Loden", he soon acquired pastoral experience. This was supplemented by a post of responsibility on Bundure Station, near Yanco in the Riverina. By 1869 he was able to purchase the lease of Geraldra Station, near Bland Creek in New South Wales and, two years later, established a lucrative stock and station agency in Young.

During December 1871 Allan married Emily the third daughter of Thomas Hodges Mate, a successful Albury storekeeper, squatter [Tarcutta Station] and politician (M.L.A. Hume). This marriage, which produced four sons and six daughters of whom two males and a female died in infancy, gave Allan personal happiness, social standing, political connections and pastoral friends—in short, a large stake in his new country.³⁴ And his interests grew almost as fast as his family. In 1874 Allan left Young and, like R. G. Casey, joined the second great pastoral migration to Queensland, purchasing Whyenbah and Woolerina Stations on the Balonne and Maranoa Rivers. The age of the pastoral improvers and business managers was then beginning in Queensland. A family tour of the East, Europe and North America followed this venture, and, on his return in 1879, he purchased the freehold of Braeside, a pastoral estate near Warwick on the Darling Downs. Braeside was maintained as his pastoral headquarters. With capital investment, judicious improvements and intelligent stock buying Allan soon turned it into a model stud farm. Here he bred his famous Black Merino sheep and Hereford cattle.³⁵

This purchase reveals Allan's intelligence, caution and shrewd business sense. Formerly part of the Rosenthal run, this well-watered and timbered property of about 10,000 acres was large enough to be an economic unit capable of supplying his western stations with breeding stock and had sufficient fertile flats to allow some cultivation in the 'nineties. Yet Braeside was just small enough not to arouse selector antagonism against new 'Grass Dukes' and to free Allan from the constant Downs pastoral nightmare of huge tracts of purchased land ruinously mortgaged from creek to creek.³⁶

Braeside, then, was never over-capitalized, was of manageable size and was ideally situated for his breeding and fattening role. Allan's business acumen and judgement were soon recognized. In 1882 he joined the famous Queensland mercantile firm of B. D. Morehead and Company as a partner and, in 1886, accepted the onerous position of managing partner. This step, combined with his membership, and later Presidency, of the Queensland Club, his racing and hunting interests and his membership of the 30° Scottish Rite, the highest lodge of Freemasonry in Queensland, gave him a social footing in the colony's dominating pastoral and mercantile establishment. The membership, influence, ramifications and social connections of this powerful multiplicity of propertied interests still awaits analysis. Nevertheless, the urbane and articulate Allan soon

became one of the most influential members and public representatives of this colonial establishment. Allan then, unlike Clark and Morgan, was an active figure in public, club and mercantile life. His opinions mattered and his private power and influence, in spite of his absence from the Cabinet, was never inconsiderable.

Allan's influence was at its height between 1891 and 1897. After that, his voluntary transfer to the Legislative Council [11.3.97 - 19.10.01] circumscribed his public activities. He was one of the leaders of a group of Downs pastoralists who, appalled at their lack of organization in the face of demands from the radical unions of the pastoral and urban proletariat, helped form the Darling Downs Pastoralists' Association in 1890. Furthermore, as a Downs representative he assisted in the creation of the United Pastoralists' Association of Queensland and the parent body, the Federated Employers' Union of Queensland. Allan was a Council member of both organizations. Finally, in March 1891, he became a Vice-President of the Pastoralists' Federal Council of Australia, and as such was a major executive officer of the pastoralists during the great strike of 1891. All this followed from the pastoralists' defeat in the famous Jondaryan case of 1890 and their reluctant acceptance of the Pittsworth Shearing Agreement on 13 June, 1890.³⁷

Allan's exact role in the two clashes remains obscure. Certainly he helped to formulate and co-ordinate Council policy, negotiated with the Government on the use of force (he was Honorary Major of the Darling Downs Mounted Infantry Regiment) and used the whole force of his personality and influence in order to carefully organize and sustain all propertied elements 'for the conservation of their common interests'.

Allan really believed that it was a question of sheer survival for the squatters. They were not wicked capitalists but " 'simple' men who, by superior intelligence, enterprise and business aptitude have built up for themselves pastoral properties . . . [as such] they are the real builders of the national wealth and prosperity of these colonies".³⁸

Allan, then, was quick to recognize a threat and react to it. Thirty years previously, Clark had faced another threat but this challenge of the 'nineties accompanied by economic stress, the apparent end of opportunity and the rise of militant unionism was a much deeper and more serious danger than the one engendered by the agrarians. Allan's significance lies in the fact that he immediately recognized the implications of 1889-90, foresaw the danger to colonial capitalism and, using his effective personal talents, effectively mobilized the diffuse sectors of property in defence of the pastoralists' position and of the existing social order. This was his most dramatic and significant contribution to Australian political history.

It was a role for which he was eminently qualified and one which he had well rehearsed.

Compared to his key role in the great class conflicts of 1890, 1891 and 1894 Allan's part in representative political life was, in Queensland terms, a rather insignificant one. No orator, seemingly untouched by the great faction-fights of the last two decades of the nineteenth century, a solid but never a distinguished or memorable parliamentary personality, and determined, on the Darling Downs at least to be 'all things to all men', Allan made little public impact. He was, however, a most successful constituency politician. At a time when the agricultural interest seemed predestined to assume control of Downs politics, Allan managed to retain two constituencies for the more conservative faction. This achievement neutralized the votes of the agrarian 'liberals' of Toowoomba and Warwick.

An analysis of the Darling Downs by-election campaign of 1881 will illustrate how this fleshy, genial pastoralist captured enough votes from seemingly contradictory interests to secure his return. The whole episode demonstrated the crucial role and interplay of such factors as personality, roads and bridges, grass-roots, organization and local rivalries during the transitional phase between the agrarian battles fought between Clark

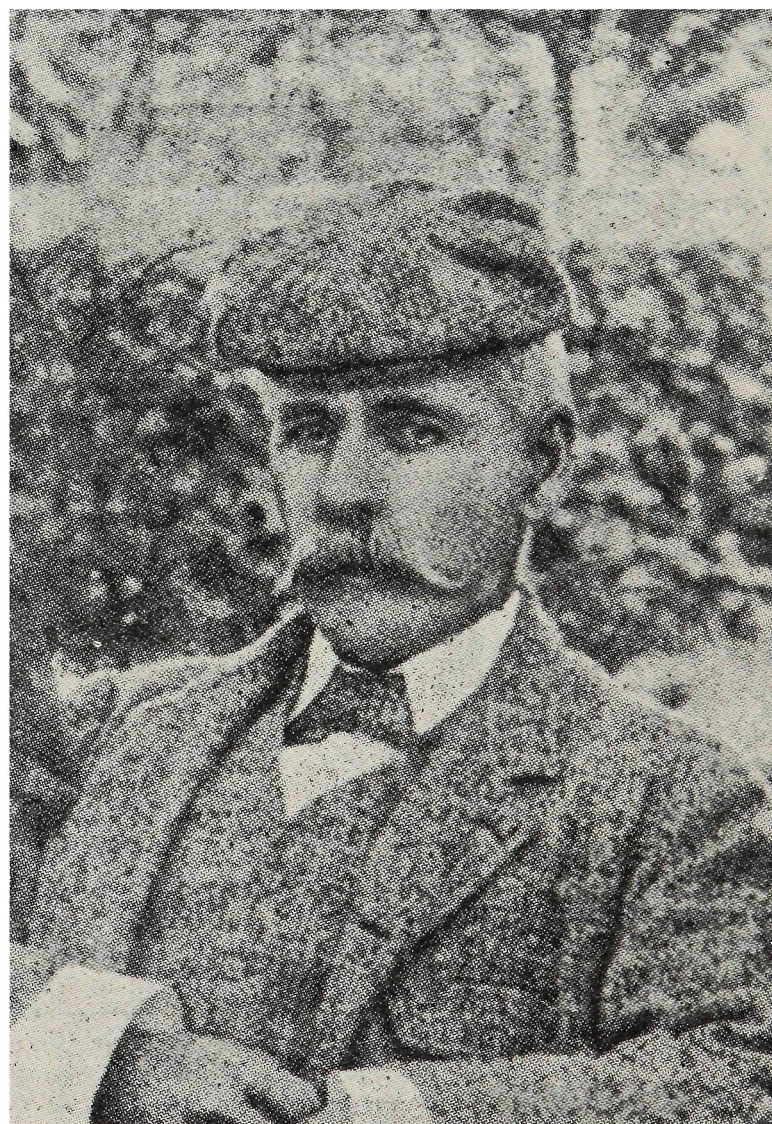
and Morgan and the class and sectional confrontations that occurred on an Australian scale in the 'nineties. It is, of course, significant that the ideological inadequacies and indeed fundamental irrelevances of Allan's appeal in the 'eighties was convincingly demonstrated by his narrow squeak in 1893 and his failure to compete in 1896.

Francis Kates, the agrarian miller and Liberal adherent unexpectedly resigned his Darling Downs seat on 1 November, 1881. William Allan decided to fight Kates when the latter desired vindication at the polls. The pastoralists' platform was, ostensibly, a simple one: independence from the two main parliamentary parties, no decided stand on any of the great issues of the day, specific pledges to his constituents ranging from a hospital for Warwick to a lunatic asylum for Toowoomba, and vague promises to support the small farmers who were reeling from the effects of three years of depression and drought.

This broad appeal even the agrarian and traditionally liberal *Warwick Argus* of Arthur Morgan could not resist:

If he can do good works it would not be politic to reject his services. Martyrdom is all very well in theory but we would require stronger reasons than are at present apparent before consenting to sacrifice ourselves on the altar of party politics. In the interests of the Darling Downs electorate in general, and of this district in particular, we hope Mr. Allan may be elected.³⁹

Morgan must have remembered the end of his father three years before. Certainly local issues took precedence over the claims of agricultural sectionalism, national policies and factional alignments. Some electors refused to believe that Allan's independent label was but 'a mask to conceal the most hideous



W. ALLAN.

political depravity... of a valid party man, voting with his class for class purposes'. The majority considered that property conflicts were of secondary importance besides a flow of government loan money, potent private influence and bluff honesty. A gentleman in the Club, then, was worth six sincere storekeepers and improvers on the Opposition back-benches.⁴⁰

So far as many Warwick residents were concerned it was still largely a deferential society where the self-made Scots pastoralist was obviously a superior alternative to the bright young German miller and agrarian theorist. This view 'Freeholder' crystallized in the columns of the Warwick *Examiner and Times*:

We want gentlemen of substance and social weight... well positioned... men of capital... whose influences weigh heavier than the price of a vote.⁴¹

Even the agrarian *Allora Guardian* in the heart of the selector-belt supported Allan's candidature. Moreover, Allan as President of both the Warwick School of Arts and the Eastern Downs Agricultural and Horticultural Society and an active member of the Turf Club and Royal Agricultural Society as well had effectively built up widespread grass-roots support. The rumour that Allan's speeches were all concocted for him by the 'aristocratic Ministerial ring' in the bar of the Queensland Club might possibly have been true. Yet such urban declamations would have been useless without the pressure of a strong local conviction that Kates had not done enough for the electorate. It was a difficult time for many on the Downs. Warwick, in particular, hard-hit by falling Government expenditure and static agricultural selection and production was actually losing population. Many could not reconcile themselves to the fact that the town had been relegated to second-place after Toowoomba in the country-town hierarchy.⁴²

Allan, too, had plenty of money for both liquid and literate campaigning, an active local committee of Warwick storekeepers, millers and graziers and an ability to project an entirely unjustified image of complete political independency. Furthermore, like Clark ten years before, he served the Roman Catholic vote in Warwick by advocating (without any chance of success) a grant of public money to Church Schools to compensate them for the withdrawal of State aid. This pledge few Catholics could resist.⁴³ Even the presence of three Kanakas on Braeside failed to shake his vigorous appeal.

Kates waged a curiously lethargic campaign and relied on the efforts of S. W. Griffith and W. H. Groom to ensure his return. This attempt to inject national issues and personalities into a local campaign proved a disastrous mistake. Rightly or wrongly many Warwick shopkeepers resented Groom's patronising and baneful influence on Kates and the small farmers.⁴⁴ The returns confirmed this view. Allan defeated Kates by 615 votes to 552. Although Kates secured a majority of the farmers' votes at the small rural booths he only managed to obtain 98 votes in Warwick compared to Allan's 208. Similarly, the four pastoral booths at Cecil Plains, Dalveen, Yandilla and Jondaryan headstations gave Allan 89 votes to Kates's mere 29.

Between 1881 and 1883 Allan proved an excellent local member. A whole host of public works were completed in his electorate and no major issues appeared to rupture the understanding between the small men and their larger representative.⁴⁵ In addition, Allan appeared to be reconciled to such agrarian proposals as the State repurchase of Darling Downs freehold estates, agricultural protection and an end to the wholesale alienation of Crown lands.

Allan, however, did not contest his seat at the general election of 1883. Acting 'on doctor's orders' he took his family for another long European and eastern tour and did not return to active political life until 1887 when he contested the Warwick Seat against Arthur Morgan after the sitting member, Horwitz, had resigned.

This time the favourable political and personal factors of 1881 operated in favour of his opponent. In 1883 the Griffith liberals

had secured a large majority and governed Queensland for the next five years. Electors were not yet as disenchanted with them as they were with Horwitz. As a member of the McIlwraith Opposition, Horwitz had been a poor roads and bridges man, and a more than usually inarticulate politician. The blame for Warwick's loss of the Via Recta railway to Brisbane and the St. George branch line was placed firmly on his shoulders.⁴⁶ Morgan, on the other hand, was a strong agrarian, a protectionist and a young and successful businessman with the support of the new and powerful Australian Natives Association. He had a facile tongue and pen, and an excellent local body record as Mayor of Warwick.⁴⁷ This combination of filial memories, youth, prudent radicalism and ministerial support could not be overcome. The builder of Allan's nest in 1881 had now turned cuckoo. On 19 July, 1887 Allan was defeated by 264 votes to 205. The man of Moreheads had gone down before the ministerial stripling.⁴⁸ But Allan's dismay was shortlived. The death of William Miles on 22 August, 1887 gave him his opportunity, and on 3 September he was elected unopposed for his old constituency of Darling Downs. This time, however, his programme was strongly conservative, anti-ministerial, and flavoured with his bluff, hearty, personal appeal.⁴⁹

Next year the two old antagonists, Kates and Allan, met again. The two-member Darling Downs seat had been split into the Cambooya and Cunningham electorates. The two rivals contested the latter. Once again, and rather surprisingly in such a farmers' constituency, Allan was victorious by 499 votes to 458. Kates was soundly defeated at Warwick by 55 votes to 152 but even a substantial part of the outlying selector vote eluded him.⁵⁰

Allan's victory was a result of several factors, some old, some new. He skilfully revived his old personal appeal and strong organisation, and capitalized on McIlwraith's vigorous scheme for public works expansion at a time when the southern Downs, depressed by drought and rust, had lost confidence in the railway policy of the Griffith Ministry. The imposition of a timber duty also handed the substantial saw milling vote to Allan on a plate. Allan even guaranteed that if he didn't obtain the Via Recta line he would resign his seat.⁵¹ Once again, most farmers and storekeepers deserted the unpopular miller for the influential squatter. The old appeal struck home:

'What we want is a man who has influence, who will be listened to with respect, one who knows our wants and will endeavour to obtain what we require... such a one we believe we have found in Mr. Allan one who has been tried and not found wanting'.⁵²

But Nationalist promises soon evaporated as the Ministry disintegrated under the physical breakdown of its lynchpin, McIlwraith, the financial depression and the proletarian challenge to property. What is surprising is that, in 1893, Queensland's year of crisis, calamity and decision, the farmers and storekeepers of Cunningham retained their confidence in Allan. The polarization of sectional interest which produced sixteen Labour representatives in Queensland and two Farmers' Alliance members on the Darling Downs was not positive enough to defeat him. Allan's alliance opponent, the Swan Creek farmer Michael Brewer, was beaten by 585 votes to 463.⁵³ Yet with Allan's loss of selector support in the heart of the electorate his political fate was only a matter of time. Personality, influence, an appeal to the rights and duties of property and the local shibboleth of 'independence' at budget time succeeded in 1893. In 1896 these were not enough. Allan did not bother to compete and the result he anticipated came to pass. Thomas McGahan, a radical Roman Catholic farmer from Mount Sturt, shattered the old unity between personal attractiveness and practical support. In this area, as in the western bush, new sectional economic and ideological interests were proving too strong for the individual and local appeals of ageing squatters. Indeed, the majority of Emu Vale, Yangan, Allora and Clifton farmers had discovered for themselves that a large pastoralist with mercantile

interests, however meritorious personally and influential politically was really a public anachronism on the Darling Downs. Agricultural selection had at last succeeded and with it a new sectional consciousness was emerging.⁵⁴

Allan's role in preserving the social order and property in 1891 and 1894 was admired but, after 1896, was no longer considered relevant or even important. Rural credit, branch railways, agricultural protection against Federation, the break up of the big estates and the satisfaction of a whole host of country demands by group pressure were the new issues. His role of a big man on a little man's frontier could no longer be sustained. The audience had finally overwhelmed the actor. So Allan retired to the Upper House and the management of his private interests.

He lived on for five years after 1896, a member of that group of mental and sometimes monetary bankrupts who indirectly ruled Queensland during the interregnum before the overthrow of the old establishment in 1915. The great drought toppled his pastoral comrades as the depression had discredited and destroyed his political colleagues. Few of that confident group who had gone north with him in the 'seventies remained. Allan himself did not long survive. On 19 October, 1901 he died of a heart attack at the Hotel Metropole, Sydney, and was buried in Waverley Cemetery two days later.

A Scotchman's pastoral and political saga had ended. And, with its end, Allan disappeared into undeserved obscurity. Yet his life justifies attention and analysis, covering as it did so many facets of colonial history. Intelligent, well-read and widely travelled, Allan was, in many respects, superior to the motley, often uncultivated and corrupt band of old squatters he and his associates replaced. An attractive urban personality with an 'irresistible manner', a shrewd and successful pastoral investor and a determined yet canny negotiator and advocate of his class interests, William Allan has a secure, if minor, place in Queensland history. A decade after his death, however, pastoralists were virtually eliminated from Queensland political life. Squatting became the kiss of death for most of his sort with political ambitions. The old pioneer pastoral establishment was eventually replaced in power politics by its rival, the Australian Workers Union, whose forerunners Allan had done so much to checkmate in the 'nineties. By 1915 the roles were reversed. A new establishment had begun its reign.

IV.

Clark played a deceptive and intricate dummy's tune on his violin, Morgan blew a strident agrarian raspberry on his trumpet while Allan kept a steady beat on the bass drums of the pastoral and mercantile establishment. Francis Kates, the catalyst in an attempt to unite storekeeper and farmer, performed interesting variations on a mild Teuton saxophone. Every member of the quartet disliked the others' beat. Each wanted to be the star soloist but nobody attempted to change the tune. Opportunity for the acquisition of property was the theme. All pursued wealth, whatever their individual attempts at variation and improvisation. Francis Benjamin Kates had brains, initiative and ideas. Unfortunately for his political peace of mind he often made the unforgivable colonial mistake of parading them. An excellent businessman before disaster overtook him at the end of the century, he was a poor political manager and ever worse dissembler. Party politics never really attracted him; he had made his own way in life and expected to be able to do the same in politics. Factional manoeuvres were to him simply a regrettable necessity, a distasteful part of the politics of agrarian development. They were not important for their own sake. Others thought otherwise. Hence his bewilderment when his own constituents and customers, the Darling Downs and Maranoa sons of the soil rejected him in 1881, 1888, 1893 and 1896. Nor did his personal business and pastoral enterprises finally repay his foresight, enterprise and technical ability. When he died, on 26 September, 1903, his executors found that his assets,

£2750 in all, were insufficient to cover his annuities and bequests.⁵⁵ This technological visionary's dreams had ended in a nightmare. Paradoxically, however, financial fulfilment for the graingrowers of the Downs was already on the horizon. As Kates's personal fortunes declined those of his erstwhile constituents flourished. At his death small-scale commercial agriculture on the Darling Downs was a viable, expanding and productive economic system.

Like so many of his rural customers Kates was a German. The son of Benjamin and Henrietta Kates, he was born in Berlin on 1 July, 1830. After receiving an excellent secondary education he graduated in classics and modern languages from Berlin University. Details of his subsequent life as a young man are unknown — possibly he served as a teacher — but, after marrying Sarah Mathews in London in 1858, he emigrated to Brisbane and secured employment as an assistant tutor at the Rev. Moffatt's Collegiate School in George Street. Kates was next engaged by the German pastoral improver and agricultural and milling pioneer, Frederick Bracker of Warroo, as a tutor for his and neighbouring children.⁵⁶ Not only did Kates acquire some knowledge of pastoral life from Bracker during his stay on Warroo between 1859 and 1862, but, as he received part of his £200 annual salary in sheep, he soon built up considerable liquid capital. By 1863 he was a man of some means with 'a flock so numerous that Fred Bracker sacked Kates who moved his sheep and sold them'.⁵⁷

With this capital Kates moved to Allora, a small hamlet which seemed likely to become a thriving town once the lands of the Downs were thrown open to agricultural selection. Kates first opened a general store and later expanded his flourishing business into a stock and produce agency. Like most store-keepers he became a money-lender to farmers on such a considerable scale that his provision of rural credit became the subject of parliamentary innuendo.⁵⁸ Seven years later, in 1871, he erected the Allora Steam Flour Mills and began his lifelong connection with grain-growing and the milling industry.⁵⁹ All told, Kates built more flour mills than any other person or company in Queensland. Apart from his Allora Mills Kates purchased Horwitz's Warwick Steam Flour Mills in 1886, and installed the new Hungarian roller machinery before selling out in 1888.⁶⁰ Ten years earlier, in 1876, Kates had also bought the empty mill of the Farmers' Co-operative and had profitably resold it to the Hayes Brothers a year later. Furthermore, Kates built but did not operate the Dominion Mill in Russell Street, Toowoomba (1890) and held a substantial interest in the Ipswich Flour Mills. The Maranoa Flour Mill at Roma was also begun by Kates about 1890.⁶¹

Allora, however, remained the centre of his milling operations until his death.

In 1886 he bought out his two partners, Dougall and Cooke, and during the following year sold his two-thirds share to the Gisler Brothers of Toowoomba. During 1892 the mill closed down, being unable to compete with the metropolitan mills and allegedly strangled by the high railway rates for flour. On 2 October, 1892 an incendiary burnt the wooden two-storey mill.⁶² Kates, however, remained undaunted. Once the Hendon Branch railway was completed in 1897 he constructed a second Allora mill. After his death in 1903 his son, F. H. Kates, removed this mill to Clifton.⁶³

Kates's flourmilling and financial activities propelled him towards a unique role in rural Downs society. As the processor of 'the staff of life' Kates became inextricably entangled with the problems of the selectors who were trying, in the face of climatic disadvantages, ignorance, technological inadequacies and chronic lack of capital and credit to make farming pay. Kates saw himself as performing a dual function. First and foremost he was a prophet of the agrarian myths behind selection legislation and the harsh pioneer life on the farm. Secondly, he was a hard-headed businessman of flair and perception whose reason and talents could be used to lead the selectors from the slough

of subsistence slavery to a prosperous, richer life based on financial independence. Somewhat deficient in a sense of humour and unable to recognize farce, this prickly Prussian was never the jolly miller of Chaucerian tradition but a shrewd, cosmopolitan, hard-eyed entrepreneur. In essence, then, a member of the urban vanguard of this new, self-made colonial society. With the farmer, he resented his squatter betters and was convinced that the processing of wheat into flour was not only a more valuable task in the economic sense than fattening cattle or growing wool, but that it was a task of such moral and social importance that without it the new civilization to be based upon an industrious Downs yeomanry could not possibly succeed. Kates then was a man with the familiar 'Granary complex'. He differed from his contemporaries, however, in his deep understanding of rural problems and in the flow of ideas and technical remedies that his example, tongue and pen suggested.

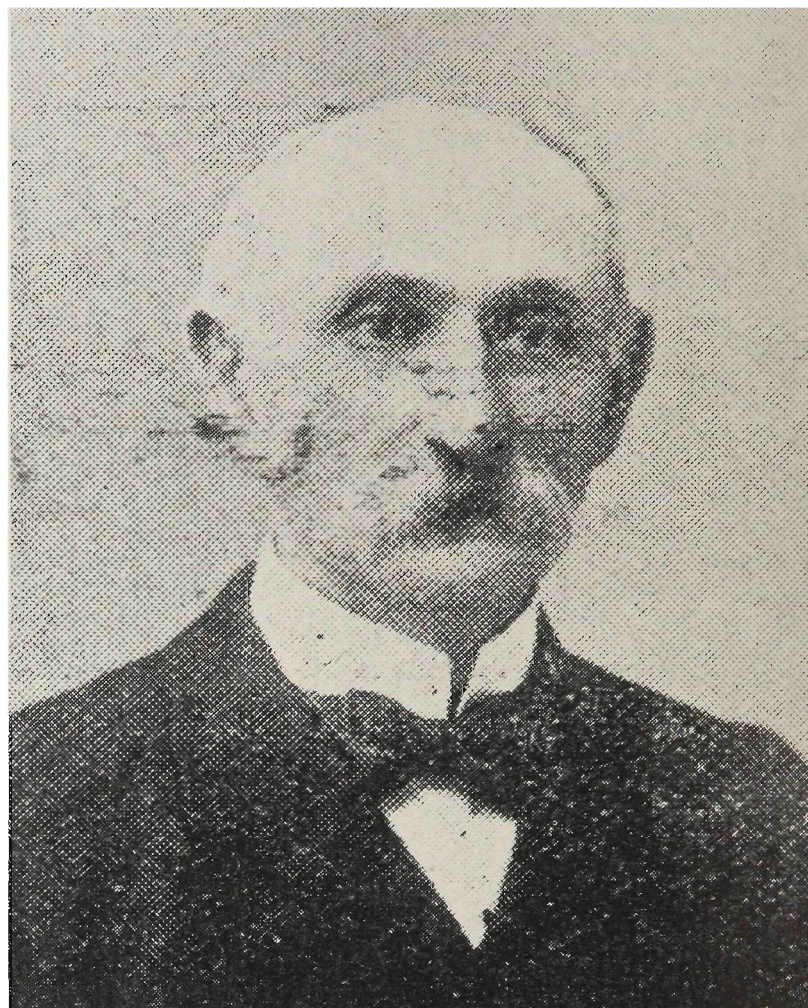
Kates accepted the basic creed of the agrarian which postulated that:

what we have to claim is the right of the Legislative to deal with all the Public lands of the colony in such a way as to serve their full utilization for the *higher purposes* of that real settlement for which God created it, and which *man has to fulfil*.⁶⁴

This gospel was reinforced by Kates's German origins and by his initial success in the world of affairs. Yet Kates, while proud of his origins and at pains to defend his fellow-countrymen from the attacks of their traducers, was never really one with the German selectors.⁶⁵ He was, as we have seen, a Prussian of urban birth and considerable education, who had married outside the ethnic group. Most important of all, he had changed his religious affiliation from his natal Lutheran to the Anglican creed of his wife. Kates was thus rapidly assimilated on all levels — social, religious, linguistic, economic and political. This absorption into the Anglo-Saxon community set him apart from the numerous German-speaking Lutheran community which had taken up so many selections on the Downs between 1866 and 1876. Kates, by his abandonment of language and faith, his occupation and his position, was never part of the German agricultural community. It is, however, reasonable to assume that he served and retained the German selector vote.

Be that as it may, Kates prospered exceedingly throughout the 'eighties. Indeed, in 1885, he became one of the first directors of the new Royal Bank of Queensland, a sober, conservative institution operating in southern Queensland which was prepared to lend to the more prosperous farmers. Two years later he became a director of the Queensland Mercantile Company and, in 1888, took the conventional trip to Europe. Already he was dabbling in grazing pursuits, transferring his interest from his 4400 acre estate, "The Glen" near Allora, to Richmond Downs near Roma and Strath Elbess near Dalveen.⁶⁶ Furthermore, when he joined the Eton Vale syndicate subdividing the estate for small holders, he became one of the few agrarians who backed their beliefs with cold cash. Since 1878 Kates had pleaded with the government to resume the large estates. His 500 shares in Eton Vale — worth a nominal £4500 — were a practical expression of faith in closer settlement. It was ironic that this investment was almost worthless at the time of his death.⁶⁷

After his visit to England and Germany in 1888 his financial position began to deteriorate. Competition from the modern, large and economical metropolitan and Toowoomba flour mills, resulting from the removal of the wheat duty and the expansion of transport facilities, damaged his regional market for flour. His banking and mercantile investments were destroyed in the depression of the 'nineties and his Roma speculations were not a great success. For once, Kates had over-estimated the wheat growing and grazing capabilities of the area. The Maranoa was not another Darling Downs and the great drought almost finished Kates financially.



F. KATES

Strangely enough, however, Kates's political career, erratic in the 'eighties, a failure in the following decade, passed through an Indian summer before his death in 1903. Like Allan, Clark and Morgan, Kates failed to reach cabinet rank. From first to last he was a Downsman, concerned with the problems of commercial agriculture and with the satisfaction of the multifarious needs of its practitioners.

Kates was the first agrarian to represent the farmers and storekeepers of the Darling Downs electorate. First elected on 26 November, 1878 he was compelled to stand again on 23 June, 1879 by the Parliamentary Committee of Elections and Qualifications. Re-elected, he was defeated by William Allan after a sensational resignation in 1881 but returned to Parliament following the great liberal sweep of 1883. As we have seen, he lost his seat to Allan in 1888, was defeated for Maranoa in 1893 and 1896, but was at last successful in the 1899 contest for Cunningham. An analysis of several of these election campaigns reveals Kates's interests and political drives and demonstrates the extent to which his policies and personality appealed to the farmer of the Southern Downs, the future granary of Queensland.

Five candidates contested the two-member Darling Downs constituency in 1878 — William Miles, Francis Kates, Allan McG. Simpson, William Deacon and James Wilson. Of this array, the latter was a farmer and Deacon an Allora auctioneer, and farmer. Both had favourite-son local appeal while Simpson was a successful Stanthorpe tin speculator who had, somewhat unwisely, invested his capital in the Black Diamond Coal Mine at Clifton and in an adjacent grazing farm. The McIlwraithian squatter William Graham also intended to stand but became ill and was ordered south to recuperate. But his agent, acting illegally and without instruction, withdrew Graham's candidature. It was this action which produced another poll between Graham, Miles and Kates in 1879.

The farmers' candidates, Deacon and Wilson, were never serious contenders. Sectional consciousness and an effective rural political organisation had not yet been developed. Kates was the only feasible alternative to a squatter. He had several vital political requisites including money, position, contacts among the farmers, a deep understanding of their predicament and problems, and a fertile technical mind.

His 1878 platform with its emphasis on the repurchase or exchange of the best available land acquired by the squatters between 1863 and 1870, the construction of branch railway lines, larger homestead selections, the provision of a College of Agriculture, cheaper railway rates, a substantial increase in pastoral rents and an expansion of rural public works appealed to the electors if not to the politicians.⁶⁸ Furthermore, although a 'liberal' he could, as a new man concerned with regional problems, disassociate himself from the failing Douglas Ministry. This appeal in conjunction with the Allan-type attractions of his running-mate, Miles, was successful. Kates received 601 votes, 91 less than Miles, but 387 more than his nearest rival, Simpson.⁶⁹

The triangular contest of 1879 was more significant. This time Miles with 784 votes and Kates with 739 defeated Graham with 534. The old guard had been finally vanquished in the Southern Downs.⁷⁰ Only the 'new breed' of pastoralists represented by Miles and Allan had a political future. Essentially, however, the 1879 verdict was a Downs vote of no-confidence in the new McIlwraith administration.

The campaign of 1881 following Kates's resignation has already been discussed. A few further points illustrating Kates's role will suffice. In Parliament Kates quickly acquired a reputation for hot-temper, sensitivity to criticism and disinterest in faction fighting. There is some evidence to suggest that the government realized his vulnerability, deliberately baited him and secured his resignation on the trivial issue of the Killarney Railway.⁷¹ The return of Allan made the plot a complete government victory. The campaign revealed Kates's distaste for the sordid, hidden side of politics. Most observers believed that Kates soon realized that he had been duped but was unwilling, through pride and a belief in his own political invulnerability, to wage a strong campaign. He treated the proceedings with 'a coolness amounting almost to apathy . . . and displayed an uncharacteristic lack of energy'.⁷²

In 1883, however, his attitude changed. Drought and the recession had increased his potential rural support, Allan had retired and his ministerial replacement, the Glenmore grazier John Affleck, was no match for the old pro-Griffith team of Miles and Kates. The miller's policy, with the addition of strong anti-land grant railway and coloured labour planks was virtually the same as it had been in 1878 and 1879.⁷³ The voting — Miles 868, Kates 863 and Affleck 551 — revealed that Kates's plans for the State repurchase of pastoral freeholds, irrigation, railway grazing leases for selectors and rent relief for small farmers had struck a responsive note. For the first time Kates even secured a large majority from farmers in every homestead area.

Five years later, however, Allan defeated him for the second time. Kates put forward a comprehensive and radical programme obviously aimed at the successful farming group now emerging on the Downs. Agricultural tariffs, cheaper railway rates, the establishment of a Department of Agriculture with Cabinet representation, the inauguration of farm schools and colleges, forest and water conservation and State repurchase of pastoral freeholds were all measures that came to pass during the following twenty years.⁷⁴ The electors rejected all this as visionary and irrelevant. Wheat prices had fallen and the millers were accused of fixing the grain market while land values were low and it was felt that repurchase would only further depress them. As we have seen Kates could not compete with Allan's personal appeal or anti-ministerial public works attitudes.

Nor was Kates any more successful in 1893 and 1896 when he contested Maranoa against Robert King, the Labor candidate. Beaten by a conservative in 1888, Kates, who had surprisingly advocated a Griffith-McIlwraith coalition in 1888 (thereby demonstrating long-term political perception but little tactical skill) was vanquished by the bushworkers and struggling selectors. These people felt that the Allora bourgeois had little to offer a region split by class-conflict and economic distress. Maranoa supported too many sheep, grew insufficient grain and contained too few storekeepers' shelves to allow the replacement of squatter by miller. The political mills of Roma ground far too small in the nineteenth century and the agrarian phase was eliminated altogether. Like Allan in Cunningham, Kates was out of joint with the times. King polled nearly 100 more votes than he did. In 1896, however, Kates came within fifteen votes of victory, but this was not enough. King consolidated his position and as political labor shifted to the right a new coalition of bushworkers, railway employees, clerks and small selectors evolved in the electorate. It became clear that Kates had no political future in Maranoa, as even the local loyalties that were emerging favoured Labor rather than the elderly politician. So this slight, upright Prussian, with his long waxed moustaches and now nearly seventy years old returned to his first home, the Darling Downs. During 1899 he contested Cunningham and, to the astonishment of all except himself, he succeeded. Running as an Independent he polled 719 votes while McGahan, the Farmers' Representative, could only muster 566 and the Labor candidate, Patterson, managed only a miserable 74.

Why this return of an old native? The old feuds were now irrelevant, prices were rising and dairy farming had been combined with profitable graingrowing to make a durable basis for economic expansion and security in the area. Between 1893 and 1899 the acreage under wheat doubled and Kates, the visionary who had foretold all this, received the credit. Furthermore, his old cause of repurchase had at last been taken up by the Government, farming techniques which he had publicised were widely adopted and the old pioneering hardships had, for the most part, nearly vanished. McGahan lacked ability and party influence while the early radical discontent had burnt itself out. Cunningham had swung the full circle from pastoral conservation to agrarian radicalism, sectional farm protest and back to property rights again. A new and enduring conservative majority alliance had been forged from the fear of socialism and the increasing security and wealth of the propertied two-thirds of the electorate.

Kates, now a member of the Philp group, lived for only three years after his final political vindication. Disappointed by his financial calamities and an apprehensive spectator of the socialists' political progress, he lived long enough to see the rolling hills of the Downs green with wheat and dotted with the homesteads of an industrious and improving yeomanry. His eyes informed him that his dreams had come true and his political resurrection confirmed his faith in landed property as the best insurance against socialism. Francis Kates was now a founding father, a patriarch of the Downs. Surely, he might believe, only further technical improvements were necessary in order to perfect this successful Downs prototype of an ideal colonial society.

Yet Kates's will suggests that he lived out his last years, like so many of his kind in Queensland, in a world of public satisfaction and private illusion. Perhaps even disillusion although, as we have seen, Kates had much to be proud of. Certainly, like his predecessor James Morgan, he had failed financially while adversaries like Allan and Clark had privately prospered. But did this really matter? It is this practical German's dream of a new Darling Downs Society that became a reality that has persisted until the present day. For his small, but not insignificant part in the evolution of this region, he deserves to be remembered.

REFERENCES

1. The writer wishes to acknowledge the invaluable help he received in preparing this article from Mr R. C. Sharman and the staff of the Queensland State Archives, and the staff of the Australian Dictionary of Biography, Australian National University, Canberra. This work is derived from a larger *Biographical Register of Queensland Members of Parliament, 1859-1929*, now being compiled by the writer.
2. Charles Clark (1830-1896) b. Tasmania, ed. England. 1861 to Darling Downs. Storekeeper and flour-miller, Warwick. Purchased Old Talgai Run, M.L.A. Warwick 1871-1873. 1890 estate sold and retired to 'Ellinthorp', Tenterfield, d. Tenterfield 15.9.96. C. of E., m. 2X, 4 s., 10 d. *Toowoomba Chronicle*, 22 September 1896, p.2., c.7.
3. Stilwell, G. T.. 'George Carr Clark', in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol. 1, pp. 224-225.
4. *Warwick Examiner and Times*, 30 August 1873, p. 2., c. 6.
5. *Warwick Argus*, 19 October 1880, p. 2. For a description of East Talgai stud after the sale of its western two-thirds see: *Queensland Agricultural Journal*, Vol. IV, Pt. 1, (1 January 1899), p. 17.
6. *Warwick Examiner and Times*, 1 March 1890, p. 2., c. 4.
7. *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, Vol. 12 (1871), p. 36. *Warwick Argus* 5 February 1868, p. 2: editorial presumably written by James Morgan.
8. Kiddle, M., *Men of Yesterday*, Melbourne, 1961: Chapter 12, pp. 233-263. Clark dummied a block of nine 320-acre selections in 1867. This action played an important part in the 1868 and 1870 election campaigns. *Warwick Examiner and Times*, 13 August 1870, p. 2.
9. *Warwick Argus*, 11 June 1867, p. 3., c. 4.
10. *Ibid.*, 23 September 1868, p. 1., c. 1-4.
11. *Ibid.*, 11 June 1862, p. 2.
12. What Clark's precise religious beliefs and affiliations were at this stage it is difficult to state but he certainly had the support of 'the fiery parish priest of Warwick' and, more importantly, of Bishop Quinn. *Warwick Argus*, 11 June 1867, p. 2.
13. *Warwick Examiner and Times*, 20 June 1867, p. 2., c. 1. *Warwick Argus*, 23 September 1868, p. 1., c. 1-4.
14. *Ibid.*, 2 July 1867, p. 2., c. 3.
15. *Warwick Examiner and Times*, 26 September 1868, p. 2., c. 7.
16. *Queenslander*, 16 February 1907, p. 13 and 16 March 1907, p. 8. *Pastoralists' Review*, Vol. 17 (15 March 1907), pp. 32-33.
17. *The Australasian*, 2 July 1887, p. 11.
18. The writer is indebted to the State Archivist for details of Clark's will. Q.S.A. to D.B.W., 22.2.67.
19. Hulton, A. W., *Young's Tour in Ireland*, Vol. 1, London, 1892, p. 214.
20. Hall, Mr, and Mrs S. C., *Ireland, Its Scenery, Character, etc.*, Vol. III, London, n.d. [c. 1845], pp. 275-88.
21. *Register of Deaths*, Country Deaths, 3217 of 1878.
22. *Warwick Argus*, 5 December 1878, p. 2.
23. *Ibid.*, 23 June 1869, p. 2., c. 2 and 11 August 1869, p. 2., c. 2.
24. *Ibid.*, 10 December 1874, p. 2., c. 1.
25. *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, Vol. 23 (1877), pp. 269-276.
26. *Warwick Argus*, 18 May 1876, p. 2., c. 1. (ed.)
27. *Ibid.*, 4 June 1874, p. 2., c. 1. This contains a typical attack on the mechanics of land classification in the Warwick area.
28. *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, Vol. 13, (1871-2), pp. 15 and 31. *Warwick Examiner and Times*, 13 August 1870, p. 3. c. 2.
29. *Warwick Examiner and Times*, 22 July 1871, Extraordinary. *Brisbane Courier*, 26 July 1871, p. 3., c. 3.
30. *Warwick Examiner and Times*, 1 November 1873, p. 2., c. 4-6.
31. *Warwick Argus*, 12 December 1878, p. 2., c. 1-2.
32. *Ibid.*, 14 November 1878, p. 2 and 24 October 1878, p. 3., c. 2.
33. *Ibid.*, 5 December 1878, p. 2., c. 3.
34. *Australasian Pastoralists' Review*, Vol. XI, (15 November 1901), p. 614; *Brisbane Courier*, 21 October 1901, p. 5., c. 6.
35. *Pugh's Queensland Almanac*, Brisbane, 1892, p. 118A.
36. *Warwick Argus*, 12 October 1880, p. 2., c. 3. For a description of the estate at its peak in 1899 see: *Queensland Agricultural Journal*, Vol. V, Part 3, (1 September 1899), pp. 248-253.
37. *Australasian Pastoralists' Review*, Vol. I, No. 4 (16 June 1897), p. 162.
38. *Ibid.*, Vol. I, No. 1 (16 March 1891), p. 2.
39. *Warwick Argus*, 19 November 1881, p. 2., c. 2.
40. *Toowoomba Chronicle*, 22 November 1881, p. 2.
41. *Warwick Examiner and Times*, 12 November 1881, p. 2., c. 7.
42. *Toowoomba Chronicle*, 22 November 1881, p. 2., c. 1., *Warwick Argus*, 22 November 1881, p. 2., c. 4.
43. *Toowoomba Chronicle*, 22 November 1881, p. 2., c. 1-3.
44. *Warwick Argus*, 26 November 1881, p. 2., c. 1.
45. For a list of his 'good works' see: *Warwick Argus*, 11 August 1883, p. 3.
46. *Ibid.*, 18 June 1887, p. 2.
47. *Ibid.*, 5 July 1887, p. 3., c. 5. and 12 July 1887, p. 2., c. 2.
48. *Ibid.*, 19 July 1887, p. 2., c. 4.
49. *Ibid.*, 3 September 1887, p. 3., c. 6. *Warwick Examiner and Times*, 7 September 1887, p. 2., c. 2-6.
50. *Warwick Argus*, 12 May 1888.
51. *Ibid.*, 28 April 1888, p. 4., c. 1.
52. *Ibid.*, 17 April 1888, p. 2., c. 7.
53. *Ibid.*, 3 May 1893, p. 3.
54. *Ibid.*, 15 April 1893, p. 2., c. 5., 22 April 1893, p. 4., c. 1.
55. Q.S.A. to D.B.W., 22 Feb 67. Details of Kates's will.
56. Kates sired two sons and a daughter. One son died in infancy but the other, Francis Henry Kates, followed his father's milling and grazing pursuits. *Warwick Argus*, 29 September 1903, p. 3., c. 2.
57. Gunn, Donald, *Links with the Past*, Brisbane, 1937, p. 169.
58. *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, Vol. 46 (1885), pp. 601-609; 620-21.
59. *Warwick Examiner and Times*, 24 February 1872, p. 2., c. 4.
60. *Warwick Argus*, 12 February 1887, p. 2., c. 7.
61. *Brisbane Courier*, 1 December 1904, p. 7., c. 4.
62. *Allora Guardian*, 8 October 1892, p. 3., c. 1-2.
63. *Groom's Darling Downs Almanac*, Toowoomba, 1907, p. 170.
64. *Brisbane Courier*, 11 September 1872, p. 2., c. 3. The italics are those of the writer.
65. *Queensland Parliamentary Debates*, Vol. 30 (1879), pp. 1111-1128.
66. *Brisbane Courier*, 29 September 1903, p. 5., c. 3.
67. Kates, with M. B. Gannon, had pioneered the private repurchase of the freehold estates in 1889 when they acquired 41,000 acres of the Clifton Run. While 57 new farms were sold, the vendors could not deal with the financial drain caused by bad seasons and deferred payments. Gannon went bankrupt and eventually the State took over the venture. *Warwick Argus*, 16 February 1889, p. 2., c. 1. *Queensland Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly*, 1896, Vol. IV, pp. 643-647.
68. *Warwick Argus*, 7 November 1878, p. 5., c. 1.
69. *Ibid.*, 28 November 1878, p. 2., c. 4.
70. *Ibid.*, 26 June 1879, p. 2., c. 3.
71. *The Week*, 19 November 1881, p. 4. *Warwick Argus*, 5 November 1881, p. 2., c. 1.
72. *Warwick Examiner and Times*, 3 December 1881, p. 2., c. 1.
73. *Warwick Argus*, 11 August 1883, p. 5., c. 2.
74. *Ibid.*, 21 January 1888, p. 3., c. 5.