



Dr. John Michael Gunson, (1825-1884), medical practitioner, was born in Limerick, son of Robert Gunson, a Protestant merchant, and his Catholic wife, Jane, nee Shepherd. He was reared as an Anglican, but became a Catholic. At 14 he was sent to school in France for about five years, and, in 1845, was entered a student at the Dublin Lying-In Hospital. After six months he was given a certificate by the hospital authorities and went to Paris, where, by 1848, he had a dozen certificates for attending lectures but no formal degree. In June he was admitted a member of the Royal College of Surgeons in England, and then practised in Oxford. In May, 1852, he sailed from Liverpool as surgeon in the *Grasmere* and arrived in South Australia on 28 August. Next April he was registered as a medical practitioner and opened a practice in Adelaide. He visited Europe and creditably passed 'a rigorous examination' at the University of Heidelberg (M.D., 1865), and, in 1866, at Limerick, married Mary Sarah Lucas. He returned to Adelaide with his wife and practised at his home in Angas Street. In 1867 he was appointed an honorary medical officer at the Adelaide Hospital, but soon resigned. He retired in 1876, and, at Marryatville, built a large house which was bought by Sir Edwin Smith and later became Loreto Convent. In 1879 he took his family to Europe

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intending to stay, but returned after two years and built another house at Kensington Gardens.

Gunson joined the Adelaide Philosophical Society in February, 1877, and read a paper 'On the Philosophy of Food, according to recent Scientists'. An influential layman in the Catholic Church, he was active for years as president of the Young Men's Society, surgeon to the Hibernian Benefit Society and director of the Catholic Building Society. On 22 August, 1881, at Adelaide he was installed a knight of St Gregory the Great. When John Redmond visited Adelaide in 1883, Gunson chaired the meeting, although, as a firm believer in the 'Home Rule', he was no advocate for an 'Irish Republic'. In the University of Adelaide (*M.D. ad eund.*, 1877) he served on its first council in 1874-79 and senate in 1877-84. He died on 3 May, 1884, and was buried in the Catholic section of West Terrace cemetery. Of his three sons, William and George were lawyers, and John Bernard a medical practitioner, who married Annie Elizabeth, granddaughter of Sir John Morphett.

Dr. Gunson's brother, William Henry, was born in Limerick and educated at Rev. John Hogg's College. He migrated

to Adelaide with his brother in 1852 and was briefly associated with the *South Australian Register*. He then joined the customs department at Port Adelaide, but moved to Melbourne where he worked for the *Age*. He was converted to Catholicism independently of his brother. About 1858 he joined the staff of the *Ballarat Times*, and, from 1860, ran the *Daylesford Express*. In February, 1868, he became the first editor of the *Advocate*, a Catholic weekly in Melbourne. Cultured and gifted, he maintained a scholarly literary style in his leading articles for nearly thirty-four years. He died, aged 73, at his home in Windsor on 28th December, 1901. He was survived by his wife, Mary Elizabeth, nee Lynch, and by their three sons and two daughters.

Sources

Register (Adel), 31 Jan, 1877, 22 Aug, 1881, 3 May, 1884, *Argus*, 3 Jan, 1902; *Advocate* (Melb), 4 Jan, 1902; A.A. Lendon, Dr. J. M. Gunson (SAA); information from F. D. Monogue, Melb Diocesan Hist Com.

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Adelaide, from the River Torrens.