

E. J. Brady
THE KELLYS

Edwin James Brady (1869–1952), journalist, poet and publicist, made a name for himself with his book of sea ballads, *The Ways of Many Waters* (1899) and a volume of bush verse, *Bells and Hobbles* (1911). His attitude to the Kelly Gang of bushrangers was shared by many of his literary contemporaries. It's embedded in an interesting book he published in 1944: *Two Frontiers*.

The Kellys were rotten, root and branch, not to be classed in criminology with light-hearted led-away riders like the Burkes and Johnny Vane. They were devoid of a humanity which Ben Hall and 'Thunderbolt' Ward retained; were without the intelligence of Mount, and lacked the ferocious courage of black Dan Morgan, who never shunned an open fight. Old New South Wales troopers always conceded that the duel between Morgan and Sergeant McGinnerty had been a fair fight. They would never admit that the Kellys were anything more than cowardly murderers. They killed Sergeant Kennedy, a wounded and disarmed man, who begged to be spared for the sake of his wife and children.

Specious arguments by which Ned Kelly and his criminal relations endeavoured to justify this inhuman deed, carried no conviction. Mistaken writers, dramatists and film producers have invested the Kellys and their deeds with a glamour they do not deserve.