

Chapter IV Marriage to Mary Harris

1923 - 1924



Letters and Diaries Before Marriage Walker Commission

These letters and diary entries begin in the fall of 1923 when Bill Browne becomes engaged to Mary Harris. Their relationship was sometimes strained and one source of great friction was the animosity between Bill and Agnes Tobin, who was Mary's aunt and guardian. Bill was often bad tempered and petulant and, at times, it was difficult to understand what would have attracted Mary to him. Mrs. Tobin, no doubt, had concerns about this man from Casey Street whose family had neither the money nor the social standing of the Harris family. In addition, Mary's relationship with her Aunt was at times difficult due to issues regarding Mary's father's estate.

As Assistant Clerk in the House of Assembly, Bill Browne had an excellent vantage point from which to observe the tumultuous events of the legislative session which closed in August of 1923. Considerable financial irregularities in the operation of government came to light, including allegations of payments made to Prime Minister Richard Squires, who was forced to resign, and wrongdoing in the Department of Agriculture and Mines of which Dr. Alexander

Campbell was Minister. William Warren¹ became Prime Minister and soon decided to investigate the scandals. Prime Minister Warren requested that the British Government make an appointment for an inquiry and T. Hollis Walker, K. C. was duly appointed, the terms of the Commission issued in December, with the Commission opening in January 1924 in the Legislative Council Chamber.

The Commission investigated allegations that Prime Minister Squires received approximately \$20,000.00 from Mr. T. Meaney, acting controller of the Board of Liquor Control, arranged by Prime Minister Squires' secretary, Miss Jean Miller. Furthermore, Prime Minister Squires was alleged to have received \$40,000.00+ from the Dominion Iron & Steel Company arranged by Miss Miller's brother, James Miller, who was employed by the company. The allegations against Dr. Campbell, well known as a ready source of "scrips" for liquor, concerned the use of public funds for electioneering and the mismanagement of government departments, resulting in a huge waste of public funds.²

The Commissioner's subsequent report resulted in criminal proceedings against both Sir Richard Squires and Dr. Alex Campbell, although neither were found guilty of the charges.³

¹ William Robertson Warren (1879 - 1927), the son of W. H. Warren and Jessie Harvey, was educated at Bishop Feild College in Newfoundland and Framlingham College in England, studying law in Newfoundland with Sir William Whiteway and Honourable George Johnson. He was admitted to the Bar in 1902 and shortly thereafter was elected to the Newfoundland House of Assembly. He was a long serving Member of the House and also served as Speaker, Minister of Justice, Attorney General, and, for a brief time (1923-1924), as Prime Minister. Not long before his death at the age of forty-eight, he was appointed to the Supreme Court of Newfoundland. William Warren is remembered as a man of integrity who called for an inquiry into the corruption of Squires, Campbell and others in 1923, but who was unable to maintain sufficient political support for a broader investigation. "The Passing of Hon Mr. Justice Warren," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 3 Jan. 1928: 4 and "Supreme Court Expresses Sympathy," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 9 Jan. 1928: 6 and "Warren, William Robertson," *Dictionary of Newfoundland and Labrador Biography*.

² Browne, *Eighty-Four Years*, 118-119.

³ Browne, *Eighty-Four Years*, 120.

42 Rennie's Mill Road
City.

Dearest Bill,

This is the first time that I'm
thinking of you after
afternoon as I was out
as I told me that
I arrived
and did
order what
upper till 9.30
have it alone when
the day again and told me the
sad news happened you Bill dear? Are
you feeling very miserable? Honestly, if I
ever had any faith in Doctor Fallon I've lost
every atom of it now, because I believe it's
his fault that you have not been well since
the operation.

Bill, if I possibly can manage it, I shall
be up to see you tomorrow, but I have my
doubts because Sheila and I have to collect

William J. Browne Esq.
89 Carey Street,
St. John's
City.



Dearest Bill,

This is just to let you know that I'm thinking of you all the time and worrying too. This afternoon when Mary Kelly telephoned I was out and our brainy (?) maid forgot to tell me that someone had rung me up. So, when I arrived in from prayers ten minutes late and did not find you here I began to wonder what had happened. I waited supper till 9.30 and then proceeded to have it alone when the faithful Mary rang again and told me the sad news. What happened [to] you Bill dear? Are you feeling very miserable? Honestly, if I ever had any faith in Dr. Fallon I've lost every atom of it now, because I believe it's his fault that you have not been well since the operation.

Bill, if I possibly can manage it, I shall be up to see you tomorrow, but I have my doubts because Sheila and I have to collect the money for the Convent in the morning and afternoon and I promised to go to the Nickel with her in the evening. However, if I don't manage to see you tomorrow I certainly shall on Tuesday if you are not better by then. I wonder what I could make that would tempt your appetite? If your poor throat is "all inflamed" as M. Kelly puts it, I guess you're not in the mood for eating anything. She told me you are "very bad" and won't be out for three or four days. When I heard that it made my heart turn crosswise. Do hurry up and get really well. I miss you tonight and I'm really lonely without you. Tomorrow morning I shall offer my Mass and Communion for your dear sake. I went around quite blithely all day; if I had known your condition I wouldn't have been quite so carefree.

I want this letter (or rather note) to be posted tonight so it will reach you tomorrow morning so goodnight dearest.

Je vous aime.

Mary

E de M.⁴

Convent of the Sacred Heart
Halifax N. S.
Oct. 2nd 1923.

Dearest Bill,

It was so good to see you at the wharf on Saturday (though only at a distance) that I must thank you for coming before proceeding any further. This morning, to my great delight my telegram arrived, and it assured me that you were thinking of me, as I am of you continually.

⁴ Mary signed her letters with E de M., "Enfant de Marie" - "Child of Mary" - or member of the Sodality of the graduating class. See Karen Grandy and Roseanne LeBlanc, eds., *See She Stands - 150 Years of Sacred Heart Memories* (Lockport, N. S., : Community Books) 9.

The passage up was not by any means rough but nevertheless I was ill most of the time - not actively, but squeamish. The first night we were almost swamped because the porthole was open and the water came in wholesale. I went to dinner the first night and enjoyed it, but at breakfast the next morning I was forced to make a hasty exit before the meal was half over. Betty was a wonderful sailor all the time, and she was most attentive to my wants.

I did not see our friend Mr. Merchie (doubtful spelling) from the time he reached the boat until we landed in Halifax (thanks the Lord!).

Yesterday when we arrived it was a most miserable day. I don't think I've ever seen such rain anywhere. However that did not prevent Marge from coming to meet me. Betty came out to the Convent with me, on the nuns' invitation, and we had dinner together. Reverend Mother wanted her to stay overnight but she had already promised to go to Mrs. Martin's. My welcome here was wonderful and Betty said my procession to my room was like an obstacle race. On the way to it I met ten nuns who embraced me warmly and welcomed me so cordially. In my room was a little card with "Welcome Home" on it, also a big vase of flowers.

Yesterday I did not have a single minute free for writing and as it is this letter has had no less than four interruptions.

Congratulations on your victory in the Prohibition case. I'm so glad to hear of it, because I was wondering how it would get on.

This is a most glorious day here, warm and sunshiny. I've been up since a quarter to seven and I went to the Station to see Betty off.

This afternoon I am going out with Helen O'Connor and this morning I spent listening to Mother Barette playing the organ for an hour, then singing for her, then I was talking to Margaret Lahey for a long time. Mother Turgeon, the new Mistress General, is simply sweet and she has been just as nice to me as if I had known her always. So you see the return is coming up to my highest expectations.

I must tell you about Aunt Agnes. I informed her about half an hour before leaving the house that twenty dollars was not enough for me to spend in Halifax so she fussed and fumed for a long time and finally relented a little and gave me twenty more. So I had to be satisfied with that.

What have you been doing with yourself since I left? I'm longing to have a letter from you to hear all about your adventures. I've told you all I've done so you shall have to do likewise eh?

Marge is so glad to have me that she is just at my beck and call. I went downstairs yesterday for half an hour or so, and when I came back I found my valise unpacked and everything in its place.

I think I shall have to bid you goodbye for the present, but I shall write again the day after tomorrow.

Much much love

From

Mary E de M.

Convent of the Sacred Heart
Spring Garden Road.
Halifax, Oct. 4th 1923

Dearest Bill,

By rights I should wait to hear from you before writing again, but patience is not my predominant virtue. I'm hoping to get a letter today, but maybe I won't after all my expectations.

It is simply lovely here, in every way, the weather included. Yesterday I did not go out to the city because one of the girls came out to see me and stayed all day. We talked and talked until we were about hoarse.

You know the stockings of mine with the brown and fawn blocks? Well, I wore them yesterday and the nuns almost expired when they saw them, as they thought them most peculiar.

This afternoon I am going out and I am going to Birks, so the next time I write I shall tell you about the rings and whether I like them or not. And then ...?

How are you and what have you been doing with yourself? I think of you a lot and I'm longing to get your first letter. No, it won't be the first either. I had a note from you once before and c'est tout. It was just a business note though.

Have you seen Mrs. Sullivan⁵ lately? She felt very bad about Betty's departure so I hear. Remember me to her won't you?

It's almost lunch time now so I shall have to call a halt, but I simply couldn't let the day go by without even a few lines to you.

Much much love dearest

From

Mary E de M.

⁵ Selina (Browne) Sullivan (c.1846 - 1932) was Bill's aunt, with whom he had a close relationship. Seline Browne was from Presque, Newfoundland and became the first student of St. Clare's Boarding School when it opened in St. John's in 1861. Selina and her husband Patrick had two sons: Michael who had represented the District of Placentia and St. Mary's in the Newfoundland House of Assembly and Thomas who had been the Magistrate at Presque. Selina also had a daughter, Laura McDonald, later of Montreal. From Bill Browne's recollections his Aunt Selina was a very interesting woman who had a wide variety of interests including politics for which she had considerable political understanding, and mining - although she held grants on two or three mines, she was unable to realize her plan to mine them. At the time of Selina's death there was a search in progress for her pilot grandson, Arthur Sullivan, missing and later presumed dead as the result of an accident while flying near St. Anthony, Newfoundland. Selina lived on Bonaventure Avenue in St. John's, near Betty's McGrath's home. See Sister M. Williamina Hogan, *Pathways of Mercy in Newfoundland* (St. John's, Nfld.: Harry Cuff Publications Limited, 1986) 51-53 and Browne, *Eighty-Four Years* 105-107 and "Death of Grandmother of Missing Aviator," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Newfoundland] 9 June 1932: 4 and "No Tidings Missing Plane and Occupants," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Newfoundland] 7 June 1932: 4.

Convent of the Sacred Heart.
Halifax, Oct. 9th, 1923.

Dearest Bill,

You really don't deserve a letter because already I've written twice and I've not had one line from you. However I am writing just a short note this morning to show that there is no ill feeling!

A few days ago I went to Birks and looked at the rings and I was very well satisfied with them. The particular one I wanted they had not got in stock, so they have sent to Montreal for it. It will be here in about a week's time, so now I'm waiting to get the money (\$250.00) so that I can have the ring safe and sound in my own hands.

Yesterday morning I was out shopping and I met Mollie St. John. She told me she had seen you at the boat and that you had sent me "your best." Thank you very much.

I'm living on a very reduced income just now. I've got ten dollars to last me two weeks, and I don't dare ask Aunt Agnes for any more. If I do she'll give me such a hot reception when I come home that it won't be pleasant. My! She makes me mad she's so stingy. I don't know how I'm going to manage, but there's no use worrying about it or bothering you with my pecuniary difficulties.

I've bought a new coat and new hat which I'm sure you will like. I won't describe them to you, but I'll let them be a surprise. Saturday Marge and I were out all day together. We had lunch in the city and then we went to show called *Alias Nora O'Brien*. There wasn't much to it but it was quite amusing. This afternoon I'm going to see Booth Tarkington's *Seventeen* with Margaret Lahey and on Sunday I'm going over to Dartmouth to spend a few days with her.

I haven't heard from Betty yet so I have not been able to write her since I don't know her address.

I think of you by night and by day and wonder what you are doing. I got a sweet little book of Marjorie Pickthall's poems (the author of *Duna*⁶). I'm sure you will like them when you read them.

Au revoir and please write soon.

Yours as ever

Mary E de M.

⁶ "When I was a little lad
With folly on my lips,
Fain was I for journeying
All the seas in ships..."

See, for example Marjorie Pickthall, *The Selected Poems of Marjorie Pickthall*, ed. Lorne Pierce (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1957) 43.

CLASS OF SERVICE	SYMBOL
Day Message	
Day Letter	Blue
Night Message	Nite
Night Letter	N L

If none of these three symbols appears after the check (number of words) this is a day message. Otherwise its character is indicated by the symbol appearing after the check.

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Day Letter	Blue
Night Message	Nite
Night Letter	N L

If none of these three symbols appears after the check (number of words) this is a day message. Otherwise its character is indicated by the symbol appearing after the check.

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HALIFAX NS 556PM OCT 10 1923

WILLIAM J BROWNE

1923 OCT 10 PM 7 07

89 CASEY ST STJOHNS NF

HAVE ORDERED RING SEND MONEY IMMEDIATELY LETTER FOLLOWING LOVE

MARY

703PM



HALIFAX NS 556PM OCT 10 1923

William J. Browne
89 CASEY ST ST JOHNS NF

1923 Oct 10 PM 7 07

HAVE ORDERED RING SEND MONEY IMMEDIATELY LETTER FOLLOWING
LOVE

MARY
703 PM

11. or a.m.

Oct 11/23.

P.O.B. 1326.

St. J. N. 7.

Mary darling,
I was beginning to wonder whether you
had made up your mind to become a
religion again and you will see from
my previous letter how gloomy I was. I have
been so lonely that at times I was absolutely
miserable. I just missed your telegram last
night by a couple of minutes as I did not
see it until about 10.15 p.m. when I returned
from Allandale Rd. I cheered me up
considerably and I am sending you a draft
now to cover cost of the ring which I am sure
you like. Miss Lewis ring is not a solitaire
It has 7 stones. You may also be interested
to learn that Harold contemplates marriage this
coming winter and will probably live on
Military Road!

I have only had one letter from you yet
and this is my third but I expect at least
two to-day i.e. if your butterfly fingers
did not prevent your writing half an hour or
you promised. I have just time to tell
you that I was down to 42 R. in Rd on
Monday. Margaret & Alice went to the play &

Oct 11/23
P.O.B. 1336
St. J. N.F.

Mary darling,

I was beginning to wonder whether you had made up your mind to become a religious again and you will see from my previous letter how gloomy I was. I have been so lonely that at times I was absolutely miserable. I just missed your telegram last night by a couple of minutes and did not see it until about 10.15 p.m. when I returned from Allandale Road. It cheered me up considerably and I am sending you a draft now to cover cost of the ring which I am sure you like. Miss Coen's ring is not a solitaire. It has seven stones. You may also be interested to learn that Harold contemplates marriage this coming winter and will probably live on Military Road!

I have only had one letter from you yet and this is my third but I expect at least two to-day i. e. if your butterfly propensities do not prevent your writing half as often as you promised. I have just time to tell you that I was down to 42 Rennie's Mill Road on Tuesday. Margaret and Alice went to the play and I stayed in with Mrs. Tobin. Then Mrs. A.F. came along. I am taking both of them for a ride to-night. The weather is magnificent at present.

I have a good deal of work on hand at present, I am thankful to say, but as times are very dull I do not think the future looks very rosy.

My cold has not disappeared yet. You will excuse the ragged appearance of my letter when you know that I am in a desperate hurry to get to the Bank and the Post Office before 11.30 a.m.

With all my love
Your loving
Bill

Convent of the Sacred Heart
Halifax, October 13th./23

Bill my dear love,

At last two letters have come to delight my heart, and I'm so glad that one of mine has at length reached you. Two others are either on their way or in St. John's by this time. Everything you told me interested me deeply and I read your letter again and again to make sure I had skipped nothing. The mails must have been in a frightful condition because both of us seemed to be wondering why the other had not written. That's not very well put I'm afraid, but you know what I mean don't you dearest?

Some of the nuns have heard from I don't know who, that I am engaged and they are delighted about it. I have told Reverend Mother, Mother Turgeon and Madame McDermott and they are all unanimous in their approval. Reverend Mother said "Mary, you would never stand the religious life so I am glad that you are to have a good Catholic husband to make you very happy."

Monsignor Foley, a great friend of mine, told me not to think of entering again⁷. He said my vocation is the married life and that's what the Lord wants me to do. He said that when God took away my health He did not do it in a haphazard way, but with the intention of showing me that I was not meant to be a nun. He said too, "I never thought you were cut out for a nun anyway." When I told Madame McDermott his opinion she said, "The clergy will be Bill's friends forever." She has reached the stage when she calls you "Bill" now. So, I'm happy and my mind is at rest, you're happy and we're all happy eh?

I would be much more so if my pocket book was not so empty. Five dollars is the extent of my wealth at present. Darn Aunt Agnes anyway!

I'd love to have seen *All of a Sudden Peggy*. It must have been good. So, Maria Hutton really did well. She is crazy to go on the stage you know.⁸

I had a letter from Betty yesterday. She has had a furious siege of homesickness, but is over it now. She says Jack's home is beautiful and he's teaching her to drive his car. She told

⁷ Rt. Reverend Monsignor William Foley (18 -1926), frequently referred to as Dr. Foley, was a much loved Halifax priest. He was born in Halifax, attended old St. Mary's College and then studied at Laval University where he received a Doctor of Divinity. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1889. While he spent nine years serving in Wedgeport, then Parrsboro, Nova Scotia, the remainder of his priesthood was spent in Halifax where he was best known as Rector of St. Mary's Cathedral, now St. Mary's Basilica. Rather unusually, Monsignor Foley was chosen as bishop in 1906, but this decision of the advisory council was over turned by Pope Pius X. While Monsignor Foley was considered a scholar and writer who was especially interested in education, he was best known and loved in Halifax for the warm, caring manner in which he related to others, regardless of religion or income or education. Karen White, Archivist and Librarian, Archdiocese of Halifax, e-mail to the author, 20 Sept. 2001 and "Community Mourns for Late Prelate," *Halifax Herald* [Halifax, Nova Scotia] 7 June 1926: 1 and Dr. J. D. Logan, "With Charity Towards All," *Halifax Herald* [Halifax, Nova Scotia] 7 June 1926: 5 and "A Prince Has Fallen This Day," *Halifax Herald* [Halifax, Nova Scotia] 7 June 1926: 5 and "Monsignor Foley," *Halifax Herald* [Halifax, Nova Scotia] 7 June 1926: 6.

⁸ Maria Hutton was the daughter of Newfoundlander Charles Hutton (1861-1949). Charles Hutton had a long and distinguished career in St. John's as a musician. He was organist at the Catholic Cathedral for more than sixty years, taught, operated a music store, and organized musical productions in St. John's. He was honoured by the Catholic Church for his work and also received the Order of the British Empire. This was Maria Hutton's first theatrical performance in St. John's. Maria Hutton, whose married name was Pigot later lived in Halifax, N. S. See "All-of-a-Sudden Peggy," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 9 Oct.1923: 4 and "Death of Most Noted Musician," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 2 Feb. 1949: 3.

about Jim Conroy on the way up and I couldn't suppress my gurgles of surprise!⁹ Her mother is quite upset about it (or was).

This day week will be Old Pupils' Day and great preparations for it are taking place. I'm helping in all the singing. In the afternoon at the Entertainment I'm going to sing *Nursery Rhymes* and *Break Break Break* and at Benediction the Ave Maria I sang in the church that Sunday. All the old pupils I meet seem to be getting new dresses for the occasion. Reverend Mother Mahony, one of the first pupils of this House, and Mother Padberg are here from Montreal for the occasion.

Tomorrow I'm going over to Dartmouth to stay with Margaret Lahey until Thursday. I saw *Seventeen* with her on Wednesday. We both laughed so much at it that I'm sure people near us thought we had softening of the brain!

I guess Maria Gomez will appear in all her glory on Monday. Too bad I won't be here to see her.

The woods around here are simply marvellous. Yesterday I was motoring with Helen O'Connor and we went way beyond Bedford. I never saw anything so pretty as the reflection of the trees in their vari-coloured robes, in the smooth, sun-lit surface of Bedford Basin.

Thank you a thousand times for the telegram announcing that you have sent the draft. I think the ring will be very pretty. At any rate I'm satisfied with it, and I think you will be, so what else matters?

Four of the girls from here have gone to Dalhousie this year, and two others are taking their M.A. this year, one in Economics and the other in Shakespeare. Both are friends of mine. There is a wonderful new women's residence called "Sheriff Hall" and I'm going out to see it someday next week.

I'm so glad you have purchased some new books to feed your mind for a month. I got another one of Marjorie Pickthall's books yesterday. I just love her poems. She is not a Catholic but one would think she was, to read her poems. She must have had a very beautiful and a very spiritual mind to write as she did. I'm hoping you will like her poems too. I never know exactly whether your taste in literature coincides with mine or not.

⁹James O'Neill Conroy (1900 -1931) was the eldest son and one of the eight children of Charles O'Neill Conroy and Mary Agnes Weathers. He graduated from St. Bonaventure's College, St. Edmunds College, England and, along with Bill Browne, was enrolled as a Solicitor of Newfoundland in October of 1922. He married Betty McGrath in 1926 and they had two children - a son Charles who became a priest and a daughter Margie who became a nun, both of whom were to become well known missionaries. He was Solicitor for the city of St. John's for a number of years. Shortly before his death Jim and his father Charles established the law practice of Conroy and Conroy; Jim's place in the firm was later taken over by his widow. Bill Browne described his friend Jim as "a great reader being exceptionally well informed on public matters here and abroad, as well as possessing great literary ability...he was most devoted to the country's welfare, particularly to the city of St. John's...he had a gift for friendship and although modest and retiring he was beloved by many and respected by all who knew him." See "Death Comes Suddenly to Young Lawyer" and "Expressions of Regret at Magistrate's Court," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Newfoundland] 12 May 1931: 4 and "Obituary," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 21 December 1946: 3.

I dreamt about you all night and it was a very pleasant dream too. You are not very often away from my thoughts although you will not believe this when I tell you I'm sure!

Yesterday Mother Turgeon handed me your letter and she was beaming all over. She said "this will make you happy as it looks like a gentleman's handwriting."

The filling fell out of Marge's tooth last night at supper and she has to go to the Dentist in a few minutes and as I am to accompany her I had better say au revoir to you dearest.

Ever your affectionate

Mary E de M.

Give my love to your Mother.

P. O. B. 1336

St. John's

N.F.

Oct 14 . 23

My dear Mary,

I have your third letter of date October 10th, which is sufficient evidence to convict you of breaking your promise to write every two days. I can understand however the temptations strewn before you, and how difficult it must be for you to write at all in such holy ground as that upon which you have been. You seem to have lost all account of what St. John's represents or is, except as far as your pet aversion is concerned. Nor do you seem frightfully enthusiastic about the rings you saw. Of course you expressed yourself as "very well satisfied with them" - whatever you mean thereby. I hope that the one which they did not have in stock came up to your expectations. If it does not, I hope you won't be foolish enough to take it.

I have forgotten as soon as I put pen to paper all the things I intended to say. For, unlike your leisurely letters, *I must write*¹⁰ in a hurry. It is 10.35 a.m. Sunday. I have to go to 11.00 a.m. Mass, go back to Holy Cross School for a meeting and post the letter at the train before 1 p.m. You will see that such a program forbids thought.

However, my bookcase ordered from Little Falls N.Y. has arrived in good condition. I spent the whole morning trying to get it through the Customs. It looks very nice and I shall probably take it with me into "our" house. It is now occupying a corner of the room and is filled with books - looking quite learned.

I took your Aunt, Mrs. A.F. and Mrs. Murphy for a drive. Besides I was down there to see them a couple of nights before.

I offered you money the day you were going and you would not take it, so you have yourself to blame for being short. I'm sure your Aunt did not want you to go to Halifax and I did not either. If you must go "gadding around" you should be sure to have enough of money to see you through. However I am not worrying since I know you have lots of friends there - and that nothing on earth would keep you from visiting the place. You may know that your visit has

¹⁰ Translated from the French

given rise to much speculation here - some think you have gone to enter, others to make a novena or retreat to give you grace to decide etc., all of which is very interesting.

The weather here is most charming - the best for months. This afternoon I am taking the Brothers of Mount St. Francis for a spin. However, I fear it a little as my poor neck (about which you seem quickly to have forgotten) is still troubling me.

Judging by your letters you seem to be in excellent spirits. I hope you received the draft for \$250.00 in my previous letter. Au revoir.

Bill

P.O.B. 1336
St. John's N.F.
Oct. 15/1923

Dearest Mary,

I believe that I am more than fulfilling my contract as I promised only to answer your letters, and to-day's express did not bring me any message from you. I was disappointed as I expected an acknowledgment of one of my letters and certainly of my telegram of the 11th instant. I should not write you therefore except that my letter of yesterday was a very hurried affair, as you could easily see, and that I find it a very pleasant occupation after a strenuous day to write to you. I must do what I forgot to do when I wrote to you yesterday and that is to tell you how pleased I was to know that you thought of me by night and by day. It is only what I've been doing in regard to you. I have been longing for you ever since you left, and I cannot tell you how much I miss you and how much I think of you.

Yesterday morning I was at 11.00 a.m. Mass, posted the letter at the train and then scooted to Holy Cross to get in my say about the dinner which is being tendered the Holy Cross team who won the Junior League trophy this year. I had the satisfaction, after listening to a lot of desultory argument, of proposing a motion which was accepted by the people there. The dinner will probably be held early next week.

After dinner, I took Brothers Egan, O'Hare and Aherne for a motor drive. You can imagine whose face filled my mind during the afternoon when I tell you that we went to Seal Cove and had tea at Miss Coates or whatever her name is - the lady of the "yawd". All the old familiar objects looked at me with reproach. I'm sure our chatty hostess was surprised. We walked across the fields and along the track before tea and talked baseball, economics, and other subjects of an impersonal nature. The weather was absolutely perfect - it was probably the finest day of the summer, and you know the autumn woods are the most beautiful in our country. When will you come with me again? We came out in little less than an hour - at the Monastery gate at 7.00 p.m.

I said I had a busy day. I was speaking to Mr. Foote¹¹ the other day and he promised to speak to Mr. Summers, Deputy Minister of Justice, about me. This morning the latter sent for me and employed me to collect \$3500 for the famous Department of Agriculture and Mines. That is promising, anyhow, as there is a good deal of work in prospect.

I am quite busy and I'm feeling tired to-night. How I should love to be with you - here.

I am very glad to hear you talk of coming home again. Will you be coming on the *Rosalind*? If so, my next letter will probably be the last I shall have to write you - which was another reason I decided to write to night. Except your first letter, the other two were very short and I don't think you can blame me for the strange tone of mine. I am looking forward to see your new hat and coat - upon which you spent so much money.

There was another accident yesterday at the blind corner by the park as shown [diagram omitted]. Route of cars was [diagram omitted]. T. Hallett's car and Chaplin's were engaged. I expect the Council will soon take notice of the matter.

There are nominations in Fogo, St. George's and Harbour Main to-day for the bye-elections, the only contest being in Harbour Main where the Honourable M.E. Hawco¹² will be opposed by an Independent candidate J.J. St. John. I do not think the latter will be elected, but a lot of circumstances do not favour Hawco. But, as I do not wish to permit this letter to become a newspaper, and as you have frequently intimated to me your aversion to politics, etc. I shall say goodnight hoping that you have been enjoying yourself at Dartmouth and that the wild life of Halifax is not having a disastrous effect on your pink cheeks.

Did you get the ring yet? If you did, I hope that you like it.

With all my love

Yours only forever

Bill

¹¹ Samuel (Sam) J. Foote, (1873-1936) was a St. John's lawyer who was then a member of the Newfoundland House of Assembly (representing Burin) and Minister without portfolio. In July of 1923 Sam Foote was one of four members of the cabinet who demanded that Dr. Alex Campbell resign from cabinet for improper behavior. When Dr. Campbell did not resign, Sam Foote and the three others resigned instead, leading to the fall of the Richard Squires Government. Sam Foote was heavily involved in the development of the pulp and paper industry in Corner Brook and was the first government director of the Newfoundland Power and Paper Company. See "Foote, Samuel J.," *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador*, vol. 2, 1967 and "Foote, Samuel J.," *Dictionary of Newfoundland and Labrador Biography*, 1990.

¹² Mathew Edgar Hawco (1882-1962) was born in Newfoundland but moved to the United States where he was educated and worked for a time. For a number of years he was employed as an engineer overseeing harbour construction on the Great Lakes and, in 1918, he returned to Newfoundland as a marine superintendent. Mathew Hawco had a brief political career (1923 and 1924), serving during that time as Minister of Posts and Telegraphs, in which position he was able to institute significant improvements. In 1937 he was appointed Magistrate in Holyrood, Newfoundland. Mathew Hawco defeated John St. John in this 1923 bye election with one newspaper giving the final count as Hawco 817, St. John 438. See "Hr. Main Bye Election," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 26 October 1923:7 and "Hawco, Mathew E.," *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador*, vol. 2, 1967.

Convent of the Sacred Heart
Spring Garden Road
Halifax, N.S.
Oct. 16th. 1923.

My darling Bill,

I've just returned from Dartmouth where I've been since Sunday with Margaret Lahey and I found a letter dated the 11th waiting for me. By this time you will be well assured that I have no intentions of becoming a religious as you feared. I wrote you on Saturday and hope you have received the letter by this time. I'm awfully sorry I haven't written oftener but sometimes it's absolutely impossible to write because people think they have to be sociable and leave me very few spare minutes to myself.

I also must say a very heartfelt "Thanks" for the draft so promptly sent - just like you Bill, to be so expeditious and thoughtful. The ring has arrived and it's absolutely "scrumptious" - a "ring of rings"; I couldn't wish for anything nicer, except for the time when you dearest will put it on my finger. The diamond is lovely - large and brilliant - and I'm enraptured with the setting. I have shown it to no one yet, but I want Marge to see it before I go.

I must take back all I said about Aunt Agnes because when I wired her for some more money she sent me a draft for \$50.00 immediately, which I think was wonderful of her.

Two weeks from today I shall be leaving for home and then we shall have a happy happy meeting because as the old proverb says "Absence makes the heart grow fonder" and its true in our case, although you won't believe me when I tell you so, I'm thinking.

You have no idea how happy I am to have my mind settled on the question of marriage once and for all. Now I can look forward to loving you and making a happy cheerful home pro semper.¹³

I am enjoying my stay in a peculiar manner because I probably won't ever be here in this capacity again, so you understand dear, don't you?

I've made a few additions to my hope chest. This morning I got a cloth suitable for a table or for a bridge cloth. It is a lovely piece of linen.

I've been wondering lately how your throat is. You haven't said anything about it in any of your letters, so I presume it is quite well again. I have not forgotten about the neckties, and I hope to have some other souvenir of this visit to bring you.

For pity's sake don't get a cold driving, because if I am any judge of weather it must be rather cool in St. John's now. Have you been out around Broad Cove lately? It must be wonderful there now with the trees in their autumn dress.

How is Mrs. Sullivan? Remember me to her and to your Mother, dearest, please.

Every cute little house I see I think of what ours will be like. Land is much cheaper at home than here I think.

¹³ Pro semper is Latin meaning *for always*.

Well dear one I must say au revoir until tomorrow, and from this out I shall try to be a more regular correspondent.

All my love and a promise of many prayers for your health and success.

Mary E de M.

P.O.B. 1336
St. Johns N.F.
Oct 17/1923.

Mary dearest,

I think that after all I deserve more credit as a correspondent than do you. For this must be about the sixth letter I have written to the three that I have received. And whose fault is it that during your whole visit we cannot say that at any time was communication really established even once, for I did not receive yet a letter from you acknowledging one of mine, although I do expect one tomorrow. I expected a letter on Monday, but as you must have gone to Dartmouth at the time you should have written, I was the loser. - So much about nothing, or is it nothing? I expected, and I believe I was justified in expecting, fatter letters, for I often posted letters for you to your classmates or your religious friends that appeared to contain more than the three short letters you honoured me with put together.

I am expecting you home a week from to-morrow. I may say that it will be a trial to wait until then. Just imagine I have only had my car out once this week, and that to-night, although the weather is unique for October. I went to see Aunt Selina (who by the way has many little things to say and ask concerning you) to-night and after that went the following crazy but terribly lonely route down to Monkstown Road, via Circular to Rennie's Mill Road, Military Road, King's Bridge Road, Torbay Road, Robinson's Hill and back to Military Road and to home via Rennie's Mill Road. My car is running beautifully. I came up Robinson's Hill (city side) on top gear like a house on fire. That reminds me that to day I met a man who looks like this



driving a motor car at second gear who took me for a ride from McBride's Hill to the top of Garrison Hill. The gentleman chewed gum, and kept his foot on the brake and blew his horn plentifully. The noise was terrific. Could you guess his identity if I told you he was once a Captain?

Shortly afterwards I met Sheila¹⁴ who told me that Aunt Agnes had told her that you had wired that you were leaving for home on the 22nd and that you were on the rocks. After my telling Sheila that I too had often been stranded she told me "you'll make a nice pair." Madame McGrath has had letters from her daughter and I believe rejoices at the thought (received via Sheila) that I have only heard from you once. Shall I appear too much a gossip if I say that "she would not be surprised if you did not come back."

Why am I writing all this? Perhaps in the few days since your last letter you may have lost interest in such trivial mundane matters. Well, I write at all because this is the last letter that you will receive if you are to come home when I think you will.

I bought a very interesting book yesterday at Dick's and Company. It is called "From a College Window" and is written by A.C. Benson, a Cambridge don.¹⁵ It is a book of essays -

¹⁴ Sheila is Newfoundlander Sheila Mary Conroy (1904-2000), later (Mother) Sister Sheila Conroy of the Religious of the Sacred Heart. Sheila was the oldest daughter and one of eight children of lawyer Charles O'Neill Conroy and Mary Agnes Weathers. Both Sheila and Mary Harris had been students at the Convent of the Sacred Heart, Halifax, N.S. and returned to Newfoundland following their studies. Sheila entered the novitiate of the Religious of the Sacred Heart in New York State in 1926 and made her profession in 1935. She served in this religious community for more than fifty years as teacher, director of studies, superior, then provincial secretary. Sister Sheila Conroy was the aunt of Sister Margie Conroy (Sheila's brother, Jim McGrath, was Margie's father) of the same order. See "Sister Sheila Mary Conroy," *Primes Sacred Heart School Alumnae Newsletter*, 7.1 (2001): 4 and "Obituary, C. O'N. Conroy," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 21 December 1946: 3.

¹⁵ Arthur Christopher Benson, *From A College Window*, 4th ed. (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1908).

gentle, magnanimous jottings of a very likeable person. You will like it as well as I do if I am not mistaken and it is applicable to my own Oxford experiences as to Cambridge. He speaks of many things - of Books, of Conversation, of Art and Beauty and his style is well rounded and symmetrical with a good deal of rhythm in it. Imagine my vexation to-night to find that in the chapter on Conversation, there was a hiatus, and that page 72 fronted 105, so that I have lost half of his "Conversation" and half of his "Beauty" although I have been given 16 pages of "Art" twice. You may be sure I shall hasten to return this copy and demand a new one or an immediate reduction in the price.

I had a few words with S. E. Garland¹⁶ and am avoiding his store therefore for a while. He is very mean and I dislike mean people unutterably.

Mother wishes to torment me as she repeats "What a beautiful night for motoring." However the reflection will bring you peace for I can write no more after it. So I shall conclude hoping that you have enjoyed your holiday, that you will have a pleasant voyage, a safe return, and you need not worry about how welcome you will be to one person at least who loves you always.

Bill

P.O.B. 1336
St. John's N. F.
October 20, 1923

Mary dear,

My letters must appear like a thermometer with the fluctuations in their expression of buoyancy. I am in the depths again and principally because I learned from the lips of Mrs. Tobin last night that you were staying for a fortnight longer whilst your letter of the same date as her telegram only arrived with the sad news to-day. For you will see by my last letter that I was under the impression that you would be coming home on Thursday next. However I do not mind in the least although I believe you have had a good many things in your mind which you kept secret from me. If you are there you might as well stay as long as you please, I have since learned that you - once you make up your mind about an object - will stick it to the bitter end.

Please excuse my scolding way. I have not been very well since you left and it leaves me irritable and cranky - you know the humour I have.

I am glad you like the ring and that you got the draft promptly, also that your Aunt came across. I have conveyed your good wishes to Mrs. Sullivan and my Mother. Thank you for your prayers which I need spiritually and physically.

¹⁶ Samuel E. Garland (1864-1954) was a St. John's book seller who sold books, magazines, stationery or gifts in St. John's for more than sixty years. Mr. Garland twice had his shop destroyed by fire - the first time in the immense St. John's fire of 1892, and the second in 1908. For a brief time Mr. Garland published Newfoundland photographs and other material and, in the 1920's, dealt in rare Newfoundland books. Samuel Garland married twice and had six children. "Garland, Samuel E.," *Dictionary of Newfoundland and Labrador Biography*, 1990 and "S. E. Garland Died Yesterday," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 29 Dec. 1954: 3

The weather here is absolutely horribly unseasonable. It was stifling hot to-day and last night I could not sleep from the heat - and from a pain in my neck from driving at night. Last night I took your Aunt and two of her friends to Manuels. She sits in the front with me so we have long chats about distant friends.

It is to two letters that this disagreeable note is attempting to respond. I received a letter from you on Thursday and one to-day but there is always an extraordinary disagreement between the date you put on the letter and that which the Post Office puts. I have not missed a mail, so far, although if I had not had your letter to-night I should not have written you.

I expect to go to Confession to-night, although I should prefer to go to bed. I'm sorry that I did not accept the invitation from the President of the American Humane Association and go to New York to their Conference as a representative from here. May God give me patience, for such things as migrating to Bermuda have been working on my mind.

I have as yet told no one (practically) of our engagement but it is impossible for me to keep it a secret when you've told all the nuns and priests in Nova Scotia. I'm afraid lest Mrs. Sullivan hears it second hand and gets vexed with me.

Please don't trouble yourself to bring me anything. It was very unreasonable for me to expect anything - but I did not think you would have so little money for yourself. So forget all about me except to bring yourself along soon, so that I may be cured by your promised love.

Bill



J. Matthews, 1979.¹⁷

Convent of the Sacred Heart
Halifax N.S. Oct. 21st 1923.

My darling Bill,

Another of your dear letters came on Friday and I'm now two days in your debt. If you had seen me that day though, you would have excused me from letter writing. All morning I was in town with Mary Ryan shopping for the nuns and all afternoon I was in the pantry cutting up and washing celery, shredding chicken and polishing glasses. Then too I was helping with the decorations for "the great day" - yesterday. It certainly was a lovely day from beginning to end, and it made me prouder than ever to be a pupil of the Sacred Heart. About two hundred were here from all parts of the province and even from Montreal.

The first thing on the programme was a business meeting at which many things pertaining to the Alumnae were discussed. This was followed by a lunch, and such a lunch that I

¹⁷ Used by permission of the artist. www.JudyMatthewsArtist.com
Ms Mathews advised (2018) that the print has recently been re-introduced.

think I shall have to tell you the menu. We had soup, chicken patties, Roast meat, potatoes, asparagus, salted almonds, pickles, olives, fruit salad, preserved strawberries and cream pudding, ice cream cake, coffee, nuts and raisins, fruit and candy. Don't you think that was a wonderful lunch for the nuns to give us. After lunch there was an Entertainment the programme of which I am sending you. It was awfully nice too. Then we had afternoon tea and the last thing was Benediction given by the Archbishop. The Old Pupils sang it and the Te Deum brought the end of a perfect day. It was delightful to hear the old old ladies telling their reminiscences of school days and to see their heartfelt loyalty to this House.

Last night the Oxford-Dalhousie Debate took place and of course I couldn't go. I was awfully sorry to miss it but it couldn't possibly be helped. The girls said it promised to be good and I shall find out this afternoon who won because I am going out to tea with Eileen Burns a Dalhousie graduate.

The weather still keeps beautifully fine as I hope it will continue to do until I depart. It's been a wonderful month altogether. Tomorrow I am going to lunch with Mrs. (Dr) Tobin (Mrs. Mare's sister).

I look at the ring a hundred times a day and wish for the time when I can wear it before the world in general as a sign that I am your future bride.

That was a good piece of news about your job of collecting \$3500 for the government. Keep on Bill dearest and you will reach the top some day.

This afternoon at Benediction I am going to sing the "Ave Maria" I sang in the Cathedral.

Have you heard anything of Betty lately? Has the romance between her and Jim Conroy progressed any, I wonder?

It was awfully good of you to take Aunt Agnes for a drive. Now, thank goodness, she will never be able to say again that no one ever asks her to go motoring. Of course she never could say that about you because you asked her several times.

Yesterday, a year ago, I entered Kenwood. I couldn't help thinking of it and of all the things that can happen in one short year. Isn't it wonderful how the Lord works things out in a way that we never expect.

How is Mrs. Sullivan? and your Mother? Please remember me most kindly to both, won't you? Au revoir dearest, and all my love

Yours always

Mary E de M.

Monday morning.

Dearest one,

I wrote yesterday but kept the letter hoping you would have written Thursday so I would get the letter today - and my hopes were realized. Last week I wrote two long letters which you must have received by this time, so I hope you are consoled a little. This morning when yours arrived I couldn't open it quick enough because it seemed ages since I heard from you although it is really only three days! Aunt Agnes must have misunderstood my wire because I telegraphed

last Tuesday the 15th and said “staying two weeks longer” that means I shall leave on the 30th. I’m sorry darling that I won’t be home sooner but I can’t possibly leave tomorrow. First of all the girls give the lay-sisters a holiday once a year and it falls on this Thursday and they have asked me to give a concert for them that night, so I could not say “no” because they have been so good to me. I feel awfully guilty about staying but then I don’t know when I’ll be here again.

Bill dearest, I wish Mrs. McG. would mind her own business. You know I love you, and I know I do, and nothing or no one would keep me here for good now. So there! Goodbye till the day after tomorrow, and much much love

From

Yours always

Mary E deM.

P.O.B. 1336
St. John’s N. F.
Oct. 24/23

My darling Mary,

Please understand that I write from love alone for I have no letter to answer. I would not write on Tuesday from half vexation but I must write for tomorrow’s mail since it will be the last, thank God. Please remember, therefore, that I shall accept no excuses for any further prolongation of your stay, although, truth to tell, now that I am convalescent I am finding means of enjoyment that formerly I shunned. I have missed you terribly because you know that my men companions are not in this city. Is it not hard therefore when I must shun the ladies and have no men to chat with in conversation for this terrible loss?

So, having been to confession on Saturday night and Communion Sunday and Monday (I tell you this in order to let you know I have not gone to the devil altogether, and that Dr. Kitchen¹⁸ told me my life was pretty good except ---), I have taken to poetry. I find it quite difficult but

¹⁸ William Phillip Hogan Kitchen (1879-1946) was a St. John’s priest, then serving as Rector of St. Patrick’s Parish in St. John’s. William Kitchen was born in St. John’s to Thomas Kitchen and Mary Josephine Hogan. In 1896, following his early school years at St. Patrick’s Hall and St. Bonaventure’s College, he left Newfoundland to study for the priesthood, first in France at the Sulpician Seminary and then at the University Seminary of Louvain in Belgium. In addition to his theological degree, he received a doctoral degree in philosophy and, in 1902, he was ordained to the priesthood in Belgium. Father Kitchen continued his scholarly writings throughout his life and his work was widely published. In 1907 Father Kitchen was appointed to the new parish of St. Joseph’s in St. John’s where he built a Convent and Church. Father Kitchen was then assigned as Rector of St. Patrick’s Parish in 1921. In 1925 he received the title “Monsignor” and in 1932 was made Vicar General of the Archdiocese and administrator of the Cathedral Parish. In his obituary he is referred to as a man of “gentle, fatherly, disposition ... especially in the Confessional as evidenced by the crowds of penitents around his Box.” See “The Church Mourns Passing Rt. Rev. W. P. H. Kitchin,” *The Monitor* vol. 13, no.9 (Sept. 1946)1 and “RT. Rev. W. P. Kitchin, Ph.D., D. P.,” *St. Bonaventure’s Adelphian* vol. 19, no. 6

I am encouraged to continue my labours by one of Mr. A. C. Benson's essays in which he tells us that the writing of poetry is the royal road to the writing of mellifluous and luscious (and all the other desirable adjectives) prose. Do you notice any improvement in this letter? If you do, I don't. But listen to the poetry. Here I sink.

The muse says:

Yellow are the leaves when autumn holds her court
But the spruces and the firs never loose their needles green
The berries have turned red for the little birds to eat
When the sun is in a hurry to leave the pleasant scene.
Fair is the moon and cold is her light
And pale is the mist that hangs o'er the lonely lake
White is the grass by the frosts of night
But dark are the shadows which the green trees make.

You will see that Inspiration has come to me again and that before dawn (it is only 8.45 p.m.) yet another masterpiece - the greatest this new writer has yet produced - will have been given to the world. I have not yet decided what will happen if winter comes but sad is the prospect.

Please revise the above. I am sure a few touches from you and there will be a product fit for - the next issue of *Inter Nos*.¹⁹ You may be interested to learn that the composition is not purely imaginative. I was aided by a visit to the scene here represented in company with your charming aunt, in my car last evening. The wind shield of my car having become coated as we passed Octagon Pond.²⁰ I was tempted as we returned from Manuels to look with a fond eye at the lake itself. Had you been there not even "the frosts of night" - to use the words of a well known poet would have chilled our enthusiasm for the beauty of the picture. It was - well - was it not, romantic?

I forgot all about the matter when we got back to No. 42 for Alexander Baird Esq. sat in state or presided in the middle of the sofa, and believe me, he seemed to fill it.²¹ He was very

(June 1926) 27, 28 and "Rt. Rev. W. P. H. Kitchin, Ph.D.," *St. Bonaventure's Adelpian* vol. 37 (1947) 131 and "Monsignor Kitchin Dies in Hospital," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 7 Sept. 1946: 7 and Larry Dohey, Archives of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of St. John's, email, 4 November 2002.

¹⁹ *Inter Nos* was a publication of the St. John's school Academy of Our Lady of Mercy. It had been started just a few months earlier by Bill's and Mary's friend Betty McGrath - see footnote Chapter I, January 20, 1919. The magazine continued until 1948. See "Inter Nos," *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador*, vol. 3, 1991.

²⁰ In 1896 Charles Danielle built a restaurant in what was later the town of Paradise, Newfoundland, near St. John's. He named the eight sided building "Octagon Castle" and the small lake nearby was called "Octagon Pond". The restaurant burned in 1915. See "Octagon Castle," *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador*, vol. 4, 1993.

²¹ Alexander B. Baird (1890-1967) was a St. John's native. He was known in Newfoundland for his service during the first World War, his business interests (including A.B. Baird Ltd.), and

amusing on various subjects but it seemed to me, suddenly, that the views he expressed were neither original nor sound. Alice looked very sweet last night. Like yourself she lapses into silence where others intrude. Do I sometimes do that? But last night I was the intruder and I did not keep silent.

Business seems to be promising i.e. my business. Sandy threatens to engage in the rum running racket on the condition that he makes enough in one year to enable him to retire. He looks like a retired gentleman now. I occasionally see him waving his hands and wrinkling his brow outside Knowling's door.

There is an election in Harbour Main to-morrow but the interest is very impersonal. Party feeling is low but I asked a crowd of men at Manuels "Who's going to be elected - Hawco?" And they shouted in chorus "No". I am inclined to differ from that opinion.

Your Aunt read me your letter and I was pleased to know that you had increased in weight 6 pounds. Were you ashamed to tell me you had grown so big, whilst I am fading away. What a shame you are not coming to-morrow. Just imagine instead a Rosalind but no Mary. The weather seems to be patiently awaiting your return. We could still motor and it is wonderful.

The Feildians are having their dance to-night. I am not there. The Highlanders are having theirs a week from tonight and I shall not be there. I am no longer interested in dances. One thing alone fills my mind. I have sent for plans of bungalows and I have been studying *Building Age* - if you can get the October issue in the bookstores please bring it with you - for a suitable design for our future home. I watch with envy Ralph Herder's structure soar aloft.²² Lionel Munn has been inspecting the piece on the other side. I hope he will not be our neighbour.²³

I expect to hear all about your great successes on Old Pupil's Day. Please don't promise to be there next year.

There was a Child Welfare concert last night. All the artists were Protestant and I do not believe the Catholics supported it at all. It is time we took a hand in matters of social work. There is plenty of scope for Catholic people.

Please answer this, you know you are in my debt for letters. With all my love and a million kisses for you dear red mouth, and the white lashes on your lovely blue eyes.

Your sweetheart
Bill

later for his role advocating Confederation with Canada. He became one of the first Newfoundland members of the Canadian Senate in 1949. "Baird, Alexander B.," *Dictionary of Newfoundland and Labrador Biography*, 1990.

²² See footnote Chapter II, May 25, 1920.

²³ Lionel Munn was the son William A.(1866-1940) and Ethel (McNab) Munn of St. John's. William Munn was well known as an importer, a manufacturer of cod liver oil, as director of a marine insurance company and, in addition, as an amateur Newfoundland historian. See "Mr. W.A. Munn Called by Death," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 22 Oct. 1940: 6.

Diary

Monday December 17, 1923

I am reading Morley's life of Gladstone²⁴, and would not be writing now except that I have a headache which may be due to eye trouble and may be due to the swelling in my neck. However, I learned that W.E.G. used to write when he could not read and the idea appeals to me. For I write seldom and ought to write often. He was an indefatigable worker, with a gluttonous appetite for every kind of literature. I am sure that besides his native English, and, of course the Greek and Latin proscribed for the classical students, he must have attained a good working knowledge of at least French, Italian, German and Spanish by the time he reached 30. His life seemed well-ordered. His prayers were said generally with a servant and he devoted a certain period daily to reading books of a religious nature. But though he seemed to read serious works generally, he never neglected relaxation in the form of walks. Six miles in 70 minutes was a pretty good pace. It does not correspond to the household record of his thirty-three times to chew one mouthful of food.

I think that I have received inspiration from what I have already read, and have even expressed to Mary the regret I feel for the time which I have already wasted. Was it not a waste of time the days and nights I played at Bridge with the lazy undergrads at Merton, and was it not folly - egregious folly the days I wasted wandering feverishly over London - alone. Much more time have I wasted than I would willingly confess. But perhaps it is not yet too late to begin over. It is not too late. Every New Year we make our resolutions. What resolution shall I make for 1924? What do I desire to be? I desire to be charitable, honourable, industrious and good, first of all. Is that so difficult of accomplishment that I should hesitate even momentarily to determine to adopt these virtues as my resolutions. When I desire to be charitable I mean to possess the charity of which St. Paul speaks as the greatest of virtues - so great that it covereth a multitude of sins. It is the charity which inspires the verse

There is so much good in the worst of us
And so much bad in the best of us
That it ill behooves any of us
To talk about the rest of us.

I must pray that God will help me to forgive people their faults, to be blind to them. I know that philosophy - and I admit its truth - that eminently charitable philosophy which admonishes us to practice rather than preach and to keep golden silence when speech will not avail. Suppose that a person that I know does something which mentally I should unhesitatingly condemn. If I do not wait until an opportunity offers to enable me to inform that person kindly of his mistake but immediately and angrily or at least roughly, wishing to call the attention of onlookers to the fault and helping them to castigate the poor unfortunate individual as well am I acting in the best manner? Is it not rather more probable that such a person will be incensed against me, and in his irritation forget the mistake which he has made.

²⁴ John Morley, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone*, 3 vols. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1903).

To be honourable I mean to be straight forward. This I have ever tried to be. But I do think that towards my dear girl Mary I have not always acted entirely straightforward. I have nothing secret from her which would give her the least pain if she heard of it, but I have been trying to test her love by feigning a shallow indifference which her loving heart easily penetrates.

I earnestly desire to be industrious but I consider that this will depend upon the state of my health. Perhaps I ought to couple with this very admirable resolution one more material in a sense, but a rider as it were, which in accompanying the former assists it in a very great degree that is, I ought to resolve, to take exercise morning and evening. I see now that I think of it I must do this. I believe that I did it for a long time after coming home and I know that I had no complaints. But I have had no holiday since I came home. That was absurd. I must make provision for one next summer, please God, for my health will not suffer much more strain than that which it has borne now for so long.

But can I aspire to Spanish, to German, to Italian, or even to improve my French a little. My Latin I seem to have neglected altogether. Would it hurt me to try to renew my acquaintance with that ancient tongue? Ought to read more law. I think that I ought to rise earlier in the mornings if I wish to get any work done. This reflection reminds me that my dear mother rises at 7 or 7.30 every morning. She is always first up though generally last in bed. What is the secret of her wonderful vigour and vitality. She takes little outdoor exercise, except perhaps a walk downtown occasionally, and she eats only the plainest food. It seems a strange thing to say but I honestly believe that she enjoys the best health when she eats little more than bread and tea.



Bill Browne's sketch of his Mother, Brigid Browne, 1922

I could not attempt to contrast her bright, sometimes even annoyingly breezy, manner with the hasty temper of her husband and the nasty ill humour of her son. What is wrong with me then? It must be my health. It is my health. Can any man have a broad smile and a cheery word when a dull pain pierces his brain from the gland behind his ear, when his forehead burns, and his eyes throb, not to mention the ever present dread which a slight pain in the right side has awakened in his heart.

Sir Richard Squires and his wife have returned home after their long sojourn in England. Premier Warren is on his way. What will happen, or will there be any political developments. We must wait and see.

Bought a safe today to keep some of the treasures of my office.

[Two pages of poetry not transcribed]

Diary

Tuesday December 18, 1923

This morning I had the temerity to prosecute Dr. Rendell of the Sanatorium under the Society for Protection of Animals Act. Although judgement was reserved, I do not think there is much doubt of the result, as Dr. Rendell and the venerable judge are long acquaintances, and it was obvious to everyone, I feel sure, that the judge leaned towards the defendant. As Mr. Hunt said, it was hard to win with these parties - W. Wood and Rendell - against me. The *Telegram* has a half column or more on the matter to-night. Good thing for it might shame the judge into impartiality.²⁵

²⁵ As the *Telegram* reported, Dr. Rendell was the Superintendent of the Sanatorium for Consumptives who was being prosecuted by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals for shooting two dogs on the Sanatorium property. The dogs were owned by Sanatorium neighbours, Mr. Reid and Mr. Ingerman, both of whom testified in court. Dr. Rendell admitted to shooting the dogs, but testified that he had merely planned to frighten the dogs who were disturbing patients and causing property damage. Dr. Rendell was represented by W. E. Wood, K. C. Bill Browne was honorary solicitor for the Society, a position traditionally held by new solicitors. See "Magistrate's Court," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 18 December 1923: 6 and Browne, *Eighty-Four Years*, 93.

Edward Emerson²⁶ did not have any news Re Hoskins as he had led me to anticipate. I was speaking to M.P. Gibbs²⁷ who arrived here from Canada on the Silvia yesterday. He was very noncommittal and said that neither he nor Sir Richard Squires discussed politics *at all*²⁸.

I was to see Mary to night, and was, at first until 10.30 in dubious mood. She guessed what was the matter, principally. I hate to be like this but really I had great mental distress and

²⁶ Lewis Edward Emerson (1890 - 1949), the son of Justice George Emerson and Katherine Maher, was educated at St. Bonaventure's College, St. John's and Ampleworth College, Yorkshire. He then returned to Newfoundland where he read law with the law firm of Furlong and Conroy. Emerson was elected to the Newfoundland House of Assembly in 1928 and was again elected in 1932, serving as Minister of Justice and Attorney General until 1934 when the Newfoundland Legislature was dissolved and the Commission of Government introduced. In 1937 Edward Emerson was appointed to the Commission of Government as Commissioner for Justice and, during World War II, as Commissioner for Defense. At the end of the War he was knighted and appointed as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. In 1947 he received the title of Knight Commander of St. Gregory, a high honour of the Catholic Church. Not yet sixty years old, he died after serving only a few weeks as the first Chief Justice for the province of Newfoundland. See "Death Calls Sir L. E. Emerson," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 19 May 1949: 3 and "Supreme Court Tribute to the Late Chief Justice Emerson," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 20 May 1949: 3 and "Emerson, Sir Lewis Edward," *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador*, vol.1, 1967 and "Emerson, Lewis Edward," *Dictionary of Newfoundland and Labrador Biography*.

²⁷ Michael Patrick Gibbs (1870-1943), the son of John and Marguerite Gibbs, was born and educated in St. John's. He was called to the Newfoundland bar in 1896, became a King's Counsel in 1911, and practiced law in a number of partnerships, in later years with his son James. Michael Gibbs was heavily involved in Newfoundland politics: he served as member of the House of Assembly for St. George's (1897-1900); he was Mayor of St. John's (1906-1910); he was appointed to the Legislative Counsel (1909-34) and served as President of the Legislative Counsel (1930-34). A Catholic, Michael Gibbs was considered a strong supporter of the rights of workers and was heavily involved in the formation of the Longshoremen's Protective Union, acting for many years as legal advisor to that organization. He was married to Barbara Eadie and the couple had four children (their sons would have attended St. Bonaventure's College when Bill Browne was also a student). One of their sons, Gus, became a priest and served at St. Joseph's Parish in St. John's. "Obituary, Hon. M.P. Gibbs, K.C." *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 8 Nov. 1943: 3 and "Gibbs, Michael Patrick," *Dictionary of Newfoundland and Labrador Biography*, 1990 and "Obituary Rev Augustine M. Gibbs," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 29 Apr. 1937: 4.

²⁸ Translated from the French

felt as obdurate and severe as Nero. So we read *Quo Vadis*, a chapter a piece in French²⁹ and after supper, Mary read a couple of pages from that prim novel *Cranford*.³⁰

I met Captain Bonia on the way home - also R. T. McG. who has gone quite *crazy*, *I think*.³¹

Mary has a present for Mother - a black and white scarf, which seems very nice. We are not used to anyone fussing over us like that but Mary is quite full of Xmas, which is a lovely spirit to have, even if. *Good-night. Midnight*.³²

Diary

Thursday December 21, 1923

To-night Mary and I argued over the form of her invitation to supper on Sunday next, and I pointed out that I never enjoyed supper there. After half an hours argument I consented to go on being assured that her invitation was "Will you come etc." and not "Are you coming etc." Then I told Mary that the same way of offering things offended me and that was the reason I did not want pictures. I came home with her photograph - the one I don't like so much as it has an artificial smile. The other is the more placid - more solid, more Mary.

²⁹ Henryk Sienkiewicz, *Quo Vadis*, trans. (Paris: Éditions Rombaldi, 1960). Henryk Sienkiewicz (1846-1916) was a Polish author who received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1905. Sienkiewicz wrote a number of popular novels, but it was his book *Quo Vadis*, a story of Roman life under Nero, that was considered the "first internationally-renowned Polish novel." See Stanley S. Sokol with Sharon Kissane, *The Polish Biographical Dictionary* (Wauconda, Illinois: Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, 1992) 364-365.

³⁰ Bill Browne's view of this work is a harsh one; others have described this book more favourably. In the early 1850's the author, who was a friend of Charlotte Bronte, had various articles published in Charles Dickens' (another friend's) periodical. Later these stories were published as *Cranford*. One author describes it "a work of rare and delicate virtues", as "gentle satire," and not really a novel at all, but a "series of sketches" of the inhabitants - mainly women - of a small English town. See Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell, *Cranford*, ed. Martin W. Sampson, (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1912) pp. xii-xviii.

³¹ Translated from the French

³² Translated from the French



Mary Grace Harris

Diary

December 22, 1923

Argued with Johnson, J, over religion. He is a peculiar duck with his flat head and ragged white whiskers. He is abrupt and dogmatic and as stubborn as a mule. He does not believe in creeds but believes in God.³³

This morning *I was very mean to my mother because I thought that she was annoyed with Mary. We are still friends.*³⁴

I lost \$2.40 at raffle for Turkey. No luck. Father no luck.

Rain. All snow gone or going.

Diary

Sunday December 23, 1923

I was almost guilty of the sin of missing mass this morning arriving at the Cathedral as late as 11.15! I stayed near the door. After a chicken dinner had a fair tea at my Aunt's place. Poor Aunt Selina was very poorly tonight. She complained at Bess in a whining voice that must have indicated suffering. Mike brought her a new dressing gown that envelops her like a huge blanket.

I went to Vespers. Father Sheehan preached. Not a good preacher. In fact I can't remember except that he referred to the feast we are soon to celebrate. Met Mary at door and walked home with her. She tried to draw me out, but I was uncommunicative. Hugh McDonald, Marg Edens, and her fiancé Martin³⁵, Alice, Margaret Doyle, Mrs. Tobin, Mary and I made the

³³ George Macness Johnson (1853-1935) was at that time a Justice of the Supreme Court of Newfoundland. George Johnson was the son of a clergyman and, although born in Newfoundland, he received much of his education in England. He was a long time law partner of Newfoundland Prime Minister William Whiteway. Johnson was elected to the House of Assembly in 1894 when bye-elections followed the disqualification of Whiteway and a number of followers because of irregularities in the 1893 election. In 1902 Johnson was appointed to the Supreme Court where he served until 1926. He then returned to England until shortly before his death nine years later. See "Obituary," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 17 Dec. 1935: 6 and "Johnson, George Macness," *Dictionary of Newfoundland and Labrador Biography*.

³⁴ Translated from the French

³⁵ Margaret Edens (c.1903-1956) of St. John's was the daughter of Margaret M. and Thomas John Edens of 39 Queen's Road. Margaret and John had a large family -in addition to Margaret they had two sons who were killed in World War I - Leonard and John, sons Francis and Gerard and a daughter Gertrude (Paddon). Thomas Edens operated a grocery business in St. John's. Thomas Edens and Mary Harris' father, John Harris, had been two of the founders of the Academia Club in St. John's. Margaret Edens married her fiancé, Albert Mortimer Martin (1900-1978) of St. John's who worked in Corner Brook in almost every capacity for Bowater's Newfoundland - worker, woodlands manager, general manager, president and then chairman of

party. Martin and Alice and Hugh and Edens then withdrew to the Drawing Room. The others stayed in the sitting room. Supper nice and simple. Martin works at Humber. Nice chap. Mary was partly blue, wondering what kind of a bee in my bonnet. *I didn't want to kiss her the night before last.*³⁶ No snow and it is a warm night. Enjoyed the walk home. Showed Mother Mary's present.

I read a little of Gladstone's life to-day. Read *Catholic Record*. Like Edgar Guest.³⁷
Judge Jackford now Chief Justice in Ontario. Catholic. 12.15

Diary

December 25, 1923

2 a.m.

One person has wished me Merry Xmas and yet I feel as little merry as I could ever wish to be. She feels the Xmas spirit, and I, God help me, told her I did not. Tonight I have been in a mood. It seems that my internal resolution *to not kiss Mary is causing me a lot of pain. To-night we almost quarreled. She does everything in such a funny way. We don't understand each other. I'm sad, even bitter. But why?*³⁸

the board. Albert Martin was also a gifted athlete and was inducted into the Newfoundland Sports Hall of Fame in 1974. "Mrs. Albert Martin Dies in Montreal," *Evening Telegram* 10 Dec. 1956: 3 and "Obituary Francis A. Edens," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 20 Jan 1942: 3 and "Edens, Thomas John," *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador*, vol. 1, 1967 and "Martin, Albert Mortimer, *Dictionary of Newfoundland and Labrador Biography*, 1990 and Frank W. Graham, *Ready...Set...Go!* (St. John's, Nfld.:Creative Publishers, 1988) 250 and "Wedding Bells Edens - Paddon," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 8 Oct. 1923: 6.

³⁶ Translated from the French

³⁷ Edgar Albert Guest (1881-1959), known as "the poet of the people," was a prolific and immensely popular poet of his time. He was born in England and lived the first ten years of his life there, then moved to Detroit where at the age of fourteen he began work as an office boy with the Detroit Free Press, working his way to daily columnist, always considering himself a newspaperman rather than a poet. It is estimated that Edgar Guest wrote 12,000 poems and they were published in as many as 275 newspapers and 25 books. Although his work was treated with disdain by reviewers, he was extremely popular with ordinary people who enjoyed his emphasis on simple values such as hard work, humility, unspoiled nature, plain living and the importance of friends, neighbours and family. "Guest, Edgar Albert," *American National Biography*, vol. 9, 1999.

³⁸ Translated from the French

I read tonight parts of T. À K.³⁹ which I borrowed and what I read prompted me to say to Mary, but I have not done so yet, that she should go back to Kenwood and leave me alone.

I had a busy day. I brought presents to Selina and I felt happy til I reached Mary's house "Take off your coat?" How foolish was that. I am susceptible. I stayed from 9.15 p.m. and went to Midnight Mass with Mary, upon whose spirits eager to be gay, I was like a blanket of ice. The singing I did not fancy much. People liked the sermon. I was too absorbed almost for anything. *I am a sinner. Lord have mercy on me.*⁴⁰

Diary

Xmas night, Tuesday, December 25, 1923

Rose about 11 a.m. because I was peeved. This is selfishness unadulterated. Mother brought up presents. Mary gave me splendid pair of gloves, "You with all my love, Me." A very nice present. Card from Betty. Beautiful day. Sun shining, slightly freezing. No snow. After dinner walked around Mundy Pond about one hour. Tea at 42 Rennies Mill Road. Alice, Dodo,⁴¹ Mary and I. Alice and Dodo went to Edens at night and Mary would not go for a walk. When I left she regretted, for it was a beautiful night. Held long religious discussion. This was the first time we were together and agreeable - I mean I was agreeable- for nearly two weeks. I was in a much better mood tonight. I shall try to continue so. Cause was peculiar.

Read some Wordsworth to-day. Uses big words and awkward expressions for simple things. There is something about his things I like though.

Mary not entirely happy tonight. Should she be? What is everything?

*Cui bono*⁴², I have heard it said. I will be the same when I am dead.

Diary

December 26, 1923

³⁹ This may possibly be a reference to Thomas à Kempis, a fifteenth century writer usually credited with the well known work, the *Imitation of Christ*, "the content [of which] is a consistent scheme of doctrine by which holy living and holy dying are to be brought home to the heart of every man." J. E. G. de Montmorency, *Thomas à Kempis His Age and His Book* (London: Methuen & Co., 1906) 223.

⁴⁰ Translated from the Latin

⁴¹ Dodo was Josephine Cleary, later Kearney, daughter of Phillip and Katherine Cleary of 3 Monkstown Road in St. John's. Dodo married St. John's businessman George Kearney (1881-1952) following the death of his first wife. See "George Kearney Dies Suddenly," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 27 Aug. 1952: 1 and *The Canadian Virtual War Memorial*, Veterans Affairs Canada, 6 Jan. 2003
<<http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/general/sub.cfm?source=collections/virtualmem/Detail&casualty=180375>>

⁴² Latin term, frequently used by lawyers, meaning *for whose benefit*

Cold, clear day. No snow. Making up books. Card from Mary only this afternoon. Sent some toys for Xmas to Placentia. Mary Kelly⁴³ brought a lot for one dollar.

Talked to [indecipherable], Meehan and Rossiter who admit better atmosphere generally. Former admitted slight improvement. Retiring for private reasons. Remarked that he had not seen me up at his place lately. Very naive. Wished me compliments of the season.

Invited to supper Allandale Road tomorrow evening. Busy day for Mary. Was speaking to her on a telephone. Seemed in contrite, contemplative mood and regarded me as intruder.

Read a little French, translated few poems Henri Batoille, etc. in *Anthologie des filles modernes*.

Commission issued to Walker re investigation. Winter and Hunt representing Government & (1) Opposition.

Arranged books in old book stand. Look nice, but they will get dusty there, I fear.

Monsignor McDermott in office chatting to-day. Thinks times better. Says Irish men at Mount Mellary are good classical scholars. He was one.⁴⁴ Bought and just got two tickets front row left for New Year's Night. I nearly deserved not to get them.

Diary

December 27, 1923

When I awoke almost two inches of snow had fallen and it continued to snow all day. I received a nice Xmas card from Henry Somerville and a letter from F. J. Wylie whom I have answered.⁴⁵

⁴³ Mary Kelly (later Boone) was Bill Browne's secretary, described by him as "the most faithful stenographer anybody ever had." Mary Kelly, worked for Bill Browne for twelve years in private practice, and later while he was a Judge with the Central District Court. Browne, *Eighty-Four Years*, 90.

⁴⁴ James McDermott (1872-1947) was an Irishman who served as a priest in Newfoundland for most of his life. He was educated at Mount Mellary Seminary, Carlow College, graduating from the University of Ireland. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1895 in Ireland and came to Newfoundland that year. For twenty years he served in parishes in St. Kyran's, Mobile, Argentia, Salmonier and Riverhead, and was then assigned to the Cathedral in St. John's when he became a Monsignor and was appointed Vicar General of the Archdiocese of St. John's. See "Monsignor McDermott is Called by Death at St. Clare's Hospital," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 1 May 1947: 3

⁴⁵ Sir Francis James Wylie (1865-1952) was the first Oxford Secretary to the Rhodes Trust, serving from the time of the first scholarship winners in 1903 until 1931, and the first Warden of Rhodes House. Francis Wylie was Oxford educated, an Oxford tutor, then junior proctor before he became involved with the Rhodes Trust. He is seen by many to have been responsible for the successful integration of the Rhodes scholarship recipients within Oxford University and he was known for his warm relationship with the scholarship winners, many of whom he corresponded with for years. Francis Wylie was knighted in 1929 at the time of the reunion of Rhodes scholars

Very miserable day downtown and little business doing.

Mother preparing house for guest Mary, and making desperate attempt to paper the new room - an impossible feat - abandoned however. Mary's photo framed and hung in her presence in the place of Muckcross Abbey.⁴⁶ I had good luck in getting a sleigh. Hickey drove me home and to and from Rennie's Mill Road for \$2.50 and a drink. We were unable to go to Allandale Road tonight as it was quite bad enough going to Rennie's Mill Road. The snow cut one's face but Mary was well wrapped up going with her father's oil coat around her. She sang some songs. Tells me she is making 30 days prayer. I said I feared its effect?? What do I mean?? Was reading *Life of St. Bernard*.⁴⁷ Have read three very interesting chapters which I found I had already read in 1914 nearly 10 years ago and parts of which came gradually back to my mind. Mary regretted being idle, not having her work with her. Lights off for several periods to-day. I left office at 4.30.

Diary

December 28, 1923

Today was very frosty and the snow which fell yesterday has, I hope come to stay. I rose very late, I am sorry to say.

I met Mike Sullivan today.⁴⁸ He said that Squires was not recognized in England. He thinks that Squires will be ruined after the Commission but I am inclined to doubt this. Mike is doubtful of political future. Met William Warren⁴⁹ who looked pale.

Went into my Aunt's and there met Mrs. McGrath who tells me she had a pleasant Xmas. My Aunt had things done in good style in our honour last night if we had come. Phil⁵⁰ alone came. Joe Fitz⁵¹ thinks Squires will emerge with flying colours and tells me later has engaged

when Rhodes House was opened. Browne, *Eighty-Four Years*, 59, 171-2 and E.T. Williams and Helen Palmer eds., *The Dictionary of National Biography* 1951- 1960 (London: Oxford University Press, 1971) 1085-87 and Lord Elton, ed., *The First Fifty Years of The Rhodes Trust and The Rhodes Scholarships 1903-1953* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell & Mott Ltd., 1955).

⁴⁶ Muckcross Abbey was built in the 1300 or 1400's for Franciscan friars near Killarney, Ireland. The ruins are near a lake and the surrounding countryside is considered extremely beautiful. R. M. Ballantyne, *The Lakes of Killarney* (London, 1865) 35-37.

⁴⁷ This book was most likely M. L'Abbe Ratisbonne, *The Life and Times of St. Bernard*, trans. Sisters of St. Mary's Convent, Greenwich (New York, 18??).

⁴⁸ See footnote Chapter III, April 12, 1923.

⁴⁹ See footnote Chapter II, Nov. 10, 1920.

⁵⁰ See footnote Chapter II, Nov.10, 1920.]

⁵¹ Joe Fitz is likely Joseph Fitzgibbon (1881-1960) who was a well-known St. John's politician, the son of Edmund and Margaret Fitzgibbon. Joseph Fitzgibbon was a long-time member of the

Lewis, a New York attorney, ex Attorney general, I believe, who with Howley will look after Squires' interests. Joe was then going in to Doc Campbell's at 11 p.m.

I read two more chapters of the *Life of St. Bernard*. The book is written in a very attractive style, and though some things seem exaggerated, the story of this saint's remarkable influence does not leave me unaffected. I also read a few pages of Morley's *Life*, but this is much harder to get through. It is deliberately constructed to last forever in that solid style which is familiar with English biographers. The *Life of St. Bernard* is in a much more graceful, even fancy, or decorated style. I read a little French, making a poor hand at translation into verse and go to bed at 1 a.m.

Diary

December 29, 1923

Last night we had another storm of snow which came in through my open window and in the morning gave my Mother much worry as well as displeasure to find my room filled with snow. My Mother had a difficult task sweeping it all up and I think did her health no good in the process.

Nothing doing at all this week. I suppose we can't expect it. We are in for another storm this time, of rain.

This afternoon Mary telephoned and made me dispirited for a long time by the information that she was going to a Bridge, and this notwithstanding my emphatic assertion that I should not go tonight. I have been invited to supper tomorrow night. But I never enjoy this for several reasons. First because Mary is never hostess. Second if the Aunt is there is too much watching oneself and uneasiness all around. Thirdly if Aunt Agnes is not, Alice is, but Alice is a splendid hostess, has a good deal of thought for the comforts of her guests and is a graceful person at table. I was invited to go for a walk but I declined.

I met Fenelon⁵² who looked like a millionaire. He told me he had put his car away at last. He had motored over to Kelligrews Xmas day to tea and to Liddys on the following day. He also told me he was not informed of the BESCO stuff in the matters upon which he was asked to

St. John's Municipal Council, member of the Newfoundland House of Assembly, Bailiff in the Central District Court, Federal and Provincial Returning Officer in St. John's West and also an auctioneer. He married Pauline Kent of Placentia and the couple had nine children. Bill Browne described Mr. Fitzgibbon as "a very witty man with a great sense of humour and much common sense." See Browne, *Eighty-Four Years*, 163, 380 and "Joseph Fitzgibbon Dies," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 19 Dec. 1960: 3.

⁵² See footnote Chapter III, introduction.

adjudicate.⁵³ When he saw Herbert Knight's name he decided to absent himself from town. He would not touch the job.⁵⁴

I then went to see Phil, Bindon⁵⁵ not being in, and all this because not having to go to Rennie's Mill Road created a sort of disappointment and left me in a melancholy mood. Phil is better, told me not to mind Joe. Asked me to look up a lease. We chatted for a half hour or so and then I went.

Colford was in his door as I came along and I stepped in to discuss politics. Like Joe he is convinced of Squires' ultimate clearance, and thinks an election imminent.

Met Father coming to look for me. How foolish are mothers but how fond!

I read Tennyson's *In Memoriam*⁵⁶ and discovered the source of Squires Xmas card. Read Gladstone and was diverted to Wordsworth's *Peter Bell*, a peculiar moral tale, that would not convert anybody. It was entertaining though. I liked *The [Old] Cumberland Beggar* and *The Farmer of Tilsbury Vale* much better.⁵⁷ I also read some more of the Life of St. Bernard who is now in charge of his own Monastery.

Diary

December 30, 1923

Mass at 11.10. High Mass said by Irishman from Australia who preached at night. Nice voice.

Headache to-day. Moody. Saw Mary after Mass but avoided meeting her going to Belvedere to see the crib with Babs and then to Aunt Selina's who told me Mrs. McGrath glad to have my Xmas card. She also said that "Betty and Sheila, tho they liked Harry Sinnott did not try to take him from Barbara" meaning that Mary had taken me from Betty. This of course is not true in the sense that I never belonged to Betty. We were friends and I did not appreciate her

⁵³ BESCO was the British Empire Steel Corporation, a company formed in 1921 by the amalgamation of the two Nova Scotia companies, The Dominion Iron and Steel Company and the Nova Scotia Steel Company, who had been mining the iron ore on Bell Island, Newfoundland. This was a difficult time for iron exports and the company was soon in financial difficulty, being taken over by a receiver in 1926. See, for example, "Bell Island" and "Iron Mines," *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador*, 1981 and 1991.

⁵⁴ Prime Minister Warren had asked three senior lawyers in St. John's - J. P. Blackwood, Herbert Knight and John Fenelon - to conduct a commission of inquiry. When they refused, the Prime Minister asked the Governor to request that the British Government make an appointment for this purpose. See Browne, *Eighty-Four Years*, 115.

⁵⁵ See footnote Chapter III, April 3, 1923.

⁵⁶ *In Memoriam* (Boston, 1855).

⁵⁷ For these three poems by Wordsworth see William Wordsworth, *The Complete Poetical Works of Wordsworth*, ed. Andrew J. George, 2nd ed. Boston: Houghton, 1932) 93, 96, 308.

friendship just because of one remark she dropped one night going to the Earle Spicer concert.⁵⁸ I remember the occasion well. We were passing by the College northern gates and I asked her had she seen my windows and she replied that she had better things to do than look at them. I have not forgotten that remark, because I had only just had my name and titles painted on the windows and I wished someone besides myself to appear interested.

Met Gibbs M.P. coming home. We talked on Education and he compared the U.S. Senate to the House of Lords to the disadvantage of the latter. I disagreed with his criticism of English education.

This afternoon I went for a walk. To night to prayers. Met Mary and walked to her place. Supper, a very dull meal and an almost duller game of cards, in the first part of which Alice read a book between the deals, with a vexed look on her face. I was as cross as could be. I have a headache anyway, but I am vexed with Mary for *her resolution not to love me with passion now. I think she's saying the thirty-day prayer with this intention. If she is, I will never kiss her and I will be cruel to her. It's a funny thing; she has to go back to the convent because I am too mean for an angel like her. To-night when we went in, she pulled the big chair next to the fire, sat down in it, and then asked me to sit. I sat by the door. When leaving the house I refused to kiss her and now I am not in a good mood. I will have to visit her New Year's day. I don't want to.*⁵⁹

Diary

January 2, 1924

I went to confession New Year's Eve as has been my custom for many years. My Mother went also.

Yesterday was New Year's Day and I spent the afternoon in making calls. Mrs. Fabey, Clancy, Maher, and in the last case there was a humourous error. I asked the young lady at the door where Mrs. O'Meara lived and she mistook the name for her Mother's and I was ushered in. As it happened I knew the people slightly and they knew all about me. They were most gentle and kind and as they have a bungalow at Topsail we have made a plan to reciprocate with favours next summer. One of her daughters is quite nice. The Reception both at St. Bonaventure's College and the Mount were tame affairs. Rev. Brother Ryan, the Superior at the former, is a strange person. Then Government House. Chatted with Goodfellow, Watson and genially to Harvey. Then Fortune's, who this year only offered me wine as I was leaving - not very polite - then Harris', where Mrs. Tobin and her three nieces sat in solemn state. I made a point to greet Mary first. The reception was a peculiar one as here nothing was offered and, on the arrival of a group of visitors with L. Emerson at the head, I made for the door. I noticed

⁵⁸ Earle Spicer was a Nova Scotia baritone who performed in England and France, as well as North America. "Young Nova Scotian Baritone Is Highly Praised By London And Paris Critics," 5 July 1922, *Halifax Chronicle*, 27 Nov. 2002
<<http://www.rootsweb.com/~canbrnep/jul051922.htm>>

⁵⁹ Translated from the French

Mary looking goodbye as I went out with no more attention than the Emerson's observing remark about my Platonic leave-taking.

It began to rain as I went to Allandale Road and just as I got inside Mrs. McGrath's elaborate new porch the rain came down very heavily. Getting no answer to my knock, I opened the door and called out. There was no one in. So I left my card on the table and went to my Aunt's home where I found Mrs. McGrath and wished her the good wishes for the New Year. She wished me the same but left almost immediately. Partridge supper but my mind was upset with the chill of the Harris reception. What is it, refinement or meanness, which prevented them entertaining? I say emphatically the latter. I went back for Mary at eight, but never looked her in the face, answered her questions as briefly as possible and in every way appeared to be in as sulky a mood as I ever have been. We went to the *Prince of Pilsen* where the music and singing gradually awoke me so that I did look a couple of times at Mary and caught her sly eyes smiling wonderingly, but pleasantly, at me. But on the way home, I reverted to my sullen mood but did, on being pressed, explain the cause. We argued much saying (I did at any rate) much that we did not mean. I said that I should not call Thursday. She entreated me to go in and I did and *I was happy when she told me that if I came Thursday she would let me love her. But in leaving I refused to come Thursday.*⁶⁰ She entreated me but I would not. She says she will make me come. I went home in a happier mood.

To day I am engaged ascertaining the state of my affairs and find that the year has been a little beyond my ambition. Thank God. It is a miserably cold day and tonight there is a terrific biting north wind that made the house shake. I issued Writ No 1 for the year 1924, and I hope it portends good luck.

Read some St. Bernard and a little Gladstone. I beat W. J. Carew at billiards.⁶¹ He was telling me that Desmond Fitzgerald is much criticized for his Bohemian habits and is unfit for Foreign Minister of Free State.

Diary

January 3, 1924

89 Casey St., St. John's

Today we are experiencing the tail of a terrible storm of wind. In its trail came a representative of Butterworth and Company and sold me 31 volumes Halsbury⁶² and a copy of

⁶⁰ Translated from the French

⁶¹ Newfoundlander William J. Carew (1890-) was educated at St. Patrick's Hall School in St. John's. He began work as a civil servant in 1909 and worked for the government of Newfoundland for the next forty-seven years. William Carew was Secretary to eight Prime Ministers, secretary to the Commission of Government, and later secretary to the Cabinet. "Carew, William J.," *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador*, 1981.

⁶² Halsbury et al., eds., *Laws of England*, 31 vols. (London: Butterworth, 1907-1917).

Phipson.⁶³ Some investment – I trust that it will assist me in my business. The agent – a congenial person whose modesty and ease I could not resist – came on the *Silvia* with the Investigator.

I saw Mary tonight and was in a good mood after she rang me up and asked me to go down. I even put on a dress collar to please her. But my happy expression soon disappeared when she gaily informed that she had broached the subject of our love affairs to another priest. How indiscrete and now all the priests of the Cathedral Parish are quite familiar with our whole history. I sat through the Nickel stoically insensible to Mary's caressing questions, but before the end of the evening I was in a better mood. She sighed and asserted her love in such tender loving tones that I had the greatest difficulty to restrain myself from kissing her. Last week we saw each other only thrice, and I have not kissed her for a week. When I was leaving, Mrs. Tobin, who had just entered, hung around and even opened the door ostensibly to show us the night but, as she allowed it to remain open, I thanked her and wandered off amused. Mary had an amused smile too.

Tomorrow is the First Friday, and it would be good to make nine concluding in September.

I have not read a line of literature today. I have been busy.

Diary

Saturday, January 5, 1924

Too weary to write last night. Little news. The Commissioner T. Hollis Walker, K.C. is here to investigate the scandals of the past Government. Little publicity concerning him. All quiet.

Cold spurt. Pipes burst under Ryan's floor. What shall we do with that place?

Very busy.

Miss Davey seems unwell, was quite hysterical yesterday but calmer today. I fear that R.T. McGrath has her money spent.

⁶³ Sidney L. Phipson, *The Law of Evidence*, 6th ed., (1921; London: Sweet & Maxwell Ltd.; Toronto: Carswell Co. Ltd.).

Bought several books yesterday. Roseberry's *Pitt*⁶⁴, Lecky's *Rationalism in Europe* 2 vols⁶⁵, Morris to Buchanan and Kingsley to Thomson in poetry⁶⁶, Boccaccio's *Decameron*⁶⁷, and Barry O'Brien's *Newman*⁶⁸ all for \$2.00. It was a gift.

Beat C. Ellis at billiards last night.

Was very worried tonight over Mary. Four on the verge of tears. That infernal Aunt and that abominably selfish ass of a sister have been worrying her about a paltry bill at Ayre & Sons. Am instructed to search will in Mary's behalf.⁶⁹

Mother very busy preparing for tomorrow night's supper. Hope it goes well. Keeping very cold.

Mary has decorated some towels very nicely with colored cross stitch. Great rivalry with Margaret Edens.

Diary

January 6, 1924

Rose late, mother being so occupied as to think it was 8:30 when it was 9:30 a.m. and so she went to 10 a.m. Mass. Spent most of the day in assisting at preparations for supper in honour of Mary.

⁶⁴ Lord Rosebery, *Pitt*, 16th printing, (London: MacMillan and Co., 1914)]

⁶⁵ W. E. H. Lecky, History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of *Rationalism in Europe*, revised ed., 2 vols. (New York and London: D. Appleton and Company, 1925).

⁶⁶ Alfred H. Miles, ed., *The Poets and the Poetry of the Nineteenth Century*, vol. 5 Charles Kingsley to James Thompson, and vol. 6 William Morris to Robert Buchanan, (1905, London: Routledge; New York: AMS, 1967).

⁶⁷ This book, written in the mid thirteen hundreds, is the story of a group of young people who fled the plague in Florence to a country villa and the one hundred tales they told during their stay. For an English translation see Giovanni Boccaccio, *The Decameron*, trans. John Payne (New York: Blue Ribbon Books, 1931).

⁶⁸ This book is likely William Barry, *Cardinal Newman* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905).

⁶⁹ The will is that of Mary's father, John Harris, who died in 1915 leaving most of his \$166,600.00 estate to his three daughters. John Harris' sister, Agnes Tobin, and his brother, Thomas B. Harris, were the executors. According to the terms of the will, Mary and her younger sisters, Alice and Marjorie, were to receive equal shares in the remainder of their father's estate on reaching the age of twenty-one. Mary had turned twenty-one. John Harris' will is filed in the Supreme Court of Newfoundland and Labrador, St. John's office, Volume 7 - Folio 58 - 1916, and is reproduced above.

Read some poems of a few obscure poets and liked certain things in Bennett's – where he describes a race on the Isis. It must have been a leisurely affair if such a conversation as mentioned in the poem could have taken place and very different from the heartbreaking and desperate struggles which were the only kind I ever witnessed there. It seems a preposterous yarn, but I like a few lines such as "Two winding rainbows by the river's banks".⁷⁰ I read a few poems of James Thomson, Kingsley and Ebenezer Jones, most of which speak of love in tenderest tones. Pontifical vespers ending with the Hallelujah.

Mary came up to supper but her Aunt suggested that with her cold she should stay at home. But Mary, who I hope will have no after effects, decided she was going to prayers and then to Bill's. She came but found the wind too much for her on Rennie's Mill Road when I was taking her home. As soon as we got inside the door, I decided to go, but she made me no affectionate embrace. I reopened the door and looking in said "You would not give me a kiss, eh" and she cried "Come back! Come back!" but I ran down the steps and came home.

Diary

January 10, 1924

On Monday the Enquiry began in the Chamber of the Legislative Council before T. Hollis Walker K.C. Mr.'s Warren, Hunt and Winter for the Crown and Mr. Howley for Squires and Campbell. The general impression from the evidence so far adduced from Mr. Meaney and Miss Miller is that Squires got the money. Meaney seems to have sacrificed himself to get Squires and is now reckless, I think, as to what he says.

I tried to get in yesterday but was unable to do so and not even my professional character secured me any preference. But the ladies were permitted to enter! However I had a long conversation with Mott who is very saddened over the whole business.⁷¹ I did get in on the gallery this afternoon after a very sharp reply from Mr. Warren whom I asked was there any chance of getting in and who replied "I am afraid there is not, Mr. Browne - it is full" and went in. I wonder has he been told that I have been speaking in favour of Sir Richard Squires. Although everyone appears convinced of Squires guilt, it does not necessarily follow that he is

⁷⁰ This is a slight misquote as it was "river's brinks". See William Cox Bennett, "The Boat-Race," *The Poets and Poetry of the Nineteenth Century Charles Kingsley to James Thomson*, ed. Alfred H. Miles (1905; London: George Routledge; New York: AMS Press, 1967) 40.

⁷¹ Henry Y. (Harry) Mott (1855-1946) was the sixty-eight year old Clerk of the Newfoundland House of Assembly. Mr. Mott had represented Burgeo-LaPoile in the House from 1894-1901, the last four of those years serving as Speaker of the House. He became Assistant Clerk in 1908, then several years later became Clerk, serving for a further twenty-two years. Mr. Mott had been a St. John's newspaper editor and, in 1894, wrote *Men of Newfoundland*. In 1923 Bill Browne served as the Assistant Clerk in the House of Assembly and had considerable respect for Mr. Mott's ability and views. See Browne, *Eighty-Four Years*, 111 and "Obituary, Henry Y. Mott," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 8 Oct. 1946: 3.

guilty. He paid scant attention to his business, undoubtedly, but should he deny the receipt of the monies from Miss Miller, what will the Commissioner do, accept his version or hers?

Mary has become very serious and appears from the story she tells me of her caustic replies to her Aunt, to have become suddenly independent. Her position is a peculiar one and it is an admirable thing in her character to find that her right to this money has not made her severe but patient. But pretense will not be kept up and I feel sure that unless Mary is indifferent again to her Aunt's doings, there will be an explosion soon.

I enjoyed the Commissioner. He has made Howley look lost, and he is a strange contrast to our dull judges. He is lively, quick, witty, and always on the point. Our judges seem to be more like stuffed figures on the Bench with some mechanical device to allow them to write and turn their heads. It is most amusing to listen to Mr. Walker's mixture of humor and sarcasm and irony.

I read a Chapter of Barry's *Newman* and I see more strongly the influence of environment upon a child.

Diary

January 18, 1924

Ingberman vs. Dr. Rendell we ought to get judgment.

Diary

January 19, 1924

Another little nasty evening with Mary and I left without saying good night. I had to leave the way Alice kept yawning and dozing and saying how tired she was, and Mary did not seem to know what to do. I had reached home only a few minutes when the phone rang and Mary asked me to go down tomorrow night, which I shall interpret as meaning after supper as I hate supper there because of the company. I had rash schemes in my head, happily now unnecessary. But I was irritated considerably and Mary seems to be so dull in the matter.

Sir Richard seems to be deserted by nearly all his pseudo-supporters. His case is thin, I think, and it may go hard with him.

Bill Browne and Mary Harris were married July 7, 1924.

Mrs. William Tobin

requests the pleasure of your company

at the wedding of her niece

Mary Grace Harris

and

Mr. William Joseph Browne,

on Monday, July seventh,

nineteen hundred and twenty-four,

at ten o'clock,

in the Chapel of the Sacred Heart,

Military Road,

and afterwards at her residence,

Rennie's Mill Road, St. John's, Newfoundland.



Mary Harris Browne, 1924

Elsie Holloway Photograph



Alice and Marjorie Harris, Mary and Bill, Harry Sinnott, Margaret Conroy, 1924
Elsie Holloway Photograph