

Chapter II

Oxford University 1919-1922

Bill Browne won the 1918 Rhodes scholarship for Newfoundland and went to England in the fall of 1919 to study law at Oxford's Merton College. While there he developed a great love for Oxford and a firm belief in the ideals of the Rhodes Trust. His time at Oxford was extremely important to him, not merely for his legal education, but because Oxford exposed him to people and places that he would not otherwise have known.

The ties between Newfoundland and Ireland were very strong then and my grandfather took this opportunity to spend considerable time in Ireland, later recalling that he felt instantly at home there. He was so involved with Irish affairs that his mother said that he was receiving more of an Irish education than a legal one. This was certainly an interesting, tumultuous time in Ireland with such occurrences as Bloody Sunday and the partitioning of Ireland. This history is woven throughout the letters and diaries.

Merton College
Oxford
Oct. 2, 1919

Dear Mother,

Just a line from Oxford to tell you I have been accepted by "Merton College" which will be my address.

I shall get Senior Status, I expect, a thing which I shall explain later. Again wishing you and Pop the best of love and hoping to hear from you at an early date, I remain

Your loving son

Billy

P. S. Oxford is a dam(p) fine place. I have made a good start. B.

Merton College
Oxford
Oct. 24, 1919

My dear Mother,

So quickly has the time sped by since my last writing that I did not notice its going. As I probably made the same remark in my last letter, you will imagine that I am having a pleasant time.

In the week's routine there is little new. I attended all my lectures, I did a little extra reading, and I began each day's work by hearing mass. I have been rowing every day except Sunday.

I attended meetings of the Newman Society, the Colonial Club, the Merton College Debating Society, the Junior Common Room, at all of which I had something to say. I find that I am not lacking in confidence to get up before a body and speak. The only thing I lack is knowledge, a gap I hope to fill in time.

Last night I heard Lord Robert Cecil¹ speak at the Oxford Union Debating Society. The debate was on the League of Nations. Four students spoke and then the noble lord made some remarks. There were over a thousand people present, mostly to hear him, and it was really a favour to get into the place at all. As it was, I had a seat (on the floor) by the side of the speakers. Cecil is a clear thinker. He uses simple but choice language, has few big words and is very easy to follow. You will remember him for he was the representative of England on the League.

On Sunday last Henry Somerville came over here to tea, and we chatted for a long time. Yesterday Harold Knight² was over. Knight is a very hard worker, and we do a lot

¹Lord Robert Cecil (1864-1958) was an Oxford graduate and barrister. He was a long-standing British Member of Parliament who had a number of distinguished appointments including one as the 1919 British delegate to the League of Nations Commission Peace Conference. He was winner of the 1937 Nobel Peace Prize. See Michael Stenton and Stephen Lees, *Who's Who of British Members of Parliament*, vol. 3 (Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1979) 60.

²Harold Stephen Knight (1897-1965) was a Newfoundlander and fellow classmate of Bill Browne at St. Bonaventure's College. Mr. Knight studied Law at Dalhousie University from 1914 until 1916. He received the 1917 Rhodes Scholarship for Newfoundland but interrupted his studies to serve in World War I as a lieutenant in the Royal Newfoundland Regiment in France where he was injured in action. Upon completing his legal education at Oxford's University College, he

together.

The Rhodes Scholars are going to ask the Rhodes Trust to grant them an increase in the scholarship. Both the American and the Colonial Rhodes Scholars are agreed on this.

I have not heard from the other side yet, and do not expect to for a couple of weeks.

Give my love to Pop and regards to all old friends.

I shall write every week or so until I hear from you. I may say that I am writing this to catch a mail leaving tomorrow via New York.

It's raining today, quite a contrast with the past two weeks. But I believe it is more natural to rain here at this season than anything else.

Best love,

Billy

Merton College

Oxford

Oct. 31, 1919

My dear Mother,

Another very interesting week has gone by, and no letters have yet arrived. However, once communication is established the situation will become easier.

So numerous have been my engagements and so varied my week's events, that I am at a loss to record them all. I missed mass through oversleeping one morning this week, and felt badly about it. Tomorrow is All Saints Day, and a Holy Day of Obligation.

Last Sunday I was out to tea to Mrs. McDouset's, whom I met through Miss Thornton. Kindly remember that tea is a very economical way to entertain people. It is not elaborate, begins late in the afternoon and ends early, the time being taken up chiefly in harmless gossip. Still, it is a very enjoyable affair and all the people have been very decent. I have to add that I am booked for another tea next Sunday at a Protestant lady's house. I met the lady, Mrs. Chadwick, through the Thorntons.

I have been to tea with Harold Knight twice during the week - one of which occasions was this afternoon. We went for a long walk afterwards around by what is known as Iffley Lock, a name of great significance to Oxford men.

On Sunday last, Monsignor Barnes who is, I believe, Rector of Newman Society here gave us a very interesting lecture on Oxford, its past history, and as it is today. The subject

returned to Newfoundland where he first practised law with his father, Herbert. He then practised law for many years with the firm Fox, Knight and Phelan. He was a Bencher with the Law Society of Newfoundland. See "City Lawyer Dies," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 18 January 1965: 3.

is too big to go very far into it here, but it consisted in a description of Catholic efforts at Oxford when Oxford was Catholic and mention being made of the various religious orders here now.

Yesterday afternoon, Lachlan McDonald and I went on our bicycles to Blenheim, a place where the Duke of Marlborough has his palace. The palace was built two hundred years ago, and presented to the Duke of Marlborough for his services as commander of the army. The estate is very large and has a large lake, with an unnecessarily large bridge. There is a great stretch of road leading up to the palace, which looks more like a barracks square than anything else, it is so bleak. Of course, the buildings are very elaborate. We then went to a place called Witney and had tea, after which we made for Oxford arriving here at ten minutes past six, after having travelled approximately thirty miles.

Tonight, I attended a meeting of the Oxford Labour Club which was organized just recently. In fact I have just returned from there.

The Newman Society meets on Sunday.

I am going to be called to the Bar at Gray's Inn, please God, in three years and the fees are considerable.

As I shall be in London next week, I shall tell you about it.

Your loving son

Billy

Love to Pop. B.

[December 1919, first page missing.]

You will have heard about the attempt to assassinate Lord French³ in Ireland. Well, tomorrow will probably bring us more information when Lloyd George introduces his Home Rule proposals.

How is R.A. Squires doing in his new position as Prime Minister? Are you going to have undenominational schools?

Give my love to Pop and regards to all kind friends.

³John French (1852-1925) was a career military man who rose through the ranks. At the beginning of World War I he was appointed as Commander-in-Chief of the British Expeditionary Force but resigned just over a year later and was made Commander-in-Chief of the Home Forces. As such, he was in charge of the English military response to the Irish uprising of Easter 1916. In 1918 he became Lord-lieutenant of Ireland. The I. R. A. attempted to kill him in December of 1919, however Lord French was unharmed. See J. R. H. Weaver, ed., *The Dictionary of National Biography 1922-1930*, 3rd ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1961) 319-324 and Edgar Holt, *Protest in Arms - The Irish Troubles 1916-1923* (London: Putnam, 1960) 191.

Best wishes for the New Year 1920.

Your loving Son

Billy

P.S. Irene sent her photo to me. B.

Merton College

Oxford

Mar. 1, 1920

Dearest Mother,

I received a letter (Feb. 3) from you yesterday, the first in three weeks, together with a bundle of newspapers.

I am sorry to learn that the winter has been so severe at home, for it is extraordinarily mild here. The mild winters seem to follow me. Last winter in Toronto was very mild but this year their climate is very much like yours.

I hope you are warm in the house this winter. Whatever you do, be sure and be comfortable. I think that our house must be very cold, for I have a distant memory of a cold bedroom, and a window coated with snowy frost, at which one used to blow warm air to gain a peep hole.

I have to write an exam for my tutor in about ten days and so am working hard for that purpose. The subject is Torts and deals with such offences as slander, libel, trespass, battery, assault, and other offences for which one may bring an action for damages. If the judge were to ask me now whether I wished to ask Hedley Moutney a question I should not be dumb, and in connection with the slide accident in which Mon Chafe was hurt, I could say that he, too, contributed negligence. Law teaches a lot of useful things. It is simply common sense, and it is most reasonable usually. Please remember me to Mon. I hope his business is flourishing.

Newfoundland seems to be in a bad way in shipping. One of the papers says that only nine steamers will leave St. John's for the seal fishery. That is very bad indeed, because Newfoundland must not let her industries run down.

As regards the election, the result is no surprise. I imagine it was almost a religious division, but I do not think the result so important as some of the papers seem to think.

The reflections on Sir Michael Cashin are quite amusing - as if education consisted in mere book-learning. There is little doubt that Cashin is a finer type of man than Squires with all the latter's polish. No doubt, the next session of the House of Assembly will be an interesting one.

I received a letter this morning from Margaret McDonnell to whom I sent a Christmas card. Her letter was quite impersonal, though. No other Toronto letters have reached me

yet and, as for Hutchings Street, I have not heard from them since Christmas and as I wrote eight letters to three, I am leaving it to that party to renew the correspondence.

Vacation begins in two weeks, when I am going to Ireland. The country seems very unsettled at present, but there are quiet parts, and civilians are never touched. I had a letter from John McGettigan⁴, whom I hope to see in Dublin before my vacation ends.

I have spent the whole morning writing letters as there is a mail leaving for Canada to-night. Give my best love to Pop. Note the date of my letter when you write because I wish to keep track of them.

I am playing football this afternoon, being goalkeeper for the college team, a position I like very much.

Your loving son
Billy

Merton College
Oxford
March 17, 1920

Dear Mother,

This is the feast of St. Patrick; the weather is fine and I am writing this letter from Gallivan's Hotel, Killarney where I came yesterday. I wrote to you on Sunday but, as I believe there is a mail leaving Liverpool tomorrow direct for St. John's, I hope that this letter will travel with it.

I don't think I told you that I had been to see Father Roche at the Dominican House of Studies at Tallaght just outside Dublin. He showed me around the House and gave me my dinner. Unfortunately for me, he had to look after a mission that was beginning there in the afternoon, so that I had to return to Dublin at 3 o'clock. I left Dublin without seeing John McGettigan but hope to see him soon again. I left Dublin for here yesterday morning, but missed my train by mistake and went on to Cork. I had two hours in Cork so I went to see the Christian Brothers, amongst whom I saw a Brother Ryan, the brother of the Superior at St. Bon's, and also a Brother Colman whose sister was at one time engaged to marry Peter

⁴John McGettigan (1897-1982) became a priest and later a monsignor. He had been a good friend of Bill Browne at St. Bonaventure's College in St. John's, Nfld. John McGettigan attended All Hallows College in Ireland and was ordained as a priest in 1923. Father McGettigan served as pastor in Marystown, St. Mary's Bay, Bell Island and Killbride, Nfld. See Browne *Eighty-Four Years*, 372 and "Deaths" *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 2 December 1982: 2 and Larry Dohey, Archives of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of St. John's, letter to the author, 3 August 2000.

Brown (who died). The latter Brother is a Newfoundlander.

At Cork the first sight I saw was of four Sinn Feiners being taken away by soldiers, in an armoured van. The soldiers were fully equipped with rifles and steel helmets, etc.

On the walls I saw such revolutionary and republican sentiment as the following: "Remember Easter Week. Pearse died. Do your part. Buy a bond." and "Lord French suppressed the Republic. Will you help to suppress French." Cork is the place that is strongest for the Irish independence. I spoke to several people about it and they all think Ireland is entitled to her independence. People have confirmed beliefs I had before about the British Government preventing industries in this country. The British Government has given Irish promoters of companies practically no help to build up industries, and the people have realized that. The British Government brought in an Education Bill which would, if put into force as law, make all the schools of this country national schools. The Bishops of Ireland have come out very strongly against the Bill, and petitions are being framed all over the country opposing it.

As to the Home Rule Bill recently introduced, Irish people think it is a farce.

People here don't know where they stand. There are two worlds - the ordinary world and the underworld of Sinn Fein. At the bottom of recruiting posters with the inscription "Join the British Army, and See the World", Sinn Feiners have added the following "Join the Royal Irish Constabulary and See the Other World".

Every day houses in Dublin are being raided. The soldiers go at all hours of the day or night into peoples' houses; they go into bedrooms and even try to make women get out of their beds. They search every part of the house. They look under the beds and tear up the floor in search of "arms, ammunition and seditious documents." On Monday in Dublin they raided two big stores, one of which belonged to a Scottish firm. The raid lasted thirteen hours. Eleven people were arrested and five were later set free.

At Thurles where I passed through yesterday, I saw about seven or eight policemen taking off two boys. The policemen all have revolvers in their belts, and are no respecter of person. They take little schoolboys to try and make them give information about their father or their neighbours. On Saturday, a boy of 16 and his father of 62 were arrested. The boy was later released. A man in England who wrote an article called "Killing - No, Murder" was sentenced to 6 months in jail. He was editor of the *Catholic Herald*.

Killarney is a very nice place. Such delightful scenery can hardly be surpassed, with wood, water and mountains all in harmony to make the scene as pretty as possible. I caught a trout this morning in a little river that runs into one of the lakes of Killarney. The roads are yet quite muddy for the weather is not as advanced as in England. The crowds of tourists have not yet begun. But they will soon, and Killarney will be restored to its position as the "gem of the Western World".

At Cork I saw the high tower which contains the Bells of Shandon, that sound so grand on the pleasant waters of the River Lee.

You would like Ireland, because everything is so natural here. The people here resemble the people at home very much. The sayings and expression of the people are identical.

Love to Pop and a sincere wish that St. Patrick's Day is a happy one with you. I am quite happy. There are lots of people around and I like the meals very well.

Your loving Son
Billy

Merton College
Oxford
April 1, 1920

Dear Mother,

I received a letter from you on Monday, but as I am in Killarney, my energy for writing seems to have dissipated with the outgoing of Lent. However I must acknowledge the receipt of two dollars enclosed (\$2.00). But don't think anything is gained really. You might better have bought English money and sent it to me. I shall get only nine shillings for them or the normal equivalent of two dollars and sixteen cents, that is, eight cents for each dollar extra. Besides, the exchange is going down very quickly. I am sure that if I have need of money again, you will not delay in sending it to me. However, I ought to be able to manage now until next October OK.

To-morrow is Good Friday - a holiday of course.

It has been cold and wet lately. I had a day's salmon fishing on Killarney Lakes but, unlike salmon fishing in Newfoundland, we did not see a salmon. I have been having a pretty easy time up to the present, but am going to start into work now. By the next letter, I hope to be able to say I have kept it up.

I was over to Tralee the other day and sent my father a number of songs. I hope he will like them.

I just read the *Evolution of Sinn Fein* - a book on the development of the Republican spirit in Ireland.

The Irish situation is very ticklish at the present time. I don't know what you are thinking at all. I must send you some papers from Dublin here.

I had a letter from Mike Kennedy - a long letter. I also had a letter and a post card from Mary O'Brien to-day from Chicago. She belongs to Bell Island. I have not heard from any of the other chaps since the beginning of the holidays.

I have seen most of the sights around here. The natural scenery is wonderful, but there are some interesting ruins of monasteries, abbeys and the like, which bear visiting.

Give my love to Pop.

Your loving Son
Billy

Merton College
Oxford
April 16, 1920

My dear Mother,

In a week's time I shall be back at the above address. At present I am still in Killarney where a letter of yours dated March 30th has just reached me. I was very sorry to hear that you and my father were down with "flu", but your remark about the warm weather (I must admit it was a surprise to read you were making Ice Cream at this season of the year) was a consolation.

I wish I could give so favourable a weather report. Unfortunately it has been raining in Ireland ever since the prisoners went on hunger strike in Mountjoy on April 5th. To-day the clouds have not disappeared from the sky.

On Saturday last I went to Cork to visit Brother Colman and Brother Ryan. The former, as you know, is a native of Newfoundland and the latter is a brother of my Brother Ryan at St. Bon's. They were both very kind, and I had dinner at the North Monastery in Cork on two occasions - and it was a real Newfoundland dinner, which I enjoyed immensely.

At Cork I was able to attend, for a short while, the inquest into the murder of the Lord Mayor of Cork,⁵ which event must be already known to you. There is little doubt but that he was murdered by the police who are generally hated by the people of Ireland.

There were 104 prisoners in Mountjoy prison in Dublin who went on hunger strike because they were being treated as criminals. After eight days without food, and the Government still remaining firm, the Labour Executive declared a general strike which lasted until the release of the prisoners. The people formed processions all over Ireland. Meetings of protest were held and the rosary was recited - generally in Irish. The spirit of the people is splendid. They will never be satisfied until Ireland is free - free to make her own destiny and free from the stupid blunders of un-Christian Englishmen. Ireland will not accept any form of Home Rule. The present Home Rule Bill is most detestable. Nobody wants it. The whole question is too big for a detailed discussion here, but all my previous

⁵The Lord Mayor of Cork, Thomas MacCurtain, was shot and killed March 20, 1920 by a group of disguised men. The coroner's inquest, which received considerable publicity, concluded that MacCurtain was murdered by the police under the direction of the British Government. See Peter Hart, *The I. R. A. and Its Enemies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) 78-79.

views on the matter have been confirmed. When I get back to England I shall have more to say on this matter.

I intend to come back to Ireland in the summertime again and shall spend the following summer here, too, please God.

I hope that this letter is not so illegible as former ones. I hope you are both in good health again. I have gained somewhat in weight here. With love to Pop

Your loving Son
Billy

Diary

May 4, 1920

I have been driven for several reasons to the purchase of a note-book wherein I may record some of the events that occur, worthy of notice. I must confess, however, that the price of note-books nowadays is staggering and I believe that as the threat of Great Britain to send gold across the U.S.A. had a bullish effect on the exchange, so the report of a paper shortage in America caused a jump in paper values in this country. Indeed, it is likely paper may become a medium of exchange.

The first feeling of regret which I experienced for not having kept some sort of diary was when Father Plater⁶ told me in the train that he had kept one during his vacation in Ireland. How many events that happened there were worth a record - my visit to Cork, attending the inquest on Lord Mayor, visiting his grave ("plot reserved for Soldiers of the Irish Republic"), also my visit to the North Monastery and my new acquaintances there. I am sorry that I did not keep a diary, for I might have recorded all the good qualities I perceived in the Irish character, and some of the atrocities committed by the "innocent" policeman in their attempts to restore "law and order". However, I can say here that my sojourn in Killarney and my visit to Cork and Dublin were thoroughly enjoyed. At Dublin I visited Father Rupert Roche O.P. at St. Mary's Tallaght and my old friends John McGettigan and Jack O'Mara and Father Joseph Sheehy at All Hallows College, who treated

⁶Father Charles D. Plater (1875-1921) was an Oxford graduate and Jesuit priest who was Rector of the Jesuit hall at Oxford at this time. In 1918 he had been instrumental in having this hall, renamed *Campion*, made a permanent hall of the university. Father Plater was the founder of the Catholic Social Guild and wrote on social matters. His fellow Jesuit, the distinguished Father C. C. Martindale, described Father Plater's vocation as one to "foster and apply Catholic social principles in England and to create a system of spiritual retreats for the laity, especially for working men." See H. W. C. Davis and J. R. H. Weaver, eds., *The Dictionary of National Biography 1912-1921*, 5th ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1961) 436-437.

me very kindly.

Whilst in Killarney – “Beauty’s Home” – I had a clash with Sergeant French, who, I am amazed to know, is still living. The proceedings during the national strike to secure the release of the hunger strikers were interesting and amusing.

Another reason that has had great weight with me in taking up this daily task (I fear that it will not be daily) is that I am at present reading John Mitchell’s *Jail Journal*, which as the name implies was written whilst he was serving his sentence of imprisonment as a convict felon. Not that I am in exactly the same position as he is. But I must say that I have almost as little intercourse with the students of Merton as Mitchell had with the inhabitants of his convict ship.

I could keep on writing for a long time expressing my regrets for not having kept a diary hitherto. But time does not permit. I have a good deal of law to do. First of all there is an essay for Sir John Miles⁷ on the “Law as to Trade Unions” – quite a comprehensive subject. Then I have letters to write – Mother, Mike, and Irene. Others must wait. As regards Law, I have the splendid prospect of four exams when I return next October. I must buckle down hard now, for I want to show those fellows that an Irishman can do more than “grieve”.

This term I have taken up golf as a daily exercise. At first the game looked rather easy, but now it begins to appear more difficult. McDonald is my constant partner, and we are an amusing pair. He becomes so dejected when his ball is lost sight of and I become so vexed or “peevish” when I miss a ball in the field after a beautiful drive off the tee. However, practice makes perfect or, as the French say, *Par force de forger, on devient forgeron*. No one seems to know much about French here. They can read, I guess, but can’t speak the language.

The *Morning Post* had a long article today on the Government’s surrender to Sinn Fein. As he criticises the Government’s vacillating policy, I have no fault with him. But when he says that men convicted of the most heinous crimes are let loose and men suspected of them are also set free, and thereby ruins the work of the government’s officer, I don’t agree at all. Many of these men should never have been in prison at all. They included many brilliant men amongst them, who would be no more inclined to murder than to fly.

The cattle drives proceed in Clare. English people – Oxford undergrads – are getting the wind up. It was a little different 80 years or so ago, when the tenants were promptly evicted out of their houses without the slightest compensation and left to die starving by the

⁷John Charles Miles (1870-1963) was an Oxford graduate and lawyer who in 1899 became a Law Tutor and Fellow of Merton College. He was considered an excellent teacher and collaborated in the publication of a number of legal books. During World War I he worked on legislation dealing with labour matters and was knighted for this in 1919. See “Sir John Miles,” *Times* [London] 14 January 1963: 10.

wayside. I have nothing to say against cattle driving.

While in London on Friday, I went to Wormwood Scrubs⁸ where the 170 Irish prisoners are on hunger strike. I reached there when the meeting was about to break up. London hooligans pelted the “guard” with bricks and stones so that there were many casualties in the ranks of the Sinn Feiners. It must give great joy to Lord Robert Cecil and his colleagues to know that the underworld is with him. How do the Labour delegates reconcile this action with their declared principles of self-determination for Ireland. Labour must make itself felt a little more and then it will have some influence.

I shan't be able to write as much everyday as this. The probability is that I shan't write every day. I filled a book in Toronto with a great deal of trash that would give me a pain to read today. I read a quotation or heard it said somewhere that a diary makes one introspective. That of course is not harmful, in my opinion, except that it will never be of any use to anyone but the writer. As the opinions which I express and the facts which I note here may later be of some service, I shall try not to be introspective in this venture.

Now I must read Pollock for a while. The weather is warm and is improving. Yesterday was my 23rd birthday and I have a card of best wishes from Mary Gallivan.

Diary

May 5, 1920

As I supposed, I did not get all my letters written. However as I could not delay writing to Irene any longer, I wrote to her and Mother, leaving an answer to Mike for another day. I got an answer today from Miss McGillicuddy at Sedgeley in reply to my letter of a week ago. She is going to meet me in Birmingham some Saturday and we can see the sights and have a chat about Ireland. I only met the young lady twice in Killarney but I had the pleasure of her company from that place to Mallow. She is a schoolteacher and once was a pupil of De Valera.⁹ As I was away last weekend I fear I shall have to put off my visit to Birmingham until next week, May 15. This will give me a chance to pick up and will provide a beautiful holiday until I go down to eat more dinners a month hence.

⁸Wormwood Scrubs was a large English prison built in the 1870's on what was then scrubland. See Ken Smith with Dave Wait, *Inside Time* (London: Harrap, 1989) 19.

⁹Eamon de Valera (1882-1975) played an important part in 20th century Irish history. He was an American born Irish revolutionary who narrowly missed execution for his part in the Easter uprising of 1916. He became president of Sinn Fein, Prime Minister and then President of the Republic of Ireland. Earlier he had been a mathematics teacher and he is said to have maintained a love of mathematics throughout his lifetime. See Lord Blake and C. S. Nicholls, eds., *The Dictionary of National Biography 1971-1980* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986) 235-238.

Last night Walmsley visited me at 11:15 p.m. with the Irish looking *Westminster Gazette*. He wanted to show me an editorial calling attention to the long hushed-up attitude that appeared in Monday's *Morning Post* about the recent hunger strike at Mountjoy. The editorial says the state of things requires Home Rule, but *Morning Post*'s correspondents want "force"; and I think the latter is right. The only way England can keep Ireland is "vi et armis", and she would do it immediately were it not for the fact that U.S.A. is the champion of the rights of small nations. My friend Walmsley inveigled me into a fruitless argument in true oxonian fashion "to find out your point of view", so that I did not get to bed till 12:45. Notwithstanding this, I was up at 7:40 a.m. and off to Bishop King's Palace, but there was no mass today. Last night's *Westminster Gazette* contained a Dublin message stating that the City of Dublin Corporation by 38 votes to 5 had decided to recognize officially Dáil Éireann. Three more policemen shot. One was Sergeant McKenna who was, I believe, responsible for the arrest of Casement¹⁰ in 1916.

The Nationalist Members have decided to abstain from Parliament during the discussions of the Home Rule Bill. Owing to Mr. Walter Long's¹¹ illness, the third reading has been postponed for another week. Not much discussion is expected (except in general principles seeing that English members know nothing of Ireland). I believe Alderman O'Brien may be put back in Wormwood Scrubs any day, if he will not sign a form saying he will take part in no meetings political or non-political and will reside at ---. There is no news about Wormwood Scrubs. Apparently the government is using its Censorship. Else why should we not have heard more of the strike, and also about the sympathetic strike of the Liverpool dockers. In this country the peoples' minds are being, or have been, poisoned. A big attempt and apparently a successful one is being made to keep England from a division on the Irish Question. The lethargy of English Labour is being made capital of in that respect also.

Today I played cricket i.e. "I went to watch but remained to play" and delivered *inter*

¹⁰Sir Roger Casement (1864-1916) was knighted at the time of his retirement as a British consular official. Although he was a Protestant from Ulster, he came to believe in the cause of Irish independence. He attempted to smuggle German guns to Ireland for the Easter uprising of 1916 and for that he was tried for treason and hung following the uprising. See Holt 72,130 and *The Dictionary of National Biography, The Concise Dictionary Part II 1901-1950* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961) 77.

¹¹Walter Hume Long (1854-1924) was an Irish Unionist leader who was for a brief time Chairman of the Irish Unionist Parliamentary Party and was successful in uniting the Unionists of northern and southern Ireland. He was a long-standing British member of Parliament who played a significant role in drafting legislation regarding the number of Ulster counties excluded from legislation giving Ireland greater independence. See Stenton and Lees, vol. 3, 213.

*alia*¹² some surprisingly (to me) good balls. It is just seven years since I played cricket. “How hath old Father Time the years so quickly passed?” 1913. Then I was very delicate. How sick I was with the excitement of cricket. I don’t think I wore glasses either. One could indulge in pleasant memories of those days. Where have all my college friends of these days gone? Ned Hogan, Nix Duchemin, Riv Costigan, Charles Fox, Harold Knight, Frank Hogan, Charles McKay and C. Most of them are living I think.

Today I have read a considerable amount of John Mitchell’s *Jail Journal* which is now half read. It is wonderfully interesting, more so than Pollock’s *Law of Torts*, I regret. However I have been able to do some study on the latter subject and must to bed now that I might arise with a thirst for more.

Diary

May 6, 1920

Merton College Tower possesses some wonderful bells, and it is their pealing now that gives me leisure to write. Today is the first time they have played since my coming up. It must be some anniversary. Why don’t they ring oftener? The music – of course I don’t profess to be a judge of good music – is so very sweet to hear that I began a search of Moore’s *Poetical Works* to find *The Bells of Shandon*¹³ – a little poetical gem lying hid in some mediocre bundle of verse. Whilst in Cork I was able to see the little Protestant Shandon church¹⁴ with its graceful and inspiring tower. The waters of the River Lee looked pleasant too. Here, the bells of Merton have not the same romantic sound. The country is flat, not like Cork, and the pleasant waters are the Isis – now thronged with the practising “Eights”.

I can’t study whilst these chimes continue; but yet I would not bid them cease. They are too much of a stranger not to give them a kindly welcome. They grow fainter, however, and now have ceased altogether – for the time being.

It amuses me very much to read the cool, detached editorials of the *Times* on the Home Rule Bill soon ready for the Committee Stage. These men know, or ought to know,

¹²*Inter alia* is Latin meaning “among other things.”

¹³See Francis Mahony (“Father Prout”), “The Bells of Shandon,” *The Oxford Book of English Verse 1250-1918*, ed. Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939) 807-809.

¹⁴This church is St. Anne’s Shandon which was built in 1722. Rev. Francis Mahony’s poem has made the church’s bells well known. See P. J. Hartnett, ed., *Cork City Its History and Antiquities* (Cork: Guy and Co. Ltd.) 33-34, reprinted from the *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society*, Vol. XLVIII., No.167, January - June, 1943.

Ireland will not accept anything short of a Republic – or a Home Rule on Dominion lines. But this will never and ought never to appease a true Republican. Now is the time for Ireland to shake off the shackles that have bound her for so long.

Some sort of an alliance was formed last night, with Sir Edward Carson¹⁵ as the prime mover, to give succour to the poor Southern Unionists. The Southern Unionists have been living on the fat of the land for too long. I refer to business men. In the west, of course, there is the land agitation. The more the merrier.

My shoulders ache today after my bowling yesterday. It is ever thus.

Diary

May 9, 1920

I have just returned from posting two letters – one to Mary Gallivan in Killarney, and the other to Mike Kennedy in Toronto. It is a very chilly evening and not at all pleasant sitting here with the windows open.

This morning, I saw Henry Somerville for the first time in 10 days. He looks pale and overworked. Alistair M^cDonald was here at the time and as usual the conversation turned on Ireland. It was too short to be fruitful. In the afternoon I went for a walk to Iffley with Donny MacGregor¹⁶ and Norman Rogers¹⁷ and Harold Knight. There we met Ned

¹⁵Edward Carson (1854-1935) was an important Unionist leader. He was an Irishman who became a distinguished lawyer in both Ireland and England. He was a politician, and became Solicitor-General and Attorney-General for England and received a knighthood in 1900. During World War I he served as first lord of the admiralty. He was opposed to home rule for Ireland and worked passionately for the cause of continued Irish union with England. He was a gifted public speaker and used this talent in organizing the opposition of Protestant Ulster to Irish independence. His involvement played a very significant part in the decision to exempt the counties of Ulster in the Government of Ireland Bill of 1920. See L. G. Wickham Legg, ed., *The Dictionary of National Biography 1931-1940*, 2nd ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1950) 146-151.

¹⁶Donald G. MacGregor (1895-1982) was the 1917 Rhodes Scholar for Nova Scotia. He received his Bachelor of Arts from Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia in 1918, then attended Oxford's New College where he received a B.A. and M.A. He later taught Physics for forty-two years at Mount Allison University, Sackville, New Brunswick. See Browne, *Eighty-Four Years*, 69,70 and B.M. Greene, ed., *Who's Who in Canada 1947-48* (Toronto: International Press Limited, 1948) 930 and Obituaries, *Chronicle-Herald* [Halifax, N.S.] 21 April 1982: 32.

¹⁷Norman Rogers (1894-1940) was a student from Amherst, Nova Scotia studying at Oxford's University College. He graduated from Acadia University, Wolfville, Nova Scotia with a B.A. in 1919 and received an M.A., B.Litt. and B.C.L. from Oxford. Following his education at Oxford he was admitted to the Nova Scotia Bar, taught at Acadia University in Wolfville, Nova

Crawford¹⁸ and Sears and the six of us had tea together at some little inn – after which we returned home around by the lock at Iffley and down by the river. Knight and I discussed legal topics principally.

Sir Hamar Greenwood¹⁹ was elected with about 9000 majority for Sunderland. Dr. Rutherford, Labour, was the runner up with highly increased vote over that polled at the general election. *The New Statesmen* has some very fine articles re Ireland. This week there is a very good one on the recent Irish labour embargo on foodstuffs.

Yesterday I had tea with Gordon after a successful round of golf. Poor Gordon knows nothing about his country although he has lived there most of his life. He knows nothing and wants to know nothing of Gaelic traditions or literature. Yet he tells me he has written to the *Times*.

I finished an essay today on the Trade Disputes Act etc. I also finished the *Jail Journal* which I found understandably interesting. Yesterday I read 40 pages of it in an hour not noticing the time go. It reads far better than many a novel. Last night I read *The Mother* by P. H. Pearse²⁰ and some of his translations from the Gaelic. All beautiful. Good night.

Scotia, served as secretary to Prime Minister Mackenzie King, and taught at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. In 1935 he became a member of parliament and Minister of Labour in the MacKenzie King government. Norman Rogers died during World War II while serving as Canada's Minister of National Defence. See Browne, *Eighty-Four Years*, 69,70 and W. Stewart Wallace, ed., *The Macmillan Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, 4th ed. (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1978) 719.

¹⁸Edward Hugh Martin Crawford (1894-1972) was born at Benton Harbour, Newfoundland. He was a Rhodes Scholar from Newfoundland and he attended Oxford's University College, obtaining a B.A. in Jurisprudence, B. C. L. and M. A. He was called to the English Bar, then moved to Winnipeg, Manitoba where he was called to the Manitoba Bar in 1921. He practised law in Manitoba for more than fifty years, other than during World War II when he served in the Royal Canadian Air Force. See Browne *Eighty-Four Years*, 68,70 and Deaths and Funerals, *Winnipeg Free Press* 29 May 1972: 18.

¹⁹Sir Hamar Greenwood (1870-1948) was born in Canada and educated at the University of Toronto, then moved to England where he was admitted to the Bar and became a long-serving member of Parliament. He was Chief Secretary for Ireland from April 1920 until October 1922 and was generally disliked by the Irish for his denial of the fact of British reprisals in Ireland. See Holt 204-205 and Stenton and Lees, 137.

²⁰Patrick Pearse (1879-1916) was a lawyer, writer, poet, editor, Irish language teacher and founder and headmaster of a boy's high school. He became a passionate Irish revolutionary and was executed for his part in the Easter uprising in Dublin in 1916. Many believed that he anticipated, possibly provoked, his own martyrdom for the cause of Irish freedom. He became an Irish folk hero whose writings are often quoted. See C. S. Nicholls, ed., *The Dictionary of National Biography, Missing Persons*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) 516-517 and Raymond J. Porter, *P. H.*

Diary

May 10, 1920

It is very important that I should record an entry for tonight, for I can frankly say that I've never experienced the same sensations as those which I've experienced tonight

It must be known that I went out of Hall on Saturday night without permission from the Steward, Mr. Scott. This constitutes a very grave crime and the criminal has to be "sconced". This means that he has to drink a quart of beer at one draught. If he does this, the sconcer has to do the same and the sconced must do it again if the sconcer downs his. Well, I happened to be the offender against the refectory rule and so had to down a sconce, which I did, after much debating since Saturday and with much ease, were it not for the fact that my face was flushed and my heart beat rapidly because I knew the eyes of all were upon me. I drank it. At first I had no definite idea of finishing it, but when I saw the bottom appearing above the reddish liquid in the tankard, I was encouraged to swallow the remainder at a good speed. It appears from the flattering remarks passed around that I made good time. However, be that as it may, I soon began to feel a certain numbness and heaviness in my head. I ate a good dinner and when the second sconce arrived took a hearty sip.

After dinner, not feeling at all sure of myself, I went to the library and read P.H. Pearse's charming stories "The Roads", "The Thief", "The Keening Woman" which three appear in *The Mother*²¹ etc. After that, I came back to Merton, bought a ticket for a concert from the porter, and went to the Junior Common Room where I saw Scott reading per usual. We came out and walked very unsteadily across the quad. I went into the J.C.R., took up the *Westminster Gazette*, but was not there very long when in came Ritchie and Scott. I pretended, though I don't know how effective my pretense was, to be intoxicated. As a matter of fact, I was quite all right in that particular [respect]. It ended up by Scott wheeling me home on a wheelbarrow and I shook hands with Ritchie and Scott before bidding them good night. So I have come to read Chapter 2 of *Dicey*²².

Today I purchased a new pair of trousers at the increased price of 25/6 or 4/4 more than the last ones.

The papers this morning told of the shooting of Detective Revell, who was wearing a coat of mail. Another train held up going to Thurles. The cattle driving still continues. I read quite a sane article in the *New Europe* on Ireland. Originally it appeared in the *New*

Pearse (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1973).

²¹*The Mother and Other Stories* was published in 1916. See Porter 79,81.

²²This was probably a reference to A.V. Dicey and his well known work *Law of the Constitution*.

York Times, and from an Englishman's point of view was well put. But, an Englishman who knows nothing of Ireland, of Irish history, of Irish sentiment can never estimate properly Irish politics.

It was rather warm today as I found out on the golf course where I was beaten by MacDonald by three holes. It was the first time he beat me. I have finished all of *Jail Journal* – a most interesting book. Now for the “Reasons against home rule” by Ulsterists.²³

It appears from the *Daily Mail* that yesterday all France did honour to Joan of Arc. From the report I saw, there never was such a wonderful scene in France. Marshal Foch²⁴ stood at the foot of her statue and reviewed the troops passing by. I wonder how France really feels about it. Is there a hope that as a nation they will become Catholic again. I think so.

Diary

May 12th, 1920

Not feeling well today. Did not play golf. Went for a walk alone, Henry Somerville not being in. Saw *The Ragamuffin*. Went to the Merton Baths watching a Club swim. The people, ladies included, all wore one-piece bathing suits – which would not be allowed on the other side. I had a swim for about a quarter of an hour, but felt quite tired afterwards.

De Zulueta²⁵ delivered his inaugural lecture this morning in Roman Law, but it was too deep for me to appreciate him. G.K. Chesterton is coming to the Union tomorrow night to speak against Divorce. It will be a very good treat.

Wrote to Mother, Wylie, [and others] tonight.

Diary

²³This was first published in 1912. See Arthur J. Balfour et al., S. Rosenbaum, ed., *Against Home Rule*, Reissued (Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1970).

²⁴Ferdinand Foch (1851-1929) became Commander of the Allied forces and Marshal of France late in the First World War. Ferdinand Foch was a Catholic. See Holger Herwig and Neil Heyman, *Biographical Dictionary of World War I* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1982) 151-154.

²⁵Francis de Zulueta (1878-1958) was a distinguished Oxford graduate, lawyer and scholar who taught at Oxford for many years. He was an expert in the field of Roman Law. See E. T. Williams and Helen Palmer, eds., *The Dictionary of National Biography 1951-1960* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971) 1097-1099. For a list of his publications see David Daube, ed., *Studies in the Roman Law of Sale* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959) ix-xi.

May 13, 1920

I have just returned from hearing G.K. Chesterton speak to the Union. The motion was "That this house would reject Lord Buckmaster's²⁶ Bill for the Extension of Divorce Facilities". Excepting Beverley Nichols, the speakers on neither side were good i.e. before G. K. appeared. One of the speakers, A.M. Harris, who although a precocious youth, has too large an idea of his powers, announced that London had 40 million inhabitants – an error of knowledge that aroused much amusement. Beverley Nichols spoke in his usual sing song, monotonous way with some criticisms of G. K.'s "The Superstition of Divorce"²⁷ – reference being made to a sentence "Being married to a drunkard is not one bit worse than being married to a teetotaller". The arguments were quite obvious ones, and one could not be impressed with the lack of originality on the part of the speakers. Even Beverley Nichols wished to show us the evils which sometimes arise from marriage – lunacy, desertion, adultery, etc..

G. K. Chesterton alluded to the extract taken from his book which Beverley Nichols had called a flippancy and a quibble, saying, "How much better to be married to a nice comfortable drunkard than to a cold, bitter prig?" G. K. – I should describe him – is a large man with a large head of grayish black hair worn like a tam-o-shanter, large florid face, a white shirt and tight dress suit in which he by no means appeared at home. He is tall, erect, and as Beverley Nichols says "carries too much weight in the world".

He asked "Why have marriages at all?". Divorce is continually getting easier. A time will come when B.A.A.M. will mean "bachelor again and married". He said that now, "marriage is a preliminary for Divorce". He aroused some enthusiasm when he said he was in sympathy with Bolsheviks, but created a sensation when he said he was also in sympathy with Banglers. He said the institution of marriage was older and more fundamental than the institution of property. Marriage is a solemn vow. His simile of the Army was a striking one, "You should not desert the thing you're trying to improve". His concluding remarks referred to the time which was at hand when the filthy industrial panic would cease, and there would come a demand for healthy peasantry and healthy family life, and this country

²⁶Stanley Buckmaster (1861-1934) was an Oxford graduate, lawyer, Member of Parliament, judge and member of the House of Lords. He was considered to be a very fine judge but was best known as a public speaker. He spoke frequently on the reform of the divorce laws. See L. G. Wickham Legg, ed., *The Dictionary of National Biography 1931-1940*, 2nd ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1950) 119-121.

²⁷See G. K. Chesterton, *The Collected Works of G. K. Chesterton IV* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1987) 225.

would be found wanting.²⁸

Chesterton spoke in paradoxes. His thought was subtle, although not quite so clear as in his books. He is not nearly so dogmatic as Belloc, and is not at all egotistical. His speech is hearty, and his laugh is good to hear. He was given a splendid hearing, of course “although many did not agree with what he said”. Oxford undergrads, I think, know less real knowledge than they are credited with. They have certainly not the experience nor the insight that Chesterton has. They listen to him and applaud but they come away unconvinced. They would come away from the best speaker in the world the same way. I think that people in Oxford should vote for the best debates and not for the side you favour, since no one has an open mind. However the subject is one [which] requires ample time to develop fully and I have already encroached at considerable length upon my slumbers. I should have come home earlier tonight.

Diary

May 15, 1920

It really seems an age since I last wrote in this diary, which goes to show how I find the time passing.

Alistair M^cDonald was unable to play golf yesterday and gave up before the first hole. As I was playing for No. 2 alone, old Townshend came up to me and asked whether I would mind playing a round with him. I was glad to be able to do so, and learned some profitable hints. We both lost a ball and I had the privilege of losing the match. At the eighth hole he was seven up. The old fellow then gave me a stroke a hole. He won the first. He lost his ball; we tied the next and I won the last, thus becoming victor of the lie.

Last evening I went to the B.A. club to hear Dr. McLean speak on the American educational system. Speaking truthfully, I was not impressed with the man who lacks personality. It was a very poorly attended meeting in Lincoln Hall.

Today I went to Reading, but found little to amuse me there except walking up and down - a most unprofitable pastime. Came back early.

After dinner I attended a meeting of the Irish Club at the House, where it was decided that the Club was in favour of the principle of forming an amalgamation of all of the clubs in Oxford – inspired by the League of Nations. The project does not appeal to me. I am unwilling to believe that the men who made such declarations as self-determination and rights of small Nations etc. during the war are sincere. There is an ulterior object lurking somewhere and it might be the fear of Bolshevism, which is spreading westward from

²⁸For a slightly different version of Chesterton’s comments in the debate that evening see Beverley Nichols, 25 (London: Jonathan Cape, 1926) 51-53.

Russia.

There was a very good article in the *Statesmen* this week on Irish self-determination. The writer would call the Sinn Fein bluff by withdrawing the forces from Ireland. He thinks the Republic would be impossible. Civil War would be imminent and could only be averted by reconciliation of North East and the rest. He considers that North East could defeat the rest of Ireland, which I think is highly exaggerated. The impression he wishes to give, however, is that Ulster is able to look after herself, for there is more anxiety in England than there is in Ulster. After the Irish Club, I went to the American Club and regaled myself with lemonade and sandwiches, listened to some very noisy choruses, looked at a few papers, spoke to a few Americans and wandered home – an eventful day in many respects, but particularly because I opened not a book today.

This term I am not mixing very well with my friends. However, tomorrow I shall go to see Miss P and J. The weather today was very fine. An American mail has arrived but no Newfoundland mail yet.

Diary

May 16, 1920 Sunday

I believe that few things are done well if done hurriedly and that anything which is worth doing at all is worth doing well. This is my belief. Whether I carry it out is another matter. Whether it is always possible to carry it out is a problem. As old Townshend would say “Do as the Priest says, not as he does”. However, I can’t concur with the literalness of this maxim, because I should be the last to think that all the holy men whose lives are devoted to religion are lip-servers. There are clergymen, and they will be found more often I think in the Protestant Churches, who are lip-servers because their position often depends on that form of service. We have as proof, if such a proof were wanting, the manner in which the public press have denounced the attitude of the Bishops of the Established Church for their hostility to Divorce. The E. church must shut up or clear out.

Sears and I went to mass together, came home together and talked about Ireland. He tried to tell me that I was letting my sympathies carry me away from the path of reason; but he was a long way off from showing me how. He showed me that he did not like English people, but that he did like England, a distinction which I think is not sound. People who have been to Ireland say that they not only like Ireland but like Irish people. How then do they logically reconcile this divergence of taste i.e. in the preference of England to Ireland. A man who was not aware of Ireland’s wrongs in the past – of which most Irish men are fully aware – can’t talk about Ireland and denounce her. In this discussion I did not take a very antagonistic attitude because it is futile. My ideas are distasteful to Englishmen, and to this Canadian of Irish extraction and of English tendency they were not especially

pleasing. Somerville came in, in time, to prevent any excesses.

Somerville lectured on “The Psychology of Socialism” at Newman Club tonight. It was the most interesting discussion that I have heard there. His speech was very lucid and displayed a thorough grasp of his subject. Some of the speakers who followed tried to trip him up on the various incidents to which he had referred, but he came out best. Father Martindale²⁹ assumed the role of apologist which seems to be generally necessary at all the Newman meetings. There must be something radically wrong with our C.Y.M. that they always have to have someone to trail after them and cover-up their tracks i.e. apologize for them.

I was to tea to Mrs. Chadwick’s, where I met a Mr. G. who, so he informs me, was a former President of Newman Club and contemporary in Newman affairs of de Zulueta.

I believe that the Eights week will considerably relieve the monotony of the past three weeks. Thursday promises something – Basket Party – whilst Sunday, who shall say?

Diary

May 18, 1920

Today there is rain and wind that is reminiscent of Newfoundland weather and of one night I spent in Cork at the Hotel Metropole. I was in Cork during the inquest on the late Lord Mayor Thomas MacCurtain. All the time I was there it rained almost incessantly. But the incident to which I refer has more to do with wind than rain, although perhaps both, as is likely, were in unison. The Hotel is situated across the street – King Street – from the King Street Police Barracks. Someone told me that night, Saturday night, that an attack might be made on that barracks any night and that I should be well advised to change my hotel. The information must have made a great impression on me, for when I went to bed I could not sleep. The room was hot being, strange to say, steam heated. The wind blew outside from “the pleasant waters of the river Lee” across the roofs of various coal sheds uninterrupted to my loose fitting window, and there it had to stop. There was, however, a distinct desire on its part to enter for it kept knocking continuously, even after I had in

²⁹Cyril Charles Martindale (1879-1963) was a Jesuit priest who was very active in the international Catholic university movement. He had been a distinguished student at Oxford and taught at Oxford for a number of years. During the years of World War I he cared for the spiritual needs of the injured soldiers housed at Oxford, and after the war he continued his ministry to both the rich and poor in England, later ministering to the spiritual needs of sailors. Father Martindale was a scholar who wrote prolifically and he became known for his ability to convey Catholic theology intellectually but simply in his sermons, broadcasts and writings. See *Catholic Authors*, 503-504 and Williams and Nicholls, eds., 736-737.

desperation shut down the window tight. Doing this kept the bently blind from swinging backwards and forwards adding to the din. But the “catch” on the window was out of commission, so that, even with the aid of a thick piece of paper which I poked down between the lath and the window, I could not stop the nuisance. To make matters worse, something would bang! every quarter of an hour or more. To my vivid and terrified and wearied imagination this sounded most realistic as a pistol shot. My heart would not be still. It palpitated until from sheer exhaustion I went to sleep.

I heard all the hours chime until 5 o'clock and had just sunk into the sleep of the weary when, a tramp, tramp, tramp became audible and a distinct jingle could be heard as the marching feet came near my door. In my feverish state, I felt convinced that it was the police or soldiers and they would raid my room. My plans were made up in an instant to push the chest of drawers to the door and the bed behind it. I looked anxiously at the thin partition and felt almost beaten when the sound of quick steps now at the door kept right on without a suggestion of a stop. They soon were beyond my hearing and the danger was past. But my heart would keep on beating in an unreasonable manner. Sleep was now impossible. So I lay in bed thinking about plans of defence until I heard a thunderous knock along the passage. My heart jumped but was instantly reassured by the soft, sweet tones of the Irish porter saying “Ten minutes of six, sir.” There was no raid and the hotel was beginning its normal life again. Then, that noise awhile ago, it must have been a waiter with a tray of breakfast dishes. But how to explain those banging noises. Unable to solve this problem, I gave it up and fell at long last into a brief sleep from which I awoke at 8:30 a.m. scarcely a bit freshened by my night's rest. I asked a maid in the passage what the noise was and I was told that there were some stables below and that the stable door had been left open during the night. If I were proprietor of that Hotel I would sue the troops of the stable for nuisance and 10,000 pounds damages.

All of which brings me back to Oxford where my study (for want of a better name, as a matter of fact, it is a breakfast room, lunch room, tea room, etc.) door rattles with the wind and I hear the rush of wind in the trees outside like the noise that Pinsent's Falls makes to the packer when he is within a quarter of a mile of its salmon filled waters.

Last night, I listened to a very interesting talk on the “Tyranny of Conformity” by Mr. Barker of New College. Mr. Barker has recently returned from a trip to the USA, where he spent much time at American colleges. His impressions were very true and called up fond memories to all University students from the other side. He described fraternity life, the passion for sanitation, the organization of Americans, the human interest everyone takes in everyone else, and the tendency of Americans to apply principles to their logical conclusions.

The meeting being thrown open to discussion, “Red” Barr from Virginia got up and in a very excited manner, and in a very emphatic style, said some very sound criticisms in a very funny way. His audience was in roars of laughter. His mind was full, as Blanchard

said, and he tried very hard to empty it. His writing to Mr. Chesterton on prohibition was very funny. Red is what Englishman call "a priceless man". Griffiths spoke with strong feeling in that grim manner of his with some gesticulation with his fist. His voice is very soft and his accent not sharp and incisive. His words were very thoughtful and their meaning sound.

Today, I finished lectures in Torts and Real Property and also invested in a "whites" outfit.

I received two letters from mother, and papers, and a letter from Mary Gallivan in Killarney. Mary is a spoiled girl, I fear, in some ways. She's quite generous, and was very kind to me especially in bringing me cocoa at 10:30 p.m.. She has a good athletic figure but is not in form at all. I must tell her to take more athletics, otherwise she will become too stout. Living in a small town, with its narrow outlook, with its dull pleasures and it's unhealthy gossip is enough to spoil any girl of a self-willed nature. The people in Killarney, too, are as stuffed into houses with no lawns and no backyards that their surroundings are not very inspiring. Irishmen have carried this crowding, due of course, to the confiscation of their lands by foreigners, into America. See Boston or St. John's.

Rioting seems to be continuing in Ulster. Troops (2150) have arrived in the south of Ireland and will be established at various points. 150 have taken over Skibbereen. A fight is imminent, I think, unless the Sinn Fein leaders have some other plans. Now that the British Government has sent troops to protect the police, recruiting for that body may begin again. However it will keep the British army busy to patrol the whole of Ireland.

The climate here seems to be worse this term than in previous terms. At least that is the explanation I put upon the fact that in the morning I am so tired that I can't get up. Starting tomorrow I shall get up every morning until the 4's are done. There's a resolution!

Diary

May 20, 1920

Beginning of The Eights! Before describing the gay scenes however, I should mention a rather interesting debate on Ireland last evening at the Labour Club. Mr. Agnew read a paper to open the debate on the Dominion plan of Settlement. It was a pity that he had to leave on the conclusion of his speech, for he would have found it interesting. The whole four people had their speeches almost in the same groove – except perhaps Ellison who wished to hang on to the Union, God knows why. He was a painful speaker. Collis of Balliol has an irritating voice and manner of shaking his head when he talks. I heard him at the Union once before and did not like him. He certainly did not know what he was talking about last night. The others did not have a good grasp of Irish affairs either.

By these preliminary disparaging remarks, it seems that I am making the case clear

for a later speaker. However, although I did speak, it is not with the idea just mentioned that I say the above. What is said above is a matter of fact not of opinion.

It was very decent of the Secretary of the Labour Club to let me speak at all. I was extremely anxious to speak and had interrupted the first two or three speakers shamefully. In my speech, I could only confine myself to a criticism of the remarks of the two previous speakers. I broke very little new ground except to declare that the Cork police murdered the Lord Mayor. I do not know how long I spoke. I felt, after a moment or so, quite at home and when I got into my subject not a bit excited. I had the advantage over some of the speakers of having been to Ireland recently and was able to recount some of the little adventures that helped to relieve the monotony of my visit – the affair with Sergeant French, the ragged newsboy in Cork, etc. Apparently my interruptions had made some people curious to hear my speech. Whether that is so or whether they were fed up, most people cleared out when I had finished.

All of which brings [me] to the events of this glorious day. I was called at “quarter past seven, sir” - that old familiar sound, accompanied by the quick tread and bustling person of Chief Scout Harry W. At 7:30 a.m., I did something unique. I got up and had a bath. Needless to say, I felt the effects of early rising before the day was over. I met Jarvis and Bliss in their punt up the Cher and helped them to paddle back to the barge, from which I walked back to Merton with Ray B.

This afternoon the picnic party of two chaperones, three young ladies and a number of young gentlemen with Mr. Grindle assembled at Salter’s Barge. Arranging ourselves into two punts, we set off and soon found ourselves moored to the far side of the river at the end of a long line of punts, each of which had its pole stuck into the bottom to keep the boat in position. There was a forest of poles.

Nothing very exciting happened in the first race. A little thrill as we saw the blades flash into the sun and sink into the water again. Soon a boat appears around the bend. We see the heaving bodies and then there is another just behind. New College II and Keble – they row through although the second boat is only a short distance behind at our position.

At the finish of the race, when all the eights have passed down, all the punts cast themselves loose and push themselves or drift out into midstream. What a pretty scene. Pretty ladies, happy undergrads, prim chaperones, jolly punters, stand or sit or half-sit and half-lie in the flat bottomed punts. There are many punts, so that it is with some little difficulty we manage to extricate our boat at length from the fleet. We go down the river and leave the forest of poles behind; we escape being run down by the “Alaska” - narrowly - and soon are tied fast together with the other punt near the shore. Here we have tea from Thermos bottles – Miss Grindle and I. Another race comes. This time we can see the yelling crowd that runs along the tow path to shout encouragement to the struggling crews.

Corpus is bumped³⁰ and Queens bumps in the Gut.

Another change of position to view the next race – the race of the day. We are in a splendid position, for we saw Magdalen bump Christ Church and New College bump University almost simultaneously. Merton paddled by the mess, and along came St. John's, pursued by Oriel, pursued by Balliol, pursued by someone who bumped them and Oriel bumped Johns. This was a good race – very thrilling for all except Merton.

That ended the picnic. We poled home by degrees, landed at Salter's, walked halfway up the Board Walk and returned from an interesting talk with Miss Grindle to fetch a basket.

Tonight, I heard Mr. Graham, M. P. for Centre Edinburgh, and Honourable McNamara. The former is a young man, who speaks like a book, very cleverly. The other is an old red-faced bluffer – a politician who always promises but never fulfills. Good night.

Diary

May 24, 1920

The sound of men shouting and cheering along the tow path for the five o'clock race has made me wake up from a reading of Shaw's "Economic" essay in *Socialism*. Naturally this is a wonderful week at Oxford, for it is Eights week. Hark, those six shots denote a bump. The cheering is now silent. The race must be nearly over.

I have looked at the Eights from nearly every angle. On Saturday Pond and I saw the start for two races. We saw Young Ellis in the Keble boat and saw Magdalen bump New College.

However the most interesting part of the Eights is not the races. It is that pretty melee of punts that one sees after the six o'clock race. Hundreds of punts and canoes with crowds of people – men in white and women in all the other colours of the rainbow – have jammed themselves together into a heterogeneous mass that is most artistic. The punters with their long poles, that resemble knitting needles as McDonald says, are not very sure of themselves and betray uneasiness. Very slowly the mass disintegrates, some breaking off and going up the Cher, others return to the barges and the rest go up or down the river. The whole process is like the breakup of an ice flow by a change of wind. One should really be out in that mass of boats to appreciate the pleasant sensation which the scene gives. There is a natural feeling about the whole ceremony that makes one feel intimate with everyone else. The

³⁰For these races the boats follow each other and each boat attempts to actually hit or bump the stern of the boat ahead with its bow, while trying not to be bumped by the boat behind. See John Richard Thackrah, *The University and Colleges of Oxford* (Lavenham: Terence Dalton Limited, 1981) 45 or Norman Longmate, *Oxford Triumphant* (London: Phoenix House Ltd, 1954) 52.

English reserve is not apparent; it has been melted by the burning sun and dissolved in the ruffled waters of the Isis. At any rate, there is about Oxford at present that fellow-feeling one has in a large party. The friends and relatives of all the undergrads have come up for the occasion. Nature has blessed Oxford with a most precious gift, fine whether. And all is well here.

Yesterday we had a most exciting encounter with a poor wee mouse of which Burns writes so appealingly and which has many a time driven the blood from a woman's cheeks. I saw him in the morning in my cupboard but was not sure. So I let him lie. In the afternoon, however, notwithstanding the presence of three talkative males, he issued forth from somewhere and marched towards the cupboard. We spied him. He attempted at first unsuccessfully to climb in and at length succeeded in his object. Somerville, practical man, shut the doors and asked for a cat. This method did not appeal to me, so I opened the doors, took out a bottom drawer and disclosed the vagrant trespasser who scurried out amidst a shower of excited, but badly aimed, kicks and blows to seek shelter in a fireplace. There he was poked by Somerville again until the latter was begged by me to desist. On my suggestion, a match was applied to the paper in the grate so that soon the fire was burning brightly. Speculation was made as to whereabouts of Mr. Mouse and, as he did not appear to be anxious to come out, we started to remove the fresh coals and paper and wood already burnt. In the midst of this, a little drunken object straggled forth to have a series of blows showered on him by the man with the shovel. The man with the tongs added to the din and finally the object of our attentions was raised aloft on the shovel with the salutation, "Get some water" – not out of consideration for his sufferings, but merely to drown him. Another suggestion of cremation being forthcoming, Mr. Mouse was thrown unceremoniously (twitching), on the fire, where in an instant he was cruelly burned to death.

Today I saw a sight devoid of the cruel methods of torture adopted by us. A butcher's boy discovered a mouse in his van. He got a stick and went for the mouse who, of course, darted away across the street where he was followed by the boy who disappeared from my view behind the window, from which he shortly afterwards appeared with the look that bespeaks triumph.

However I must dress to see the six o'clock race.

Diary

May 25, 1920

Merton bumped University yesterday as expected. Today we rowed through making a good start but a bad finish. The weather continues warm.

Last evening the party of thirteen assembled at Timms' boat house at 7:30 o'clock

and set sail from there up the river, five in each of two punts and three in Hov-Kari. In company with “Bobby” and Miss Moreland, I was in the canoe. We had dinner on the banks. The meal was a very fine one and everyone enjoyed it. After dinner we told stories until 11:00 p.m. when we began to start back arriving at the boat house at 11:35, from which we set off at once for College leaving all the ladies under the care of the one married gentleman. I just managed to get in at 11:58.

Today I received an unexpected call from Ned Crawford just before lunch. I went to University, and who was there? Father Nangle³¹ in civies, Jackman, Howlett and Ralph Herder.³² We had lunch together in Butterfield’s room. Harold Knight and Rogers came in but the party left shortly afterward for the Clarendon, from which they motored away in a hurry for London. This was at the command of Howlett, who appeared to me to be in a savage humour. I don’t know what to think of the bunch. They went away so quickly that it seems like a dream.

The Irish railwaymen will not run trains bearing munitions; nor will they run trains with police and prisoners. That’s the idea. I suppose the English leaders will say that this is not authorized. They would like to see a fight with all the advantage on one side. If Labour in England wishes to maintain (or gain or regain) its prestige, it must be whole-hearted in its support of the Irish railwaymen. Labour recognizes no such artificial barrier as nationality. Let Labour live up to its assertions.

I returned to *Dacey* today, and read some 70 pages or more, understanding it more or less. There are several statements in his book that I should like to criticize i.e. in the

³¹Thomas F. Nangle was a Newfoundland Catholic priest assigned to the Newfoundland Regiment in France during World War I. He was very popular with soldiers from all religions. Following the war Father Nangle was Newfoundland’s representative on the War Graves Commission and he played an important role in the construction of Newfoundland war memorials especially the Memorial at Beaumont Hamel in France. Around this time Father Nangle wrote from London to the Newfoundland War Veterans’ Association, among others, regarding the controversy over the poor condition of Newfoundland’s soldiers’ graves. Thomas Nangle left the priesthood, married and moved to Rhodesia in the early 1930’s. See “Nangle, Thomas F,” *Encyclopaedia of Newfoundland and Labrador*, vol. 4, 1993 and “Rev. Major Nangle Writes,” *Daily News* [St. John’s, Nfld.] 28 June 1920: 3.

³²Ralph Herder (1894-1955), son of W. J. Herder, was a Newfoundlander who had fought in World War I. In late June of 1920 his father’s paper reported that he had just returned to St. John’s from a three month “health trip to Spain and Mediterranean ports.” After his father’s death in 1922, he became secretary-treasurer of his family’s paper, *The Evening Telegram*, and then president and publisher of the paper. Ralph Herder and his family lived in the home next to Bill Browne’s on Rennie’s Mill Road for many years. See “Herder, Ralph Barnes,” *Dictionary of Newfoundland and Labrador Biography*, 1990 and “Personal,” *Evening Telegram* [St. John’s, Nfld.] 26 June 1920: 6.

application of certain of his principles of the Rule of Law to Ireland. From what reading I have done, it appears to me that Englishmen have had almost a different “law” altogether from Irishmen. Suspension of Habeas Corpus³³ is not rare in Ireland. However, I shall leave further discussion until I have finished the book, which I shall do this week.

Should I mention how pleasant it is here, either sitting on my doorstep going into my garden where I may listen to the birds singing and whistling and watch them skimming gracefully to and from above my head, or at night sitting peacefully on my sofa listening to the murmuring sounds of evening - sounds that must come from that part of Oxford beyond the river - or asleep. Good night.

Diary

June 3, 1920

Corpus Christi. A party of Catholic undergrads are going over to Thame today to attend a procession of the Blessed Sacrament there, leaving here at 12:15 and returning about 6:30 p.m.. It is cool today – quite a change after the warm days we have had.

Yesterday morning I had breakfast with Rev. F.W. Greene³⁴ who was Chaplain on the S.S. Cornwall when she was at St. John’s last July. They took part in that Flat Island affair³⁵. Acworth was there and we discussed the eccentricities of Johnstone the Newdigate poet – and his roommate.

I have become lax in my correspondence, not having received any letters myself from abroad (except mother) since my return from Ireland. I am beginning to fear that my letters were held up. I must drop a note this morning to several people to whom I wrote long letters

³³*Habeas corpus* is Latin meaning you have the body. This is the name given to a variety of court processes each having the objective of bringing a person before the court or judge. *Habeas corpus* is generally regarded as the great constitutional guarantee of individual liberty, by ensuring that persons have their liberty restrained only by due process.

³⁴Father Greene was holidaying in Europe at this time. The St. John’s paper reported that Father Greene and Father Nangle visited and prayed at many graves of the Newfoundland soldiers. See “Rev. Dr. Greene Visits Heroes’ Graves,” *Evening Telegram* [St. John’s, Nfld.] 26 May 1920: 6.

³⁵The Flat Island affair occurred in July of 1919 when A. B. Morine, then Justice Minister, sent the warship Cornwall to this settlement (located in his own riding) to locate fishermen believed to be selling liquor during Prohibition. The fishermen in question were away fishing in Labrador and were later arrested by a Government boat. See “Flat Islands, Bonavista Bay,” *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador*, vol. 2, 1984 and Ian D. M. McDonald, edited by J. K. Hiller, *To Each His Own* (St. John’s, Nfld.: Institute of Social and Economic Research, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1987) 78.

in Ireland and have not yet received a reply.

On Monday I borrowed 10 pounds from Henry Somerville and then went for a paddle with him. We had tea at the Cadena with Sears and Hershey. On Tuesday I played golf with Miller beating him eight holes to four. Miller began to play last term. Although I did two holes of the twelve rather badly, I did all the others pretty well – 5,5, 9, 11, 5,7, 5,6, 6,4, 4,5. This is a great improvement on any of my previous scores.

I am getting very tired of College life at present and I attribute it to not playing enough games. The occasional game of golf I get on a cool day is not sufficient to utilize my surplus energy which needs a healthy outlet.

I don't remember anything of very great importance since my previous record, unless hearing of a lecture by Lord Dunsany³⁶ last night could be so considered. He spoke on "The Drama of the Stage" - a very matter-of-fact thing - and he read one of his plays *If Shakespeare Lived Again*.³⁷ Father Cuthbert gave a lecture on "Hop-Picking" at Newman. The next number of the I.U.M. will contain my essay on *Newman Club Toronto*.

7:00 p.m. I have just returned from our trip to Thame. On our arrival we were met by Mrs. Griswolde and her daughters. Mrs. Griswolde is a very capable woman who smokes cigarettes incessantly. She speaks in a rather hoarse voice – probably due to over smoking. She sings well too. I hear she was Pauline Chase in the original Peter Pan. She was most energetic today and managed everything beautifully. I'm not sure how many children she has. Her sister, who resembles her very much, was also present.

The house is a 13th century one, which has been lately acquired by Catholics and renovated. Originally the chapel, dormitory and residence were all connected. Now, the tiny little chapel adjoins the dormitory by a crumbling wall with a large window in it, but is not joined to the house. The dormitory upstairs is very interesting. The ceiling had been plastered but the plaster has mostly been removed so that the original roof is visible. The roof is supported by about five solid beams with braces running all along the roof at every two or three feet. On account of the small size of the chapel, a sacristy has been improvised outdoors but very convenient to the door of the chapel.

This house is called the Prebendal Home. The inhabitants always speak of the Abbot who owned the little Chapel. Some Cardinal used to live here also. I know, however, that Bishop Grosseteste lived here.

We were given a top hole lunch out on the lawn shortly after arrival. The ceremonies

³⁶Lord Dunsany, born Edward Plunkett, (1878-1957) inherited his Irish title and had strong ties with both England and Ireland. He was opposed to Irish nationalism and was taken prisoner by the rebels in the uprising of Easter 1916. Lord Dunsany, the "poet-peer", was well known as a writer of plays, short stories, novels and poetry. See Williams and Palmer 819-820 and James Gleeson, *Bloody Sunday*, 2nd ed. (London: Four Square, 1963) 30.

³⁷See Lord Dunsany *Plays of Near and Far* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1923) 191.

began at four, and consisted in a procession from the Chapel around the garden to an altar erected on the lawn behind the house. There were children, women and girls and undergrads in the procession. The weather, of course, was most auspicious and everything went off without a hitch. Long before the ceremony began, a large crowd had assembled to watch. It consisted in the main of stout ladies, motherly looking, and stout girls with a great many young children and babies. There were few men amongst the spectators.

After the procession and Benediction were over we had tea and I did my bit in helping others. After tea we chatted for a bit before bidding goodbye and boarding the bus, bound for home. We were given a hearty cheer as we lumbered heavily away and we waived our caps in reply. All were agreed that the outing had been a most pleasant one.

Diary

June 5, 1920 Saturday

I did not do much work today. McDonald and I went out for golf exercise. I lost several golf balls during the day and McDonald lost his only one. It was a funny thing that I should lose two in succession from a drive, as I had not the faintest idea where they went. I was completely off form and did not make one drive for the day.

I went to confession this evening to Father O'Hare and came home early so that I shall go to bed early as well.

Diary

June 6, 1920. Sunday

Mass (early) and Holy Communion. Called on Monsignor Barns at 4:20. Not at home. Called again at 5:00. Had tea. A couple of others came in before 6 when there was Benediction. In the evening went to St. Aloysius to see the Corpus Christi Procession. Newman was represented by a few people.

Diary

June 24, 1920

I am seated on the platform of Strabane Railway Station waiting for the 5:30 p.m. train to leave for Killybegs. I came up from Dublin this morning. In Dublin yesterday I saw Brother Ryan, Father Greene, John McGettigan and Jack O'Mara. I stayed at the Ivanhoe Hotel, which I found quite comfortable.

A police chief - Roberts - was shot at in Dublin whilst I was there at 10 o'clock in the morning.

Derry is undergoing a spasm of civil war. From a lady on the train I learned that the trouble started through a plot. Some policemen's daughters were set on to some soldiers. I fear I did not understand her fully. However over twenty people had been shot and hundreds wounded by the shooting. The troops have fired on the Sinn Feiners.

The House of Commons doesn't seem to be anxious to assert law and order in Derry, although a railway porter here tried to tell me that the Unionists gave up their arms to the troops last evening before the troops fired. The Sinn Feiners got the shots. All this trouble is religion, and may be put down to Carson who quite recently urged his constituents to emphasize the religion issue. This city has always been the hotbed of trouble.

Diary

June 25, 1920

I am sitting at the window of a hotel in the town of Killybegs³⁸, having spent last night here. The window overlooks a magnificent harbour protected on every side and where the fresh wind from the sea now blowing raises not the slightest ripple. It is a harbour where a regatta could be rowed safely in a storm. A narrow passage seems to lead from an outer harbour or bay into the harbour around which the town stands, at least around the part of which the majority of buildings stand, and an occasional house or building stands sentinel at different distances around. A solitary wharf, locally called the peer, stands above the water near the shore, and the seagulls whose knowledge of harbours must be immense seem to regard this erection as uncanny or unnatural for they either don't rest on it at all, or touch the edge for a second and fly off again.

Same day. Carrick. I am sitting at another window in another hotel in the town of Carrick. I reached here about 2:20 after about two hours trip on my bike from Killybegs. Father McDwyer was not at home, but I met his housekeeper, with whom I talked for quite a while. She remembered Mrs. Kentleton. So, I came to this hotel where I am staying until I find out where Father McDwyer can get me a place.

This afternoon I went down to Teelin and had the company of the coastguard's daughter on my journey. She is a very dark skinned, thin person with a rather nice English lipping (r silent or as w) accent. She lives in a very big house owned by the British Government. I do not know why this big place is necessary. I suppose it is to give the

³⁸In comparison with other parts of Ireland, Killybegs had very little violence at this time. See Peter Collins, ed. *Nationalism and Unionism, Conflict in Ireland 1885-1921* (Antrim: The Institute of Irish Studies, The Queen's University of Belfast, 1994) 170.

warning in case of an attack by somebody.

I spent about an hour on the breakwater talking with the "Manager" of the C.F.B. The C.F.B. is an institution which gives (or sells) nets and ropes etc. to the fishermen and receives semi-annual installments (payments). The fishing is done by letting down a net fastened to the shore and trying to catch the salmon when they jump near it. Slow game. The fishing here appears to be very poor but the harbour is very nice. I hope to catch some salmon before long. I went down to the river and was fortunate to see a trout jump.

Diary

June 26, 1920

I am sitting on the top of Slieve League and am monarch of all I survey, my might there "none to dispute". This view has been considered the finest in the British Isles.

Diary

June 27, 1920. Sunday.

The foregoing must seem a brief account for a view so extravagantly termed, and needs some explanation. After I had written the above I became aware that I was not on the highest point at all. So I shut up the book, and with renewed ardour began the ascent to the summit. On my arrival there, I spoke to the old shepherd whose presence on an eminence above me had lured me on and had shaken off my lethargy and given me renewed energy. I threw myself down on the top of this part of Slieve League and surveyed the country around.

At my back rose a huge knife ridge that shut out the sea. It is known locally as the One Man Pass. In front, I could see for miles, one hill rising above another, until the furthestmost was lost in the mist. To the left I could see the sea in the distance. A little cleft in the hills told me where Glencolumbkille nestled, and the tiny houses near the dazzling white road gave me another clue. Carrick lay far below and directly in front. It is a very small, prettily situated village thrown across a little stream that empties into Donegal Bay at Teelin. Teelin looked bigger than Carrick, whilst the huge Coastguard Station made it look like a metropolis. The opening to the sea looked very insufficient to withstand the strong winds that might blow from that quarter, although when I stood on the breakwater the harbour seemed well protected. I could see Killybegs Bay made by a long low arm jutting out into the sea. I could see Sligo in Connaught, and smoke was rising at different points. In Mallock more was visible also.

My old friend was an interesting companion. His gray hairs had seen sixty-four

winters, of which twenty-six were spent in the Western States. His discourse was of the situation political, but his outlook was not sanguine. Unmarried he was, and his sad voice, rendered sadder by an occasional heavy sigh, betokened a man who felt that his end was near. However, he could and he did give me a lesson in courage for the still distant peaks of the One Man Pass had no terror for him, and he invited me to go up, saying that it would be a pity to miss it since I had come so far.

It was the prospect of seeing the sea, the open sea that stretched unfettered to my own dear home that urged me on. So up we went, my companion in his bare feet and gray hairs more agile than I, forty years his junior. Up we went, over heather and uncovered limestone, yes up until I could see no land above me. We passed two wells above which crosses had been erected. The water was fairly cool, but very dirty and did not quench my cigarette caused thirst. Along the top it seems stations are erected, by whom I cannot tell. It must have entailed a huge amount of labour to collect these chunks of marble and arrange them in piles like that. Down a precipitous cliff at an angle of 70 degrees, I could see the placid ocean wash the edges of the cliff. On Carrigan Head there was a watch tower that reminded me of Cabot Tower on Signal Hill in St. John's. There was a small loch behind the tower. The coast of Connaught was plainly visible, and was delightful. To the north I could see the island of Aranmore and to the west and north there was an island with a lighthouse. Halfway to the Connaught coast there was another island whose name escapes me now. The view was magnificent – the finest I've ever seen, in truth. But, I had to leave my shepherd friend with a word of thanks and make my way down the winding road from marble blocks back home. I passed a man shearing sheep on the way, and I stopped to have a word with him.

Yesterday morning, I saw the cycle race from Dublin to Donegal and back pass into Carrick. It is an annual event, of which the most difficult feat is the hill at Glengesh, which is the steepest and longest in Ireland.

I must not fail to record my visit to the "big man", who is no less than six feet tall, with ugly, pock marked features, wears glasses but has the kindest of faces withal. He was civility and hospitality par excellence. His curate Father Sweeney and a Holy Father were there. I went home at 11:15 p.m. by twilight and with an invitation to dinner at 4 p.m. today.

Something very amusing interested me yesterday. It was only a farmer standing by the river watching his cow. But he stood there for hours with his hands in his pockets, just thinking. Above him on the hill a young woman ran out and sat on the rock to watch the cycles go by. Further up the bank of the river, I saw other people, men and women, watching their cattle with the same cogitating air. How sad it seems but it is beautiful. *What were they thinking about?*³⁹

³⁹This sentence was translated from French.

Diary

Killybegs to Strabane July 3, 1920

I got fed up with Carrick very quickly although I did a good deal of study there. It rained all the time I was there, and my sole amusement consisted in watching the police play baseball on the street.

I spent last night in Killybegs and had the good fortune to see a lorry of soldiers go to Carrick to bring over the police. The lorry was decorated with Sinn Fein flags and signs. While the lorries were stopped at Killybegs a Miss Doherty behaved in what must have been a provocative way to the soldiers. She seemed to rejoice because a little tommy, who could not reach up to the catch fastening the tail of the lorry, had the misfortune to have it fall on his head. She would not move an inch for the Coastguards or the officer and held her elbow in the road.

Killybegs looked very nice this morning and I was strongly tempted to spend the weekend there. But the noise of the jackdaws in the morning was awful and woke me prematurely. It is a very difficult thing to write on one of Mr. Balfour's light railways. We were stopped for a little while, but are moving again. This is Bruckless.

My cold is worse if anything.

Diary

July 17, 1920

Killarney Lower Lake near Ross Pt.

I am almost a regular pirate for I am the captain of the good ship "Nellie Secundis" and I have divested myself of my shoes and stockings and lighted my pipe. Another ship is in sight, however, and may make me put them on again. Although I joined the Golf Club, I prefer coming out on the Lake. This is the fourth time I have been out, but the first time alone. Mrs. Carroll took me out one day in her good ship and yesterday Leo and I rowed over to O'Sullivan's Cascade. This very pretty falls that is shut in from the lake by the trees received its name, so it is told, in a very curious manner. It seems that the great O'Sullivan was eager for the hunt. So one morning, he girded his loins about him and called his dogs around him and set out. He soon roused a stag, and his dogs followed at top speed. They pursued the animal all day, but at nightfall O'Sullivan, footsore and weary, seeing that his dogs had lost the scent in the darkness, gave up the chase. He was starting towards home when he heard a voice call him back. Turning he beheld Finn McCool. "You have been hunting my stag," says Finn. "He was the finest I've ever saw" says O'Sullivan. "You are a brave man" says Finn, "and, as you are thirsty, I'll give you a drink". So he stamped his heel in the rock and out spurted the water by which O'Sullivan quenched his thirst. Tis quite

a pretty tale and harmonizes with the situation at the foot of the mountain and above the shore of the Lower Lake.

I may say that the rain keeps on every day, although the sun makes his appearance occasionally for a little while, as if to assure us that he still hopes to be able to spend more time in our company at a later date. I have only seen the stars once since I came to Ireland. But this is not only because the clouds overcast the sky but for the additional reason that owing to the “new time” which regulates some of our movements, it is possible to read outdoors at midnight. It is funny, but it’s true!

The Dublin Post Office was raided this Thursday and the Castle and Lodge Mails were confiscated. It makes the British Government and the Irish Executive look ridiculous to see the repetition of an occurrence of some months ago, when the mail van was held up, and some miscellaneous shootings of various “spies” followed. We shall look forward to the happenings of the next few days with renewed interest. The number of incidents, some amusing, some tragic, which have occurred during the past couple of weeks is very great. Shootings of policemen and attacks on barracks, hold-ups of mails, dismissals of trainmen, form some of those events of which the newspapers are filled.

Diary

July 29, 1920

As I have done very often recently, I have rowed to the Point of the Library and drawn up my boat on the shore. It is beginning to rain so that I must be brief. Yesterday I had the pleasure of rowing Judy and Mac to this spot.

Diary

July 30, 1920

Oh, what a shock I received today when I learned that Judy had gone back yesterday. I felt sure that my face must have betrayed the surprise I felt at the announcement. And I let yesterday go by without going to see her. I kept away from the house so that I should not see her, lest I might betray – as if people had not already jumped to conclusions – my feelings. Love comes but once and then perhaps too late. For the first time in ten months I have fallen in love, and this time, God help me, with a married woman. Am I right in thinking that she cares even the least for me. Or is it that her eyes only practised shooting Cupid’s darts, and at me as I was the only one within reach. But we had confidences, gently whispered, to recall which makes me feel sorrowful and happy, sorrowful that the joy was so fleeting and is past, happy that such a thing did really happen.

Never have I met anyone with whom I seemed to be in so perfect a harmony and never was my case more hopeless. When I first met her she was standing at the station door, as I passed in. She was strikingly pretty. Large, blue grey, fun-filled eyes, a mouth shaped for kissing and lips as red and soft as any I ever saw. A simple costume of dark stuff, a blue ribboned bonnet shaped hat and that is all. As I passed out of the station she was still here, and when I looked behind she was waving her hand. Knowing that it was not to me, I looked about and saw Mary McG approaching. I asked her to introduce me but was stunned to learn that this beautiful girl was already married. I thought at first that such knowledge would kill any affections that would arise. But no, I could not help falling in love. My work dropped off and for the last week I have done very little indeed at the History of the Law of Real Property.

On Wednesday, we (Abbie, J., etc.) went out on the lake to the Point of the Library, and I hardly need say that it was thoroughly enjoyed.

What a caring, charming girl. Perhaps, rather I am sure, I am not the first boy she has smitten so hard. But did she not whisper to me that it was a pity she had married so young and other things I consider too sacred to write? Oh, what a lucky, unhappy, disappointed wretch am I.

But yet, I suppose, that like the weather, my mind will grow accustomed to the absence of that beautiful flower that was plucked when still a bud. My heart has heaved many a sigh since I first saw her and will heave many another, before her memory will fade. Oh God, watch over her and keep her free from harm and help me to be reconciled to my fate.

Diary

September 14, 1920

I have grown accustomed.

“In some districts loyalists and members of H.M.F. have received notices threatening the destruction of their houses in certain eventualities.

Under these circumstances it had been decided that for every loyalist’s house so destroyed the house of a Republican leader will be similarly dealt with. It is naturally to be hoped that the necessity for such reprisals will not arise, and therefore these warnings of the punishment which will follow any destruction of loyalists’ houses are being widely circulated.”

Above notice was posted during the night of September 13 – 14 on several houses around the town of Killarney.

Merton College
November 10, 1920

My dear Mother,

I received your letter of October 26th two days ago. I was glad to hear that Pop and you are members of the Irish Self Determination League.

I enclose the pictures of the places in Mallow. I forgot to bring films with me when I went to Balbriggan and could not get any there.

Balbriggan is only a poor town which depends for its existence on two factories - hosiery. One of these was destroyed and the other was attempted⁴⁰, but a neighbouring doctor intervened and saved the place. It was a Providential intervention.

When in Balbriggan I talked to a lot of the poor people. I sent one chap whose house had been destroyed two old sets of clothes, you know the two oldest suits. It was not very great charity on my part. Your heart would ache for the poor people. The little children were playing in the streets as usual outside the burnt remains of their homes.

As regards insurance, the Insurance Companies will not pay the insurance on houses destroyed in this manner. Risks of 80 per cent are required before any insurance will be given. The people send in their claims to the High Court, and the people of the district have to pay increased rates. The County Councils will not pay these claims. So the British Government which controls the Irish funds will not give the Councils their grants. But as the Government want to make the people pay, they have just passed a Bill which gives the Police power to seize the property of any person who refuses to pay the money to the Government.

You will realize that the financial situation is nearly desperate.

I enclose a copy of a letter which I sent to *The Times* but they would not publish the letter. I wish you would show it to Phil Brown⁴¹ and any others interested.

⁴⁰In September of 1920 Balbriggan was attacked, partially burned and two men believed to be Irish Republican Army officers were killed by the Black and Tans. This action was in retaliation for the I. R. A.'s killing of a police inspector and wounding of a constable. See Holt 219.

⁴¹Phillip J. Brown (1878-1945) was a cousin of Bill Browne - they shared the same grandfather (Phillip Brown c.1815-May 23, 1891 of Sound Island, Placentia Bay, Nfld.). Phil Brown was born in Placentia Bay, attended St. Bonaventure's College, and later worked as a draper with George Knowling Ltd. in St. John's, then had his own store in St. John's. He became well known for his long involvement as an oarsman and coxwain in the St. John's Regatta, participating first in 1901. He was considered a quiet gentleman who was much respected by his crews. Phil Brown was admitted to the St. John's Regatta Hall of Fame in 1987. See Bill Browne, letter to his son Billy, 7 March 1945 and *The Royal St. John's Regatta Hall of Fame*, ed. Randy Dodge, 3 Jul. 2000 <<http://www.infonet.st-johns.nf.ca/providers/Regatta/hof1987pb.html>>

As to pictures of Mallow, they speak for themselves. Over a hundred towns have been treated in the same way. The terrible condition of the poor people is becoming even worse. 28 creameries have been burned down, so that thousands of farmers are unable to dispose of their milk and must throw it away. At present, there is a likelihood of all the Railways being closed down. The railwaymen refuse to carry soldiers or policemen who are armed. So, on each refusal, the railwaymen are dismissed, with the gradual result of paralysing the railway transport.

In Tralee, from which I sent Pop the songs in the spring, the Police will not allow any shops to open, will not allow people to get bread, will not allow farmers to dispose of their milk, so that the people are faced with starvation. This has been done because two Black and Tans⁴² have been kidnapped by Sinn Feiners and have not been returned.

Give my best love to Pop. Glad to see Mr. Devine and Mr. Meaney⁴³ speak up.

Your loving Son

Billy

[This letter is badly damaged, making complete transcription impossible. However the letter has been included as it describes such an important day in Irish history.]

Merton College

Oxford

November 24, 1920

Dear Mother,

I have not heard from you since last writing and so expect a letter any time now.

I was up in London for three days at the weekend and spent the time at Mrs. Fenn's⁴⁴

⁴²Black and Tans refers to a group of mainly former World War I soldiers hired in England to supplement the Royal Irish Constabulary. Initially there was a shortage of dark green (nearly black) material for the usual R.I.C. uniforms, so the first members in 1920 wore a mixture of khaki and green. This name remained long after their uniforms were identical to the other members of the R.I.C. See Holt 200-201.

⁴³John M. Devine and John T. Meaney had been delegates from the Self Determination for Ireland League of Newfoundland to the Irish Race Convention in Ottawa. They had recently returned to St. John's and were reporting to a meeting of the League which was open to the public and attended by approximately 1000 people. The paper reported that they both delivered inspiring speeches which were well received. Mr. Devine spoke about the dissociation of religion and the Irish cause, and Mr. Meaney gave the historical and political background. See "Resolutions Passed at Last Nights Meeting S. D. I. L.," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 28 October 1920: 12.

⁴⁴Mrs. Fenn may be Mrs. Ellie Finn. See *Eighty-Four Years*, 71.

place, which is about 15 miles outside London. Jim Gallivan, her brother, is over from Killarney to see a doctor, so that we had a pleasant time together. I may spend my Christmas vacation in Surrey (near Croydon), instead of going to France as I [had intended].

On Thursday last, I wrote a little article for the *Irish* ___ and received a cheque for 1 pound 11 and 6, or about \$7.00 and was agreeable surprised. This is the first time I have received payment for my journalistic abilities, but it won't be the last (please God).

You have probably received very conflicting news about Ireland on Sunday, and probably the Irish in Newfoundland (some of them) will wish to condemn what happened. Fourteen military officers who are now serving as policemen or Court martial officials were shot about 9.30 a.m. in bed⁴⁵..... All the papers here have these shootings as murders, and the Government have been congratulating themselves ever since. The Government, when murders were few, said its policy was succeeding; now, when there are many murders, it says that it must keep up the good work. However, anyone who has traced the history of the past nine months in Ireland was not surprised at what happened. On many occasions, the soldiers shot Sinn Fein prisoners, [or hung] Kevin Barry⁴⁶, and they murdered over a hundred ___ defenceless men, women and children, all the time the Sinn Feiners observed the rules of war, never touching unarmed men, treating their prisoners kindly always. They have behaved chivalrously all along. But, if the other side will not fight clean, then it will have to taste its own medicine. That is what happened.

But British brutality overlooks all that and becomes more brutal and more inhumane. On Sunday afternoon, 17 lorries of troops went to a football match where there were 7000 people. They fired on the people at once. There was a [panic] and the soldiers kept [firing]. They killed eleven with bullets. They bayoneted a little boy of 10. A young woman, engaged to be married next week, was trampled to death. Scores of people were hit with bullets, whilst the number of people injured in the stampede must have been very large. The people fled in terror as best they could, climbed over high fences, leaving their [hats] and coats behind⁴⁷

Last night they shot three [Sinn Fein] prisoners dead. Of course [Dublin] Castle says they tried to escape, but "Dead men tell no tales." Only foreigners will be fooled by what Dublin Castle says.

On Monday, when the soldiers were taking some prisoners, a crowd of little boys

⁴⁵There has been a great deal written about the two events which occurred on "Bloody Sunday". See, for example, "Red Sunday in Dublin," *Times* [London] 22 November 1920: 12

⁴⁶Kevin Barry was an 18 year old medical student and member of the I.R.A. who was arrested following the attack and death of six British soldiers. He was hung November 1, 1920. See Holt 220-223.

⁴⁷For another description of this event of "Bloody Sunday" see "Croke Park Panic," *Times* [London] 23 November 1920: 12

booed them. So, the gallant heroes fired and killed a little chap named Riley and wounded another. All over the country, the soldiers are killing and burning. Last week a priest was murdered..... Hard times for Ireland are ahead. All must stand together for this is going to become a war of extermination - a conquest.

I hope you will tell Phil about this. Let him see the letter. I am very busy at present or I would write him. I will do so as soon as I can.

I had a long letter from Mike and must answer soon.

I am working very hard now, and getting ready for exams in June.

If you like to send me those gloves you bought last year they will be acceptable now, [as the] others are dirty and worn from [wearing] them playing football.

Give my love to Pop. I hope the winter will not be a hard one. It is fine here, yet.

Your loving Son

Billy

Merton College
Oxford
February 25, 1921

My dearest Mother,

Your loving letter of the 14th instant in answer to mine of a few weeks ago arrived today with the draft for 20 pounds enclosed. Many thanks for the promptness you took to send it. I shall try hard to be as economical as possible in using it. As I wrote you only a couple of days ago I have no news. I am going to spend the Easter vacation at Wallington in Surrey at Mrs. Fenn's with another chap (a Catholic) of this College. He comes from Ceylon.

As to going home next summer, I shall not decide until the time comes. Harold Knight is going home, I believe. If I did so, I could get a little better known - through Football and other things. But perhaps that will be all right in any case. You see, if I stay away too long, they may forget me. However.....

Working as usual.

Love to Pop. Thank you again.

Your loving Son

Billy

Merton College
Oxford
March 9, 1921

Dear Mother,

I received two letters and two papers from you on Monday, but have been busy studying for and writing exams since. I did all right on all the papers but one of the papers was very hard. However it is not a final exam and is only intended as a test.

I am leaving here on Saturday and will spend the vacation probably at Mrs. Fenn's place in Surrey. But I've been told that there is a chance of a truce with Ireland by St. Pat's Day. If there is, I'm for Ireland at once. Oh I hope it's true. But Irishmen have been so often fooled that it's almost too good to be true.

The weather here is fine. Excuse the short letter. Feeling tired. Going to see *Julius Caesar* to-night.

Love to Pop and Self

Your loving Son

Billy

P.S. longer letter next time. B.

Wallington

Surrey

(but write to Merton College, Oxford)

March 22, 1921

My dearest Mother,

I received your letter of the 1st instant yesterday. I was glad to see my father taking such a lively interest in the affairs of poor old Ireland. I stopped sending the Irish papers for a while for some reason or other. I shall try and send you some to-morrow. Let me know if you wish them and I'll keep sending them regularly. I shall not get the *Independent* until after June because I shall be working most of the time from this on.

I have not written to my cousin Margaret as I've dropped nearly all except my most immediate friends. You and Mike and Annie are my only letter writers now.

I'm enjoying my stay here splendidly. The time goes very quickly. I've been here 10 days already and it has been most enjoyable. The air is delightful. I sleep well, I eat well and I'm beginning to study well. 'Tis fine.

The news from Ireland is ever the same. Yesterday near Killarney, the Sinn Feiners killed 8 soldiers and wounded 10 in a battle. I expect Killarney will be wrecked after that.

You see the British can hang their prisoners. The Irish treat theirs like prisoners of war. "They're still hanging men and women for the wearing of the green." In England they're going to do away with hanging people under 21, but the Act will not apply to Ireland.

The weather here is very good and warm.

I've no other news to tell you. So I shall close, however with best love to Pop and yourself.

Longer letter next time.

Your loving Son

Billy

P.S. Friday next is Good Friday. We are near the church here and I expect to be an assistant in the Holy Week ceremonies as there are very few Catholics in this neighbourhood. B.

Merton College

Oxford

May 26, 1921

My dear Mother,

Just a line to let you know I passed my exams satisfactorily at the Bar in London. I shall probably do the Finals in October.

I received your letter of 11th May this morning.

Love to Pop.

Billy

Merton College

Oxford

September 27, 1921

My dearest Mother,

I was very pleased to find that at last you had no occasion to grieve for my health. I am now feeling as well as ever I did and am quite tanned and almost "good looking".

Let me correct a wrong impression that you have received - I have received the B.A. at Oxford. The exams of which I was speaking were those at the Bar in London. I had intended writing them in October next; but owing to the regrettable fact that I could not do any hard work I found it necessary to postpone the exams. It was only through convenience I intended taking them so soon. I have until next June to pass them. But I am in a better position than Harold Knight in that respect, and will probably work more with him this year. I have one exam in Part I to do, whilst he has three. I have four exams in Part II and that is

all I have to do. I shall probably try for the B.C.L.⁴⁸ also, but will not take it if the work is too hard. I don't think it is, though.

As regards Irish history etc., I have learned a great deal of it, and all that I am doing at present is keeping abreast of the times. You need have no fears about my future. I have been able to meet men much older than myself and discuss political questions with them. This I regard as more important than being able to know, without consulting a book, some obscure legal point. Everything has gone well, thank God. So you need not worry.

I write you this from Dublin where I have been for the past week, and where I intend to stay as long as possible before October 13. You need not worry about the danger. There is none. If the Conference takes place, it will last some little time. I have met many of the members of Dáil Éireann⁴⁹. They are very fine men.

On Sunday I went to All Hallows and saw Father Sheehy and the boys McGettigan, Bartlett, Summers, Murphy, and Joe Miller from Placentia. They are all well and have become Sinn Fein rebels.

I wrote to Miss Lyne yesterday and told her what you said. I don't know when she will get the letter as the Railwaymen are on strike against a reduction in wages. Similar reductions were made and accepted in England but the Irish will not accept them.

Father Mike is now probably too busy to write me. He has not yet answered my letter of June 29th. Give my love to dear old Pop. I only wish he could be here. We would engage in the smuggling business, but not smuggling liquor.

Your loving Son
Billy

15 Wytham Street
or
Merton College
Oxford
November 1, 1921

My dearest Mother,

This is in answer to yours of October 18th which took only eight days by the

⁴⁸Oxford's B. C. L. degree is a Bachelor of Civil Law. The B. C. L. degree is an advanced or graduate degree, roughly equivalent to the North American Masters in Law or L. L. M. See F. H. Lawson, *The Oxford Law School* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968) 36, footnote.

⁴⁹For further information regarding Bill Browne's meetings with the members of the Dáil and the Irish Delegation to Westminster see *Eighty-Four Years*, 80-83.

Sachem.⁵⁰ You will see by the address given above, that you can write to either address. I leave it to you to select which address you like. As I go into College everyday, I get any letters that come for me there. On the other hand, if you wrote to the place where I'm staying, I shall get your letter earlier.

To-day I sent you two photographs which I had taken the day I took my degree. I hope you will not be too severe on my moustache, to which I have become quite accustomed. The pictures are good, I think.

Now, if you want to be really nice and send me a nice Christmas gift, you can have your photo taken - you and Pop. I should be very happy if you will do that. I think it's a shame that I haven't even a snapshot of either of you. What is Mon doing that he does not take your picture?

Harold and Seb⁵¹ were here to tea with me on Saturday and they were very complimentary about my "digs" - as we call the place where we stay. Yes, I agree with you that Harold is a nice chap.

I am wondering whether I should get another suit soon. Clothes are very cheap here. I enclose a sample of a suit I got in Dublin for eight guineas or about thirty-five dollars of our money. If Pop wants a suit he could send his measurements (and the price of it). Then I wonder whether I should need a dress suit in St. John's. I can't afford it at present. Here I seldom need one and, when I did, I borrowed one. Of course, all the undergrads have them.

I know that I'm going to have heavy expenses between this and when I go home; but as I have not calculated them all yet, I shan't know how much I need till about next May or June. Previous to this I paid what I owed in College at the beginning of each term. Now I am paying by the week. It is much cheaper so that this year, fortunately, will be cheaper than the previous years. The chief item will not come until June. So I think things are not too bad.

I hope Pop is well and likes my photo. My landlady is very good to me. Father Burke is back at Toronto, I hear.

Love to you and Pop

Billy

P.S. If you like, you could send me some money, because I do not know whether the

⁵⁰The Sachem was a steamer owned by the Furness Withy Company which carried both passengers and cargo and sailed among Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, England and the U.S. See "'Sachem' and 'Digby'," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 31 May 1920: 7.

⁵¹Sebastian Paul Young (1897-1934) was a Newfoundlander who attended Oxford 1921-1922 and then completed his medical studies in 1925 at Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia. See Browne, *Eighty-Four Years a Newfoundlander*, 68 and Nancy Faulkner, Dalhousie University Alumni Records, email to the author, 22 June 2000.

Rhodes people will give us a bigger bonus this year. Not very much, but it would be for the Christmas vacation. B.

15 Wytham Street
Oxford
December 1, 1921

My dearest Mother,

I had two letters from you on Tuesday, and in one of them I received the draft for twenty-five pounds. Thank you very much. You say that it does not seem very long since you sent the last. Well, it is at least two months. You don't think that it is a pleasure for me to be writing so often for money. As a matter of fact, I shall have to get an advance of my scholarship to enable me to spend the vacation. However, you can console yourself with the thought that I shall be through here by June.

I am glad you liked the photos. I liked them and most of my friends did. But Harold Knight seems to have some foolish jealousy of me for, alone of all my acquaintances, he said he did not like it "because it did not flatter" me. He is an odd chap. 'Tis funny my father differs from you in preferring the stern, or pouty looking picture. I suppose he says that with a face like that he is able to hold his own with the English - "they were never any good."

I am studying regularly although I occasionally get a bit "fed up" - I find Oxford so dull, and get no real pleasure from being here.

What I do enjoy most is the Football at which our team has been most successful recently.

It is difficult to speak about the Irish question. The only thing we know definitely is



that the British Government has said it will not ask "Ulster" to surrender its rights. The English people are utterly indifferent to the present negotiations and, personally, I have not the least bit of respect for the English people who think only of themselves like that. Individually one likes them. But to me their newspapers are so full of lies and nonsense which they read very gullibly that at times I am terribly disgusted, and sometimes, thank God, I can be amused.

Well it is a sign that Christmas is coming, when the carollers are singing *Adeste Fideles* and other hymns outside my window. They won't go away until they get some money or - - water..... Well, I went out to them and asked them to call next week and they went away.

We get vacation in a week and I expect to go to London and Paris for a while. I shall probably go to Leeds and Liverpool when Harry Somerville is going away. Give my love to Pop and always

Your loving Son
Billy

15 Wytham Street
Oxford
February 11, 1922

My dear Mother,

I've not head from you since last writing, so that the unexpected receipt of two letters via the Sagem is still considerably ahead of the letters going the longer way round. This week has gone by very quickly; it always does when one is busy as well as regular, and I've been both for the past week. I'm studying for the Bar exams which I will take in March, please God, in five or six weeks time, only. I hope to be well prepared.

The Irish Players - a company of Irish actors playing Irish plays - have been at Oxford this week. The Irish Society entertained them to luncheon, so that I had the honour of meeting most of them, besides seeing them act. They are a very good company, and are going to London on Monday for six weeks. Their principal play deals with the life of a Belfast family - a Protestant family in which the father is a black Orangeman, and the mother and children unexceptionally tolerant. The name of the play is *Mixed Marriage*. The old man won't let his son marry a Catholic and, when he catches him talking with the girl in his kitchen, he goes into a fury. He ceases to support his Catholic fellow workmen and goes to the Orange Lodge in a temper to denounce the strike as a Popish plot. Then the Catholics and Protestants fight again in the streets and the poor girl rushing out to save her brother, who is trying to get the people to stop fighting, is shot down and brought in to die in the arms of her lover. The old man is not a bit softened by the terrible tragedy he has caused and his last words in the play are "I was right", while his good wife lays her weeping head on

his breast saying "You poor old man". The last act is a scene of a house near the riot and it is one of the most exciting scenes possible to imagine. I was agreeably surprised to find the audience unusually enthusiastic and cheered all the actors at the end of the performance.

You will be interested to know I had tea with Harold Knight one day, and borrowed a book from him, to show that there was no ill feeling.

Mother, I must confess that I was in grave financial difficulties in Paris until the arrival of my Irish friends. Now, although I can borrow money here when I am in a pinch or otherwise, I don't like to be so dependent on other people's generosity. I have had to do it many a time. You see we don't get our scholarship money until the vacation is finished. In other words, I fear I have to ask you for another loan to help me out. I'm sure you think I'm dreadfully extravagant, but I'm not really. Paris naturally was expensive, but it is less expensive than London, at present, I should think. My next vacation, I shall probably go to Dublin. My exams will be in the second week of vacation so that my vacation will be shorter than usual. Harold Knight will probably be writing his exams at the same time. I don't think he'll be any better off this time than I will be.

We have had a touch of cold weather here and it is most agreeable to me - not enough to give us skating, unfortunately.

Give my love to Pop, who I hope is well.

Your loving Son,
Billy

15 Wytham Street
Oxford
April 19, 1922

My dear Mother,

I am sending you a quantity of stationary which I bought at a sale at Blackheath, near where I am staying. I hope you get it all right. If you sell it at the prices which were usual when I was at home, you ought to make a good profit. I do not know what the freight charges will be. There ought to be no duty for they are mostly school supplies. The prices I worked out in dollars are for \$4.80 to the pound, which gives a fair margin.

	Pounds-S-D.	\$.c
1000 Envelopes	4-6	1.08
Paper & Envelopes to match	2-3	.54
I Packet Paper	1-9	.42
16 Copybooks	1-4	.32
1 Gross Pencils	4-6	1.08
3 dozen pen holders @ 10 c. per doz	2-6	.60
1 dozen pen holders	-51/2	.11

1 gross nibs	1-3	.30
3 dozen rubbers @ ½ d ea.	1-6	.36
1 pencil sharpener	-6	.12
	I pound-0-61/2	\$4.93

Let me know before I come home if there are any goods you would like me to order while I am here. You know that you can import your goods as well as anybody else.

Now, you should add the other costs, freight, insurance, duty, carriage and see how much profit you can make on this order so that we may see if it is worthwhile dealing with this firm. They are an old house and were very agreeable to me when I was there.

Irish news is a bit brighter to-day. The Rebels are losing ground now. I was glad to see that the American Friends of Irish Freedom refused money to the Republicans.

I shall be back at Oxford a week from to-morrow. I am doing a little work daily, but am in good condition - never felt better, almost.

I hope Pop and you are well. You should keep the pencil sharpener. Let me know if there are other things which the scholars of Butler's or Centenary Hall desire. I can get it when I come down again. Hope this lot reaches you OK.

Yours lovingly
Billy

15 Wytham Street
Oxford
April 25, 1922

My dear Mother,

On Saturday last I sent you a post card from the historic city of Canterbury. I went there with a friend at whose home I was staying for a week-end at Lenham. This little village is in the county of Kent and my friend was staying at the same boarding house in Lewisham.

Last week I sent you some stationary - at least I ordered it at "Berryman's" near here (Lewisham) but I have not yet received their bill for shipping and insurance charges. Please let me know if you received it all right and if the contents tallied with the list I sent you in my letter of last Tuesday. In the same letter I asked you to let me know if you wanted any other buying done. Now, of course, that applies to clothes. So, if you want me to get you or Pop anything, be sure to give me your measurements. Otherwise I can only guess. Men's clothes are fairly cheap here and I could get my father a good blue serge suit for \$30.00. Ladies costumes are not very expensive compared with the prices prevalent at home, I

should think.

I shall be going back to Oxford on Friday, so that my next letter will be from there. On the same day the result of my exams will be published.

The house where I stayed in Lenham is very old, having been built in the Middle Ages or earlier. It is constructed of oak beams and floors and, before the present occupants entered, it had a huge open fireplace. I shall try and get a picture of the house to send you, for it is a lovely place, although somewhat spoiled by the presence of a forge which is attached. It is built near an old Norman church that was built in the days of the Normans. On Saturday I visited three other churches, two of which are now in the hands of Protestants. The Church at Ashford is partly old and partly new. The old part is lovely but the new part is ugly.

Canterbury Cathedral was the place where St. Thomas à Becket was murdered at the command of King Henry II - the man who started the trouble in Ireland. People come annually on pilgrimages to the tomb of Becket but at the Reformation the shrine was torn down and the body taken up and buried. The old road used by the Pilgrims still exists, and I walked along part of it. The steps in the Cathedral leading up to the Shrine are worn smooth - supposed to be from the knees of the pious pilgrims. This Cathedral is a magnificent example of the architecture of the transition period i.e. between the Norman (or Roman) and Gothic art. Its lofty spires are beautiful and the cathedral to-day harmonizes with a large portion of the town. The old gates of the town still exist and some of the houses, with their jutting upper stories and lovely bow windows, combine to give the town a delightful medieval appearance. From the few hours I spent there, I've brought away a sense of delight and pleasure that I've experienced in no other place in England, even Oxford. But I shall now be the better able to appreciate some of the beauties of Oxford.

Irish matters are much the same. A friend who has just come from Ireland tells me that in the South they are very bad. This is no doubt true, but I have hope and faith that blood will not be shed there.

Give my love to Pop and regards to friends. Hoping you both are well.

I am

Your affectionate Son
Billy

April 27, 1922

[Postcard from England]

Dear Mother,

Letter April 6 to hand. I just wired you that I passed the Final Bar exams

successfully. I hope you understood what it meant. I shall be called to the English Bar on June 18 or so. Harold passed too. Both of us 3rd class. I got second class in Criminal Law.

Love to Pop.

Your
Bill

15 Wytham Street
Oxford
May 2, 1922

My dear Mother,

I've had so much correspondence with you lately that I don't know when I wrote you last. At any rate, here I am back at Oxford getting to work for the B.C.L. in a few weeks. I suppose you understood from my postcard what I meant by the Telegram I sent you. I passed the Bar exam Final, and got the same class (division) - third - as Harold and the other Oxford men. This, of course, was hard for all concerned, tho' I managed to relieve the monotony of successive thirds by getting Second Class in Criminal Law - an easy subject. As these are the only exams officially recognized in St. John's at the Supreme Court, Harold's good work at Oxford will not therefore be of very much use to him. He will do well in the B.C.L., however.

It will be necessary to add 100% to the cost of the goods I sent you. I hope you will make your own sale price and get what you can for the articles. The Freight and Insurance must have made up the excess. That is, instead of costing \$4.90, they cost \$10.00. The duty, however, which you were to pay would be calculated on the \$4.90.

Please let me know what you get for the various articles so that I can see whether this scheme pays. I have not yet paid the excess charge for freight and, as I think it unreasonable, will not do so till I have made investigations.

I began tennis yesterday but the weather is not so wonderful as it was last year.

I received a letter of April 15 today with information of Mrs. McCarthy's departure. I'm sorry that you should have backbited her to the Kennedy's, and I'm not so keen on you visiting them. I'm sure they criticised you when you were gone, which, I'll bet, Anne McCarthy did not do so much. However, I do not know much. My father's policy to leave them all alone is the best.

Give him my love. I hope he is well and benefited by the Mission. I went to one in Holy Week.

Tomorrow I shall be 25 and in two weeks will be your birthday. Many happy returns.

Your loving son,
Billy

15 Wytham Street
Oxford
May 11, 1922

My dearest Mother,

It seems a very long time since I heard from you as it is over a week since I last wrote you. I am fairly busy doing about six hours study a day - which is as much as I dare risk at present, as I do not want to become ill as I did last year.

We had a couple of very warm days which made me regret I did not go into the Ice Cream business last summer in London. This year a lot of Americans are coming over and some big English factories are turning out millions of blocks a day.

I saw Harold the other day, although I was not speaking to him. I saw Seb Young today and he told me he had some letters today. Perhaps mine will come tomorrow.

Harry Somerville was here to tea one day. He was in Toronto during his recent trip, but he brought back no word - perhaps he forgot to tell me - of remembrance from the people I knew there. I have not really asked him about it yet.

Our exams for the B.C.L. begin on the 13th June - just five weeks from yesterday. We have 8 exams - four days.

I shall have to make enquiries very soon of a passage by the Furness line. They have not come down with their rates. I would almost prefer to go to Quebec and then come from Halifax, but perhaps I may have to do that yet.

Business is still dull in England owing, it seems, to the state of Russia and the political situation generally.

Irish news is much the same as ever. I hope for the best. That's all one can do.

I shall be called to the bar on the 28th June - which is a long way off. If there is a boat leaving here soon after that, I shall probably go by it.

There is nothing else exciting to tell. I pass the day monotonously - study and tennis. Sometimes I watch the University playing cricket.

Give my love to Pop. I hope you both are well, and ready for a big rush in the Ice Cream business.

What are legal prospects in St. John's now?

Your loving Son,
Billy

15 Wytham Street
Oxford
May 18, 1922

My dearest Mother,

I received a very long letter from you on Monday last, but then I had to wait a long time for it. I also received the papers of the 1st May. Thank you for both. You did tell me a lot of news and the papers were quite interesting. I may say that the style of newspapers at home is infinitely worse than the style here. Their articles are badly written. Those open letters to Morgan, although evidently the work of a fluent writer, were too high flown for the subject. I thought they seemed like something Fox⁵² would write. But, of course, I don't know.

The Advocate is very contemptible in the mean sarcastic way it referred to the meeting held to invite Sir Robert Bond to speak in St. John's. I fail to see what good it expects to do by adopting an attitude like that.

There ought to be talks of an Election in St. John's now or the civic spirit would not be so active. I can't imagine that Bond will come back again to the slime of political life in Newfoundland. I fail to understand why he lives in Newfoundland at all, when he could certainly have had a career in politics in this country. I think there is some mystery connected with him. But there again, I don't know.

I have splurged and ordered a dress suit - a full dress suit and dinner jacket. Let us hope I shall not get stout. It costs for all that about \$70.00 - or about the price of the suit I had made from Maunder.

I have ordered another suit, a blue serge, but as the tailor had not got the goods in, I am waiting till tomorrow to see it. The serges over here are not so good as the serge suit I had in Chatham from the "King's Tailor"; I suppose the pre-war goods were better.

I have made a rough calculation of my expenses before going home and think that £25 will cover all my personal ones. But as you and Pop will want me to get you some things, you can increase that as much as you like. I can get a good suit or overcoat for Pop at \$30.00.

Women's clothes vary. Anyhow, be sure to send me your sizes for whatever you want. I can get them made to order for Pop or ready made, whichever you like.

I must write to Furness Withy Company and find out about passages now. I do not suppose they are any cheaper.

I am very busy working awfully hard. So, love to Pop.

Your loving son,

⁵²Cyril Fox (1889-1946) was a lawyer who represented St. John's East in the Newfoundland House of Assembly (1919-1928) and was also Speaker (1924-1928). He became a justice of the Supreme Court in Newfoundland and was selected to Chair the National Convention of 1946 but died just after it opened. Cyril Fox and Bill Browne were friends. They visited each other at home and frequently discussed politics; as well, they sometimes fished together. See "Fox, Cyril James," *Dictionary of Newfoundland and Labrador Biography*, 1990 and Browne, *Eighty-Four Years*, 133.

Billy

Compton Hotel
Church Street
Liverpool
July 11, 1922

My dear Mother,

I am writing this in case the Sachem will be further delayed, for instead of leaving tomorrow, she is not scheduled to sail till a week more. So here I am in Liverpool with all this time ahead of me and, as there is a mail leaving today, I am writing you in hopes of catching it.

Do not be surprised to hear that I did not pass the B.C.L. Harold did pretty well getting a second class but, after the difficulties I had last summer, it is not greatly to be wondered that I did not pass. However, as I told you before, I am in good health, thank God, and that will be of much more service than a dozen titles after my name.

The degree would not mean very much to me,⁵³ and the only regret I have is that I entered for the examination.

I saw Harold yesterday in Oxford when I was going to the station. I had a van to carry my luggage and there was another big case on the van. So I said to Harold "That's my luggage" and he said "Is all that yours?" I said "Yes" for he seemed so astonished. I have about three times as many books as Harold and, although he will bring back a better knowledge of law than I have, I think I can fairly say that, taken all round, I have got more advantages from Oxford than he has. At present I am engaged writing another article about Oxford - this time "Oxford Political Life". But, as I have recently acquired several books on Oxford, I am waiting to read them first before I continue.

I'm very sorry that the steamer was delayed because I was thinking that I should be home in time to see if it would be well to have a tent at the Regatta.⁵⁴ We could get someone

⁵³The B.C.L. is an advanced law degree, not necessary for the practice of law. W. J. Browne was admitted to the practice of law with the Bachelor of Arts in Jurisprudence which he had received in 1921. It is Oxford's first law degree and roughly equivalent to the usual North American law degree, the Bachelor of Laws or L.L.B.

⁵⁴The St. John's Regatta is a day of rowing races held since approximately 1826 and believed to be the oldest continuing, not always annual, sporting event in North America. It is a civic holiday and usually held the first Wednesday in August, but if the weather is inclement the holiday is moved to the first suitable day. The racing takes place on Quidi Vidi Lake, and the shores of the lake have tents and stands for food and games. See "Regattas," *Encyclopaedia of Newfoundland and*

to manage it. I'm not sure whether you still have the tent or not. You know that it is not dishonourable to have a tent there and I regret very much our decision two years ago not to have one. It is a confession of pride. However, don't you worry your head about it. Wait until I get home. It is about time I did some thinking on business matters now. I'm longing to get to work and I think that chances will be good.

I spent the weekend at the home of a friend of mine down in Kent; unfortunately, the weather was wet so that we could not go strawberry picking in the gardens.

Love to Pop and to yourself and don't worry about the B.C.L. - I'm not going to worry about it.

Your Loving Son,
Bill