

Chapter IV

Courtship of Mary Harris and the Walker Inquiry 1923-1924

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

For Mary's letters and information about her family [CLICK HERE](#).

As Assistant Clerk in the House of Assembly, Bill Browne had an excellent vantage point from which to observe the tumultuous events of the legislative session which closed in August of 1923. Considerable financial irregularities in the operation of government came to light, including allegations of payments made to Prime Minister Richard Squires, who was forced to resign, and wrongdoing in the Department of Agriculture and Mines of which Dr. Alexander Campbell was Minister. William Warren¹ became Prime Minister and soon

¹ William Robertson Warren (1879-1927), the son of W. H. Warren and Jessie Harvey, was educated at Bishop Feild College in Newfoundland and Framlingham College in England, studying law in Newfoundland with Sir William Whiteway and Honourable George Johnson. He was admitted to the Bar

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

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

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

Thank you to Megan Snow, my daughter, for translating the French passages⁴ and to David Sharp, London, Ontario for translating the Latin passage.

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

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

³Browne, *Eighty-Four Years*, 120.

⁴Bill Browne wrote parts of these diary entries in French, especially when he wished to keep them secret from others. Throughout his life Bill attempted to increase his fluency in French.



Mary Grace Harris

P.O.B. 1336
St. John's, N.F.
October 11, 1923

Mary darling,

I was beginning to wonder whether you had made up your mind to become a religious

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

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

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

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

With all my love
Your loving
Bill

P. O. B. 1336
St. John's, N.F.
October 14, 1923

My dear Mary,

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

I have forgotten as soon as I put pen to paper all the things I intended to say. For,

unlike your leisurely letters, *I must write*⁵ in a hurry. It is 10.35 a.m. Sunday. I have to go to 11.00 a.m. Mass, go back to Holy Cross School for a meeting and post the letter at the train before 1 p.m. You will see that such a program forbids thought.

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

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

I offered you money the day you were going and you would not take it, so you have yourself to blame for being short. I'm sure your Aunt did not want you to go to Halifax and I did not either. If you must go "gadding around" you should be sure to have enough of money to see you through. However I am not worrying since I know you have lots of friends there - and that nothing on earth would keep you from visiting the place. You may know that your visit has given rise to much speculation here - some think you have gone to enter, others to make a novena or retreat to give you grace to decide etc., all of which is very interesting.

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

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

Bill

P.O.B. 1336
St. John's, N.F.
October 15, 1923

Dearest Mary,

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

⁵Translated from the French

I cannot tell you how much I miss you and how much I think of you.

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

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

I said I had a busy day. I was speaking to Mr. Foote⁶ the other day and he promised to speak to Mr. Summers, Deputy Minister of Justice, about me. This morning the latter sent for me and employed me to collect \$3500 for the famous Department of Agriculture and Mines. That is promising, anyhow, as there is a good deal of work in prospect.

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

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

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

⁶Samuel (Sam) J. Foote (1873-1936) was a St. John's lawyer who was then a member of the Newfoundland House of Assembly (representing Burin) and Minister without portfolio. In July of 1923 Sam Foote was one of four members of the cabinet who demanded that Dr. Alex Campbell resign from cabinet for improper behavior. When Dr. Campbell did not resign, Sam Foote and the three others resigned instead, leading to the fall of the Richard Squires Government. Sam Foote was heavily involved in the development of the pulp and paper industry in Corner Brook and was the first government director of the Newfoundland Power and Paper Company. See "Foote, Samuel J.," *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador*, vol. 2, 1967 and "Foote, Samuel J.," *Dictionary of Newfoundland and Labrador Biography*, 1990.

There are nominations in Fogo, St. George's and Harbour Main to-day for the bye-elections, the only contest being in Harbour Main where the Honourable M.E. Hawco⁷ will be opposed by an Independent candidate J.J. St. John. I do not think the latter will be elected, but a lot of circumstances do not favour Hawco. But, as I do not wish to permit this letter to become a newspaper, and as you have frequently intimated to me your aversion to politics, etc. I shall say goodnight hoping that you have been enjoying yourself at Dartmouth and that the wild life of Halifax is not having a disastrous effect on your pink cheeks.

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

With all my love

Yours only forever

Bill

P.O.B. 1336
St. John's, N.F.
October 17, 1923

Mary dearest,

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

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

I am expecting you home a week from to-morrow. I may say that it will be a trial to wait until then. Just imagine I have only had my car out once this week, and that to-night, although the weather is unique for October. I went to see Aunt Selina (who by the way has many little things to say and ask concerning you) to-night and after that went the following crazy but terribly lonely route down to Monkstown Road, via Circular to Rennie's Mill Road, Military Road, King's Bridge Road, Torbay Road, Robinson's Hill and back to Military Road and to home via Rennie's Mill Road. My car is running beautifully. I came up Robinson's Hill (city side) on top gear like a house on fire. That reminds me that to day I met a man who looks like this driving a motor car at second gear who took me for a ride from McBride's Hill to the top of Garrison Hill. The gentleman chewed gum, and kept his foot on the brake and blew his horn plentifully. The noise was terrific. Could you guess his identity if I told you he was once a Captain?



Shortly afterwards I met Sheila⁸ who told me that Aunt Agnes had told her that you had wired that you were leaving for home on the 22nd and that you were on the rocks. After my telling Sheila that I too had often been stranded she told me "you'll make a nice pair." Madame McGrath has had letters from her daughter and I believe rejoices at the thought (received via Sheila) that I have only heard from you once. Shall I appear too much a gossip if I say that "she would not be surprised if you did not come back."

Why am I writing all this? Perhaps in the few days since your last letter you may have lost interest in such trivial mundane matters. Well, I write at all because this is the last letter

⁸Sheila is Newfoundlander Sheila Mary Conroy (1904-2000), later (Mother) Sister Sheila Conroy of the Religious of the Sacred Heart. Sheila was the oldest daughter and one of eight children of lawyer Charles O'Neill Conroy and Mary Agnes Weathers. Both Sheila and Mary Harris had been students at the Convent of the Sacred Heart, Halifax, N.S. and returned to Newfoundland following their studies. Sheila entered the noviciate of the Religious of the Sacred Heart in New York State in 1926 and made her profession in 1935. She served in this religious community for more than fifty years as teacher, director of studies, superior, then provincial secretary. Sister Sheila Conroy was the aunt of Sister Margie Conroy (Sheila's brother, Jim McGrath, was Margie's father) of the same order. See "Sister Sheila Mary Conroy," *Primes Sacred Heart School Alumnae Newsletter*, 7.1 (2001): 4 and "Obituary, C. O'N. Conroy," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 21 December 1946: 3.

that you will receive if you are to come home when I think you will.

I bought a very interesting book yesterday at Dick's and Company. It is called "From a College Window" and is written by A.C. Benson, a Cambridge don.⁹ It is a book of essays - gentle, magnanimous jottings of a very likeable person. You will like it as well as I do if I am not mistaken and it is applicable to my own Oxford experiences as to Cambridge. He speaks of many things - of Books, of Conversation, of Art and Beauty and his style is well rounded and symmetrical with a good deal of rhythm in it. Imagine my vexation to-night to find that in the chapter on Conversation, there was a hiatus, and that page 72 fronted 105, so that I have lost half of his "Conversation" and half of his "Beauty" although I have been given 16 pages of "Art" twice. You may be sure I shall hasten to return this copy and demand a new one or an immediate reduction in the price.

I had a few words with S. E. Garland¹⁰ and am avoiding his store therefore for a while. He is very mean and I dislike mean people unutterably.

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

Bill

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

Mary dear,

My letters must appear like a thermometer with the fluctuations in their expression of buoyancy. I am in the depths again and principally because I learned from the lips of Mrs. Tobin last night that you were staying for a fortnight longer whilst your letter of the same

⁹Arthur Christopher Benson, *From A College Window*, 4th ed. (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1908).

¹⁰Samuel E. Garland (1864-1954) was a St. John's book seller who sold books, magazines, stationary or gifts in St. John's for more than sixty years. Mr. Garland twice had his shop destroyed by fire - the first time in the immense St. John's fire of 1892, and the second in 1908. For a brief time Mr. Garland published Newfoundland photographs and other material and, in the 1920's, dealt in rare Newfoundland books. Samuel Garland married twice and had six children. "Garland, Samuel E.," *Dictionary of Newfoundland and Labrador Biography*, 1990 and "S. E. Garland Died Yesterday," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 29 Dec. 1954: 3

date as her telegram only arrived with the sad news to-day. For you will see by my last letter that I was under the impression that you would be coming home on Thursday next. However I do not mind in the least although I believe you have had a good many things in your mind which you kept secret from me. If you are there you might as well stay as long as you please, I have since learned that you - once you make up your mind about an object - will stick it to the bitter end.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Bill

P.O. Box 1336
St. John's, N. F.
October 24, 1923

My darling Mary,

Please understand that I write from love alone for I have no letter to answer. I would

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

So, having been to confession on Saturday night and Communion Sunday and Monday (I tell you this in order to let you know I have not gone to the devil altogether, and that Dr. Kitchen¹¹ told me my life was pretty good except ---), I have taken to poetry. I find it quite difficult but I am encouraged to continue my labours by one of Mr. A. C. Benson's essays in which he tells us that the writing of poetry is the royal road to the writing of mellifluous and luscious (and all the other desirable adjectives) prose. Do you notice any improvement in this letter? If you do, I don't. But listen to the poetry. Here I sink.

The muse says:

Yellow are the leaves when autumn holds her court
But the spruces and the firs never loose their needles green
The berries have turned red for the little birds to eat
When the sun is in a hurry to leave the pleasant scene.

Fair is the moon and cold is her light
And pale is the mist that hangs o'er the lonely lake

¹¹William Phillip Hogan Kitchen (1879-1946) was a St. John's priest, then serving as Rector of St. Patrick's Parish in St. John's. William Kitchen was born in St. John's to Thomas Kitchen and Mary Josephine Hogan. In 1896, following his early school years at St. Patrick's Hall and St. Bonaventure's College, he left Newfoundland to study for the priesthood, first in France at the Sulpician Seminary and then at the University Seminary of Louvain in Belgium. In addition to his theological degree, he received a doctoral degree in philosophy and, in 1902, he was ordained to the priesthood in Belgium. Father Kitchen continued his scholarly writings throughout his life and his work was widely published. In 1907 Father Kitchen was appointed to the new parish of St. Joseph's in St. John's where he built a Convent and Church. Father Kitchen was then assigned as Rector of St. Patrick's Parish in 1921. In 1925 he received the title "Monsignor" and in 1932 was made Vicar General of the Archdiocese and administrator of the Cathedral Parish. In his obituary he is referred to as a man of "gentle, fatherly, disposition ... especially in the Confessional as evidenced by the crowds of penitents around his Box." See "The Church Mourns Passing Rt. Rev. W. P. H. Kitchin," *The Monitor* vol. 13, no.9 (Sept. 1946)1 and "Rt. Rev. W. P. Kitchin, Ph.D., D. P.," *St. Bonaventure's Adelpian* vol. 19, no. 6 (June 1926) 27, 28 and "Rt. Rev. W. P. H. Kitchin, Ph.D.," *St. Bonaventure's Adelpian* vol. 37 (1947) 131 and "Monsignor Kitchin Dies in Hospital," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 7 Sept. 1946: 7 and Larry Dohey, Archives of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of St. John's, email, 4 November 2002.

White is the grass by the frosts of night
But dark are the shadows which the green trees make.

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

Please revise the above. I am sure a few touches from you and there will be a product fit for - the next issue of *Inter Nos*.¹² You may be interested to learn that the composition is not purely imaginative. I was aided by a visit to the scene here represented in company with your charming aunt, in my car last evening, the wind shield of my car having become coated as we passed Octagon Pond.¹³ I was tempted as we returned from Manuels to look with a fond eye at the lake itself. Had you been there not even "the frosts of night" - to use the words of a well known poet would have chilled our enthusiasm for the beauty of the picture. It was - well - was it not, romantic?

I forgot all about the matter when we got back to No. 42 for Alexander Baird Esq. sat in state or presided in the middle of the sofa, and believe me, he seemed to fill it.¹⁴ He was very amusing on various subjects but it seemed to me, suddenly, that the views he expressed were neither original nor sound. Alice looked very sweet last night. Like yourself she lapses into silence where others intrude. Do I sometimes do that? But last night I was the intruder and I did not keep silent.

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

¹²*Inter Nos* was a publication of the St. John's school Academy of Our Lady of Mercy. It had been started just a few months earlier by Bill's and Mary's friend Betty McGrath - see footnote Chapter I, January 20, 1919. The magazine continued until 1948. See "Inter Nos," *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador*, vol. 3, 1991.

¹³In 1896 Charles Danielle built a restaurant in what was later the town of Paradise, Newfoundland, near St. John's. He named the eight sided building "Octagon Castle" and the small lake nearby was called "Octagon Pond". The restaurant burned in 1915. See "Octagon Castle," *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador*, vol. 4, 1993.

¹⁴Alexander B. Baird (1890-1967) was a St. John's native. He was known in Newfoundland for his service during the first World War, his business interests (including A.B. Baird Ltd.), and later for his role advocating Confederation with Canada. He became one of the first Newfoundland members of the Canadian Senate in 1949. "Baird, Alexander B.," *Dictionary of Newfoundland and Labrador Biography*, 1990.

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

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

The Feildians are having their dance to-night. I am not there. The Highlanders are having theirs a week from tonight and I shall not be there. I am no longer interested in dances. One thing alone fills my mind. I have sent for plans of bungalows and I have been studying *Building Age* - if you can get the October issue in the bookstores please bring it with you - for a suitable design for our future home. I watch with envy Ralph Herder's structure soar aloft.¹⁵ Lionel Munn has been inspecting the piece on the other side. I hope he will not be our neighbour.¹⁶

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

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

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

Your sweetheart
Bill

Diary

Monday December 17, 1923

I am reading Morley's life of Gladstone¹⁷, and would not be writing now except that

¹⁵See footnote Chapter II, May 25, 1920.

¹⁶Lionel Munn was the son of William A. (1866-1940) and Ethel (McNab) Munn of St. John's. William Munn was well known as an importer, a manufacturer of cod liver oil, as director of a marine insurance company and, in addition, as an amateur Newfoundland historian. See "Mr. W.A. Munn Called by Death," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 22 Oct. 1940: 6.

¹⁷John Morley, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone*, 3 vols. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1903).

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

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

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

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

To be honourable I mean to be straight forward. This I have ever tried to be. But I do think that towards my dear girl Mary I have not always acted entirely straightforward. I

have nothing secret from her which would give her the least pain if she heard of it, but I have been trying to test her love by feigning a shallow indifference which her loving heart easily penetrates.

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

But can I aspire to Spanish, to German, to Italian, or even to improve my French a little. My Latin I seem to have neglected altogether. Would it hurt me to try to renew my acquaintance with that ancient tongue? Ought to read more law. I think that I ought to rise earlier in the mornings if I wish to get any work done. This reflection reminds me that my dear mother rises at 7 or 7.30 every morning. She is always first up though generally last in bed. What is the secret of her wonderful vigour and vitality. She takes little outdoor exercise, except perhaps a walk downtown occasionally, and she eats only the plainest food. It seems a strange thing to say but I honestly believe that she enjoys the best health when she eats little more than bread and tea. I could not attempt to contrast her bright, sometimes even annoyingly breezy, manner with the hasty temper of her husband and the nasty ill humour of her son. What is wrong with me then? It must be my health. It is my health. Can any man have a broad smile and a cheery word when a dull pain pierces his brain from the gland behind his ear, when his forehead burns, and his eyes throb, not to mention the ever present dread which a slight pain in the right side has awakened in his heart.

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

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

[Two pages of poetry not transcribed]

Diary

Tuesday December 18, 1923

This morning I had the temerity to prosecute Dr. Rendell of the Sanatarium under the Society for Protection of Animals Act. Although judgement was reserved, I do not think there is much doubt of the result, as Dr. Rendell and the venerable judge are long

acquaintances, and it was obvious to everyone, I feel sure, that the judge leaned towards the defendant. As Mr. Hunt said, it was hard to win with these parties - W. Wood and Rendell - against me. The *Telegram* has a half column or more on the matter to-night. Good thing for it might shame the judge into impartiality.¹⁸

Edward Emerson¹⁹ did not have any news Re Hoskins as he had led me to anticipate. I was speaking to M.P. Gibbs²⁰ who arrived here from Canada on the *Silvia* yesterday. He

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

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

²⁰Michael Patrick Gibbs (1870-1943), the son of John and Marguerite Gibbs, was born and educated in St. John's. He was called to the Newfoundland bar in 1896, became a King's Counsel in 1911, and practiced law in a number of partnerships, in later years with his son James. Michael Gibbs was heavily involved in Newfoundland politics: he served as member of the House of Assembly for St. George's (1897-1900); he was Mayor of St. John's (1906-1910); he was appointed to the Legislative Counsel (1909-34) and served as President of the Legislative Counsel (1930-34). A Catholic, Michael Gibbs was considered a strong supporter of the rights of workers and was heavily involved in the formation of the Longshoremen's Protective Union, acting for many years as legal advisor to that organization. He was married to Barbara Eadie and the couple had four children (their sons would have attended St. Bonaventure's College when Bill Browne was also a

was very noncommittal and said that neither he nor Sir Richard Squires discussed politics *at all*²¹.

I was to see Mary to night, and was, at first until 10.30 in dubious mood. She guessed what was the matter, principally. I hate to be like this but really I had great mental distress and felt as obdurate and severe as Nero. So we read *Quo Vadis*, a chapter a piece in French²² and after supper, Mary read a couple of pages from that prim novel *Cranford*.²³

I met Captain Bonia on the way home - also R. T. McG. who has gone quite *crazy*, *I think*²⁴.

Mary has a present for Mother - a black and white scarf, which seems very nice. We are not used to anyone fussing over us like that but Mary is quite full of Xmas, which is a lovely spirit to have, even if. *Good-night. Midnight*.²⁵

Diary

Thursday December 21, 1923

To-night Mary and I argued over the form of her invitation to supper on Sunday next, and I pointed out that I never enjoyed supper there. After half an hours argument I consented

student). One of their sons, Gus, became a priest and served at St. Joseph's Parish in St. John's. "Obituary, Hon. M.P. Gibbs, K.C." *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 8 Nov. 1943: 3 and "Gibbs, Michael Patrick," *Dictionary of Newfoundland and Labrador Biography*, 1990 and "Obituary Rev Augustine M. Gibbs," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 29 Apr. 1937: 4.

²¹Translated from the French

²²Henryk Sienkiewicz, *Quo Vadis*, trans. (Paris: Éditions Rombaldi, 1960). Henryk Sienkiewicz (1846-1916) was a Polish author who received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1905. Sienkiewicz wrote a number of popular novels, but it was his book *Quo Vadis*, a story of Roman life under Nero, that was considered the "first internationally-renowned Polish novel." See Stanley S. Sokol with Sharon Kissane, *The Polish Biographical Dictionary* (Wauconda, Illinois: Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, 1992) 364-365.

²³Bill Browne's view of this work is a harsh one; others have described this book more favourably. In the early 1850's the author, who was a friend of Charlotte Bronte, had various articles published in Charles Dickens' (another friend's) periodical. Later these stories were published as *Cranford*. One author describes it "a work of rare and delicate virtues", as "gentle satire," and not really a novel at all, but a "series of sketches" of the inhabitants - mainly women - of a small English town. See Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell, *Cranford*, ed. Martin W. Sampson, (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1912) pp. xii-xviii.

²⁴Translated from the French

²⁵Translated from the French

to go on being assured that her invitation was “Will you come etc.” and not “Are you coming etc.” Then I told Mary that the same way of offering things offended me and that was the reason I did not want pictures. I came home with her photograph - the one I don’t like so much as it has an artificial smile. The other is the more placid - more solid, more Mary.

Diary

December 22, 1923

Argued with Johnson, J, over religion. He is a peculiar duck with his flat head and ragged white whiskers. He is abrupt and dogmatic and as stubborn as a mule. He does not believe in creeds but believes in God.²⁶

This morning *I was very mean to my mother because I thought that she was annoyed with Mary. We are still friends.*²⁷

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

Rain. All snow gone or going.

Diary

Sunday December 23, 1923

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

I went to Vespers. Father Sheehan preached. Not a good preacher. In fact I can’t remember except that he referred to the feast we are soon to celebrate. Met Mary at door and

²⁶George Macness Johnson (1853-1935) was at that time a Justice of the Supreme Court of Newfoundland. George Johnson was the son of a clergyman and, although born in Newfoundland, he received much of his education in England. He was a long time law partner of Newfoundland Prime Minister William Whiteway. Johnson was elected to the House of Assembly in 1894 when bye-elections followed the disqualification of Whiteway and a number of followers because of irregularities in the 1893 election. In 1902 Johnson was appointed to the Supreme Court where he served until 1926. He then returned to England until shortly before his death nine years later. See “Obituary,” *Evening Telegram* [St. John’s, Nfld.] 17 Dec. 1935: 6 and “Johnson, George Macness,” *Dictionary of Newfoundland and Labrador Biography*.

²⁷Translated from the French

walked home with her. She tried to draw me out, but I was uncommunicative. Hugh McDonald, Marg Edens, and her fiancé Martin²⁸, Alice, Margaret Doyle, Mrs. Tobin, Mary and I made the party. Martin and Alice and Hugh and Edens then withdrew to the Drawing Room. The others stayed in the sitting room. Supper nice and simple. Martin works at Humber. Nice chap. Mary was partly blue, wondering what kind of a bee in my bonnet. *I didn't want to kiss her the night before last.*²⁹ No snow and it is a warm night. Enjoyed the walk home. Showed Mother Mary's present.

I read a little of Gladstone's life to-day. Read *Catholic Record*. Like Edgar Guest.³⁰ Judge Jackford now Chief Justice in Ontario. Catholic. 12.15

Diary

December 25, 1923

2 a.m.

²⁸Margaret Edens (c.1903-1956) of St. John's was the daughter of Margaret M. and Thomas John Edens of 39 Queen's Road. Margaret and Thomas had a large family - in addition to Margaret they had two sons who were killed in World War I - Leonard and John, sons Francis and Gerard and a daughter Gertrude (Paddon). Thomas Edens operated a grocery business in St. John's. Thomas Edens and Mary Harris' father, John Harris, had been two of the founders of the Academia Club in St. John's. Margaret Edens married her fiancé, Albert Mortimer Martin (1900-1978) of St. John's who worked in Corner Brook in almost every capacity for Bowater's Newfoundland - worker, woodlands manager, general manager, president and then chairman of the board. Albert Martin was also a gifted athlete and was inducted into the Newfoundland Sports Hall of Fame in 1974. "Mrs. Albert Martin Dies in Montreal," *Evening Telegram* 10 Dec. 1956: 3 and "Obituary Francis A. Edens," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.]20 Jan 1942: 3 and "Edens, Thomas John," *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador*, vol. 1, 1967 and "Martin, Albert Mortimer," *Dictionary of Newfoundland and Labrador Biography*, 1990 and Frank W. Graham, *Ready...Set...Go!* (St. John's, Nfld.:Creative Publishers, 1988) 250 and "Wedding Bells Edens - Paddon," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 8 Oct. 1923: 6.

²⁹Translated from the French

³⁰Edgar Albert Guest (1881-1959), known as "the poet of the people," was a prolific and immensely popular poet of his time. He was born in England and lived the first ten years of his life there, then moved to Detroit where at the age of fourteen he began work as an office boy with the Detroit Free Press, working his way to daily columnist, always considering himself a newspaperman rather than a poet. It is estimated that Edgar Guest wrote 12,000 poems and they were published in as many as 275 newspapers and 25 books. Although his work was treated with disdain by reviewers, he was extremely popular with ordinary people who enjoyed his emphasis on simple values such as hard work, humility, unspoiled nature, plain living and the importance of friends, neighbours and family. "Guest, Edgar Albert," *American National Biography*, vol. 9, 1999.

One person has wished me Merry Xmas and yet I feel as little merry as I could ever wish to be. She feels the Xmas spirit, and I, God help me, told her I did not. Tonight I have been in a mood. It seems that my internal resolution *to not kiss Mary is causing me a lot of pain. To-night we almost quarreled. She does everything in such a funny way. We don't understand each other. I'm sad, even bitter. But why?*³¹

I read tonight parts of T. À K.³² which I borrowed and what I read prompted me to say to Mary, but I have not done so yet, that she should go back to Kenwood and leave me alone.

I had a busy day. I brought presents to Selina and I felt happy til I reached Mary's house "Take off your coat?" How foolish was that. I am susceptible. I stayed from 9.15 p.m. and went to Midnight Mass with Mary, upon whose spirits eager to be gay, I was like a blanket of ice. The singing I did not fancy much. People liked the sermon. I was too absorbed almost for anything. *I am a sinner. Lord have mercy on me.*³³

Diary

Xmas night, Tuesday, December 25, 1923

Rose about 11 a.m. because I was peeved. This is selfishness unadulterated. Mother brought up presents. Mary gave me splendid pair of gloves, "You with all my love, Me." A very nice present. Card from Betty. Beautiful day. Sun shining, slightly freezing. No snow. After dinner walked around Mundy Pond about one hour. Tea at 42 Rennies Mill Road. Alice, Dodo³⁴, Mary and I. Alice and Dodo went to Edens at night and Mary would not go for a walk. When I left she regretted, for it was a beautiful night. Held long religious discussion. This was the first time we were together and agreeable - I mean I was agreeable-for nearly two weeks. I was in a much better mood tonight. I shall try to continue so. Cause

³¹Translated from the French

³²This may possibly be a reference to Thomas à Kempis, a fifteenth century writer usually credited with the well known work, the *Imitation of Christ*, "the content [of which] is a consistent scheme of doctrine by which holy living and holy dying are to be brought home to the heart of every man." J. E. G. de Montmorency, *Thomas à Kempis His Age and His Book* (London: Methuen & Co.,1906) 223.

³³Translated from the Latin

³⁴Dodo was Josephine Cleary, later Kearney, daughter of Phillip and Katherine Cleary of 3 Monkstown Road in St. John's. Dodo married St. John's businessman George Kearney (1881-1952) following the death of his first wife. See "George Kearney Dies Suddenly," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 27 Aug.1952: 1 and *The Canadian Virtual War Memorial*, Veterans Affairs Canada, 6 J a n . 2 0 0 3 < <http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/general/sub.cfm?source=collections/virtualmem/Detail&casualty=180375>>

was peculiar.

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

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

Cui bono³⁵, I have heard it said. I will be the same when I am dead.

Diary

December 26, 1923

Cold, clear day. No snow. Making up books. Card from Mary only this afternoon. Sent some toys for Xmas to Placentia. Mary Kelly³⁶ brought a lot for one dollar.

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

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

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

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

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

Monsignor McDermott in office chatting to-day. Thinks times better. Says Irish men at Mount Mellary are good classical scholars. He was one.³⁷ Bought and just got two tickets

³⁵Latin term, frequently used by lawyers, meaning *for whose benefit*

³⁶Mary Kelly (later Boone) was Bill Browne's secretary, described by him as "the most faithful stenographer anybody ever had." Mary Kelly, worked for Bill Browne for twelve years in private practice, and later while he was a Judge with the Central District Court. Browne, *Eighty-Four Years*, 90.

³⁷James McDermott (1872-1947) was an Irishman who served as a priest in Newfoundland for most of his life. He was educated at Mount Mellary Seminary, Carlow College, graduating from the University of Ireland. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1895 in Ireland and came to Newfoundland that year. For twenty years he served in parishes in St. Kyran's, Mobile, Argentia, Salmonier and Riverhead, and was then assigned to the Cathedral in St. John's when he became a Monsignor and was appointed Vicar General of the Archdiocese of St. John's. See "Monsignor McDermott is Called by Death at St. Clare's Hospital," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 1 May

front row left for New Year's Night. I nearly deserved not to get them.

Diary

December 27, 1923

When I awoke almost two inches of snow had fallen and it continued to snow all day. I received a nice Xmas card from Henry Somerville and a letter from F. J. Wylie whom I have answered.³⁸

Very miserable day downtown and little business doing.

Mother preparing house for guest Mary, and making desperate attempt to paper the new room - an impossible feat - abandoned however. Mary's photo framed and hung in her presence in the place of Muckross Abbey.³⁹ I had good luck in getting a sleigh. Hickey drove me home and to and from Rennie's Mill Road for \$2.50 and a drink. We were unable to go to Allandale Road tonight as it was quite bad enough going to Rennie's Mill Road. The snow cut one's face but Mary was well wrapped up going with her father's oil coat around her. She sang some songs. Tells me she is making 30 days prayer. I said I feared its effect?? What do I mean?? Was reading *Life of St. Bernard*.⁴⁰ Have read three very interesting chapters which I found I had already read in 1914 nearly 10 years ago and parts of which came gradually back to my mind. Mary regretted being idle, not having her work with her. Lights off for several periods to-day. I left office at 4.30.

1947: 3

³⁸Sir Francis James Wylie (1865-1952) was the first Oxford Secretary to the Rhodes Trust, serving from the time of the first scholarship winners in 1903 until 1931, and the first Warden of Rhodes House. Francis Wylie was Oxford educated, an Oxford tutor, then junior proctor before he became involved with the Rhodes Trust. He is seen by many to have been responsible for the successful integration of the Rhodes scholarship recipients within Oxford University and he was known for his warm relationship with the scholarship winners, many of whom he corresponded with for years. Francis Wylie was knighted in 1929 at the time of the reunion of Rhodes scholars when Rhodes House was opened. Browne, *Eighty-Four Years*, 59, 171-2 and E.T. Williams and Helen Palmer eds., *The Dictionary of National Biography* 1951-1960 (London: Oxford University Press, 1971) 1085-87 and Lord Elton, ed., *The First Fifty Years of The Rhodes Trust and The Rhodes Scholarships 1903-1953* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell & Mott Ltd., 1955).

³⁹Muckross Abbey was built in the 1300 or 1400's for Franciscan friars near Killarney, Ireland. The ruins are near a lake and the surrounding countryside is considered extremely beautiful. R. M. Ballantyne, *The Lakes of Killarney* (London, 1865) 35-37.

⁴⁰This book was most likely M. L'Abbe Ratisbonne, *The Life and Times of St. Bernard*, trans. Sisters of St. Mary's Convent, Greenwich (New York, 18??).

Diary

December 28, 1923

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

I met Mike Sullivan today.⁴¹ He said that Squires was not recognized in England. He thinks that Squires will be ruined after the Commission but I am inclined to doubt this. Mike is doubtful of political future. Met William Warren who looked pale.

Went into my Aunt's and there met Mrs. McGrath who tells me she had a pleasant Xmas. My Aunt had things done in good style in our honour last night if we had come. Phil⁴² alone came. Joe Fitz⁴³ thinks Squires will emerge with flying colours and tells me later has engaged Lewis, a New York attorney, ex Attorney general, I believe, who with Howley will look after Squires' interests. Joe was then going in to Doc Campbell's at 11 p.m.

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

Diary

December 29, 1923

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

⁴¹See footnote Chapter III, April 12, 1923.

⁴²See footnote Chapter II, Nov.10, 1920.]

⁴³Joe Fitz is likely Joseph Fitzgibbon (1881-1960) who was a well-known St. John's politician, the son of Edmund and Margaret Fitzgibbon. Joseph Fitzgibbon was a long-time member of the St. John's Municipal Council, member of the Newfoundland House of Assembly, Bailiff in the Central District Court, Federal and Provincial Returning Officer in St. John's West and also an auctioneer. He married Pauline Kent of Placentia and the couple had nine children. Bill Browne described Mr. Fitzgibbon as "a very witty man with a great sense of humour and much common sense." See Browne, *Eighty-Four Years*, 163, 380 and "Joseph Fitzgibbon Dies," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 19 Dec. 1960: 3.

good in the process.

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

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

I met Fenelon⁴⁴ who looked like a millionaire. He told me he had put his car away at last. He had motored over to Kelligrews Xmas day to tea and to Liddys on the following day. He also told me he was not informed of the BESCO stuff in the matters upon which he was asked to adjudicate.⁴⁵ When he saw Herbert Knight's name he decided to absent himself from town. He would not touch the job.⁴⁶

I then went to see Phil, Bindon⁴⁷ not being in, and all this because not having to go to Rennie's Mill Road created a sort of disappointment and left me in a melancholy mood. Phil is better, told me not to mind Joe. Asked me to look up a lease. We chatted for a half hour or so and then I went.

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

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

I read Tennyson's *In Memoriam*⁴⁸ and discovered the source of Squires Xmas card. Read Gladstone and was diverted to Wordsworth's *Peter Bell*, a peculiar moral tale, that would not convert anybody. It was entertaining though. I liked *The [Old] Cumberland*

⁴⁴See footnote Chapter III, introduction.

⁴⁵BESCO was the British Empire Steel Corporation, a company formed in 1921 by the amalgamation of the two Nova Scotia companies, The Dominion Iron and Steel Company and the Nova Scotia Steel Company, who had been mining the iron ore on Bell Island, Newfoundland. This was a difficult time for iron exports and the company was soon in financial difficulty, being taken over by a receiver in 1926. See, for example, "Bell Island" and "Iron Mines," *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador*, 1981 and 1991.

⁴⁶Prime Minister Warren had asked three senior lawyers in St. John's - J. P. Blackwood, Herbert Knight and John Fenelon - to conduct a commission of inquiry. When they refused, the Prime Minister asked the Governor to request that the British Government make an appointment for this purpose. See Browne, *Eighty-Four Years*, 115.

⁴⁷See footnote Chapter III, April 3, 1923.

⁴⁸*In Memoriam* (Boston, 1855).

Beggar and *The Farmer of Tilsbury Vale* much better.⁴⁹ I also read some more of the Life of St. Bernard who is now in charge of his own Monastery.

Diary

December 30, 1923

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

Headache to-day. Moody. Saw Mary after Mass but avoided meeting her going to Belvedere to see the crib with Babs and then to Aunt Selina's who told me Mrs. McGrath glad to have my Xmas card. She also said that "Betty and Sheila, tho they liked Harry Sinnott did not try to take him from Barbara" meaning that Mary had taken me from Betty. This of course is not true in the sense that I never belonged to Betty. We were friends and I did not appreciate her friendship just because of one remark she dropped one night going to the Earle Spicer concert.⁵⁰ I remember the occasion well. We were passing by the College northern gates and I asked her had she seen my windows and she replied that she had better things to do than look at them. I have not forgotten that remark, because I had only just had my name and titles painted on the windows and I wished someone besides myself to appear interested.

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

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

⁴⁹For these three poems by Wordsworth see William Wordsworth, *The Complete Poetical Works of Wordsworth*, ed. Andrew J. George, 2nd ed. Boston: Houghton, 1932) 93, 96, 308.

⁵⁰Earle Spicer was a Nova Scotia baritone who performed in England and France, as well as North America. "Young Nova Scotian Baritone Is Highly Praised By London And Paris Critics," 5 July 1922, *Halifax Chronicle*, 27 Nov. 2002 <<http://www.rootsweb.com/~canbrnep/jul051922.htm>>

*to visit her New Year's day. I don't want to.*⁵¹

Diary

January 2, 1924

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

Yesterday was New Year's Day and I spent the afternoon in making calls. Mrs. Fabey, Clancy, Maher, and in the last case there was a humourous error. I asked the young lady at the door where Mrs. O'Meara lived and she mistook the name for her Mother's and I was ushered in. As it happened I knew the people slightly and they knew all about me. They were most gentle and kind and as they have a bungalow at Topsail we have made a plan to reciprocate with favours next summer. One of her daughters is quite nice. The Reception both at St. Bonaventure's College and the Mount were tame affairs. Rev. Brother Ryan, the Superior at the former, is a strange person. Then Government House. Chatted with Goodfellow, Watson and genially to Harvey. Then Fortune's, who this year only offered me wine as I was leaving - not very polite - then Harris', where Mrs. Tobin and her three nieces sat in solemn state. I made a point to greet Mary first. The reception was a peculiar one as here nothing was offered and, on the arrival of a group of visitors with L. Emerson at the head, I made for the door. I noticed Mary looking goodbye as I went out with no more attention than the Emerson's observing remark about my Platonic leave-taking.

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

⁵¹Translated from the French

came Thursday she would let me love her. But in leaving I refused to come Thursday.⁵² She entreated me but I would not. She says she will make me come. I went home in a happier mood.

To day I am engaged ascertaining the state of my affairs and find that the year has been a little beyond my ambition. Thank God. It is a miserably cold day and tonight there is a terrific biting north wind that made the house shake. I issued Writ No1 for the year 1924, and I hope it portends good luck.

Read some St. Bernard and a little Gladstone. I beat W. J. Carew at billiards.⁵³ He was telling me that Desmond Fitzgerald is much criticized for his Bohemian habits and is unfit for Foreign Minister of Free State.

Diary

January 3, 1924

89 Casey St., St. John's

Today we are experiencing the tail of a terrible storm of wind. In its trail came a representative of Butterworth and Company and sold me 31 volumes Halsbury⁵⁴ and a copy of Phipson.⁵⁵ Some investment – I trust that it will assist me in my business. The agent – a congenial person whose modesty and ease I could not resist – came on the Silvia with the Investigator.

I saw Mary tonight and was in a good mood after she rang me up and asked me to go down. I even put on a dress collar to please her. But my happy expression soon disappeared when she gaily informed that she had broached the subject of our love affairs to another priest. How indiscrete and now all the priests of the Cathedral Parish are quite familiar with our whole history. I sat through the Nickel stoically insensible to Mary's caressing questions, but before the end of the evening I was in a better mood. She sighed and asserted her love in such tender loving tones that I had the greatest difficulty to restrain myself from kissing her. Last week we saw each other only thrice, and I have not kissed her for a week. When

⁵²Translated from the French

⁵³Newfoundlander William J. Carew (1890-) was educated at St. Patrick's Hall School in St. John's. He began work as a civil servant in 1909 and worked for the government of Newfoundland for the next forty-seven years. William Carew was Secretary to eight Prime Ministers, secretary to the Commission of Government, and later secretary to the Cabinet. "Carew, William J.," *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador*, 1981.

⁵⁴Halsbury et al., eds., *Laws of England*, 31 vols. (London: Butterworth, 1907-1917).

⁵⁵Sidney L. Phipson, *The Law of Evidence*, 6th ed., (1921; London: Sweet & Maxwell Ltd.; Toronto: Carswell Co. Ltd.).

I was leaving, Mrs. Tobin, who had just entered, hung around and even opened the door ostensibly to show us the night but, as she allowed it to remain open, I thanked her and wandered off amused. Mary had an amused smile too.

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

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

Diary

Saturday, January 5, 1924

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

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

Very busy.

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

Bought several books yesterday. Roseberry's *Pitt*⁵⁶, Lecky's *Rationalism in Europe* 2 vols⁵⁷, Morris to Buchanan and Kingsley to Thomson in poetry⁵⁸, Boccaccio's *Decameron*⁵⁹, and Barry O'Brien's *Newman*⁶⁰ all for \$2.00. It was a gift.

Beat C. Ellis at billiards last night.

Was very worried tonight over Mary. Four on the verge of tears. That infernal Aunt and that abominably selfish ass of a sister have been worrying her about a paltry bill at Ayre

⁵⁶Lord Rosebery, *Pitt*, 16th printing, (London: MacMillan and Co., 1914)]

⁵⁷W. E. H. Lecky, *History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe*, revised ed., 2 vols. (New York and London: D. Appleton and Company, 1925).

⁵⁸Alfred H. Miles, ed., *The Poets and the Poetry of the Nineteenth Century*, vol. 5 Charles Kingsley to James Thompson, and vol. 6 William Morris to Robert Buchanan, (1905, London: Routledge; New York: AMS, 1967).

⁵⁹This book, written in the mid thirteenth century, is the story of a group of young people who fled the plague in Florence to a country villa and the one hundred tales they told during their stay. For an English translation see Giovanni Boccaccio, *The Decameron*, trans. John Payne (New York: Blue Ribbon Books, 1931).

⁶⁰This book is likely William Barry, *Cardinal Newman* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905).

& Sons. Am instructed to search will in Mary's behalf.⁶¹

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

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

Diary

January 6, 1924

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

Read some poems of a few obscure poets and liked certain things in Bennett's – where he describes a race on the Isis. It must have been a leisurely affair if such a conversation as mentioned in the poem could have taken place and very different from the heartbreaking and desperate struggles which were the only kind I ever witnessed there. It seems a preposterous yarn, but I like a few lines such as "Two winding rainbows by the river's banks".⁶² I read a few poems of James Thomson, Kingsley and Ebenezer Jones, most of which speak of love in tenderest tones. Pontifical vespers ending with the Hallelujah.

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

⁶¹The will is that of Mary's father, John Harris, who died in 1915 leaving most of his \$166,600.00 estate to his three daughters. John Harris' sister, Agnes Tobin, and his brother, Thomas B. Harris, were the executors. According to the terms of the will, Mary and her younger sisters, Alice and Marjorie, were to receive equal shares in the remainder of their father's estate on reaching the age of twenty-one. Mary had turned twenty-one the previous year. There may have been a dispute about a provision in the will stating that, if the executors thought fit, they could make John Harris' nieces, Mary and Elsie Doyle, a "suitable allowance for their maintenance until their marriage". John Harris' will is filed in the Supreme Court of Newfoundland and Labrador, St. John's office, Volume 7 - Folio 58 - 1916.

⁶²This is a slight misquote as it was "river's brinks". See William Cox Bennett, "The Boat-Race," *The Poets and Poetry of the Nineteenth Century Charles Kingsley to James Thomson*, ed. Alfred H. Miles (1905; London: George Routledge; New York: AMS Press, 1967) 40.

Diary

January 10, 1924

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

I tried to get in yesterday but was unable to do so and not even my professional character secured me any preference. But the ladies were permitted to enter! However I had a long conversation with Mott who is very saddened over the whole business.⁶³ I did get in on the gallery this afternoon after a very sharp reply from Mr. Warren whom I asked was there any chance of getting in and who replied "I am afraid there is not, Mr. Browne - it is full" and went in. I wonder has he been told that I have been speaking in favour of Sir Richard Squires. Although everyone appears convinced of Squires guilt, it does not necessarily follow that he is guilty. He paid scant attention to his business, undoubtedly, but should he deny the receipt of the monies from Miss Miller, what will the Commissioner do, accept his version or hers?

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

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

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

⁶³Henry Y. (Harry) Mott (1855-1946) was the sixty-eight year old Clerk of the Newfoundland House of Assembly. Mr. Mott had represented Burgeo-LaPoile in the House from 1894-1901, the last four of those years serving as Speaker of the House. He became Assistant Clerk in 1908, then several years later became Clerk, serving for a further twenty-two years. Mr. Mott had been a St. John's newspaper editor and, in 1894, wrote *Men of Newfoundland*. In 1923 Bill Browne served as the Assistant Clerk in the House of Assembly and had considerable respect for Mr. Mott's ability and views. See Browne, *Eighty-Four Years*, 111 and "Obituary, Henry Y. Mott," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 8 Oct. 1946: 3.

Diary

January 18, 1924

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

Diary

January 19, 1924

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

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

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

