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TOPICS OF AN OLD-TIMER

Captain John Elmsley, Son of Chief Justice Elmsley—The Controversy over his conversion to the Catholic Church—Elmsley Villa and the Different Uses to which it was put—Occupied by Lord Elgin, the Governor General—Captain Elmsley's Services to Catholic Education.

Among the men of prominence in the writer's former days in Toronto was the Hon. Capt. John Elmsley, and anything relating to him will, I am sure, be of interest to my readers. The following narrative touches that distinguished gentleman, I find in Volume I. of "Robertson's Landmarks of Toronto." I have read it with interest myself and I am sure others will do the same.

"Almost as soon as Governor Simcoe had selected York as the capital of Upper Canada, before the commencement of the present century Chief Justice John Elmsley and the first Dr. Macaulay selected two adjoining park lots, both of them fronting on Queen street, Dr. Macaulay's being bounded on the east by Yonge street. They then effected an exchange of land with each other. Dividing these two lots transversely into equal portions, the chief justice chose the upper or northern halves and Dr. Macaulay the lower or southern halves. Dr. Macaulay thus acquired a large frontage on Queen street and the Chief Justice a like advantage on Yonge street. The northern portion of these halves descended to the son and heir of the Chief Justice, Capt. John Elmsley, on the death of his father, in 1805. On this property, north of where Grosvenor street now runs westward of Yonge street, was a solitary green field, with a screen of lofty trees on three of its sides. In its midst was a Dutch barn or hay-barrack with a movable roof. The sward on the northern side of this building had drunk human blood. It was the exact spot where a fatal duel was fought early in the morning of the 12th of July, 1817, an account of which has been given in the previous chapter. Captain John Elmsley in his younger days was a lieutenant in the Royal Navy. In 1832, with his friend Mr. Jaffray Hales, afterward of Quebec, he left the naval service. In 1837 he was appointed to the command of a government vessel, carrying two swivel guns, on the lower St. Lawrence. A short time subsequently he settled on a portion of his estate at Toronto, where he expended considerable sums of money in farming operations. Later he undertook the command of a vessel, the "James Coleman," trading on his own account between Halifax and Quebec. The love of the water never left him and afterwards for a time he commanded the "Sovereign," one of the mail steamers on Lake Ontario. He owned a fast sailing cutter of twenty-two and a half tons burden, named the "Dart," and in 1832 he advertised her for sale at York. Somewhat later than 1837 Captain Elmsley was appointed to a seat in the Upper House. Captain Elmsley was a skillful and popular lake captain. He was a man of fine bearing, and it is said he greatly resembled his father, the Chief Justice. In 1839 he visited Brockville. There was in the vicinity of Brockville at that time a number of military men who had as a reward for their services in the war of 1812 been granted scrip entitling them to claim land from the government. Captain Elmsley foresaw that the ownership of these claims might be turned to good account, and so he was bent on acquiring them, as claims could be had at a large discount from their real value. He procured assignments of many claims and thus was laid the foundation of his wealth as a large landed proprietor.

Captain John Elmsley did not follow the footsteps of his father in the matter of faith and religion. The Chief Justice was a staunch Protestant and a member of the Church of England. He was one of the principal founders of the building of St. James' church. In the year 1834

Captain Elmsley became a convert to the Roman Catholic Church, though up to that period he had like his father and mother, been a staunch Protestant. The ostensible cause of his change of faith was the reading of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Strasburg's observations on the sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel. Mr. Elmsley satisfied his own mind and published a pamphlet which he circulated through the province giving the reason for his change of faith. His former pastor, the Venerable Archdeacon Strachan, came out on the other side with a pamphlet and sermon and sent a nicely bound copy of his production to his old friend, the Roman Catholic Bishop, Alexander Macdonell. His Vicar-General, William P. Macdonald, flared up at once and in spite of the Bishop's remonstrance, published "Remarks on the Eucharist," in reiteration of his old school-fellow, Dr. Strachan. On reading this Mr. Strachan is said to have exclaimed: "It's all right, diamond-cut diamond, Scotchman against Scotchman." The controversy went no further.

"Captain Elmsley, notwithstanding his secession from his mother church, continued in acts of benevolence. Many poor citizens, some now living, had reason to acknowledge assistance from his bounty and the Roman Catholic Church profited largely by his benefactions. He gave facilities for the establishment of St. Basil's College and other Roman Catholic institutions on his estate. Captain Elmsley married a daughter of Chief Justice Sherwood, and somewhere about the time of the Mackenzie rebellion built on his estate Elmsley Villa.

"Elmsley Villa was also for a time the residence of Capt. J. S. Macaulay, who married a daughter of Chief Justice Elmsley. The Hon. Henry Sherwood, Solicitor General, had his residence at Elmsley Villa in 1846. A portion of the sandhill elevation to the westward of Yonge street, a little south of Yorkville, is its name Clover Hill, from the designation of Captain Elmsley's house. The rustic lodge with diamond lattice windows at the gate leading into the original Clover Hill was on the street a little further on. At the time of his disease Captain Elmsley had taken up his abode in a building apart from the principal residence of the Clover Hill estate, a building to which he had given in fact a portion of the outbuildings of the homestead turned into a modest dwelling.

Barnstable was subsequently occupied by Mr. Maurice Scollard, a veteran attaché of the Bank of Upper Canada.

The burning by a mob of the Parliament Buildings at Montreal on the 25th of April, 1849, in consequence of the passing of the Rebellion Losses Bill, and the subsequent riotous manifestations in that city had satisfied Lord Elgin and his ministers that it would be desirable to remove the seat of government to some place containing a less turbulent population, and where more respect was paid to constitutional authority. The determination finally arrived at was that the remaining sessions of the existing parliament should be held at Toronto, after which the seat of government should be transferred alternately to Quebec and Toronto for periods of four years. A few weeks before arriving at this conclusion the Governor-General paid a visit to Upper Canada. He reached Toronto on the 9th of October and was received by the people with mingled enthusiasm and apprehension, for it was known that many persons were disposed to hold him personally responsible for the Rebellion Losses Bill, and there was some fear of a riot. His Excellency landed from the steamer at Yonge street wharf, where he was met by a large concourse, including nearly all the prominent citizens, by whom he was escorted to his hotel. Certain hostile demonstrations were made by a few persons as the cortège moved up Yonge street. Several stones and rotten eggs were flung at the Vice Regal party, who preserved their composure. Thirteen persons were arrested and as the grand jury were then in session, the culprits were forthwith presented and committed to prison. Lord Elgin took up his quarters temporarily at Elmsley's Hotel on King street west, but soon afterwards removed to Elmsley Villa, a structure built on the rising ground to the north of the Yonge street branch of the College avenue. Elmsley Villa, as the name implies, was once the property of Captain John Elmsley. It was subsequently converted into Knox College, and stood on the site now occupied by the Central Presbyterian church on the corner of Grosvenor and St. Vincent streets. The Governor continued to reside there during his stay in Toronto and the place thus became permanently associated with his name. Elmsley Villa afterward was occupied by Knox College from the time of its removal from the site now occupied by the Queen's Hotel to the completion of the present edifice on Spadina avenue.

"To the Hon. John Elmsley the early Catholic youth of Toronto owed a great debt of gratitude from

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An educational institution which can show an actual daily attendance of 468 students gathered from all parts of the Dominion, and whose graduates are eagerly sought for by business firms, may reasonably be termed a great school. The one business training school in Canada which enjoys this standing is the Central Business College of Toronto. The catalogue issued by this well known school is an interesting production and may be had on application to the Principal, Mr. W. H. Shaw.

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BARRIE CORRESPONDENCE

A meeting of the Altar Society was held in the convent Sunday evening, Rev. Father Finnegan being elected honorary president.

Very Rev. Dean Egan left Monday and will be out of town for a fortnight. Rev. Father McGrath of Toronto, during the Dean's absence, will assist Rev. Father Finnegan.

The many friends of Mr. Alfred Beardsley will be sorry to learn that he is seriously ill. He is a patient in the Barrie Hospital.

A memorial stained glass window, the gift of the Misses Caroline and Mary Anne Beardsley and their brother Alfred, was placed last week in St. Mary's church.

It is placed in the large tower in the west end, over the organ gallery, facing Mulcaster street, and presenting a beautiful appearance. When the church is lighted up at night it presents a magnificent appearance from the street. It has a design of the crucifixion of artistic design and execution. At the foot is the inscription:

"In loving memory of Mrs. Sarah Beardsley, died January 5th, 1900; erected by her children."

It comes from the stained glass appointment of Messrs. F. J. & Company, 301 Yonge street, Toronto, and is pronounced by experts to be one of the best of the kind in Ontario.

Separate School Board

At the last regular meeting of the Separate School Board the following members were in attendance: Rev. Father Rohleder, who presided; Rev. Fathers Hand and Lamarche, Messrs. T. F. Callaghan, Jos. Caderet, D. A. Carey, A. J. Cottam, M. Power, and L. J. Woods. The financial statement for 1904 was presented.

Mr. Andrew Cottam complimented the finance committee on the excellence of their report, but would go further, and have all the resources and liabilities included as well as the receipts and disbursements. It was time to come down to a statement of absolute facts, and he desired to see the records in such shape that any ratepayer could obtain a thorough statement on application. The electors of Ward 4 took an active interest in the separate schools. He defended his colleague, Mr. J. O'Hearn, who was absent. When he discussed the finances of the Board at the late election his statements were correct and were borne out by the information then obtainable.

Rev. Father Hand, Chairman Finance Committee, pointed out that the fullest information would be given any member on application to the Secretary.

It was decided to have a complete report in detail for the next meeting. The Finance Committee was instructed to increase the insurance and take advantage of the 80 per cent. rate, the amount to be carried will be increased to \$170,000.

Local Inspector Brother Odo Baldwin presented a very interesting report of attendance at the different schools for 1904. The registered attendance was 5,297, the highest average being 4,143 in the month of October. It is the intention of the Board to have a booklet printed containing the reports and other information regarding the schools.

his ceaseless zeal for their welfare and advancement. He was a father to them as well as mentor. There are many yet living who remember how proudly he marched at the head of his Sunday School scholars in line from the Richmond street school-house Sunday after Sunday to old St. Paul's for late mass, there being no other Catholic church in the city. The late John Mulvey possessed what he valued as a treasure, a Bible received at his hands for attention at Sunday School, in 1843.

In 1841, the national school system was introduced in Upper Canada, and Captain Elmsley was then a school trustee. On Sundays he and Mrs. Dr. King would there teach the children their catechism.

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Mass, receive the Sacraments and secure a knowledge of their religion.

Our Holy Father Pius X. has selected as Bishop of this new Diocese, The Rt. Rev. David Joseph Scollard, Pastor of the flourishing parish of North Bay. For several years he was our secretary and chancellor, and discharged the duties of these offices with marked ability and fidelity. During the past nine years he has proved himself a pious, zealous and energetic pastor, whose labors have been blessed with much fruit and great success. The faithful of the diocese of Sault Ste. Marie will find in their new Bishop a kind and loving father, who will be ever ready to encourage them in their undertakings and sympathize with them in their trials. We part with one of our devoted and gifted priests, a true friend who has ever been loyal to his Church and obedient to his Bishop.

For many years past the opportunities for the development of New Ontario in agricultural, commerce, mining, manufacturing and other industries, have been recognized, thereby causing a large increase in population.

It has been our consistent desire that religion should keep pace with the material advancement of the country. Hence our motive for building churches and schools wherever possible. The establishing of an Episcopal See in the midst of this extensive district will carry out our designs in regard to religious progress, and will encourage Catholics to flock to the vacant and fertile lands of these regions and to the centres of industrial enterprises.

We cannot forget the many sacrifices made by the new settlers to preserve the traditions of their fathers, and build up the works of religion and education in their new homes. With pleasure, we recall the many pastoral visitations to the distant missions of our Diocese, when we witnessed the strong faith of the people and their attachment to the practices of their religion, as well as their reverence and expressions of joy in receiving their Bishop into their humble dwellings. Our purpose was to bring them the blessings of Heaven and offer them words of encouragement and advice for their spiritual and temporal progress.

How edifying and consoling, on visiting the Indian missions, to behold the fervent faith and reverential conduct of those beloved children whose simple piety and fervor might well be imitated by those who enjoy a larger share of the benefits of civilization and learning.

We shall ever remember the noble and zealous Jesuit Fathers who have proved themselves worthy disciples of St. Ignatius in training the Indians to follow in the path of religion and infusing into them habits of morality, sobriety and industry. To these fellow-laborers who have charge also of the parishes and missions in the new Diocese, must be attributed the glorious success attained by God's Church in this extensive district. They have borne the heat of summer and endured the hardships of winter, in bringing the Bread of Life and announcing the word of God to the Faithful of the sparse missions of early years and the more populous parishes of recent times. Like the Good Shepherd, they have labored in season and out of season, searching after the scattered sheep, guiding them into the true fold and to the fountain of living waters. Nor can we fail to extol the zeal and self-sacrifice of our secular clergy who have likewise labored energetically in building up religion in the missions entrusted to them.

We cannot praise too highly the Religious Communities whose members are devoted to forming the moral and intellectual character of the youth, or consecrated by their life of charity to alleviate the sufferings of the sick and helpless members of our Divine Lord. Their life of self-denial in promoting works of education and charity have won for them the love and reverence of the members of the Church, as well as the admiration and esteem of those who do not share our faith. Truly they are the spotless virgins, who, after saving and relieving the afflicted of God's children will be amongst those who in Heaven "sing a new canticle before the throne and follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth."

We had a paternal and affectionate farewell to our beloved priests, devoted Sisters and faithful people of the Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie. Though no longer their Bishop, we shall ever retain a pleasant memory of the many visitations we made to the parishes and missions, when we were amply repaid for the inconveniences attendant upon travel in a new country, by the ardent faith and fervent piety we witnessed in these pioneers of religion.

In conclusion, Dearly Beloved, we earnestly exhort you to pray Almighty God to bestow upon the new Fishion, in abundance, the graces of the Holy Spirit, that he may be

D'YOUVILLE READING CIRCLE

The meeting of the Circle on the 7th inst. was a digression from the usual program, although it was kept on the same lines.

Current events were briefly reviewed, the chronicle in the February magazines being mentioned for reference.

The first part of the evening was given to an appreciation of Franz Schubert, the German composer, who will always be loved and admired as long as there is anyone to read his pathetic story or to listen to his exquisite music.

A carefully prepared paper on Schubert, written by the Chairman, was read by a member, Miss A. McCullough. It told of the great master's struggle for recognition; of his modesty, his patience and cheerfulness in spite of his difficulties. For his time was the haughtiest and most pretentious in the history of Vienna, and of his final success, though his fame, as in the case of Oliver Goldsmith, did not come in time to cheer his earthly life. His cheerfulness and serenity seem to characterize all his compositions. His "Impromptu," op. 90, No. 4, was gracefully and sympathetically played by Miss Julia Fortin, and his "Serenade" sung by Mrs. M. Whelan.

The Oxford study was supplemented for this time, by two selected poems of Frederick William Faber: "St. Mary's Church, Oxford, in winter," and "Absence from Oxford," which were read by Miss Agnes Baskerville.

The review notes were confined to Agnes Lant's new book, "The Great Pathfinders of the West," and Rev. Dr. Barry's volume of essays, "Heralds of Revolt."

The second part of the evening, as usual, was given to the oriental study, but not on the ordinary lines.

Mrs. Thos. Ahearn, who has travelled extensively in the East, and especially in India, entertained the members with a talk on her experiences there. Having lived in India for some time, visited their temples and other works of pagan art, also having observed the natives in their habits and costumes. She is a valuable witness on the condition of India at the present day, socially and religiously. The strongest proof of the futility of the attempt of Buddhism is found in the degraded condition of the Indian woman. Surely India has not yet reached her age of chivalry!

Mrs. Ahearn told of many instances in which she beheld females engaged in the most menial service, as carrying mortar, shovelling, etc., while their "lords" were chatting together or otherwise enjoying themselves. The speaker had also opportunities of coming into close contact with the higher classes. In an interview with an Indian princess of an unpronounceable name who was shut up in closest confinement, she realized that the condition of the lower class was, after all, happier for they, in spite of their labor, have the benefit of the outdoor life, while the princess has no freedom whatever.

Another remarkable feature is observed in the fact that although there are famous Buddhist libraries, one very remarkable one, which contains nearly rare books, yet it is not available to the people.

The Circle hope to hear Mrs. Ahearn again at some future date.

Rev. Dr. O'Boyle's lecture on the Gaelic Revival was announced for the last Monday of February. The next meeting will be on the 21st inst.

spared for many years to zealously labor for the advancement of religion and the salvation of souls; that the Holy Ghost may enlighten, protect and guide him in all his ways; that the flock entrusted to his charge may afford him joy and consolation; that the priests and faithful cooperating with him, the Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie may become one of the most flourishing in the Province.

The consecration will take place in our Cathedral, Peterborough, on Friday, Feb. 24th, Feast of the Apostle St. Matthias.

This letter shall be read in all the churches and chapels of the Diocese as soon as convenient after its reception.

RICHARD ALPHONSUS O'CONNOR
Bishop of Peterborough
M. J. O'BRIEN, D.D.,
Secretary.
Peterborough, Feb. 9th, 1905.

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