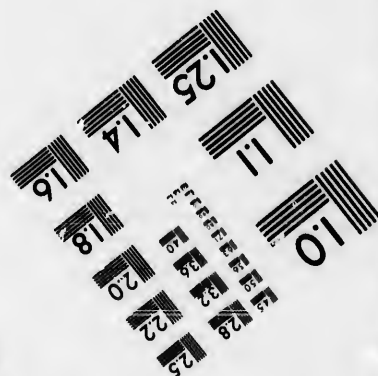
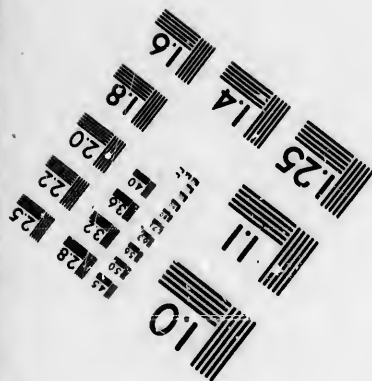
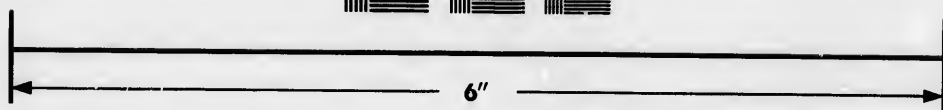
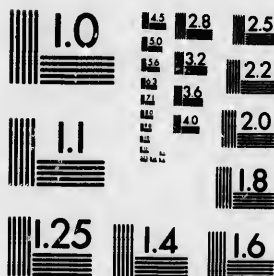


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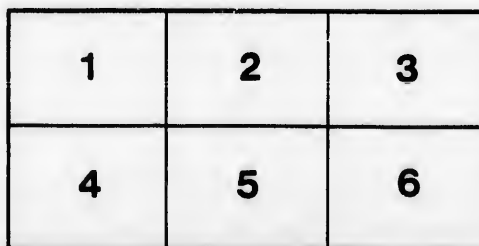
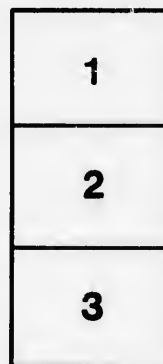
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### THE ELGIN PERIOD.

#### THE LATE HONORABLE MRS. ROBERT BRUCE— INTERESTING REMINISCENCES.

*(Ottawa Citizen, 12th February, 1890.)*

There has recently passed away at one of the Royal Palaces in London, a lady of the Queen's household—the Hon. Mrs. Robert Bruce— whose loss will be keenly felt by Her Majesty, and by other surviving friends at home and abroad. In Canada, where Mrs. Bruce long resided, her memory will be pleasantly associated with a notable period in our domestic history—that covering the years when her noble kinswoman, the Countess of Elgin, ably supported by the lady now no more, graciously dispensed a munificent hospitality, first at "Monklands," then at "Elmsley Villa," and subsequently at the historic "Spencer Wood." Not a few of the friends of those days have preceded the lamented lady to the unknown land, but there are happily still with us a few to unite in paying a tribute, however inadequate, to departed worth and goodness. Our recollections of Mrs. Bruce go back to her, first as a young and happy bride. She was the daughter of Sir Michael Shaw-Stewart, 6th Baronet of Blackhall, and was married, in 1848, to Colonel Robert Bruce, of the Grenadier Guards, the singularly handsome brother of Lord Elgin, then Governor-General of Canada. The young couple came at once to Montreal, where the seat of Government then was, Colonel Bruce being appointed Military Secretary and Principal A.D.C. to his brother. Mrs. Bruce's fine personal appearance and cheerful and winning demeanour soon made her a particular favourite in society, and her praises were universal. The times became out of joint, however, for the practice, to any considerable extent, of the social amenities. There was mischief in the air. The passing of the Rebellion Losses' Bill by Lord Elgin threw the country into a ferment of excitement, and for a time there was a grand upheaval, social as well as political. The painful events following—the burning of the Parliament Buildings and the mobbing of the Queen's Representative, with other enormities—are fully set forth

in history, and need no enlargement here. Many interesting reminiscences of that stormy period have been given and are now more or less forgotten, but there is one incident recently revived which certainly merits permanent record. It concerns a gentleman, now a resident of Ottawa, the highly respected Chancellor of Queen's University, Mr. Sandford Fleming—then newly arrived in the colony from his native Scotland. He it was on the disastrous night of the conflagration who, at the imminent peril of his life, bore through the flames of the Legislative Halls, that well-known picture of our revered Queen which now adorns the Federal Buildings of the Dominion Capital. What more patriotic subject for the painter's brush or the poet's fancy! Colonel Bruce accompanied the Governor-General on all occasions, a circumstance he had long painful cause for remembering, seeing that he carried on his person for the rest of his days the wound-print of a blow received from a heavy stone thrown by some one in a pursuing mob. This occurred a week or more after the first overt demonstration, as Lord Elgin and his brother were driving home from Government House. Seeing the threatened danger, Colonel Bruce threw himself into a position to save his brother, and thus sustained the injury intended for the latter. His bravery and fraternal devotion in such a crisis were on all sides much applauded. During all this unhappy period "Monklands," the Governor's residence, and the houses of the Ministers resident, were in a state of siege, requiring special protection. Mrs. Bruce, of course, was with her sister-in-law at "Monklands," and it was there, when the political excitement had somewhat abated, attended by Mrs. Bruce, that Lady Elgin was safely delivered of a son—her first born—who has lived to inherit the family titles and honours. Here, before we dismiss the subject, it may be proper to observe, that while public opinion in this country was much divided on the wisdom and policy of Lord Elgin's course at this particular stage of his public career, in England, by the Queen and her constitutional advisers, it was upheld and sustained throughout. But probably the best evidence of His Lordship's eminent success as an Administrator was afforded on the occasion of his untimely demise, when both the great leaders in the House of Lords, Earl Derby and Earl Grey, contended with generous rivalry for the honour of having first introduced the departed statesman to official life. Rarely has so marked a compliment been paid in any country, even to a public man of the first rank. From Montreal the seat of Government was transferred to Toronto for two years, moving thence to Quebec in 1851, at both of which places Colonel Bruce (who meanwhile had succeeded the late Colonel Campbell, of St. Hilaire, as Governor General's Secretary and Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs) and his

estimable wife, made many warmly attached friends, with several of whom, in after years, they maintained an intimate correspondence. Both Lord and Lady Elgin and their family circle, including His Lordship's daughter by his first marriage, the present Lady Thurlow, mingled freely in the Colonial society of the day, and one and all manifested the warmest interest in everything tending to the welfare and happiness of the Canadian people, the smallest duties being as sedulously looked after as the more important ones. The writer well remembers a visit paid to the school he attended by His Excellency. There was to be a distribution of prizes and the Governor General was asked to present them. To the writer's intense surprise his own name was called. Proceeding in some trepidation to the dais, where the great personage stood, he found himself before a handsome, middle-aged gentleman of benevolent aspect, whose first words removed every uneasiness. "You are an English boy," said His Lordship, with a kind smile, "your parents having both come from England; I am now about to give you the History of England," and, handing the book with a warm shake of the hand, "I want you always to stand up for England!" While in Quebec, Durham Terrace (so named after Lady Elgin's father, whose report on public affairs is now so frequently cited), was always a favourite resort with the Vice-regal party, and there, in the early morn, Lord Elgin, when he remained in town, and Colonel and Mrs. Bruce, always, rain or shine, could be found doing a vigorous "constitutional" before breakfast, their companions on these occasions not infrequently being the late Hon. Henry Black, the late Hon. F. W. Primrose (son of a former Earl of Rosebery), or the venerable and dignified *Seigneur* of Lotbiniere, the late Mr. Gaspard Joly, whose son, Edmond, an officer under Havelock, not long afterward bravely fell at the relief of Lucknow. At that time, during the sessions of Parliament, divine service was celebrated every Sunday morning in one of the Chambers of the Legislature (whose sittings were held in the old stone building, since destroyed by fire, at Prescott Gate), the late Dr. Adamson generally officiating. At these services, which were attended by almost all the members of the Legislature of the Anglican communion, Lord Elgin, with his family and suite, was oftentimes present. Alas! how few remain of the prominent figures of those times. As we look around us to-day, and mentally note the absent faces, we begin to realize the tremendous havoc wrought by death in the ranks of our public-men, but one form—that of the veteran Premier in his green and vigorous old age—remaining in active public life as a connecting link between the Present and the Past of which we are speaking. Lord Elgin's official relation with Canada termi-

nated in 1854, the year in which he concluded his well-known Treaty of Reciprocity with the United States. Returning to England His Lordship entered the administration of the day, and with his subsequent brilliant career in China and India, down to the day when dying on the Himalayan hills from exhausted vitality, he sent his last message, expressive of love and devotion to the Queen, our readers are doubtless familiar. He was but 52 when called away. Colonel Bruce re-joined his regiment, and, in 1859, attained Major-General's rank ; but in the previous year, Her Majesty, whose entire confidence and sincere regard and esteem he seems to have won, together with that also of the lamented Prince Consort, was pleased to appoint him to the charge of the Prince of Wales as Governor, a trust, we are assured, he fulfilled with a fidelity, good judgment, tact and kindness that have rarely been equalled. In the capacity named General Bruce accompanied His Royal Highness on his visit to Canada and the United States, in 1860, the full political significance of which event the Prince Consort was the first to recognize ; on his tour in Germany, in 1861, when the young Prince met for the first time his future wife ; and, again, on his interesting journey through the Holy Land, in the year following. He was also with the Heir Apparent at Oxford and Cambridge. While at Constantinople, returning from the East, the General contracted a fever, from the effects of which he died, suddenly, soon after reaching England, his death occurring at St. James' Palace, the scene also of his wife's demise. The Queen, it is reported, was plunged in grief over the sad event, as was also the Prince of Wales, whose faithful guide, counsellor and friend the departed officer had proved himself to be. Realizing from her own sad experience, not long before, the full force of the blow sustained by the bereaved widow, Her Majesty extended to her every consolation in her power, and in further proof of her consideration and sympathy was pleased, as before stated, to appoint Mrs. Bruce to an important position in her personal service. In this office, in close and frequent attendance upon her Royal Mistress, Mrs. Bruce—the friend of many in Canada in other times—passed the remainder of her days until her own call came not many weeks ago. Like her husband and other prominent members of the family in official life before her, Mrs. Bruce died at the post of duty, thus further sustaining the opinion advanced by the chief of the Bruces in his last moments—that it was well to die in harness ! She passed away not unrecognized for her useful and important services in the Queen's household, Her Majesty having, some years before, enrolled the name of the lamented lady in the Royal Order of Victoria and Albert.

*Mufti.*



