

Miscellaneous Newspaper Notes

Death of the Queen

The propriety of passing votes of condolence on the death of the Queen has been engaging the attention of Irish Nationalist boards for the past week. In nearly every instance such resolutions brought forward by members of the Unionist minorities have been defeated, though it has been made clear that no desire to offer personal insult to the memory of the dead Queen actuated the Nationalists. Queen Victoria may have led the blameless life attributed to her, but it would puzzle her most ardent admirers to discover any great act of hers tending to the benefit of this country, and justifying poignant grief at her demise. Our Unionist friends tell us, on the one hand, that the English Constitution prevented her Majesty from decreeing that the evils which beset Ireland should cease; on the other, they ask us to admire her for not misusing the enormous power at her disposal. The contentions are decidedly contradictory, but if we look into her career for some illustrations of that maternal feeling, which she is credited with having entertained towards her Irish subjects, we find that it was fostered and sustained by a fortnight's personal intercourse! Queen Victoria was a good mother and a model woman according to her lights, but it cannot be said that she took that deep private interest in the trials and troubles of Irish subjects which would make us mourn her death with a sense of irreparable loss. But if the resolutions brought forward by Irish Unionists for adoption at Nationalist public boards were based purely on appreciation of her late Majesty's worth as a woman nobody would be churlish enough to stand up and oppose them. It is not against her Majesty personally that the Irish people harbour feelings of resentment, but against the Government of which she was the ostensible head. Her recent visit to Ireland, and the cordial and respectful welcome accorded to her by the people, were utilised to prove that Ireland was perfectly satisfied with English rule, an inference which was readily accepted by many of our sympathisers abroad to the detriment of the Nationalist cause. It is, we are convinced, with a similar sinister intention that many of our loyalist public men in the present instance are seeking to make play on the generosity and chivalry of the Irish people. If so their plan has been defeated. The period which her Majesty's reign covered saw Ireland scourged with famine; it saw our industries dwindle, decay and die; it saw peaceful and smiling landscapes turned into desolate wastes; it saw our population diminished by half, and our workhouses taxed to their utmost capacity. To express regret at the death of the Queen as a good woman would be a graceful act, but to sympathise with her loss to a Government which has made the history Ireland for the last sixty-four years one of poverty, misery and suffering, would in the absence of a phrase to more adequately describe it, be the veriest hypocrisy.

Limerick Leader, editorial, 30 January 1901

Lady Limerick to Tour in Concert

Lady Limerick, who, according to the cable dispatches, has arranged to come over here immediately after the Christmas holidays to undertake a concert tour, of which the profits, it is said, are to be devoted to the endowment of a national school for music at Dublin, is the wife of one of the impoverished British peers, the late earl, who himself was far from rich, having left everything of which he could dispose to his widow- a second wife. His first wife, the mother of the present peer, was a woman of rather humble parentage.

The present earl was formerly in the army, but distinguished himself more as an amateur actor than as a soldier, his most notable performance having been his presentation of "The Nurse" in his burlesque of "Romeo and Juliet," given at the Queen's Theater, Dublin, in behalf of some local charity. He has, besides this, one very peculiar hobby, that of bootmaking.

Lady Limerick is a very beautiful woman, with dark hair and typically Irish eyes, possessed of great musical talents that are shared by her sister. Indeed, the latter's performances on the violin, together with Lady Limerick's singing and touch of the piano, served to secure them as young girls the entree into Dublin society. The countess is the daughter of Joseph Burke Irwin, a police magistrate of Limerick, and a granddaughter to that J.B. Irwin, of Fenn Hall, Roscommon, who in the early days of the nineteenth century, was known throughout Ireland by the soubriquet of "Hard Riding Johnny." It was her uncle, Edward Irwin who was so conspicuous on the turf, and who with his grand race horse, Faugh-a-Ballagh, won the historic St. Leger of 1844. She was practically dowerless, and it was largely on this account that her father-in-law, the late earl, so bitterly opposed her marriage.

The patronymic of the Lords of Limerick is Pery, which does not prevent their claiming descent on the distaff side from the Plantagenet kings. The first Pery of note was William Pery, Bishop of Limerick, who was created Lord Glentworth in 1789. His son, for supporting the act of union and for inducing the corporation and County of Limerick to do the same, was advanced to the rank, first of Viscount and then of Earl of Limerick. The title of Lord Glentworth is now borne by Lady Limerick's son, who has for his godmother the Princess of Wales.

Should Lady Limerick's concert tour in America prove a success, we may yet witness a whole string of British peeresses and women of title and of the highest rank in English society coming over here to appear before the American public for money in behalf of the charities and institutions in which they are more particularly interested. Of course, it is only the net profits that go to the charity or to the institution mentioned, after the payment of all the expenses of the tour, and in this way duchesses, marchionesses, and countesses will have an opportunity of visiting America free of cost under the most favorable auspices, and, more over, will have the additional advantage, not indifferent to the feminine mind of knowing that they are to be seen not merely by that small fraction of people, but by the American public at large.

Impresarios will doubtless be quick to take up this new branch of industry, namely, the management of the concert tours of peeresses who sing, play and recite for charity, and who, of course, will be on quite a different footing to those impoverished scions of the European aristocracy, such as, for instance, Lord Yarmouth, Lady Mansel, and "Princess Wrede," who have appeared before the American footlights in a purely professional capacity for that charity that begins at home.

Washington Post, 14 December 1904.

Crimeless Limerick

The address of Lord Chief Justice O'Brien to the Grand Jury at the City Assizes today gave generous testimony to the freedom from crime of the city of Limerick, and the peaceableness of our citizens. But for one small case, which, his Lordship admitted, in no way reflected on the peace of the city, he would have had the pleasure of being presented with the traditional white gloves. *This is a gratifying and conclusive proof of our social condition and must confound those who, for their own party or sectarian purposes, have been filling the columns of the newspapers with heated and very imaginary accounts of the lawlessness and religious intolerance of Limerick. After such a vindication, our opponents must perforce find retreat in discreet silence, or else prove themselves the disseminators of vicious falsehood, and fall beneath the contempt of all truth-loving men. His Lordship, in his address, further referred to the fact that good men on all sides and of various sections of the community had exerted moral influence in the cause of peace and he hoped they would receive their reward, for a certain sacred authority, to which all Christians appealed, tells us that 'Blessed are the peacemakers.' We acknowledge, with his Lordship, the very commendable efforts of these peacemakers amongst us, and we hold with these peacemakers of all sections of our community. But it is only just to reflect how, while circumstances have called forth their mediation, that medication would never have been required in our relations with one another. We can triumphantly point to our city as a crimeless city. Our people are, in every social relation, singularly courteous and tolerant. Any influence, which could endanger our reputation or leave us open to any accusation against our peaceableness, must be an outside influence, and has been such. Any demonstrations which have occurred in our midst, have been the outcome of the most gross and persistent violation on the part of outsiders of our most revered and deep-rooted sentiments – a violation which would have been met by any other people, as spirited as our citizens, with a less tolerant form of retaliation than that with which it was opposed by us. His Lordship, in concluding his address, made regretful reference to the report he had heard to the effect that an attempt had been made to molest the carriage of the Protestant Bishop of Limerick, and which was said to have occurred outside the city. We trust with his lordship that if unhappily the report is true, the perpetrator of the act was some irresponsible person, for it is not in the nature of Limerick people to ever be guilty of an act of aggression of this kind.

Limerick Leader (editorial) 5 July 1901

*A pair of white gloves was given to the judge when there were no criminal cases at an assizes as a symbol of the virtue of the area. The Lord Chief Justice in question was Peter O'Brien (1842-1914), Baron O'Brien of Kilfenora, more popularly known as 'Peter the Packer' for his skill, earlier in his career, in selecting juries who would convict those he regarded as guilty. It is interesting that the strongly nationalist *Limerick Leader* appears to view him favourably at this stage.

