

## THE LONDONDERRY LINE

### Statesmen and Leaders who have Shaped the Destinies of Nations

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The Londonderry family has occupied an important place in the political, social and commercial life of Britain for over a century, and during that time has helped to shape the destinies of nations. The family's story, in a sense, is a national story, for the Londonderrys have played a prominent part in the world stage.

Successive holders of the title and the vast estates made their mark in many varied fields—in war or peace, political life or business activity.

The founder of the present position of the family was Alexander Stewart of Ballylawn Castle, Donegal, and Mount Stewart, County Down, who played an important part in Ulster politics. His son, Robert Stewart, was born in 1739. His position in public life appears in the fact that he was deputed to the second Dungannon Convention in 1783, when the more enlightened of the Protestant aristocracy, having practically established the independence of Ireland in the previous year, met to demand the reform of the Irish Parliament, which, though now free, was still a close oligarchy of the most corrupt and despotic type.

Stewart appears to have become soon detached from the party of legislative independence. He was made Baron Londonderry in 1789, Viscount Castlereagh in 1795, and Earl of Londonderry in 1796. He lived to the age of 83, dying, in 1821.

#### **Second Only to Pitt.**

The chief distinction of this, the first Marquis of Londonderry was to be the father of his sons; two of whom were among the most prominent and powerful personages of the tremendous age in which revolution and reaction convulsed 30 years of history.

Robert Stewart, second Marquis of Londonderry was better known as Lord Castlereagh. Second only to Pitt as the author of The Act of Union, he was one of the best abused men of any period. It must at least be said of him that if while destitute of intellectual genius of any sort he took a main hand in re-casting the constitution of this country and became later one of the arbiters of Europe, it was because in sheer courage, inflexible determination and unhesitating energy, he was surpassed by none of his contemporaries.

From the first and to the last; his was the firmest voice in favour of supporting Wellington in Spain. As foreign Secretary after March, 1812, he was the soul of the last struggle against Napoleon. He represented England at the Congress of Vienna, the Treaty of Paris, and the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle - the great assemblies which disposed at will of the fortunes of Europe and set up the Holy Alliance to hold down the revolutionary spirit.

#### **A Much Hated Peer.**

As the most bold and thorough agent of coercion in England in the years that followed Waterloo, he was pursued to his grave with incredible hatred. Perhaps no man less strong and less cold could have rendered such services to order at that time.

He was ready to drive in the face of any unpopularity and his famous phrase about the "ignorant impatience of taxation" shows at once the unpopular manners and masterfully practical temper of the man. In a fit of insanity he committed suicide in 1822, having in the previous year succeeded his father as second Marquis of Londonderry.

His half-brother, the third Marquis. Whose equestrian statue stands in Durham Market Place had already achieved an independent reputation and it was he who established the connection between the Stewarts and the North of England. Born in Dublin in 1778 he entered the army as an ensign at fourteen years of age.

He accompanied the expedition to Holland in 1794, and when attached to the mission with the Austrian armies from 1795 till 1797, was severely wounded at the Battle of Donauwerth. He went through the Irish Insurrection, and was for a short time Under Secretary for War.

## **A Great cavalry Leader.**

As Brigadier-General he distinguished himself in the famous retreat of Sir John Moore, and from 1809 till 1813 was Adjutant-General to the army under 'Wellington. " He shared with Lord Paget, the praise of Moore, that they had put the right spirit into English Cavalry."

His desperate courage as a cavalry leader was a proverb in the army. He would at any time have charged a host with a squadron, and for the manner in which his handful of dragoons dashed into Marshal Soult's army in his retreat across the Douro he received the thanks of the House of Commons.

In 1813 he went to Berlin as Ambassador and as Military Commissioner to the allied sovereigns, was especially charged to watch Bernadette, King of Sweden, whose loyalty was suspected. Raised to the peerage as Baron Stewart, he was appointed as Ambassador to Austria, and was one of the plenipotentiaries at the Congress of Vienna. He fought at the Battle of Waterloo and accompanied the Iron Duke at the entry into Paris

## **THE TEMPESTS.**

His first wife, a daughter of the third Earl of Darnley, had died in 1812, and Lord Stewart formed the great connection of his family with the North of England by his marriage in 1819 with Frances Anne, only daughter and heiress of Sir Harry Vane Tempest Bart of Wynyard and Long Newton, County Durham. On his marriage he assumed by Royal licence the surname of Vane only.

The Tempests had been one of the characteristic families of the North for at least three centuries, the Vanes for at least two. Sir Piers Tempest served at Agincourt, and a hundred years later the family came into wide estate at the dissolution of the monasteries. The principal branch was that of the Tempests of Stella, though the Tempests of Wynyard had diverged from them as early as the beginning of the sixteenth century.

Baron Stewart had succeeded his brother in the Irish Marquisate in 1822, and in the following year was made Earl Vane and Viscount Seaham in the peerage of the United Kingdom. For a whole generation after his accession to the immense local property of his wife he held the singular position of being the head and front of Toryism in the county of Durham, while the most powerful and enterprising commercial figure in the county.

## **A THREAT**

He entered into negotiations with the River Wear Commissioners for exclusive privileges in the shipment of coals; when these were refused he said he would make the grass grow in the streets of Sunderland, and set about the construction of Seaham Harbour, a private enterprise of almost unparalleled magnitude and importance for that time.

The third marquis who was one of the pallbearers at Wellington's funeral, received the Garter made vacant by the Great Duke's death, and died in 1854.

When his Statue at Durham was unveiled on December 2nd 1861, Mr. Disraeli delivered a noble and finished eulogy upon the memory of his friend.

His only son by his first wife, Frederick William Robert Stewart, succeeded as Fourth Marquis, and in 1872 was himself succeeded by the eldest son of the second marriage, George Henry Robert Charles William Vane-Tempest, the fifth Marquis, who died in 1881.

The career of the sixth Marquis needs, but a very brief recapitulation. Born in 1852, he represented County Down in the House of Commons from 1878 to 1884. In the latter year he married Theresa, the beautiful daughter of the Earl of Shrewsbury. He was Viceroy of Ireland from 1886 to 1889.

The career of the present Marquis is fully dealt, with elsewhere.

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