

DEATH OF RT. HON GEORGE WYNDHAM  
1863 - 1913  
Soldier, Statesman, Scholar



**DEATH OF MR. WYNDHAM, M.P.**

**HEART FAILURE IN PARIS.**

It is with deep regret that we have to record the sudden and entirely unexpected death of Mr. Wyndham. The news that reached Dover shortly after mid-day on Monday came as a great shock to the town. His death was just as unexpected to his own family, as Mr. Wyndham, after a short and apparently not severe illness, passed away in Paris on Sunday evening, without any of them being present, or even knowing that he was really ill. Mr. Wyndham, who was Colonel of the Cheshire Yeomanry, had been at the annual training at Llanymonach Wells, and last Wednesday went to Paris, crossing by the "Engadine," where he joined Lord and Lady Plymouth for a few days' holiday before returning to Parliament on Monday of this week. He had been in perfect health until Saturday. On Friday he accompanied the Duke of Westminster, who was on his way through Paris to the Gare du Nord, and saw him off to London, and on Saturday he looked in at the South Eastern and Chatham Companies' offices and reserved a cabin for himself for Sunday, as he intended to return by the mid-day train. He was in the best of spirits at the South Eastern and Chatham offices, laughing and joking about the probabilities of a rough crossing. On Sunday he felt unwell. He had caught a sudden chill, he thought, and determined to stay another day in Paris. Later in the afternoon he felt worse, and asked for a doctor. A doctor was sent for by the hotel management, and at Mr. Wyndham's request he arranged for a consultation for 9 o'clock on Monday morn-

ing, Saturday, January 17th, 1910, he fought his third and last election in Dover, when he was opposed by Sir (then Mr.) A. M. Bradley, and the result was:—

Mr. Wyndham	...	...	...	...	3,330
Mr. Bradley	...	...	...	...	1,572
Majority	...	...	...	...	1,758

Since the year 1900 Mr. Wyndham's health had not been very robust, especially in the winter, when from time to time he suffered from severe attacks of influenza. In 1911, his father, the Hon. Percy Wyndham, died, and Mr. Wyndham succeeded to Clouds, his father's Wiltshire seat. For years, however, he has been closely associated with Cheshire, where he resided with the Countess Grosvenor, at Saighton Grange, and he has commanded for the last few years the Cheshire Yeomanry. Apart from his political life, Mr. Wyndham took great interest in literature, as anyone must easily have gleaned, who heard his brilliant speeches. He edited, with great literary ability, three books, "North's Plutarch," Shakespeare's "Sonnets and Poems," 1898, and an essay on the Poems of "Ronsard and la Pléiade," 1906.

"The Times," on Tuesday, in a most appreciative memoir, referred to Mr. Wyndham's literary gifts, saying:—

"To George Wyndham, soldier, courtier, scholar" is the inscription in the book dedicated to him by his friend Henley in 1900—"the Book of the Courtier, done into English by Sir Thomas Hoby"—and that, with its introduction by his other friend, Walter Raleigh, seems as if it might be one of his best memorials. . . .

"If he had gone on writing, if writing had been his business, there can be little doubt that he would have done many more notable

ing with a well known English doctor in practice at Paris. This was at seven o'clock on Sunday. In conversation with his colleague, the hotel doctor diagnosed Mr. Wyndham's case as congestion of the lungs. At ten o'clock on Sunday night quite suddenly Mr. Wyndham felt much worse, and rang the bell, but died of an embolism of the heart in a few minutes, only Lord Plymouth being present. The news did not become known in London till nearly mid-day on Monday. The Countess Grosvenor at the time was at Clouds with Mr. Wyndham's mother. On Monday, after receiving the terrible news, she came to Grosvenor House, London, but was so much prostrated by the shock that she was unable to go on to Paris, for which Mr. Percy Wyndham at once left.

Mr. Wyndham was in his fiftieth year, having been born in 1863. He was the son of Mr. Percy Wyndham, who died in 1911. He was grandson of Lord Leonfield, and the grand-nephew on his mother's side of Lord Edward FitzGerald, the Irish rebel, being a direct descendant of the famous Pamela, daughter of Madame de Genlis. He was educated at Eton, and subsequently went to Sandhurst, and in 1885 entered the Coldstream Guards, with whom he served in the Suakin Campaign of 1885, for which Mr. Wyndham held the Medal and Khedive Star. It was in 1887 that Mr. Wyndham retired from the Army, and became Private Secretary to Mr. Balfour, at that time Chief Secretary for Ireland. It was two years later, in 1889, now twenty-four years ago, that Mr. Wyndham first came into touch with Dover. Major Dickson, the sitting Member, died, and Mr. Wyndham, then 26 years of age, was introduced as the Unionist candidate, and returned unopposed. He had in 1887 married Countess Grosvenor, by whom he had one son, Mr. Percy Wyndham, whose marriage to Miss Lister only took place a few weeks ago. In 1892, the year of his first contested election, he ceased to be Mr. Balfour's Private Secretary. In the summer of 1892 Mr. Wyndham fought his first election at Dover against Major Edwards, an independent Labour Candidate. Major Edwards held very advanced views, and he found little support from the Dover Liberals, many of the leaders of whom supported Mr. Wyndham on this occasion. The result of the election was as follows:—

Mr. Wyndham ... ..	2,231
Major Edwards ... ..	978
Majority ... ..	1,253

When the Conservative Party came into power in 1895, Mr. Wyndham was expected to obtain a position in the Government, but it was not until 1898 that he became Under Secretary of State for War. He occupied that position during the trying time of the first portion of the Boer War, and being the representative of the War Office in the House of Commons, it is needless to say that that period must have been an anxiety that told on him. In 1900 he became Chief Secretary of State for Ireland, and was responsible for passing the Irish Land Act of 1903 that has done a great deal for dealing with the Irish agricultural problem, and his memory will always be gratefully

things. He was gaining as a writer, learning freedom of style, and what he has left as his published work is not the complete expression of his mind. But, if not completely, his writings express his mind truly. He wrote about what he admired—Shakespeare; Plutarch's Lives in Sir Thomas North's translation; the poetry of Ronsard; the spirit of romance. The 16th Century was where he was most at home, and especially among the 'soldiers, courtiers, scholars' of that time. He had travelled in his reading and his interests far beyond those limits; he could talk of the books of Lancelot and Tristram, and was no less ready to discuss the character of Bolingbroke, or of later political authors. But it was to the 16th Century that he gave most of his study, and not in an antiquarian pedantic way, but feeling in the sonnets of Ronsard and Sidney the poetical meaning, as well as the music, that contented him best. Wherever the writings of George Wyndham are read there will be found in them a very noble and sincere admiration for some of the noblest things; something like the mind of Sir Philip Sidney, as thorough in devotion as in criticism and controversy."

In the House of Commons on Monday the following tributes were paid by the chief speakers of both Parties, who were discussing the Home Rule Bill:—

Mr. Asquith said: Before I embark, Sir, upon the waves of controversy, I would venture to express what I am sure is the universal and deep-seated regret of members in all quarters of this House at the sad and shocking tidings we have just received of the sudden death of Mr. George Wyndham. Mr. Wyndham served the State in many capacities. He was a most distinguished incumbent of the office of Chief Secretary for Ireland, and the great measure for Irish land purchase will always be associated with his name (cheers). We lose in him a most gracious and attractive personality, and one whose Parliamentary gifts not only in Irish but in all other discussions we can ill afford to lose. The House of Commons, I am sure we shall all feel, is impoverished by his removal (subdued cheers).

Later, Mr. Balfour said: I rise, as the House will readily understand, with special feelings of emotion in respect of the great loss which the House generally, and his old friends and colleagues in particular, have sustained by the death of Mr. George Wyndham. The Prime Minister has, with admirable taste, referred to the matter, and I have little or nothing to add to what he has said. Naturally and inevitably I feel the tragedy more personally and more acutely than he or, perhaps, any other man in the House can be expected to feel it. From my longer and more intimate knowledge of Mr. Wyndham, I feel myself justified in speaking with greater confidence, perhaps, than any other man in the House as to the width of his accomplishments and as to his great literary and imaginative powers, which never received, I think, their full expansion and their full meed of praise, or, perhaps, their full theatre in which to show themselves. Though many of us heard speeches made by Mr. Wyndham, which those who heard them will not readily forget, yet all, I think, must feel that he has been cut off at a time of life when there was still before him the hope and promise of

remembered in Ireland by all Parties in that respect. He entered the Cabinet in 1902, but before the close of Mr. Balfour's Ministry he resigned his position in 1905 on account of the attacks of a section of the Unionist Party on the devolution policy of his subordinate, Sir (now Lord) Anthony MacDonnell. During this long period since 1902, Mr. Wyndham's seat had not been contested, and most of the elections passed without the subject of a contest being even seriously considered. In the great Election of 1906, which Mr. Wyndham fought on the Tariff Reform question, he had his first straight Party fight in Dover, when he was opposed by Mr. Bryce. Mr. Wyndham's personal popularity was great, and he won the election by a large majority, as the following figures show:—

Mr. Wyndham ... ..	3,269
Mr. Bryce ... ..	1,705
Majority ... ..	1,564

Although successful himself, his Party had a great set-back, and Mr. Wyndham has since occupied a seat on the Opposition Front Bench. He did great work for his Party in his advocacy, especially in Northern towns, of the Tariff Reform and Imperial Preference Policy, and when the latter portion of the policy was dropped he was very disappointed, although he accepted his leaders' views. He was also always a supporter of Women's Suffrage. On

greater things in the future than he had ever done in the past. These are the great tragedies of life, and that I, whose public work in the natural course of things is drawing to a close (cries of "No") should have to say these few words in the House of one who in politics was from the beginning in close co-operation with myself, who was almost young enough to be my son, seems to me to add deeply to the tragedy of what is a tragic situation. There was one point most happily referred to by the Prime Minister when he touched upon the question of Irish land purchase. It was the great, I had almost said the unique, good fortune of my departed friend to have his name for ever associated with that great Irish measure, which, though a great Irish measure, was yet not the subject of bitter Irish controversy. That has happened to few men before. It happened to him, and those who, like myself, have the greatest admiration for his high intellectual and moral qualities are happy in the thought that his name will be so closely associated with the greatest reform that this House has ever introduced into Ireland (hear, hear).

Mr. Wyndham visited Dover last in company with Lady Grosvenor in January, when on January 15th he addressed the Primrose League; and on January 18th he spoke at the Carlton Club. He was also present at the complimentary banquet to Mr. Burr on February 4th, this being his last public appearance at Dover. In the recent poll with regard to



Funeral of Rt Hon G Wyndham MP, 1913

the Sea Front Dock, he gave a promise to advise that the dock would be withdrawn if the poll were adverse to it, and it may be considered that it was due to this pledge that the Dock was withdrawn.

The last time Mr. Wyndham appeared in the political arena at Dover was when he presented the billiard prizes at the Carlton Club on January 18th. He then said that in 1914 he would be qualified to celebrate his "silver wedding" in connection with the Borough of Dover, and that to symbolise the occasion he would put up the cup he had presented to the Club to open competition amongst those who had held it during the last thirteen or fourteen years.

In reply to a message of condolence sent on behalf of Dover Unionists, by Sir William Crundall, Countess Grosvenor telegraphed:— "Thank you for your most kind and touching telegram. It comforts me to know that I have such sympathy from Dover. — Sibell Grosvenor."

The King and Queen, the Duke and Duchess of Connaught, Princess Henry of Battenburg, and Princess Louise, Duchess of Argyll have sent messages of condolence to Countess Grosvenor on the death of Mr. George Wyndham. Messages of sympathy have also been received from Mr. Balfour and other members of the Unionist Party.

#### BRINGING THE REMAINS HOME.

The body of Mr. Wyndham was brought over from Paris on Wednesday afternoon by Boulogne and Folkestone, and was taken direct to Clouds, East Knoyle, near Salisbury. At Boulogne the coffin was placed in the forehold of the mail packet "Empress," and covered with the Union Jack. The flags of the steamer were lowered to half-mast. A small party of Mr. Wyndham's political and personal friends awaited the arrival of the "Empress," on the quay-side at Folkestone. Among those present were Sir William Crundall, Chairman of the Unionist Party in Dover; Mr. E. Carder, Mr. R. Mowll, Mr. W. J. Barnes, and Dr. Best. The body was taken by special train to Semley, and was afterwards placed in the chapel at Clouds, where it will remain until to-morrow. Mr. Percy Wyndham, son, and a few of the late Mr. Wyndham's personal friends, who had accompanied the coffin from Paris, also travelled on the train.