

THE VISCOUNT TAAFFE

ONLY BRITISH PEER IN ARMS ON SIDE OF GERMANY

Not Liable to Old Penalties—can be Executed, but Not Quartered—Title Dates From Boyne

But one peer of the British realm is now bearing arms against England, namely, Viscount Taaffe, of Correen, 12th holder of this Irish peerage, and also Lord of Ballymote, both in the County of Sligo. He is serving in the Austrian army, as captain of Emperor Francis Joseph's First Dragoon regiment, which is in the field in Alsace-Lorraine, co-operating with the German troops, there against the allied English and French forces.

Under the laws which existed in England about 44 years ago, the fact that Lord Taaffe had borne arms against King George and that he had been guilty of assisting any public enemy at war with his majesty in such way as by means whatsoever would have been sufficient to attain his two Irish peerages, the Viscountcy of Taaffe and the Barony of Ballymote, both of which would have been forfeited, along with his property, to the crown, as those of a traitor.

But in 1870 it was enacted by parliament that there should no longer be any attainder or forfeiture on conviction of high treason. The so-called doctrine of "corruption of blood, both upwards and downwards," being abolished as inhuman. Viscount Taaffe has no possessions within the limits of the United Kingdom and Ireland. But even if he had, these could not now be declared forfeited, although they might be seized by the British government and held until the close of the conflict.

Nor if Viscount Taaffe were captured by the English would he be called upon to undergo the dreadful penalties formerly inflicted upon those who have been guilty of treason, and which provided that the offender "be drawn on a hurdle to the place of execution, there hanged by the neck, but not until he be dead, and that while yet alive he be disembowelled, and that his body be divided into four quarters, the head and quarters to be at the disposal of the crown."

Death Without Trimmings. These medieval methods of punishment were abolished in 1870, and were restricted to ordinary death, without any of the ghastly trimmings above described. It may be taken for granted that anyone sent to the scaffold for high treason in Great Britain nowadays would meet with his death by hanging, in the same way as an ordinary murderer.

But the secretary of state is empowered by statute to order, if he sees fit, that the sentence be changed from hanging to decapitation. The last occasion on which a man was condemned to death in England for high treason was that of the Australian-born journalist and physician, Dr. Arthur Lynch, now Nationalist member of parliament from County Clare. Just 11 years have elapsed since he was convicted of high treason at the Old Bailey in London, the capital sentence imposed upon him being subsequently commuted to penal servitude for life.

He served only a year of his term, was then liberated on a ticket-of-leave by the nationalist government, and received a free pardon from the crown when the liberals came into office in 1906. Lynch's high treason consisted in his having commanded, as colonel, the second Irish brigade under the Boer flag in South Africa against the English. When reproached last March in the House of Commons by Lord Hugh Cecil for having borne arms against the British empire, he admitted that at the time when he fought with the Boers he had no much respect for the British constitution, having been born of Irish parents.

He added that he had been tried and condemned to death, which produced reflection; that since then England had done a great deal both for England and for Ireland, and that if Great Britain were again attacked by any foreign foe, he would fight her. His explanation was received with good humor and cheers from both sides of the house.

Very Brilliant Man. Lynch is a very brilliant man, a graduate of the universities of Melbourne, Berlin, and Paris, a doctor of medicine in France, and a member of the Royal College of Surgeons in England. It is in the latter capacity that he has volunteered for service in the field against Germany.

Other notable trials for treason during the last hundred years was that of the 13th Lord Inchiquin's brother, William Smith O'Brien, descendant of British Boru, and also that of the gifted John Mitchell, now mayor of New York. Both were convicted of treason at Dublin in 1848, for inciting rebellion against the government; and while John Mitchell was sentenced to 14 years' transportation to the penal colony of Tasmania, O'Brien was sentenced to death by hanging, with disembowelling, decapitation and quartering. O'Brien's sentence

was commuted to transportation for life in Tasmania.

Mitchell escaped to the United States, became editor of the Enquirer at Richmond, Va., and of the Irish Citizen in New York, and died as member of parliament for County Tipperary, being received on the occasion of his return to Ireland in 1874, with the utmost enthusiasm. O'Brien served but six years of his sentence, and then received a free pardon, returning to his native land, and dying ten years later.

With regard to Viscount Taaffe, there is this to be said in his behalf, namely, that although he is a British peer, he has never been a British citizen, being a native and citizen of Austria, of which empire his father was for many years prime minister. The present Viscount Taaffe has succeeded his father in the possession of his very extensive and valuable estates in Bohemia and in Hungary, and also in his title of Count of Austria, and of the Holy Roman empire, bestowed upon his ancestor by emperor Leopold, II., 200 years ago or more.

Taaffe's Claim Rejected.

In 1912 Viscount Taaffe applied to the British crown for permission to exercise his rights and prerogatives as a peer of the kingdom of Ireland. But the committee of privileges of the House of Lords, on the recommendation of the lord high chancellor of Great Britain and of Ireland, and of the attorney-general of the two kingdoms, rejected his claim. The refusal was based on his objection to abandon his Austrian allegiance, and his commission in the Austrian army, in order to become a British subject.

It was admitted that he was the lawful owner of the two Irish peerages in question, but that as an alien, and as giving his allegiance to a foreign sovereign, he could not be permitted to exercise any of the legislative prerogatives of a peer of the British realm.

The connection of the Irish Viscounts Taaffe with Austria dates from the Battle of the Boyne, at which the third viscount was killed, fighting for King James, his honors developing in his brother Francis, who had already at the time attained so great a reputation in the Austrian service, that the peerages and estates were, at the instance of King William and Queen Mary, specially exempted from the attainder that was meted out to the other peers who had already at the time attained of the Stuart.

The fifth and sixth Viscounts Taaffe also achieved fame in Austria the sixth, indeed, being remembered to this day throughout the Austro-Hungarian empire for his introduction of the culture of the potato, from whence it may be assumed that he remembered his native land. Whereas the late Viscount Taaffe was persons gratissima at court, and a boyhood friend of Emperor Francis Joseph, who always addressed him with the familiar "Du," the present peer has lived for years past altogether on his estates, absent from court, and from the great world in consequence of his marriage with a girl of very humble birth, as a girl of such rank was at one time a foothold favorite in Vienna. Her name should be included among those actresses who have become through marriage peeresses of the British realm.

CHILD LIFE UNPLEASANT.

Numerous Ordeals For Boys and Girls in African Countries.

Christian Herald. Child life in Africa has few pleasures and many sorrows, and it is a state of constant reversal and change. From the time of a boy's birth until he has gone through the "devil bush," he is little thought of, but as soon as he has passed through its terrible ordeals and practices he is regarded as a man and an asset in the native community.

With a girl it is different. It is very hard to procure girls for the mission stations, because they are considered specially valuable as workers and possible money-bringers until the period arrives for them to enter and pass through the "green" bush ordeal.

Then they are regarded as women and eligible for marriage, and their industrial value decreases. Still, if they raise large families, their market value keeps up in a measure; for in certain sections of Africa tribal custom permits a man to sell, loan or rent out his wives, or keep them in household slavery, or give them their freedom.

Freedom is conferred by presenting the wife with the long tooth of a leopard, which indicates that she is no longer a slave, but a free woman—not a divorced wife.

Record Breaking Beard.

Brooklyn Citizen. The longest beard recorded in history was that of John Mayo, painter to Emperor Charles V. Though he was a tall man, it is said that his beard was of such length that he could tread upon it. He was very vain of it and usually fastened it with a ribbon to his button-hole, and sometimes he would untie it by command of the emperor, who took great delight in seeing the wind blow it in the faces of his courtiers.

Unfortunately all classical music doesn't have the accent on the

FAMOUS CURFEW POEM

IT WON ONLY FAME FOR THE AUTHOR.

Mrs. Rose Hartwick Thorpe Never Received Pecuniary Reimbursement for Contribution—Souvenir Seller in England Reaped Rich Harvest.

Mrs. Thorpe in Washington Post. "When I was sixteen and wrote 'Curfew Shall Not Ring Tonight,' I little imagined that it was destined to make famous the little church in England where its scene was laid, enrich numerous publishers and make a fortune for the man who bought the timbers upon which the old bell was hung and sold as souvenirs made from them.

"Directly, I never received a penny from the poem or its sale, but, of course, it gave me a name, and enabled me to find a market for other poems I have written. It also gave me recognition from Queen Victoria, and, in fact, the people of England have shown much more appreciation for the work than the people in my own country."

"Was the incident true of which the poem was written?" "Indeed it was, and has since then proved so, although I did not know it at the time. I am past 64, and I wrote the poem on April 3rd, 1847, at Litchfield, Mich. The incident was taken from a story in Peterson's Magazine of September, 1855, the story being called 'Love and Loyalty.' I sent the poem to the Commercial Tribune of Detroit, and the editor published it. I received almost instantly a gain recognition. The editor wrote to me and said that he felt ashamed to have taken the poem, but that they did not pay for such matter. He told me it had been copied all over the world, and that it should find my other productions to magazines.

"It attracted so much attention in England that Queen Victoria appointed a commission to verify the incident. The commission traced it down, located the church at Chertsey, and found the old bell, which was cast in 1310. An enterprising Englishman took the timbers and used them to make clappers for miniature bells, which he sold as souvenirs. He reaped a harvest. But I have had my reward in knowing the people of the world appreciated the story I told, as innumerable testimonials I have received testify."

Humors of the War.

The London Financial News says that the Kaiser, should he be dethroned, would come to New York and build a mansion on Fifth avenue.

A British agent buying mules for the British army rejects all grey mules. He says they can be seen too far.

The Widow Bonnard in Paris sent nine sons to the war and all were wounded, but all will recover.

After a sharp battle near Grezy a heavy thunderstorm came up and the French soldiers stripped and enjoyed a shower bath, the first since the war began.

A shell exploded in a group of French soldiers and a dozen or more were killed. One man, who had both legs and an arm blown off, implored his superior officer to kill him. The officer put a bullet through the soldier's heart, saying, "It is better poor devil." The officer opened his mouth to speak again and a bullet struck him in the mouth and killed him.

A Turco soldier brought back from one of the engagements with the Germans the head of one of the enemy. When the officers ordered it taken away from him and buried, the Turco raged so that he was placed in the guard house.

A troop of 28 Prussian soldiers, ignorant of the progress of the German advance line, asked a peasant near Paris if the German had taken the city. "Yes," said the peasant, "I will show you the road." The peasant led the troopers into the French lines.

A company of British dragoons called unexpectedly into action, were accompanied by their farrier, who armed only with a sledge hammer, gave a good account of himself.

The King of the Tonga Islands in the South Pacific has declared neutrality.

Jules Vedrines, the French airman, is chafing because the officers will not give him more latitude in scouting. "If they will permit me," he says, "I will leave my visiting card at the Royal Palace in Berlin."

Comradship in the Field. English newspapers which have been peevish contain a pleasant anecdote of the fighting at Mons. It comes from the French paper the Liberte, and concerns a Scottish regiment which is not named. This regiment was occupying a trench swept by violent rifle fire and artillery fire, when two privates noticed that a Frenchman attached to the battalion as interpreter occupied the most exposed spot in the trench. One private said: "The French man is badly placed; let's widen his trench," and during a minute, paying no attention to the hail of bullets and shrapnel, the privates deepened the trench, and with same calm resumed their places.

Fallacies About Fish Food. A noted medical authority although he considers fish as an excellent food, calls attention to certain fallacies about it. "It is often stated," he says, "that fish is food which ministers particularly to the needs of the brain because it contains phosphorus. As a matter of fact fish does not contain more phosphorus than do ordinary meat foods, and it certainly does not contain it in the free state. The belief, therefore, that fish is a brain food is just about as reasonable as the idea that because soup is thick and gelatinous it will stick to the ribs."

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The Imperturbable Britisher. "Our brave allies have two dominating preoccupations," a Frenchman who has been acting as interpreter with the British army observes—"to make their tea, and to shave." "No danger can distract them from these two things; I can still hear that superior officer declare with charming phlegm between assaults. "If is nothing, gentlemen, let us take tea." Does not the traditional bathtub accompany the expeditionary force? The wondering Frenchman probably overlooked it. "War is hell," for the warrior if he is deprived of the little creature comes down upon him, lighting another cigarette as if he were lounging in the library of the Marlborough Club—Grant would have lighted a cigar. Wellington took his bounds with him when he went to Spain to drive out the armies of Napoleon, and hunted with as much regularity as circumstances allowed.