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MOURN DEATH OF SIR JOHN REES

Was Notable Figure in British House of Commons

Some Spurious Gifts Reported Found in Array Received at Royal Wedding—Shelly Centenary—News Topics in London.

(From our own correspondent.) London, June 23.—Everyone connected with Westminster feels something like a personal loss at the death of Sir John Rees, by falling from the Scotch express. Had such a thing happened to the vast majority of members, it would have required an effort even to identify the name. Perhaps a hundred private members in the present House of Commons are sufficiently well known to enable one to write something about them. But Sir John Rees belonged to the very small category of non-official members who give to the House of Commons its character, and whose frequent speeches fill the chamber with delighted listeners as surely as a speech from the Treasury bench.

His outstanding merit was a vigorous loathing of cant and humbug, the courage which will nerve a man to oppose the whole House, when the strong tide of sentimentality is sweeping all before it, and a range of real, as opposed to Blue Book knowledge of the world and its inhabitants unrivalled by any man in public life today. Dry, caustic, a realist in everything, his opponents often accused him most unjustly of cynicism.

"Thank God, I have got a heart!" exclaimed Lord Robert Cecil recently when Sir John was talking about the Russian famine.

"Precisely," retorted the member for Nottingham, "and the noble lord proposes to indulge the luxury of having a heart at the expense of the British taxpayer!"

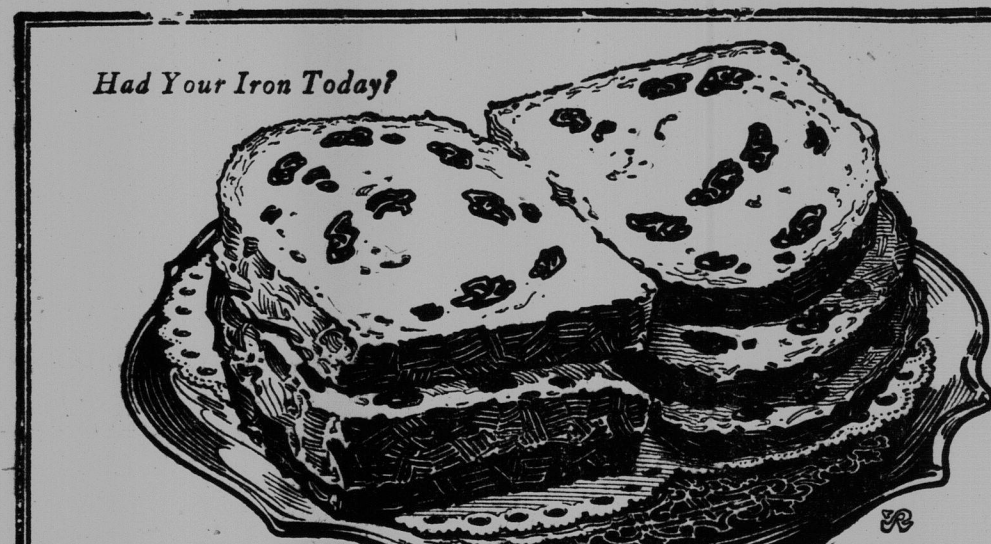
Some Reminiscences. He was a traveler dreaded by the stay-at-home humanitarians of the opposition benches. Did they expatiate on the Russian famine, Sir John had been in the Volga region, actually living with the peasants whom he loved, and he would tell the House how, after his first night in a peasant's hovel, the good woman took his chin in her hands and murmured, "Did they bite you, my little pigeon?" If it was the Labor Party holding forth about the woes of Korea, Japan, Sir John had an anecdote about the elegantly-attired Koreans "too lazy to sit down if they happened to be standing up." But his pet antipathy was the feminist group of both sexes. Following Lady Astor, they feared Sir John, and the noble lady herself dubbed him a

Wedding Gift Frauds. When the crowds were filing through the apartments in St. James' Palace viewing the magnificent display of Princess Mary's wedding presents, they had one common impulse. Everybody wondered how much all those costly and beautiful things were worth in the grand total. Some very wild guesses were made. For official purposes these royal presents have now been valued by experts. Their total value is placed at about £400,000. But it would have been well over the half million had all the articles been genuine. Those engaged on the task of valuation were astounded to discover to what extent fraud entered into the workmanship. Of course this in no way reflects upon the donors of the presents, but it is merely a striking example of modern commercial deceit. There were many instances where, out of an antique suite of furniture only one or two articles proved genuine, and the rest were modern imitations. In some cases only one small item out of the whole suite was what it purported to be. Now that wedding gifts of costly antique furniture are so popular among wealthy people, these frauds in the case

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"Noah's Ark Man." When they were well away on one of those unpleasant subjects which "women's organizations" are constantly bringing forward in parliament, Sir John would wait his time and speak on the matrimonial laws and customs of Eastern peoples which would disconcert them not a little.

even of royal presents should put purchasers on their guard. An antique suite, of which only a small portion is genuine and the rest a clever imitation, may be just as attractive and useful to the recipients as one that is entirely bona fide, but it makes an immense difference to the real value of the possession, and should make all the difference in the cost to the donors.

The King's Horse. When Erskine, a bay gelding which Sir Edward Lucas presented to the king on behalf of the people of South Australia, was formally given to His Majesty in the Palace garden on last Friday, the king said that he already knew something about the animal, as the Prince of Wales had spoken in high terms of his qualities. Erskine is certainly a fine horse, and one of the proudest men in connection with the gift is Farr, the groom, who accompanied the horse from Australia and led him to the king for the formal handing over. The king heartily shook hands with Farr, and questioned him about the habits of Erskine, but His Majesty was assured by Farr that he was a "gentleman" in every sense of the term. The king will ride him at Windsor during Ascot Week.

Mr. Bottomley's Intentions. No time has been lost in lodging Mr. Bottomley's appeal, which is based on "grave misdirection" and "extreme severity." He will plead his own case in the Appeal Court, and if the conviction stands and he is expelled from the House

of Commons, will probably insist on his rights to be heard at the Bar of the Chamber. Both on the occasion of the appeal and the result of his trial. Not only was he conspicuously present with ladies at the Wells-Goddard fight in the Crystal Palace on the Saturday before his sentence, but he had in his pocket the Old Bailey six grand stand seats for his beloved Derby. But his luck was really out. He is said to have been a pretty heavy backer of Pondoland.

An Adventurous Lady. Miss Jane Sands, whose father is well known in imperial circles, is fitting out an expedition to search for the famous pirate's treasure on Ocosingo Island. Just how many expeditions have gone in search of this treasure it is impossible to say, but they must run into the three figures. Some consisted only of three or four men who put off in a crazy schooner. The best known is Lord Fitzwilliam's yachting party in the Cape line Hadley Castle. On another occasion the admiral in command of the Pacific Fleet, and a large party and started to search with high explosives, but the only thing he got was the displeasure of a British admiral at a British admiral being put to such use, and it is to be feared that his men destroyed a large number of landmarks which are mentioned in the old directions. There is certainly treasure there probably worth more than two million pounds, but whether it can be got at is quite another matter. Miss Sands has a sort of R. L. S. map in which she has absolute faith, and she is to be bought in any of the Newfoundland fishing ports for a few shillings apiece.

Shelly Centenary. But for the centenary preparations, some of us, who have talked with those who knew him, might have difficulty in realizing that 100 years have passed since Shelley's death. Our most tragic English poet's meteoric life presents abundant anomaly. He was born in Horsham of all places. As abjectly truly rural a Sussex small town as there is in the whole of the "clerical" country. The date was August 4, 1792. "A beautiful boy, with ringlets, deep blue eyes, a snowy complexion, exquisitely formed hands and feet, remarkable for his gentle sweetness." This is the unfortunate youth, effeminate, sensitive, unathletic, whose early schooling took place at a Brentford academy attended by tradesmen's sons of a robust brutality, and his later education at Eton during the Georgian tradition. Everybody knows how Eton's most gifted pupil was expelled for stabbing a tormenting bully with a penknife, and afterwards from Oxford for a pamphlet advocating atheism. We are also more than familiar with the tragedy of his early first marriage, to an inkkeeper's daughter who committed suicide when the poet ran off with another, who became his second wife. Finally we know that, after giving the world some of his finest poetical masterpieces and a not of richer poignance than any other writer save Shakespeare, Shelley's fate was that of the minor poet whose memory Milton honored prematurely in his "Lycidas." He was drowned on July 4, 1822. We shall be celebrating his memory next month in London—but is the new generation reading him?

Our New Earl. Lord French doubtless chose his new title, conferred for services in Ireland, distinctly more hazardous than those which won his first peerage, with its ears open. He must realize that by a very wide section of the community, including "some of his most ardent"

ers who shared the heat and burden of bad times on the western front, he will be always acclaimed as the Earl of Wipers. The highest nobility is no novelty in association with the name of this illustrious old Flemish city. There have been Counts of Ypres for more centuries than even the ruins of the ancient Cloth Hall or the stump of the old Cathedral can count. One can appreciate the soldierly pride that dictated Earl Ypres' choice of a title, though perhaps Lord Plumber, vivacious and staunch old soldier, who commanded the Second Army, might assert best claim to such historic designation, because as General Plumber, who in his salad days made so many gallant but unavailing attempts to relieve Baden Powell in Malcing, he was the real Man of Ypres. He held the tragic ruins in the firm grasp of his second army against all odds for weary months and years, until the sacred pearl was crushed to dust within his iron clasp. It was the second hardest nut Tommy Atkins had to crack. The hardest of all—one talks merely of pronouncement—was the small town of Hinge, where British divisions frequently had their headquarters. When our boys cheerfully asked native Frenchmen the way to "Hinge," pronounced to suggest the mechanism on which doors are swung, the gravelled villagers completely failed to identify their own families "Ange!"

Lenin and His Health.

Almost as many conflicting reports are current about Lenin's health as used to be spread about the Mad Mullah's premature demise. The latest story is that the proletarian czar has been suffering from gastro-enteritis, and that, though recovering for the moment, may experience a serious relapse at any time unless he reforms his regime. This report might easily conform to the fact, as stated to me by a Russian who knows the dictator intimately of old days, that Lenin was wounded in the stomach by a bullet, fired by some unknown hand in the early days of the Russian revolution. Any fatal mischance to Lenin would be likely to have more tremendous consequences to European affairs than the death of any other single statesman, because in a very special sense Lenin is the soul of the Bolshevik regime, and lacking his illimitable power of subtle analysis, relentless energy of mathematical calculation, and now positively superhuman prestige with the Russian masses, the Soviet kingdom might easily collapse. At any rate so say Russians who are now in London after experiencing years of hazard under the Bolsheviks. Some amazing personalities and remarkable mentalities have emerged in Moscow under the stress of revolution, but Lenin still remains the pillar of the new state. His forte is scientific infallibility as applied to the rule-of-thumb business of politics.

Measure Taken.

(Judge.) "If you kiss me again," declared Miss Lovely firmly, "I shall tell father."

"That's an old tale," replied the bold, bad young man. "Anyway, it's worth it," and he kissed her.

Miss Lovely sprang to her feet. "I shall tell father," she said, and left the room.

"Father," she said softly to her parent when she got outside, "Mr. Bolder wants to see your new gun."

"All right, I'll take it in to him," said her father, and two minutes later he appeared in the doorway with his gun in his hand.

There was a crash of breaking glass as Mr. Bolder dived through the window and departed in all haste for the railway station.

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