



V. S. Knott Esq

The Castle
Exeter



J. Dyer Knoll Esq -
The Castle -
Exeter -

Dublin -

9 Fitzwilliam Place -

July 12 - 1851 -

Sir -

I have to apologise
to you for my long delay
in replying to your
letter which duly reached
me - but it was only this
day that I succeeded in
finding the only autograph
signature of the late

Mr. Curran that remained
attached to such of his
manuscripts as were
within my reach -

105 George Street
St. James's

June 20-1853

Sir

In consequence of my
absence from Ireland, I have
only just received your
letter of the 20th Inst.

I have to state with
regret that it is not in
my power to comply with
your request - I am not aware
of the existence of any person
belonging to, or connected

with the late Mr. Flood's
family - and I possess no
autograph of the late Mr
Grattan - With regard to the
latter, however, I should think
that if you were to apply to
his son, Mr Henry Grattan,
whose residence (I believe)
is in Stephens Green,
Dublin, you would probably
obtain your object -

I have the honor to be
Sir
your most obed

W^m G. Mason

20 June 1853

W. Combs Curran

WILLIAM HENRY CURRAN.

Mr. William Henry Curran died, at Dublin, on the 25th of August. He was favourably known in the literary world by his biography of his father, the orator, and also by the 'Sketches of the Irish Bar,' in which series he was joined by Sheil. Mr. W. H. Curran's speciality was as "a literary Whig." He was a member of the Whig political party for many years,—and he watched the game of politics with keen interest. His early years were subjected to painful trials, of which he always spoke with great reserve. His father's domestic life was most unhappy; and it was always believed that Mr. W. H. Curran was treated with great harshness, on account of parental prejudices against his mother. Charles Fox, in one of his letters to the Duke of Bedford, passed some reflections on the private character of Curran,—and even Davis, an enthusiastic admirer of the orator, was compelled to admit that, by the exposures of the case in which Curran sought for damages for the seduction of his wife, "he (Curran) lost many friends." From these causes, Mr. W. H. Curran suffered most unjustly during his early manhood. But he faced the trials of life with spirit,—and receiving but little pecuniary aid from his family, and in spite of great delicacy of consti-

tution, he won a distinguished name, and realized an ample fortune. He had a high nervous temperament; and, his stomach being deficient in digestive energy, he was compelled to adopt the habits of a valetudinarian, and to be extremely particular in his diet, so that, after many years, he had all the knowledge, theoretical and practical, which distinguishes the *gastronome*, the *gourmand* and the *gourmet*, and his annotations on Dr. Doran's 'Table Traits' might have exceeded the text as much as Coke's Commentaries did the Tenures of Littleton. He was fastidious, but he had many fine qualities. He was a sincere friend, and he was very hospitable; keeping a carefully appointed bachelor's establishment and giving choice dinners in the style of a mirthful Apicius, where excellent things were said and offered by the humorous host, and duly swallowed by the appreciating guests. His conversation encroached too much on monologue, but the interest of some of his admirable stories more than compensated for the length of his retrospectives. From the opportunities which he possessed, and from his own talent for observation, he had accumulated a vast fund of authentic political anecdotes relating to contemporary history, and he always took great pains to be careful in his statement of facts. Much that the world would like to hear has never been truly told about Emmett and Sarah Curran, and in his last conversation with one of his literary acquaintances, he stated that "he had placed these facts on record," and we should not be surprised if even posthumous papers of an autobiographical kind were given to the world from his pen. His literary *forte* was as a light essayist,—he could sketch character with great ease, wrote a correct and finished style, and had much natural wit, though sometimes his efforts to carry on the firm of "Curran and Son" were too palpable. His mind, upon the whole, was more bright than powerful, for the extreme nervousness of his temperament diminished the energy of his talent. During Lord Anglesey's second Irish Viceroyalty Mr. W. H. Curran was intimately and confidentially associated with the then Viceroy; and the conduct of O'Connell in attacking Lord Anglesey, assailing the Whigs and raising the rebel cry was often bitterly commented upon by Mr. Curran, who had strong party feelings. For many years Mr. Curran was a member of the Reform Club, Pall Mall, but towards the end of his life he withdrew his name and joined Brookes's Club. His political feelings took a narrower range than in early life, and he seemed to think that Protestant Liberalism had gone quite far enough, if not too far, in Ireland. "If such things can be done with impunity, it will end in the priests choosing Queen Victoria's Judges," said he. And again, upon another occasion, he said, "I do not regret the fact of Catholic Emancipation, and I think that the policy advocated by Fox and Grattan, and my father, ought to have been carried; but I am deeply disappointed with the conduct of the Roman Catholics." He suffered severely from what Sydney Smith called the "O'Connell-phobia"; but no disgust or annoyance would have induced him to secede from "the Whig party," to whose leaders he looked with reverence, and with many of whom he was linked by ties of close personal friendship. His best writing was his personal sketch of a day of O'Connell's life, in his 'Sketches of the Irish Bar,' and his humorous and racy portraiture of Mr. Serjeant Goold. He died in the sixty-ninth year of his age, having bequeathed the bulk of his property to one of his family. He had practised at the bar with much success, and he filled for many years the important office of Insolvent Commissioner in Ireland,—so that he may be fairly cited as one of the few barristers who united literary and professional laurels. The concourse of eminent persons who attended his funeral testified to the high respect entertained for his character.

4 Sep 1858

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