

Horatio Townsend [607]



Views of Kinsale





Extract from Samuel Lewis' Topographical Dictionary 1837

BLACKROCK, a chapelry, in the parish of ST. FINBARR, county of the city of CORK, and province of MUNSTER, 2 1/4miles (E. S. E.) from Cork: the population is included in the return for the parish. This place is beautifully situated on a peninsula bounded on the north and east by the river Lee, and on the south by Lough Mahon and the Douglas channel. Numerous advantages resulting from its proximity to Cork; the beauty of its situation, the salubrity of its climate, and the excellent accommodations for bathing, have rendered this one of the most desirable places of residence in the South of Ireland. It has a penny post to Cork, and the railroad from Cork to Passage will; if carried into effect, pass through the village. The scenery is of the most varied and pleasing character, exhibiting numerous elegant villas and cottages, with lawns, gardens, and plantations reaching down to the margin of the Lee, which is here a noble expanse of water more than a mile broad, constantly enlivened by steam-boats and other vessels. The land is naturally very fertile, and is for the most part enclosed in lawns, gardens, and pleasure grounds; the rest, deriving from its contiguity to Cork an abundant supply of rich manures, and having the advantage of inexhaustible quarries of limestone and plenty of sea sand, is in a high state of cultivation, and supplies the Cork market with a large proportion of its vegetables. The substratum is limestone of excellent quality, which is extensively quarried for various purposes. Between the fissures of the rocks, near its junction with the clay-slate, are found numerous amethystine crystals, some of which are very large and clustery, and all are beautifully coloured; one specimen in the Cork Royal Institution weighs more than 40lb. The church, dedicated to St. Michael, serves as a chapel of ease to the cathedral church of St. Finbarr, Cork, and was built in 1827, at an expense of £2100, of which £900 was given by the late Board of First Fruits, £100 by the corporation of Cork, and the remainder, with the exception of a few local subscriptions and the sale of pews, was defrayed by the dean and chapter, who appoint and pay the curate. It is a handsome edifice of hewn limestone, in the later style of architecture, with a tower crowned with battlements and pinnacles, and surmounted by a spire 60 feet high, which, with part of the tower and the western portion of the nave, was destroyed by lightning on Jan. 29th, 1836, but has been restored by aid of a grant of £310 from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. A school-house connected with St. Michael's chapel was erected at Ballintemple in 1836; a school for boys was built in 1834, at an expense of £160, of which two-thirds were contributed by the National Board, and the remainder by J. Murphy, Esq., of Ring-Mahon Castle; and there is a school for girls, supported by subscription. Here is a dispensary, and near Ballintemple are two private lunatic

asylums. Cittadella, belonging to Joshua Bull, Esq., was established by the late **Dr. Hallaran***, in 1798, and has secluded pleasure grounds for the use of the patients. Lindville belongs to Dr. Osborne, and is pleasantly situated in a demesne of 14 acres. A temperance society was established in 1835. At the village of Ballintemple, situated on this peninsula, the Knights Templars erected a large and handsome church in 1392, which, after the dissolution of that order, was granted, with its possessions, to Gill abbey. At what period it fell into decay is uncertain; the burial ground is still used.

* See the entry for Horatio Townsend [607].

Transcript of a letter written by Dr Edward Richard Townsend [6C00] to Commander John Townsend [622] about the sanity of his father Horatio

Copy made April 5 1878

November 19th. 1855.

13 Morrison's Quay, Cork.

My dear John,

I received your note of the 13th Inst. and also one from Dr. Symonds. First allow me to assure you that no report of the transaction could have emanated from me inasmuch as I never mentioned it to any Human Being but I am aware that there has been a report of the kind flying through Carbery. When it originated I cannot possibly tell. I have sent the following reply to Symonds. I send you the transcript of the letter which fully embraces and expresses all my professional views of the subject.

To Dr. Symonds,

"Dear Sir, I have considered the subject of your letter fully and will give you the information you wish as briefly as possible. Lieutenant John Townsend's father was never insane. There existed no hereditary predisposition to any mental disease in his family. I am acquainted with the history of every branch of it for nearly two Hundred years and no case of Lunacy ever occurred in that time. Mr. Horace Townsend, Lieut. J's father was the eldest son of a man of fortune and although well educated his temper naturally bad was never restrained and he became proud, morose unkind to his family and friends. I attribute the increase of those feelings to mismanagement in domestic arrangements. His Brother placed him in a lunatic asylum here, but the late Dr. Hallaran the medical Inspector did not think him insane and discharged him in a very short time from that establishment. Mr. H. Townsend had several Brothers & sisters who were remarkably intelligent and free from the slightest trace of Insanity. One sister who was deformed became delirious before her death which occurred some years since but never previously showed the slightest symptom of mental weakness."

.... Eight lines erased here[sic]... evidently relating to my mother, Mrs. Chambre Townshend, formerly Eliza Oliver, the letter goes on . - "She had two or three Aunts who died Insane, and I know that two of her Father's first cousins died insane. One of them who had been a Member of the House of Commons died an Idiot, and I have always heard that Insanity was prevalent in the family."

***The young lady" (evidently Minnie Townshend of 6 Rodney Place, Clifton) "now four or five and twenty has a peculiarly well regulated mind. Calm, quiet, free from nervous excitement, and none of her Brothers and sisters have shewn as yet the slightest trace of their Mother's disease. Her father was a particularly placid man, inheriting no disposition to cerebral disease. He died of the effects of scarlatina. There must certainly be a risk in any matrimonial alliance. It would be impossible to give a decided opinion of what may occur. The blessing of Providence may avert so sad an affliction from as amiable a girl as ever existed. Our Human Judgement can go no farther".

This fully gives my view - the common-sense one of the case.

Yours affectionately, **E.R.Townsend.**

We will never know what lies behind this letter, written ten years after the death of Horatio in 1844.