

THE LIMNER COMPANY



WILLIAM WOOD (1769 - 1810)

Portrait miniature of Henry, Viscount Boyle, later 3rd Earl of Shannon, KP, PC (Ire) (1771-1842), wearing dark blue coat, white waistcoat and stock, his hair powdered; circa 1805

Circa: Circa 1805

Circa 1805

8.7 cm (3 ³/₈ inches)

Watercolour on ivory

Ivory registration number: M6TNXRCV

Gold frame, the reverse glazed to reveal hair

Henry Boyle, 3rd Earl of Shannon, is here shown as Viscount, as he was styled as such until 1807. He was one of the last surviving members of the Parliament of Ireland. Educated at Winchester, he later became MP for County Cork (1801-07) in the British Parliament. From 1806 until 1822, he held the valuable sinecure office of Clerk of the Pells. He was appointed Custos Rotulorum for Co. Cork in 1807, and Lieutenant of the county in 1831, both of which offices he held until his death.

The present portrait postdates Boyle's marriage in 1798 to Sarah, fourth daughter of John Hyde, of Castle Hyde. The couple had twelve children, their first son dying as an infant in 1803. Their second son, Richard, succeeded his father as 4th Earl of Shannon. Surviving letters show much affection between the couple, with Sarah addressing him as 'my beloved Lord B'.

Boyle features in the writings of many prominent figures of the time – including in a letter from the writer Sir Walter Scott to his son, who notes Boyle as someone who might be able to give him sage financial advice.[1] His papers, which survive in The Treasury of Ireland, also name his correspondents as the Dukes of Wellington, Richmond and Buccleuch; Lord Castlereagh; Charles Agar, Archbishop of Cashel; Dr Joseph Warton, headmaster of Winchester; William Elliott, Under-Secretary; and Lord Shannon's

nephew, James Bernard (afterwards 2nd Earl of Bandon). Boyle was also active in arming the volunteer yeomanry in 1796, and was commissioned Captain of five different units, those of Castlemartyr, Cloyne, Cove, Imokilly and Middleton. After the Irish Rebellion of 1798, he was among the new Members of the House of Commons, representing County Cork in the new Parliament of the United Kingdom from 1801 to 1807.

In 2015, a portrait of Henry Boyle, third Earl of Shannon in his robes as a Knight of St Patrick (attributed to William Cuming (1769-1852) who served first as President of the Society of Artists in Dublin and then as President of the Royal Hibernian Academy) was among a group of Boyle family portraits temporarily returned to the Shannon's former seat, Castlemartyr, County Cork, now an hotel. The facial resemblance between this full-length oil and the current portrait by Wood is striking. Boyle died in London after a long illness which he endured for two years, his body then moved to Castle Martyr, the family home near Cork.

[1] Lockhart, J. G. (John Gibson), 1794-1854, *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.* 7 vols (Edinburgh: Robert Cadell, 1837), Chapter XII 1820.