

LADY PIRRIE DEAD; HEADED SHIP FIRM

New York Times

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Widow of Belfast Builder of Many Vessels Succeeded Him in Control of Concern

ADVISED HIM FOR YEARS

He Had Often Publicly Paid High Tribute to Her Assistance---Daughter of Professor

LONDON, June 19 (AP)---Viscountess Pirrie, president of Harland & Wolff, the famous Belfast shipbuilders, died in London today.

She was the widow of Viscount Pirrie, who died at sea in 1924. Her husband, it was said, had always consulted her on important decisions and at his death she was made president of the company. The office was created especially for her.

The election of Lady Pirrie to the presidency of Harland & Wolff not long after the death of her husband caused no surprise in the shipping world, for Lord Pirrie had on several occasions publicly paid tribute to the aid he had received from his wife throughout his long career.

Before her marriage in 1879 Lady Pirrie was Miss Margaret Montgomery Carlisle of Belfast. She was a daughter of Professor John Carlisle of Belfast University, and a sister of Sir Alex Carlisle, another possessor of large shipping interests.

Lord Pirrie died suddenly in June, 1924, on board the Pacific Steam Navigation Company's liner Ebro on his way to New York after a tour of South America. The Viscountess and her sister, Miss Carlisle, were with him. Lord Pirrie was called by the late William T. Stead "the greatest shipbuilder the world has ever known," who "built more ships and bigger ships than any man since the days of Noah."

Lord and Lady Pirrie were in New York in 1899 when the new White Star liner Oceanic was the largest ship in the world. Seated with his wife at the Waldorf-Astoria he told reporters:

"It is my wife who is responsible for our big boat. In fact, she knows as much about it as I do. She followed the plans as keenly as I did for the two and a half years of designing and building. She suggested many clever things about the arrangements and planned all the decorations."

Cheerfulness was Lady Pirrie's formula for a happy life. Her motto was Thomas Hood's: "I resolved that, like the sun, so long as my days lasted I would look on the bright side of everything."

One tragic task she had to face was the breaking of the news to her husband of the sinking of the Titanic in 1912. He had looked on this ship as the finest product of his shipyard and had he not been forced to undergo an operation would have sailed on the ill-fated voyage. A nephew, Thomas Andrews, designer of the ship, took his place and was drowned.

Courtesy of Mark Baber

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