

= Wilhelmina FitzClarence , Countess of Munster =

Wilhelmina FitzClarence , Countess of Munster (née Kennedy @-@ Erskine ; 27 June 1830 ? 9 October 1906) was a British peeress and novelist . Her mother , Lady Augusta FitzClarence , was an illegitimate daughter of William IV of the United Kingdom ; Wilhelmina , also known as Mina , was born the day after William 's succession as monarch . She travelled as a young girl throughout Europe , visiting the courts of France and Hanover . In 1855 , Mina married her first cousin William FitzClarence , 2nd Earl of Munster ; they would have nine children , including the 3rd and 4th Earls of Munster .

The Earl and Countess of Munster lived at Palmeira Square in Brighton . Later in life , Lady Munster became a novelist and short story writer . In 1889 , she released her first novel , Dorinda ; a second , A Scotch Earl , followed two years later . The year 1896 saw the publication of Ghostly Tales , a collection of tales on the supernatural which have largely been forgotten today . Lady Munster also produced an autobiography entitled My Memories and Miscellanies , which was released in 1904 . She died two years later .

= = Family and early life = =

Wilhelmina " Mina " Kennedy @-@ Erskine was born on 27 June 1830 in Dun House , Montrose , Scotland . She was the second child of the Hon. John Kennedy @-@ Erskine and his wife Lady Augusta FitzClarence , an illegitimate daughter of William IV (who became monarch the day before Mina 's birth) . Her father , the second son of the 13th Earl of Cassilis , was a captain with the 16th Lancers and an equerry to King William before dying in 1831 at the age of 28 . Her paternal grandmother , Anne Watts , was a descendant of the Schuyler family , the Van Cortlandt family (including Stephanus Van Cortlandt) , and the Delancey family of British North America .

Mina lived with her widowed mother and two siblings in a " charming brick house " on the River Thames called Railshead , which was next door to a house owned by her paternal grandparents . King William visited the family often and was quite fond of Mina ; on one occasion , he visited to comfort his daughter when three- or four @-@ year @-@ old Mina nearly died of a " very dangerous brain fever " . The Kennedy @-@ Erskines also often visited Windsor Castle during the king 's reign .

Five years after Kennedy @-@ Erskine 's death , Lady Augusta married Lord Frederick Gordon @-@ Hallyburton , a decision that displeased her first husband 's parents . The decision led to Lady Augusta 's departure from Railshead . In 1837 she became State Housekeeper at Kensington Palace after the death of her sister , Lady De L 'Isle . Mina lived there until she married . She and her sister Millicent enjoyed music and had a particular love for the Italian soprano Marietta Alboni . The sisters ' Italian singing @-@ master secretly arranged for a meeting with Alboni , but the encounter did not go well ; the singer discovered that they were the daughters of the " housekeeper " , and , assuming that they were not ladies , departed soon after .

In the late 1840s , Mina travelled through Europe with her family so that they might " learn languages and finish [their] education " . The trip started in 1847 , when Mina journeyed to Dresden due to her mother 's desire for her daughters to learn German . From 1847 to 1849 , she and her family lived in Paris near the Arc de Triomphe , and were kindly received by the French Royal Family headed by Louis Philippe I and Queen Marie Amalie . They left soon after the king and queen 's fall from power , as the city had suddenly become unsafe for those of their rank . In 1850 , they visited the court of Hanover and were received by Ernest Augustus I of Hanover and his family ; later that year , they returned to Kensington Palace and Mina and Millicent came out in society .

= = Marriage = =

Mina married her full first cousin William FitzClarence , 2nd Earl of Munster at Wemyss Castle on 17 April 1855 in a double wedding in which her sister Millicent married James Hay Erskine Wemyss . Like Mina , FitzClarence was a grandchild of William IV ; at a young age , he had succeeded his

father the 1st Earl , who served as a governor of Windsor Castle and constable of the Round Tower until his suicide in 1842 . The FitzClarences travelled to Hamburg immediately after the wedding , visiting local schlosses and the family of Prince Christian of Schleswig @-@ Holstein (who later married The Princess Helena) . Their first child , Edward , was born within a year . The couple would have nine children , four of whom outlived their mother :

Edward , Viscount FitzClarence (29 March 1856 ? 1870)

Hon. Lionel Frederick Archibald (24 July 1857 ? 24 March 1863)

Geoffrey FitzClarence , 3rd Earl of Munster (18 July 1859 ? 2 February 1902) ; died without issue

Hon. Arthur Falkland Manners (18 October 1860 ? 1861)

Aubrey FitzClarence , 4th Earl of Munster (7 June 1862 ? 1 January 1928) ; died without issue

Hon. William George (17 September 1864 ? 4 October 1899) ; married Charlotte Elizabeth Williams

Hon. Harold Edward (15 November 1870 ? 28 August 1926) ; married Frances Isabel Eleanor Keppel ; their son was the 5th Earl of Munster

Lady Lillian Adelaide Katherine Mary (10 December 1873 ? 15 July 1948) ; married Captain William Arthur Boyd

Lady Dorothea Augusta (5 May 1876 ? 1942) ; married Major Chandos Brydges Lee @-@ Warner

The Earl and Countess of Munster lived at Palmeira Square in Brighton . According to an article in contemporary women 's magazine The Lady 's Realm , the Countess lived a very quiet life . In 1897 , the magazine reported that she had lived in retirement in Brighton for the past thirty @-@ five years . Her attachment to the city , the article suggested , was due to childhood memories of visiting there with King William . The article also stated that because Lord Munster 's health was failing , the Countess was living in " comparative seclusion " , though her lifestyle was also attributed to a love of a " quiet , literary , and artistic life " . She died on 9 October 1906 , having been widowed five years .

= = Literary career = =

Later in life , Lady Munster became a novelist and short story writer , writing under the title the Countess of Munster . At the age of nearly sixty , she published two novels ; her first , Dorinda , in 1889 , and her second , A Scotch Earl , in 1891 . The plot of Dorinda centred on a young woman who eventually kills herself after stealing works of art from her friends . Oscar Wilde noted Munster 's skill in writing Dorinda ; he compared the " exceedingly clever " novel 's eponymous heroine to " a sort of well @-@ born " Becky Sharp , and praised the author 's ability " to draw ... in a few sentences the most lifelike portraits of social types and social exceptions " . In 1888 , an article by Munster about ballad singing appeared in The Woman 's World , a Victorian women 's magazine edited by Wilde . A Scotch Earl , which centred on a vulgar Scottish nobleman named Lord Invergordon , was less well received by contemporaries . The Spectator published a critical review soon after its publication which suggested that the novel 's showering of " contempt upon the society of wealth and rank " was close to Republicanism or Socialism . The review criticised A Scotch Earl for lacking " any merits of construction or style " , and added that Lady Munster was " not and never will be a capable novelist " .

In 1896 , Munster released Ghostly Tales , a collection of stories " written in a manner similar to accounts of true hauntings " . Lady 's Realm considered her stories to be based on fact . A positive review of Ghostly Tales was published in the Saturday Review in 1897 , in which the stories were described as " entertaining and dramatic " , but it was noted that not all were based on supernatural events . Hugh Lamb included the Countess 's " surprisingly grim " story " The Tyburn Ghost " in his 1979 edited volume Tales from a Gas @-@ Lit Graveyard . He wrote at the time that Lady Munster 's works had been " completely overlooked by bibliophiles and anthologists since her death " . Lamb deemed this regrettable , as he considered Ghostly Tales " possibly her best work " and one of the " truly representative collections of Victorian ghost stories " . Lamb also included another of her stories , " The Page @-@ Boy 's Ghost " , in a 1988 anthology . However , modern author and editor

Douglas A. Anderson has called the Countess 's stories " standard , melodramatic fare " , which are " perfectly forgettable " .

In 1904 , Lady Munster produced an autobiography entitled *My Memories and Miscellanies* . In its foreword , she explained that " some valued friends " convinced her to write it , despite her reluctance , because her " long life " had witnessed " not a few interesting events " . The book was called her " chief work " in *The Manchester Guardian* at the time of her death in 1906 . The Countess wrote the entire book by memory , and expressed regret that she had given up her journal writing as a young girl after someone else improperly read it . The autobiography included several recounted sightings of the female ghost " Green Jean " at Wemyss Castle ; Lady Munster claimed that several members of her family , including Millicent , saw the ghost while staying there .

= = Ancestry = =