

Dermody, interspersed with pieces of original poetry"; and in 1807 "The Harp of Erin, or the Poetical Works of the late Thomas Dermody," also in two volumes.

AUBREY THOMAS DE VERE

Aubrey Thomas de Vere, poet and author, was born at Curragh Chase on 10th January, 1814, the third son of Sir Aubrey de Vere, the poet, the younger brother of Sir Stephen de Vere, translator of Horace, and the grandson of Sir Vere Hunt, diarist, member of Parliament, theatrical manager and what not. There is a memorable passage in the latter's diary describing the birth of Aubrey, which seems now to have been prophetic:—

"Frost increasing but weather delightful. Pigeons, rooks, robins, sparrows, magpies, blackbirds, thrushes and water-wagtails in affectionate intimacy, crowding about the house for hospitable consideration of potato-skins, oats, barley, bread crumbs and offals. Gratified the humanity of my disposition in feeding them. This morning at half-past one, our dear Mary was happily delivered of a fine boy after an illness of only one hour. Kit was sent off to Rathkeale for that paragon of mid-wives, Mrs. Flin, but Providence, aided and assisted by Kitty and Mrs. Gamble, was good, and before the arrival of the lady doctor, a little Aubrey travelled into this wicked world, who, I pray God, may live long, be healthy, happy and equal to his father in disposition, talent and goodness."

De Vere was educated by a tutor, and at the age of eighteen was already contributing poetry to the National Magazine. In 1832 he entered Trinity College with a view to taking Orders, but although he never fully gave up the idea, he seems to have drifted along without doing so. While here he became the intimate friend of Sir William Rowan Hamilton, the poet and mathematician.

After graduating in 1837, he travelled to England and the Continent, met Cardinal Newman at Oxford, Tennyson at Cambridge, Browning, Carlyle, Manning and many others. He was a fervent admirer of Wordsworth, whom he met in London in 1841, and when invited to stay with the poet, considered it "the greatest honour of his life." An intimacy, to be ended only with the older poet's death, as well as a close friendship with Coleridge's talented daughter, Sara, began here. At this time he had already published two books, "The Waldenes and Other Poems" in 1842, and "The Search After Proserpine and Other Poems," in 1843.

In 1846 De Vere returned to Ireland and, finding the country in the grip of famine, worked hard for the relief of the starving people. The harrowing scenes he witnessed during this time gave rise to a long poem, "A Year of Sorrow," and an indignant pamphlet, "English Misrule and Irish Misdeeds."

On the death of Wordsworth, De Vere's admiration was turned towards Cardinal Newman, and, like the latter he began to incline towards Catholicism. In 1851 he set out for Rome in the company of Cardinal Manning, and on the 15th November he was received into the Catholic Church at the Archbishop's chapel at Avignon. Shortly after, Newman appointed him Professor of Political and Social Science in the new Catholic University in Dublin, and although De Vere never acted, he retained this post till Newman's retirement in 1858.

From this time on De Vere lived mostly at Curragh Chase, preferring the quiet sanctuary of its woods to the gossip and malice of the literary groups in Dublin and London. In 1897 he published his "Recollections," and he died, unmarried, on 21st January, 1902, at the age of 88. His grave lies in the parish churchyard at Askeaton.

Between prose and verse De Vere published about 30 books in all. He was too prolific and his pen too facile for his own good, and no one knew it better than himself. He once said: — "If I ceased to write poetry my income would be doubled," referring to the cost of publication of his works. He might have added: "Or if I wrote less my reputation would be doubled."

He was at his best in the old Irish lays, heroic in theme, spiritual in significance, or in those many allegorical poems on the troubles of Ireland. "The Little Black Rose," referring to the defeat of James at Athenry, is a fine example of the latter class and its dignified simplicity owes much to his first master, Wordsworth.

The little black rose shall be red at last!
 What made it black but the east wind dry,
 And the tear of the widow that fell on it fast?
 It shall redden the hills when June is nigh,
 The silk of the kine shall rest at last!
 What drave it forth but the dragon-fly?
 In the golden vale she shall feed full fast
 With her mild gold horn and her slow dark eye.
 The wounded wood-dove lies dead at last;
 The pine, long bleeding, it shall not die!
 This song is secret. Mine ear it pass'd
 In a wind o'er the stone plain of Athenry.

SIR STEPHEN EDWARD DE VERE

Sir Stephen Edward de Vere, Bart., poet and politician, was born at Curragh Chase on 26th July, 1812, the second son of Sir Aubrey de Vere and Mary Rice, sister to the first Lord Monteagle. He was educated at Trinity College, where he graduated in 1833, and, after reading a course in Lincoln's Inn, he was called to the Irish Bar in 1836. Although he never acted as a barrister his training in the profession was very useful in his subsequent parliamentary career.