

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.

De Vere was keenly interested in the Irish people and worked hard for them during the awful famine years of the 1840s. He was so generous to the tenants of his Limerick estate, and they appreciated his kindness so much, that, even in his lifetime, they erected a fountain to commemorate his great work.

He represented Limerick in Parliament from 1854 to 1859, and was High Sheriff of the county for the year 1870. As a parliamentarian he realised the impossible plight of the Irish under the bad landlords, and the even worse government, and he advocated emigration as the only possible relief, encouraging all able-bodied young men to go to Canada. Together with Charlotte Grace O'Brien he investigated the terrible conditions prevailing on the emigrant ships and sailed as a steerage passenger to Canada in order to find out the truth for himself. His letter describing this voyage was read by Lord Grey in the House of Lords and, as a result, the Passenger Act was passed and the "coffin" ships eliminated.

His investigations into the conditions of the Irish poor so excited his admiration for their patience, which he attributed to their great faith, that, after his steerage passage to Canada, he took instruction in the Catholic Church and was received into it in the year 1847.

Sir Stephen wrote many pamphlets on the economic situation here, on the Grand Jury system, and on the Land Purchase Bill, but most of them were printed for private circulation only, and are extremely scarce. He inherited the family love of literature and in all his busy work, he found time to write original verse as well as to translate the Odes of Horace into English. This latter, which is his greatest work, ran into several editions, and it is by this work principally that his memory will live. It has been described as the best verse translation in the English language.

In 1880, on the death of his brother, Sir Vere de Vere, Stephen inherited the family title and estate. He enjoyed them for 24 years and died, unmarried, on 10th November, 1904, at Foynes, and was buried there, just outside the Catholic church which he had done so much to help build. With his death the baronetcy, gained by his grandfather, Sir Vere Hunt, in 1774, became extinct.

## PHILIP EMBURY

Philip Embury, Methodist preacher and founder of American Methodism, was born at Ballingrane, County Limerick, in the year 1728. He was a descendant of one of the Palatines who had settled on the Southwell Estate in 1709 and was educated locally by another of them, Philip Guier. He became a carpenter, was said to be a good tradesman, and, like most of the Palatines at that time, had no religion on account of the lack of a pastor.