

his father died in 1666, Sir John was living at Nantes in France, and David O'Brudair, in a lament for the father, prayed that the son would return home safely. He did and became O'Brudair's chief patron, and most of O'Brudair's existing poems are on Fitzgerald or his family.

In 1680 Sir John, with many other Catholic landowners, was arrested in connection with the alleged "Popish" plot and imprisoned in London. In the war between William and James he held the post of Lieutenant-Colonel in Lord Mountcashel's regiment of foot, and later commanded a regiment of his own. On the surrender of Limerick, he went to France, but it seems that few of his regiment followed him.

However, those that did go distinguished themselves in the Flanders campaign and at the battle of Landen. In 1696 they again distinguished themselves in the Italian campaign under Catinat, and in 1697 they fought on the Rhine. This year, among other changes in the French Army, the Limerick Regiments were disbanded and incorporated in other corps. Little further is known of Fitzgerald, but it is probable that he was the John Fitzgerald who was admitted to the Hotel des Invalides in 1703.

During the Jacobite wars in Ireland, Trinity College was garrisoned by the Irish Army, and Sir John was put in command of it. About this time the "Book of Lecan" disappeared mysteriously from the Library and it is probable that Sir John took it. He sold it to James Terry and it was eventually deposited in the Irish College in Paris. Later it was returned to Ireland, through the good offices of the Chevalier O'Gorman, of County Clare, and it is now in the Royal Irish Academy Library.

O'Brudair wrote of Fitzgerald when he was arrested and tried in London for complicity in the supposed "Popish" Plot of the period: —

If my prince were to cast but one glance at the visage and limbs of
this man,

His vigour, deportment and kindness, distinction and beauty of form,
I am sure in the course of his prudence and justice he ne'er would
admit

On the word of a scoundrel that treason could ever have entered his
heart.

WILLIAM VESEY FITZGERALD

William Vesey Fitzgerald, Irish statesman, was the son of James Fitzgerald, of Ennis, Barrister and Member of Parliament, by his wife, Catherine Vesey. He was born in the year 1783 and educated at Christ Church College, Oxford. Although he had a brilliant career there and established a reputation for his intelligence and ability, he seems to have led a fairly wild life and was involved in the scandalous affair of Mary Anne Clarke and the Duke of York,

To save the situation his father brought him back to Ireland and, resigning in his favour, had him made Member of Parliament for the Borough of Ennis. Instead of doing him harm, the Clarke scandal reacted in his favour, for he wriggled out by giving evidence and bringing to light facts which the Commission of Inquiry was anxious to obtain. As a reward he was appointed a Lord of the Irish Treasury and a Privy Councillor. Mrs. Clarke published "a letter to the Rt. Hon. William Fitzgerald," impugning his motives for giving evidence, but she was unable to prove what was probably a fact and was imprisoned for nine months for libel.

Continuing in favour, Fitzgerald was appointed a Lord of the English Treasury, first Lord of the Irish Treasury and Chancellor of the Irish Exchequer, which offices he held until their amalgamation with the English Treasury in 1816. In 1820 he was appointed Minister to Sweden, but, failing in his mission, he was recalled in 1823, in what looked suspiciously like disgrace. In 1826 he was back in favour and was made Paymaster-General to the Forces, and in 1828 President of the Board of Trade. This latter post necessitated a seat in Parliament but he was defeated in the great Clare Election of that year by Daniel O'Connell. A local ballad-writer of the day sang:—

"All hands aloft," the Sheriff cries, the least is for poor Vesey.
O what a slap was on their pride, which set the landlords crazy.
But now the day is just at hand, that we so long remember,
When Vesey must jump and scratch his shins and consent
to a Papist member.

And another ballad-monger wrote a song with the chorus:
"Down, down, poor Vesey, lie down."

However, a seat was engineered for Fitzgerald in England and he held it until he retired from office in 1830. In 1831 he was again returned for Ennis and held the seat until his mother's death when he became an Irish Peer.

In 1835, Sir Robert Peel rewarded his faithful services to the Crown with an English Peerage, Lord Fitzgerald of Desmond and Clangibbon, and in 1831 he entered on his last public office, President of the Board of Control. He died in Belgrave Square, London, on 11th May, 1843, and was, at the time, a Trustee of the British Museum, President of the Institute of Irish Architects and a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries. His English title died with him for he had no children, but his Irish title, which he had inherited from his mother, passed to his youngest brother, Henry, the Dean of Kilmore.

EDWARD FITZGIBBON

Edward Fitzgibbon, author and fisherman, the son of a Limerick land agent, was born in Limerick in 1803. When he was fourteen years old his father died and he was articled to a surgeon in London, but he quitted the profession in disgust