

In 1807, at the early age of 19, De Vere married Mary Spring-Rice of Mount Trenchard, sister to the first Lord Mont-eagle, and had five sons and three daughters. Two of the former, Aubrey Thomas and Sir Stephen, outshone their brilliant father, who, like most artists who receive too generous a praise from their contemporaries, has suffered severely from the neglect of posterity.

FATHER DERMOD DUGGAN.

Dermod Duggan, a young man of the Diocese of Emly, studying for the priesthood in the Irish College in Paris in the beginning of the 17th century, became attracted by the zeal of Saint Vincent de Paul and joined the newly founded Missionary Order, the Vincentians, in the year 1645.

He was one of the young Irish priests who, at the request of Bishop O'Dwyer, returned on missionary endeavour to counter the persecutions of the Cromwellian period. After four years work in Limerick Diocese he was compelled to leave the country again.

His next mission was to the highlands of Scotland, where he arrived in the company of Father White, another Limerick Vincentian, under the protection of MacDonell, Lord Glengarry. Having worked for a time here with Father White, he set out for the Western Isles, being one of the few priests capable of working among the poverty-stricken Gaelic-speaking natives who had been neglected spiritually for so long. In order to avoid arrest by the Cromwellian soldiery, he travelled disguised as a merchant under the name of Gray.

He converted eight or nine hundred people in the islands of South Uist, Eigg and Canna and relates in his letters to Vincent de Paul how he instructed and baptised thirty or forty people, and ministered to many others who for seventy, eighty or ninety years or more had never received the Holy Sacrament. Other islands in which Father Duggan laboured with success, as well as on the mainland, were those of Skye and Barra. He was about to set out for new territory, the Island of Pabbay, in 1657, when his strength failed him, and he died at South Uist on the 7th of May of that year.

Father Duggan's life was a strenuous and a dangerous one. In spite of his long walking pilgrimages on the mainland, and the hazardous journeys between the islands, his diet was of the most primitive quality, often consisting of nothing but barley, bread, cheese, and salt butter. Meat he seldom saw, or even fish, for he says that although the sea around the island abounded with the latter, the islanders were not skilled enough to catch them. Added to these petty inconveniences was the ever present dread of arrest and death, for the common informer, who was

paid so well for his dirty work, was even more common there than in Ireland.

Father Duggan has left an interesting series of reports to his Superior, Saint Vincent de Paul, and in them are preserved many of the habits and customs of the Gaels of the Scottish Isles, as well as an account of his own missionary labours. He was known, and is still remembered there, as "An Brathair Bocht," the poor friar, and his grave in the ancient churchyard of Kilvanon, West Gernish, is still known and pointed out. The chapel here is called after him, and, in Eigg also, the work of this strenuous missionary priest is remembered with love and honour.

FLORENCE HENSEY

Florence Hensey, or Henchy, physician and French spy, was the son of Florence and Mary Henchy, of Ballycumeen, County Clare. He was born in the year 1715, went to England while still very young, and entered the University of Leyden on the 18th October, 1748.

He studied for the medical profession and, having graduated, spent several years travelling on the Continent, learning thereby to speak Swiss, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish like a native. He then set up as a physician in Paris, but, not being very successful, soon transferred to England and began to practice in London.

On the outbreak of the Seven Years War between England and France, in 1756, Henchy was enlisted as a French secret service agent and undertook to furnish the French with information concerning the British Fleet for a salary of 200 guineas a year. His method of procedure was to send the secret information written in lemon juice between the lines of letters to his brother who was Chaplain to the Spanish Ambassador at the Hague. He was highly valued by the French, for it was through his information that a proposed English naval expedition to capture the town of Rochefort, in 1757, failed utterly.

Shortly after this episode, a postman, who suspected the volume of foreign correspondence received by Henchy, reported the matter and, on some letters being opened, the secret was discovered and Henchy was arrested as he was leaving the Catholic Church in Soho on 21st August, 1757. In June of the following year he was brought to trial, and, as the evidence was overwhelmingly against him, he was condemned to death as a traitor to Britain. However, he had powerful friends and, on the day appointed for his execution, he received a reprieve and, in the following year, was allowed out of prison on bail. Eventually he was fully pardoned and granted complete freedom provided he left England for ever. From thence Henchy disappears from the scene completely and we cannot even record the year of his death.