

Bridge, the launching of the *Great Eastern*, and the uprooting of the trees of more than one forest. Contrast with these, the publican's beer-engine, or Bramah's last patent (for preventing dry-rot in timber, by coating it with Parker's Roman Cement, taken out in 1814), and it will be seen at once how keen and comprehensive were Bramah's perceptions in mechanics, and which were displayed alike in small things as in great. He possessed not only a ready inventive faculty, but he was quick to observe the need which necessitates invention. He was undoubtedly the first mechanician of his day, and as a manufacturer he stood unrivalled for excellence and finish of workmanship—due, perhaps, to the great development he gave to the art of tool-making. From his workshops came Henry Maudslay and Joseph Clement, whose brilliant mechanical achievements now vie with those of their chief. Bramah died in his sixty-sixth year, on the 14th of December, 1814. The parish to which Bramah belonged was proud of the distinction he had achieved in the world, and erected a marble tablet to his memory in Silkstone Church.

Bramah was a man of excellent moral character, temperate in his habits, of a pious turn of mind—and so even and cheerful was his temperament, that he was the life and soul of every company which he entered. He was also benevolent and affectionate; and whilst being neat and methodical in his habits, he knew how to temper liberality with economy; and it is related of him, that when there was a stagnation in trade he frequently kept his workmen employed, and laid by the articles they produced until trade revived.

A TRIBUTE TO OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

(4.)—OLIVER GOLDSMITH was born in the year 1728, at Pallas, a small village in the parish of Forney, county Longford, Ireland—his father being a poor curate, who coked out the scanty funds which he derived from his benefice, by cultivating a small quantity of land. The chequered career of Oliver is well known to all readers of English literature; his writing challenging attention chiefly for the unaffected ease, grace, and tenderness of his descriptions of rural and domestic life. Ellis, in reviewing the poet and his writings, has paid the following graceful tribute to him:—

"Who of the millions whom he has amused, doesn't love him? To be the most beloved of English writers, what a title that is for a man! A wild youth, wayward, but full of tenderness and affection, quits the country village where his boyhood has been passed in happy nursing, in idle shelter, in fond longing to see the world out of doors, and achieve name and fortune—and after years of dire struggle, and neglect and poverty, his heart turning back as fondly to his native place, as it had longed eagerly for change when sheltered there, he writes a book and a poem, full of the recollections and feelings of home—he paints the friends and the scenes of his youth, and peoples Auburn and Wakefield with remembrances of Lissoy. Wander he must, but he carries away a home relic with him, and dies with it on his breast. His nature is true; in repose it longs for change; as on the journey it looks back for friends and quiet. He passes to-day in building air-castles for to-morrow, or in writing yesterday's elegy; and he would fly away this hour, but that a cage of necessity keeps him. What is the charm of his verse, of his style, and humour? His sweet regrets, his delicate compassion, his soft smile, his treasured sympathy, the weakness which he owns: 'Your love for him is half pity. You come hot and tired from the day's battle and this sweet minstrel sings to you. Who could ever harm the kind vagrant harper? Whom did he ever hurt? He carries no weapon—save the harp on which he plays to you; and with which he delights great and humble, young and old, the captains in the tent or the soldiers round the fire, or the women and children in the village, at whose porches he stops and sings his simple songs of love and beauty. With that sweet story of the 'Vicar of Wakefield,' he has found entry into every castle and every hamlet in Europe. Not one of us, however busy or hard, but once or twice in our lives has passed an evening with him, and undergone the charm of his delightful music."

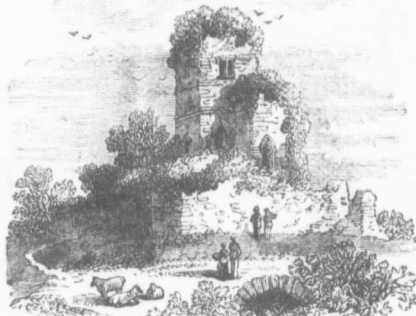
The copyright of Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield* was sold, in 1764, for fifty guineas, to Newberry the bookseller, in order to enable the writer to discharge a pressing debt. It has since earned for its various publishers great and untold sums.

THE AUTHOR OF THE "FAERIE QUEENE!"

(5.)—EDMUND SPENSER was, with one illustrious exception, the greatest of those poets whose genius brightened the closing period of Queen Elizabeth's reign. His career is thus briefly sketched:—

Spenser was born in London, in 1553, and educated at Cambridge, where he took a degree in arts; but, not obtaining a fellowship, he quitted the University, and became a private tutor. It was not until the year 1579 that he published his earliest poem, "*The Shepherd's Calendar*," which he dedicated to Sir Philip Sydney, who greatly befriended him, and introduced him at Court. This led, in 1580, to his appointment as

secretary to the Viceroy of Ireland—and it was while in that country that he became intimate with Sir Walter Raleigh, who encouraged him in a growing inclination to abandon politics for the Muses. Spenser had received a grant of three thousand acres of confiscated land in the county of Cork, which had belonged to the Earl of Desmond, and as by the terms of the gift he was obliged to reside on the estate, he



KILCOLMAN CASTLE.

built himself a house, known as Kilkoman Castle, now a ruin, but the spot must ever be dear to the lovers of genius. Availing himself of its seclusion, he wrote there, besides many other poems, his "*Complaints*," and "*The Faerie Queene*." These established his success as a poet, and procured him a royal pension of fifty pounds a year—then a fair income. In 1586 appeared two poems, beautiful in themselves, but doubly interesting because of the many allusions to the poet's personal history contained in them, viz., "*Colin Clout's come Home again*," and "*Epithalamium*," the latter having special reference to his recent marriage. In the following year Spenser revisited England, and it is said that on his voyage he lost the missing books of "*The Faerie Queene*," but the statement is not well authenticated, and strong reasons exist for believing the poem was never completed.

Besides his poems Spenser wrote an able prose treatise, called "*A View of the State of Ireland*," which, though completed in 1596, was not printed until 1633, many years after the author's death. It is an excellent specimen of old English style, and is often referred to even now-a-days in connection with Irish questions.

In the year 1598 the poet returned again to Ireland, and at the outbreak of the rebellion—instigated by the Earl of Tyrone—Kilkoman Castle was plundered and burnt by the merciless cruelty of the insurgents, and the poet and his wife had to flee for their lives, leaving their infant child in the burning pile. Broken in heart, and ruined in fortune, the poet sought shelter in London, where, according to the somewhat doubtful testimony of Ben Jonson, he died of want in 1599. Be this as it may, at any rate he was buried with great pomp by the ill-fated Earl of Essex, in Westminster Abbey, near to the grave of Chaucer, and the Countess of Dorset erected a monument to his memory. Spenser was a contemporary of Shakespeare, and the immortal bard has referred to him in laudatory language in the eighth sonnet of his "*Passionate Pilgrim*."

It has been observed of Spenser that "he is one of the most purely poetic of all poets. Yet, as it is with Milton, so it is with him; his name is spoken with a proud admiration, and his '*Faerie Queene*' is not read! Some, like Hume, find it more a taste than a pleasure, to read this poem." Pope says of it—"There is something that pleases us as strongly in one's old age as it did in one's youth." Mr. Craik, in his sketches of *Literature and Learning* in England, observes—"Without calling Spenser the greatest of all poets, we may still say that his poetry is the most poetical of all poetry." But tastes in literature, as in everything else, differ, and illustrative of this, it is related that when Spenser had finished his "*Faerie Queene*," he carried it to the Earl of Southampton, the great patron of the poets of that day. The manuscript being sent up to the earl, he read a few pages, and then ordered the servant to give the writer twenty pounds. Reading on, he cried in a rapture, "Carry the man another twenty pounds." Proceeding farther, he exclaimed, "Give him twenty pounds more!" But at length, his admiration increased, and as he read, he said, "Go turn that fellow out of the house, for if I read farther, I shall be ruined."