

counters with the treacherous enemies and with savage beasts, that Spenser is showing us what Ireland was like then.

After Lord Grey was recalled to England, Spenser stayed on in Ireland, and finally made it his home. And it was in Ireland, at Kilcolman Castle, that the great poem was written. In 1589, Sir Walter Raleigh came to visit Spenser at Kilcolman; and when he read the part of the "Faerie Queene" that was finished, he persuaded his friend to bring it over to England and publish it. Queen Elizabeth received the poet kindly; she let him dedicate his book to her, and gave him a pension of fifty pounds a year. Every one who read the poem was delighted, and Spenser was acknowledged to be the greatest living poet. In 1595 he again came to England and published the next three books.

Ireland was still very unsettled, and in 1598 there was a terrible rising of the Irish against the English settlers. Spenser's castle was attacked and burned, and some say that his little new-born baby perished in the fire. He and his wife escaped and got safely to England, but very soon after, in January, 1599, the poet died in London. He was buried near Chaucer in Westminster Abbey.

The "Faerie Queene," like the "Canterbury Tales," is unfinished. There were to have been twelve books, but, as we have seen, only six were published when the poet died. It has been thought that the other books had been written, and that they were lost in the destruction of Kilcolman. This is not certain; but, ten years after Spenser's death, a part of the seventh book was found and printed. Fortunately, however, Spenser had placed at the first of his book a letter addressed to Sir Walter Raleigh, explaining his plan for the whole work. So we know what the story was intended to be.

Spenser says that he was writing the book with the hope that it might help "to fashion a gentleman or noble person in virtuous and gentle discipline." To do this, he chose for his hero King Arthur, for three reasons: first, because Arthur was the best and noblest person that he knew about; second, he was already very famous through the many books that had been written about him; and third, as Arthur was no longer living, no one could be jealous or suspicious of him. In the "Faerie Queene" Arthur was made to be a brave knight, perfect in all the twelve moral virtues. Spenser says he was a *magnificent* person, by which he meant, what we should call, a great soul.

While Arthur is the hero of the whole story, and unites in his own person all the virtues, each book has a hero of its own, who has one special virtue. The book of which he is the hero tells how each one met and fought and overcame all the difficulties and obstacles which were likely to be opposed to that virtue. Thus, Sir Guyon, the Knight of Temperance, or, as we should say, Self-Control, has to fight against intemperate anger, love of luxury and self-indulgence, and excessive love of money. All the adventures of these twelve knights were undertaken in honour of Gloriana, the Faerie Queene, and for her approval and praise; and all the knights set out on their quests from her court, and at her command. At the end, when each knight should have conquered his enemies, it is supposed that they were all to return to the court to celebrate the marriage of Gloriana with Arthur. But, as I said, we have not got the end of the story.

The whole story is an allegory, that is, a description or story of one thing under the image of another. One thing that makes it hard to understand, is that there are two hidden meanings instead of one, as in most allegories. The domain of the Faerie Queene means, in the first place, England, and the Faerie Queene herself is Queen Elizabeth. The deeds of the knights are done for England and England's great queen. But the faerie land is also an image of the world in which we all have to fight against evil, and to grow stronger in goodness; and by the Faerie Queene, Gloriana, is meant True Glory. Arthur stands, first, for the great Earl of Leicester, who was Queen Elizabeth's favourite, and likely, many people thought, to be her husband. But he also signifies the great soul, who is perfect in all virtues, and so, able to win true glory for his own.

The first book is the story of the Red Cross Knight, St. George, the Knight of Holiness; the second, of Sir Guyon, the Knight of Temperance; the third, of Britomartis, the Lady Knight of Chastity; the fourth book is called a Legend of Friendship, and contains the story of Cambel and Triamond, but Britomart is still the knight; the fifth book celebrates Arthegall, the Knight of Justice; and the sixth, Calidore, the Knight of Courtesy. The virtue depicted in the fragment of the seventh book is Constancy.

Each book has twelve parts, called cantos, and each canto has from thirty-five to sixty verses.