

the Irish historian, "the Munsterians, generally, rebel in October, and kill, murder, ravish and spoil without mercy; and Tyrone made James Fitz-Thomas Earl of Desmond, on condition to be tributary to him; he was the handsomest man of his time, and is commonly called the *Sugan* Earl."

On the last day of the previous September (Sept. 30, 1598), the English Council had written to the Irish Government to appoint Edmund Spenser, Sheriff of the County of Cork, "a gentleman dwelling in the County of Cork, who is so well known unto you all for his good and commendable parts, being a man endowed with good knowledge in learning, and not unskilful or without experience in the wars." In October, Munster was in the hands of the insurgents, who were driving Norreys before them, and sweeping out of house and castle the panic-stricken English settlers. On December 9th, Norreys wrote home a despatch about the state of the province. This despatch was sent to England by Spenser, as we learn from a subsequent despatch of Norreys of December 21.<sup>1</sup> It was received at Whitehall, as appears from Robert Cecil's endorsement, on the 24th of December. The passage from Ireland seems to have been a long one. And this is the last original document which remains about Spenser.

What happened to him in the rebellion we learn generally from two sources, from Camden's *History*, and from Drummond of Hawthornden's *Recollections* of Ben Jonson's conversations with him in 1619. In the Munster insurrection of October, the new Earl of Desmond's followers did not forget that Kilcolman was an old possession of the Desmonds. It was sacked and burnt. Jonson related

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted for this reference to Mr. Hans Claude Hamilton. See also his Preface to *Calendar of Irish Papers, 1574-85*, p. lxxvi.

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