vindicated. To this excellent work was afterwards add­ed, A Diſcourſe concerning vulgar prophecies, wherein the vanity of receiving them as the certain indications of any future event is expoſed ; and ſome marks of diſtinction between true and pretended prophets are laid down. 3. A Latin Diſſertation concerning Urim and Thummim. 4. His famous treatiſe *De legibus Hebraeo­rum ritualibus et earum rationibus.* The intention of this book, as he informs us himſelf, was to vindicate the Deity from the imputation of acting from arbitrary and fantaſtical motives. It has been highly and juſtly es­teemed both for the elegance of ſtile and the uncom­mon erudition and found ſenſe which it diſplays. It has, however, (that part of it particularly which endea­vours to deduce ſome of the Jewiſh ceremonies from the practices of their heathen neighbours), alarmed many persons, as if inch a doctrine, if it could be proved, would derogate from the Divine wiſdom, and under­mine revelation. But this is ſo far from being the case, that Dr Spencer’s attempt, whether ſucceſsful or not, deferves the gratitude of Christians, becauſe it has a tendency to throw light on an important and difficult ſubject.

SPENSER (Edmund); the poet, was born in London in the year 1553, and deſcended from an ancient family of the Spenſers in Northamptonſhire. All we know concerning his education is, that he was admitted a ſizer of Pembroke-hall in Cambridge, and matriculated in 1569. At this time began his intimacy with Mr Gabriel Harvey, a man of genius and a poet. In 1576, having completed his degrees in arts, he left the univerſity, as it is conjectured, for want of ſubſistence, and retired to the north of England. Here he had the misfortune to become enamoured of his Roſalind, who, after flattering his paſſion for a time, at length prefer­red his happier rival. Spenſer continued in the country till the year 1578, when at the perſuaſion of his friend Mr Harvey he removed to London, where that gentle­man introduced him to Mr Sidney (afterwards Sir Philip Sidney). Concerning his first introduction to Sir Phi­lip, there is indeed a different ſtory, which was first told by the writer of his life, prefixed to his works in 1679, and tranſcribed by Hughes, Cibber, and ſeveral others ; which, nevertheleſs, is certainly not true. The purport of it is, that Spenſer, being unknown to this Mecsenas of the age, went to Leiceſter-houſe, and sent in the 9th canto of the first book of the Fairy Queen ; that, on reading part of it, Sir Philip ordered his steward to give the bearer job; on reading a little farther 50 l. more ; then 200 l. bidding him to make haste and pay the money, left he ſhould give the poet his whole eſtate. The ſtory tells prettily enough; but it is very certain, that the Fairy Queen was begun long after his acquaintance with Sir Philip. By this univerſal patron ef genius, however, he was preſented to queen Eliza­beth, who honoured him with the place of poet-laureat. About this time he finiſhed his Shepherd’s Calendar, which was first printed in 1579 ; and in the following year, being recommended by his patron to the earl of Leiceſter, he went to Ireland as ſecretary to the lord Grey of Wilton, then appointed lord-lieutenant of that kingdom. Lord Grey was recalled in 1582, and with him Spenſer returned to London, where he conti­nued till after the dearth of Sir Philip Sidney in 1586 ; a loſs which he bewailed to the end of his life. The following year, our poet, having obtained a royal grant of 3000 acres of forfeited lands in the county of Cork in Ireland, ſet out for that kingdom, took poſſeſſion of his eſtate, and fixed his reſidence in the castle of Kilcolman, which had belonged to the earl of Deſmond. In this retirement he reſumed his great work of the Fairy Queen ; and continued in Ireland till, being viſited by his old friend Sir Walter Raleigh in 1589, he came over with him to England, but returned to Ire­land the year following, where he fell in love with a country gid, and married her. Soon after his marri­age, he paid another viſit to his native country, where we alſo find him in 1596. In the following year he re­turned once more to Kilcolman ; but on the rebellion of Lord Tyrone, who ravaged the whole county of Cork, he was obliged to fly for ſafety with his family to England, where, in the year 1599, he died in ex­treme poverty @@(a). He was buried in Weſtminſter Abbey, according to his requeſt, near Chaucer. A monument was erected to his memory by Ann counteſs of Dorſet. We know but little of his character as a man ; as a poet, conſidering the age in which he lived, he deferves our utmoſt veneration. He wrote various pieces beſides thoſe above-mentioned His whole works, with his life by Hughes, were publiſhed in six volumes 12mo, in 1715 and 1750.

SPERGUL A, Spurrey,in botany: Agenus of plants belonging to the claſs of *decandria,* and the order of *pentagynia ;* and in the natural ſyſtem arranged under the 22d order, *caryophylleae.* The calyx is pentaphyllous ; the petals five, and undivided ; the capſule oval, unilocu­lar, and containing five valves. There are five species,the arvenſis, nodoſa, pentandra, laricina, and ſaginoides ; all of which are Britiſh : 1. The *arvenſis,* corn-ſpurrey, has linear ſurrowed leaves, from eight to twenty in a whirl. The flowers are small, white, and terminal. It is frequent in corn-fields. In Holland it is cultivated as food for cattle, and has the advantage of growing on the very pooreſt soils ; but does not afford a great deal of food. Poultry are fond of the seeds ; and the inha­bitants of Finland and Norway make bread of them when their crops of corn fail. Horſes, ſheep, goats, and ſwine, eat it. Cows refuſe it.

2. The *nodoſa,* knotted ſpurrey. Several ſtalks ariſe from one root, ſometimes reclining and ſometimes erect, and from three to five inches high. The leaves are ſmooth, of a fine green, narrow, pointed, and op­poſite. The flowers are white, terminal, with yellow antherse.

3. *Pentandra,* ſmall ſpurrey. The leaves are very narrow, and grow in whirls at the joints. The ſeeds are black with a white circle. It flowers in July.

4. *Laricina,* larch-leaved ſpurrey. Several ſtalks

@@@(a) This is Camden’s account, and it has been generally believed; but Mr Malone, the laſt editor of Shakeſpeare’s works, by examining the patent roll, 33 Eliz. p. 3. has discovered, that in February 1790-1 Spenſer obtained from Queen Elizabeth an annuity or pension of L. 50 during his life; a ſum equivalent to L. 200 at preſent.