allegory governs the structure of the poem, and Spenser himself attached great importance to it as determining his position among poets. The ethical purpose is distinctive of the poem as a whole ; it was foremost in Spenser’s mind when he conceived the scheme of the poem, and present with him as he built up and articulated the skeleton ; it was in this respect that he claimed to have “ over­passed ” his avowed models Ariosto and Tasso. If we wish to get an idea of Spenser’s imaginative force and abundance, or to see his creations as he saw them, we must not neglect the allegory. It is obvious from all that he says of his own work that in his eyes the ethical meaning not only heightened the interest of the marvellously rich pageant of heroes and heroines, enchanters and monsters, but was the one thing that redeemed it from romantic commonplace. For the right appreciation of many of the characters and incidents a knowledge of the allegory is indispensable. For example, the slaughter of Error by the Red Cross knight would be merely dis­gusting but for its symbolic character ; the iron Talus and his iron flail is a revolting and brutally cruel monster if he is not regarded as an image of the executioner of righteous law ; the Blatant Beast, a purely grotesque and ridiculous monster to outward view, ac­quires a serious interest when he is known to be an impersonation of malignant detraction.

After the publication of the *Faery Queen* Spenser seems to have remained in London for more than a year, to enjoy his triumph. It might be supposed, from what he makes the Shepherd of the Ocean say in urging Colin Clout to quit his banishment in Ireland, that Raleigh had encour­aged him to expect some permanent provision in London. If he had any such hopes they were disappointed. The thrifty queen granted him a pension of £50, which was paid in February 1591, but nothing further was done for him. Colin Clout’s explanation that the selfish scrambling and intriguing of court life were not suited to a lowly shepherd swain, and that he returned to country life with relief, may be pastoral convention, or it may have been an expression of the poet’s real feelings on his return to Kilcolman, although as a matter of fact there seems to have been as much scrambling for good things in Munster as in London. Certain it is that he did return to Kilcol­man in the course of the year 1591, having probably first arranged for the publication of *Daphnaida* and *Com­plaints. Daphnaida* is a pastoral elegy on the death of the niece of the mistress of the robes. The fact implied in the dedication that he was not personally known to the lady has more than once provoked the solemn remark that the poet’s grief was assumed. Of course it was assumed ; and it is hardly less obvious that sincerity of personal emotion, so far from being a merit in the artificial forms of pastoral poetry, the essence of which lies in its dreamy remoteness from real life, would be a blemish and a discord. Any suggestion of the poet’s real personality breaks the charm ; once raise the question of the poet’s personal sincerity and the pastoral poem may at once be thrown aside. The remark applies to all Spenser’s minor poetry, including his love-sonnets ; the reader who raises the question whether Spenser really loved his mistress may have a talent for disputation but none for the full enjoyment of hyperbolical poetry. *Complaints,* also pub­lished in 1591, is a miscellaneous collection of poems written at different periods. The volume contained *The Ruins of Time ; The Tears of the Muses ; Virgil’s Gnat*; *Mother Hubbard’s Tale ; The Ruins of Rome ; Muiopotmos ;* Visions *of the World's Vanity ; Bellay’s Visions · Petrarch’s Visions.* Some of these pieces are translations already alluded to and interesting only as the exercises of one of our greatest masters of melodious verse ; but two of them, *The Tears of the Muses* and *Mother Hubbard’s Tale,* have greater intrinsic interest. The first is the complaint of the decay of learning alluded to in *Midsummer Night’s Dream,* V. 1, 52—

“ The thrice three Muses mourning for the death Of Learning late deceased in beggary.”

The lament, at a time when the Elizabethan drama was “ mewing its mighty youth,” was not so happy as some

of Spenser’s political prophecies in his *View of Ireland;* but it is idle work to try to trace the undercurrents and personal allusions in such an occasional pamphlet. *Mother Hubbards Tale,* a fable in Chaucerian couplets, shows a keenness of satiric force not to be paralleled in any other of Spenser’s writings, and suggests that he left the court in a mood very different from Colin Clout’s.

Spenser returned to London probably in 1595. He had married in the interval a lady whose Christian name was Elizabeth,—Mr Grosart says Elizabeth Boyle. The mar­riage, celebrated on the 11th of June 1594, was followed by a rapid succession of publications. The first was a volume (entered at Stationers’ Hall, 19th November 1594, published 1595) containing the *Amoretti,* a series of ex­quisite sonnets commemorative of the moods and incidents of his courtship, and the magnificent *Epithalamion,* in­comparably the finest of his minor poems. As in the case of the *Complaints,* the publisher for obvious reasons issued this volume nominally without his authority. *Colin Clout's Come Home Again* was published in the same year, with a dedication to Sir Walter Raleigh, dated 1591. Early in 1596 the second three books of the *Faery Queen* were entered in the register of Stationers’ Hall ; and in the course of the same year were published his *Four Hymns,* his *Prothalamion,* and his *Astrophel,* a pastoral lament for Sir Philip Sidney, which he dedicated to the countess of Essex.

That Spenser wrote more of the *Faery Queen* during the last two years of his life, and that the MS. perished in the sack of Kilcolman castle by the rebels, may plausibly be conjectured, but cannot be ascertained. During those years he would seem to have been largely occupied with political and personal cares. He describes himself in the *Prothalamion* as a disappointed suitor at court. He drew up his *View of Ireland* in 1596 when he was in London, and from various circumstances it is evident that he had hopes of some kind from the favour of Essex. The *View*, with its urgent entreaty that Essex should be sent to Ire­land, was entered at Stationers’ Hall in April 1598, but he did not obtain leave to publish it. Burghley, who had long stood in his way, died in August of that year, and next month Spenser was appointed sheriff of Cork. In October Tyrone’s rebellion broke out, and Spenser’s house was sacked and burned. The poet himself escaped, and in December was sent to London with despatches. Again he ventured to urge upon the queen his plan for the thorough “reformation” of Ireland. But his own end was near. On 16th January 1599 he died at Westminster, ruined in fortune, if not heart-broken, and was buried in Westminster Abbey, near his master Chaucer.

There have been many editions of Spenser’s works. The most available and complete is the Globe edition, with a carefully edited text by Dr R. Morris, and a memoir by Professor J. W. Hales. Mr Grosart’s edition, with its keenly argumentative biography and copious collection of variorum researches and critical opinions, is printed for private circulation. (W. M. )

SPERMACETI is a solid waxy body found in special cavities in the head of the sperm whale *(Physeter macro- cephalus),* where it is held in solution by sperm oil while the creature is in life. At a temperature of about 6° C. the solid matter separates in a crystalline condition, and when purified by pressure and treatment with weak solu­tion of caustic alkali it forms brilliant white crystalline scales or plates, hard but unctuous to the touch, and desti­tute of taste or smell. It is quite insoluble in water, very slightly affected by boiling alcohol, but easily dissolved in ether, chloroform, and carbon bisulphide. Spermaceti consists principally of cetin or cetyl palmitate, { θ>

—an ether composed of cetyl alcohol combined with palmi­tic acid. Spermaceti candles of definite size are employed