now duc d’Anjou, and Sidney, in giving the lie to Oxford, affronted the leader of the French party. In January 1580 he went further in his opposition to the match, addressing to Eliza­beth a long letter in which the arguments against the alliance were elaborately set forth. This letter *(Sidney Papers,* pp. 287- 292), in spite of some judicious compliments, was regarded, not unnaturally, by the queen as an intrusion. Sidney was compelled to retire from court, and some of his friends feared for his personal safety. A letter from Languet shows that he had written to Elizabeth at the instigation of “ those whom he was bound to obey,” probably Leicester and Walsingham.

Sidney retired to Wilton, or the neighbouring village of Ivychurch, where he joined his sister in writing a paraphrase of the Psalms. Here too he began his *Arcadia*, for his sister’s amusement and pleasure. In October 1580 he addressed a long letter of advice, not without affectionate and colloquial inter­ruptions, to his brother Robert, then about to start on his con­tinental tour. This letter *(Sidney Papers,* p. 283) was printed in *Profitable Instructions for Travellers* (1633). It seems that a promise was exacted from him not to repeat his indiscretions in the matter of the French marriage, and he returned to court. In view of the silence of contemporary authority, it is hardly possible to assign definite dates to the sonnets of *Astrophel and Stella.* Penelope Devereux was married against her will to Robert, Lord Rich, in 1581, probably very soon after the letter from Penelope’s guardian, the earl of Huntingdon, desiring the queen’s consent. The earlier sonnets are not indicative of over­whelming passion, and it is a reasonable assumption that Sidney’s liking for Penelope only developed into passion when he found that she was passing beyond his grasp. Mr A. W. Pollard assigns the magnificent sequence beginning with No. 33—

“ I might ! unhappy word—O me, I might,

And then would not, or could not, see my blisse,”— to the period following on Stella’s reappearance at court as Lady Rich. It has been argued that the whole tenor of Philip’s life and character was opposed to an overmastering passion, and that there is no ground for attaching biographical value to these sonnets, which were merely Petrarchan exercises. That Sidney was, like his contemporaries, a careful and imitative student of French and Italian sonnets is patent. He himself confesses in the first of the series that he "sought fit words to paint the blackest face of woe,” by “ oft turning others’ leaves ” before he obeyed the command of his muse to "look in his heart and write.” The account of his passion is, however, too circumstantial to be lightly regarded as fiction. Mr Pollard sees in the sonnets a description of a spiritual struggle between his sense of a high political mission and a disturbing passion calculated to lessen his efforts in a larger sphere. It seems certain, at any rate, that he was not solely preoccupied with scruples against his love for Stella because she was already married. He had probably been writing sonnets to Stella for a year or more before her marriage, and he seems to have continued to address her after his own marriage. Thomas Nash defined the general argument epigrammatically as "cruel chastity—the prologue Hope, the epilogue Despair.” But after Stella’s final refusal Sidney recovered his earlier serenity, and the sonnet placed by Mr Pollard at the end of the series—“ Leave me, O Love, which reachest but to dust ”—expresses the triumph of the spirit.

Meanwhile he prosecuted his duties as a courtier and as member for Kent in parliament. On the 15th and 16th of May 1581 he was one of the four challengers in a tournament arranged in honour of the visit of the duke of Anjou. In 1579 Stephen Gosson had dedicated to Sidney his *School of Abuse,* an attack on the stage, and incidentally on poetry. Sidney was probably moved by this treatise to write his own *Apologie for Poetrie,* dating from about 1581. In 1583 he was knighted in order that he might act as proxy for Prince John Casimir, who was to be installed as Knight of the Garter, and in the autumn of that year he married Frances, daughter of his friend and patron Sir Francis Walsingham, a girl of fourteen or fifteen years of age. In 1584 he met Giordano Bruno at the house of his friend Fulke Greville, and two of the philosopher’s books are dedicated to him.

Sidney was employed about this time in the translation from the French of his friend Du Plessis Mornay’s treatise on the Christian religion. He still desired active service and took an eager interest in the enterprises of Martin Frobisher, Richard Hakluyt and Walter Raleigh. In 1584 he was sent to France to condole with Henry III. on the death of his brother, the duke of Anjou, but the king was at Lyons, and unable to receive the embassy. Sidney’s interest in the struggle of the Protestant princes against Spain never relaxed. He recommended that Elizabeth should attack Philip II. in Spain itself. So keen an interest did he take in this policy that he was at Plymouth about to sail with Francis Drake’s fleet in its expedition against the Spanish coast (1585) when he was recalled by the queen’s orders. He was, however, given a command in the Netherlands, where he was made governor of Flushing. Arrived at his post, he con­stantly urged resolute action on his commander, the earl of Leicester, but with small result. In July 1586 he made a success­ful raid on Axel, near Flushing, and in September he joined the force of Sir John Norris, who was operating against Zutphen. On the 22nd of the month he joined a small force sent out to intercept a convoy of provisions. During the fight that ensued he was struck in the thigh by a bullet. He succeeded in riding back to the camp. The often-told story that he refused a cup of water in favour of a dying soldier, with the words, "Thy need is greater than mine,” is in keeping with his character. He owed his death to a quixotic impulse. Sir William Pelham happening to set out for the fight without greaves, Sidney also cast off his leg-armour, which would have defended him from the fatal wound. He died twenty-five days later at Arnheim, on the 17th of October 1586. The Dutch desired to have the honour of his funeral, but the body was taken to England, and, after some delay due to the demands of Sidney’s creditors, received a public funeral in St Paul’s Cathedral on the 16th of February 1587.

Sidney’s death was a personal grief to people of all classes. Some two hundred elegies were produced in his honour. Of all these tributes the most famous is *Astrophel, A Pastoral Elegie,* added to Edmund Spenser’s *Colin Clout's Come Home Again* (1595). Spenser wrote the opening poem; other contributors are Sidney’s sister, the countess of Pembroke, Lodowick Bryskett and Matthew Roydon. In the bare enumeration of Sidney’s achievements there seems little to justify the passionate admira­tion he excited. So calm an observer as William of Orange desired Fulke Greville to give Elizabeth “ his knowledge and opinion of a fellow-servant of his, that (as he heard) lived unemployed under her. . . . If he could judge, her Majesty had one of the ripest and greatest counsellors of estate in Sir Philip Sidney, that this day lived in Europe ” (Fulke Greville, *Life of Sidney,* ed. 1816, p. 21). His fame was due first of all to his strong, radiant and lovable character. Shelley placed him in *A donais* among the “ inheritors of unfulfilled renown,” as "sublimely mild, a spirit without spot.”

Sidney left a daughter Frances (b. 1584), who married Roger Manners, earl of Rutland. His widow, who, in spite of the strictures of some writers, was evidently sincerely attached to him, married in 1590 Robert Devereux, second earl of Essex, and, after his death in 1601, Richard de Burgh, earl of Clanricarde.

Sidney’s writings were not published during his lifetime. *A Worke concerning the trewnesse of the Christian Religion,* trans­lated from the French of Du Plessis Mornay, was completed and published by Arthur Golding in 1587.

*The Countesse of Pembroke's Arcadia written by Philippe Sidnei* (1590), in quarto, is the earliest edition of Sidney’s famous romance.@@1 A folio edition, issued in 1593, is stated to have been revised and rearranged by the countess of Pembroke, for whose delectation the romance was written. She was charged to destroy the work sheet by sheet as it was sent to her. The circumstances of its composition partly explain the difference between its intricate sentences, full of far-fetched conceits, repetition and antithesis, and the simple and dignified phrase of the *Apologie for Poetrie.* The style is a concession to the fashionable taste in

@@@1 For a bibliography of this and subsequent editions see the fac­simile reprint (1891) of this quarto, edited by Dr Oskar Sommer.