modem date; but the probabilities are that these passages in Van der Noodt’s *Theatre,* although the editor makes no acknowledgment, were contributed by the schoolboy Spenser.@@1 As the exercises of a schoolboy writing before our poetic diction was enriched by the great Elizabethans, they are remarkable for a sustained command of expression which many schoolboys might exhibit in translation now, but which was a rarer and more significant accomplishment when Surrey and Sackville were the highest models in post-Chaucerian English.

Little is known of Spenser’s Cambridge career, except that he was a sizar of Pembroke Hall, took his bachelor’s degree in 1572, his master’s in 1576, and left Cambridge without having obtained a fellowship. Dr Grosart’s inquiries have elicited the fact that his health was not good—colIege allowances while he was in residence being often paid “ Spenser aegrotanti.” One of the fellows of Pembroke strongly influenced his destiny. This was Gabriel Harvey, a prominent figure in the university life of the time, an enthusiastic educationist, vigorous, versatile, not a little vain of his own culture and literary powers, which had gained him a certain standing in London society. The revival and advancement of English literature was a passion of the time, and Harvey was fully possessed by it. His fancy for reforming English verse by discarding rhyme and substituting unrhymed classical metres, and the tone of his controversy with Thomas Nash, have caused him to be regarded as merely an obstreperous and pragmatic pedant; but it is clear that Spenser, who had sense enough not to be led astray by his eccentricities, received active and generous help from him and probably not a little literary stimulus. Harvey’s letters to Spenser@@2 throw a very kindly light on his character. During his residence at the university the poet acquired a knowledge of Greek, and at a later period offered to impart that language to a friend in Ireland (see Ludowick Bryskett, *Discourse of Civil Life, London, 1606—* written twenty years previously). Spenser’s affinity with Plato is most marked, and he probably read him in the original.

Three years after leaving Cambridge, in 1579, Spenser issued his first volume of poetry, the *Shepherd’s Calendar.* Where and how he spent the interval have formed subjects for elaborate speculation. That most of it was spent in the study of his art we may take for granted. That he lived for a time in the “ north parts ” of England; that there or elsewhere he fell in love with a lady whom he celebrates under the anagram of “ Rosalind,” and who was most likely Rose, a daughter of a yeoman named Dyneley, near Clitheroe; that his friend Harvey urged him to return south, and introduced him to Sir Philip Sidney; that Sidney took to him, discussed poetry with him, introduced him at court, put him in the way of preferment— are ascertained facts in his personal history. Dr Grosart con- jectures with considerable plausibility that he was in Ireland in 1577. The words “for long time far estranged ” in E.K.’s preface to the *Shepherd’s Calendar* point that way. Spenser undoubtedly entered the service of the earl of Leicester either in 1578 or a year earlier *(Carew Papers).*

The interest of the *Shepherd’s Calendar* is mainly personal to Spenser. Its twelve poems continue to be read chiefly because they were the first published essays of the author of the *Faery Queen,* the poems in which he tried and disciplined his powers. They mark no stage in the history of pastoral poetry. The title, borrowed from a French almanack of the year 1496, which was translated into English in 1503 and frequently reprinted, is at- tractive but hardly tallies with the subject. It may have been an afterthought. Spenser had too strong a genius not to make his own individuality felt in any form that he attempted, and his buoyant dexterity in handling various schemes of verse must always afford delight to the connoisseur in such things. But a reader not already interested in Spenser, or not already familiar with the artificial eclogue, would find little to attract him in the *Shepherd’s Calendar.* The poems need a special education; given this, they

are felt to be full of charm and power, a fresh and vivid spring to the splendid summer of the *Faery Queen.* The diction is a studi­ously archaic artificial compound, partly Chaucerian, partly North Anglian, partly factitious; and the pastoral scenery is such as may be found in any country where there are sheep, hills, trees, shrubs, toadstools and running streams. That Spenser, having been in the north of England, should have introduced here and there a touch of north country colour is natural enough, but it is not sufficient to give a character to the poems as pastoral poems. As such they follow continuously and do not violently break away from Latin, Italian and French predecessors, and Professor George Saintsbury is undoubtedly right in indicating Marot as the most immediate model. At the same time one can quite understand on historical grounds why the *Shepherd’s Calendar* was hailed with enthusiasm as the advent of a “ new poet.” Not only was it a complete work in a form then new to English literature, but the execution showed the hand of a master. There had been nothing so finished, so sustained, so masterful in grasp, so brilliant in metre and phrase, since Chaucer. It was felt at once that the poet for whom the age had been waiting had come. The little coterie of friends whose admiration the young poet had won in private were evidently concerned lest the wider public should be bewildered and repelled by the unfamiliar pastoral form and rustic diction. To put the public at the right point of view the poems were pub'- lished with a commentary by “ E.K.”—supposed to be one Edward Kirke, who was an undergraduate with Spenser at Pembroke. This so-called “ glosse ” explained the archaic words, revealed the poet’s intentions, and boasted that, as in the case of Virgil, the pastoral poetry of the “ new poet ” was but “ a proving of the wings for higher and wider flights." The “ new poet's ” name was withheld; and the identification of the various “ shepherds”—of Cuddie and Roffy and Diggon Davie, and the beauteous golden-haired “ widow’s daughter of the glen ”—was fortunately reserved to yield delight to the ingenious curiosity of a later age.@@8 On the subject of Spenser’s obligations the “ glosse ” is very misleading. An eclogue drawn almost entirely from Virgil is represented as jointly inspired by Virgil and Theocritus and chiefly by the latter. Marot is belittled and his claim to be a poet called in question. As regards the twelfth eclogue suggested by and in part translated from his poetry, his influence is ignored. The stanzas Professor Hales cites as autobiographical are actually taken from Marot’s eclogue, *Au Roi sous les noms de Pan et Robin.* Dr Grosart falls into the same error.

The *Shepherd’s Calendar* was published at Gabriel Harvey’s instance, and was dedicated to Sir Philip Sidney. It was one out of many poetical schemes on which the young poet was busy in the flush of conscious power, and high hopes excited by the admiration of the literary authorities whose approval was then most to be coveted. His letters to Harvey and Harvey’s letters to him furnish hints for a very engaging fancy picture of Spenser at this stage of his life—looking at the world through rose-coloured spectacles, high in favour with Sidney and Leicester, dating his letters from Leicester House, gaily and energetically discussing the technicalities of his art, with some provision from his powerful friends—certain, but the form of it delightfully uncertain—going to court in the train of Leicester, growing pointed beard and mustachios of fashionable shape, and frightening his ever-vigilant friend and mentor Harvey by the light courtier-like tone of his references to women. The studious pastoral poet from “ north parts ” had blossomed with surprising rapidity in the image of the •gay fortune-seeking adventurers who crowded the court of the virgin queen in those stirring times. Some of the poems which he mentions to Harvey as then completed or on the anvil—his *Dreams,* his *Nine Comedies,* his *Dying Pelican* and his *Stemmata dudleiana* (singing the praises of the noble family which was befriending him)—have not been preserved, at least in any form that can be certainly identified. Among the lost works was his *English Poet—*a contribution to literary criticism. He had sent Harvey a portion of the *Faery Queen,* which he was eager to con- tinuc; but Harvey did not think much of it—a judgment for which Harvey is often ridiculed as a dull pedant, as if we knew for certain that what was submitted to him was identical with what was published ten years later.

Spenser was appointed secretary to the lord-deputy of Ireland in 1580, and was one of the band of adventurers who, with mixed motives of love of excitement, patriotism, piety and hopes of forfeited estates, accompanied Lord Arthur Grey of WiIton to Ireland to aid in the suppression of Desmond’s rebeIlion. Regret is sometimes expressed that the author of the *Faery Queen,* who ought to have been dreamy, meditative, gentle and refined, should have been found in such company, and should have taken part in the violent and bloody scenes of Lord Grey’s two years’ attempt at “ pacification.” But such things must be judged with reference to the circumstances and the spirit of the time, and it must be remembered that England was then

@@@1 The first versions of the *Visions* of Petrarch and Du Bellay are reproduced by Dr Grosart in his *Complete Works of Spenser,* vol. iv. (London, 1882). The translations of Petrarch are imitated from Marot. Koeppcl *(Englische Studien,* vol. xv.), questions whether they are by Spenser (see also J∙ B∙ Fletcher, *Modern Language Notes,* vol. xxii.).

*@@@2 Letter-Book of Gabriel Harvey* (Camden Society).

@@@s Sec Dr Grosart’s *Complete Works of Spenser,* vol. i.