end was near. On the 16th of January 1599 he died at West­minster, ruined in fortune, if not heart-broken, and was buried in Westminster Abbey, near his master Chaucer. Ben Jonson asserted that he perished for lack of bread, and that when the earl of Essex, hearing of his distress, sent him “ 20 pieces,” the poet declined, saying that he had no time to spend them.@@1 This report of his end is mentioned also by the author of *The Return from Parnassus,* but, having regard to Spenser’s position in the world, it is inherently improbable. Still there is an ugly possibility of its truth. The poet left three sons and a daughter. A pedigree of the family appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for August 1842.

Editions by Todd (8 vols., 1805) and by A. B. Grosart (10 vols., 1882-1884); the Aldine edition, with Life by Collier, and the Globe edition, with Life by J. W. Hales; Dean Church’s *Spenser,* in “ English Men of Letters ” series; Craik’s *Spenser and his Poetry* (1845); Mrs C. Μ. Kirkland’s *Spenser and the Faery Queen* (New York, 1847); J. S. Hart’s *Essay on the Life and Writings of Edmund Spenser* (New York, 1847); Kitchin and Mayhew’s *Spenser's Faery Queen,* bks. i.-ii., and Herford’s *Spenser's Shepherd's Calendar* (Oxford, Clarendon Press); Roden Noel’s preface to the Spenser volume in the Canterbury’ Poets; and F. I. Carpenter’s *Guide to the Study of Spenser* (Chicago, 1894). (W. M.; F. J. S.)

**SPENSER, JOHN** (1559-1614), president of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, was educated at Merchant Taylors’ school, London, and Oxford. After graduating he became Greek reader in Corpus Christi College, and held that office for ten years, resigning in . 1588. He then left Oxford and held successively the livings of Alveley, Essex (1589-1592), Ardleigh, Essex (1592- 1594), Faversham, Kent (1594-1599), and St Sepulchre’s London (1599-1614). He was also presented to the living of Broxbourne, Hertfordshire, in 1592. In 1607 he was appointed president of Corpus Christi College. After the death of his friend Richard Hooker he edited the first five hooks of Hooker’s *Ecclesiastical Politic* (London, 1604). The introduction to that work and *A Sermon at Paule's Crosse on Εsαy V., 2, 3* (London, 1615) are his only published writings. He was, however, one of the translators of the authorized version of the Bible, serving on the New Testament committee.

**SPENSERIAN STANZA,** a form of verse which derives its name from the fact that it was invented by the poet Edmund Spenser, and first used in his *Faery Queene* in 1590. The origin of this stanza has been matter for disagreement among critics of prosody. Schiffer has argued that it was adapted from the old French ballade-stanza (see Ballade). But it is much more probable that it was of Italian origin, and that Spenser, who was familiar with *ottava rima* as it had long been employed in Italy, and was at that very time being used by the school of Tasso, added a line between the Italian fourth and fifth, modified slightly the arrangements of rhyme, and added a foot to the last line, which became an Alexandrine. The form of the pure Spenserian stanza can best be observed by the study of a speci­men from the *Faery Queene:—*

Into the inmost temple thus I came,

Which fuming all with frankincense I found,

And odours rising from the altar’s flame.

Upon a hundred marble pillars round

The roof up high was reared from the ground,

All decked with crowns and chains and garlands gay,

And thousand precious gifts worth many a pound,

The which sad lovers for their vows did pay,

And all the ground was strow’d with flowers as fresh as May.” It is necessary to preserve in all respects the characteristics of this example, and the number, regular sequences and identity of rhymes must be followed. It is a curious fact that, in spite of the very great beauty of this stanza and the popularity of Spenser, it was hardly used during the course of the 17th century, although Giles and Phineas Fletcher made for themselves adap- tations of it, the former by omitting the eighth line, the latter by omitting the sixth and eighth. In the middle of the 18th century the study of Spenser led poets to revive the stanza which bears his name. The initiators of this reform were Akenside, in *The Virtuoso* (1737); Shenstone, in *The Schoolmistress* (1742); and

Thomson, in *The Castle of Indolence* (1748). Mrs Tighe (1772- 1810) used it for her once-famous epic of *Psyche.* It was a favourite form at the time of the romantic revival, when it was employed by Campbell, for his *Gertrude of Wyoming* (1809); by Keats, in *The Eve of St Agnes* (1820) ; by Shelley, in *The Revolt of Islam (Laon and Cythnα)* (1818) ; by Mrs Hernans; by Reginald Heber; but pre-eminently by Byron, in *Childe Harold* (1812- 1817). Thomas Cooper, the Chartist, wrote his *Purgatory of Suicides* (1845) in Spenserian stanza, and Tennyson part of his *Lotus Eaters,* By later poets it has been neglected, but Worsley and Conington’s translation of the *Iliad* (1865-1868) should be mentioned. The Spenserian stanza is an exclusively English form.

**SPERANSKI, COUNT MIKHAIL MIKHAILOVICH** (1772- 1839), Russian statesman, the son of a village priest, spent his early days at the ecclesiastical seminary in St Petersburg, where he rose to be professor of mathematics and physics. His brilliant intellectual qualities attracted the attention of the government, and he became secretary to Prince Kurakin. He soon became known as the most competent of the imperial officials. The most important phase of his career opened in 1806, when the emperor Alexander I. took him with him to the conference of Erfurt and put him into direct communication with Napoleon, who described him as “ the only clear head in Russia ” and at the instance of Alexander had many conversations with him on the question of Russian administrative reform. The result of these interviews was a series of projects of reform, including a consti- tutional system based on a series of *dumas,* the cantonal assembly *(volost)* electing the *duma* of the district, the *dumas* of the districts electing that of the province or government, and these electing the Duma of the empire. As mediating power between the autocrat and the Duma there was to be a nominated council of state. This plan, worked out by Speranski in 1809, was for the most part stillborn, only the council of the empire coming into existence in January 1810; but it none the less, to quote M. Chesle,@@1 dominated the constitutional history of Russia in the 19th century and the early years of the 20th. The Duma of the empire created in 1905 bears the name suggested by Speranski, and the institution of local self-government (the *zemstvos)* in 1864 was one of the reforms proposed by him. Speranski’s labours also bore fruit in the constitutions granted by Alexander to Finland and Poland.

From 1809 to 1812 Speranski was all-powerful in Russia, so far as any minister of a sovereign so suspicious and so unstable as Alexander could be so described. He replaced the earlier favourites, members of the “ unofficial committee,” in the tsar’s confidence, becoming practically sole minister, all questions being laid by him alone before the emperor and usually settled at once by the two between them. Even the once all-powerful war-minister Arakcheyev was thrust into the background. Speranski used his immense influence for no personal ends. He was an idealist; but in this very fact lay the seeds of his failure. Alexander was also an idealist, but his ideals were apt to centre in himself; his dislike and distrust of talents that overshadowed his own were disarmed for a while by the singular charm of Speranski’s personality, but sooner or later he was bound to discover that he himself was regarded as but the most potent instrument for the attainment of that ideal end, a regenerated Russia, which was his minister’s sole preoccupation. In 1810 and the first half of 1811 Speranski was still in high favour, and was the confidant of the emperor in that secret diplomacy which preceded the breach of Russia with Napoleon.@@2 He had, however, committed one serious mistake. An ardent freemason himself, he conceived in 1809 the idea of reorganizing the order in Russia, with the special object of using it to educate and elevate the Orthodox clergy. The emperor agreed to the first steps being taken, namely the suppression of the existing lodges; but he was naturally suspicious of secret societies, even when ostensibly admitted to their secrets, and Speranski’s abortive plan only resulted in adding the clergy to the number of his enemies.

@@@1 See *Conversations with Drummond,* Shakespeare Society, pp. 7, 12.

*@@@1 Le Parlement russe* (Paris, 1910), p. 21

@@@2 Schiemann, *Gesch, Russlands,* i. 77.