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UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE

THE INFLUENCE OF SPENSER'S IRISH RESIDENCE ✓
ON THE FAERIE QUEENE ✓

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Faculty

Of the Graduate School of the University of Louisville

In Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Of Master of Arts

Department of English

By

ELLEN McDOWELL DAVIS ✓

1932



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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The departure of Spenser for Ireland in 1580 as secretary to Lord Grey of Wilton, newly appointed Lord Deputy of Ireland, marks a significant point in the poet's career. Save for occasional trips to England, the remaining years of his life Spenser spent in this "salvage land", among a hostile and turbulent people, far from the brilliance of English court life and "Eliza's blessed fields".

The appointment to service in Ireland seems to have been a disappointment to the poet who had shortly before thought himself assured of an official career in England under the patronage of Leicester. In October of the preceding year he had expected to be sent on a foreign mission in "his Honour's service" but the trip seems never to have taken place. Written later from Ireland, Virgil's Gnat shows the hurt and disappointed poet bemoaning his banishment which he attributes to a well-meant but resented warning to Leicester, probably Mother Hubbard's Tale.¹ He writes,

"I carried on into waste wilderness,
Waste wilderness, among Cymrian shades,
Where endless paines and hideous heavinessse
Is round about me heapt in darksome glades."

(V. G. 369-72)

¹ E. Greenlaw, "Spenser and The Earl of Leicester"
Publications Modern Language Association-XIV-1910-533 ff

The prospect of service in Ireland may well have been distasteful to the poet, for the country was in fierce rebellion against her English lords, and the career of any English official there would necessarily be a stormy one. To the Englishman, the Irish were papists, rebels and barbarians to be subdued as quickly and completely as possible. The country was a wild land full of bogs and forests, the more terrible now because wasted by war and famine. Names like Raleigh, Rich, George, Fenton, Bryskett, Long, Dillon and Morreys--men whom Spenser seems to have known in Ireland--indicate that the salvage land was not without a circle of cultured and congenial Englishmen, but Spenser finds Ireland very far removed from Parnassus. Falkiner declares, "In the estimation of the courtiers of Elisabeth, and indeed in that of every subject of the Queen of gentle birth, Ireland was no better than an unreclaimed backwoods wholly given over to savagery and incivility, little fit for the habitation of people of character and refinement, but to which in the last resort a spendthrift or a scapegrace might perhaps venture to repair to restore his shattered fortunes in the vast area of its confiscated lands, or to win reputation in its incessant wars."¹ It is small wonder that Spenser felt himself a "wight forlorn" banished in "that waste".

It is a significant fact that it was during the poet's Irish residence that the greater part of the Faerie Queene was produced. It seems certain that Spenser was conscious that his surroundings had left their stamp on his work. In the dedicatory sonnet addressed to the Earl of Ormond he writes:

"Receive most noble Lord a simple taste

¹

A. C. Falkiner, "Spenser in Ireland"
Edinburgh Review-Jan. 1905--p 164-188

Of the wilde fruit, which salvage land hath bred
 Which being through long wars left almost waste
 With brutish barbarisme is overspredd:
 And in so faire a land as may be redd,
 Not one Parnassus, nor one Helicone
 Left for sweet Muses to be harboured
 But where thyselve hath thy brave mansions:"

More explicitly in the sonnet to Lord Grey he implies that the influence of the land had been harmful when he refers to his poem as,

"Rude rhymes the which a rustic Muse did weave
 In salvage soyle, far from Parnasse mount,
 And roughly wrought in an unlearned Loome."

Such references are difficult to interpret accurately since they may be, as Greenlaw suggests, merely a reflection of "the conventional protestations of the poets for the meanness of their verses".¹ Moreover, though the utterance may have been sincere here, Spenser's attitude seems to have changed somewhat in the later years of his life in Ireland. Book V of the Faerie Queene and the Vlew of Ireland show an active and genuine interest in the welfare of Ireland, and, with other passages from his later works, bear witness to the fact that the poet had found much to admire and wonder at in the beauty of the land which had become his home, and in the romance and legend of its history. However Spenser himself considered it, a study of the Faerie Queene would indicate that the Irish residence was beneficial rather than harmful to his genius. Dowden has said, "To have a part in the ragged commonwealth of Ireland appeared to Spenser to be little less than

¹

E. Greenlaw, "Spenser and British Imperialism"
Modern Philology-II-1912-p 347 ff

banishment. Ireland was to him a savage soil; yet for one of his temper, solitude must have been better than the close shouldering of the press; Kulla, rippling below her alders, must have been more musical than the salutations of sycophants; the Irish air, the lights and shadows, the bright veil of rain, the tender luminousness of morning and evening, the gray mountain Mele, must have made up a surrounding for Spenser more open and fresh than the ante chamber where importunate suitors are¹ bid to wait."

Dr. Sigerson, an Irishman, puts it more strongly when he says, "Spenser came to us--and, caught by the glamour of the Gael, gave us the Faerie Queene, wherein he immortalizes some of our scenery and pays tribute to the ancient renown of our nation..... It is noteworthy that the great poem which marked the revival of English letters after Chaucer was written in Ireland. Granting that Spenser found models in Ariosto and Tasso, yet if he had remained in London, he might never have risen above the standard of the Palace-poets..... Probably nothing saved Spenser but his immersion in Irish nature, which his verse so faithfully reflects. Not only are the material beauties of our country, mountains, woods and rivers, mirrored there, but its spiritual world² also." What Spenser's genius would have become under the shadow of the court can be only a subject for conjecture. What he did become in the environment in which he was placed we may discover, at least in part, from a study of the work he produced during the Irish period. It is the

1

E. Dowden, Transcripts and Studies-p 308

2

G. Sigerson-in-Irish Literature-IV-dx

purpose of this study to show that the stamp of Spenser's Irish surroundings is evident in the Faerie Queene, to point out specifically the influence of Ireland on the poet's conception of his subject and his method of treating it; and to reach the conclusion that the Irish residence, so far from being detrimental to Spenser, was rather of definite value in intensifying and vitalizing the quality of his genius. The poet's imagination was caught by the beauty, the terror and the romance of the place where he found much in his surroundings that was akin in spirit and appearance to the Fairy-land of his epic, and the wars of his Fairy knights. As he became more and more familiar with the country and its history, he alluded to it more frequently and more explicitly in the Faerie Queene. Sometimes the Irish note is so completely fused with other elements in Spenser's own inimitable manner, as to be almost indistinguishable, but, as we shall attempt to show, many passages are unmistakably Irish in inspiration.

The echoes of the Irish years seem to fall into four groups. Spenser's years in government service naturally influenced his political ideas and theories of government. If he had the same ideas before reaching Ireland, his later experiences developed and intensified them. In the Faerie Queene we have not only an allegorical account of a part of his official service in Ireland, but a theory of government set forth.

The second group is closely related. It concerns the reflections of Spenser's experiences in Ireland but more especially as they tend to color the pictures of his knights and their foes than in relation to a political theory.

The third group deals with Spenser's use of Irish topography

in the Faerie Queene, the use of actual place names, and the tendency of the poet more and more to use the Irish countryside as the background of his Fairy-land.

The last group constitutes the reflections of Irish literature, legend and folk lore in the Faerie Queene. A separate chapter will be devoted to each of these divisions.

CHAPTER XI

THE INFLUENCE OF IRELAND ON THE POLITICAL

VIEWS IN THE FARRIE QUEENE

CHAPTER II

THE INFLUENCE OF IRELAND ON THE POLITICAL VIEWS IN THE

PATRICK QUINCE

Book V of the Poeris Queens contains the most apparent allegory dealing with Spenser's personal experiences in Ireland. The date of Composition of Book V is uncertain, but it is thought that it was begun perhaps about 1583 or 1584, inspired by the death of Lord Grey in October, 1583.¹ In the person of Artegall, the poet represents Grey as the knight of Justice and proceeds into an elaborate defense of the Deputy and his government, justifying before the world Grey's unbending policy which had met such bitter criticism in England. In connection with this defense, Spenser makes plain his theory of the only proper government for Ireland.

The fact that Spenser represents Grey as Artegall, the knight of Justice, trained by Astraea herself while she lived among men, is in itself a vindication of the Deputy. The sword Chryseas, representing the policy of subjection by the sword, is a righteous weapon, Spenser implies, since Astraea gave it to him, and Jove himself had used it

"in that great fight

Against the Titans, that whyleome rebelled

Gainst highest heavens;"

Astraea left also her own groom Talus, the iron man,

¹
A. C. Falkiner, "Spenser in Ireland"
Edinburgh Review-Jan. 1905-p 164-188

"Who in his hand an yron flais did heald,
 With which he thresht out falsehood, and did
 Trouthe unfold." (V, i, 12)

He seems to symbolize that executive power which is necessary for the carrying out of the decrees of justice, and in the case of Ireland this power was military force.

With this grim companion, Artegall sets out on his mission to free the lady Irena from the giant Grantorto. Irena is a transparent name for Ireland, closely related to the old Irish term "Ierne". The close correspondence to the Greek Irene, one of the Horae and goddess of peace, implies that Irena is peaceful Ireland whom Artegall is to restore to her rightful heritage.

Artegall meets with many adventures before the final combat with the giant. The first which has to do with Ireland is the encounter with Sanglier. Greenlav¹ has suggested that the squire mourning beside the headless trunk of the lady (V, i, 13) is a symbol of the woe wrought by murder and lawlessness. In the same connection Sanglier has been identified with Shane O'Neill² whose rebellion set Ireland in a state of turmoil and bloodshed which did not end with his death in 1567. The slaughter had occurred before Artegall's arrival, but the effects had still to be dealt with, just as the effects of the O'Neill uprising and similar rebellions were still evident when Grey arrived in 1580. The picture sets the stage for Grey's exploits and hints at his problems.

¹ E. Greenlav, "Spenser and British Imperialism" M. P.-IX-p 347

² E. C. Brewer, The Reader's Handbook--Sanglier

Artegall, proceeding "to perils great for iustice sake" meets Follente. This Sarasin and his daughter Munera represent the evils of extortion and bribery in government which Grey had to destroy before Ireland could be freed and made the peaceful part of Britain that Spenser¹ dreamed. The stringent methods are in harmony with the treatment of Grantorto in cante xii.

In cante ix, Artgall meets with another foe in the form of Malengin, Guile or Deceit. This enemy seems to represent the wandering bands of Irish rebels whom Grey had to trace to their haunts and subdue² before Ireland could be restored to allegiance to England. In the View Ireneus says that in reforming Ireland, "The first thing must be to send over into that realme such a stronge power of men, as that shall perforce bring in all that rebellious route of loose people, which either doe nowe stande out in open armes, or in wandring companyes doe keepe³ the woodes, spoyling the good subject."

The encounter with Radigund (V, iv-vi) is very significant in relation to Spenser's theory. Radigund may be considered a representation of Ireland. Since she is that proud Amazon that

"did late defy

All the brave Knights that hold of Maidenhead",

she is not the peaceful Irena to be protected, but rather the Ireland

¹
E. Greenlaw, *op. cit.*, pp347-370

²
H. S. V. Jones, A Spenser Handbook-p263

³
Spenser, The View of the Present State of Ireland
Complete Works-Trent Edition, p800

1

that is in arms against England. Here was a foe that stood in the way of the restoration of Irena, and Artegall's combat against her begins manfully enough. Radigund is conquered and lies at his mercy. He unlaces her helmet, and is suddenly arrested by her beauty.

"At sight thereof his cruel minded heart
 Pierced was with pittiful regard
 That his sharpe sword he throw from him apart
 Cursing his hand that had that visage hard." (V, v, 13)

The result is immediate. Radigund rises, redoubles her attacks on the now unarmed knight, and soon has him in her power. Arrayed in woman's weeds he is set to spinning—a sorry figure indeed whom Britomart comes finally to rescue.

The bearing on the Irish question is important. Artegall's ruin is wrought by pity which Spenser here conceives of as a fatal flaw in the knight's character, out of keeping with justice. At the other extreme is over-severity. Perfect justice steers a straight course between, and is therefore the golden mean. In dealing with a rebellious people, where justice must be done and the fate of the dominion is at stake, a policy which admits of pity is both weak and womanish and can lead only to disaster. This is Spenser's meaning. In the View of Ireland, Spenser admits that Grey "was soe farre from delighting in blood, that oftentimes he suffered not just vengeance to fall where it was deserved: and even some of those which were afterwarde his accusers had tasted to much of his mercye, and were from the gallows brought to be his accusers."² Spenser may have intended this incident as a back-

¹
 P. Henley, Spenser in Ireland—p 141-142

²
View, p 805

ground and a prelude to the Grantorto episode, a justification of extreme measures employed then. Having learned by experience the dangers of allowing pity to effect war policies, Grey was forced to recognize the necessity of firm and unbending measures which kept justice and the necessity of imperial domination always in sight. Perhaps the reference is more to English policy as directed from the English court than to the Deputy himself. Elizabeth, veering suddenly from a program of utter conquest to one of conciliation seriously hindered the Deputy in his work, often going so far as to send pardons¹ to offenders whom Grey had condemned to death.

The episode of the trial of Duessa (V, ix-x) adds another point. Mercilla is touched with pity for the accused and weeps at her fate. Whereupon Spenser discourses upon the quality of mercy.

"For if that vertue be of so great might,
Which from just verdict will for nothing start,
But to preserve inviolated right,
Oft spilles the principall, to save the part;
So much more then is that of power and art,
That seekes to save the subject of her skill,
Yet never doth from dooms of right depart:
As it is better prayse to save then spill,
And better to reforme, then to cut off the ill."

Mercilla pitied Duessa and longed to save her, but, realizing that she was worthy of death, and "when strong constraint did her thereto enforce" she allowed the sentence to be executed, for, not even for pity could she "from dooms of right depart". Mercy, then, is a necessary attribute

¹

Cf.—The Life and Correspondence of Lodovick Bryskett—Flemer & Cross
pp 18, 23, 33 for contemporary account.

of justice, else it would not be just, and reformation is better than extermination, but there are times, says Spenser, when reformation is impossible. Witness Radigund. The Amazon was worthy of death to begin with. When spared she shows no gratitude but turns on the knight treacherously and enthralls him. The Irish situation had gone so far that subjection was the only method practical, and pity had no part in that.

These episodes form the background for an understanding of canto xii, the conquest of Grantorto, which is, indeed, the chief argument of the book.

An "aged wight", Sir Sergis has told Artagall that Irena will be killed by the giant in ten days if a champion does not arrive (V, ix, 37). Sergis seems to be Sir Henry Sidney who was thrice deputy of Ireland before Grey's appointment and who is known to have advised with the new official when he took up his duties.

Artagall and the iron page arrive at Grantorto's abode on the day set for the execution. In single combat the knight of Justice is victorious and completely decapitates the giant. Irena is restored to her throne. All traitors are slain and Talus is helping Artagall set the kingdom in order when the knight is recalled to Faerie Court. On the way, Envy, Detraction and the Blatant Beast meet Nim and shamefully abuse him.

Here, in thinly veiled allegory, is the story of Grey's expedition to Smewick. The parallel is unmistakable. In 1560 the whole of Ireland was in a turmoil. In the south, the Earl of Desmond and his brother John were joined by Viscount Baltinglas and Fiagh MacHugh O'Byrne who had recently defeated Grey at Glenmalur. Dr. Nicholas Saunders, the papal legate, was encouraging them with news of aid from

the continent. Both the Pope and Philip II of Spain were watching Ireland's struggle for freedom and were anxious to help her in order to gain a nearby foothold from which to attack England. Grantorto has been called both the Pope and Philip, but as Jones declares, "Dr. Gough's identification of Grantorto with the Pope should be preferred to the traditional identification with Philip II; because it was the Pope rather than Philip that took an active part in Irish affairs. It was he who in 1577 gave James Fitzmaurice a commission to conquer the country, who in 1579 bestowed a consecrated banner upon the small expedition headed by Fitzmaurice and his own legate Dr. Saunders; and it was he who in 1580 despatched the 800 Italians and Spaniards¹ to Smerwick.

On November 8, Grey marched against the Fort del Ore which was situated on a narrow strip of land in Smerwick Bay. Hedged in between the English fleet on the one side and the English troops on the other, the rebels were brought to surrender within two days. Spenser declares that he was "as neere them as any" when the leader of the invaders came to sue for terms. "Thereupon the sayd Colonel did absolutely yeeld himselfe and the forte, with all therein, and craved only mercye, which it being not thought good to shewe them, both for daunger of themselves, if, being saved, they should afterwarde joyne with the Irish, who were much emboldened by these forrayne succours, and also putt in hope of more ere long; there was noe other way but to make that shorte end of them which was made."² The end, Camden

1

H. S. V. Jones, A Spenser Handbook p 269

2

View, p 806

relates, was "against the will of the Deputy who wept thereat, that the leaders should be saved and all the rest put to the sword for an example, and that the Irish should be hanged, which was presently done."¹ Six hundred were slain that day, but in the annals of Ireland even such a defeat was not the end of the trouble as the allegory implies.

It was this slaughter which caused Envy and Detraction and slander to attack Grey, especially on his return to England. The hag's abuse is like that which Grey met from all sides:

"That he had with unmanly guile
 And foule abusion both his honour blent,
 And that bright sword, his sword of Justice lent,
 Had stayned with reproachfull crueltie,
 In guiltlesse blood of many an innocent:
 As for Grantorto, him with treacherie
 And traynes having surpris'd, he fouly did to die."

(V, xii, 40)

Grey's action at Emswrick certainly does not meet with modern and more humanitarian ideas of justice, nor does the account of his two years' campaign which records "1,485 chief men and gentlemen slain, not accounting those of meaner sort, nor yet executions by law which were numerous."² It would seem small wonder that he gained "the name of a bloody man". In addition, he was charged with having broken faith with the Emswrick captives, gaining a surrender with the

¹ William Camden, Britannia- vol. IV

² E. deSalincourt, Introduction to Oxford Edition of Spenser-xxiv

promise of life, and then killing nearly all in the fort.

Spenser refutes both these charges both cleverly and convincingly in the View. Concerning Emerwick he declares that Grey "so farr from either promising, or putting them in hope", "flatly denied" them any hope from the first. Grey's statement to the Queen concerning the affair asserts that he gave them no promise and that they yielded "for life or death". Moreover, the reasons for the necessity of the slaughter which Spenser sets down, are, if viewed in the light of the tactics of the day, sound and orthodox enough. Though encouraged by the Pope and countenanced by Philip, they were, as Spenser states, not lawful enemies—but only adventurers. "The Spanish were legally pirates, who had without valid commissions stirred up the native Irish to rebellion. English adventurers in the same legal position on the Spanish main, although free from the added imputation of inciting to rebellion, had been mercilessly slain. The only fault found by the Queen was that the superior officers had been spared."

Spenser's argument, however, goes deeper than the justification of a simple expedition. A theory of government is underlying the whole defense, for Grey's administration is representative of all the rest during these troubled years. The problem was the same. In the View

¹
View, p 806

²
R. W. Church, Spenser--pp 58-60

³
Dictionary of National Biography--see also
R. Todd, Sir Walter Raleigh--pp 31-32 for excerpt from the Queen's letter to Grey.

Bulocus says: "See I remember in the late government of the good Lord Greye, when after long travell and many perilous assayes, he had brought thinges almost to this pass that ye speake of, and that when it was even made readye for reformation, and might have been brought to what her Majesty would, like complaynte was made agaynst him, that he was a bloudye man, and regarded not the like of her subjectes noe more than dogges, but had wasted and consumed all, soe as now she had nothing almost left, but to raigne in their ashes; her Majesties care was scene lente thereunto, and all suddaynly turned tepsyturvy. The noble Lord eft-soones was blamed; the wretched people pittyed; and new counsellis plotted, in which it was concluded that a general pardon should be sent over to all that would accept it, uppon which all former purposes were blaunked, the Governour at a baye, and not onely all that greate and long charge, which she had before bene at, quite lost and cancelled, but also that hope of good which was even at the doore putt back and cleane frustrated." ¹ The plea for consistent policy--this is the basis of the defense of Grey--the secret of Spenser's political ideas. To fail to take this into account is to miss the fundamental argument in the poet's policy. This is why he represents pity as a flaw in Artegall--because it caused him to swerve from his course of justice. This is why he approves of Grey's slaughter at Emswick. Spenser was not, as many would charge, a brassen-hearted Talus who advocated wholesale human slaughter and annihilation of the Irish race merely to curry favor with the officials. He declares himself, "by the swords which I named, I doe not meane the cutting of of all that nation with the swords which farre be it from me that I should

¹
View, p 805

ever think soe desperately, or wish so uncharitably, but by the swordes I means the royall power of the Prince, which ought to stretche it self fourths in the chiefest strength to the redressing and cutting of those evills, which I before blamed, and not of the people which are evill. For evill people by good ordinaunces and government may be made good; but that evill that is of itself evill will never become good.¹ His plan was to place garrisons throughout the land to put down the rebellion as soon as possible, and then by reforming the laws and customs to make of Ireland a loyal and profitable subject for the Queen. If this plan took little account of the Irish temperament or fierce national spirit, it is not to be greatly wondered at, nor should we condemn the poet too harshly for it. The age of Elizabeth had no time to give to humanitarian consideration of enemies and subjects. It was a time of fierce international struggle when a nation defended herself and her possessions at any cost to insure her own survival. To be sure the Irish hated Spenser as "the bitterest and most unthinking of her enemies", but Spenser was the defender of English supremacy. It was an accepted fact in England that the dominion of Ireland was necessary for England's safety, if she was to prevent Philip from winning it for a base for his own operations against Elizabeth. Delay was dangerous and turmoil was wrecking the whole of Ireland. Spenser, touched by the wretched condition of the Irish, and realizing the immediacy of the danger, pleads desperately for definite measures that would end the trouble and settle the question finally. Force is always cruel at best, but the campaign which Spenser urged was certainly kinder in the long

1

View, p 800

run than the endless cycle of coercion, conciliation, pardon and coercion again which was wearing down both the Irish and the English. "It must be foreseen and assured," he writes, "that after once entering into this course of reformation, there be afterwarde no remorse or drawing backe for the sight of any such ruefull objectes as must thereupon followe, nor for compassion of theyr calamitye, seeing that by no other meanes it is possible to recure them, and that these are not of will, but of very urgent necessity."¹ Jealousy and divided counsels in England, Burghley's fear of expenditure, the frequent change of Deputies--all these were recognized by those who knew the Irish situation intimately as the root of the continued failure in Ireland and attest to Spenser's correct diagnosis of the trouble. Lodovick Bryskett in a letter to Walsingham speaks of "the small reputation which the Governours are brought into among them (the Irish) for want of countenance and credit from home, and the often expectation of change", declaring that the Deputy could do nothing "unless her Majestie and your honors there, doe better enable him and alter the course which now is held, committing trust to him, that being continually here is better habile, and nearest eye-witness, to discerne what is most expedient for the reformation of this miserable disordered countrey."²

Here we have an explanation of Spenser's intense feeling against change. This justifies Artagall's words to the giant with the scales:

"All change is perillous, and all chaunce unseund." (V, ii, 36)

¹
View, p 807

²
Flomer and Cross, Life and Correspondence of Lodovick Bryskett
p 33--letter--Nov. 26, 1581

when he upholds the divine right of Kings and the established order of things. It was not that, as Legouis believes, "Spenser did not recognise any progress or improvement in the universe," and "that Mutability might be a power exerted for the good of mankind was an idea which never occurred to Spenser".¹ Spenser is not "an incurable malcontent", but rather a well-informed man in political life who saw the evil of inconsistency in policy and its disastrous results, and therefore set them forth in his literary work. "Spenser differed," says Greenlaw, "from all other literary men of his time in that he persistently clung to that conception of the poet's function that made him a vates, a "seer", a man who should warn and advise, directly or through cloudy allegories, those who ruled England."²

The frequent repetition of the theme of mutability only serves to make the meaning more apparent. Aside from the examples in Book V and the View, the cantos of Mutabilitie bear on the same subject. The date of composition of these cantos is uncertain, but the tone is that of a later work than Book V and the references to Colin Clouts Come Home Again (1591) argue for a late date of composition. Falkiner declares that the fragment "must have been inspired by apprehension of the calamitous rising in which Munster plantation was overwhelmed."³ Since Spenser was one of the Munster planters, and

¹ E. Legouis, Edmund Spenser--pp 37-38

² E. Greenlaw, "Spenser and British Imperialism" Modern Philology, II--pp 347-370

³ A. C. Falkiner, Edinburgh Review--1905

know the constant menace of attack from the rebels dwelling in the nearby forests, the last lines of canto vi seem to support this view:

"Since which, those Woods, and all that goodly Chase
Doth to this day with Wolves and Thieves abound:
Which too-too true that lands in-dwellers since have found."¹

If we accept the theory generally held that the cantos of Mutability were intended as a part of the Faerie Queene, then we have Constancy celebrated as one of the twelve moral virtues and the giantesse Mutability the opposing vice. This is certainly Spenser's conception.

Mutability is considered in the same light here as in Book V, a power harmful to sovereignty and to Justice.

"He sees the leaves of Nature onely brake,
But eke of Iustice, and of Policie:
And wrong of right, and bad of good did make,
And death for life exchanged foolishlie;
Since which, all living wights have learned to die
And all this world is waxen daily worse." (vi, 6)²

The giantesse in her pride attacks Cynthia (Elizabeth).

¹ Cf. E. M. Albright, "Spenser's Reasons for Rejecting the Mutability Cantos"—Studies in Philology, XXV-p 93 ff.—and—"On the Dating of the Mutability Cantos"—S. P. XXVI-p 482 ff.

Miss Albright believes these cantos were written in England about 1579-80, inspired by the criticism of Sir Henry Sidney's Irish administration, and rejected because of adverse criticism by Harvey. The Irish local color was inserted later. However, the relation of the fragment to Book V and the View seems so close, and the tone so much more that of the later books of the Faerie Queene than of the earlier, that it seems that, even if the germ of the poem was formed in England, the poem was so completely reworked at this time as to constitute practically a new work.

²

Cf. Letter to Raleigh—Spenser says he has used Raleigh's conceit of Cynthia to shadow Elizabeth—Cynthia is Elizabeth in C. C. C. H. A.

" boldly preacing-on, raught forth her hand
 To pluck her down perforce from off her chaire;"

claiming the right to rule in her stead, and declaring her superiority over the very gods. Cynthia stopped in her course and the world is thrown into darkness. So mutability attacking Elizabeth on her throne caused trouble and upheaval throughout the realm. When Mutability has appealed to Nature, the trial is set upon Arle Hill, and this circumstance seems to link the problem definitely with Ireland, for there in truth the policy was on trial and with disastrous results. Cynthia is described by the arrogant Titaness:

" her face and countenance every day
 We changed see, and sundry forms partake
 Now horn'd, now round, now bright now browne and gray:
 So that as changeful as the Moone men use to say."

(vii, 50)

For those who knew the vacillating character of the Queen and her government there was little need of explanation of this allegory.

Nature's judgment is Spenser's own--in favor of the established order of things. Though she admits change in all things yet she declares

" over them Change doth not rule and raigne;
 But they raigne over Change, and doe their states maintaine."

So the gods are confirmed in their seats. Canto vii, however, begins with a complaint from the poet.

"When I bethinke me on that speech whylere
 Of Mutability, and well it way:
 Meemes, that though she all unworthy were

Of Heaven's Ruls; yet very sooth to say,
 In all things else she beares the greatest sway.
 Which makes me loath this state of life so tickle
 And love of things so vaine to cast away!"

In the next stanza Spenser concludes that the day "when Change no more shall be" is to come only with a golden age, and he begs God for a sight of "that Sabaoth".

All this smacks of a late period in the poet's life when he felt he had done all in his power to show to the court the folly of its ways, and had failed to make an impression. There is a bitter note that we feel is darkened by the knowledge of the menace of a new rebellion which might have been avoided.

In 1598, Spenser's theories were proved and his worst fears realized when the Irish under the Earl of Tyrone swept down on Munster and plundered the lands of the English planters. Kilcolman was ruined and the poet fled to Cork. The letter to the Queen written in 1598, traces this last catastrophe, like the earlier ones, to mutability when he writes; "The change of government succeeding the death of the Lo. Burrowes ensuwing, the sundry altercations of Councils and purposes following, together with the division and partaking of these themselves of your Councill here, have since brought things to that dangerous condition that now they stand in. ffar from this head through tolleracion and too much temporizing the evill is sprad into all parties of the Realme and growne in to so universall a contagion that nothing but a moste violent medecyne will serve to recover yt. ffar all the Irish of all partes are confederated and have generallie agreed to shake of

the yoke of their obedience to the Crown of England."¹ The disappointment which is shown in this tract bears evidence to the faith Spenser had put in his plan and the grief he felt at its not being heeded in time. The daring of the statement proves its sincerity. Anyone who studies the two prose tracts in their relation to the Faerie Queene and with due weight given to the background of history will be slow to accept Jusserand's statement "The poet sang, the functionary spoke."² On the other hand, the poet and the functionary are one, and the utterances of the former cannot be fully understood unless one knows the views of the latter. He was a careful student of government and his conclusions are sincere and consistent. His experiences in Ireland and his intimate connection with the Irish government, if they did not actually form his political theories, at least crystallized them and gave them conviction, so that he became in Ireland "the laureate of the new England, defending that national policy which, however cruel and narrow in some of its applications was to enable her to thwart the foes that threatened her detraction."³

¹
Brief Note of Ireland--in Trent's Edition of Works--p 845

²
Quoted by E. Greenlaw, "Spenser and British Imperialism" M. P.
IX--p 347 ff.

³
E. Greenlaw, "Spenser and British Imperialism"
Modern Philology--IX--pp 347-370

CHAPTER III

THE INFLUENCES OF SPENSER'S EXPERIENCES

IN

IRELAND ON HIS FAIRY LAND AND ITS PEOPLE

CHAPTER III

THE INFLUENCES OF SPENSER'S EXPERIENCES IN IRELAND

ON HIS FAIRYLAND AND ITS PEOPLE

The years that Spenser passed in Ireland not only affected his political views but indeed colored his whole conception of Fairyland. Church declares, "The Faerie Queene might almost be called the Epic of the English wars in Ireland under Elizabeth, as much as the Epic of English virtue and valour at the same period..... The allegory bodies forth the trials which beset the life of man in all conditions and at all times. But Spenser could never have seen in England such a strong and perfect image of the allegory itself..... It cannot be doubted that his life in Ireland added to the force and vividness with which Spenser wrote. In Ireland, he had before his eyes continually the dreary world which the poet of knight errantry imagines. There men in good truth might travel long through wildernesses and 'great woods' given over to the outlaw and the ruffian. There the avenger of wrong need seldom want for perilous adventure and the occasion for quelling the oppressor. There the armed and unrelenting hand of right was but too truly the only substitute for law. There might be found in most certain and precise reality, the ambushes, the disguises, the treacheries, the deceits, the temptations, even the supposed witch crafts and enchantments, against which the fairy champions of the virtues have to be on their guard. In Ireland, Englishmen saw, or at any rate thought they saw, a universal battle going on between error and religion, between

justice and the most insolent selfishness. They found there every type of what was cruel, brutal, loathsome. They saw everywhere men whose business it was to betray and destroy, women whose business it was to tempt and ensnare and corrupt. They thought they saw too, in these who waged the Queen's wars, all forms of manly and devoted gallantry, of noble generosity, of gentle strength, of knightly sweetness and courtesy. The realities of Irish social and political life gave a real subject, gave body and form to the allegory.¹

Some of the most powerful and memorable passages in the Faerie Queene owe their inspiration to Irish happenings which the poet witnessed. The frequency of the occurrence of such reflections, and the fact that they appear often in parts of the allegory having nothing to do with Ireland, shows how the atmosphere of the land became an integral part of Spenser's poetical background. The passages to be considered in this section deal with actual experiences of Spenser in Ireland.

It is reasonable to suppose that Spenser, as Secretary to Grey, would have accompanied the Deputy on many of his expeditions against the Irish. From his own statement in the View of Ireland, we know that he was at the capture of Smerwick. Moreover, his acquaintance with Sir Henry Sidney, Sir Walter Raleigh, and other officials and captains in Dublin, would account for an interest in and a knowledge of various campaigns which took place before his arrival in Ireland, or on which he did not accompany the army. From the Irish wars, Spenser got his background for the descriptions of beheadings and battles, many of which

¹
R. W. Church, Edmund Spenser—pp 88-91

seem painted realistically from specific incidents.

Grey's administration was one of continual war, and bloodshed and execution were daily occurrences. Walpole describes the period immediately after Smerwick. "..... Grey swiftly returned to Dublin: there he arrested Kildare and Lord Delvin on suspicion, and flung them into prison; he turned savagely on the Wicklow insurgents, and, taught by his experience at Glenmalur, organized a number of small bands to hunt them from the mountains. Two of the Eustaces and Gerald O'Teele he caught and beheaded; but Baltinglas escaped to the Continent. A reign of terror then began at Dublin. A conspiracy to seize the castle and liberate the imprisoned peers was discovered, and martial law was proclaimed. The smaller men were hanged in batches, and nineteen of the best blood of the Pale were brought to trial for treason. Short work was made by pliant juries, and the whole of them were convicted and hanged."

"Ormonde caught and hanged Lady Fitzgerald of Inckelly and reports in his despatches the execution of 134 persons, and that the pardoned chiefs were bringing in the heads of other rebels by the sackful."¹

Though he believed them necessary, such events as these struck horror to Spenser's heart, and when we know that he must have witnessed many such sights we cannot fail to note the stark reality of such passages as the description of the abode of Despair.

"And all about old stocks and stabs of trees,
Whereon nor fruit, nor leaf was ever seen,
Did hang upon the ragged rocky knees;
On which had many wretches hanged been,

¹

C. G. Walpole, Short History of the Kingdom of Ireland—p 101

These carcases were scattered on the greens,
And thrown about the cliffs."

(I, ix, 34)

Beside the old man

"There lay upon the grass
A drearie corse, whose life away did pass
All wallow'd in his own yet luke-warme blood,
That from his wound yet welled fresh alas;
In which a rustie knife fast fixt stood,
And made an open passage for the gushing flood."

(I, ix, 36)

The whole of the Faerie Queene is red with such gory descriptions and numerous are the bloody, severed heads, like Pallente's

"That tumbling on the strand
It bit the earth for very fell despight
And gnashed with his teeth."

(V, ii, 18)

And even women's heads are not inviolate, for Error is decapitated (I, i, 24) and Radigund, though spared by Artegall, is beheaded by Britomart. (V, vii, 34)

Many of Spenser's "wicked wights" take on the lineaments and characteristics of the Irish rebels whom Spenser saw, and the battles against them often bear a marked resemblance to certain English campaigns in Ireland.

In the forester, who pursues Florinell, and his two wicked brothers Buck sees the symbol of the rebels who attacked Elizabeth's power in Ireland. Timias, then, who pursues the "villein", is iden-

tified with Sir Walter Raleigh who served in the Irish wars.¹ The fleetness of the forester enables him to escape from Timias.

"The villen sped himselfe so well,
Whether through the swiftnesse of his speede beast
Or knowledge of these woods, where he did dwell,
That shortly he from danger was releast
And out of sight escaped at the least;"

(III, v, 14)

The forester then set about getting revenge on the squire, and "with bitter words he stird to bloody ire" his two brothers who agree to aid him. Armed, they proceed into the forest and station themselves in ambush near a narrow ford where Timias has to pass. The squire appears, and as he is about to pass through the ford, the foresters attack him.

"That stroke the hardy Squire did sore displease
But more that him he could not come to smite;
For by no meanes the highe banks he could cease,
But laboured long in that deepe ford with vaine disease."

(III, v, 19)

From their vantage point above him, the foresters hurl their darts upon him, and wound him sorely. These are exactly the methods employed by the Irish which Spenser describes in the View. "To seeke him out that still flyeth, and followe him that can hardly be founde, were wayne and bootlesse..... It is well known that he is a flying enemye, hiding himself in woods and bogges, from whence he will not draw

¹

P. M. Bask, cited in H. S. V. Jones, Spenser Handbook—p 219

forth, but into some straits passage or perillous fords where he knows the enemy must needs passe; there will he lye in wayte, and yf he finde advantage fitt, will dangerously hazarde the troubled souldier.¹"

Spenser knew these tactics well, for they were disastrously employed by the Irish at Glenmalur, Grey's first Irish campaign. Fitzgerald describes the encounter. "The rebels were swarming in the valley of Glenmalur, and Grey recklessly sent his men into the narrow gorge, believing he was strong enough to hunt them out. When the troops were well in the difficult ground, a well-directed fire was poured in upon them from the safe cover of rocks and brushwood; the soldiers advanced through ground that became more and more difficult with every step, and at length became entangled in a bog between two wooded hills, where it became impossible to preserve any longer the semblance of order. While thus confused and broken, they were exposed on all sides to a murderous fire from the woods and rocks that skirted the ravine, and they were cut off almost to a man. A miserable remnant escaped to the chief governor who returned to Dublin with shame and confusion."² Grey watched the battle from the level ground at the mouth of the glen, and Spenser was probably with him. Many of the details, doubtless, came from this and similar battles which Spenser witnessed, while there is an incident in Raleigh's career in Ireland which was so spectacular that it may have come to Spenser's ear and suggested the picture, especially since Spenser was personally acquainted with Raleigh.

¹
View, p 801

²
T. H. Fitzgerald, Ireland and her People--vol. IV

Raleigh had been sent against an Irish rebel, David, Lord Barry, but the expedition was thwarted by the Lord's burning his own castle and wasting the surrounding land, and therefore Raleigh and his men started to return to Dublin. "Between Wougal and Cork was a ford in the Balinacurra. Here there lay in ambush, waiting for his passage, a certain Fitz-Edmunds, a rebel of Barry's faction, known as the Seneschall of Imokelly, with numerous horsemen and footmen. His little escort of six men were lagging behind, and Raleigh reached the river's edge accompanied only by an Irish guide, when suddenly the whole company of Fitz-Edmunds sprang from their hiding and held the ford. He cut his way through and had crossed in safety to the other side, when he became aware that one of his followers was unhorsed in the middle of the stream and crying to him for help. Dashing back into the river he brought the man safe to land, and then with his pistol cocked stood firm on the opposite bank, waiting for the rest of his party to come up. The Seneschal, seeing other troopers advancing in his rear, made off in haste, although his force numbered twenty to ¹ one."

The fact that the siege of Smerwick is portrayed in the battle with Grantorto has been treated already. In addition, it is worthy of note, that though the giant represents a foreign invader, he is arrayed like an Irish chieftain.

"All armed in a cote of yron plate,
Of great defence to ward the deadly feare
And on his head a Steele cap he did weare

1

R. Redd, Sir Walter Raleigh--pp 32-33

Of colour rustie browne, but sure and strong;
 And in his hand an huge Polaxe did beare
 Whose steale was yron studded, but not long;"

(V, xii, 14)

This giant is much like these Irish foot soldiers known as "Gallow-glasses" whom Spenser describes in his View of Ireland as "armed with a long shirt of mayle downe to the calfe of his legg, with a long bread axe in his hand."¹ Joyce declares that they wore iron helmets² as well, and were large-limbed, tall, fierce-looking men, again like Grantorto:

"Of stature huge and hideous he was
 Like to a Giant for his monstrous hight
 And did in strength most sorts of men surpas."

His face was ugly, and his countenance sterne
 That could have frayed one with the very sight."

(V, xii, 15)

Malengin owes much of his character and appearance to the Irish rebel. His dwelling is one of those rocky fastnesses in which the Irish were driven to take refuge. Jones points out an interesting source in the story current in Dublin in Spenser's time "of a thief named Scaldbrother, who lived like Malengin, in a labyrinth reaching two large miles under the earth. Here he would hide all that he could steal, and he was so swift of foot that he could outrun the swiftest

¹
View, p 789

²
 P. W. Joyce on Ireland in H. D. Traill, Ed. of Social England

and lustiest young men."¹

Spenser describes the Irish kernes and gallowglasses as having "the most loathsome and barbarous conditions of any people (I thinke) under heaven: for, from the time they enter into that course, they doe use all the beastly behaviour that may be to oppresse all men: they spoyle as well the subject as the enemye: they steale, they are cruell and bloodye, full of revenge and delighting in deadly execution, licentious, swearers, ² Exaggerated as this was, it was undoubtedly the common English attitude toward the Irish kerne.

Guile's appearance is, likewise, typical of those ragged wretches whom Grey fought and whom Spenser often saw.

"Full dreadfull wight he was, as ever went
 Upon the earth, with hollow eyes deep pent,
 And long curld locks, that down his shoulders
 shagged
 And on his back an uncouth vestiment
 Made of straunge staffe, but all to werne and
 ragged
 And underneath his breech was all to torne and
 jagged." (V, ix, 10)

Malengin's long shaggy locks suggest one of the Irish customs which Spenser deplored--that of wearing "long glibbes which is a thiek

¹
 H. S. V. Jones, Handbook--p 28

²
View, p 789

curled bush of heere, hanging downe over theyr eyes, and monstrous-ly disguising them."....."They are fit masks as a mantell is for a thief. For whensever he hath runn himself into that perill of lawe that he will not be knowne, he either cutteth his glibbe quite, by which he becometh nothing like himself, or pulleth it so lowe downe over his eyes, that it is very hard to discover his thievish countenance."¹

This man does not wear the coat of mail like Grantorte's, for it would be a heavy encumbrance to him in his hasty flight. So, Spenser tells us, many of the Irish preferred to go "to battell without armour on theyr bodyes or heades, but trusting onely to the thickness of theyr glibbes, the which (they say) will sometimes bware off a good stroke"². The uncouth vestiment seems to have been a sort of mantle commonly worn by the Irish, which Spenser shows in detail to be "a fitt house for an outlave, a meete bed for a rebel, and an apt cloake for a thief"³—therefore very appropriate for Grantorte.

Malengin, moreover, like the forester, flies so fast that Artegall cannot overtake him, and Talus is sent to capture him just as English garrisons were stationed to capture the rebel Irish.

Miss Gray has pointed out an interesting parallel in the fate of Malengin to the death of the Earl of Desmond who was traced by the English to a shack in the mountains and captured..... "So they strake off his head. They carried the Earl's head with them,

¹
View, pp 780, 781

²
View, p 788

³
View, p 780

but left his body behind, and whether the same was devoured of wolves
or buried by his kernes is not certainly known.¹ Of Malengin Spenser
says--

"There they him left a carrion outcast
For beasts and foules to feed upon for their
repast." (V, ix, 19)

The slaughter of Pollente, according to both Gray¹ and Henley²
finds almost exact counterpart in the account of the death of John of
Desmond, the Earl's brother, in 1581. Hecker declares: "Sir John's
head was sent to Dublin, but his body was hanged up by the heels upon
a gibbet and set upon the North Gate at Cork."³ Artegall behsaded
Pollente and

"His corpe was carried downe along the Lee,
Whose waters with his filthy blood it stayned;
But his blasphemous head, that all might see
He pitcht upon a pole on high ordayned;
Where many years it afterwards remayned,
To be a mirroure to all mighty men,
In whose right hands great power is contayned,
That none of them the feeble overren
But alwaies doe their powre within just compasse pen."

(V, 11, 19)

¹ M. M. Gray, The Influence of Spenser's Irish Experiences on the
"Faerie Queene"--R. E. S., 1930. Quotation from Holinshed-
VI, 454

² P. Henley, op. cit. pp 139-141

³ R. Holinshed, Chronicles VI, p 446

The reference to the Lee, an Irish river, seems definitely to locate the incident. One account quoted by Gray states that "the body was hung over the river Lee on the North Gate of Cork," and another quoted in the Dictionary of National Biography says "it was hanged up for 3 or 4 years together as a spectacle for all beholders to look on, until at length a great storm and wind blew it off, but the head was sent to Dublin and then was fastened to a pole and set over the city wall." Since Spenser was in Dublin at that time he would certainly have seen the head among the others spiked on the castle gate. Henley asserts that it may have even come into the poet's hands since it was sent as a New Year's gift to Grey.¹

Munera's attempt to bribe her captors, and the fate inflicted on her by Talus also have a parallel in Irish history, cited by Miss Gray. Felham, in an account of the siege of Adare writes to the Council at Dublin—"Desmond sent a fair young harlot, as a present to the governor by whose means he hoped to get the house, but the constable learning from whence she came, threw her (as it is reported to me) with a stone about her neck into the river."² Since Spenser was secretary to Grey, and was "treated as secretary to the Lord Deputy and the Council,"³ such a report may well be supposed to have passed through his hands at some time. Munera's hands and feet were chopped off and mailed up, and then Talus threw her over the wall into the river. As Gray points out,

¹
 Henley, *op. cit.* p 139

²
 Carew Papers—p 205—Ja. 1580—quoted by Gray

³
 F. I. Carpenter, Reference Guide to Spenser—p 15

the knights who execute such punishments are not "very parfit gentil knights" but rather English officials driven to employ desperate methods.

Frequently those with whom the Fairy knights must do battle are not single foes like Pollente and Malengin, but the whole "rascal rout". In Book V, vi, 29-30, V, ii, 51-54, we find the crowds which attack Artegall and Britomart and which are routed by Talus. A better picture is to be found (II, ix-xi) in the attack of the Passions on the House of Temperance. The rabble rout is like many Spenser must have seen during the campaigns against the rebels.

" Ice with outrageous cry

A thousand villeins round about them swarmed
 Out of the rocks and caves adjoining nye,
 Vile caytive wretches, ragged, rude, deformed,
 All threatening death, all in strange manner armed,
 Some with unweldy clubs, some with long speeres,
 Some rusty knives, some staves in fire warmed.
 Sterne was their looks, like wild amazed steeres
 Staring with hellow eyes, and stiffe upstanding heeres."

(II, ix, 13)

The figure which likens the intruders to a swarm of gnats over the "fennes of Allan" seems an added indication that the poet had in mind an event which took place in Ireland.

The "villeins" are repulsed, but return again and again. Their chief, too, Maleger, when seemingly slain, arises, amazingly renewed by contact with Earth, and resumes the fight. So the Irish had a remarkable way of reviving their strength and resuming the war when they seemed completely subdued. The valor and endurance of the rebels Spenser is forced

to concede. "Yet sure they are very valiante and hardye, for the most part great endurers of cold, labour, hunger, and all hardiness, very active and stronge of hand, very swift of foote, very vigilante and circumspects in theyr enterprises, very present in perrills, very great scornere¹ of death."

The "outrageous cry" Spenser describes as "a terrible yell and hubbabwe, as if heaven and earth would have gone together"². Malger "all in canvas thin bedight," and the captive wretches in their rags, like Malengin, fight without armor as many Irish did. Their "stiffe upstanding heares" over their staring eyes resemble the Irish "glibbes". The villains swarming around the knights recall the rebels in "theyr confused kind of marche in heapes, without any order or array, theyr clashing of sword together,³ theyr fierce running upon theyr enayes, and theyr manner of fight."

When they returned the next day, "Everyone did bow and arrows beare," and "all att once at him let fly theyr fluttering arrowes thicke as flakes of snow." The Irish kernes, Spenser says, had "short bowes and little quivers with short bearded arrowes."⁴

The introduction of the rabble crew into knightly romance is

¹
View, p 789

²
Ibid, p 781

³
Ibid, p 783

⁴
Ibid, p 785

not completely an innovation with Spenser as Miss Gray believes,¹ but at least the rabble that he uses is typically Irish. Miss Gray believes that the "Monstrous Rabblement" perhaps owes its conception to Spenser's knowledge of the Munster Rebellion. Certainly the picture of Malagar, their leader, is reminiscent of some starving rebel chieftain of Munster. He is a powerfully built man,

"But of such subtle substance, and unbound
That like a ghost he seem'd, whose grave clothes
were unbound." (II, xi, 20)

"As pale and wan as ashes was his look,
His bodie lean and meagre as a rake,
And skin all withered like a dried rock,
Thereof as cold and dreery as a Snake,
That seem'd to tremble evermore, and quake!"

(II, xi, 22)

This is the poetical version of the press picture of the starving Irish of Munster found in the View of Ireland. "Out of every corner of the woods and glimes they came creeping foorth upon theyr handes, for theyr legges could not beare them; they looked like anatomies of death, they spake like ghostes crying out of theyr graves."² The very phrasing is similar though the View is of later date.

Spenser was deeply affected by these scenes of famine which he had "ensampled" in the Munster wars. The situation was terrible. Sir

¹
Cf.—C. S. Lewis, "Spenser in Ireland"—Review English Studies 1951
Examples of the use of the rabble rout in Belardo.

²
View, p 804

Warham St. Leger in a letter to the Queen relates that not less than 30,000¹ perished from starvation in less than half a year in Munster alone. The Faerie Queene is full of figures bearing the telling marks of privation and famine. A witch has a "hollow deadly gaze" (III, vii, 7). The old smith, Care, has "hollow eyes and rawbone cheeks forspent.....

With rugged beard, and hearie shagged heare,
The which he never wont to combe or comely sheere."

(IV, v, 34)

Timias, pining because of his lady's displeasure, as a sign of utter wretchedness, is made to resemble the starving rebels

"With heavy glib deform'd, and melger face,
Like ghost late risen from his grave agrys'd."

(IV, viii, 12)

So, the Redcross Knight, when he emerges from the dungeon of Orgoglio's castle speaks with

"an hollow, dreary, murmuring voyce."

His "feeble thighs, unable to uphold

His pined corse, him scarce to light could beare,
A ruefull spectacle of death and ghastly dreere.

His sad dull eyes deepe sunke in hollow pits,
Could not endure thi unwanted sunne to view;
His bare thin cheekes for want of better bits,
And empty sides deceived of their daw,
Could make a stony hart his hap to rew;

¹

Quoted by M. M. Gray, E. E. S.—VI—1930—pp 413-28

His rawbone armes, whose mighty branned bowrs
 Were wonted to rive steele plates, and helmets hew
 Were cleane consum'd, and all his vitall powres
 Decay'd, and all his flesh shronk up like
 withered flowres." (I, viii, 38, 40, 41)

Spenser's feeling seems to have been one with Arthur's.

"Trembling horrour ran through every ioynte."

(I, viii, 39)

In the View, Spenser asserts "any stony heart would have rued the same," in words almost identical with those quoted above.

The most complete picture of a starving rebel is found in the portrayal of the giant Despair in Book I, cante ix.

"That same wicked wight

His dwelling has, low in an hollow cave,

Dark, delefull, dreerie like a greedie grave."

Despair himself sat inside.

"His grislie locks, long grown and unbound,

Disordered heng about his shoulders round,

And hid his face; through which his hollow eyne

Loekt deadly dull, and stared as astound;

His raw-bone cheekes, through penurie and pine,

Were shronke into his iawes, as he did never dine."

His garment nought but many ragged clouts,

With thornes together pind and patched was,

The which his naked sides he wrapt abouts."

(I, ix, 33, 35, 36)

Padelford calls this passage one of the "purple patches"¹ in the Faerie Queene and assigns no allegorical meaning to it. It was obviously added after the poet's arrival in Ireland. Granting that the Faerie Queene was started before the poet left England. The first three books were not published for almost a decade after Spenser went to Ireland (1590). Spenser's method of reworking his poems, and the obvious relation of such passages as the one just considered indicate that the poet incorporated in his early work, bits of his later experience which would, he felt, lend strength and vividness to the whole.

Two other passages in Book I of the Faerie Queene which seem to owe something to Ireland, though less definitely perhaps, may be explained in the same way. One is the description of the "commune hall"² in the Palace of Pride with its minstrels, bards and chroniclers, which resembles the hall of an Irish lord's castle. Spenser seems to have been acquainted with the Earl of Ormond who aided the English against the Desmonds. The dedicatory sonnet to Lord Ormond implies that Spenser has enjoyed the mansion of the Earl which he represents as the sole harbor for the Muses in Ireland. If the picture is not derived specifically from Kilkenny, at least it implies an acquaintance with similar halls.

The other reference in Book I is the account of Carosa's cottage "under the steep feet of mountain here" which resembles an

¹ F. M. Padelford, The Political and Ecclesiastical Allegory of the First Book of the Faerie Queene—p 51

² I, v, 3

¹
 Irish cottage. A better account of the same sort of hut is to be found in the picture of the witch's abode in Book III.

"There in a gloomy hollow glen she found
 A little cottage, built of sticks and reedes
 In homely wise, and wald with seds around,
 In which a witch did dwell, in leathly weedes
 And wilful want, all careless of her needes."

(III, vii, 6)

The unnecessary equalor of some of the poorer Irish tenants Spenser mentions in the View.² Joyce gives the following description of the houses of the Irish peasants. "The dwelling-houses were almost always constructed of Wickerwork. The wall was formed of long stout poles, standing pretty near each other, with their ends fixed deep in the ground, the spaces between closed in with reeds and twigs neatly and firmly interwoven; generally of hazel..... The roof was covered with straw or rushes or reeds, or with thin boards of oak, laid and fastened³ so as to overlap, like our slates and tiles." Spenser is bound to have seen many of these little houses in Ireland.

Another vivid bit from Irish life is the house of Care—a smithy with the incessant noise of hammers and bellows, fit habitation for Care. Smiths (Gobha) were numerous in Ireland, and of high repute, and their art was highly developed at a very early period as various

¹
 I, iii, 10

²
View, p 794

³
 P. W. Joyce, Ancient Irish Civilization—pp132-136

ancient relics testify.¹ Henley thinks that Spenser on his travels with Grey may have spent a night in such a place.²

This custom of seeking harbor for the night in castles or cottages along the way is an old Irish custom. Spenser asserts more than once that "there be no Innes" in Ireland where "lodging or horse meat or man's meat" might be obtained.³ Hospitality was not only a courtesy but even a religious virtue. In the records of Spenser's litigation with Lord Roche, the poet accuses Roche of having killed a "fat beef" of Teig Olyves, because Mr. Spenser lay in his house as he came from the sessions at Limerick. In Spenser's time, as he tells us, there was a statute making it treason "to go into another man's house for lodgings", or "to his owne tenant's house to take victuall by the way not withstanding there is noe other meanes for him to have lodging, nor horse meat, nor man's meat."³ May it not be that the inhospitality of Turpine is a reflection which Spenser so bitterly deplored?

In the Faerie Queene the reflections of Ireland thus far considered seem predominantly those of a land racked by war and famine. Such "varlets" as Atin and Fagor ply a fruitful trade; the hammers of relentless Care murder sleep and "afflict to the very sowle"; Despair gains easy victims; and the Blatant Beast pursues a cruel course in spite of all the Fairy knights can do. In Book VI, we have an indication that the poet's life in Ireland was not all horror and strife, when we have an

¹
F. W. Joyce, *op. cit.*—pp 132-135

²
P. Henley, *op. cit.*—p 125

³
View, p 772

account of Calidere's life among the shepherds. This passage is undoubtedly inspired by the poet's life at Killoolman. It is an interesting combination of the real rural Ireland that Spenser knew, and an ideal Arcadia that he dreamed it might some day become. Now in the words of Melibee, now of Calidere, the poet seems to voice his own sentiments. The old shepherd recounts to the knight the joys of the pastoral life, the calm and peace as contrasted with the strife and fickleness of the world. Is the poet referring to his own experience when Melibee says--

"The time was once, in my first prime of years,
 When pride of youth forth pricked my desire,
 That I disdained amongst mine equall peeres
 To follow sheepe, and shepheardes base attire:
 For further fortune then I would inquire.
 And leaving home, to roiall court I sought;
 Where I did sell myselfe for yearly hire,
 And in the Princes gardin daily wrought.
 There I beheld such vainnesse, as I never thought.

With sight whereof some cloyd, and long deluded
 With idle hopes, which them doe entertaine,
 After I had ten yeares my selfe excludet
 From native home, and spent my youth in vaine
 I gan my follies to myselfe to plaine,
 And this sweet place, whose lacke did then appeare.
 The back returning to my sheepe againe,
 I from thenceferth have learn'd to love more deare
 This lowly quiet life, which I inherite here." (VI, ix, 24-25)

Even more like the poet is Calidore who, tired of his quest,
drops his mission to dwell a while among the shepherds.

"How much (sayd he) more happie is the state
In which ye father here doe dwell at ease,
Leading a life so free and fortunate
From all the tempeste of these worldly seas,
Which tosse the rest in dangerous seas,
Where warres, and wreckes, and wicked enmitie
Doe them afflict, which no man can appease,
That certes I your happiness envie,
And wish my lot were plast in such felicitie.

I find

That all this worlds gay shewes which we admire
Be but vaine shadowes to this safe retyre
Of life, which here in lowlinesse ye lead,
Fearlesse of foes, or fortunes wrackful yre,
Which tosseth states, and underfoot doth tread
The mighty ones, affrayed of every changes dread."

(VI, ix, 19, 27)

Sponser went with Raleigh to London in 1589 to have the first
books of the Faerie Queene published and perhaps with hopes of prefer-
ment at court. In the words of Colin returned from Cynthia's court he
says,

"For sooth to say, it is no sort of life
For shepherd fit to lead in that same place."

(C. C. G. H. A., p 688)

He decries the evils of the court, jealousy, strife, vanity, and hypocrisy. So Spenser, returning to Kilkolman must have welcomed the peace and beauty of country life as Calidore did. He seems to have resigned his position as Clerk of the Council of Munster some time after his return and to have retired into private life. In 1594 his marriage to Elizabeth Boyle took place. These years seem to have been happy ones for the poet, and his praise of the rustic life, though strongly colored by ideas of an Arcadia, seem sincere, and indicate that the poet is content with his lot in Ireland.

Even here the poet is not free from the inroads of the rebels, however. The "Brigants" come and ruin the community and carry off the shepherds. The tragic irony of this passage is self evident when we know that scarce two years after the publication of these stanzas the Tyrone rebellion broke in Munster and wrapped Kilkolman in flames, forcing Spenser to flee to Cork. Unlike the shepherds who were "fearless of foes" Spenser knew the danger that menaced the planters, and this description seems a grim prophecy of his own fate. The episode ends, however, with a note of optimism which is not found in the later Mutability Cantos. Pastorella is rescued from the "brigants" and returned to her newly discovered parents. Spenser here seems to feel that Ireland will be delivered from the reign of rebellion and restored to England to whom she rightfully belongs. This was Spenser's dream for Ireland. He deplored the wretchedness of the land and if he seems to advocate more wretchedness, it is only because that was his idea of

¹
R. W. Church, op. cit.—p 166—gives date 1593

²
F. I. Carpenter, op. cit.—p 20—gives date June 11, 1594

the only way possible of saving Ireland. He dreamed that some day it would be reformed and Anglicised, and would become an Arcadia like Melibee's before the brigands ruined it. He is truly Irenaeus when he declares that he hopes by the theories he advocates "to settell an eternal peace in that country and also to make it profitable to her Majesty."¹

¹
View, p 820

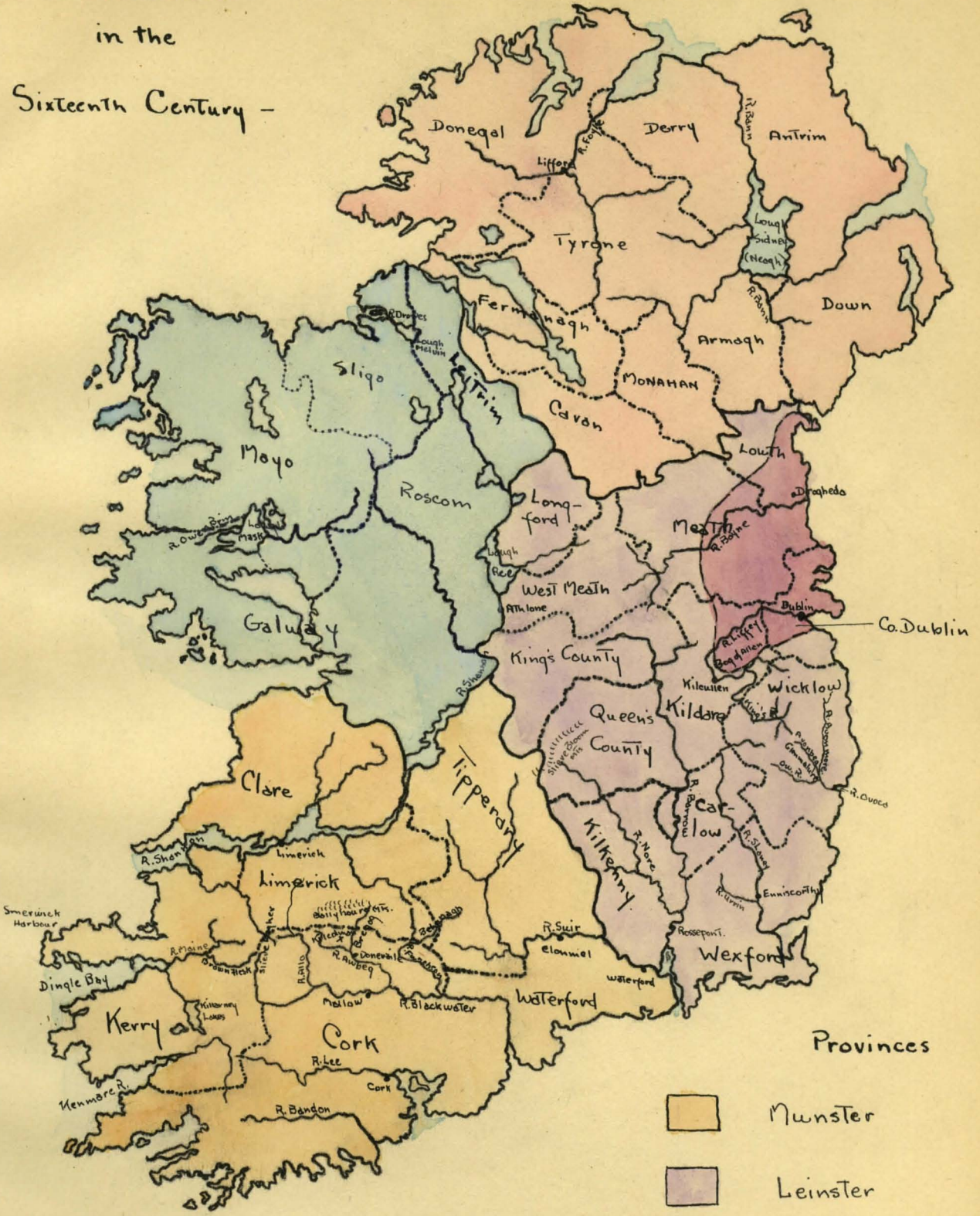
CHAPTER IV

IRISH TOPOGRAPHY IN THE FAERIE QUEENE






IRELAND

in the

Sixteenth Century -



Provinces

-  Munster
-  Leinster
-  Ulster
-  Connaught
-  English Pale

CHAPTER IV

IRISH TOPOGRAPHY IN THE FAERIE QUEENE

One of the most notable of Spenser's traits as a writer is his ability to paint pictures. "The true use of him," says Lowell, "is as a gallery of pictures which we visit when the mood takes us.... He makes one always think of Venice--Paul Veronese or Guido Reni." Thomas Campbell has called him "The Rubens of the Poets", and Carpenter¹ compares him to Turner. One cannot fail to note the strokes of a master painter in the pictures in the Faerie Queene. Too many, however, have accepted Carpenter's "dreary indistinctness" as the predominant characteristic of the whole epic. Hazlitt, for instance, says, "Spenser's poetry is all fairy land. We wander in another world of ideal beings--by the sound of softer streams, among greener hills and fairer valleys. He paints nature not as we find it, but as we expected to find it, and fulfills the delightful promises of our youth."²

At first glance, we may think Gloriana's realm indeed a dream land where nothing is real, where even trees and hills are filaments of the poet's imagination, but this is to lose sight of those intrusions of reality into the land of shadows, which grow more frequent as the story progresses. To be sure, it is a fairy land, and justly so, but it is a fairy land which owes much to the land where the poet lived. If Ireland

¹ Cf. J. B. Fletcher, "The Painter of the Poets"--S. P. XIV--p 153

² J. Zeitlin, Hazlitt on English Literature--p 22

offered Spenser exploits for his knights, she also presented him the wild and untamed magnificence of forest and plain admirably suited as a background for deeds of prowess and chivalry. As Legouis has said, "A country of a thousand enchantments, a wild desert, indeterminate region of immense forests, Spenser drew it largely from the savage land of Ireland, where his dreams could all but grow real and observation could revive fancy."¹

If Spenser considered Ireland a "salvage land" it was because it was "through long wars left almost waste", and "through brutish barbarism overspredd". The countryside itself he recognized as "as faire a land as may be redd". In the View his words in reference to the North of Ireland illustrate his opinion of the beauty of the whole land. "And sure it is yet a most beautifull and sweet countrey as any is under heaven, seemed throughout with many goodly rivers, replenished with all sorte of fish, most abundantly sprinkled with many sweet Ilandes and goodly lakes, like litle Inland Sease, that will carry even ships upon theyr waters, adorned with goodly woodes fitt for building of howses and shippes.....; also full of good portes and havens opening upon England and Scotland as inviting us to come to them, to see what excellent comodities that countrey can affoord; besides the soyle itself is most fertile fitt to yeeld all kind of fruite that shal be comitted thereunto. And lastly, the heavens most milde and Temperat."²

Actual Irish place names appear in the Fairy land that Spenser creates. Other locations are given names by the poet, and, though they

¹
E. Legouis, Edmund Spenser--p 126

²
View, p 766

seem foreign to modern geography, they are derived very definitely from Spenser's knowledge of Ireland. At times the descriptions have a tone of almost homely reality, again they are more idealized, but there is always that accuracy of detail which denotes keen observation and lends a certain vivid and convincing quality to the landscape of the romance.

Among several passages containing Irish place names, one of the most outstanding is the catalogue of Irish rivers attending the wedding of the Thames and the Medway (IV, xi, 40-44). Critics generally agree with Professor Osgood who attributes to "the poet's familiarity with the river's themselves" the peculiar freshness and spontaneity¹ of the passage. He has shown that the names and epithets of the English rivers are derived largely from Holinshed, Camden and contemporary maps rather than from observation. In a letter to Harvey in 1580 Spenser gives an outline of the Epithalamion Thamesis, one of the lost poems, which is thought to have been developed into the river catalogue in the Fairie Queene.² Here he declares his intention to describe all the English rivers at the wedding, but makes no mention of including any of the foreign rivers which are found in the later catalogue. He acknowledges here his debt to Holinshed. No definite literary source has been discovered for the catalogue of Irish streams, and it seems probable that he added these guests to the original list after he went

¹ Cf. M. E. Nicolson, "Realistic Elements in Spenser's Style" S. P.—XXI—pp 382-388

² Letter to Harvey, "Touching the Earthquake of April last"—Oxford Edition—Works—p 612

to Ireland, and relied on his own knowledge for their descriptions. ¹

Authorities who have visited Ireland with the express purpose of studying Spenser's rivers in relation to their originals agree on the accuracy of the descriptions. For instance, P. W. Joyce declares: "The dryness of a mere catalogue is relieved by the happy selection of short descriptive epithets which exhibit such a variety that no two of them are alike, and describe several streams with great force and truthfulness. The manner in which the Liffey is pictured is extremely just and natural, for this river, after bursting from the highlands of Wicklow.....flows for more than half its course through ² the loveliest lea lands in all Ireland--the plains of Kildare."

Spenser had a double acquaintance with the "Liffey rolling down the lea". He saw it as it flowed by Dublin where he lived for most of the time between 1580 and 1588. On August 24, 1582, he was ³ granted the lease of New Abbey, County Kildare, and for the next two years "he was officially described as of New Abbey where he seems to ⁴ have often resided". The Liffey flows quite near New Abbey, so that

¹ F. F. Covington, "Spenser and Alexander Neckam"--S. P. XXII--pp 222-225
Covington mentions Neckam's catalogue of Irish rivers in the third "Distinetie" of De Laudibus (twelfth century) which Spenser might have seen in manuscript or portions of it quoted in the 1590 edition of Camden. All Neckam's rivers, save one, appear in Spenser's list, but the names and descriptions differ. Spenser's list is much longer. "It is not to be supposed that the medieval writer was Spenser's 'source'," though this passage may have suggested the inclusion of the Irish streams in the list.

² M. Nicolson, "Realistic Elements in Spenser's Style"--S. P.--pp 382-398--
XXI

³ Elizabeth Flants, 3969, quoted in Carpenter--p 17

⁴ Dictionary of National Biography

Spenser knew it "on the lee" as well as near the city.

The Slane is now called the Slaney of County Wicklow. In July, 1581 Spenser obtained possession of the manor of Enniscoerthy on the Slaney, but he seems never to have lived there since it was far from Dublin, and the records show that the property was turned over in December to Richard Synot.¹ It seems more probable that Spenser learned to know the river on the expedition with Grey to Glenmalure.²

There is some dispute as to the identification of the Aubrian, for there is no river by that name in Ireland. Falkiner calls it the Owenbrin which flows into Lough Mask, and to which the epithet "stony" is applicable. Spenser got his information from English soldiers from Connaught.³ Henley quotes Flood's identification of Aubrian with the Urrin, a rocky tributary of the Slaney in County Wexford,⁴ but is not completely satisfied. Keightley seems the most certain of the three, and he is supported by Dr. O'Donovan whom he considers "the Ceryphaeus of Irish scholars and topographers". He believes that the Aubrian is the King's River, a tributary of the Liffey in County Kildare. Grey led his troops down the ridge above this river on the way to Glenmalure, and Spenser would have seen the river then. The Irish name was "Avan-ree"⁵ (Avan ríge) which Spenser made into "Aubrian".

¹ Elizabeth Platts, 5963, quoted in Carpenter--p 36

² A. C. Falkiner, Edinburgh Review--January 1905, pp 164-188

³ A. C. Falkiner, op. cit.

⁴ P. Henley, op. cit.--p 93

⁵ T. Keightley, Irish Rivers in the "Faerie Queens"--Notes and Queries IV, iv

The "Shenan" is Shannon, and a glance at a map will prove the aptness of Spenser's phrase "spreading like the sea". Spenser's duties as Clerk of the Council of Munster would have carried him often to Limerick¹ for the sessions and there he must have often witnessed the tidal conflict in the mouth of the Shannon which he describes elsewhere.

"Like as the tide that comes from the Ocean mayne,
Flows up the Shenan with contrary forse,
And overruling him in his own rayne,
Drives backe the current of his kindly course
And makes it seeme to have some other source:
But when the flood is spent, then backe againe,
His borrowed waters forst to redisbourse,
He sends the sea his owne with double gaine,
And tribute eke withall as to his Sovereaine."

(IV, 111, 27)²

The "pleasant Boyne" is a river in County Meath which flows by Drogheda and into the Irish Sea. The Barn rises in County Down, flows into Lough Sidney (Lough Neagh), then forming the boundary between

¹
P. Henley, op. cit.--p 49

²
F. F. Covington, A Note on the "Faerie Queene", IV, 111, 27
Modern Language Notes--XL--p 253

Cites a note in the Annals of Loch Ce for the year 1586.

"The stream of the Siensaim (Shannon) turned back to Lough-Righ (Lough Ree) and it was twenty-four hours in that order, in the presence of all who were in Ath-Luin (Athlone)."

"May it be that this elaborate simile of Spenser's had its origin in the impression made on the poet's mind not by a daily though impressive phenomenon, but by an unusual and marvellous event, the memory of which was still fresh in the South of Ireland?"

Counties Antrim and Derry, flows north into the North Channel.

"Swift Arniduff, which of the English man

Is cal'de Blacke water"

is the Ulster Blackwater which flows into Lake Sidney west of the Bann,
not the river of the same name in Cork near Kilcolman.¹

"The Liffar deep," writes Dr. O'Donovan, "I take to be the Fyale; for in some old maps of Spenser's time, it is called 'the Ryver of the Liffar'. It is very deep."² Spenser in the View of Ireland refers to the same place when he says, "Another (garrison) would I putt at Castleliffar (Lifford) or there about soe as they should have all the passages upon the river to Loughfoyle."³

"Sad Trowis" is a short river which carries the waters of Lough Melvin to the sea, and is known as the Drowes. Spenser's description, "that once his people overran", shows that he was acquainted with the legend of Lough Melvin. According to tradition, many centuries before the Christian era, the sudden rise of the Drowes, overflowing the land and people, turned the valley into a lake."⁴

The Alle is a river flowing into the Munster Blackwater. Henley suggests, however, that Spenser is referring not to the tributary, but to the Blackwater itself, since the main stream and not the

¹ I. Keightley, op. cit.

² Ibid.

³ View, p 802

⁴ P. Henley, op. cit.—p 92

Allo "tumbles from Slewlogher steep:" (Slieve Loughera, a moorland district in Kerry).¹ In support of this view is the fact that in the Faerie Queens and in the View of Ireland the only Blackwater mentioned is plainly the river of that name in Ulster, and no mention is made of that Blackwater which flowed so near the poet's home. In Colin Clouts Come Home Again, the poet declares that the Allo is "Broadwater called farre", another indication that the Allo is the Blackwater, which was often called Broadwater in Spenser's time.² Moreover, "The Allo may in ancient times have been the name of the main stream, and thus the Irish antiquarian, Dr. O'Donovan explains 'Mallow', or Moyalle--the plain of Allo."³

"Mulla mine" is the Awbeg (Awan-beag--little river), another tributary of the Blackwater which flowed near the poet's home at Kilcolman. The name according to Keightley is derived from the Irish term, "mullech", meaning "hill-top", suggested by the fact that the Awbeg rises in the Ballyhoura Hills north of Kilcolman.⁴ Spenser declares that he "whylom" taught his Mulla's waves to weep. Henley thinks that he is referring to those lines in Colin Clouts Come Home Again which represent nature mourning for her absent shepherd.⁵

¹
P. Henley, op. cit.--p 87

²
Ibid, p 87--note 20--"Broadwater" in State papers and Nicholas White's Journal

³
Ibid, p 87--note 22

⁴
T. Keightley, op. cit.

⁵
P. Henley, op. cit.--p 90

"The running waters wept for thy returns
And all the fish with languor did lament."

(11, 27-28)

In the Epithalamion, Spenser lovingly celebrates the same river.

"Ye Nymphs of Mulla which with careful heed
The silver scaly trouts doe tend full well
And greedy pikes which use therein to feed
(Those trouts and pikes all others doe exceed)."

(56-59)

Spenser's pride in the piscatory excellence of his stream is not a literary convention or merely the partiality bred of ownership, to judge by accounts of the river from other sources. Camden speaks of "the Arbeg, Spenser's Mulla, noted for excellent fish runs near it."¹ (Kilcolman) It is interesting to note that Camden substitutes Spenser's name Mulla for the original name of the river on his map of Ireland. A modern travel guide states that the stream is still known for its fine trout.²

The "three renowned brethren", the Shure, the Newre, and the Barrow, are three rivers which flow into Waterford Harbour. Only the Newre (Here) of these three rises in the Slieve Bloom Mountains, but Spenser indicates that all three originate in the Mountain. Keightley declares that the error is due to a similar mistake in Giraldus Cambrensis

¹
W. Camden, Britannia, Vol. IV--p 276

²
J. Murray, Handbook for Travellers in Ireland--"Arbeg"

¹
sis. Spenser may have preserved the old idea purposely in order to use the legend of the origin of the rivers.

The "wide embayed Mayre" is the Kenmare river, which, as Keightley says, "is no river at all, but a bay or arm of the sea running up to Kenmare in Kerry".² The Bandon is known by the same name today, and so also is the Lee, which

"like an Iland fayre

Enloseth Corke with his devided flood."

Cork today has grown out onto the mainland, but in Spenser's day most of the city was probably on the island. This is that same river Lee on which Pollente and Munera met their fate.

The "baleful Oure" presents the most difficult problem. Henley, on the authority of Joyce, believes that it "represents the Avonbeg flowing through Glenmalur, where Spenser doubtless witnessed that disaster to the English army in 1580."³ Keightley's identification is quite different. In Smith's Kerry, he says, he discovered the following passage: "This river (the Mary--now Maine in Kerry) riseth near Castle Island.....and receives a stream called the Brown Fleek..... This latter is considerably augmented by another called Oureach." "All seemed now plain enough, but Dr. Roman assured me that to his certain knowledge there was no such stream, 'but,' said he, 'may it

¹
Giraldus Cambrensis, Historical Works--p 23
"Three noble rivers, then, rise at the foot of the Blandine Mountains (Sliabh Bladheva, Slieve Bloom): they are called the Three Sisters because they received their names from three sisters. These are the Beria (Barrow), the Eyrus (More).....and the Suyrus (Suir)..."

²
T. Keightley, op. cit.

³
P. Henley, op. cit., p 92

not be the Brown Fleek itself whose name in Irish is Ouan-ruadh, Brown River?¹ This was quite decisive: Ouan-ruadh (pronounced Ouan-ree) became Oure just as Ouan-beg did Awbeg and Aman-ree, Ambrian. Though our poet's lines are always strictly decasyllabic, he may have pronounced here Oure as it is at the caesura. In 'stained with blood' there may be an allusion to the name of the river, as well as to the engagement of the English with the followers of the Earl of Desmond whose chief abode was in this district.¹ There is some support for both theories, but neither seems completely satisfactory.

Of all these rivers, Allo and "Mulla mine" were dearest to the poet's heart. They were familiar from long acquaintance, for they flowed near Kilcolman castle where the poet lived. Spenser's frequent celebration of these streams attests his love of them. One instance is found in the lay of

"Mulla faire and bright

Unto whose bed false Bregog whylome stole

That Shepherd Colin did condole."

Bregog is that small river of the same name which flows on the east of Kilcolman to join the Awbeg on its course toward the Blackwater. The fact that Bregog must steal underground to his beloved to elude Old Father Mole who has destined his daughter for the luckless Allo, is an allusion to the fact that the Bregog sinks from sight for about two miles in its course, leaving the bed quite dry save in rainy weather. "The Irish name deceitful (Bregog) is said to have been derived from

¹

I. Keightley, op.cit.

the fact that it is liable to sudden and dangerous floods."¹

Old Father Mole receives more attention in the Mutability Cantos when Spenser describes the trial of the Titaness. By the "Mole", Spenser meant the Ballyhoura Hills, part of the Galtee Range, which circled to the north of Kilschman. The poet puts all his love of the hills in their spring attire into these lines:

"And Mole himself, to honour her the more,
 Did deck himself in freshest faire attire,
 And his high head, that seemeth alwaies hore,²
 With hardened frosts of former winter's ire,
 He with an Oaken girlond now did tire,
 As if the love of some new Nymph late scene,
 Had in him kindled youthfull fresh desire,
 And made him change his gray attire to greene,
 Ah gentle Mole: such joyance hath the well besene."

(C, VII, 11)

The Mutability Cantos contain the legend of curse upon Arlo hill "the highest hill (in all men's sight) of my old Father Mole". "Who knows not Arlo hill?" cries the poet, and indeed there were few in Ireland who did not know it, and it was not unknown in England. Numerous references to Aberlow, Abarlo, Harlow and Harlo in the state records of the time show it to have been notorious as the dwelling of the Irish rebels.² Spenser means by it "the highest part of the Galtee

1

P. Kenley, op. cit.—pp 86-87

2

Cf. R. Holinshed, Chronicles—VI—p 452

range below which to the north through a glen or defile runs the river Aberlow¹. Galtymore, the summit, rises, with precipice and gully, more than 3000 feet above the plains of Tipperary, and is seen far and wide. It was connected with the 'great wood', the wild region of forest, mountain and bog, which stretched half across Munster from the Suir to the Shannon.¹

In this passage Spenser celebrates the love of two other Munster rivers. Molama, daughter of Mole and sister of Mulla, "a fairer flood may no man see", loved Fanchin or the Funchon, a tributary of the Blackwater, east of the Arbeg. Molama is a tributary of the Funchon known as the Behanagh. It has been said that Spenser got his name by a clever² combination of Mole with the last two syllables of Behanagh.

The passages considered thus far contain personification of hills and rivers that Spenser knew. Even more significant than these legends, though much more difficult of definite identification are the numerous similes and descriptions which suggest specifically or more remotely the Irish landscape. Spenser knew the nature of Ireland much better than that of England. In England his life seems to have been mainly urban, save for his trip north after leaving Cambridge. A study of the descriptions he uses will show that, on the whole, those taken from real life and nature rather than from the classics and pageants and tapestries, are clearly Irish in tone and color.

One of the most vivid similes in the Faerie Queene, as well as

¹
R. W. Church, op. cit. p 172

²
P. Henley, op. cit. p 91

one of the most easily located is found in Book II, canto ix, stanza 16. Arthur and Guyon are beset by a "thousand villeins" outside the castle of Alma,

"As when a swarme of gnats at evontide
 Out of the fennes of Allan do arise
 Their murmuring small trompets sounden wide
 Whiles in the aire their clustring army flies
 That as a cloud doth seeme to dim the skies:
 No man nor beast may rest, or take repast,
 For their sharp woundes, and noyous injuries
 Till the fierce Northerne wind with blustering blast
 Doth blow them quite away, and in the Ocean east."

So vivid is this with sound and feeling as well as with images that we do not need to be told that the poet in his New Abbey residence was quite near the Bay of Allan, to recognize that personal experience inspired it.

The tide at the mouth of the Shannon has already been mentioned.

Many of Spenser's descriptions of forests are colored by his knowledge of the Munster woods. The narrow ford "in the covert" where Timias was trapped by the foresters is typical of many such Irish streams "with thicke woods over growne". Belpheobe's abode where Timias is healed of his wounds is a somewhat glorified picture drawn from the woodland haunts which Spenser knew.

"in a pleasant glade

With mountains round about environed,

1

T. Keightley, Spenser the Poet of Ireland--Notes and Queries--IV--7
 Ap. 15, 1871

And mighty woods, which did the valley shade,
 And like a stately theatre it made,
 Spreading itselfe into a spacious plaine.
 And in the midst a little river plaide
 Amongst the puzey stones, which seem'd to plaine
 With gentle murmure, that his course they did restraine.

Beside the same a dainty place there lay
 Planted with mirtle trees and laurels greene
 In which the birds sang many a lovely lay
 Of gods high prayse, and of their loves sweet teene
 As it had been an earthly Paradise."

(III, v, 39-40)

Henley has suggested the parallel of Guyon's voyage to the Bower of Bliss to the voyage north from the Kenmare River around the Kerry Coast. It seems more probable that Spenser's scenery there came primarily from the Legend of Brendan and other "inramas" and the classics.¹ The fact that Brendan is supposed to have started from this point would explain the similarities of Spenser's islands and seas to the Irish coast. Spenser doubtless did know something of this part of Ireland since he visited Smerwick with Grey. We have no assurance, however, that he ever made the voyage up the coast, and his knowledge was at best second hand.² The fact that the Bower is placed in a lake rather than in

¹
 Cf. pp 113-117

²
 P. Henley, op. cit.—pp 114-117

the sea may owe something to Spenser's intense admiration of the Killarney lakes which he may have visited on this same expedition, but this too is somewhat doubtful. The vividness of the picture of the Bower and of Phaedria's Island, however, is perhaps due to the fact that, though the poet was drawing from legendary sources, he himself had seen almost similar places of exquisite beauty which enabled him to paint details convincingly and concretely. In such a passage it is impossible to separate line from line, saying "this is Celtic; that is classical". The remarkable fusion of elements in Spenser's imagination makes this impossible. The significant point is that one of the elements which was fused was Irish.

There are many descriptions of storms on land and sea which are among Spenser's most forceful similes. Such storms are not peculiar to Ireland alone, nor is the sea around Ireland different from any other sea. We suppose, however, that with the trip to Ireland Spenser became acquainted with the sea. Frequent channel trips provided him with his knowledge of the Irish channel, and the poet was often on or near the sea at Killycolman, Cork, Dublin, Smerwick, Limerick.

It will be noticed on close examination that in the second part of the Faerie Queene the reflections of Ireland become more definite and more numerous than in the first three books. The Bay of Allan is the only Irish place name which occurs in the first three books in contrast to the multitude of Irish rivers, hills and towns mentioned in the later books. It is evident that Spenser learned to know and love the country more on longer acquaintance, and his interest in Irish nature grew ever stronger.

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Cf. Faerie Queene--I, xi, 21--II, viii, 48--II, xii, 10, 18, 33--III, iv, 13--III, iv, 7--IV, i, 42-45

During the first years in Ireland, Spenser was mainly in or near Dublin. "While he would thus have acquired an excellent general knowledge of Ireland, he was not in a position to acquire an intimate familiarity with any particular locality. In the second period, however, he was in uninterrupted occupation of a permanent home, and enjoying a comparative leisure which would enable him to explore the whole of the neighboring country..... In the first three books of the Faerie Queene the genius loci is indeed apparent, not only in the general setting of the imagery, but in many specific allusions; but in the second portion of the poem, on the other hand, the scenery and the associations of Kilcolman and the south of Ireland colour the whole texture of his work and the concluding books abound in passages wherein not all the poet's idealism nor the veil of his elaborate allegory can conceal the influence of his actual surroundings, both upon the trend of his fancy and the form in which that fancy found expression."¹

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A. C. Falkner, op. cit.

CHAPTER V

IRISH LEGEND IN THE PABRIE QUEENE

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The subject of Spenser's debt to Celtic literature and legend is intensely interesting, but here we have to deal almost entirely with conjecture. In the View of the Present State of Ireland, Spenser gives evidence of his knowledge of Irish history and legend through his study of the English, Latin and Irish authorities. Moreover, concerning Irish literature, Irenaeus says, "I have caused diverse of them (Irish poems) to be translated unto me that I might understand them; and surely they savoured of sweete witt and good invention, but skilled not of the goodly ornamentes of Poetrie: yet were they sprinkled with some pretty flowers of theyr own naturall devise, which gave good grace and comliness unto them, the which it is greates pittye to see soe abused to the gracing of wickedness and vice, which would with good usage serve to beautifye and adorne vertus."¹ According to his own statement Spenser was acquaint-²ed with the lore of Ireland as told by its own Bards and Chroniclers.

Whether Spenser knew these writings in the original or not we do not know, for we cannot be certain whether Spenser knew Gaelic. The fact that he had the poems translated would imply that he did not. We know that he would never have deigned to use the Irish language as many

¹
View, p 791

²
Ibid, p 775

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Anglo-Irish did in their daily conversations. On the other hand, it would seem strange if a man of Spenser's intellect should live in a country for eighteen years and make no attempt to become acquainted with the native language, especially at a time when the Renaissance love of learning had brought that tongue into some degree of popularity in the English court.² The Irish terms used in the View imply a slight knowledge of Gaelic, but it is probably as Draper says that "Spenser's knowledge of linguistics was sadly narrow, especially of Celtic linguistics".³ Spenser's own statement indicates that, even if he knew Gaelic, he did not feel himself accurate enough to understand the real meaning of the work. The important fact, after all, is that he knew the poems and legends, whether in the original or in translation.

We do not know either, who translated the poems for Spenser. It has been suggested that it was Roche's bard, Tadby, who instructed Spenser in the lore of Ireland.⁴ Henley believes that the Teig Olyves mentioned in the records of Spenser's litigation with Roche is this same Tadby.⁵ In that case, we have evidence of the poet's acquaintance with the bard. Other opportunities to learn the legends of the land

¹
View, p 788

²
P. Henley, *op. cit.* p 100

³
J. W. Draper, "Spenser's Linguistics in the Present State of Ireland" Modern Philology—XVII—1919—pp 471-486

⁴
H. S. V. Jones, Spenser Handbeck—p 385

⁵
P. Henley, *op. cit.* p 66—note 47

were numerous. Spenser's acquaintance with the Earl of Ormond, whose castle at Kilkenny he celebrates as the Irish home of the Muses, must have provided him with many opportunities to gather Irish lore from bards and minstrels. Moreover, from the earliest days, Ireland has been a land of hero and fairy tales, and hardly a brook or hill is without its history. Travelling through the land as he did, Spenser could not have failed to hear of the gods and saints and fairy folk who once peopled Erin. The references to the Pooka and the hobgoblins about Killoelman in the Epithalamion show a knowledge of the folk legends of his own district at least.

Spenser's strange method of mingling widely diversified elements in his work makes a consideration of his sources very difficult. "Distinctions of classical and romantic, ancient and modern, sacred and profane, have no meaning for him. Where others distinguish, he is only conscious of the unity of all that has arrested the human imagination. The eclectic method is pursued alike in the main weaving of his plot, in its incidental embellishment, in the similes and allusions that enrich his style and drive home his imaginative conception." Thus, in the consideration of the influence of Irish legend on Spenser, we do not mean to imply that the Celtic sources are the only ones for these certain passages, nor indeed, in many cases, the most important ones. Our purpose is to show that they form an integral part of that background from which Spenser wove his Fairy land and created his "Knights of the Maydenhed".

One of the most outstanding parallels to Celtic legend in the

¹
E. de Selincourt, introduction to Oxford Edition--p lvi

Faerie Queene has been treated very adequately by Miss Whitney in her comparison of the journey of Guyon to the Bower of Bliss with the old legend of St. Brendan.¹ St. Brendan was an Irish monk of the sixth century (484-577) who was known as one of the Twelve Saints of Erin, and who founded the monastery of Cloufert. He made two voyages in search of "the mysterious land far from human ken" which he finally reached on the second journey. His experiences were celebrated in the Celtic Inram Brendain which was later widely known in the more elaborate Latin version, The Navigatio Brendani. The saint's legend became so popular that it was translated into French and English.² It seems probable that Spenser used the English prose version known as The Golden Legend.³

This would seem, probably, an indirect influence from Ireland, but the story itself was ultimately Celtic, and even in the medieval versions,⁴ it retains many of the conventions of the Irish inrama.

The general character of the two voyages is similar. Brendan and the Palmer are parallel throughout, in that they warn against dangers, dispel marauders and keep the boat in a straight course toward the island

¹ Lois Whitney, "Spenser's Use of the Literature of Travel in the 'Faerie Queene'" -- Modern Philology -- XIX -- pp 143-162

² Cf. Encyclopaedia Americana -- Brendan

³ Lois Whitney, op. cit.

⁴ "The inram is a sea voyage tale in which a hero accompanied by a few companions, wanders about from island to island, meets other-world adventures everywhere, and finally returns to his native land." -- W. F. Thrall, "Vergil's Aeneid and the Irish 'Inrama'" -- Modern Philology XV -- 1917 -- pp 65-82

goal. The dangers encountered are somewhat alike. Both parties pass wandering isles, but Guyon hurries by, while Brendan and his men stop and disembark, only to learn that the "island" is a monstrous fish.

Brendan's ship is followed by a whale "castyng se moche water out of his mouth into the skyppe that they supposed to have drowned". Then a swarm of fish surround the boat "so thicke that un-
neth they might see the water for the fyshes". Guyon has only one encounter with sea monsters but Whitney points out that this one episode incorporates the features of both of these in the legend.

"Suddeine they see from midst of all the Maine,
The surging waters like a mountains rise
And the great sea puft up with proud disdain
To swell above the measure of his guise,
As threatening to devoure all that his powre dispise,"

(II, xii, 21)

Then followed the multitude of fish, monsters in this case, that crowd around the boat. Both parties were afraid, but the fish were dispersed in the one case when the Saint said a mass, in the other when the Palmer smote the waters with his "vertuous staffe".

As Brendan neared his goal, a "derke myst" enveloped the ship and the men were badly frightened. So, on Guyon's voyage

"Suddeinly a grosse fog overspred
With his dull vapour all that desert has
And heavens shearefull face enveloped
That all things one, and one as nothing was
And this great universe seem'd one confused mas."

(II, xii, 34)

And they "feared to wander in that wasteful mist". This mist is a very common convention of otherworld islands. When Cernak approaches the land of Mananan he finds it surrounded in mist, and the Fee who summons Bran to the otherworld declares that an "exquisite haze" hangs over it.¹

Brendan's destination is the Land of Dyheest, a conventional otherworld, and the Bower of Bliss has much in common with it, though Spenser has adapted the paradise into a lovely land of temptation to serve the purpose of his allegory, and has made the Fee a wicked enchantress, Acrasia. Both lands are islands, a typically Celtic note in contrast to the mountain used by Tasso, probably of Oriental origin.² The luxuriant verdure, the flowers and rich fruits and music are common to both islands.

Other features of the Bower of Bliss are found in other Celtic accounts of the Fairy Otherworld. The wall of the Bower was thin and beautiful, and the gate was of ivory, in places "with gold besprinkled" (II, xii, 43, 45). The Celtic islands are usually walled, and often with gold and silver. In the Voyage of Maeldune, one island has four walls, gold, silver, brass, and crystal. Teigne, son of Cian, visits the island Patnos which has both silver and golden palisades.³

In the Perch, Guyon and the Palmer saw

"an embracing vine

¹
L. H. Gray, Mythology of all Races—III—pp 115-118

²
L. Whitney, *op. cit.*

³
L. Whitney, *op. cit.*

Whose bouches hanging downe, seemed to entice
 All passers by, to test their luscious wine
 And did themselves into their heads incline,
 As freely offering to be gathered:
 Some deepe empurpled as the Hyacint,
 Some as the Rubine, laughing sweetly red,
 Some like faire Emeraude, not yet well ripened."

(II, xii, 54)

Maeldune and his men visited the Island of Red Berries where they found¹
 "great red berries which yielded an intoxicating and slumberous juice".
 Figures similar to the Genius of the Forch and the Gensly Dame appear in²
 the prophecy to Gann the Hundred Fighter.

The whole landscape of the Isle of the Living is in the Bower
 of Bliss. As in that land which Teigne sought, so here are "delicate woods
 with empurpled tree tops fringing the delightful streams: there is mar-
 velous minstrelsy of birds, a wonderful fragrance; there are luscious
 grapes, superlatively beautiful women, and rich workmanship in gold, sil-
 ver and precious jewels."³

Phaedria's island which Guyon had visited earlier is another
 example of the same Irish otherworld, "Magh Mell", "Isle of the Living",
 "Isle of Joy", "Isle of Truth", or "Land of Mananan", as it is variously
 called. The beauty of the place, the fragrance distilled from the flowers,

¹
 T. W. Rolleston, Myths and Legends of the Celtic Race

²
 P. Henley, op. cit. pp 117-118

³
 L. Whitney, op. cit.

the bird songs, the shady dale and grassy plain,—all recall the Land of the Living.

Phaedria herself is a fit inhabitant for the Celtic other-world. She is essentially the *fé* who falls in love with a mortal and lures him from the world of men to her magic isle.¹ In the legend of Comla of the Golden Hair, a lady comes to Comla to tell him of her fair abode,

"A land of youth, a land of rest
A land from sorrow free
It lies far off in the golden west
On the verge of the azure sea."²

Like Phaedria, the lady had a magic boat "a swift canoe of crystal bright", in which Comla finally sailed away, and was never seen again. Phaedria's shallow ship

"More swift than swallow sheres the liquid skie
Withouten care or Pilote it to guide
Or winged canvas with the wind to flie
Only she turned a pin, and by and by,
It out away upon the yielding wave
He cared she her course for to apply;
For it was taught the way, which she would have
And both from rocks and flats itselwe could wisely
save." (II, vi, 5)

¹ E. Greenlaw, "Spenser's Fairy Mythology"—Studies in Philology XV—pp 105-122

² E. Greenlaw, *op. cit.*

The fairy boat is usually wonderfully endowed. The Boat of Mananan, son of Lir, "knew a man's thoughts and would travel whithersoever he would"¹.

Acrasia likewise is a fee, found by Guyon with her mortal lover. Greenlaw has pointed out other uses of the fee motif in the Faerie Queens. One is in Arthur's vision of the Faerie Queens. "A fee is enamoured of a young knight, appears to him in a vision..... and offers him her love. Usually they are at once united and the lover warned not to tell anyone about his 'amie'..... If he disobeys..... his amie disappears and he searches for her for a long time."² Arthur's vision and his long, fruitless search for his queen seem truly Celtic in tone and treatment.

In the Irish legend, to yield to the fee is rather desirable than otherwise. The tale of Collen and his resistance against the charms of Gwyn ab Nûd is one of the few which gives any hint that the good man is not one who yields to the fairy folk.³ Spenser uses the fee as a charming and evil enchantress in nearly every case. Radigund is a wicked fee who offers the knight love or thralldom if he refuses.

In another parallel which Greenlaw mentions there is no temptation mentioned. The mother of Priamond, Diamond and Triamond, Spenser states definitely, was a Fay. Moreover

"she had the skill

¹
I. W. Ralleston, op. cit.,--p 113

²
E. Greenlaw, op. cit.

³
E. Greenlaw, op. cit.

Of secret things and all the powres of nature
 Which she by art could use unto her will
 And to her service bind each living creature
 Through secret understanding of their feature."

Her beauty, her skill in leech craft, her goodly stature are all in keeping with the conventional féé. Her manner of living in the forests instead of on an island differentiates her from the other féés we have considered, but she is still of the same race. She is of the Sidhe folk, "the good people" who the Irish peasants declare still live in their green hills. They are not the tiny fairies like Shakespeare's, but beings of majestic stature, the people of the goddess Dana, called Tuath De Danaan, who held Ireland for many years. Finally they were defeated by the sons of Miled, the Gaels. "But as to the Tuatha De Danaan, after they were beaten, they would not go under the sway of the sons of Miled but they went away by themselves. And because Mananan, son of Lir, understood all enchantments, they left it to him to find places for them where they would be safe from their enemies. So he chose out the most beautiful hills and valleys of Ireland for them to settle in; and he put hidden walls about them, that no man could see through but they themselves could see through them and pass through them."¹ Then "when Mananan had found places for all the Tuatha De Danaan to live in, he himself left Ireland and went to dwell in a country beyond the sea,"²—the Land of the Living. From this land came the féés who

¹ Lady Gregory, Gods and Fighting Men--p 75

² Ibid, p 100

summoned Bran and Cormak and others to their islands. Thus the fées are all originally Tuatha De Danaan--both those of the magic hills and those of the magic isles.

Greenlaw cites Wentz who thinks that the mother of the three warriors may have been suggested by the story of a particular fee of Irish legend. "The Earl of Desmond one day saw Aine, a fee, combing her hair on the bank of the river Carnog near Lough Gur. Fascinated by her beauty, he gained control of her by catching hold of her cloak. From this union was born the enchanted hero Geroid."¹ The parallel in situation and setting seems convincing.

The episode in which Calidore watches the Graces dancing around Rosalind to the music of Colin's pipe is another reminiscence of the Sidhe legends. "All the details,--the fairy hill, far off from human pathway, guarded by fairies against the approach of anything unclean; the fairy music heard from a great distance; the hundred dancers, the fee herself in the center of the group; the disappearance at the approach of a mortal not initiated into the mysteries of the fairy folk--² all these are commonplaces in folk tradition."

There are many less distinct reflections of legendary lore in the Faerie Queens which are still worthy of note. For instance, the name "Una" is that of a fairy queen of Ireland, but it is not certain that Spenser got his name from this fairy. Britomart in her armor is much like the Irish war goddess Macha "with her red gold hair gathered

1

E. Greenlaw, op. cit.

2

E. Greenlaw, op. cit.

into her helmet". Macha was moreover, a pattern of perfect chastity like Britomart.¹ The resemblance of the hags, Envy and Detraction to the three terrible daughters of a chief of the Tuatha has been pointed out.² The three sisters had "coarse heads of hair all dishevelled; their eyes rheumy and redly bleared; their three mouths black and deformed, and in the gums of each evil woman of them a set of sharpest venomous and curved fangs; their three bony necks maintaining their heads upon these formidable beldames; their six arms extraordinarily long while the hideous and brutish nail that garnished every finger of theirs resembled the thick-butted, sharp-tipped oxhorn; six bandy legs.....supported them, and in their hands they had three hard and pointed distaffs."³ The resemblance to Spenser's hags with their ragged locks, dull eyes, deformed mouths with leathery lips, their long nails like "puttocks claws", and their distaffs, is certainly marked.

Henley remarks the similarity of Timias' fight at the ford to the fight of Ferdiad at the ford with Cuchulain, but the similarity ends with the fact that the setting is at the ford, and that Ferdiad is forced to fight by a threat of disgrace, probably a little like Despetto or Decetto.

Likewise, the visit of Thyania to Satyrane in the forest (I, vi, 21) is only slightly like the visit of Muirna to her son Fion. Only the fact that a mother, separated from her son, visits him in his forest home can suggest the parallel which Henley mentions.

¹
P. Henley, op. cit. p 113

²
Ibid, p. 124

³
Ibid

The picture of Lust (IV, vii, 5-7) is a masterpiece of grotesquerie suggesting some mad dream or a monster from fairy land. Though he derives from other sources also, he owes something to the classic Celtic monsters. "In the Mabinogion, in the Story of Kilbrish and Olwen, Gweyl, son of Gwested had lips so large that he could drop one below his waist, and cover his head with the other."¹

These resemblances serve to show that, although the reflection is sometimes vague and the parallel uncertain, Spenser absorbed much of the atmosphere and feeling of the lore of Erin. Celtic gods and fairies appear in his Faerie Queens, adapted to the allegory, but still preserving much of the characteristic features of the originals.

¹

L. Whitney, op. cit.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

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The preceding chapters have been an attempt to show that Ireland exercised a very definite influence on Spenser, and to point out the specific evidences of that influence in the Faerie Queene. These evidences have been considered under four heads. We first discussed the political policy of subjection which Spenser advocates in his defense of Lord Grey and sought to prove that this policy was the natural result of the poet's intimate connection with the government as an official of the crown. Considered in the light of the prevalent governmental policies of Spenser's age, the situation of Ireland, and the necessity for immediate and decisive action, the poet's position is understandable. His diagnosis shows keen judgment and thorough study of the facts. If he was a champion of England's dominion before he came to Ireland, his experiences intensified his opinions and gave them body, making his conviction so strong that the last books of the Faerie Queene, as well as his prose tracts, ring with his cry for decisive action to insure Ireland for the crown.

In the second place, we considered the effect of Spenser's experiences in Ireland on the general conception of the Faerie Queene and mentioned many of the concrete details drawn from the Irish wars which give color and vitality to the narrative. True Englishman that he was, Spenser saw in Ireland a contest between good and evil not unlike that which he was recounting in his poem. So it happens very

naturally that the knights of the Maydenhood are Englishmen who do battle against the powers of evil, many of whom bear a marked resemblance to the Irish rebels. Other native types besides the rebel soldiers are also distinguishable. We believe that Spenser's varied experiences in war-torn Ireland provided him with a wealth of graphic details which give body and vividness to his tales—a sort of realism which he could hardly have attained in England.

Thirdly, we have shown how much of the topography of Ireland has become a part of Fairy Land. Definite place names occur in several passages, and in others we find more or less definite allusions to Irish scenery, particularly that which the poet knew best in Munster. During his years at Kilkenny Spenser came to know Nature intimately, and not merely through the spectacles of literary convention. He found the wild beauty of the land, magnificent even in ruin, a fit setting for his narrative, and he makes an ever increasing use of it in his descriptions of Gloriana's realm. Thus, another bit of realism to be found in Spenser's fanciful world may be attributed to the influence of Ireland.

Lastly, it seems probable that Spenser knew much of the legend and history of Ireland, and certain passages in the Faerie Queene have a decided Celtic note. Fees and monsters resemble some of those beings who people the legendary Ireland, and their magic dwellings and their enchantments are something like those which are common in Celtic lore.

It would have been strange indeed if the Faerie Queene bore no trace of the land where most of it was written, especially when that land was such a treasure house of romance and adventure. The fact that the reflections of Ireland grow more numerous as the tale proceeds in-

dicate a growing interest in the country. As Spenser became better acquainted with it, he fell more and more under its charm, and so absorbed the atmosphere of the place, that he used Irish material in his narrative as frequently and as unconsciously as he earlier used his classical sources. He took from Ireland both beauty and terror, both legend and life, both the real world of men, and the fantastic land of gods and fairies. Thus far Keightley is completely justified in calling him "the poet of Ireland",¹ for Ireland, more than England, is reflected in his tale. But we must not forget, for the poet never did, that he was an Englishman. If he saw and admired Ireland and its traditions, he never became an Irishman in any sense of the word. His point of view was consistently English, and his dream was of an English Ireland which he hoped would some day be realized.

¹
T. Keightley, "Spenser, the Poet of Ireland"--Notes and Queries--
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