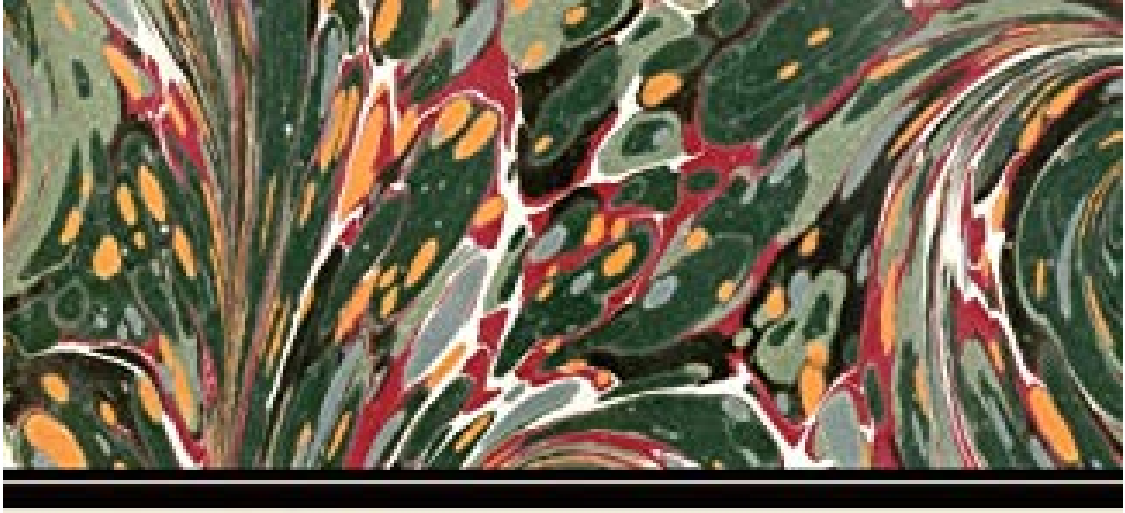
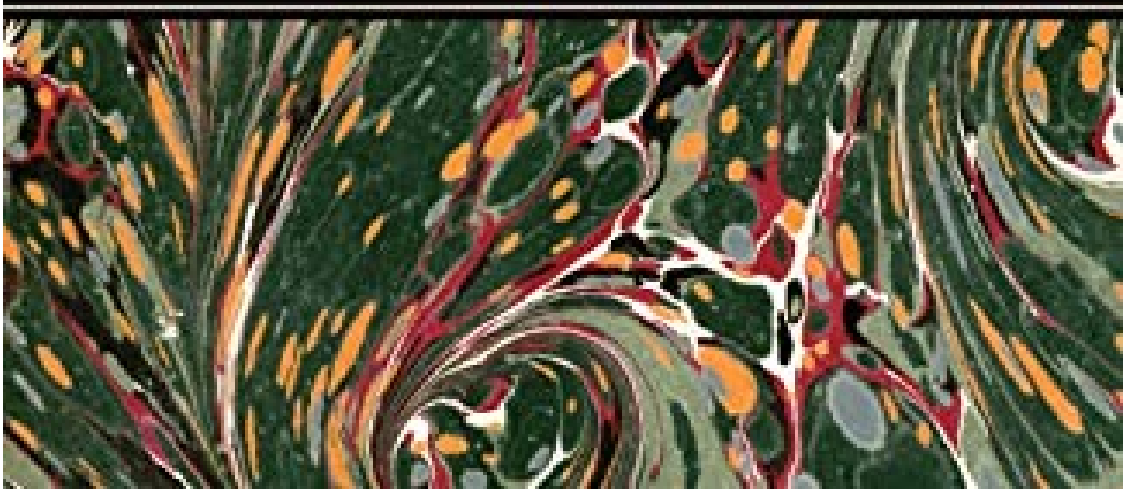


English Verse - Specimens Illustrating Its Principles And History

Raymond Macdonald Alden



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ENGLISH VERSE: SPECIMENS ILLUSTRATING ITS
PRINCIPLES AND HISTORY ***

ENGLISH VERSE

SPECIMENS ILLUSTRATING ITS PRINCIPLES AND HISTORY

CHOSEN AND EDITED
BY
RAYMOND MACDONALD ALDEN, PH.D.
Associate Professor in Leland Stanford Junior University



NEW YORK

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TO

my Father and Mother

WHO HAVE GIVEN
BOTH THE INSPIRATION AND THE OPPORTUNITY
FOR ALL MY STUDIES

PREFACE

The aim of this book is to give the materials for the inductive study of English verse. Its origin was in certain university courses, for which it proved to be necessary—often for use in a single hour's work—to gather almost numberless books, some of which must ordinarily be inaccessible except in the vicinity of large libraries. I have tried to extract from these books the materials necessary for the study of English verse-forms, adding notes designed to make the specimens intelligible and useful.

Dealing with a subject where theories are almost as numerous as those who have written on it, it has been my purpose to avoid the setting forth of my own opinions, and to present the subject-matter in a way suited, so far as possible, to the use of those holding widely divergent views. In the arrangement and naming of the earlier sections of the book, some systematic theory of the subject—accepted at least

tentatively—was indeed indispensable; but I trust that even here those who would apply to English verse a different classification or terminology may be able to discard what they cannot approve and to make use of the specimens from their own standpoint. Even where (as in these introductory sections) the notes seem to overtop the text somewhat threateningly, they are invariably intended—as the type indicates—to be subordinate. Where it has been possible to do so, I have preferred to present comments on the specimens in the words of other writers, and have not confined these notes to opinions with which I wholly agree, but only to those which seem worthy of attention. My own views on the more disputed elements of the subject (such as the relations of time and accent in our verse, the presence of "quantity" in English, and the terminology of the subject) I have reserved for Part Three, where I trust they will be found helpful by some readers, but where they may easily be passed over.

To classify the materials of this subject is peculiarly difficult, and one who tries to solve the problem will early abandon the hope of being able to follow any system with consistency. Main divisions and subdivisions will inevitably conflict and overlap. For practical purposes, basing my arrangement in part on that found convenient in university lectures (which it will be seen is not altogether unlike that followed by Schipper in his *Englische Metrik*), I have divided the specimens of verse into two main divisions, each of which is suggested by a word in the sub-title of the book. Part One contains specimens designed to illustrate the principles of English verse, arranged in topical order. Part Two contains specimens designed to illustrate the history of the more important forms

of English verse, arranged—in the several divisions—in chronological order. Part Three has already been spoken of. Part Four contains extracts from important critical writers on the place and function of the verse-element in poetry,—matters which give us the *raison d'être* for the whole study of versification.

If there had ever been hope of making the collection of specimens fairly complete, even in a representative sense, this would have been dissipated by the discovery, during the very time of the book's going through the press, of a number of additional specimens which it seemed wicked to omit. Doubtless every reader will miss some favorite selection which might well have been included, and suggestions as to important omissions will be received gratefully. The attempt has been to put students on the track of all the more important lines of development of English verse, and to indicate, by including a considerable number of specimens from early periods, the continuity of this development from the times of our Saxon forefathers to our own.

Little consistency can be claimed for the practice observed in the matter of modernizing texts that date from transition periods like the sixteenth century. In some cases the text has been modernized, or retained in its original form, according as it seemed well to emphasize either the permanent significance or the historical position of the specimen in question. In other cases the form of the text was determined merely by the best edition accessible for purposes of reproduction.

Dates have been appended to the specimens in those sections where chronology is a significant element. It

has not always been possible to verify these dates with thoroughness, or to distinguish between the date of writing and that of publication; but it is hoped that inaccuracies of this sort will at least not be found of a character to misrepresent the historical relations of the specimens. Dates are not ordinarily given for the poems of writers still living.

In the notes on the specimens I have tried to distinguish between material likely to be useful for all students of the subject and that going more into detail, which is intended only for advanced or special students. Notes of the second class are printed in smaller type. There has been no attempt to give the notes of a bibliographical character any pretension to completeness. One may well hesitate to add, in this direction, to the admirable material presented in the *Methods and Materials of Literary Criticism* of Professors Gayley and Scott.

I have resisted strenuously all temptation to choose or to annotate specimens on general grounds of æsthetic enjoyment, apart from the distinct study of verse-forms. Yet it would be useless to deny having sometimes made choice of particular verses, all other considerations being equal, for their poetic or literary value over and above their prosodical. I shall not claim for the collection what Boswell did for Dr. Johnson's Dictionary, that "he was so attentive in the choice" of the illustrative passages "that one may read page after page ... with improvement and pleasure;" yet I may say that, so far from fearing that the enjoyment of any poem will be injured by a proper attention to the elements of its metrical form, it is my hope that many a haunting verse may linger, a perpetual possession of beauty, in the memory of the student who first found it here classified under a

technical name.

Many obligations are to be acknowledged to scholars of whose advice I have availed myself. Most kindly aid has been received from Professor G. L. Kittredge and Dr. Fred N. Robinson, of Harvard University; from Professor Felix E. Schelling, of the University of Pennsylvania; from my friend, Mr. H. P. Earle, of Stanford University; and from my colleague, Dr. Ewald Flügel. My obligation to Schipper's monumental works on English verse will be obvious to every scholar. They suggested many of the specimens of verse-forms, and are also represented by translations or paraphrases in the notes; references to Schipper, without full title, are to the *Englische Metrik*,—the larger work. I have also made thankful use of Mr. John Addington Symonds's essays on Blank Verse, and of Professor Corson's *Primer of English Verse*,—both somewhat unscientific but highly suggestive works. The section on Artificial French Forms obviously owes very much to Mr. Gleeson White's *Ballades and Rondeaus*. A book to which my obligation is out of all proportion to the number of actual quotations from it is Mr. J. B. Mayor's *Chapters on English Metre*. This modest but satisfying volume seemed to me, when I first was taking up the study of English verse, to be a grateful relief from the thorny and often fruitless discussions with which the subject had been overgrown; and in returning to it again and again, I have never failed to renew the impression. Its suggestions underlie a good part of the system of classification and terminology adopted for this book. The new and enlarged edition came to hand too late for use, but I was able to include references to it in the notes.

I must also record thanks to those authors and

publishers who have courteously given permission for the reproduction of their publications: to Mr. John Lane, for permission to quote from the works of Mr. William Watson and Mr. Stephen Phillips; to Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin and Company, for permission to make extracts from the poems of Mr. William Vaughn Moody and from Mr. Stedman's *Nature and Elements of Poetry*; to Macmillan and Company, Limited, of London, for permission to make extracts from Professor Butcher's *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry* and from Mr. Courthope's *Life in Poetry and Law in Taste*; to Professor F. B. Gummere and The Macmillan Company of New York, for permission to quote from the former's *Beginnings of Poetry*; to the Lothrop Publishing Company of Boston, for permission to reprint Mr. Clinton Scollard's villanelle, "Spring Knocks at Winter's Frosty Door," from the volume entitled *With Reed and Lyre*; to Mrs. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, for permission to reprint her rondeau, "A Man must Live," from the volume entitled *On This Our World* (published by Small, Maynard and Company); to Dr. Samuel Minturn Peck, for permission to reprint one of the triolets called "Under the Rose," from his volume entitled *Cap and Bells*; to the Frederick A. Stokes Company, for permission to reprint Mr. Frank D. Sherman's "Ballade to Austin Dobson," from the volume entitled *Madrigals and Catches*. Dr. S. Weir Mitchell, Mr. W. E. Henley, and Mr. Edmund Gosse have given generous permission to quote freely from their poems. Mr. Henley was also good enough to suggest the choice of the rondeau from his "Bric-à-Brac"; and Mr. Gosse, whose unfailing courtesy follows up his numerous published aids to students of English poetry, has also added some personal notes on the history of the heroic couplet.

Finally, it should be said that a considerable part of the studies resulting in this book was carried on while the editor held the Senior Fellowship in English on the Harrison Foundation in the University of Pennsylvania. If, therefore, the book should prove of service to any, the fact will be a single additional tribute to the munificence of that foundation.

R. M. A.

STANFORD UNIVERSITY, CALIFORNIA,
November, 1902.

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PART ONE

ENGLISH VERSE

I. ACCENT AND TIME

A.—KINDS OF ACCENT

THE accents of English syllables as appearing in verse are commonly classified in two ways: according to degree of intensity, and according to cause or significance.

Obviously there can be no fixed limits to the number of degrees of intensity recognized in syllabic accent or stress. It is common to speak of three such degrees: syllables having accent (stressed), syllables having secondary accent, and syllables without accent (unstressed). Schipper makes four groups: Principal Accent (*Hauptaccent* or *Hochton*), Secondary Accent (*Nebenaccent* or *Tiefton*), No Accent (*Tonlosigkeit*), and Disappearance of Sound (*Stummheit*). In illustration he gives the word *ponderous*, where the first syllable has the chief accent, the last a secondary accent, the second no accent; while in the verse

"Most ponderous and substantial
things"

the second syllable is suppressed or silent.

Mr. A. J. Ellis, in like manner, recognized three principal classes of syllables: those stressed in the first degree, those stressed in the second degree, and those unstressed.[1] In the following lines from *Paradise Lost* he indicated these three degrees, as he recognized them, by the figures 2, 1, 0, written underneath.

```
Of  man's  first  disobedience,
and the fruit
 0   2      1   0 0 2    0     0   0

Of that forbidden tree, whose
mortal taste
```

```
 0   1   0 2    0   1      0    2  0

Brought death into the world,
and all our woe,
   1      2    0 0  0    2     0    1

With loss of Eden, till one
greater man
  0    1   0 2  0    0   0    2   0

Restore us, and regain the
blissful seat,
  0  2   0   0   0  2   0    2   0

Sing, heavenly Muse, that, on
the secret top
  2     2    0  2      1    0  0   2

Of Horeb or of Sinai, didst
inspire
 0  2  0  0  0  2  0    1    0  2

That shepherd, who first taught
the chosen seed
  1    2   0    0    2     2     0

In the beginning, how the
heavens and earth
 0  0   0  2   0   1   0    2      0

Rose out of chaos.[2]
 2    0   0  2  0
```

It is worthy of note that the secondary accent seems originally to have been a more important factor in English verse than it is commonly considered to be in modern periods. In Anglo-Saxon verse the

combination of a primary stress, a secondary stress, and an unstressed syllable, is a recognized type. In modern verse the reader is likely to make an effort to reduce all syllables to the type of either stress or no-stress. In such a verse as the following, however (from Matthew Arnold's *Forsaken Merman*),—

"And I lose my poor soul, Merman,
here with thee,"—

we may find such a combination as that just referred to as familiar in Anglo-Saxon rhythm. The syllables "*soul, Merman*" are respectively cases of primary stress, secondary stress, and no-stress. On this matter see further the remark of Luick, cited on p. 156, below.

The element of Pitch is not ordinarily included in the treatment of versification, as it is not ordinarily recognized as having any significance peculiar to verse. According to Professor J. W. Bright, however, there is such a thing as a "pitch-accent" which plays an important part in verse where the word-accent conflicts with that of the regular metre. Under certain exigencies, he says, "*un-governed, pre-cisely, re-markable,* and *Je-rusalem* ... are naturally pronounced with a pitch-accent upon the first syllables, and with the undisturbed expiratory word-accent upon the second. It will of course be understood that when the word-accent is defined as expiratory this term does not exclude the inherent pitch of English stress. Force, quantity, and pitch are combined in our word-stress (or word-accent), both primary and secondary; but in the secondary stress used as ictus there is a noticeable change in the proportions of these elements, the pitch being relatively increased. An answer is thus won for the question: How do we naturally pronounce two stresses in juxtaposition on the same word, or on adjacent words closely joined grammatically? This is further illustrated in the specially

emphasized words of such expressions as 'The idea!'" where Professor Bright marks the pitch-accent on the first syllable of "idea," retaining the stress-accent on the second syllable. In the line

"Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit"

he marks a pitch-accent where the word-stress and metrical stress are in conflict, that is, on the syllables "dis-" and "and." "The rhythmic use of 'disobedience,'" he says, "illustrates with its four syllables (as here used) as many recognizable varieties of stress. The first syllable has a secondary word-accent, raised to a pitch-accent for ictus; the second is wholly unaccented; the third has the chief word-accent, employed as ictus (the accent of the preceding word, "first," is subordinate to the rhythm); the fourth has a secondary word-accent which remains unchanged in the thesis." The conclusion is that "ictus in conflict requires a pitch-accent." (All these quotations are from an article on 'Proper Names in Old English Verse,' in the *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, n.s. vol. vii. No. 3). Professor Bright's theory of pitch-accent is a part of his general theory of opposition to what he calls the "sense-doctrine" of the reading of verse,—that is, the accepted doctrine that the word and sentence accents must ordinarily take precedence of the metrical accent.

According to cause or significance, accents are commonly classed in three groups: Etymological or Word Accent, Syntactical or Rhetorical Accent, and Metrical Accent. Accents of the first class are due to the original stress of the syllable in English speech; those of the second class are due to the importance of the syllable in the sentence; those of the third class are due to the place of the syllable in the metrical scheme. In the verse

"Mary had a little lamb,"

the first syllable may be said to be stressed primarily for etymological reasons, the seventh primarily for syntactical or rhetorical reasons, and the third (which would not be accented in prose) for metrical reasons.

The general law of English verse is that only those syllables which bear the accent of the first class (that is, which are stressed in common speech), together with monosyllables which on occasion are stressed in common speech, shall be placed so as to receive the metrical stress; and that, if the word-stress and the metrical stress apparently conflict, the metrical stress must yield. Less generally, the rhetorical or syntactical accent in the same way takes precedence of the metrical. In both cases exceptions are of course numerous.

The following are examples of verses showing a conflict between the normal prose-accent and the normal verse-accent, where—as commonly read—the prose- (word-) accent triumphs.

> The blessed damozel leaned out
> *From the gold bar* of heaven.
>
> (ROSSETTI: *The Blessed Damozel.*)

> *Love is* a smoke *raised with* the fume of
> sighs;
> Being purged, a fire *sparkling* in
> lover's eyes;
> Being vexed, a sea *nourished* with
> lover's tears.
>
> (SHAKSPERE: *Romeo and Juliet*, I. i. 196 ff.)

Art thou so bare and full of
wretchedness,
And fear'st to die? *famine* is in thy
cheeks,
Need and oppression starveth in thine
eyes.

(SHAKSPERE: *ib.* V. i. 68 ff.)

Till, at his second bidding, Darkness
fled,
Light shone, and order from disorder
sprung.
Swift to their several quarters hasted
then
The cumbrous elements—*Earth*,
Flood, *Air*, Fire;
And this ethereal quintessence of
Heaven
Flew upward, *spirited* with various
forms,
That rolled orbicular, and turned to
stars
Numberless, as thou seest, and how
they move.

(MILTON: *Paradise Lost*, iii. 712 ff.)

She was a gordian shape of dazzling
hue,
Vermilion-spotted, golden, green, and
blue;
Striped like a zebra, freckled like a
pard,
Eyed like a peacock, and all crimson
barred.

(KEATS: *Lamia*, i. 47 ff.)

"Boys!" shriek'd the old king, but
vainlier than a hen
To her false daughters in the pool; for
none
Regarded; neither seem'd there more
to say.
Back rode we to my father's camp,
and found
He thrice had sent a herald to the
gates.

(TENNYSON: *The Princess*, v. 318 ff.)

Sequestered nest!—this kingdom,
limited
Alone by one old *populous green* wall;
Tenanted by the ever-busy flies,
*Gray crickets and shy lizards and quick
spiders*;
Each family of the silver-threaded
moss—
Which, look through near, this way,
and it appears
A stubble-field *or a cane-brake*, a
marsh
Of bulrush whitening *in the* sun: *laugh
now*!

(BROWNING: *Paracelsus*, i. 36 ff.)

On the other hand, we find verses showing a conflict between prose and verse accent, where the verse-accent may be regarded as triumphing wholly or in part. Where this triumph is complete, the accent is said to be *wrenched*; as, for example, in old ballad

endings like "north countree."[3] Where there is a compromise effected in reading, the accent is said to be *hovering*; as in one of Shakspere's songs,—

"It was a lover and his lass ...
That o'er the green *corn-field*
did pass."

I sat with Love upon a woodside well,
Leaning across the water, I and he;
Nor ever did he speak nor looked at
me,
But touched his lute wherein was
audible
The certain secret thing he had to tell:
Only our mirrored eyes met *silently*
In the low wave; and that sound came
to be
The passionate voice I knew; and my
tears fell.
And at their fall, his eyes beneath
grew hers;
And with his foot and with his *wing-
feathers*
He swept the spring that watered my
heart's drouth.
Then the dark ripples spread to
waving hair,
And as I stooped, her own lips rising
there
Bubbled with brimming kisses at my
mouth.

(ROSSETTI: *Willowwood. House of Life*,
Sonnet xlix.)

I wish my grave were growing green,

A winding-sheet drawn ower my een,
And I in Helen's arms *lying,*
On fair Kirconnell lea.

(*Fair Helen*; old ballad.)

For the stars and the winds are unto her
As raiment, as songs of the *harp-player.*

(SWINBURNE: Chorus in *Atalanta in Calydon.*)

Nothing is better, I well think,
Than love; the hidden *well-water*
Is not so delicate to drink:
This was well seen of me and her.

(SWINBURNE: *The Leper.*)

These wrenched accents are characteristic of one phase of the so-called "pre-Raphaelite" poetry of the Victorian period; in part, no doubt, they are due to the influence of the old ballads. My colleague Professor Newcomer has suggested that they are partly due, also, to a dislike for the combative accent which would occur where two heavy syllables came together (accented as commonly) in a compound like "harp-player."

Of special interest are the examples of wrenched and hovering accent found in the verse of Sir Thomas Wyatt and the Earl of Surrey,—more especially in Wyatt. These mark the time when the syllable-counting principle was coming into prominence in English verse, under the new culture of the days of Henry VIII. The first conscious followers of this principle seem to have given it such

prominence that a verse seemed good to them if it contained the requisite number of syllables, whether the accents conformed to any regular system or not. In the case of Wyatt we can also compare the original forms of many of his poems, as preserved in manuscript, with the revised forms as printed in Tottel's Miscellany (1557). (See Dr. Flügel's transcriptions from the Wyatt Mss., in *Anglia*, vol. xviii.) The following is the octave of one of the sonnets, as found in the Ms.:

"Avysing the bright bemes of these fayer
Iyes
where he is that myn oft moisteth and
wassheth
the werid mynde streght from the hert
departeth
for to rest in his woroldly paradise
And fynde the swete bitter under this
gyse
what webbes he hath wrought well he
parceveth
whereby with himselfe on love he
playneth
that spurreth with fyer: and bridillith
with Ise."

(*Anglia,* xviii. 465.)

Compare this with the revised form in Tottel's edition:

"Avisyng the bright beames of those
fayre eyes,
Where he abides that mine oft moistes
and washeth:
The weried mynd streight from the hart
departeth,
To rest within hys worldly Paradise,
And bitter findes the swete, under this
gyse.
What webbes there he hath wrought,

well he preceaveth
Whereby then with him self on love he playneth,
That spurs wyth fire, and brydleth eke with yse."

(Arber Reprint, p. 40.)

It appears that this revision was the work of the editor, who had a better sense of true English rhythm than the poet himself. Alscher, however, in his work on Wyatt, contends that Wyatt doubtless revised his own verses so as to give them their finished form. (See *Sir Thomas Wyatt und Seine Stellung*, etc., p. 49.) Other lines in Wyatt's verse where the number of syllables is counted but where the accents are faulty, are these:

"The long love that in my thought I harbour."

"And there campeth displaying his banner."

"And there him hideth and not appeareth."

"For good is the life, ending faithfully."

Another large group of hovering accents is that formed by French words with such terminations as *-our*, *-ance*, *-ace*, *-age*, *-ant*, *-ess*. In such cases the original tendency of the word was to accent the final syllable; but the general tendency of English accents being recessive, the words often passed through a transitional period when the accent was variable or "hovering." The first of the four lines just quoted shows us a word of this character.

For an interesting presentation of certain phases of the laws of stress in English verse, see Robert Bridges's *Milton's Prosody* (ed. 1901), Appendix J, "on the Rules of Stress Rhythms."

B.—TIME-INTERVALS

The fundamental principle of the rhythm of English verse (and indeed of any rhythm) is that *the accents appear at regular time-intervals*. In practice there is of course great freedom in departing from this regularity, the equal time-intervals being at times only a standard of rhythm to which the varying successions of accented and unaccented syllables are mentally referred. Where the equal time-intervals are observed with substantial regularity, two sorts of verse are still to be clearly distinguished: that in which not only the intervals of time but the numbers of syllables between the accents are substantially equal and regular, and that in which the number of syllables varies. The latter class is that of the native Germanic metres; the former is that of the Romance metres, and of modern English verse as influenced by them. With the development of regularity in the counting of syllables there has perhaps also taken place a development of regularity in the regular counting of the time-intervals. In other words, the modern English reader, where the number of syllables between accents is variable, makes the time-intervals as nearly equal as possible by lengthening and shortening the syllables in the manner permitted by the freedom of English speech; in early English verse, where the number of syllables between accents varied very greatly, we cannot be sure that the time-intervals were so accurately felt or preserved in recitation.

i. *Verse showing fairly regular intervals between accents*

Avoid extremes; and shun the fault of such
Who still are pleas'd too little or too much.
At every trifle scorn to take offence,
That always shows great pride, or little sense:
Those heads, as stomachs, are not sure the best,
Which nauseate all, and nothing can digest.
Yet let not each gay turn thy rapture move;
For fools admire, but men of sense approve:
As things seem large which we through mist descry,
Dulness is ever apt to magnify.

(POPE: *Essay on Criticism*, ll. 384-393.)

Louder, louder chant the lay—
Waken, lords and ladies gay!
Tell them youth and mirth and glee
Run a course as well as we;
Time, stern huntsman! who can baulk,
Staunch as hound and fleet as hawk;
Think of this, and rise with day,
Gentle lords and ladies gay!

(SCOTT: *Hunting Song*.)

Larger constellations burning, mellow moons and happy skies,
Breadths of tropic shade and palms in

cluster, knots of Paradise.

(TENNYSON: *Locksley Hall.*)

Wild April, enkindled to laughter and
storm by the kiss of
the wildest of winds that
blow,
Calls loud on his brother for witness;
his hands that were
laden with blossom are
sprinkled with snow.

(SWINBURNE: *March.*)

ii. ***Verse showing irregular intervals between accents***

Gegrētte ðā gumena gehwylcne,
hwate helm-berend, hindeman sīðe,
swæse gesīðas: "Nolde ic sweord
beran,
wæpen tō wyrme, gif ic wiste hū
wið ðām āglæcean elles meahte
gylpe wiðgrīpan, swā ic gīo wið
Grendle dyde;
ac ic ðær heaðu-fȳres hātes wēne,
oreðes ond attres; forðon ic mē on
hafu
bord ond byrnan. Nelle ic beorges
weard
oferflēon fōtes trem,
ac unc sceal weorðan æt
wealle, swā unc wyrd getēoð,
Metod manna gehwæs. Ic eom on
mōde from,

þæt ic wið þone gūð-flogan gylp
ofersitte.

(*Beowulf*, ll. 2516-2528. ab. 700.)

Ich herde men upo mold make muche
mon,
hou he beþ itened of here
tilyynge:
gode yeres & corn boþe beþ agon,
ne kepeþ here no sawe ne no
song synge.
Nou we mote worche, nis þer non
oþer won,
mai ich no lengore lyue wiþ mi
lesinge.
Yet þer is a bitterore bit to þe bon,
for euer þe furþe peni mot to þe
kynge.[4]

(*The Farmer's Complaint*, ab. 1300; in
Böddeker's *Altenglische Dichtungen*, p.
102, and Wright's *Political Songs*, p.
149.)

I will speake out aloude, I care not
who heare it:
Sirs, see that my harnesse, my tergat
and my shield
Be made as bright now as when I was
last in fielde,
As white as I shoulde to warre againe
to-morrowe;
For sicke shall I be but I worke some
folke sorow.
Therefore see that all shine as bright
as Sainct George,

Or as doth a key newly come from the
smiths forge.

(N. UDALL: *Ralph Roister Doister*, IV. iii.
13-19. 1566.)

To this, this Oake cast him to replie
Well as he couth; but his enemie
Had kindled such coles of displeasure,
That the good man noulde stay his
leasure,
But home him hasted with furious
heate,
Encreasing his wrath with many a
threat:
His harmefull Hatchet he hent in
hand,
(Alas! that it so ready should stand!)
And to the field alone he speedeth,
(Aye little helpe to harme there
needeth!)
Anger nould let him speake to the
tree,
Enaunter his rage mought cooled bee;
But to the roote bent his sturdie
stroake,
And made many wounds in the waste
Oake.

(SPENSER: *Shepherd's Calendar,
February*. 1579.)

Through many a dark and dreary
vale
They passed, and many a region
dolorous,
O'er many a frozen, many a fiery Alp,

Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens,
and shades of death—
A universe of death, which God by
curse
Created evil, for evil only good;
Where all life dies, death lives, and
Nature breeds,
Perverse, all monstrous, all prodigious
things,
Abominable, inutterable, and worse
Than fables yet have feigned, or fear
conceived.

(MILTON: *Paradise Lost*, II. 618 ff. 1667.)

The night is chill; the forest bare;
Is it the wind that moaneth bleak?
There is not wind enough in the air
To move away the ringlet curl
From the lovely lady's cheek—
There is not wind enough to twirl
The one red leaf, the last of its clan,
That dances as often as dance it can,
Hanging so light, and hanging so
high,
On the topmost twig that looks up at
the sky.

(COLERIDGE: *Christabel*, Part I. 1816.)

In his Preface to this poem Coleridge said: "The metre of the *Christabel* is not, properly speaking, irregular, though it may seem so from its being founded on a new principle; namely, that of counting in each line the accents, not the syllables. Though

the latter may vary from seven to twelve, yet in each line the accents will be found to be only four. Nevertheless this occasional variation in number of syllables is not introduced wantonly, or for the mere ends of convenience, but in correspondence with some transition, in the nature of the imagery or passion." The verse is accurately described, but it has frequently been pointed out as curious that Coleridge should have spoken of it as "founded on a new principle," when the principle in question was that of native English verse from the earliest times.[5]

For other specimens of verse showing irregularity in the number of syllables between the accents, see Part Two, under Non-syllable-counting Four-stress Verse.

iii. *Silent Time-intervals between Syllables (Pauses)*

(a) Pauses not filling the time of syllables.

Most English verses of more than eight syllables are divided not only into the time-intervals between the accents, but also into two parts (which Schipper calls "rhythmical series") by the *Cesura*. The Cesura is a pause not counted out of the regular time of the rhythm, but corresponding to the pauses between "phrases" in music, and nearly always coinciding with syntactical or rhetorical divisions of the sentence.

The medial cesura is the typical pause of this kind, dividing the verse into two parts of approximately equal length. In much early English verse, and in French verse, this medial cesura is almost universal; in modern English verse (and in that of some early poets, notably Chaucer) there is great freedom in the

placing of the cesura, and also in omitting it altogether. The importance of this matter in the history of English decasyllabic verse will appear in Part Two.

In the early Elizabethan period the impression was still general that there should be a regular medial cesura. Spenser seems to have been the first to imitate the greater freedom of Chaucer in this regard. See the Latin dissertation on Spenser's verse of E. Legouis (*Quomodo E. Spenserus*, etc., Paris, 1896), and the summary of its results by Mr. J. B. Fletcher in *Modern Language Notes* for November, 1898. "Spenser," says Mr. Fletcher, "revived for 'heroic verse' the neglected variety in unity of his self-acknowledged master, Chaucer." In Gascoigne's *Notes of Instruction concerning the making of verse or ryme in English* (1575), we find: "There are also certayne pauses or restes in a verse whiche may be called Ceasures.... In mine opinion in a verse of eight sillables, the pause will stand best in the middest, in a verse of tenne it will be placed at the ende of the first foure sillables; in a verse of twelve, in the midst.... In Rithme royall, it is at the wryters discretion, and forceth not where the pause be untill the ende of the line." This greater liberty allowed the rime royal is doubtless due to the influence of Chaucer on that form. For Gascoigne's practice in printing his verse with medial cesura, even without regard to rhetorical divisions, see the specimen given below.

Another interesting Elizabethan account of the cesura is found in Puttenham's *Arte of English Poesie* (1589), where the writer compares the verse-pause to a stop made by a traveler at an inn for rest and refreshment. (Arber's Reprint, p. 88.)

Specimen of French alexandrine, showing the regular medial cesura:

Trois fois cinquante jours le général

naufrage
Dégasta l'univers; en fin d'un tel
ravage
L'immortel s'émouvant, n'eût pas
sonné si tôt
La retraite des eaux que soudain flot
sur flot
Elles gaignent au pied; tous les
fleuves s'abaissant.
Le mer rentre en prison; les
montagnes renaissent.

(DU BARTAS: *La Première Semaine*.
1579.)

See further, on the character of the French alexandrine and its medial cesura, in Part Two, under Six-stress Verse.

Specimen of early blank verse printed with regular medial cesura:

O Knights, O Squires, O Gentle blouds
yborne,
You were not borne, al onely for your
selves:
Your countrie claymes, some part of
al your paines.
There should you live, and therein
should you toyle,
To hold up right, and banish cruel
wrong,
To helpe the pore, to bridle backe the
riche,
To punish vice, and vertue to
advaunce,
To see God servde, and Belzebub

suppresst.
You should not trust, lieftenaunts in
your rome,
And let them sway, the scepter of
your charge,
Whiles you (meane while) know
scarcely what is don,
Nor yet can yeld, accompt if you were
callde.

(GASCOIGNE: *The Steel Glass*, ll. 439 ff.
1576.)

For specimens of regular medial cesura, and of variable cesura, in modern verse, see under the Decasyllabic Couplet and Blank Verse, in Part Two.

The Cesura is called *masculine* when it follows an accented syllable. (For examples, see previous specimen from Gascoigne.) It is called *feminine* when it follows an unaccented syllable. Two varieties of the feminine cesura are also distinguished: the Lyric, when the pause occurs inside a foot; *e.g.*:

"This wicked traitor, whom I thus
accuse;"

the Epic, when the pause occurs after an extra (hypermetrical) light syllable; *e.g.*:

"To Canterbury with ful devout
corage."

"But how of Cawdor? the thane of
Cawdor lives."

The "epic" cesura is quite as characteristic of dramatic blank verse as of epic.

The pause occurring at the end of a line is equally regular with the medial pause, and corresponds in the same way to a phrase-pause in music. It is an element of the same character, then, as the cesura, though not bearing the same name. It coincides less closely than the cesura with syntactical and rhetorical pauses. When there is no corresponding syntactical or rhetorical pause at the end of the line (in other words, when the metrical pause marking the end of the verse cannot be prominently represented in reading without interfering with the expression of the sense), the line is said to be "run-on." Such an ending is also called *enjambement*. The importance of this distinction between "end-stopped" and "run-on" lines will appear in the notes on the Decasyllabic Couplet and Blank Verse, in Part Two.

(*b*) Pauses filling the time of syllables.

A second class of silent time-intervals, or pauses, is to be distinguished from the cesural pause by the fact that in this case the time of the pause is counted in the metrical scheme. Pauses of this class correspond to rests in music; and as in the case of such rests, their occurrence is exceptional.

> Of fustian he wered a gipoun
> ˄ Al bismotered with his habergeoun.
>
> For him was lever have at his beddes heed
> ˄ Twenty bokes, clad in blak or reed.
>
> (CHAUCER: Prologue to *Canterbury Tales*, 75 f. and 293 f.)

This omission of the first light syllable is characteristic of Chaucer's couplet and of Middle

English verse generally. (See Schipper, vol. i. p. 462, and ten Brink's *Chaucer's Sprache und Verskunst*, p. 175.) In modern verse it is not usually permitted.

> The time doth pass, ˄ yet shall not my
> love.
>
> (WYATT: *The joy so short, alas!*)

The omitted syllable following the medial pause is closely parallel to that at the beginning of the verse.

> Stay! ˄ The king hath thrown his
> warder down.
>
> (*Richard II*, I. iii. 118.)
>
> Kneel thou down, Philip. ˄ But rise
> more great.
>
> (*King John*, I. i. 161.)
>
> In drops of sorrow. ˄ Sons, kinsmen,
> thanes.
>
> (*Macbeth*, I. iv. 35.)
>
> Than the soft myrtle. ˄ But man,
> proud man.
>
> (*Measure for Measure*, II. ii. 117.)

These specimens of pauses in Shakspere's verse indicate the natural varieties of dramatic form. In such cases the pause often occurs between speeches, or where some action is to be understood as filling the time; as in the second instance, where the accolade is given in the middle of the line. (See

Abbott's *Shakespearian Grammar*, pp. 413 ff.)

˄ Break, ˄ break, ˄ break,
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

(TENNYSON: *Break, Break, Break.*)

In Lanier's *Science of English Verse*, p. 101, this stanza is represented in musical notation, with rests, to show that rhythm "may be dependent on silences."

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to mind?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And auld ˄ lang ˄ syne?

(BURNS: *Auld Lang Syne.*)

Here the syllables "auld" and "lang" may be regarded as lengthened so as to fill the time of the missing light syllables. So in many cases there is a choice between compensatory lengthening and compensatory pause.

Thus ˄ said the Lord ˄ in the Vault
above the Cherubim,
Calling to the angels and the souls in their degree:
"Lo! Earth has passed away
On the smoke of Judgment

Day.
That Our word may be established
shall We gather up the sea?"

Loud ˄ sang the souls ˄ of the jolly,
jolly mariners:
"Plague upon the hurricane that made
us furl and flee!
But the war is done
between us,
In the deep the Lord
hath seen us
—
Our bones we'll leave the barracout',
and God may sink the sea!"

(KIPLING: *The Last Chantey.*)

This is an instance of a pause forming a regular part of the verse-rhythm. Thus in the first verse of each stanza the second and sixth syllables are omitted, and the result gives the characteristic effect of the rhythm. In measures where there is regular catalexis (that is, where the last light syllable of the verse is regularly omitted) the phenomenon is really of the same kind.

These, these will give the world
another heart,
And other pulses. Hear ye not the
hum
Of mighty workings?——
Listen awhile, ye nations, and be
dumb.

(Keats: *Sonnet to Haydon.*)

Call her once before you go,—
Call once yet!
In a voice that she will know,—
"Margaret! Margaret!"
Children's voices should be dear
(Call once more) to a mother's ear;
Children's voices, wild with pain,—
Surely she will come again!
Call her once, and come away;
This way, this way!...

Come, dear children, come away
down:
Call no more!
One last look at the white-walled
town,
And the little gray church on the
windy shore;
Then come down!
She will not come, though you call all
day;
Come away, come away!

(MATTHEW ARNOLD: *The Forsaken Merman.*)

In this specimen no attempt has been made to indicate the pauses, as different readers would interpret the verse variously. It will be found that this whole poem is a study in delicate changes and arrangements of time-intervals. The four stresses characteristic of the rhythm can be accounted for in such short lines as the second and tenth, properly read.

FOOTNOTES:

[1] *Transactions of the Philological Society*, 1875-76.

[2] According to a more elaborate system Mr. Ellis recognized nine varieties of force or stress, which he named in order as follows: subweak, weak, superweak, submean, mean, supermean, substrong, strong, superstrong. In like manner he named nine degrees each of length, pitch, weight, and silence. Length and Silence are both terms of duration of time. The meaning of Weight has not been generally understood, nor is the term ordinarily recognized. Mr. Ellis described it as "due to expression and mental conceptions of importance, resulting partly from expression in delivery, produced by quality of tone and gliding pitch, and partly from the mental effect of the constructional predominance of conceptions." On this whole scheme of Mr. Ellis's, Mr. Mayor remarks interestingly: "Whilst I admire, I with difficulty repress a shudder at the elaborate apparatus he has provided for registering the minutest variations of metrical stress. Not only does he distinguish nine different degrees of force, but there are the same number of degrees of length, pitch, silence, and weight, making altogether forty-five varieties of stress at the disposal of the metrist ... If the analysis of rhythm is so terribly complicated, let us rush into the arms of the intuitivists and trust to our ears only, for life is not long enough to admit of characterizing lines when there are forty-five expressions for each syllable to be considered." (*Chapters on English Metre*, p. 69.)

[3] The term "wrenched" was used originally, it would seem, as one of reprobation. Thus Puttenham, in his *Arte of English Poesie* (1589), said; "There can not be in a maker a fowler

fault, than to falsifie his accent to serve his cadence, or by untrue orthographie to wrench his words to helpe his rime." (Arber ed., p. 94.)

[4] It is interesting to compare with these irregular lines another stanza of similar form, of about the same date, from an Elegy on Edward I., in Böddeker's Collection, p. 140, and Wright's *Political Songs*, p. 246.

Alle þat beoþ of huerte trewe,
a stounde herkneþ to my
song
of duel, þat deþ haþ diht vs
newe
(þat makeþ me syke ant
sorewe among!)
of a knyht, þat wes so strong,
of wham god haþ don ys
wille;
me þuncheþ þat deþ haþ don vs
wrong,
þat he so sone shal ligge
stille.

The comparatively great regularity of the measures in this second stanza is due to the fact that it was under the syllable-counting influence of the French, being in fact a translation of a French original.

[5] Leigh Hunt said that "Coleridge saw the mistake which had been made with regard to this measure, and restored it to the beautiful freedom of which it was capable, by calling to mind the liberties allowed its old musical professors the minstrels, and dividing it by *time* instead of *syllables*." (See the entire passage on *Christabel*, in the Introduction, on "What is Poetry?", to *Imagination and Fancy*. For a criticism of the metrical structure of

Christabel, see Robert Bridges's *Milton's Prosody* (ed. 1901, pp. 73-75).)

II. THE FOOT AND THE VERSE

English verse is commonly measured by feet, a determinate number of which go to form a verse or line. The foot is determined by the distance from one accented syllable to another in the regular scheme of the metre. The usual metrical feet are either dissyllabic or trisyllabic. The dissyllabic foot is commonly called an *iambus* (or *iamb*) if the unaccented syllable precedes the accented, and a *trochee* if the accented precedes the unaccented. The trisyllabic foot is commonly called an *anapest* if the two unaccented syllables precede the accented syllable, and a *dactyl* if they follow the accented syllable.[6] It will be observed that the fundamental rhythm of both iambic and trochaic verse is the same, as is also that of both anapestic and dactylic verse; the distinction belonging only to the metre as measured into regular lines. Iambic and anapestic verse (in which the light syllables commonly open the verse) are sometimes called "ascending rhythm"; trochaic and dactylic verse (in which the accented syllables commonly open the verse) "descending rhythm." Ascending rhythm is very greatly in predominance in English poetry.

The normal verse of any poem is therefore described by indicating the name of the foot and the number of feet in the verse. The number of feet is always indicated by the number of stresses or principal

accents in the normal verse. As the light or unaccented syllables may vary from the typical number, it may also be necessary to indicate that the line is longer than its name would imply, by reason of Feminine Ending (a light syllable added at the end) or Anacrusis (a light syllable prefixed); or that it is shorter than its name would indicate by reason of Catalexis or Truncation (the light syllable at the end —or less frequently at the beginning—being omitted).

In like manner, any particular verse or line is fully described by indicating: (1) the typical foot; (2) the number of feet; (3) the place of the cesura; (4) the presence or absence of a final pause ("end-stopped" or "run-on"); (5) the presence of such irregularities as

(*a*) Anacrusis or feminine ending,
(*b*) Catalexis (or truncation),
(*c*) Substitution of exceptional feet for the typical foot,
(*d*) Pauses other than the cesural.

One-stress iambic.

Thus I
Pass by
    And die
As one
Unknown
    And gone.

(HERRICK: *Upon his Departure Hence.* 1648.)

(In combination with two-stress and three-stress:)

No more I'll vaunt,
For now I see
Thou only hast the power
To find
And bind
A heart that's free,
And slave it in an hour.

(HERRICK: *His Recantation.* 1648.)

Two-stress iambic.

Most good, most fair,
Or things as rare
To call you 's lost;
For all the cost
Words can bestow
So poorly show,...

(DRAYTON: *Amouret Anacreontic.* ab. 1600.)

Because I do
Begin to woo,
Sweet singing Lark,
Be thou the clerk,
And know thy when
To say Amen.

(HERRICK: *To the Lark.* 1648.)

The raging rocks,
And shivering shocks,
Shall break the locks
Of prison-gates;
And Phibbus' car

Shall shine from far,
And make and mar
The foolish Fates.

(SHAKSPERE: Bottom's song in *Midsummer Night's Dream*, I. ii. ab. 1595.)

(In combination with three-stress:)

Only a little more
I have to write;
Then I'll give o'er,
And bid the world good-night.

'Tis but a flying minute
That I must stay,
Or linger in it;
And then I must away.

(HERRICK: *His Poetry his Pillar.* 1648.)

In the second stanza we have the same measure with feminine ending.

(In combination with four-stress:)

Thus let me live, unseen, unknown,
Thus unlamented let me die;
Steal from the world, and not a stone
Tell where I lie.

(POPE: *Ode on Solitude.* ab. 1700.)

Two-stress trochaic.

Could I catch that

Nimble traitor,
Scornful Laura,
Swift-foot Laura,
Soon then would I
Seek avengement.

(CAMPION: Anacreontics, in *Observations in the Art of English Poesie*. 1602.)

(In combination with four-stress:)

Dust that covers
Long dead lovers
Song blows off with breath that brightens;
At its flashes
Their white ashes
Burst in bloom that lives and lightens.

(SWINBURNE: *Song in Season.*)

(Catalectic, and in combination with three-stress:)

Summer's crest
Red-gold tressed,
Corn-flowers peeping under;—
Idle noons,
Lingering moons,
Sudden cloud,
Lightning's shroud,
Sudden rain,
Quick again
Smiles where late was thunder.

(GEORGE ELIOT: Song from *The Spanish Gypsy*, Bk. i. 1868.)

The trochaic measures in *The Spanish Gypsy* are in imitation of the similar forms in Spanish poetry. See p. 114, below.

Two-stress anapestic.

(In combination with three-stress:)

Like a gloomy stain
On the emerald main
Alpheus rushed behind,—
As an eagle pursuing
A dove to its ruin
Down the streams of the cloudy wind.

(SHELLEY: *Arethusa.* 1820.)

(With feminine ending:)

He is gone on the mountain,
He is lost to the forest,
Like a summer-dried fountain,
When our need was the sorest.
The font, reappearing,
From the raindrops shall borrow,
But to us comes no cheering,
To Duncan no morrow!

(SCOTT: Coronach, from *The Lady of the Lake*, Canto 3. 1810.)

(In combination with four-stress:)

Fear death?—to feel the fog in my
throat,
The mist in my face.
When the snows begin, and the blasts

denote
I am nearing the place,
The power of the night, the press of
the storm,
The post of the foe;
Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a
visible form,
Yet the strong man must go.

(BROWNING: *Prospice.* 1864.)

These specimens, as is usual in anapestic verse, show considerable freedom in the treatment of the part of the foot containing the light syllables, substituted iambi being very common. Note the iambi in the Shelley stanza, line 1, second foot, and line 5, first foot. In the latter case, however, the first light syllable of line 5 is really supplied by the syllable added to make the feminine ending of line 4. In like manner, in the Scott stanza, the first syllable of line 8 is really supplied by the *-ing* of line 7; and where we have both feminine ending (in line 1) and a full anapest following, the effect is that of a hypermetrical syllable which must be hurried over in the reading. In the specimen from Browning we find an iambus in the opening foot in lines 2 and 6 (also, of course, in lines 1 and 5).

Two-stress dactylic.

One more Unfortunate,
Weary of breath,
Rashly importunate,
Gone to her death!

Take her up tenderly,

Lift her with care;
Fashioned so slenderly,
Young, and so fair!

(THOMAS HOOD: *The Bridge of Sighs.* ab. 1830.)

Here the alternate lines are catalectic, both light syllables being wanting.

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them
    Volley'd and thunder'd;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
Boldly they rode and well,
Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of Hell
    Rode the six hundred.

(TENNYSON: *Charge of the Light Brigade.* 1854.)

Here the fourth and ninth lines are catalectic.

Loudly the sailors cheered
Svend of the Forked Beard,
As with his fleet he steered
    Southward to Vendland;
Where with their courses hauled
All were together called,
Under the Isle of Svald
    Near to the mainland.

(LONGFELLOW: *Saga of King Olaf*, xvii. 1863.)

In the reading of these stanzas from Tennyson and

Longfellow there is so marked a stress on the final syllable as to make the second dactyl (except in the opening lines of the Tennyson stanza) more like a Cretic (in the classical terminology); *i.e.* a foot made up of two heavy syllables with a light syllable between them. But no such foot is generally recognized in English verse.

Two-stress irregular.

On the ground
Sleep sound:
I'll apply
To your eye,
Gentle lover, remedy.
When thou wak'st,
Thou tak'st
True delight
In the sight
Of thy former lady's eye.

(SHAKSPERE: Puck's Song in *Midsummer Night's Dream*, III. ii. ab. 1595.)

What I hate,
Be consecrate
To celebrate
Thee and Thy state,
No mate
For Thee;
What see
For envy
In poor me?

(BROWNING: Song in *Caliban upon Setebos*. 1864.)

In the usual printing of *Caliban upon Setebos* this song is brought into the form of the five-accent lines. It is evidently intended, however, to be read in two-accent groups. Professor Moulton has remarked interestingly that Browning gives the unique figure of Caliban not only a grammar but a prosody of his own.

Though my rime be ragged,
Tattered and jagged,
Rudely raine-beaten,
Rusty and moth-eaten;
If ye take wel therewith,
It hath in it some pith.

(JOHN SKELTON: *Colyn Cloute*. ab. 1510.)

This is a specimen of what Mr. Churton Collins calls "that headlong voluble breathless doggrel which, rattling and clashing on through quick-recurring rhymes, ... has taken from the name of its author the title of Skeltonical verse." (Ward's *English Poets*, vol. i. p. 185.) The number of accents, as well as the number of syllables, is irregular, being quite as often (perhaps more often) three as two.

Three-stress iambic.

O let the solid ground
    Not fail beneath my feet
Before my life has found
    What some have found so sweet;
Then let come what come may,
What matter if I go mad,
I shall have had my day.

(TENNYSON: Song in *Maud*, xi. 1855.)

(In combination with verse of four, five, and six stresses:)

The Oracles are dumb;
No voice or hideous hum
Runs through the arched roof in
words deceiving.
Apollo from his shrine
Can no more divine,
With hollow shriek the steep of
Delphos leaving:
No nightly trance or breathed
spell
Inspires the pale-eyed priest from
the prophetic cell.

(MILTON: *Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity*. 1629.)

Here, in line 5, we have an instance of a verse truncated at the beginning,—rare in modern English poetry.

(With feminine ending:)

The mountain sheep are sweeter,
But the valley sheep are fatter;
We therefore deemed it meeter
To carry off the latter.
We made an expedition;
We met an host and quelled it;
We forced a strong position,
And killed the men who held it.

(THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK: War Song of
Dinas Vawr, from *The Misfortunes of*

Elphin. 1829.)

In line 2 is an instance of anacrusis.

Three-stress trochaic.

(In combination with iambic:)

Go where glory waits thee,
But, while fame elates thee,
Oh! still remember me.
When the praise thou meetest
To thine ear is sweetest,
Oh! then remember me.

(THOMAS MOORE: *Go Where Glory Waits Thee*. ab. 1820.)

(In combination with six-stress verses:)

Hail to thee, blithe Spirit!
Bird thou never wert,
That from heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest,
Like a cloud of fire
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

(SHELLEY: *To a Skylark*. 1820.)

Here lines 2 and 4 are catalectic.

Three-stress anapestic.

I am monarch of all I survey;
My right there is none to dispute;
From the centre all round to the sea
I am lord of the fowl and the brute.

(COWPER: *Verses supposed to be written by Alexander Selkirk.* 1782.)

In this specimen lines 2, 5, 6, and 8 show initial truncation, the first light syllable being missing.

(With two-stress verse:)

His desire is a dureless content,
And a trustless joy;
He is won with a world of despair
And is lost with a toy....

But true love is a durable fire,
In the mind ever burning,
Never sick, never old, never dead,
From itself never turning.

(SIR WALTER RALEIGH (?): *Pilgrim to Pilgrim*. In MS. Rawl. 85; in Schelling's *Elizabethan Lyrics*, p. 3.)

"The metres of the earlier years of Elizabeth's reign are so overwhelmingly iambic," Professor Schelling observes, "that this perfectly metrical, if somewhat irregular, anapæstic movement comes like a surprise. Professor Gummere, of Haverford College, calls my attention to three epigrams—printed among the poems of Raleigh, ed. Hannah, p. 55—all of them in more or less limping

anapæsts, but not of this measure. It is quite possible that the time to which these verses were sung may have affected the measure." (Notes to *Elizabethan Lyrics*, pp. 211, 212.)

(With initial truncation:)

She gazed, as I slowly withdrew,
My path I could hardly discern;
So sweetly she bade me adieu,
I thought that she bade me return.

(SHENSTONE: *Pastoral Ballad.* 1743.)

Mr. Saintsbury praises highly the anapests of Shenstone (Ward's *English Poets*, vol. iii. p. 272), saying that he "taught the metre to a greater poet than himself, Cowper, and these two between them have written almost everything that is worth reading in it, if we put avowed parody and burlesque out of the question." But this is probably to be regarded as overstating the case.

(With feminine ending:)

If you go over desert and mountain,
Far into the country of sorrow,
To-day and to-night and to-morrow,
And maybe for months and for years;
You shall come, with a heart that is bursting
For trouble and toiling and thirsting,
You shall certainly come to the fountain
At length,—to the Fountain of Tears.

(ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY: *The Fountain of Tears.* 1870.)

Here the extra light syllable at the end of the line is really the initial light syllable of the following line, as in the specimen on p. 29, above.

So this is a psalm of the waters,—
The wavering, wandering waters:
With languages learned in the forest,
With secrets of earth's lonely caverns,
The mystical waters go by me
On errands of love and of beauty,
On embassies friendly and gentle,
With shimmer of brown and of silver.

(S. WEIR MITCHELL: *A Psalm of the Waters.* 1890.)

Here, also, the final light syllable might be said to take the place of the missing initial syllable; but the structure of the verse, with the fact that the initial anapest is always truncated and that the final syllable is never accented, indicates that the verse as it stands is the norm of the poem—three-stress anapestic, with initial truncation and feminine ending.

Three-stress dactylic.

(Catalectic:)

This is a spray the Bird clung to,
    Making it blossom with pleasure,
Ere the high tree-top she sprung to,
    Fit for her nest and her treasure.

(BROWNING: *Misconceptions*. 1855.)

Four-stress iambic.

(For specimens, see Part Two.)

Four-stress trochaic.

Maiden, crowned with glossy
blackness,
Lithe as panther forest-roaming,
Long-armed naiad, when she dances,
On a stream of ether floating.

(GEORGE ELIOT: Song from *The Spanish Gypsy*, Book i. 1868.)

Westward, westward Hiawatha
Sailed into the fiery sunset,
Sailed into the purple vapors,
Sailed into the dusk of evening.

(LONGFELLOW: *Hiawatha*. 1855.)

Honour, riches, marriage-blessing,
Long continuance, and increasing,
Hourly joys be still upon you!
Juno sings her blessings on you.

(SHAKSPERE: Juno's Song in *The Tempest*, IV. i. ab. 1610.)

(Catalectic:)

On a day, alack the day!
Love, whose month is ever May,

Spied a blossom passing fair
Playing in the wanton air:
Through the velvet leaves the wind,
All unseen, can passage find;
That the lover, sick to death,
Wish himself the heaven's breath.

(SHAKSPERE: *Love's Labor's Lost*, IV. 3.
ab. 1590.)

Haste thee, Nymph, and bring with
thee
Jest, and youthful jollity,
Quips and cranks and wanton wiles,
Nods and becks and wreathed smiles,
Such as hang on Hebe's cheek,
And love to live in dimple sleek.

(MILTON: *L'Allegro*. 1634.)

Souls of Poets dead and gone,
What Elysium have ye known,
Happy field or mossy cavern,
Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern?
Have ye tippled drink more fine
Than mine host's Canary wine?
Or are fruits of Paradise
Sweeter than those dainty pies
Of venison? O generous food!
Drest as though bold Robin Hood
Would, with his maid Marian,
Sup and bowse from horn and can.

(KEATS: *Lines on the Mermaid Tavern*.
1820.)

Four-stress anapestic.

What I speak, my fair Chloe, and
what I write, shows
The difference there is betwixt
nature and art:
I court others in verse; but I love thee
in prose:
And they have my whimsies; but
thou hast my heart.

(PRIOR: *A Better Answer*. ab. 1710.)

Prior's anapests well illustrate the appropriateness of the measure for light tripping effects, such as are sought *vers de société*. See also the measure of Goldsmith's *Retaliation*, especially the passage beginning—

"Here lies David Garrick, describe me
who can;
An abridgment of all that was
pleasant in man."

The small birds rejoice in the green
leaves returning,
The murmuring streamlet winds
clear through the vale;
The hawthorn trees blow in the dews
of the morning,
And wild scatter'd cowslips
bedeck the green dale.

(BURNS: *The Chevalier's Lament*. 1788.)

The Assyrian came down like the wolf
on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in
purple and gold;
And the sheen of their spears was like
stars on the sea,
When the blue wave rolls nightly on
deep Galilee.

(BYRON: *The Destruction of Sennacherib*.
1815.)

(With three-stress:)

Believe me, if all those endearing
young charms,
Which I gaze on so fondly to-day,
Were to change by to-morrow, and
fleet in my arms,
Like fairy-gifts fading away,

Thou wouldst still be ador'd, as this
moment thou art,
Let thy loveliness fade as it will,
And around the dear ruin each wish
of my heart
Would entwine itself verdantly
still.

(THOMAS MOORE: *Believe me, if all those endearing young charms.* ab. 1825.)

Four-stress dactylic.

After the pangs of a desperate lover,
When day and night I have
sighed all in vain;
Ah, what a pleasure it is to discover
In her eyes pity, who causes my
pain!

(DRYDEN: Song in *An Evening's Love*. 1668.)

Of this song Mr. Saintsbury says that it is "one of the rare examples of a real dactylic metre in English, where the dactyls are not, as usual, equally to be scanned as anapests." (*Life of Dryden*, Men of Letters Series, p. 62.) Here, as almost always in English, the measure is catalectic, a final dactyl being instinctively avoided, except in short two-stress lines.

Warriors and chiefs! should the shaft
or the sword
Pierce me in leading the host of the
Lord,
Heed not the corse, though a king's,

in your path:
Bury your steel in the bosoms of
Gath!

(BYRON: *Song of Saul before his Last Battle.* 1815.)

Kentish Sir Byng stood for his King,
Bidding the crop-headed Parliament
swing:
And, pressing a troop, unable to stoop
And see the rogues flourish and
honest folk droop,
Marched them along, fifty-score
strong,
Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this
song.

(BROWNING: *Cavalier Tunes.* 1843.)

Here the metre is varied interestingly by pauses. Thus in lines 1 and 5 the light syllables of the second foot are wholly wanting.

Five-stress iambic.

(For specimens, see Part Two.)

Five-stress trochaic.

What, there's nothing in the moon
noteworthy?
Nay: for if that moon could love a
mortal,
Use, to charm him (so to fit a fancy),

All her magic ('tis the old sweet
mythos),
She would turn a new side to her
mortal,
Side unseen of herdsman, huntsman,
steersman—
Blank to Zoroaster on his terrace,
Blind to Galileo on his turret,
Dumb to Homer, dumb to Keats—
him, even!

(BROWNING: *One Word More.* 1855.)

This is a rare specimen of unrimed verse in other than iambic rhythm.

(Catalectic:)

Then methought I heard a mellow
sound,
Gathering up from all the lower
ground;
Narrowing in to where they sat
assembled
Low voluptuous music winding
trembled,
Wov'n in circles: they that heard it
sighed,
Panted, hand-in-hand with faces pale,
Swung themselves, and in low tones
replied;
Till the fountain spouted, showering
wide
Sleet of diamond-drift and pearly hail.

(TENNYSON: *The Vision of Sin.* 1842.)

Five-stress anapestic.

As thy Love is discovered almighty,
almighty be proved
Thy power, that exists with and for it,
of being beloved!
He who did most, shall bear most; the
strongest shall stand the most
weak.
'Tis the weakness in strength that I
cry for! my flesh, that I seek
In the Godhead! I seek and I find it. O
Saul, it shall be
A Face like my face that receives thee;
a Man like to me,
Thou shalt love and be loved by,
forever: a Hand like this hand
Shall throw open the gates of new life
to thee! See the Christ stand!

(BROWNING: *Saul.* 1845.)

Let it flame or fade, and the war roll
down like a wind,
We have proved we have hearts in a
cause, we are noble still,
And myself have awaked, as it seems,
to the better mind;
It is better to fight for the good than
to rail at the ill;
I have felt with my native land, I am
one with my kind,
I embrace the purpose of God, and
the doom assign'd.

(TENNYSON: *Maud*, III. vi. 1855.)

Here frequent iambi are substituted for anapests; as in line 1, second and fourth feet; lines 2 and 3, fifth foot; line 5, third foot.

Five-stress dactylic.

This form is almost unknown. In the following lines we find five-stress catalectic verse of dactyls and trochees combined:

Surely the thought in a man's heart
hopes or fears
Now that forgetfulness needs must
here have stricken
Anguish, and sweetened the sealed-up
springs of tears.

(SWINBURNE: *A Century of Roundels.*)

Six-stress iambic.

(For specimens, see Part Two.)

Six-stress trochaic.

(With alternate lines catalectic:)

Day by day thy shadow shines in
heaven beholden,
Even the sun, the shining shadow
of thy face:
King, the ways of heaven before thy
feet grow golden;
God, the soul of earth is kindled

with thy grace.

(SWINBURNE: *The Last Oracle.*)

Six-stress anapestic.

For I trust if an enemy's fleet came yonder
round by the hill,
And the rushing battle-bolt sang from the
three-decker out of the foam,
That the smooth-faced snubnosed rogue
would leap from his counter and
till,
And strike, if he could, were it but with
his cheating yard-wand, home.

(TENNYSON: *Maud*, I. i. 1855.)

(See note on p. 41.)

All under the deeps of the darkness are
glimmering: all over impends
An immeasurable infinite flower of the
dark that dilates and descends,
That exalts and expands in its breathless
and blind efflorescence of heart
As it broadens and bows to the wave-
ward, and breathes not, and
hearkens apart.

(SWINBURNE: *The Garden of Cymodoce*,
in *Songs of the Springtides*.)

Six-stress dactylic.

(For this, see chiefly Part Two.)

(Catalectic:)

Dosn't thou 'ear my 'erse's legs, as they
canters awaay?
Proputty, proputty, proputty—that's what
I 'ears 'em saay.
Proputty, proputty, proputty—Sam, thou's
an ass for thy paains:
Theer's moor sense i' one o' 'is legs nor in
all thy braains.

(TENNYSON: *Northern Farmer—new style.* ab. 1860.)

Thee I behold as a bird borne in with the
wind from the west,
Straight from the sunset, across white
waves whence rose as a daughter
Venus thy mother, in years when the
world was a water at rest.

(SWINBURNE: *Hesperia.*)

Seven-stress iambic.

There's not a joy the world can give like
that it takes away
When the glow of early thought declines
in feeling's dull decay;
'Tis not on youth's smooth cheek the blush
alone, which fades so fast,
But the tender bloom of heart is gone, ere
youth itself be past.

(BYRON: *Stanzas for Music.* 1815.)

Here we have anacrusis in lines 2 and 4.

Beyond the path of the outmost sun,
through utter darkness hurled—
Further than ever comet flared or vagrant
star-dust swirled—
Live such as fought and sailed and ruled
and loved and made our world.

(KIPLING: *Wolcott Balestier.*)

(See also under Seven-stress Verse, in Part Two.)

Seven-stress trochaic.

(Catalectic:)

Clear the way, my lords and lackeys, you
have had your day.
Here you have your answer, England's yea
against your nay;
Long enough your house has held you: up,
and clear the way!

(SWINBURNE: *Clear the Way.*)

Seven-stress anapestic.

(With feminine ending:)

Come on then, ye dwellers by nature in
darkness, and like to the leaves'
generations,
That are little of might, that are moulded
of mire, unenduring and

shadowlike nations,
Poor plumeless ephemerals, comfortless
mortals, as visions of creatures fast
fleeing,
Lift up your mind unto us that are
deathless, and dateless the date of
our being.

(SWINBURNE: *The Birds*, from
Aristophanes.)

Of this translation Mr. Swinburne says that it was undertaken from a consideration of the fact that the "marvellous metrical invention of the anapestic heptameter was almost exactly reproducible in a language to which all variations and combinations of anapestic, iambic, or trochaic metre are as natural and pliable as all dactylic and spondaic forms of verse are unnatural and abhorrent." ... "I have not attempted," he says further, "the impossible and undesirable task of reproducing the rare exceptional effect of a line overcharged on purpose with a preponderance of heavy-footed spondees.... My main desire ... was to renew as far as possible for English ears the music of this resonant and triumphant metre, which goes ringing at full gallop as of horses who

'dance as 'twere to the
music
Their own hoofs make.'"

(*Studies in Song*, p. 68.)

Seven-stress dactylic.

This form of verse may be said to be wanting. Schipper quotes as possible examples some lines which (as he remarks) seem to be made merely for the metrical purpose:

"Out of the kingdom of Christ shall be
gathered, by angels o'er Satan
victorious,
All that offendeth, that lieth, that faileth
to honor his name ever glorious."

(*Englische Metrik*, vol. ii. p. 419.)

Eight-stress iambic.

This is almost unknown in English verse, because where conceivably occurring it shows an irresistible tendency to break up into two halves of four stresses each. William Webbe, in his *Discourse of English Poetrie* (1586), quoted these lines as "the longest verse in length which I have seen used in English":

"Where virtue wants and vice abounds,
there wealth is but a baited hook,
To make men swallow down their bane,
before on danger deep they look."

Eight-stress trochaic.

(Catalectic:)

Love took up the glass of Time, and turn'd
it in his glowing hands;
Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself in
golden sands.

Love took up the harp of Life, and smote
on all the chords with might;
Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling,
pass'd in music out of sight.

(TENNYSON: *Locksley Hall.* 1842.)

Open then I flung the shutter, when, with
many a flirt and flutter,
In there stepped a stately raven of the
saintly days of yore.
Not the least obeisance made he; not an
instant stopped or stayed he;
But, with mien of lord or lady, perched
above my chamber door,—
Perched upon a bust of Pallas, just above
my chamber door.

(POE: *The Raven.* 1845.)

Night, in utmost noon forlorn and strong,
with heart athirst and fasting,
Hungers here, barred up forever, whence
as one whom dreams affright,
Day recoils before the low-browed lintel
threatening doom and casting
Night.

(SWINBURNE: *Night in Guernsey.*)

In the last line of this specimen we have a nine-accent verse,—very rare in English poetry.

The tendency of all eight-accent lines being to break up into halves of four accents, the distinction between four-stress and eight-stress verse may be at times only a question of printing. Thus, Thackeray's *Sorrows of Werther* might be regarded as eight-stress

trochaic, though commonly printed in short lines:

"Werther had a love for Charlotte
Such as words could never utter.
Would you know how first he saw
her?
She was cutting bread and
butter."

Eight-stress anapestic.

Ere frost-flower and snow-blossom faded
and fell, and the splendor of winter
had passed out of sight,
The ways of the woodlands were fairer
and stranger than dreams that fulfil
us in sleep with delight;
The breath of the mouths of the winds had
hardened on tree-tops and branches
that glittered and swayed
Such wonders and glories of blossomlike
snow, or of frost that out-lightens
all flowers till it fade,
That the sea was not lovelier than here
was the land, nor the night than the
day, nor the day than the night,
Nor the winter sublimer with storm than
the spring: such mirth had the
madness and might in thee made,
March, master of winds, bright minstrel
and marshal of storms that enkindle
the season they smite.

(SWINBURNE: *March.*)

Eight-stress dactylic.

Onward and onward the highway runs to
the distant city, impatiently bearing
Tidings of human joy and disaster, of love
and of hate, of doing and daring.

(LONGFELLOW: *Golden Legend*, iv. 1851.)

The breathlessly continuous character of such long anapestic or dactylic lines may of course be interrupted, by way of relief, by the substitution of iambi or trochees. In the specimen from Swinburne such a resting-place is found in line 3, where a light syllable is omitted after *winds*. In the specimen from Longfellow the words *high-way*, *distant*, *human*, of course, fill the places of complete dactyls.

COMBINATIONS AND SUBSTITUTIONS

i. *Verses in which different sorts of feet are more or less regularly combined.*

In the morning, O so early, my beloved,
my beloved,
All the birds were singing blithely, as if
never they would cease:
'Twas a thrush sang in my garden, "Hear
the story, hear the story!"
And the lark sang "Give us glory!" and the
dove said "Give us peace."

(JEAN INGELOW: *Give us Love and Give us Peace.*)

Fair is our lot—O goodly is our
heritage!
(Humble ye, my people, and be
fearful in your mirth!)
For the Lord our God Most High
He hath made the deep as dry,
He hath smote for us a pathway to the
ends of all the Earth!

(KIPLING: *A Song of the English.*)

In both these specimens the full accent regularly recurs in only the alternate feet. Thus while the first specimen is technically eight-stress trochaic, there are in the normal reading of it only four full accents to the line. In other words the first, third, fifth, and seventh feet are regularly pyrrhics. (See p. 55.) The same thing appears in the specimen from Kipling: *ye*, *and*, *in* (in line 2) are accented only in a distinctly secondary fashion. Some have suggested, for such rhythms as these, the recognition of a foot made up of one stressed and three unstressed syllables. Lanier represents such measures (in *The Science of English Verse*) in four-eight time.

Fear death?—to feel the fog in my
throat,
The mist in my face,
When the snows begin, and the blasts
denote
I am nearing the place,
The power of the night, the press of
the storm,
The post of the foe;
Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a
visible form,
Yet the strong man must go.

(BROWNING: *Prospice.*)

Here the tendency is to use iambi and anapests in alternate feet; see especially lines 2, 3, and 5.

All we have willed or hoped or dreamed
of good, shall exist;
Not its semblance, but itself; no
beauty, nor good, nor power
Whose voice has gone forth, but each
survives for the melodist
When eternity affirms the conception
of an hour.

The high that proved too high, the heroic
for earth too hard,
The passion that left the ground to
lose itself in the sky,
Are music sent up to God by the lover and
the bard;
Enough that He heard it once: we
shall hear it by-and-by.

(BROWNING: *Abt Vogler.*)

Here we have a hexameter which is neither iambic nor anapestic, but a combination of the two rhythms. So in the following specimens dissyllabic and trisyllabic feet are used interchangeably.

When the lamp is shatter'd
The light in the dust lies dead—
When the cloud is scatter'd
The rainbow's glory is shed.
When the lute is broken,
Sweet tones are remember'd not;
When the lips have spoken,

Loved accents are soon forgot.

(SHELLEY: *The Flight of Love.*)

The sea is at ebb, and the sound of
her utmost word
Is soft at the least wave's lapse in a
still small reach.
From bay unto bay, on quest of a goal
deferred,
From headland ever to headland and
breach to breach,
Where earth gives ear to the message
that all days preach.

(SWINBURNE: *The Seaboard.*)

England, none that is born thy son,
and lives, by grace of thy
glory, free,
Lives and yearns not at heart and
burns with hope to serve as he
worships thee;
None may sing thee: the sea-bird's
wing beats down our songs as
it hails the sea.

(SWINBURNE: *The Armada*, vii.)

This life of ours is a wild Æolian harp
of many a joyous strain,
But under them all there runs a loud
perpetual wail, as of souls in
pain.

(LONGFELLOW: *The Golden Legend*, iv.)

Come away, come away, Death,
And in sad cypress let me be laid;
Fly away, fly away, breath;
I am slain by a fair cruel maid.
My shroud of white, stuck all with
yew,
O prepare it!
My part of death, no one so true
Did share it.

(SHAKSPERE: *Twelfth Night*, II. iv.)

The characteristic irregularity in this stanza is the variation from trochaic to iambic rhythm. In this case the variations are in part due, no doubt, to the fact that the words were written for music.

Maud with her exquisite face,
And wild voice pealing up to the
sunny sky,
And feet like sunny gems on an
English green,
Maud in the light of her youth and
her grace,
Singing of Death, and of Honor that
cannot die,
Till I well could weep for a time so
sordid and mean
And myself so languid and base.

(TENNYSON: *Maud*, I. v.)

In this specimen the characteristic rhythm of lines 1, 4, and 5 is dactylic, that of the remainder anapestic-iambic.

The trumpet's loud clangor

Excites us to arms
With shrill notes of anger
And mortal alarms.
The double double double beat
Of the thundering drum
Cries, hark! the foes come;
Charge, charge, 'tis too late to retreat.
The soft
complaining
flute
In dying notes
discovers
The woes of
helpless
lovers,
Whose dirge is whispered by the
warbling lute.

(DRYDEN: *Song for St. Cecilia's Day*, 1687.)

In this famous stanza the rhythm changes for obvious purposes of imitative representation.

Children dear, was it yesterday
(Call yet once) that she went away?
Once she sate with you and me,
On a red gold throne in the heart of
the sea,
And the youngest sate on her knee.
She combed its bright hair, and she
tended it well,
When down swung the sound of a far-
off bell.
She sighed, she looked up through the
clear green sea;

She said, "I must go, for my kinsfolk
pray
In the little gray church on the shore
to-day.
'Twill be Easter-time in the world—ah
me!
And I lose my poor soul, Merman!
here with thee."
I said, "Go up, dear heart, through the
waves;
Say thy prayer, and come back to the
kind sea-caves!"
She smiled, she went up through the
surf in the bay.
Children dear, was it yesterday?

... Down, down, down!
Down to the depths of the sea!
She sits at her wheel in the humming
town,
Singing most joyfully.
Hark what she sings: "O joy, O joy,
For the humming street, and the child
with its toy!
For the priest, and the bell, and the
holy well;
For the wheel where I spun,
And the blessed light of the sun!"
And so she sings her fill,
Singing most joyfully,
Till the spindle drops from her hand,
And the whizzing wheel stands still.
She steals to the window, and looks at
the sand,
And over the sand at the sea;
And her eyes are set in a stare;

And anon there breaks a sigh,
And anon there drops a tear,
From a sorrow-clouded eye,
And a heart sorrow-laden,
A long, long sigh,
For the cold strange eyes of a little
mermaiden,
And the gleam of her golden hair.

(MATTHEW ARNOLD: *The Forsaken Merman.*)

Then the music touch'd the gates and
died;
Rose again from where it seem'd to
fail,
Storm'd in orbs of song, a growing
gale;
Till thronging in and in, to where
they waited,
As 'twere a hundred-throated
nightingale,
The strong tempestuous treble
throbbed and palpitated;
Ran into its giddiest whirl of sound,
Caught the sparkles, and in circles,
Purple gauzes, golden hazes, liquid
mazes,
Flung the torrent rainbow round:
Then they started from their places,
Moved with violence, changed in hue,
Caught each other with wild
grimaces,
Half-invisible to the view,
Wheeling with precipitate paces
To the melody, till they flew,

Hair, and eyes, and limbs, and faces,
Twisted hard in fierce embraces,
Like to Furies, like to Graces,
Dash'd together in blinding dew.

(TENNYSON: *Vision of Sin.*)

ii. *Verses in which individual feet are altered from the metrical scheme.*

Even in metre exhibiting no marked irregularities, it is of course rather exceptional than otherwise to find all the feet in a verse conforming to the type-foot of the metre. Departures from the typical metre may be conveniently classified in five groups: Deficiency in accent; excess of accent; inversion of accent; light syllable added to dissyllabic foot; light syllable omitted in trisyllabic foot.

Deficiency of accent is the most common of all the variations, if we understand by "accent" such syllabic stress as would be ordinarily appreciable in the reading of the word in question. It would be safe to say that in English five-stress iambic verse, read with only the ordinary etymological and rhetorical accents, twenty-five per cent of the verses lack the full five stresses characteristic of the type. In many cases, too, a foot with deficiency in stress is compensated for by another foot in the same verse showing excess of stress. Feet thus deficient in stress may conveniently be called *pyrrhics*, the pyrrhic being understood as made up of two unstressed syllables. This term has never become fully domesticated in English prosody, and some object to its use on the ground that we have no feet wholly without stress. Its use in the sense just indicated,

however, seems to be an unquestionable convenience.

Excess of accent, while less common than deficiency of accent, is even more easily recognizable. The foot containing two stressed syllables, even though one of the stresses may be distinctly stronger than the other, may conveniently be called a *spondee*.

Inversion of accent is exceedingly familiar, especially at the beginning of the verse and after the medial pause. It consists, technically speaking, in the substitution of a trochee for an iambus or an iambus for a trochee (the latter very rarely).

A light syllable inserted in dissyllabic measure is not unusual, though by no means so common as the variations previously enumerated. Such a syllable is frequently spoken of as "hypermetrical"; or, the variation may be considered as the substitution of an anapest for an iambus, in iambic measure, or the substitution of a dactyl for a trochee, in trochaic measure.

The omission of one of the two light syllables from the foot in trisyllabic verse is so common as to make it difficult to find pure anapestic or dactylic verse in English. This fact is due in part to preference for dissyllabic measures, and in part to the usual indifference, in all Germanic verse, to accuracy in the number of light syllables. The variation may frequently be regarded as involving a prolongation of the light syllable of the foot, or a pause equal to the time of the omitted syllable; technically speaking, it consists in the substitution of an iambus for an anapest, or a trochee for a dactyl.

Examples of all these variations may best be found in

the specimens of verse included in the preceding pages. A few specimens of detail are added here, for the sake of greater clearness.

Deficiency in accent (substituted pyrrhic).

To further this, Achit*ophel* unites
The malcontents of all the Israelites,
Whose differing par*ties he* could
wisely join
For several ends to serve the same
design;
The best (*and of* the princes some
were such)
Who thought the power of mon*archy*
too much;
Mistaken men and patr*iots in* their
hearts,
Not wick*ed, but* seduced by impious
arts;
By these the springs of prop*erty* were
bent,
And wound so high they crack'd the
gov*ernment.*

(DRYDEN: *Absalom and Achitophel*, I.)

Excess of accent (substituted spondee).

And ten *low words* oft creep in one
dull line.

(POPE: *Essay on Criticism.*)

Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens,
and shades of death.

(MILTON: *Paradise Lost*, II. 621.)

See, see where Christ's *blood streams* in
the firmament!

(MARLOWE: *Faustus*, sc. xvi.)

O great, *just, good God! Mis*erable me!

(BROWNING: *The Ring and the Book*, VI.)

A tree's *head snaps*—and there, *there,*
there, there, there!

(BROWNING: *Caliban upon Setebos.*)

Inversion of accent (substituted trochee).

Thou detestable maw, thou womb of
death,
Gorged with the dearest morsel of the
earth.

(SHAKSPERE: *Romeo and Juliet*, V. iii. 45
f.)

Finds tongues in trees, *books in* the
running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in every
thing.

(*As You Like It*, II. i. 16 f.)

The watery kingdom whose ambitious
head
Spits in the face of heaven.

(*Merchant of Venice*, II. vii. 44 f.)

Long lines of cliff *breaking* have left a
chasm.

(TENNYSON: *Enoch Arden.*)

There whirled her white robe like a
blossomed branch
Rapt to the horrible fall: a glance I
gave,
No more; but woman-vested as I was
Plunged; and the flood *drew; yet* I
caught her; then
Oaring one arm,...

(TENNYSON: *The Princess.*)

Stabbed through the heart's affections
to the heart!
Seethed like a kid in its own mother's
milk!
Killed with a word worse than a life of
blows!

(TENNYSON: *Merlin and Vivien.*)

Right for the polar star, past Orgunje,
Brimming, and bright, and large; then
sands begin,...

(MATTHEW ARNOLD: *Sohrab and Rustum.*)

Hypermetrical syllable (substituted anapest).

Let me see, let me see, is not the leaf
turn'd down?

(SHAKSPERE: *Julius Cæsar*, IV. iii. 271.)

Leviathan, which God of all his works
Created hug*est that swim* the ocean
stream.

(MILTON: *Paradise Lost*, I. 201 f.)

This passage was one of those where Bentley made himself ridiculous in his edition of Milton. "To smooth it" he changed the lines to read—

"Leviathan, whom God the vastest
made
Of all the kinds that swim the ocean
stream,"—

not perceiving, what Cowper pointed out, that Milton had designedly used "the word *hugest* where it may have the clumsiest effect.... Smoothness was not the thing to be consulted when the Leviathan was in question."

So he with diff*iculty* and labour hard
Moved on, with diff*iculty* and labour
he.

(*ib.* II. 1021 f.)

Of some precip*itous rivulet to* the
wave.

(TENNYSON: *Enoch Arden.*)

The sound of many a heav*ily galloping*
hoof.

(TENNYSON: *Geraint and Enid.*)

I wish that somewhere in the ruin'd
folds,...
Or the dry thickets, I could meet with
her
The Abominable, that uninvited came.

(TENNYSON: *Œnone.*)

Do you see this square old yellow
book I toss
I' the air, and catch again, and twirl
about
*By the crumpl*ed vellum covers; pure
crude fact—

(BROWNING: *The Ring and the Book*, I.)

Shall never wave its tangles light*ly*
*and soft*ly
As a queen's languid and imperial
arm.

(BROWNING: *Paracelsus*, I.)

A distinction should be made between these hypermetrical syllables which change the character of the foot from dissyllabic to trisyllabic, and syllables (in a sense hypermetrical) which are slurred or elided in the reading. The word *radiance*, for example, is regarded as trisyllabic in prose, but in the verse—

"Girt with omnipotence, with
radiance crowned,"

it is made dissyllabic by instinctive compression, and in no proper sense makes an anapest of the fifth foot. Of the same character are the numerous cases where a vowel is elided before another vowel—especially the vowel of the article *the*.[7] On the elisions of Milton's verse, see Mr. Robert Bridges's *Milton's Prosody*; on those of Shakspere's verse, see Abbott's *Shakespearian Grammar*. In modern verse the use of elision and slurring is ordinarily that found in common speech.

Omitted syllable (substituted iambus).

As a vision of heaven from the
hollows of ocean, that none but
a god *might see*,
Rose out of the silence *of things*
unknown of a presence, a form,
a might,
And we heard as a prophet that hears
*God's mes*sage against him, and
may *not flee*.

(SWINBURNE: *Death of Richard Wagner.*)

See also specimens on pp. 42, 43, 48, above.

Mr. Mayor considers the question as to how far substitution of other than the typical foot may be carried in a verse, without destroying the genuineness of the fundamental rhythm. His conclusions are these:

(1) The limit of trochaic substitution is three feet out of five, with the final foot iambic; or two out of five, if the fifth foot is inverted.

(2) A spondee is allowable in any position; the limit is four out of five, with either the fourth or fifth foot remaining iambic.

(3) A pyrrhic may occur in any position; the limit is three out of five, with the other feet preferably spondees.

(4) The limit for trisyllabic substitution is three out of five.

(*Chapters on English Metre*, chap. V.)

Professor Corson discusses the æsthetic effect of these changes from the typical metre: "The true metrical artist ... never indulges in variety for variety's sake.... All metrical effects are to a great extent *relative*—and relativity of effect depends, of course, upon having a standard in the mind or feelings.... Now the more closely the poet adheres to his standard—to the even tenor (modulus) of his verse—so long as there is no logical nor æsthetic motive for departing from it, the more effective do his departures become when they are sufficiently motived. All non-significant departures weaken the significant ones.... The normal tenor of the verse is presumed to represent the normal tenor of the

feeling which produces it. And departures from that normal tenor represent, or should represent, variations in the normal tenor of the feeling. Outside of the general law ... of the slurring or suppression of extra light syllables, which do not go for anything in the expression, an exceptional foot must result in emphasis, whether intended or not, either logical or emotional.... A great poet is presumed to have metrical skill; and where ripples occur in the stream of his verse, they will generally be found to justify themselves as organic; *i.e.* they are a part of the expression."

(*Primer of English Verse*, pp. 48-50.)

On the æsthetic symbolism of various metrical movements, see G. L. Raymond's *Poetry as a Representative Art*, pp. 113 ff.

FOOTNOTES:

[6] The names of the several kinds of feet are of course borrowed from classical prosody, where they are used to mark feet made up not of accented and unaccented, but of long and short syllables. The different significance of the terms as applied to the verse of different languages has given rise to some confusion, and it is proposed by some to abandon the classical terms; their use, however, seems to be too well established in English to permit of change. Some would even abandon the attempt to measure English verse by feet, contending that its rhythm is too free to admit of any such measuring process; thus, see Mr. J. M. Robertson, in the Appendix to *New Essays toward a Critical Method*, and Mr. J. A. Symonds in his *Blank Verse*. See also in Mr.

Robert Bridges's *Milton's Prosody*, Appendix G "On the Use of Greek Terminology in English Prosody." (1901 ed. p. 77.)

[7] On the historical problem of the distinction between elided and genuinely hypermetrical syllables in the French and English decasyllabic verse, see Motheré: *Les théories du vers héroique anglais et ses relations avec la versification française* (Havre, 1886).

III. THE STANZA

The stanza, or strophe, is the largest unit of verse-measure ordinarily recognized. It is based not so much on rhythmical divisions as on periods either rhetorical or melodic; that is, a short stanza will roughly correspond to the period of a sentence, and a long one to that of a paragraph, while in lyrical verse the original idea was to conform the stanza to the melody for which it was written. Thus Schipper observes: "The word strophe properly signifies a *turning*, and originally indicated the return of the song, as sung, to the melody with which it began." Schipper defines a stanza as a group of verses of a certain number, so combined that all the stanzas of the same poem will be identical in the number, the length, and the metre of the corresponding verses; in rimed verse, also, the arrangement of the rimes will be identical. (See *Grundriss*, p. 268.)

The form of a stanza, then, is determined and described (the fundamental metre being assumed) by the number of verses, the length of verses, and the

arrangement of rimes. The usual and convenient method of indicating these conditions is to represent all the verses that rime together by the same letter, while the number of feet in the verse is written like an algebraic exponent. Thus a quatrain in "common metre" (four-stress and three-stress lines), riming alternately, is represented by the formula $a^4b^3a^4b^3$.

The appearance of the stanza in English verse is always the sign of foreign influence. The West Germanic verse, as far back as we have specimens of it, is uniformly *stichic* (that is, marked by no periods save those of the individual verse), not *stanzaic*.[8] On the other hand, we find the stanza in the Old Norse verse. Sievers's view is that originally the two sorts of verse existed side by side, the stanzaic being preferred for chorus delivery, the stichic for individual recitation; one form at length crowding out the other.

The great organizer of the stanza is, of course, the element of rime. While unrimed stanzas are familiar in classical verse, the two innovations, rime and stanza, were introduced together into English verse, under both Latin and French influences, and have almost invariably been associated. For notes on the history of the beginnings of stanza-forms in English, see therefore under Rime, in the following section.

TERCETS

Truth may seem, but cannot be;
Beauty brag, but 'tis not she;
Truth and beauty buried be.

(SHAKSPERE: *The Phœnix and the Turtle.* 1601.)

O praise the Lord, his wonders tell,
Whose mercy shines in Israel,
At length redeem'd from sin and hell.

(GEORGE SANDYS: *Paraphrase upon Luke i.* ab. 1630.)

Love, making all things else his foes,
Like a fierce torrent overflows
Whatever doth his course oppose.

(SIR JNO. DENHAM: *Against Love.* ab. 1640.)

Children, keep up that harmless play:
Your kindred angels plainly say
By God's authority ye may.

(LANDOR: *Children Playing in a Churchyard.* 1858.)

Whoe'er she be,
That not impossible She
That shall command my heart and
me;

Where'er she lie,
Lock'd up from mortal eye
In shady leaves of destiny:...

—Meet you her, my Wishes,
Bespeak her to my blisses,
And be ye call'd, my absent kisses.

(CRASHAW: *Wishes for the Supposed*

Mistress. 1646.)

I said, "I toil beneath the curse,
But, knowing not the universe,
I fear to slide from bad to worse.

"And that, in seeking to undo
One riddle, and to find the true,
I knit a hundred others new."

(TENNYSON: *The Two Voices.* 1833.)

Like the swell of some sweet tune,
Morning rises into noon,
May glides onward into June.

(LONGFELLOW: *Maidenhood.* 1842.)

Whenas in silks my Julia goes,
Then, then (methinks) how sweetly
flows
That liquefaction of her clothes.

(HERRICK: *To Julia.* 1648)

The fear was on the cattle, for the
gale was on the sea,
An' the pens broke up on the lower
deck an' let the creatures free
—
An' the lights went out on the lower
deck, an' no one down but me.

(KIPLING: *Mulholland's Contract.*)

Terza rima (*aba*, *bcb*, etc.).

A spending hand that alway poureth
out
Had need to have a bringer in as fast;
And on the stone that still doth turn
about

There groweth no moss. These
proverbs yet do last:
Reason hath set them in so sure a
place,
That length of years their force can
never waste.

When I remember this, and eke the
case
Wherein thou stand'st, I thought
forthwith to write,
Bryan, to thee. Who knows how great
a grace,...

(SIR THOMAS WYATT: *How to use the court and himself therein, written to Sir Francis Bryan.* ab. 1542.)

The *terza rima* is, strictly speaking, a scheme of continuous verse rather than a stanza, each tercet being united by the rime-scheme to the preceding. Its use in English has always been slight, and always due to conscious imitation of the Italian. No successful attempt has been made to use it for a long poem, as Dante did in the *Divina Commedia*. Wyatt's specimen is the earliest in English; he chose the form for his three satires imitating those of Alamanni.

Once, O sweet once, I saw with dread
oppressed
Her whom I dread; so that with

prostrate lying
Her length the earth Love's chiefe
clothing dressed.
I saw that riches fall, and fell a
crying:—
Let not dead earth enjoy so deare a
cover,
But decke therewith my soule for
your sake dying;
Lay all your feare upon your fearfull
lover:
Shine, eyes, on me, that both our lives
be guarded:
So I your sight, you shall your selves
recover.

(SIR PHILIP SIDNEY: *Thyrsis and Dorus*,
in the *Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*.
ab. 1580.)

Why do the Gentiles tumult, and the
nations
Muse a vain thing, the kings of earth
upstand
With power, and princes in their
congregations

Lay deep their plots together through
each land
Against the Lord and his Messiah
dear?
"Let us break off," say they, "by
strength of hand

Their bonds, and cast from us, no
more to wear,
Their twisted cords." He who in

Heaven doth dwell
Shall laugh.

(MILTON: *Psalm II.* 1653.)

O wild West Wind, thou breath of
Autumn's being,
Thou from whose unseen presence the
leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an
enchanter fleeing,
Yellow, and black, and pale, and
hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes! O thou
Who chariotest to their dark wintry
bed
The winged seeds, where they lie cold
and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave,
until
Thine azure sister of the Spring shall
blow
Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth,
and fill
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed
in air)
With living hues and odors plain and
hill:
Wild Spirit, which art moving
everywhere;
Destroyer and Preserver; hear, oh
hear!

(SHELLEY: *Ode to the West Wind.* 1819.)

In this case the tercets are united in groups of three to form a strophe of fourteen lines together with a

final couplet riming with the middle line of the preceding tercet.

> The true has no value beyond the
> sham:
> As well the counter as coin, I submit,
> When your table's a hat, and your
> prize a dram.
>
> Stake your counter as boldly every
> whit,
> Venture as warily, use the same skill,
> Do your best, whether winning or
> losing it,
>
> If you choose to play!—is my
> principle.
> Let a man contend to the uttermost
> For his life's set prize, be it what it
> will!
>
> (BROWNING: *The Statue and the Bust.* 1855.)

The effort to translate Dante in the original metre is especially interesting, and marked by great difficulties; to furnish the necessary rimes, without introducing expletive words that mar the simplicity of the original, being a serious problem. The following are interesting specimens of translations where this problem is grappled with; the first is a well-known fragment, the second a portion of a still unpublished translation of the *Inferno*, reproduced here by the courtesy of the author.

> Then she to me: "The greatest of all
> woes

Is to remind us of our happy days
In misery, and that thy teacher knows.
But if to learn our passion's first root preys
Upon thy spirit with such sympathy,
I will do even as he who weeps and says.
We read one day for pastime, seated nigh,
Of Lancelot, how love enchained him too.
We were alone, quite unsuspiciously.
But oft our eyes met, and our cheeks in hue
All o'er discolored by that reading were;
But one point only wholly us o'erthrew;
When we read the long-sighed-for smile of her,
To be thus kissed by such devoted lover,
He who from me can be divided ne'er
Kissed my mouth, trembling in the act all over.
Accursed was the book and he who wrote!
That day no further leaf did we uncover."

(BYRON: *Francesca of Rimini*, from Dante's *Inferno*, Canto V. 1820.)

"Wherefore for thee I think and deem
it well
Thou follow me, and I will bring
about
Thy passage thither where the
eternal dwell.
There shalt thou hearken the
despairing shout,
Shalt see the ancient spirits with
woe opprest,
Who craving for the second death
cry out.
Then shalt thou those behold who are
at rest
Amid the flame, because their
hopes aspire
To come, when it may be, among
the blest.
If to ascend to these be thy desire,
Thereto shall be a soul of
worthier strain;
Thee shall I leave with her when
I retire:
Because the Emperor who there doth
reign,
For I rebellious was to his decree,
Wills that his city none by me
attain.
In all parts ruleth, and there reigneth
he,—
There is his city and his lofty
throne:
O happy they who thereto chosen
be!"

(MELVILLE B. ANDERSON: *Dante's*

Inferno, Canto i. ll. 112-129.)

QUATRAINS

aaaa

Suete iesu, king of blysse,
Myn huerte love, min huerte lisse,
Þou art suete myd ywisse,
Wo is him þat þe shal misse!

(Song from Harleian Ms. 2253—12th century, Böddeker's *Altenglische Dichtungen*, p. 191.)

aabb

O Lord, that rul'st our mortal line,
How through the world Thy name doth shine;
Thou hast of Thy unmatched glory
Upon the heavens engrav'd Thy story.

(SIR PHILIP SIDNEY: *Psalm viii.* ab. 1580.)

A Sensitive Plant in a garden grew,
And the young winds fed it with silver dew,
And it opened its fan-like leaves to the light,
And closed them beneath the kisses of night.

(SHELLEY: *The Sensitive Plant.* 1820.)

abcb

In somer, when the shawes be sheyne,
And leves be large and long,
Hit is full mery in feyre foreste
To here the foulys song.

(Ballad of *Robin Hood and the Monk*. In Gummere's *English Ballads*, p. 77.)

This is the familiar stanza of the early ballads. The omission of rime in the third line signalizes the fact that the stanza could be (and was) regarded indifferently as made up either of two long lines or four short ones. Thus the famous Chevy Chase ballad is found (Ashmole Ms., of about 1560) written in long lines:

"The yngglyshe men hade ther bowys
ybent yer hartes wer good ynoughe
The first off arros that the shote off seven
skore spear-men the sloughe."

(See in Flügel's *Neuenglisches Lesebuch*, vol. i. p. 199.)

The same thing occurs also where there are two rimes to the stanza. Originally, the extra internal rime was no doubt the cause of the breaking up of the long couplet into two short lines. (See examples in Part Two, in the case of the septenary.)

Ye flowery banks o' bonnie Doon,

How can ye bloom sae fair!
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
And I sae fu' o' care!

(BURNS: *Bonnie Doon.* ab. 1790.)

abab

Þe grace of god ful of mi3t
Þat is king and ever was,
Mote among us ali3t
And 3ive us alle is swet grace.

(From the Harleian Ms. 913. In Mätzner's *Altenglische Sprachproben*, vol. i. p. 125.)

Furnivall prints this in long lines with internal rime, which of itself seems to form the short-line stanza from the long lines.

Of al this world the wyde compas
Hit wol not in myn armes tweyne.—
Who-so mochel wol embrace
Litel thereof he shal distreyne.

(CHAUCER: *Proverb.* ab. 1380.)

When youth had led me half the race,
That Cupid's scourge me caus'd to run,
I looked back to meet the place
From whence my weary course begun.

(EARL OF SURREY: *Description of the restless state of a lover.* ab. 1545.)

Weep with me, all you that read
This little story;
And know, for whom a tear you shed
Death's self is sorry.

(BEN JONSON: *Epitaph on Salathiel Pavy.* 1616.)

And now the weary world's great medicine, Sleep,
This learned host dispensed to every guest,
Which shuts those wounds where injured lovers weep,
And flies oppressors to relieve the opprest.

(SIR WILLIAM DAVENANT: *Gondibert*, Bk. i. Canto 6. 1651)

Now like a maiden queen she will behold
From her high turrets hourly suitors come;
The East with incense and the West with gold
Will stand like suppliants to receive her doom.

(DRYDEN: *Annus Mirabilis*, stanza 297. 1667.)

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,

And all that beauty, all that
wealth e'er gave,
Await alike the inevitable hour.
The paths of glory lead but to the
grave.

(GRAY: *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard.* 1751.)

To Davenant's *Gondibert* is usually traced the use of this "heroic" stanza (*abab* in iambic five-stress lines) in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In his preface the author said: "I believed it would be more pleasant to the reader, in a work of length, to give this respite or pause, between every stanza, ... than to run him out of breath with continued couplets. Nor doth alternate rime by any lowliness of cadence make the sound less heroic, but rather adapt it to a plain and stately composing of music." Dryden followed Davenant in using the stanza for his *Annus Mirabilis*, saying in his preface: "I have chosen to write my poem in quatrains, or stanzas of four in alternate rhyme, because I have ever judged them more noble, and of greater dignity, both for the sound and number, than any other verse in use amongst us.... I have always found the couplet verse most easy (though not so proper for this occasion), for there the work is sooner at an end, every two lines concluding the labor of the poet; but in quatrains he is to carry it further on, and not only so, but to bear along in his head the troublesome sense of four lines together." Dryden did not use the stanza again, however, and it is obviously unsuited to a long narrative poem. Saintsbury says: "With regard to the nobility and dignity of this stanza, it may safely be said that *Annus Mirabilis* itself, the best poem ever written therein, killed it by exposing its faults.... It is

chargeable with more than the disjointedness of the couplet, without the possibility of relief; while, on the other hand, the quatrains have not, like the Spenserian stave or the *ottava rima*, sufficient bulk to form units in themselves." (*Life of Dryden*, Men of Letters Series, p. 34.)

It is hard to say what Mr. Saintsbury means in speaking of the *Annus Mirabilis* as the best poem ever written in the heroic quatrain, when we remember that it is the quatrain of Gray's *Elegy*. On the possible sources of his use of it, see Gosse's *Life of Gray*, in the Men of Letters Series, p. 98 (also his *From Shakespeare to Pope*, p. 140). Mr. Gosse refers to the use of the quatrain by Sir John Davies in the *Nosce Teipsum* (1599), with which Gray was familiar, and (in addition to Davenant, Dryden, and Hobbes's *Homer*) to the *Love Elegies* of James Hammond, published 1743. "It is believed that the printing of Hammond's verses incited Gray to begin his *Churchyard Elegy*, and to make the four-line stanza the basis of most of his harmonies.... The measure itself, from first to last, is an attempt to render in English the solemn alternation of passion and reserve, the interchange of imploring and desponding tones, that is found in the Latin elegiac; and Gray gave his poem, when he first published it, an outward resemblance to the text of Tibullus by printing it without any stanzaic pauses." Mr. Gosse neglects the elegies of William Shenstone, which were also in the quatrain, and some of which had apparently been published before the *Churchyard Elegy*. On this matter see Beers's *Romanticism in the Eighteenth Century*, p. 137, where Shenstone is said to have borrowed the stanza from Hammond, and Gray from Shenstone. Shenstone, in his *Prefatory Essay on Elegy*, defended the metrical form and referred to the

elegies of Hammond. "Heroic metre, with alternate rhyme, seems well enough adapted to this species of poetry; and, however exceptionable upon other occasions, its inconveniencies appear to lose their weight in shorter elegies, and its advantages seem to acquire an additional importance. The world has an admirable example of its beauty in a collection of elegies not long since published." (Chalmers's *English Poets*, vol. xiii. p. 264.)

For there was Milton like a seraph
strong,
Beside him Shakespeare bland
and mild;
And there the world-worn Dante
grasped his song,
And somewhat grimly
smiled.

(TENNYSON: *The Palace of Art.* 1833.)

abba

Yet those lips, so sweetly swelling,
Do invite a stealing Kiss.
Now will I but venture this;
Who will read, must first learn
spelling.

(SIR PHILIP SIDNEY: *Astrophel and Stella*,
Song ii. ab. 1580.)

Let the bird of loudest lay,
On the sole Arabian tree,
Herald sad and trumpet be,

To whose sound chaste wings obey.

(SHAKSPERE: *The Phœnix and the Turtle*, 1601.)

Though beauty be the mark of praise,
And yours of whom I sing, be such
As not the world can praise too much,
Yet is't your virtue now I raise.

(BEN JONSON: *Elegy*, in *Underwoods*. 1616.)

Lord, in thine anger do not reprehend me,
Nor in thy hot displeasure me correct;
Pity me, Lord, for I am much deject,
And very weak and faint; heal and amend me.

(MILTON: *Psalm vi.* 1653.)

Away, those cloudy looks, that lab'ring sigh,
The peevish offspring of a sickly hour!
Nor meanly thus complain of fortune's power,
When the blind gamester throws a luckless die.

(COLERIDGE: *To a Friend.* ab. 1795.)

Twelve struck. That sound, by

dwindling years
Heard in each hour, crept off;
and then
The ruffled silence spread again,
Like water that a pebble stirs.

(ROSSETTI: *My Sister's Sleep.* 1850.)

I hold it true, whate'er befall;
I feel it when I sorrow most;
'Tis better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all.

(TENNYSON: *In Memoriam*, xxvii. 1850.)

Sweet after showers, ambrosial air,
That rollest from the gorgeous
gloom
Of evening over brake and bloom
And meadow, slowly breathing bare

The round of space, and rapt below
Thro' all the dewy-tasselled
wood,
And shadowing down the horned
flood
In ripples, fan my brows and blow

The fever from my cheek, and sigh
The full new life that feeds thy
breath
Throughout my frame, till Doubt
and Death,
Ill brethren, let the fancy fly

From belt to belt of crimson seas
On leagues of odor streaming far,

To where in yonder orient star
A hundred spirits whisper "Peace."

(TENNYSON: *ibid.*, lxxxiv.)

This stanza (*abba* in four-stress iambics) is commonly known as the "*In Memoriam* stanza," from its familiar use by Tennyson. Tennyson is indeed said to have invented it for his own use, not knowing of its earlier appearance in the works of Jonson and Rossetti. Professor Corson has an interesting passage on the poetic quality of the stanza: "By the rhyme-scheme of the quatrain, the terminal rhyme-emphasis of the stanza is reduced, the second and third verses being most closely braced by the rhyme. The stanza is thus admirably adapted to that sweet continuity of flow, free from abrupt checks, demanded by the spiritualized sorrow which it bears along. Alternate rhyme would have wrought an entire change in the tone of the poem. To be assured of this, one should read, aloud of course, all the stanzas whose first and second, or third and fourth, verses admit of being transposed without affecting the sense. By such transposition, the rhymes are made alternate, and the concluding rhymes more emphatic." Compare the stanza quoted above from section xxvii. with the transposed form:

"I feel it when I sorrow most;
I hold it true, whate'er befall;
'Tis better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all."

On the passage quoted from section lxxxiv. Professor Corson also observes: "The four stanzas of which it is composed constitute but one period, the sense being suspended till the close. The rhyme-emphasis is so

distributed that any one, hearing the poem read, would hardly be sensible of any of the slightest checks in the continuous and even movement of the verse.... There is no other section of *In Memoriam* in which the artistic motive of the stanza is so evident." (*Primer of English Verse*, pp. 70-77.)

aaba

Doubt you to whom my Muse these
notes entendeth,
Which now my breast, surcharg'd, to
music lendeth!
To you, to you, all song of praise
is due,
Only in you my song begins and
endeth.

(SIR PHILIP SIDNEY: *Astrophel and Stella.*
Song i, ab. 1580.)

Here the third line (the same in all the stanzas) has an additional internal rime.

Oh, make the most of what we yet
may spend,
Before we too into the dust descend;
Dust into dust, and under dust, to
lie,
Sans wine, sans song, sans singer, and
—sans end!

(EDW. FITZGERALD: *Paraphrase of the*
Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyam. 1859.)

For groves of pine on either hand,
To break the blast of winter, stand;
And further on, the hoary Channel
Tumbles a billow on chalk and sand.

(Tennyson: *To the Rev. F. D. Maurice.* 1854.)

This delightful stanza (used also by Tennyson in *The Daisy*) seems to be an imitation of the well-known Alcaic stanza of Horace:

"Vides, ut alta stet nive candidum
Soracte, nec jam sustineant onus
Silvae laborantes, geluque
Flumina constiterint acuto."

Ah, yet would God this flesh of mine might be
Where air would wash and long leaves cover me,
Where tides of grass break into foam of flowers,
Or where the wind's feet shine along the sea.

(SWINBURNE: *Laus Veneris.*)

REFRAIN STANZAS

In this group of refrain stanzas there is no attempt to make the range of illustrations complete, but only to suggest how the refrain idea has been variously used in forming the structure of the stanza. In some cases, for example, it will be seen that the refrain is a mere appendage or *coda* to the stanza; in others it is made

by rime a part of the organized structure.

Blow, northerne wynd,
Sent þou my suetyng!
Blow, norþern wynd,
Blou! blou! blou!

(Song from Harleian Ms. 2253; Böddeker's *Altenglische Dichtungen*, p. 168.)

I that in heill wes and glaidness,
Am trublit now with gret seikness,
And feblit with infirmitie;
Timor Mortis conturbat me.

(WILLIAM DUNBAR: *Lament for the Makaris.* ab. 1500.)

Now Simmer blinks on flowery braes,
And o'er the crystal streamlets plays;
Come, let us spend the lightsome days
In the birks of Aberfeldy.

(BURNS: *The Birks of Aberfeldy.* 1787.)

I wish I were where Helen lies;
Night and day on me she cries;
O that I were where Helen lies
On fair Kirconnell lea!

(*Fair Helen*; old ballad.)

O sing unto my roundelay,
O drop the briny tear with me,
Dance no more at holy-day,
Like a running river be.
My love is dead,

Gone to his death-bed,
All under the willow
tree.

(CHATTERTON: Minstrel's Roundelay
from *Ælla*. ab. 1770.)

The twentieth year is well-nigh past,
Since first our sky was overcast;
Ah, would that this might be the last!
My
Mary!

(COWPER: *My Mary*. 1793.)

Duncan Gray cam' here to woo—
Ha, ha, the wooing o't!
On blithe Yule night, when we were
fou—
Ha, ha, the wooing o't!
Maggie coost her head fu' heigh,
Looked asklent and unco skeigh,
Gart poor Duncan stand abeigh;
Ha, ha, the wooing o't!

(BURNS: *Duncan Gray*. ab. 1790.)

My heart is wasted with my woe,
Oriana.
There is no rest for me below,
Oriana.
When the long dun wolds are ribb'd
with snow,
And loud the Norland whirlwinds
blow,
Oriana,
Alone I wander to and fro,

Oriana.

(TENNYSON: *Ballad of Oriana.* ab. 1830.)

Oh, the little birds sang east, and the
little birds sang west,
(Toll
slowly)
And I smiled to think God's greatness
flowed around our
incompleteness—
Round our
restlessness
His rest.

(ELIZABETH B. BROWNING: *Rhyme of the Duchess May.* ab. 1845.)

"Ah! what white thing at the door has
cross'd,
Sister
Helen?
Ah! what is this that sighs in the
frost?"
"A soul that's lost as mine is lost,
Little
brother!"
(O Mother, Mary
Mother,
Lost, lost, all lost, between Hell
and Heaven!)

(ROSSETTI: *Sister Helen.* 1870.)

Laetabundus
Exultet fidelis chorus,

Alleluia!
Egidio psallat coetus
Iste laetus,
Alleluia!

(ST. BERNARD: *De Nativitate Domini.*)

Sermone Marcus Tullius,
Fortuna Cesar Julius
Tibi non equantur.
Tibi summa prudentia,
Prefulgens et potentia
Celesti dono dantur.

(From a 12th c. MS.: *Regulae de Rhythmis.* In Schipper's *Englische Metrik*, vol. i. p. 354.)

Quant li solleiz conviset en leon
En icel tens qu'est ortus pliadon
Perunt matin,
Une pulcellet odit molt gent plorer
Et son ami dolcement regreter,
Ex si lli dis.

(Early French version of the *Song of Songs*, quoted in LEWIS's *Foreign Sources of Modern English Versification*, p. 89.)

The special form of refrain stanza appearing in the first of these foreign specimens (the Alleluia hymn form) is generally thought to have been the source of the "tail-rime stanza" illustrated in the other two specimens, and in the several pages which follow. The characteristic feature of this stanza is the presence of two short lines riming together and serving as "tails" to the first and second parts of the

body of the stanza. The same name appears in all the languages: "versus caudati" in the mediæval Latin, "rime couée" in the French, and "Schweifreim" in modern German. It is easy to see, what the following specimens illustrate, how stanzas constructed on this fundamental principle might be varied greatly in particular forms, according to the number, length, and rime-arrangement of the longer lines.

Men may merci have, traytour not to
save, for luf ne for awe,
Atteynt of traytorie, suld haf no
mercie, wiþ no maner lawe.

(ROBERT MANNING of Brunne:
Chronicle. ab. 1330.)

For Edward gode dede
Þe Baliol did him mede
a wikked bounte.
Turne we ageyn to rede
and on our geste to spede
a Maddok þer left we.

(*Ibid.*)

Manning's chronicle was a translation of the French chronicle of Pierre de Langtoft. Although the translator designed to avoid the various complicated measures used in the original, and kept pretty closely to alexandrines (see p. 254, below), in the passages here represented he followed the tail-rime of the original. In the first case the stanza form is not represented in the manuscript, though of course implicit in the rimes. The name of the stanza, "rime couée," appears very early in Manning's Prologue, in the famous passage in which he expressed his

preference for metrical simplicity:

Als þai haf wrytenn and sayd
Haf I alle in myn Inglis layd,
In symple speche as I couthe,
That is lightest in mannes mouthe.
I mad noght for no disours,
Ne for no seggers no harpours,
Bot for þe luf of symple menn
That strange Inglis cann not kenn.
For many it ere that strange Inglis
In ryme wate never what it is,
And bot þai wist what it mente
Ellis me thoght it were alle shente.

I made it not for to be praysed,
Bot at þe lewed menn were aysed.
If it were made in ryme couwee,
Or in strangere or entrelace,
Þat rede Inglis it ere inowe
Þat couthe not haf coppled a kowe,
Þat outhere in couwee or in baston
Som suld haf ben fordon,
So þat fele men þat it herde
Suld not witte howe þat it ferde.

... And forsoth I couth noght
So strange Inglis as þai wroght,
And menn besoght me many a tyme
To turne it bot in light ryme.
þai sayd, if I in strange it turne,
To here it manyon suld skurne.
For it ere names fulle selcouthe,
þat ere not used now in mouthe.
And therfore for the comonalte,
þat blythely wild listen to me,

On light lange I it begann,
For luf of the lewed mann.

(Hearne ed., vol. i. pp. xcix, c.)

Lines 15-22 may be paraphrased thus: "If it were made in *rime couée*, in *rime strangere*, or *rime entrelacée*, there are plenty of those who read English who could not have put the tail-verses together; so that either in the tail-verse or the *baston* some would have been confused, and many men that heard it would not know how it went." The "interlaced" (alternate) rime was a familiar form. *Baston* seems usually to be an equivalent for "stanza" or "stave." It seems uncertain whether by *rime strangere* Manning had in mind any particular form of stanza or rime-arrangement.

Stand wel, moder, under rode,
Byholt þy sone wiþ glade mode;
Blyþe, moder, myht þou be!
Sone, hou shulde y blyþe stonde?
Y se þin fet, y se þin honde
Nayled to þe harde tre.

(Song from Harleian MS. 3253; Böddeker's *Altenglische Dichtungen*, p. 206.)

Listeth, lordes, in good entent,
And I wol telle verrayment
Of mirthe and of solas;
Al of a knyght was fair and gent
In bataille and in tourneyment,
His name was sir Thopas ...

An elf-queen wol I love, y-wis,

For in this world no womman is
Worthy to be my make
In toune;
Alle othere wommen I forsake,
And to an elf-queen I me take
By dale and eek by doune!

(CHAUCER: *Sir Thopas*, from *Canterbury Tales*. ab. 1385.)

The tail-rime stanza had become a favorite for the metrical romances of the fourteenth century; but Chaucer evidently saw its inappropriateness for long narrative poems, and ridiculed it—with certain other elements of the romances—in this *Rime of Sir Thopas*. The Host is made to interrupt the story:

"'Myn eres aken of thy drasty speche;
Now swiche a rym the devel I
beteche!
This may wel be rym dogerel', quod
he."

My patent pardouns, ye may se,
Cum fra the Cane of Tartarei,
Weill seald with oster schellis;
Thocht ye have na contritioun,
Ye sall have full remissioun,
With help of buiks and bellis.

(SIR DAVID LINDSAY: *Ane Satyre of the Three Estates.* ab. 1540.)

Seinte Marie! levedi briht,
Moder thou art of muchel miht,
Quene in hevene of feire ble;
Gabriel to the he lihte,

Tho he brouhte al wid rihte
Then holi gost to lihten in the.
Godes word ful wel thou cnewe;
Ful mildeliche thereto thou bewe,
And saidest, "So it mote be!"
Thi thone was studevast ant trewe;
For the joye that to was newe,
Levedi, thou have merci of me!

(*Quinque Gaudia.* In Mätzner's *Altenglische Sprachproben*, vol. i. p. 51.)

Here the principle of the tail-rime is extended to four tail-verses. See also the specimen on p. 111, below.

All, dear Nature's children sweet,
Lie 'fore bride and bridegroom's feet,
Blessing their sense!
Not an angel of the air,
Bird melodious or bird fair,
Be absent hence.

(Song from *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, by Shakspere and Fletcher. pub. 1634.)

Fair stood the wind for France,
When we our sails advance,
Nor now to prove our chance
Longer not tarry;
But put unto to the main,
At Caux, the mouth of Seine,
With all his martial train,
Landed King Harry.

(DRAYTON: *Agincourt.* ab. 1600.)

I am a man of war and might,

And know thus much, that I can fight,
Whether I am i' th' wrong or right,
Devoutly.
No woman under heaven I fear,
New oaths I can exactly swear,
And forty healths my brains will bear
Most stoutly.

(SIR JOHN SUCKLING: *A Soldier*. ab. 1635.)

The stanzas that follow show various combinations and applications of the same principle—the use of shorter verses in connection with longer.

A wayle whyte ase whalles bon,
A grein in golde þat goldly shon,
A tortle þat min herte is on,
In toune trewe;
Hire gladshipe nes never gon,
Whil y may glewe.

(Song from Harleian MS. 2253; Böddeker's *Altenglische Dichtungen*, p. 161.)

Of on that is so fayr and bri3t,
velut maris stella,
Bri3ter than the day is li3t,
parens et puella;
Ic crie to the, thou se to me,
Levedy, preye thi sone for me,
tam pia,
That ic mote come to the
Maria.

(*Hymn to the Virgin*, from Egerton MS.

613. In Mätzner's *Altenglische Sprachproben*, vol. i. p. 53.)

Oh, wad some power the giftie gie us
To see oursel's as ithers see us!
It wad frae monie a blunder free us
An' foolish notion:
What airs in dress an' gait wad lea'e us,
An' e'en devotion!

(BURNS: *To a Louse on a Lady's Bonnet.* 1786.)

O goodly hand,
Wherein doth stand
My heart distract in pain;
Dear hand, alas!
In little space
My life thou dost restrain.

(SIR THOMAS WYATT: In Tottel's *Songs and Sonnets.* pub. 1557.)

Old Ocean's praise
Demands my lays;
A truly British theme I sing;

A theme so great,
I dare compete,
And join with Ocean, Ocean's king.

(EDWARD YOUNG: *Ocean, an Ode.* 1728.)

No more, no more
This worldly shore
Upbraids me with its loud uproar!
With dreamful eyes
My spirit lies
Under the walls of Paradise!

(THOMAS BUCHANAN READ: *Drifting.*
ab. 1850.)

In these stanzas a pair of long lines bind together the first and second parts of the composition, just as the short lines do in the original *rime couée*.

Young was and is universally condemned for choosing this form of stanza for his odes. He was led to do so by his admiration for the passage in Dryden's *Ode for St. Cecilia's Day*, running:

"Assumes the god,
Affects to nod,
And seems to shake the spheres."

Here, said Young, Dryden was expressing "majesty"; hence, since he wished his odes to be majestic, he used the short, choppy measure throughout. (See his Introductory Essay to his Odes, in Chalmers's *English Poets*, vol. xiii.) On the other hand, the stanza as used by Read has been almost universally admired.

Hail, old Patrician Trees, so great and
good!
Hail, ye Plebeian Underwood!
Where the poetic birds rejoice,
And for their quiet nests and
plenteous food
Pay with their grateful voice.

(COWLEY: *Of Solitude.* ab. 1650.)

To-night this sunset spreads two
golden wings
Cleaving the western sky;
Winged too with wind it is, and
winnowings
Of birds; as if the day's last hour in
rings
Of strenuous flight must die.

(ROSSETTI: *Sunset Wings.* 1881.)

Ye dainty Nymphs, that in this
blessed brook
Do bathe your breast,
Forsake your watery bowers, and
hither look
At my request:
And eke you Virgins that on Parnasse
dwell,
Whence floweth Helicon, the learned
well,
Help me to blaze
Her worthy praise,
Which in her sex doth all excel.

(SPENSER: *The Shepherd's Calendar,*
April. 1579.)

You, that will a wonder know,
Go with me,
Two suns in a heaven of snow
Both burning be;
All they fire, that do but eye them,
But the snow's unmelted by them.

(CAREW: *In Praise of his Mistress.* ab. 1635.)

Go, lovely Rose!
Tell her, that wastes her time and me,
That now she knows,
When I resemble her to thee,
How sweet and fair she seems to be.

(WALLER: *Go, lovely Rose.* ab. 1650.)

The use of short lines somewhat intricately introduced among longer ones, is characteristic of the stanzas of the lyrical poets of the first part of the seventeenth century. It may perhaps be traced in part to the influence of Donne.

Where the quiet-colored end of
evening smiles
Miles and miles
On the solitary pastures where our
sheep
Half-asleep
Tinkle homeward thro' the twilight,
stray or stop
As they crop.

(BROWNING: *Love among the Ruins.* 1855.)

Compare with this (although it is not divided into stanzas) Herrick's *Thanksgiving to God*:

Lord, thou hast given me a cell
Wherein to dwell;
A little house, whose humble roof
Is weatherproof;

Under the spars of which I lie
Both soft and dry.

When God at first made
Man,
Having a glass of blessings standing
by,
Let us (said He) pour on him all we
can:
Let the world's riches, which
dispersed lie,
Contract into a span.

(GEORGE HERBERT: *The Gifts of God.* 1631.)

The following specimens illustrate various forms of stanzas distinguished by arrangement of rime, without reference to the length of lines:

abccb

In vain, through every changeful year
Did Nature lead him as before;
A primrose by a river's brim
A yellow primrose was to him,
And it was nothing more.

(WORDSWORTH: *Peter Bell.* 1798.)

ababb

Survival of the fittest, adaptation,
And all their other evolution terms,
Seem to omit one small consideration,

To wit, that tumblebugs and
angleworms
Have souls: there's soul in everything
that squirms.

(WILLIAM VAUGHN MOODY: *The Menagerie.* 1901.)

aabbb

Mary mine that art Mary's Rose,
Come in to me from the garden-close.
The sun sinks fast with the rising
dew,
And we marked not how the faint
moon grew;
But the hidden stars are calling you.

(ROSSETTI: *Rose Mary.* 1881.)

aabcdd

Hail seint michel, with the lange sper!
Fair beth thi winges: up thi scholder
Thou hast a rede kirtil a non to thi
fote.
Thou ert best angle that ever god
makid.
This vers is ful wel
i-wrog3t;
Hit is of wel furre y-
brog3t.

(*Satire on the People of Kildare*, from Harleian Ms. 913, in Guest's *English*

Rhythms, Skeat ed., p. 616.)

aaaabb

What beauty would have lovely
styled,
What manners pretty, nature mild,
What wonder perfect, all were filed
Upon record in this blest child.
And till the coming of the soul
To fetch the flesh, we keep the roll.

(BEN JONSON: *Epitaph; Underwoods, liii.* 1616.)

ababab

She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry
skies:
And all that's best of dark or bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes;
Thus mellowed to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day
denies.

(BYRON: *She Walks in Beauty.* 1815.)

ababcc

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and
hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

(WORDSWORTH: *I wandered lonely as a cloud.* 1804.)

O, how her eyes and tears did lend
and borrow!
Her eyes seen in her tears, tears in her
eye;
Both crystals, where they view'd each
other's sorrow,—
Sorrow that friendly sighs sought still
to dry;
But like a stormy day, now wind,
now rain,
Sighs dry her cheeks, tears make
them wet again.

(SHAKSPERE: *Venus and Adonis*, st. 161. 1593.)

***ababbcc* ("*Rime royal*")**

Humblest of herte, hyest of reverence,
Benigne flour, coroune of vertues alle,
Sheweth unto your rial excellence
Your servaunt, if I durste me so calle,
His mortal harm, in which he is y-
falle,

And noght al only for his evel fare,
But for your renoun, as he shal
declare.

(CHAUCER: *Compleynte unto Pite.* ab. 1370.)

And on the smale grene twistis sat
The lytil suete nyghtingale, and song
So loud and clere, the ympnis
consecrat
Of luvis use, now soft now lowd
among,
That all the gardynis and the wallis
rong
Ryght of thaire song, and on the
copill next
Of thaire suete armony, and lo the
text.

(JAMES I. of Scotland: *The King's Quhair*, st. 33. ab. 1425.)

For men have marble, women waxen,
minds,
And therefore are they form'd as
marble will;
The weak oppress'd, the impression of
strange kinds
Is form'd in them by force, by fraud,
or skill:
Then call them not the authors of
their ill,
No more than wax shall be
accounted evil,
Wherein is stamp'd the
semblance of a devil.

(SHAKSPERE: *The Rape of Lucrece*, st. 178. 1594.)

In a far country that I cannot name,
And on a year long ages past away,
A King there dwelt in rest and ease and fame,
And richer than the Emperor is to-day:
The very thought of what this man might say
From dusk to dawn kept many a lord awake,
For fear of him did many a great man quake.

(WILLIAM MORRIS: *The Earthly Paradise; The Proud King.* 1868.)

The "rime royal" stanza is one of Chaucer's contributions to English verse, and about 14,000 lines of his poetry are in this form. Its use by King James in the *King's Quhair* was formerly thought to be the source of the name; but it seems more likely that the name, like the form, was of French origin, and is to be connected with such terms as *chant royal* and *ballat royal*, familiar in the nomenclature of courtly poetry (see Schipper, vol. i. p. 426). The stanza was used by Chaucer with marvellous skill for purposes of continuous narrative, and was a general favorite among his imitators in the fifteenth century, being used by Lydgate, Occleve, Hawes, Dunbar, then by Skelton, and by Barclay in the *Ship of Fooles*. It appears popular as late as the time of Sackville's part of the *Mirror for Magistrates* (1563).[9] Later than Shakspere's *Rape of Lucrece* it is rarely found.

(But see Milton's unfinished poem on *The Passion*, where he used a form of the rime royal with concluding alexandrine.)

Strictly speaking, the "rime royal" is always in five-stress verse, but in the following specimen the same rime-scheme appears in the irregular six-or-seven-stress verse of one of the Mysteries.

The story sheweth further, that, after
man was blyste,
The Lord did create woman owte
of a ribbe of man,
Which woman was deceyvyd with the
Serpentes darkned myste;
By whose synn ower nature is so
weake no good we can;
Wherfor they were dejectyd and
caste from thence than
Unto dolloure and myseri and to
traveyle and payne,
Untyll Godes spryght renuid; and so
we ende certayne.

(Prologue to Norwich Whitsun Play of the Creation and Fall. In Manly's *Specimens of the Pre-Shaksperean Drama*, vol. i p. 5.)

ababcca

Dear and great Angel, wouldst thou
only leave
That child, when thou hast done
with him, for me!
Let me sit all the day here, that when

eve
Shall find performed thy special
ministry,
And time come for departure, thou,
suspending
Thy flight, may'st see another child
for tending,
Another still, to quiet and
retrieve.

(BROWNING: *The Guardian Angel.*
1855.)

ababccb

The City is of Night; perchance of
Death,
But certainly of Night; for never
there
Can come the lucid morning's fragrant
breath
After the dewy dawning's cold
grey air;
The moon and stars may shine with
scorn or pity;
The sun has never visited that city,
For it dissolveth in the daylight
fair.

(JAMES THOMSON: *The City of Dreadful*
Night. 1874.)

abababab

Trew king, that sittes in trone,

Unto the I tell my tale,
And unto the I bid a bone,
For thou ert bute of all my bale:
Als thou made midelerd and the
mone,
And bestes and fowles grete and
smale.
Unto me send thi socore sone,
And dresce my dedes in this dale.

(LAURENCE MINOT: *Battle of Halidon Hill.* 1352.)

On Minot's lyrics see ten Brink's *History of English Literature*, Kennedy translation, vol. i. p. 323.

ababbaba

Since love is such that as ye wot
Cannot always be wisely used,
I say, therefore, then blame me not,
Though I therein have been
abused.
For as with cause I am accused,
Guilty I grant such was my lot;
And though it cannot be excused,
Yet let such folly be forgot.

(SIR THOMAS WYATT: *That the power of love excuseth the folly of loving*, ab. 1550.)

ababbcbc

In a chirche þer i con knel

Þis ender day in on morwenynge,
Me lyked þe servise wonder wel,
For þi þe lengore con i lynge.
I sei3 a clerk a book forþ bringe,
Þat prikked was in mony a plas;
Faste he sou3te what he schulde
synge,
And al was *Deo gracias*!

(From the Vernon and Simeon MSS.; in *Anglia*, vii. 287.)

This Julius to the Capitolie wente
Upon a day, as he was wont to goon,
And in the Capitolie anon him hente
This false Brutus, and his othere foon,
And stikede him with boydekins
anoon
With many a wounde, and thus they
lete him lye;
But never gronte he at no strook but
oon,
Or elles at two, but if his storie lye.

(CHAUCER: *The Monk's Tale*, ll. 713-720. ab. 1375.)

This stanza is sometimes called the "*Monk's Tale* stanza," from its use by Chaucer in that single tale of the Canterbury group. Although it has been little used by later poets, it may have given Spenser a suggestion for his characteristic stanza (see below, p. 102).

Farewell! if ever fondest prayer
For other's weal availed on high,
Mine will not all be lost in air,

But waft thy name beyond the
sky.
'Twere vain to speak, to weep, to sigh:
Oh! more than tears of blood can
tell,
When rung from guilt's expiring eye,
Are in that word—Farewell!—
Farewell!

(BYRON: *Farewell, if ever fondest prayer.* 1808.)

ababccdd

Will no one tell me what she sings?
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago:
Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of to-day?
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again!

(WORDSWORTH: *The Solitary Reaper.* 1803.)

***abababcc* (*ottava rima*)**

She sat, and sewed, that hath done
me the wrong
Whereof I plain, and have done many
a day;
And, whilst she heard my plaint in
piteous song,

She wished my heart the sampler,
that it lay.
The blind master, whom I have served
so long,
Grudging to hear that he did hear her
say,
Made her own weapon do her finger
bleed,
To feel if pricking were so good in
deed.

(SIR THOMAS WYATT: *Of his love that pricked her finger with a needle*, in Tottel's *Songs and Sonnets*. pub. 1557.)

This *ottava rima* is a familiar Italian stanza made classic by Ariosto and Tasso, and introduced into England by Wyatt, together with the sonnet and other Italian forms. Professor Corson says, "Such a rhyme-scheme, especially in the Italian, with its great similarity of endings, is too 'monotonously iterative'; and the rhyming couplet at the close seems, as James Russell Lowell expresses it, 'to put on the brakes with a jar.'" (*Primer of English Verse*, pp. 89 f.)

O! who can lead, then, a more happie
life
Than he that with cleane minde, and
heart sincere,
No greedy riches knowes nor bloudie
strife,
No deadly fight of warlick fleete doth
feare;
Ne runs in perill of foes cruell knife,
That in the sacred temples he may

reare
A trophee of his glittering spoyles and
treasure,
Or may abound in riches above
measure.

(SPENSER: *Virgil's Gnat*, ll. 121-128.
1591.)

For as with equal rage, and equal
might,
Two adverse winds combat, with
billows proud,
And neither yield (seas, skies
maintain like fight,
Wave against wave oppos'd, and
cloud to cloud);
So war both sides with obstinate
despite,
With like revenge; and neither party
bow'd:
Fronting each other with confounding
blows,
No wound one sword unto the other
owes.

(DANIEL: *History of the Civil War*, bk. vi.
ab. 1600.)

Thus sang the uncouth swain to the
oaks and rills,
While the still morn went out with
sandals gray;
He touch'd the tender stops of various
quills,
With eager thought warbling his
Doric lay:

And now the sun had stretch'd out all
the hills,
And now was dropt into the western
bay:
At last he rose, and twitch'd his
mantle blue:
To-morrow to fresh woods, and
pastures new.

(MILTON: *Lycidas*; Epilogue. 1638.)

This is a single stave of the *ottava rima*, at the close of the varying metrical forms of *Lycidas*. Professor Corson says: "The Elegy having come to an end, the *ottava rima* is employed, with an admirable artistic effect, to mark off the Epilogue in which Milton ... speaks in his own person."

They looked a manly, generous
generation;
Beards, shoulders, eyebrows, broad,
and square, and thick,
Their accents firm and loud in
conversation,
Their eyes and gestures eager, sharp,
and quick,
Showed them prepared, on proper
provocation,
To give the lie, pull noses, stab and
kick;
And for that very reason, it is said,
They were so very courteous and
well-bred.

(JOHN HOOKHAM FRERE: *The Monks and the Giants.* 1817.)

With every morn their love grew
tenderer,
With every eve deeper and tenderer
still;
He might not in house, field, or
garden stir,
But her full shape would all his seeing
fill;
And his continual voice was
pleasanter
To her, than noise of trees or hidden
rill;
Her lute-string gave an echo of his
name,
She spoilt her half-done broidery with
the same.

(KEATS: *Isabella.* 1820.)

As boy, I thought myself a clever
fellow,
And wished that others held the same
opinion;
They took it up when my days grew
more mellow,
And other minds acknowledged my
dominion:
Now my sere fancy "falls into the
yellow
Leaf," and Imagination droops her
pinion,
And the sad truth which hovers o'er
my desk
Turns what was once romantic to
burlesque.

(BYRON: *Don Juan*, canto iv. st. 3.

1821.)

Of the *ottava rima*, as used by Frere and Byron, Austin Dobson says: "It had already been used by Harrington, Drayton, Fairfax, and (as we have seen) in later times by Gay; it had even been used by Frere's contemporary, William Tennant; but to Frere belongs the honor of giving it the special characteristics which Byron afterward popularised in *Beppo* and *Don Juan*. Structurally the *ottava rima* of Frere singularly resembles that of Byron, who admitted that *Whistlecraft* was his 'immediate model.' ... Byron, taking up the stanza with equal skill and greater genius, filled it with the vigor of his personality, and made it a measure of his own, which it has ever since been hazardous for inferior poets to attempt." (Ward's *English Poets*, vol. iv. p. 240.) Byron may indeed be said—in the words of the present specimen—to have turned what was commonly a romantic stanza "to burlesque."

aabaabbab

O hie honour, sweit hevinlie flour
degest,
Gem verteous, maist precious,
gudliest.
For hie renoun thow art guerdoun
conding,
Of worschip kend the glorious end
and rest,
But quhome in richt na worthie wicht
may lest.
Thy greit puissance may maist avance
all thing,
And poverall to mekill availl sone

bring.
I the require sen thow but peir art
best,
That efter this in thy hie blis we ring.

(GAWAIN DOUGLAS: *The Palace of Honour.* ab. 1500.)

ababcccdd

My love is like unto th' eternal fire,
And I as those which therein do
remain;
Whose grievous pains is but their
great desire
To see the sight which they may
not attain:
So in hell's heat myself I feel to be,
That am restrained by great
extremity,
The sight of her which is so dear to
me.
O! puissant love! and power of great
avail!
By whom hell may be felt e'er death
assail!

(SIR THOMAS WYATT: *Of the extreme torment endured by the unhappy lover.* ab. 1550.)

***ababbcbcc* ("*Spenserian stanza*")**

By this the Northerne wagoner

had set
His sevenfold teme behind the
stedfast starre
That was in Ocean waves yet
never wet,
But firme is fixt, and sendeth
light from farre
To all that in the wide deepe
wandring arre;
And chearefull Chaunticlere with
his note shrill
Had warned once, that Phœbus
fiery carre
In hast was climbing up the
Easterne hill,
Full envious that night so long his
roome did fill.

(SPENSER: *The Faerie Queene*, bk. i.
canto 2, st. 1. 1590.)

And more to lulle him in his
slumber soft,
A trickling streame from high
rock tumbling downe,
And ever-drizling raine upon the
loft,
Mixt with a murmuring winde,
much like the sowne
Of swarming Bees, did cast him
in a swowne.
No other noyse, nor peoples
troublous cryes,
As still are wont t'annoy the
walled towne,
Might there be heard; but
carelesse Quiet lyes

Wrapt in eternall silence farre from
enimyes.

(SPENSER: *ib.* bk. i. canto 1, st. 41.)

This stanza, which Spenser invented for his own use and to which his name is always given, was apparently formed by adding an alexandrine to the *ababbcbc* stanza of Chaucer. In it Spenser wrote the greater part of his poetry, and its use marks the Spenserian influence wherever found, especially among the poets of the eighteenth century,—Thomson, Shenstone, Beattie, and the like.

James Russell Lowell, in his Essay on Spenser, comments as follows: "He found the *ottava rima* ... not roomy enough, so first ran it over into another line, and then ran that added line over into an alexandrine, in which the melody of one stanza seems forever longing and feeling forward after that which is to follow.... Wave follows wave with equable gainings and recessions, the one sliding back in fluent music to be mingled with and carried forward by the next. In all this there is soothingness, indeed, but no slumberous monotony; for Spenser was no mere metrist, but a great composer. By the variety of his pauses—now at the close of the first or second foot, now of the third, and again of the fourth—he gives spirit and energy to a measure whose tendency it certainly is to become languorous." (*Works*, vol. iv. pp. 328, 329.)

See also the chapters on the Spenserian stanza in Corson's *Primer of English Verse*, where its use for pictorial effects is interestingly discussed.

A pleasing land of drowsy-head it

was,
Of dreams that wave before the
half-shut eye,
And of gay castles in the clouds
that pass,
Forever flushing round a summer
sky:
There eke the soft delights, that
witchingly
Instil a wanton sweetness
through the breast,
And the calm pleasures always
hovered nigh;
But whate'er smacked of
noyaunce, or unrest,
Was far far off expelled from this
delicious nest.

(THOMSON: *The Castle of Indolence*,
canto i. 1748.)

Her cap, far whiter than the
driven snow,
Emblem right meet of decency
does yield:
Her apron dyed in grain, as blue,
I trowe,
As is the hare-bell that adorns the
field:
And in her hand, for sceptre, she
does wield
Tway birchen sprays, with
anxious fear entwined,
With dark distrust and sad
repentance filled,
And stedfast hate, and sharp
affliction joined,

And fury uncontrolled and
chastisement unkind.

(SHENSTONE: *The Schoolmistress.* 1742.)

Thomson's *Castle of Indolence*, although not published till 1748, seems to have been written and circulated before Shenstone's *Schoolmistress*. Thomson caught the spirit of Spenser and his stanza better than any other imitator until the days of Keats. On the revival of the stanza at this period, see Beers's *English Romanticism in the Eighteenth Century*, chap. iii., on "the Spenserians." Earliest of the group, according to Mr. Gosse, was Akenside's *Virtuoso* (1737. See *Eighteenth Century Literature*, p. 311).

O Scotia! my dear, my native
soil!
For whom my warmest wish to
Heaven is sent,
Long may thy hardy sons of
rustic toil
Be blest with health, and peace,
and sweet content!
And oh, may Heaven their simple
lives prevent
From luxury's contagion, weak
and vile!
Then, howe'er crowns and
coronets be rent,
A virtuous populace may rise the
while,
And stand a wall of fire around their
much-loved Isle.

(BURNS: *The Cotter's Saturday Night.*
1785.)

I stood in Venice, on the Bridge
of Sighs;
A palace and a prison on each
hand:
I saw from out the wave her
structures rise
As from the stroke of the
enchanter's wand:
A thousand years their cloudy
wings expand
Around me, and a dying glory
smiles
O'er the far times, when many a
subject land
Looked to the winged Lion's
marble piles,
Where Venice sate in state, throned
on her hundred isles.

(BYRON: *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*,
canto iv, st. i. 1818.)

A casement high and triple-arch'd
there was,
All garlanded with carven
imag'ries
Of fruits, and flowers, and
bunches of knot-grass,
And diamonded with panes of
quaint device,
Innumerable of stains and
splendid dyes,
As are the tiger-moth's deep-
damask'd wings;
And in the midst, 'mong thousand
heraldries,
And twilight saints, and dim

emblazonings,
A shielded scutcheon blush'd with
blood of queens and kings.

(KEATS: *Eve of St. Agnes.* 1820.)

Professor Corson remarks: "Probably no English poet who has used the Spenserian stanza, first assimilated so fully the spirit of Spenser, ... as did Keats; and to this fact may be partly attributed his effective use of it as an organ for his imagination in its 'lingering, loving, particularizing mood.'" (*Primer of English Verse*, p. 124.)

The splendors of the firmament
of time
May be eclips'd, but are
extinguish'd not;
Like stars to their appointed
height they climb,
And death is a low mist which
cannot blot
The brightness it may veil. When
lofty thought
Lifts a young heart above its
mortal lair,
And love and life contend in it
for what
Shall be its earthly doom, the
dead live there
And move like winds of light on dark
and stormy air.

(SHELLEY: *Adonais*, st. 44. 1821.)

With reference to his use of this stanza Shelley

remarked, in the Preface to *The Revolt of Islam*: "I have adopted the stanza of Spenser (a measure inexpressibly beautiful), not because I consider it a finer model of poetical harmony than the blank verse of Shakespeare and Milton, but because in the latter there is no shelter for mediocrity: you must either succeed or fail.... But I was enticed also by the brilliancy and magnificence of sound which a mind that has been nourished upon musical thoughts can produce by a just and harmonious arrangement of the pauses of this measure." Professor Corson (*Primer of English Verse*, p. 112) quotes Mr. Todhunter as saying: "Compare the impetuous rapidity and pale intensity of Shelley's verse with the lulling harmony, the lingering cadence, the voluptuous color of Spenser's, or with the grandiose majesty of Byron's.... In *Adonais*, indeed, a poem on which he bestowed much labor, he handles the stanza in a masterly manner, and endows it with an individual music beautiful and new."

"Courage!" he said, and pointed
    toward the land,
"This mounting wave will roll us
    shoreward soon."
In the afternoon they came unto
    a land
In which it seemed always
    afternoon.
All round the coast the languid
    air did swoon,
Breathing like one that hath a
    weary dream.
Full-faced above the valley stood
    the moon;
And like a downward smoke, the

slender stream
Along the cliff to fall and pause and
fall did seem.

(TENNYSON: *The Lotos-Eaters.* 1833.)

abababccc

A fisher boy, that never knew his
peer
In dainty songs, the gentle
Thomalin,
With folded arms, deep sighs,
and heavy cheer,
Where hundred nymphs, and
hundred muses in,
Sunk down by Chamus' brinks;
with him his dear
Dear Thyrsil lay; oft times
would he begin
To cure his grief, and better way
advise;
But still his words, when his sad
friend he spies,
Forsook his silent tongue, to speak in
watry eyes.

(PHINEAS FLETCHER: *Piscatory Eclogues.*
ab. 1630.)

Fletcher was an imitator of Spenser, and here devises a stanza differing little from his master's. The final alexandrine is used with the same effect. For other instances of final alexandrines, doubtless used under the general influence of the Spenserian stanza, see the following specimens.

aabaabcc

Ring out, ye
crystal
spheres!
Once bless our
human
ears,
If ye have power to touch
our senses so;
And let your
silver
chime
Move in
melodious
time;
And let the bass of heaven's
deep organ blow;
And with your ninefold harmony,
Make up full consort to the angelic
symphony.

(MILTON: *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity*. 1629.)

ababbcbcdd

What? Ælla dead? and Bertha
dying too?
So fall the fairest flowrets of the
plain.
Who can unfold the works that
heaven can do,
Or who untwist the roll of fate in

twain?
Ælla, thy glory was thy only
gain;
For that, thy pleasure and thy joy
was lost.
Thy countrymen shall rear thee
on the plain
A pile of stones, as any grave can
boast.
Further, a just reward to thee to
be,
In heaven thou sing of God, on earth
we'll sing of thee.

(CHATTERTON: *Ælla,* st. 147. 1768.)

This is the ten-line "Chatterton stanza," a variant of the Spenserian stanza, devised by Chatterton, which he claimed ante-dated Spenser by one or two centuries. His claim for it was of course purely fictitious.

aabbbcc

Build thee more stately mansions,
O my soul,
As the swift
seasons
roll!
Leave thy low-
vaulted
past!
Let each new temple, nobler than
the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a
dome more vast,

Till thou at
length
art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's
unresting sea!

(OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES: *The Chambered Nautilus.* 1858.)

See also the notable use of the alexandrine in Shelley's *Skylark*, p. 34, above.

abababbcbc

The dubbement dere of doun and
dalez,
Of wod and water and wlonke
playnez,
Bylde in me blys, abated my
balez,
Fordidde my stresse, dystryed my
paynez.
Doun after a strem that dryghly
halez,
I bowed in blys, bred-ful my
braynez;
The fyrre I folghed those floty valez,
The more strenghthe of joye myn
herte straynez,
As fortune fares theras ho
fraynez,
Whether solace ho sende other
ellez sore,
The wygh, to wham her wylle ho
waynez,

Hyttez to have ay more and
more.

(*The Pearl*, st. xi. Fourteenth century.)

Mr. Israel Gollancz says, in his Introduction to this poem: "I can point to no direct source to which the poet of *Pearl* was indebted for his measure; that it ultimately belongs to Romance poetry I have little doubt. These twelve-line verses seem to me to resemble the earliest form of the sonnet more than anything else I have as yet discovered.... Be this as it may, all will, I hope, recognize that there is a distinct gain in giving to the 101 stanzas of the poem the appearance of a sonnet sequence, marking clearly the break between the initial octave and the closing quatrain.... The refrain, the repetition of the catch-word of each verse, the trammels of alliteration, all seem to have offered no difficulty to our poet; and if power over technical difficulties constitutes in any way a poet's greatness, the author of *Pearl*, from this point of view alone, must take high rank among English poets." (Introduction, pp. xxiv, xxv.)

Other examples of intricate stanza structure are found in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, supposed to be by the author of *Pearl*. See in Part Two, p. 156.

aabccbddbeebffgggf

Ne mai no lewed lued libben in
londe,
be he never in hyrt so haver of
honde,
So lerede us

biledes.
ȝef ich on molde mote wiþ a mai,
y shal falle hem byfore & lurnen
huere lay,
ant rewen alle
huere
redes.
ah bote y be þe furme day on folde
hem byfore,
ne shaly nout so skere scapen of
huere score;
so grimly he on me
gredes,
þat y ne mot me lede þer wiþ mi
lawe;
on alle maner oþes [þat] heo me
wulleþ awe,
heore boc ase on
bredes.
heo wendeþ bokes on brad,
ant makeþ men a moneþ a
mad;
of scaþe y wol me
skere,
ant fleo from my
fere;
ne rohte hem whet
yt were,
boten heo hit had.[10]

(Song from Harleian MS. 2253. Böddeker's *Altenglische Dichtungen*, p. 109.)

This and the two following specimens, together with some included earlier under the head of Tail-Rime, illustrate the interest in complex lyrical measures

characteristic of the period of French influence in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In 1152 Henry of Normandy (who ascended the throne in 1154) married Eleanor of Poitou, and in her train there came to England the great troubadour Bernart de Ventadorn. On the poems of this troubadour and others of the same school, see ten Brink's *English Literature*, Kennedy translation, vol. i. pp. 159-164. Other troubadours followed, and found a home in the court of Richard the Lion-Hearted, who himself entered the ranks of the poets. The result was a great mass of Norman French lyrical poetry, often in intricate forms, and a smaller mass of imitative lyrics in Middle English. As Schipper observes, the elaborate lyrical forms were inconsistent with English taste, and it was only the simpler ones which were widely adopted. On the general character of the Romance stanza-forms, and their influence in England, see Schipper, vol. i. pp. 309 ff.

ababccdeed

Iesu, for þi muchele miht
þou ȝef us of þi grace,
þat we mowe dai & nyht
þenken o þi face.
in myn herte hit doþ me god,
when y þenke on iesu blod,
þat ran doun bi ys syde,
from is herte doun to is fot;
for ous he spradde is herte blod,
his wondes were so wyde.

(Song from Harleian MS. 2253; in Böddeker's *Altenglische Dichtungen*, p. 208.)

aabccbddbeeb

Lenten ys come wiþ love to toune,
wiþ blosmen & wiþ briddes roune,
þat al þis blisse bryngeþ;
dayes e3es in þis dales,
notes suete of nyhtegales,
uch foul song singeþ.
þe þrestelcoc him þreteþ oo;
away is huere wynter woo,
when woderove springeþ.
þis foules singeþ ferly fele,
ant wlyteþ on huere wynter wele,
þat al þe wode ryngeþ.

(Song from Harleian MS. 2253; Böddeker's *Altenglische Dichtungen*, p. 164.)

abcbdcdceccce

Trowe 3e, sores, and God sent an angell
And commawndyd 3ow 3owr chyld to slayn,
Be 3owr trowthe ys ther ony of 3ow
That eyther wold groche or stryve ther-ageyn?
How thyngke 3e now, sorys, ther-by?
I trow ther be iii or iiii or moo.
And thys women that wepe so sorowfully
Whan that hyr chyldryn

dey them froo,
As nater woll and
kynd,—
Yt ys but folly, I may well
awooe,
To groche a-3ens God or to
greve 3ow,
For 3e schall never se hym
myschevyd, wyll I
know,
Be lond nor
watyr,
have
thys in
mynd.

(Epilogue of Brome Play of Abraham and Isaac. In Manly's *Specimens of the Pre-Shaksperean Drama*, vol. i. p. 56.)

This verse of the early Mystery Plays and connected forms of the drama shows an extraordinary variety of measures. In general, the effort of the writers seems to have been to show some artistic ingenuity of structure, and at the same time keep to the free popular dialogue verse which was associated with the plays. We find, therefore, tumbling verse, alexandrines, septenaries, and intricate strophic forms, all commonly written with slight regard for syllable-counting principles.

FOOTNOTES:

[8] There is a single well-known exception: the Anglo-Saxon poem known as *Deor's Lament*, which is divided into irregularly varying strophes, all ending with the same refrain. (See

ten Brink's *English Literature*, Kennedy translation, vol. i, p. 60.) See also on the strophic formation of the First Riddle of Cynewulf, an article by W. W. Lawrence, in *Publications of the Mod. Lang. Assoc.*, N.S. vol. x. p. 247.

[9] Gascoigne, in his *Notes of Instruction* (1575), mentions this form of stanza as "a royall kinde of verse, serving best for grave discourses," a statement in which he is followed by King James in his *Reulis and Cautelis* (1585). Puttenham, in the *Arte of English Poesie* (1589), speaks of the stanza as "the chiefe of our ancient proportions used by any rimer writing any thing of historical or grave poeme, as ye may see in Chaucer and Lidgate." (Arber Reprint, p. 80.)

[10] The appendage to a stanza, based on one or more short lines, is sometimes called a "bob-wheel." See Guest's *History of English Rhythms*, Skeat ed., pp. 621 ff., for an account of various forms of these "wheels."

IV. TONE-QUALITY

The quality of the sounds of the words used in verse, although in no way concerned in the rhythm, is an element of some importance. The sound-quality may be used in either of two ways: as a regular coördinating element in the structure of the verse, or as a sporadic element in the beauty or melody of the verse.

A. AS A STRUCTURAL ELEMENT

In this capacity, similar qualities of sound indicate coördinated parts of the verse-structure, thus emphasizing the idea of similarity (corresponding to that of symmetry in arts expressed in space) which is at the very basis of rhythmical composition.

Obviously, the similarity may exist between vowel sounds, consonant sounds, or both; more specifically, it is found either in initial consonants, in accented vowels, or in accented vowels plus final consonants. Properly speaking, the term Rime is applicable to all three cases; the first being distinguished as initial rime or Alliteration (German *Anreim* or *Stabreim*); the second as Assonance (*Stimmreim*), the third as complete Rime (*Vollreim*). English usage commonly reserves the term Rime for the third class.

i. *Assonance*

Assonance was the characteristic coördinating element in the verse of the early Romance languages, the Provençal, Old French, and Spanish. Thus in the *Chanson de Roland* (eleventh century) we find the verses of each *laisse*, or strophe, bound together by assonance. Frequently this develops into full rime by chance or convenience. The following is a characteristic group of verses from the *Roland*:

> Li reis Marsilies esteit en Sarragoce.
> Alez en est un vergier soz l'ombre;
> Sor un pedron de marbre bloi se
> colchet:
> Environ lui at plus de vint milie
> homes.

Il en apelet et ses dus et ses contes:
"Odez, seignor, quels pechiez nos
encombret.
Li emperedre Charles de France dolce
En cest pais nos est venuz confondre."

The following specimen of Old Spanish verse shows the nature of assonance as regularly used in that language:

Fablo myo Çid bien e tan mesurado:
"Grado a ti, señor padre, que estas en
alto!
Esto me han buelto myos enemigos
malos."
Alli pieussan de aguijar, alli sueltan
las rriendas.
A la exida de Bivar ovieron la corneja
diestra,
E entrando a Burgos ovieron la
siniestra.
Meçio myo Çid los ombros e
engrameo la tiesta:
"Albricia, Albarffanez, ca echados
somos de tierra!"

(*Poema del Cid.* Twelfth century.)

Maiden, crowned with glossy
blackness,
Lithe as panther forest-roaming,
Long-armed naiad, when she dances,
On a stream of ether floating,—
Bright, O bright
Fedalma!

Form all curves like softness drifted,

Wave-kissed marble roundly
dimpling,
Far-off music slowly winged,
Gently rising, gently sinking,
—
Bright, O bright
Fedalma!

(GEORGE ELIOT: Song from *The Spanish Gypsy*, book i.)

This song was written in avowed imitation of the Spanish verse, illustrating its prevailingly trochaic rhythm as well as alliteration. Elsewhere verse bound together only by assonance is almost unknown in English poetry. In the *Contemporary Review* for November, 1894, Mr. William Larminie has an interesting article giving a favorable account of the use of assonance in Celtic (Irish) verse, and proposing its larger use in English poetry, as a relief from the—to him—almost cloying elaborateness of rime.

In the following specimen, assonance seems in some measure to take the place of rime.

Haply, the river of Time—
As it grows, as the towns on its marge
Fling their wavering lights
On a wider, statelier stream—
May acquire, if not the calm
Of its early mountainous shore,
Yet a solemn peace of its own.

And the width of the waters, the hush
Of the gray expanse where he floats,
Freshening its current and spotted

with foam
As it draws to the ocean, may strike
Peace to the soul of the man on its
breast,—
As the pale waste widens around him,
As the banks fade dimmer away,
As the stars come out, and the night-
wind
Brings up the stream
Murmurs and scents of the infinite
sea.

(MATTHEW ARNOLD: *The Future.*)

ii. *Alliteration*

Alliteration appears sporadically in the verse of all literary languages, but as a means for the coördination of verse it is characteristic of the primitive Germanic tongues.

Hwæt! we nu gehyrdan, hu þæt
hælubearn
Þurh his hydercyme hals eft forgeaf,
Gefreode ond gefreoþade folc under
wolcnum
Mære meotudes sunu, þæt nu monna
gehwylc,
Cwic þendan her wunað, geceosan
mot
Swa helle hienþu swa heofones
mærþu,
Swa þæt leohte leoht swa ða laþan
niht,
Swa þrymmes þræce swa þystra
wræce,

Swa mid dryhten dream swa mid
deoflum hream,
Swa wite mid wraþum swa wuldor
mid arum,
Swa lif swa deað, swa him leofre bið
To gefremmanne, þenden flæsc ond
gæst
Wuniað in worulde. Wuldor þæs age
Þrynysse þrym, þonc butan ende!

(CYNEWULF: *Crist.* ll. 586-599. Eighth century.)

This specimen represents the use of alliteration in the most regularly constructed Anglo-Saxon verse. The two half-lines are united into the long line by the same initial consonant in the important syllables. In the first half-line the alliteration is on the two principally stressed syllables, or on one of them alone (most frequently the first); in the second half-line it is commonly found only on the first. Alliterating unstressed syllables are usually regarded as merely accidental. Any initial vowel sound alliterates with any other vowel sound.

The most regular verse appears in Anglo-Saxon poetry of what may be called the classical period,—700 A.D. and for a century following,—represented by *Beowulf* and the poems of Cynewulf. By the time of Ælfric, who wrote about 1000 A.D., there appear signs of a breaking in the regular verse-form. (See Schipper, vol. i. pp. 60 ff.) For example, two alliterative syllables often appear in the second half-line; one half-line may be without alliteration; alliteration may bind different long-lines together; or alliteration may be altogether wanting. There are also additions of many light syllables, resulting

almost, as Schipper observes, in rhythmical prose. These tendencies resulted in the wholly irregular use of alliteration appearing in much of the verse of the early Middle English period, illustrated in the specimens that follow.

The origins of alliteration in Germanic verse are lost in the general mass of Germanic origins. It is almost universally regarded as a purely native development, although M. Kawczynski (*Essai Comparatif sur l'Origine et l'Histoire des Rythmes*; Paris, 1889) sets forth the remarkable opinion that the Germans derived their alliteration from the Romans. "We must remember," he says, "the schools of rhetoric existing in Gaul in the sixth and seventh centuries, where alliteration seems to have been held in esteem.... It became more and more frequent in the Latin poetry of the Carlovingian period, and it will suffice to cite here the following verses from Milo of Saint Amand:

'Pastores pecum primi pressique
pavore
Conspicuos cives carmen caeleste
canentes
Audivere astris arrectis auribus;
auctor
Ad terras ...'

It early passed to Ireland, and the Irish made use of it in their Latin poetry and in their national poetry. The example of the Irish was followed by the Anglo-Saxons, although these last had derived the same rules from the Latin writers.... The Anglo-Saxons, who sent the second series of apostles to the

Germans, taught them the use of alliteration in poetry. The Scandinavians, on their side, learned it also from the Anglo-Saxons." This theory has found no adherents among scholars, and M. Kawczynski's illustrations are probably most useful in emphasizing the natural pleasure in similarity of sound found among all peoples. See below, on the related question of the origin of end-rime.

ðe leun stant on hille, and he man
hunten here,
oðer ðurg his nese smel, smake that
he negge,
bi wilc weie so he wile to dele niðer
wenden,
alle hise fet steppes after him he
filleð,
drageð dust wið his stert ðer he
steppeð,
oðer dust oðer deu, ðat he ne cunne is
finden,
driveð dun to his den ðar he him
bergen wille.

(*The Bestiary*, from MS. Arundel. In Mätzner's *Altenglische Sprachproben*, vol. i. p. 57.)

See also the specimen from Böddeker, p. 14, above.

Cristes milde moder, seynte Marie,
mines lives leome, mi leove lefdi,
to þe ich buwe and mine kneon ich
beie,
and al min heorte blod to ðe ich
offrie.

(*On God Ureisun of ure Lefdi.* In Morris's *Old English Homilies*, first series, p. 191. Zupitza's *Alt-und Mittelenglisches Übungsbuch*, p. 76.)

Kaer Leir hehte þe burh: leof heo wes þan kinge.
þa we an ure leod-quide: Leirchestre cleþiað.
ʒeare a þan holde dawen: heo wes swiðe aðel burh.
& seoðden þer seh toward: swiðe muchel seorwe.
þat heo wes al for-faren: þurh þere leodene væl.
Sixti winter hefde Leir: þis lond al to welden.
þe king hefde þreo dohtren: bi his drihliche quen.
nefde he nenne sune: þer fore he warð sari.
his manscipe to holden: buten þa þreo dohtren.
þa ældeste dohter haihte Gornoille: þa oðer Ragau.
þa þridde Cordoille.

(LAYAMON: *Brut*, ll. 2912-2931. Madden ed., vol. i. p. 123. ab. 1200.)

The *Brut* of Layamon represents typically the transition period, when alliteration and end-rime were struggling for the mastery in English verse. Schipper points out that we find in the poem four kinds of lines:

1. Simple alliterative lines in more or less strict

adherence to the old rules.

2. Lines combining alliteration and rime or alliteration and assonance.

3. Lines showing rime or assonance, without alliteration.

4. Four-stress lines with neither rime nor alliteration.

The present specimen shows the preference for alliteration; that on p. 127, below, represents the introduction of rime.

In a somer seson . whan soft was the sonne,
I shope me in shroudes . as I a shepe were,
In habite as an heremite . unholy of workes,
Went wyde in this world . wondres to here.
Ac on a May mornynge . on Malverne hulles
Me byfel a ferly . of fairy me thou3te;
I was wery forwandred . and went me to reste
Under a brode banke . bi a bornes side,
And as I lay and lened . and loked in the wateres,
I slombred in a slepyng . it sweyved so merye.

(WILLIAM LANGLAND (?): *Piers the Plowman*, Prologue, ll. 1-10. B-text. Fourteenth century.)

Piers the Plowman represents the revival of the alliterative long line, with fairly strict adherence to the old rules, by contemporaries of Chaucer, in the fourteenth century. For this verse, see further in Part Two, pp. 155, 156.

Apon the Midsumer evin, mirrest of
nichtis,
I muvit furth allane, neir as midnicht
wes past,
Besyd ane gudlie grene garth, full of
gay flouris,
Hegeit, of ane huge hicht, with
hawthorne treis;
Quhairon ane bird, on ane bransche,
so birst out hir notis
That never ane blythfullar bird was
on the beuche harde:
Quhat throw the sugarat sound of hir
sang glaid,
And throw the savar sanative of the
sueit flouris;
I drew in derne to the dyk to dirkin
eftir myrthis;
The dew donkit the daill, and dynarit
the foulis.

(WILLIAM DUNBAR: *The Tua Mariit Wemen and the Wedo*, ll. 1-10. Ed. Scottish Text Society, vol ii. p. 30.)

See notes on Dunbar as a metrist, in this edition, vol. i. pp. cxlix and clxxii, and T. F. Henderson's *Scottish Vernacular Literature*, pp. 153-164.

Alliteration as an organic element of verse was especially favored in the North country, and its

popularity in Scotland—illustrated in the present specimen from Dunbar—considerably outlasted its use in England. The famous words of Chaucer's Parson will be recalled:

> "But trusteth wel, I am a Southren
> man,
> I can nat geste—rum, ram, ruf—by
> lettre."

We find King James, as late as 1585 (*Reulis and Cautelis*), giving the following instructions: "Let all your verse be Literall, sa far as may be, ... bot speciallie Tumbling verse for flyting. By Literall I meane, that the maist part of your lyne sall rynne upon a letter, as this tumbling lyne rynnis upon F:

> *Fetching fude for to feid it fast furth of*
> *the Farie.*"

The following specimen is one of the latest examples of fairly regular alliterative verse, written in England, that has come down to us. It is from a ballad of the battle of Flodden Field (1513).

> Archers uttered out their arrowes, and
> egerlie they shotten.
> They proched us with speares, and
> put many over,
> That the blood outbrast at there
> broken harnish.
> There was swinging out of swords,
> and swapping of headds;
> We blanked them with bills through
> all their bright armor,
> That all the dale dunned of their derfe

strokes.

(*Scotishe Ffielde*, from Percy's Folio MS.
In FLÜGEL'S *Neuenglisches Lesebuch*, vol.
i. p. 156.)

iii. *Rime* (*i.e. end-rime*)

Full rime, or end-rime, involves the principally stressed vowel in the riming word, and all that follows that vowel. When there is an entire unstressed syllable following, the rime is called double, or feminine. Triple rime is also recognized, though rare.[11] End-rime being a stranger to the early Germanic languages, its appearance in any of them may commonly be taken as a sign of foreign influence. In general, of course, rime and the stanza were introduced together into English verse, under the influence of Latin hymns and French lyrics.

The functions of rime in English verse may perhaps be grouped under three heads: the function of emphasis, the function of forming beautiful or pleasurable sounds, and the function of combining or organizing the verses. It is with reference to the first of these that Professor Corson speaks of rime as "an enforcing agency of the individual verse." Under the second head rime is considered simply as a form of tone-color, and as furnishing a part of the melody of verse. The third function, by which individual verses are bound into stanzas, is, in a sense, the most important.

On the subject of the æsthetic values of rime, see the chapter on "poetic unities" in Corson's *Primer of English Verse*, and Ehrenfeld's *Studien zur Theorie des*

Reims (Zürich, 1897). The problem of the relative values of rimed and unrimed verse will come up in connection with the history of the heroic couplet and of blank verse. The objection always urged against rime is that its demands are likely to turn the poet aside from the normal order of his ideas. Herder, as Ehrenfeld points out, thought that this was particularly true of English verse, the uninflected language not providing so naturally for cases where thought and sound are parallel. A recent protest against the tyranny of rime is found in the article by Mr. Larminie, cited on page 115, where it is claimed that undue attention to form is thinning out the substance of modern poetry, and that the demands of rime should be relaxed. See also Ben Jonson's "Fit of Rhyme against Rhyme," for a humorous complaint against the requirements of rime upon the poet.

The origin of rime has been a subject of prolonged controversy. See the monograph by Ehrenfeld already cited; Meyer's *Anfang und Ursprung der rythmischen Dichtung* (Munich, 1884); W. Grimm's *Geschichte des Reims* (1851); Norden's *Antike Kunstprosa* (Leipzig, 1898; *Anhang ueber die Geschichte des Reims*); Kluge's article, *Zur Geschichte des Reimes im Altgermanischen*, in Paul u. Braune's *Beiträge*, vol. ix. p. 422; and Schipper, vol. i. pp. 34 ff. Meyer's work is an exposition of the theory that rime was an importation from the Orient. In like manner, it has been held by many that the poetry of Otfried (the first regularly rimed German verse) was produced under Latin influence wholly, and that rime was introduced by him to the Germans (see the work by Kawczynski, cited p. 117). Herder (see Ehrenfeld's monograph) regarded rime as a natural growth of the instinct for symmetry in all human taste, closely connected with dance-rhythms, all forms of parallelism, and the like. Similarity of inflectional endings in similar clauses, he pointed out, would naturally develop rime in any inflected language. This view is in line with the

tendency of recent opinion. Schipper says, in effect: "Is rime to be regarded as the invention of a special people, like the Arabian, or is it a form of art which developed in the poetic language of the Aryan peoples, separately in the several nations? In the opinion of the principal scholars the latter opinion is the correct one. The chief support of this opinion is the fact that traces of rime, in greater or less number, appear in the oldest poetry of almost all the partially civilized peoples. 'It is,' says C. F. Meyer, 'something inborn, original, universally human, like poetry and music, and no more than these the special invention of a single people or a particular time.' In fact, traces of rime may be noticed in the poetry of the Greeks, in Homer, Æschylus, Sophocles, Aristophanes, as also in the poetry of the Romans; in a more developed form it appears in the late middle Latin clerical poetry. In the Celtic languages, moreover, rime is the indispensable mark of the poetic form, even in the oldest extant specimens. The Latin poetry just referred to gives interesting evidence that rime is a characteristic sign of popular poetry. While the quantitative system became dominant, with the artistic verse-forms of the Greeks, in the Golden Age of Roman literature, the early Saturnian verses, written in free rhythms, already showed the popular taste for similarity of sound in the form of alliteration; and in the post-classical time, with the fall of the quantitative metres, rime again came to the front in songs intended for the people. The same element was made so essential a characteristic in the organization of verse in the mediæval Latin, that 'carmen rhythmicum' came to signify a rimed poem, and the later Latinists used the word 'rhythmus' precisely in the sense of 'rime.'"

Schipper goes on to inquire whether this mediæval Latin poetry was the means of introducing rime to the Germanic peoples. Wackernagel held it as certain that Otfried learned his rimes from Latin poems; but as Otfried declares that his poetry is intended to take the place of useless popular songs, it seems probable that he was not using an innovation, and that rime was already

popular in Old High German. Indeed, it appears sporadically in the *Hildebrandslied* and the *Heliand*. Grimm observes that it is theoretically unlikely that alliteration should have vanished suddenly and rime as suddenly have taken its place. The gradual development of rime from assonance among the Romance peoples suggests the same thing. The early appearance of rime by the side of alliteration is illustrated by C. F. Meyer (*Historische Studien*, Leipzig, 1851) from the Norse *Edda*, from *Beowulf*, Cædmon, etc. In the later Anglo-Saxon period rime was evidently securing a considerable though uncertain hold. The Riming Poem suggests what development rime might have had in English without the incoming of Romance influences. Grimm observes that, while to his mind alliteration was a finer and nobler quality than rime, there was need of a stronger sound-likeness which should hold the attention more firmly by its unchanging place at the end of the line. Schipper remarks, finally, that the fact that the use of rime in connection with alliteration was especially popular in the southern half of England, where the Romance influence was strongest, may suggest why in the more purely Germanic northern half alliteration remained the single support of the poetic form well into the fifteenth century.

The appendix to the work of Norden, cited above, is a fuller development of ideas frequently suggested by the sporadic appearance of rime in early Greek and Latin literature. Norden gives many examples of this "rhetorical rime," as well as of rime arising naturally from parallelism of sentence structure found in primitive charms, incantations, and the like. In particular he emphasizes the influence of the figure of *homœoteleuton* as used in the literary prose of the classical languages. His conclusion is as follows: "Rime, then, was potentially as truly present in the Greek and Latin languages, from the earliest times, as in every other language; but in the metrical (quantitative) poetry it had no regular place, and appeared there in general only sporadically and by chance, being used by only a few poets as a rhetorical

ornament. It became actual by the transition from the metrical poetry to the rhythmical (that is, the syllable-counting, in which—in the Latin—the chief consideration is still for the word-accent); and this transition was consummated by the aid of the highly poetic prose, already used for centuries, which was constructed according to the laws of rhythm, and in which the rhetorical homœoteleuton had gained an ever-increasing significance. In particular, rime found an entrance through sermons composed in such prose, and delivered in a voice closely approaching that of singing, into the hymn-poetry which was intimately related to such sermons. From the Latin hymn-poetry it was carried into other languages, from the ninth century onward. It is self-evident that in these languages also rime was potentially present before it became actual through the influence of foreign poetry; for in this region also there operates the highest immanent law of every being and every form of development,—that in the whole field of life nothing absolutely new is invented, but merely slumbering germs are awakened to active life." (*Antike Kunstprosa*, vol. ii. pp. 867 ff.)

Me lifes onlah. se þis leoht onwrah.
and þæt torhte geteoh. tillice onwrah.
glæd wæs ic gliwum. glenged hiwum.
blissa bleoum. blostma hiwum.
Secgas mec segon. symbel ne alegon.
feorh-gife gefegon. frætwed wægon.
wic ofer wongum. wennan gongum.
lisse mid longum. leoma getongum.

(From the "Riming Poem" of the *Codex Exoniensis*.)

This puzzlingly early appearance of rime in Anglo-Saxon verse, in conjunction with fairly regular alliteration, is of especial interest.[12] "It is supposed," says Schipper, "that this new form has for its foundation the Scandinavian *Runhenda*, and that this was known to the Anglo-Saxons through the Old Norse poet, Egil Skalagrimsson, who was living in England in the tenth century, and who stayed twice in England at Athelstan's court, writing a poem in Northumbria in the same form." He also observes that the attempt to attain something like equality of feet and half-lines suggests the Norse models.

Sainte Marie, Cristes bur,
Maidenes clenhad, moderes flur,
Dilie mine sinne, rixe in min mod,
Bring me to winne with self god.

(Verses attributed to St. Godric. ab. 1100.)

Godric, the hermit of Norfolk, lived about 1065-1170. These verses seem to give the earliest extant appearance of end-rime in Middle English. The Romance words in the hymn indicate the presence of French influence. (On this hymn see article in *Englische Studien*, vol. xi. p. 401.)

Woden hehde þa hæhste la3e an ure
ælderne dæ3en.
he heom wes leof: æfne al swa
heore lif.
he wes heore walden: and heom
wurðscipe duden.
þene feorðe dæi i þere wike: heo
3iven him to wurðscipe.
þa Þunre heo 3iven þures dæi: for þi

þat heo heom helpen mæi.
Freon heore læfdi: heo ȝiven hire fridæi.
Saturnus heo ȝiven sætterdæi: þene Sunne heo ȝiven sonedæi.
Monenen heo ȝivenen monedæi: Tidea heo ȝeven tisdæi.
þus seide Hængest: cnihten alre hendest.

(LAYAMON: *Brut*, ll. 13921-13938. Madden ed., vol. ii. p. 158. ab. 1200.)

On the verse of the *Brut* see above, p. 119.

Ich æm elder þen ich wes · a wintre and alore.
Ic wælde more þaune ic dude · mi wit ah to ben more.
Wel lange ic habbe child ibeon · a weorde end ech adede.
Þeh ic beo awintre eald · tu ȝyng i eom a rede....
Mest al þat ic habbe ydon · ys idelnesse and chilce.
Wel late ic habbe me bi þoht · bute me god do milce.

(*Poema Morale*, ll. 1-4, 7, 8. In Zupitza's *Alt-und Mittelenglisches Übungsbuch*, p. 58. ab. 1200.)

The *Poema Morale*, evidently one of the most popular poems of the early Middle English period, seems to be the earliest one of any considerable length in which end-rime was used regularly.

For other early examples of rime introduced into English under foreign influence, see above, in the section on the Stanza.

Double and triple rime.

To our theme.—The man who has
stood on the Acropolis,
And looked down over Attica; or
he
Who has sailed where picturesque
Constantinople is,
Or seen Timbuctoo, or hath taken
tea
In small-eyed China's crockery-ware
metropolis,
Or sat amidst the bricks of
Nineveh,
May not think much of London's first
appearance—
But ask him what he thinks of it a
year hence?

(BYRON: *Don Juan*, canto xi. st. vii.)

'Tis pity learned virgins ever
wed,
With persons of no
sort of
education,
Or gentlemen, who, though
well born and bred,
Grow tired of scientific
conversation;
I don't choose to say much upon this

head,
I'm a plain man, and in a single
station,
But—oh! ye lords of ladies
intellectual,
Inform us truly, have they not
hen-pecked you all?

(*Ib.*, canto i. st. xxii.)

So the painter Pacchiarotto
Constructed himself a grotto
In the quarter of Stalloreggi—
As authors of note allege ye.
And on each of the whitewashed sides
of it
He painted—(none far and wide so fit
As he to perform in fresco)—
He painted nor cried *quiesco*
Till he peopled its every square foot
With Man—from the Beggar barefoot
To the Noble in cap and feather;
All sorts and conditions together.
The Soldier in breastplate and helmet
Stood frowningly—hail fellow well
met—
By the Priest armed with bell, book,
and candle.
Nor did he omit to handle
The Fair Sex, our brave distemperer:
Not merely King, Clown, Pope,
Emperor—
He diversified too his Hades
Of all forms, pinched Labor and paid
Ease,
With as mixed an assemblage of

Ladies.

(BROWNING: *Pacchiarotto*, v.)

What's a man's age? He must hurry
more, that's all;
Cram in a day, what his youth took a
year to hold:
When we mind labor, then only, we're
too old—
What age had Methusalem when he
begat Saul?
And at last, as its haven some
buffeted ship sees
(Come all the way from the north-
parts with sperm oil),
I hope to get safely out of the turmoil
And arrive one day at the land of the
Gypsies,
And find my lady, or hear the last
news of her
From some old thief and son of
Lucifer,
His forehead chapleted green with
wreathy hop,
Sunburned all over like an Æthiop.

(BROWNING: *The Flight of the Duchess*,
xvii.)

These passages illustrate sufficiently the grotesque effects of double and triple rime in English verse,—effects of which Byron and Browning are the unquestioned masters. Professor Corson observes that the double rime is to be regarded as the means of "some special emphasis," whether serious or humorous. More commonly the effect is humorous,

of course, as in *Don Juan*, where the rimes indicate "the lowering of the poetic key—the reduction of true poetic seriousness." The rimes in the *Flight of the Duchess* Mr. Edmund Gurney has said sometimes "produce the effect of jokes made during the performance of a symphony." The specimen which follows illustrates the use of these double and triple rimes for a wholly serious purpose. Professor Corson remarks that in this case the rime serves "as a most effective foil to the melancholy theme. It is not unlike the laughter of frenzied grief." It is interesting to note that in the Italian language, where double rimes are almost constant, masculine rimes are sometimes used for grotesque effect in the same way that English poets use the feminine.

Perishing gloomily,
Spurred by contumely,
Cold inhumanity,
Burning insanity,
Into her rest.—
Cross her hands humbly,
As if praying dumbly,
Over her breast.
Owning her weakness,
Her evil behaviour,
And leaving, with meekness,
Her sins to her Saviour!

(THOMAS HOOD: *The Bridge of Sighs.*)

Roll the strong stream of it
Up, till the scream of it
Wake from a dream of it
    Children that sleep,
Seamen that fare for them

Forth, with a prayer for them;
Shall not God care for them,
Angels not keep?
Spare not the surges
Thy stormy scourges;
Spare us the dirges
Of wives that weep.
Turn back the waves for us:
Dig no fresh graves for us,
Wind, in the manifold gulfs of the deep.

(SWINBURNE: *Winter in Northumberland*, xiv.)

Into the woods my Master went,
Clean forspent, forspent.
Into the woods my Master came,
Forspent with love and shame.
But the olives they were not blind to Him,
The little gray leaves were kind to Him:
The thorn-tree had a mind to Him
When into the woods he came.

(SIDNEY LANIER: *A Ballad of Trees and the Master.*)

Broken rime.

There first for thee my passion grew,
Sweet, sweet Matilda Pottingen!
Thou wast the daughter of my tu-
tor, law-professor at the U-

niversity of Gottingen.

Sun, moon, and thou, vain world,
adieu!
That kings and priests are
plotting in;
Here doomed to starve on water gru-
el, never shall I see the U-
niversity of Gottingen.

(GEORGE CANNING: Song in *The Rovers; Anti-Jacobin*, June 4, 1798.[13])

Winter and summer, night and morn,
I languish at this table dark;
My office-window has a corn-
er looks into St. James's Park.

(THACKERAY: Ballads, *What Makes my Heart to Thrill and Glow?*)

Internal rime.

Internal rime may be regarded on the one side as only a matter of the division of the verse, since if it occurs regularly at the medial cesura, it practically breaks the verse into two parts. On the other side, if used only sporadically, it is a matter of tone-color. It sometimes appears, however, in forms which entitle it to recognition by itself. The earliest of these forms is the "Leonine rime," which is said to have taken its name from Leoninus of St. Victor, who in the twelfth century wrote elegiacs (hexameters and pentameters) in which the syllable preceding the cesura regularly

rimed with the final syllable. Obviously lines of this kind would easily break up into riming half-lines. Similarly, in septenary verse internal rime was often used together with end-rime, with a resulting resolution into short-line stanzas riming either *aabb* or *abab*.[14] The following specimen from a celebrated ballad shows the popular use of a somewhat complex system of internal rime.

Be it right or wrong, these men
among on women do
complaine,
Affirming this, how that it is a labour
spent in vaine,
To love them wele, for never a dele
they love a man agayne.
For lete a man do what he can, ther
favour to attayne,
Yet yf a newe to them pursue, ther
furst trew lover than
Laboureth for nought, and from her
thought he is a bannisshed
man.

(*Ye Nutbrowne Maide.* From Arnold's Chronicle, printed ab. 1502. In Flügel's *Neuenglisches Lesebuch*, vol. i. p. 167.)

Haill rois maist chois till clois thy fois
greit micht,
Haill stone quhilk schone upon the
throne of licht,
Vertew, quhais trew sweit dew
ouirthrew al vice,
Was ay ilk day gar say the way of
licht;
Amend, offend, and send our end ay

richt.
Thow stant, ordant as sanct, of grant
maist wise,
Till be supplie, and the hie gre of
price.
Delite the tite me quite of site to
dicht,
For I apply schortlie to thy devise.

(GAWAIN DOUGLAS: *A ballade in the commendation of honour and verteu*; at the end of the *Palace of Honor*.)

Douglas, like his countryman Dunbar, was something of a metrical virtuoso, and his use of internal rime in this ballade is one of his most remarkable achievements. In the first stanza there are two internal rimes in each line, in the second three, and in the third (here quoted) four.

I cannot eat but little meat,
My stomach is not good,
But sure I think that I can drink
With him that wears a hood.
Though I go bare, take ye no care,
I nothing am a-cold,
I stuff my skin so full within
Of jolly good ale and old.

(Drinking Song in *Gammer Gurton's Needle*.)

The fair breeze blew, the white foam
flew,
The furrow stream'd off free;
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.

(COLERIDGE: *Rime of the Ancient Mariner.*)

The splendor falls on castle walls,
And snowy summits old in story;
The long light shakes across the lakes,
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.

(TENNYSON: Song in *The Princess*, iv.)

England, queen of the waves whose green inviolate girdle enrings thee round,
Mother fair as the morning, where is now the place of thy foemen found?
Still the sea that salutes us free proclaims them stricken, acclaims thee crowned ....
England, none that is born thy son, and lives, by grace of thy glory, free,
Lives and yearns not at heart and burns with hope to serve as he worships thee;
None may sing thee: the sea-wind's wing beats down our songs as it hails the sea.

(SWINBURNE: *The Armada*, vii.)

Here the third and eighth syllables of each verse rime, giving the effect of a separate melody only half heard under that of the main rime-scheme. This is especially subtle where there is no possible pause after the riming word, as in the "sing" of the last line

quoted.

Ah, broken is the golden bowl! the
spirit flown forever!
Let the bell toll!—a saintly soul floats
on the Stygian river;
And, Guy de Vere, hast thou no tear?
—weep now or nevermore!
See on yon drear and rigid bier low
lies thy love, Lenore!
Come, let the burial rite be read—the
funeral song be sung:
An anthem for the queenliest dead
that ever died so young,
A dirge for her the doubly dead in
that she died so young.

(POE: *Lenore.*)

I did not take her by the hand,
(Though little was to understand
From touch of hand all friends might
take,)
Because it should not prove a flake
Burnt in my palm to boil and ache.

I did not listen to her voice,
(Though none had noted, where at
choice
All might rejoice in listening,)
Because no such a thing should cling
In the wood's moan at evening.

(ROSSETTI: *Penumbra.*)

(See also *Love's Nocturn*, p. 146, below.)

B. AS A SPORADIC ELEMENT (TONE-COLOR)

This division includes the use made of the qualities of sound for the purpose of adding to the melodiousness of verse, or of expressing in some measure the ideas to be conveyed by means of the very sounds employed. Sometimes this takes the form of alliteration, differing from that of early English verse only in that it follows no regular structural laws. On the other hand, it may take the form of *onomatopœia*, the figure of speech in which sound and sense are closely related,—as in descriptive words like *buzz*, *hiss*, *murmur*, *splash*, and the like. The term Tone-color is formed by analogy with the German *Klangfarbe*, an expression apparently due to the feeling that the sound-qualities of speech have somewhat the same function as the various colors in a picture. It is unquestionably true that the selection of sounds, whether vowel or consonantal, has much to do with the melodious effect of very much poetry. The poet may choose the different sound-qualities (so far as the sense permits) just as the musician may choose the varying qualities of the different instruments in the orchestra or the different stops in the organ.

Strictly speaking, this matter of Tone-color is not a part of verse-form in the same sense as matters of rhythm, rime, and the like; for it may appear in prose as well as in verse, and is not in any case reducible to formal principles or laws. Yet its use in actual verse is so important, and it is so closely related to the use of sound-quality in the form of rime and alliteration, that it seems well to include it here.[15]

Dr. Guest treats sounds as having in themselves the

suggestion of more or less definite ideas, this suggestiveness being explainable by physical causes. Thus the trembling character of *l* suggests trepidation, as in "Double, double, toil and trouble." *R* suggests harsh, grating, or rattling noises; the sibilants are appropriate to the expression of shrieks, screams, and the like; *b* and *p*, because of the compression of the lips, suggest muscular effort; *st*, from a sudden stopping of the *s*, suggests fear or surprise; *f* and *h* also fear, because of their whispering quality. Hollow sounds (*au*, *ow*, *o*, and the like) suggest depth and fulness. Guest quotes in this connection an interesting passage from Bacon's *Natural History* (ii. 200): "There is found a similitude between the sound that is made by inanimate bodies, or by animate bodies that have no voice articulate, and divers letters of articulate voices; and commonly men have given such names to those sounds as do allude unto the articulate letters; as trembling of hot water hath resemblance unto the letter *l*; quenching of hot metals with the letter *z*; snarling of dogs with the letter *r*; the noise of screech-owls with the letter *sh*; voice of cats with the diphthong *eu*; voice of cuckoos with the diphthong *ou*; sounds of strings with the diphthong *ng*.

A. W. Schlegel went even farther in suggesting a subtle symbolism in sounds apart from descriptive qualities. Thus he regarded *a* as suggestive of bright red, and as symbolizing youth, joy, or brightness (as in the words *Strahl*, *Klang*, *Glans*); *i* as suggestive of sky-blue, symbolic of intimacy or love; and so with other vowel sounds. (See Ehrenfeld's monograph, p. 57.) In general it may be said that it is dangerous to attempt to explain the special effects of tone-color in verse, except where it is obviously descriptive, the appreciation of such effects being a subtle and a more or less individual matter. On this subject Mr. Gurney makes some interesting observations, in the essays cited above. He believes that the pleasurable effect of the sound-qualities in verse can never be

dissociated from the sense of the words; that the most melodious verse cannot be appreciated if in a foreign language, unless read with particular expressiveness; and that the pleasure derived from what we roughly call melodious or harmonious verses is always due to the mystical combination of the appropriate sound with the poetic content.

Dr. Johnson ridiculed the idea of tone-color, as appearing in Pope's teaching that the sound should be "an echo to the sense." See his *Life of Pope*, and especially the *Idler* for June 9, 1759, in which he describes Minim the critic as reading "all our poets with particular attention to this delicacy of versification." Such a critic discovers wonders in these lines from *Hudibras*:

> "Honor is like the glossy bubble,
> Which cost philosophers such trouble;
> Where, one part crack'd, the whole
> does fly,
> And wits are crack'd to find out why."

"In these verses, says Minim, we have two striking accommodations of the sound to the sense. It is impossible to utter the first two lines emphatically without an act like that which they describe; *bubble* and *trouble* causing a momentary inflation of the cheeks by the retention of the breath, which is afterwards forcibly emitted, as in the practice of *blowing bubbles*. But the greatest excellence is in the third line, which is *crack'd* in the middle to express a crack, and then shivers into monosyllables."

In an article on "Some Technical Elements of Style in Literature" (originally published in the *Contemporary Review*, April, 1885; reprinted in the Scribner edition

of Stevenson's Works, vol. xxii. p. 243) Robert Louis Stevenson discussed some of the more subtle effects of vowel and consonant color, as appearing in both prose and verse. The combination and repetition of the consonants PVF he found to be particularly frequent. The pervading sound-elements in the two following passages he analyzed by means of the key-letters in the margin:

(KANDL)
"In Xanadu did Kubla Khan

(KDLSR)
A stately pleasure-dome decree,

(KANDLSR)
Where Alph the sacred river ran

(KANLSR)
Through caverns measureless to man,

(NDLS)
Down to a sunless sea."

(COLERIDGE.)

W.P.V.F. (st) (ow)
"But in the wind and tempest of her frown,

W.P.F. (st) (ow) L.
Distinction with a loud and powerful fan,

W.P.F.L.
Puffing at all, winnows the light

away;

W.F.L.M.A.
And what hath mass and matter by itself

V.L.M.
Lies rich in virtue and unmingled."

(SHAKSPERE: *Troilus and Cressida.*)

No attempt has been made to classify the specimens that follow. Nor does comment seem necessary, in order to make clear the particular qualities of the sounds of the verse.

The heraudes lefte hir priking up and doun;
Now ringen trompes loude and clarioun;
There is namore to seyn, but west and est
In goon the speres ful sadly in arest;
In goth the sharpe spore in-to the syde.
Ther seen men who can juste, and who can ryde;
Ther shiveren shaftes up-on sheeldes thikke;
He feeleth thurgh the herte-spoon the prikke.
Up springen speres twenty foot on highte;
Out goon the swerdes as the silver brighte.

The helmes they to-hewen and to-
shrede;
Out brest the blood, with sterne
stremes rede.
With mighty maces the bones they to-
breste.
He thurgh the thikkeste of the throng
gan threste.
Ther stomblen stedes stronge, and
doun goth al.

(CHAUCER: *Knight's Tale*, ll.
1741-1755.)

And in his house heap pearls like
pebble-stones,
Receive them free, and sell them by
the weight;
Bags of fiery opals, sapphires,
amethysts,
Jacinths, hard topaz, grass-green
emeralds,
Beauteous rubies, sparkling
diamonds,
And seld-seen costly stones of so great
price,
As one of them indifferently rated,
And of a carat of this quantity,
May serve in peril of calamity.

(MARLOWE: *The Jew of Malta*, I. i.)

Be kind and courteous to this
gentleman;
Hop in his walks and gambol in his
eyes;
Feed him with apricocks and

dewberries,
With purple grapes, green figs and
mulberries;
The honey-bags steal from the
humble-bees,
And for night-tapers crop their waxen
thighs,
And light them at the fiery glow-
worm's eyes,
To have my love to bed and to arise;
And pluck the wings from painted
butterflies,
To fan the moonbeams from his
sleeping eyes:
Nod to him, elves, and do him
courtesies.

(SHAKSPERE: *Midsummer Night's Dream*,
III. i. 167-177.)

Now entertain conjecture of a time
When creeping murmur and the
poring dark
Fills the wide vessel of the universe.
From camp to camp, through the foul
womb of night,
The hum of either army stilly sounds,
That the fix'd sentinels almost receive
The secret whispers of each other's
watch:
Fire answers fire; and through their
paly flames
Each battle sees the other's umber'd
face:
Steed threatens steed, in high and
boastful neighs
Piercing the night's dull ear; and from

the tents
The armourers, accomplishing the knights,
With busy hammers closing rivets up,
Give dreadful note of preparation.
The country cocks do crow, the clocks do toll,
And the third hour of drowsy morning name.

(SHAKSPERE: *Henry V.*, Chorus to Act IV.)

Forthwith the sounds and seas, each creek and bay,
With fry innumerable swarm, and shoals
Of fish that, with their fins and shining scales,
Glide under the green wave in sculls that oft
Bank the mid-sea. Part, single or with mate,
Graze the sea-weed, their pasture, and through groves
Of coral stray, or, sporting with quick glance,
Show to the sun their wav'd coats dropt with gold,
Or, in their pearly shells at ease, attend
Moist nutriment, or under rocks their food
In jointed armor watch; on smooth the seal
And bended dolphins play: part, huge

of bulk,
Wallowing unwieldy, enormous in
their gait,
Tempest the ocean. There leviathan,
Hugest of living creatures, on the
deep
Stretch'd like a promontory, sleeps or
swims,
And seems a moving land, and at his
gills
Draws in, and at his trunk spouts out,
a sea.

(MILTON: *Paradise Lost*, VII. 399-416.)

Then in the
key-hole
turns
The intricate wards, and every bolt
and bar
Of massy iron or solid rock with ease
Unfastens. On a sudden open fly,
With impetuous recoil and jarring
sound,
The infernal doors, and on their
hinges grate
Harsh thunder, that the lowest
bottom shook
Of Erebus.

(*Ib.*, II. 876-883.)

Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered
saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains
cold;
Even them who kept thy truth so pure

of old,
When all our fathers worshipped
stocks and stones,
Forget not: in thy book record their
groans
Who were thy sheep, and in their
ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piemontese, that
rolled
Mother with infant down the rocks.
Their moans
The vales redoubled to the hills, and
they
To heaven. Their martyred blood and
ashes sow
O'er all the Italian fields, where still
doth sway
The triple Tyrant; that from these
may grow
A hundredfold, who, having learnt
thy way,
Early may fly the Babylonian woe.

(MILTON: *Sonnet on the Late Massacre in Piedmont.*)

And when they list, their lean and
flashy songs
Grate on their scrannel pipes of
wretched straw;
The hungry sheep look up, and are
not fed,
But, swoln with wind and the rank
mist they draw,
Rot inwardly, and foul contagion
spread;
Besides what the grim wolf with privy

paw
Daily devours apace, and nothing
said.

(MILTON: *Lycidas*, ll. 123-129.)

The soft complaining flute
In dying notes discovers
The woes of helpless lovers,
Whose dirge is whispered by the
warbling lute.
Sharp violins proclaim
Their jealous pangs and
desperation,
Fury, frantic indignation,
Depth of pains and height of
passion,
For the fair, disdainful
dame.

(DRYDEN: *Song for St. Cecilia's Day*,
1687.)

Soft is the strain when Zephyr gently
blows,
And the smooth stream in smoother
numbers flows;
But when loud surges lash the
sounding shore,
The hoarse, rough verse should like
the torrent roar:
When Ajax strives some rock's vast
weight to throw,
The line too labors, and the words
move slow;
Not so, when swift Camilla scours the
plain,

Flies o'er th' unbending corn, and
skims along the main.

(POPE: *Essay on Criticism*, ll. 366-373.)

Was nought around but images of
rest:
Sleep-soothing groves, and quiet
lawns between;
And flowery beds that slumberous
influence kest,
From poppies breath'd: and beds of
pleasant green,
Where never yet was creeping
creature seen.
Meantime unnumber'd glittering
streamlets played,
And hurled everywhere their waters'
sheen;
That, as they bickered through the
sunny shade,
Though restless still themselves, a
lulling murmur made.

(THOMSON: *Castle of Indolence*, canto i.
st. 3.)

Yes, I will be thy priest, and build a
fane
In some untrodden region of my
mind,
Where branched thoughts, new grown
with pleasant pain,
Instead of pines shall murmur in
the wind:
Far, far around shall those dark-
cluster'd trees

Fledge the wild-ridged mountains
steep by steep;
And there by zephyrs, streams, and
birds, and bees,
The moss-lain Dryads shall be
lull'd to sleep;
And in the midst of this wide
quietness
A rosy sanctuary will I dress
With the wreath'd trellis of a working
brain,
With buds, and bells, and stars
without a name,
With all the gardener Fancy e'er could
feign,
Who breeding flowers will never
breed the same.

(KEATS: *Ode to Psyche.*)

Strike for the King and die! and if
thou diest,
The King is King, and ever wills the
highest.
Clang battleaxe, and clash brand! Let
the King reign.

(TENNYSON: *The Coming of Arthur.*)

He could not see the kindly human
face,
Nor ever hear a kindly voice, but
heard
The myriad shriek of wheeling ocean-
fowl,
The league-long roller thundering on
the reef,

The moving whisper of huge trees
that branch'd
And blossom'd in the zenith, or the
sweep
Of some precipitous rivulet to the
wave,
As down the shore he ranged, or all
day long
Sat often in the seaward-gazing gorge,
A shipwreck'd sailor, waiting for a
sail:
No sail from day to day, but every
day
The sunrise broken into scarlet shafts
Among the palms and ferns and
precipices;
The blaze upon the waters to the east;
The blaze upon his island overhead;
The blaze upon the waters to the
west;
Then the great stars that globed
themselves in heaven,
The hollower-bellowing ocean, and
again
The scarlet shafts of sunrise—but no
sail.

(TENNYSON: *Enoch Arden*, ll. 577-595.)

But follow; let the torrent dance thee
down
To find him in the valley; let the wild
Lean-headed eagles yelp alone, and
leave
The monstrous ledges there to slope,
and spill

Their thousand wreaths of dangling
water-smoke,
That like a broken purpose waste in
air:
So waste not thou; but come; for all
the vales
Await thee; azure pillars of the hearth
Arise to thee; the children call, and I
Thy shepherd pipe, and sweet is every
sound,
Sweeter thy voice, but every sound is
sweet;
Myriads of rivulets hurrying through
the lawn,
The moan of doves in immemorial
elms,
And murmurings of innumerable
bees.

(TENNYSON: *The Princess*, VII.)

Heap cassia, sandal-buds and stripes
Of labdanum, and aloe-balls,
Smeared with dull nard an Indian
wipes
From out her hair: such balsam
falls
Down sea-side mountain
pedestals,
From tree-tops where tired winds are
fain,
Spent with the vast and howling
main,
To treasure half their island-gain.

(BROWNING: *Paracelsus*, IV.)

Good sappy bavins that kindle
forthwith;
Billets that blaze substantial and
slow;
Pine-stump split deftly, dry as pith;
Larch-heart that chars to a chalk-
white glow;
Then up they hoist me John in a
chafe,
Sling him fast like a hog to
scorch,
Spit in his face, then leap back safe,
Sing 'Laudes' and bid clap-to the
torch.

(BROWNING: *The Heretic's Tragedy.*)

'Will sprawl, now that the heat of day
is best,
Flat on his belly in the pit's much
mire,
With elbows wide, fists clenched to
prop his chin.
And, while he kicks both feet in the
cool slush,
And feels about his spine small eft-
things course,
Run in and out each arm, and make
him laugh:...
He looks out o'er yon sea which
sunbeams cross
And recross till they weave a spider-
web.

(BROWNING: *Caliban upon Setebos.*)

Master of the murmuring courts
Where the shapes of sleep
convene!
Lo! my spirit here exhorts
All the powers of thy demesne
For their aid to move my queen.
What reports
Yield thy jealous courts unseen?

Vaporous, unaccountable,
Dreamland lies forlorn of light,
Hollow like a breathing shell.
Ah! that from all dreams I might
Choose one dream and guide its
flight!
I know well
What her sleep should tell to-
night.

(ROSSETTI: *Love's Nocturn.*)

When the hounds of spring are on
winter's traces,
The mother of months, in
meadow or plain,
Fills the shadows and windy places
With lisp of leaves and ripple of
rain.

(SWINBURNE: Chorus in *Atalanta in Calydon.*)

Till,
as
with
clamor
Of

axe
and
hammer
Chained streams that stammer and
struggle in straits,
Burst
bonds
that
shiver,
And
thaws
deliver
The roaring river in stormy spates.

(SWINBURNE: *Winter in Northumberland.*)

But, oh! that deep romantic chasm
which slanted
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn
cover!
A savage place! as holy and
enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was
haunted
By woman wailing for her demon-
lover!
And from this chasm, with ceaseless
turmoil seething,
As if this earth in fast thick pants
were breathing,
A mighty fountain momently was
forced:
Amid whose swift half-intermitted
burst
Huge fragments vaulted like
rebounding hail,

Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's
flail;
And 'mid these dancing rocks at once
and ever
It flung up momently the sacred river.
Five miles meandering, with a mazy
motion,
Through wood and dale the sacred
river ran,
Then reach'd the caverns measureless
to man,
And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean.

(COLERIDGE: *Kubla Khan.*)

FOOTNOTES:

[11] "Perfect rime" is a term applied to rimes between two words identical in form, but different in meaning. It is inadmissible in modern English verse, although it was considered entirely proper in Middle English times (compare Chaucer's—

"The holy blisful martir for to
seke,
That hem hath holpen, whan
that they were *seke*."),

and is still common in French verse.

Schipper gives a separate paragraph also to "unaccented rime," where the similarity of sound belongs wholly to final, unstressed syllables. Generally speaking, this is inadmissible in English verse. Schipper quotes from Thomas Moore:

"Down in yon summervale

Where the rill flows,
Thus said the Nightingale
To his loved Rose."

It might be said, however, that the final syllables of "summervale" and "nightingale" are not wholly unstressed; moreover, they are in the first and third verses of the stanza, where rime is not indispensable. Unaccented rime is most noticeable in some of the verse of the transition period in the sixteenth century, when the syllable-counting principle was so emphasized as to admit any license of accent so long as the proper number of syllables was observed. Thus, in the verse of Wyatt we find such rimes as "dreadeth" and "seeketh," "beginning" and "eclipsing," etc. See p. 10, above.

Imperfect rime, occurring where the vowel sounds are only similar, not identical, or where the consonants following them are not identical, is commonly regarded as an imperfection in verse form. The most common of these imperfect rimes are in cases where the spelling would indicate perfect rime (hence where, in many cases, the words rimed originally, but have separated in the changes of pronunciation), such as *love* and *move*, *broad* and *load*, and the like. For a defence of these "rimes to the eye," and other imperfect rimes, with a study of their use by English poets, see articles by Prof. A. G. Newcomer in the *Nation* for January 26 and February 2, 1899.

[12] Rime also appears in a short passage in Cynewulf's *Elene*. Some have thought it a later interpolation, but Schipper thinks it indicates that Cynewulf was a Northumbrian. Grein believes him to have been the author also of the Riming Poem, but, as Rieger points out,

the rimes of Cynewulf are of a much less systematic character. (On this see Wülcker's *Grundriss zur Geschichte der Angelsächsischen Literatur*, pp. 216, 217.)

[13] The second of these stanzas is said to have been added to Canning's song by Willian Pitt.

[14] See notes on the Septenary, in Part Two, p. 259.

[15] On the subject of Tone-color in English verse, see Guest's *English Rhythms*, chap. ii.; Lanier's *Science of English Verse*, part iii. ("Colors of English Verse"); Corson's *Primer of English Verse* (chapter on "Poetic Unities"); Edmund Gurney's *Tertium Quid* (essays on "Poets, Critics, and Class-Lists" and "The Appreciation of Poetry"); Professor J. J. Sylvester's *Laws of Verse* (London, 1870); G. L. Raymond's *Poetry as a Representative Art* and *Rhythm and Harmony in Poetry and Music*; and Ehrenfeld's *Studien zur Theorie des Reims*.

PART TWO

I. FOUR-STRESS VERSE

English verse of four stresses is chiefly to be divided into two groups: that representing the primitive Germanic tendency to emphasize the element of

accent rather than the counting of syllables, and that produced under foreign influence, showing comparative regularity in the number of syllables to the verse. The first group is made up of the various descendants of the original "long line," sometimes rimed and sometimes unrimed; the second group of forms of the familiar octosyllabic couplet. (Of modern verse only iambic measures are included here.)

A.—NON-SYLLABLE-COUNTING

The earliest English verse, like early Germanic verse generally, is based on the recurrence of strong accents, and is composed of a long line made up of two short lines, or half-lines, which are bound together by alliteration. As to the number of accents to be counted in the line, there are two theories, the "two-accent" and the "four-accent." According to the first, we should count two accents to the half-line, and four to the long line; according to the second, we should count four to the half-line and eight to the long line. The distinction is not so marked, however, as would appear at first thought; for the two-accent theorists recognize a considerable number of secondary accents in addition to the principal ones, while the four-accent theorists recognize half the accents as being commonly weaker than the other half.

The four-accent theory is that of Lachmann, represented chiefly in more recent scholarship by ten Brink and Kaluza. Lachmann took, as the typical Germanic line, such a verse as this from the *Hildebrandlied*,—

"Garutun se iro guðhama: gurtun sih iro
suert ana;"

but admitted that the Anglo-Saxon line was a departure from the type in the direction of fewer accents. Ten Brink, however, found the full number of accents in the typical Anglo-Saxon line. "It is based upon a measure which belonged to the antiquity of all Germanic races, namely, the line with eight emphatic syllables, divided into equal parts by the cesura." (*English Literature*, trans. Kennedy, vol. i. pp. 21, 22.) The principal representative of the two-accent theory is Sievers, whose conclusions have been pretty generally accepted by English and American scholars. He admits that very many, perhaps most, Anglo-Saxon lines can be read with eight accents, but shows that there is still a large proportion (some eleven hundred in *Beowulf*) which cannot be so read without wrenching the natural reading. On this subject, see Westphal's *Allgemeine Metrik*, Sievers's *Altgermanische Metrik*, Kaluza's *Der Altenglische Vers*, and the articles by Sievers, Luick, and ten Brink in Paul's *Grundriss der Germanische Philologie*.

Aside from the two-part structure of the long line, the number of accents, and the alliteration, Anglo-Saxon verse is marked by the usual coincidence of the principal accents with long syllables. The unaccented parts of the line vary in both the number and length of the syllables. In general, each half-line is divided into two feet, or measures; and, according to the structure of these feet, the ordinary half-lines of Anglo-Saxon verse have been reduced by Sievers to five fundamental types.

Type A is represented by such a half-line as "stiðum wordum."

Type B inverts the rhythm of A, as in the half-line "nē winterscūr."

Type C is characterized by the juxtaposition of the two accents, as in the half-line "and forð gangan."

Type D commonly has only the accented syllable in the first foot, while the second foot is characterized by a sort of dactylic rhythm, as in the half-lines "sælīðende" and "flet innanweard."

Type E inverts the rhythm of D, as in the half-line "gylp-wordum spræc."[16]

In all the types many variations are found. The beginning of the line may show anacrusis, and two short syllables may take the place of a long syllable; while an indeterminate number of light syllables may often be introduced before or after the principal accents.

Hafað ūs ālȳfed *lucis auctor*,
þæt wē mōtun hēr *merueri*
gōddædum begietan *gaudia in celo*,
þær wē mōtun *maxima regna*
sēcan and gesittan *sedibus altis*,
lifgan in lisse *lucis et pacis*,
āgan eardinga *almæ letitæ*,
brūcan blæddaga *blandem et mitem*
gesēon sigora Frēan *sine fine*,
and him lof singan *laude perenne*
ēadge mid englum *Alleluia*.

(From the Anglo-Saxon *Phœnix*. ab. 700 A.D.)

These closing lines of the poem furnish an important opportunity to compare the Latin half-lines with those in Anglo-Saxon. Each half seems to be influenced by the metrical nature of the other; the Anglo-Saxon being a little more regular in the number of syllables than usual, the Latin less regular. Since, to the ear of the writer, the two halves of each verse were doubtless fairly equivalent, metrically, and since each of the Latin half-lines appears to have two accents, these combination verses have been thought to be an argument for the "two-accent" theory of Anglo-Saxon verse. On the other hand, the advocates of the four-accent theory would read the Latin half-lines with four stresses each, on the ground that nearly every syllable was stressed in the chanting of such religious verse (*lú-cís aúc-tór*, etc.).

See also the specimens on pp. 13 and 14, above.

Alle beon he bliþe Þat to my song
lyþe:
A song ihc schal ȝou singe Of Mury þe
kinge.
King he was bi weste So longe so hit
laste.
Godhild het his quen, Fairer ne miȝte
non ben.
He hadde a sone þat het Horn, Fairer
ne miȝte non beo born,
Ne no rein upon birine, Ne sunne
upon bischine.

(*King Horn*, ll. 1-12. ab. 1200-1250.)

The metre of *King Horn* is very irregular, and has proved somewhat puzzling to scholars. It seems to be the direct result of the primitive "long line" broken

into two halves by internal rime. The number of accents varies greatly: we may have verses which are easily read with two, such as—

"Into schupes borde
At the furst worde."

Yet these it is evident might also be read with three accents, as in the following couplet also:

"The se bigan to flowe,
And Horn child to rowe."

According as one reads the Anglo-Saxon verse with two or four accents to the half-line, he will regard the typical half-line of *King Horn* as made up of two or four accents. If the fundamental number was two, the additional accented syllables were doubtless introduced under the influence of the French eight-syllable couplet. It is not difficult to see how the more regular (Latin or French) and the less regular (native) measures might have been confused, and soon have coalesced in popular use. Ten Brink, reading the *King Horn* lines with four accents, speaks of them as "formed entirely on the Teutonic principle, with two accents upon the sonorous close of the verse, so that it appears to be an organic continuation of the chief form in Layamon and in Ælfred's *Proverbs*. This circumstance makes the poem exceptional among the early English romances." He also speaks of "an unmistakably strophic construction in the text as we have it." (*English Literature*, Kennedy translation, vol. i. p. 227.)

Anon out of þe north est þe noys
bigynes:
When boþe breþes con blowe upon

blo watteres,
Ro3 rakkes per ros with rudnyng
anunder,
Þe see sou3ed ful sore, gret selly to
here,
Þe wyndes on þe wonne water so
wrastel togeder,
Þat þe wawes ful wode waltered so
hi3e
And efte busched to þe abyme, þat
breed fysches,
Durst nowhere for ro3 arest at þe
bothem.
When þe breth and þe brok and þe
bote metten,
Hit watz a ioyles gyn, þat Ionas watz
inne;
For hit reled on roun upon þe ro3e
yþes.

(*Patience*, ll. 137-147. ab. 1375.)

Til þe kny3t com hym-self, kachande
his blonk,
Sy3 hym byde at þe bay, his burne3
bysyde,
He ly3tes luflych adoun, leve3 his
corsour,
Brayde3 out a bry3t bront, & bigly
forth stryde3,
Founde3 fast þur3 the forþ, þer þe
felle byde,
Þe wylde wat3 war of þe wy3e with
weppen in honde.
Hef hy3ly þe here, so hetterly he
fnast,

Þat fele ferde for þe freke3, lest felle
hym þe worre
Þe swyn sette3 hym out on þe segge
even,
Þat þe burne & þe bor were boþe
upon hepe3,
In þe wy3t-est of þe water, þe worre
had þat oþer;
For þe mon merkke3 hym wel, as þay
mette fyrst,
Set sadly þe scharp in þe slot even,
Hit hym up to þe hult, þat þe hert
schyndered,
& he 3arrande hym 3elde, & 3edoun
þe water, ful tyt;
A hundreth
houndе3
hym hent,
Þat bremely con
hym bite,
Burne3 him bro3t to
bent,
& dogge3 to dethe
endite.

(*Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight*,
strophe xviii. ab. 1375.)

These two specimens, both doubtless the work of the same author (to whom are also attributed the *Pearl* and *Cleanness*), represent the patriotic revival of the alliterative long line by contemporaries of Chaucer in the latter half of the fourteenth century. In *Sir Gawayne* the rimeless long line is gathered into strophes, each of which concludes with four riming lines. (See above, p. 109.)

For analysis of this revived alliterative verse, see a valuable article by Dr. Luick, *Die Englische Stabreimzeile im 14n, 15n, und 16n Jahrhundert*, in *Anglia*, vol. xi. pp. 392 and 553. Luick analyzes not only the poems of the "Pearl poet," but also the *Troy Book*, the *Alexander Fragments*, *William of Palerne*, *Joseph of Arimathea*, *Morte Arthure*, and minor poems. He finds the *Troy Book* the most regular alliterative poem of Middle English, but in all of the group a general tendency to preserve not only the early laws of alliteration but also the "five types" of Sievers's Anglo-Saxon metrics. Dr. Luick attributes the final decline of the old measure in large degree to the falling away of the final syllables in *-e*, etc.; without these numerous feminine endings the primitive "long line" was impossible. This he regards as regrettable, since the old alliterative verse, "growing up on native soil with the language itself," represented the natural accent-relations of the Germanic languages, especially the recognition of two principal degrees of accent; whereas the modern rimed verse requires the reduction of this to a uniform "tick-tack" of alternating stress and non-stress.

He put on his back a good plate-jack,
And on his head a cap of steel,
With sword and buckler by his side;
O gin he did not become them weel!

(*Ballad of Bewick and Grahame*. In GUMMERE'S *English Ballads*, p. 176.)

The regular stanza of the old ballads was of this four-stress type, with extra light syllables admitted anywhere yet not in great numbers. More commonly, however, the fourth stress was lost from the second and fourth lines. (See p. 264, below.)

I thanke hym full thraly, and sir, I
saie hym the same,
But what marvelous materes dyd this
myron ther mell?
For all the lordis langage his lipps, sir,
wer lame,
For any spirringes in that space no
speche walde he spell.

(*York Mystery Plays: The Trial before Pilate*. Ed. L. T. SMITH, p. 322.)

As Gammer Gurton, with manye a
wyde styche,
Sat pesynge and patching of Hodg her
mans briche,
By chance or misfortune, as shee her
geare tost,
In Hodge lether bryches her needle
shee lost.

(*Gammer Gurton's Needle*, Prologue. 1566.)

In these specimens we have the later descendant of the long line as used in the early drama of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries,—the "tumbling verse," regular in rhythm and rime, but indifferent to the number of syllables.[17] Sometimes, where most regular, as in lines 2-4 of the second specimen, the measure approximates closely to regular four-stress anapestic.

The time was once, and may againe
retorne,
(For ought may happen that hath

bene beforne),
When shepheards had none
inheritaunce,
Ne of land, nor fee in sufferaunce,
But what might arise of the bare
sheepe,
(Were it more or lesse) which they
did keepe.
Well ywis was it with shepheards
thoe:
Nought having, nought feared they to
forgoe;
For Pan himselfe was their
inheritaunce,
And little them served for their
mayntenaunce.
The shepheards God so wel them
guided,
That of nought they were unprovided;
Butter enough, honye, milke, and
whay,
And their flockes' fleeces them to
araye.

(SPENSER: *The Shepherd's Calendar, May.* 1579.)

Spenser's use of the tumbling verse in the *Shepherd's Calendar* was a part of his imitation of older forms for the sake of an uncultivated, bucolic effect. In his hands the irregular measure showed a tendency to reduce itself to regular ten-syllable lines, like the first two of the present specimen, which, by themselves, might easily be read as decasyllabic iambics. On this, see further under Five-Stress Verse. Spenser was perhaps the last cultivated poet to use the irregular measure, until we come to modern imitators of the

early popular poetry. The following specimen is of this class.

It was up in the morn we rose betimes
From the hall-floor hard by the row of limes.
It was but John the Red and I,
And we were the brethren of Gregory;
And Gregory the Wright was one
Of the valiant men beneath the sun,
And what he bade us that we did,
For ne'er he kept his counsel hid.
So out we went, and the clattering latch
Woke up the swallows under the thatch.
It was dark in the porch, but our scythes we felt,
And thrust the whetstone under the belt.
Through the cold garden boughs we went
Where the tumbling roses shed their scent.
Then out a-gates and away we strode
O'er the dewy straws on the dusty road,
And there was the mead by the town-reeve's close
Where the hedge was sweet with the wilding rose.

(WILLIAM MORRIS: *The Folk-Mote by the River.* In *Poems by the Way*. 1896.)

B.—SYLLABLE-COUNTING (OCTOSYLLABIC

COUPLET)

The more regular four-stress verse, in rimed couplets showing a tendency to be octosyllabic, we have seen to be generally attributed to the influence of the French octosyllabics, which were in common use in late mediæval French poetry, such as that of Wace and Chrestien de Troyes.

According to Stengel (in Gröber's *Grundriss der Romanischen Philologie*), this octosyllabic French verse goes back to a lost vulgar Latin verse; this view is opposed by Dr. C. M. Lewis, in his *Foreign Sources of Modern English Versification* (Yale Studies in English, 1898), who finds its origin in the tetrameter of the Latin hymns. Dr. Lewis also attributes to this Latin verse more direct influence on English verse than is commonly assumed. Thus he finds in it, rather than in the French octosyllabics, the model of the verse of the *Pater Noster*, quoted below. The argument is briefly this: the Latin verse was both accentual and syllabic; the French verse was syllabic but not accentual; that of the *Pater Noster* is accentual but not syllabic; hence it is more nearly like the Latin than the French. A stanza of the Latin tetrameter, cited by Dr. Lewis from the hymn *Aurora lucis rutilat*, is as follows:

"Tristes erat apostoli
de nece sui Domini,
quem pœna mortis crudeli
servi damnarunt impii."

Compare these lines from the *Brut* of Wace:

"Adunt apela Cordeille
qui esteit sa plus joes ne fille;
pur ce que il l'aveit plus chiere
que Ragaü ne la premiere
quida que el e cuneüst
que plus chier des al tres l'eüst.

Cordeil le out bien escuté
et bien out en sun cuer noté
cument ses deus sorurs parloënt,
cument lur pere losengoënt."

The last four verses of this passage are cited by Schipper as illustrating the regular iambic character of the French octosyllabics; but Dr. Lewis regards the measure as purely syllabic, with no regard for alternation of accents, and instances the earlier lines of the passage as being quite as nearly anapestic as iambic. (See Schipper, vol. i. p. 107, and Lewis's monograph, as cited above, pp. 73 ff. See also Crow: *Zur Geschichte des Kurzen Reimpaares in Mittel Englisch.*) Dr. Lewis's conclusion is: "We may therefore sum up the whole history of our octosyllabic verse in this way: we borrowed its number of accents from the Latin, but owing to the vitality of our own native traditions we at first borrowed nothing further; the syllabic character of the verse (so far as it has been imported at all), came in only gradually, against stubborn resistance; and it came not directly from the Latin, but indirectly, through the French" (pp. 97, 98). Some of these statements are open to question; but however we may interpret the French verse of Wace and his contemporaries, it is obvious that in English the influence of the Latin and the French poetry would very naturally be fused, with no necessarily clear conception of definite verse-structure. Whether under French or Latin influence, however, the new tendency was for the more accurate counting of syllables. We may see some suggestion of this in the verses of St. Godric, quoted on p. 126, above, although they are not regularly iambic. The poem on the "Eleven Pains of Hell" (in the *Old English Miscellany*) shows the French influence clearly marked by the language of its opening verses:

"Ici comencent les unze peynes
De enfern, les queus seynt pool v[ist]."

Ure feder þet in heovene is,

Þet is al soþ ful iwis!
Weo moten to theor weordes iseon,
Þet to live and to saule gode beon,
Þet weo beon swa his sunes iborene,
Þet he beo feder and we him icorene,
Þet we don alle his ibeden
And his wille for to reden.

(*The Pater Noster*, ab. 1175. In Morris's *Old English Homilies*, p. 55.)

This poem is sometimes said to show the first appearance of the octosyllabic couplet in English. It suggests the struggle between native indifference to syllable-counting and imitation of the greater regularity of its models. As Dr. Morris says of the next specimen: "The essence of the system of versification which the poet has adopted is, briefly, that every line shall have four accented syllables in it, the unaccented syllables being left in some measure, as it were, to take care of themselves." But this does not altogether do justice to the new regularity. Schipper says that of the first 100 lines of the poem 20 are perfectly regular. (See his notes in vol. i. p. 109.) In the following specimens we may trace the gradual growth of skill and accuracy.

ðo herde Abraham stevene fro gode,
newe tiding and selkuð bode:
'tac ðin sune Ysaac in hond
and far wið him to siðhinges lond.
and ðor ða salt him offren me,
on an hil, ðor ic sal taunen ðe.

(*Genesis and Exodus*, ll. 1285-1290. ab. 1250-1300.)

"Abid! abid!" the ule seide.
"Thu gest al to mid swikelede;
All thine wordes thu bi-leist,
That hit thincth soth al that thu seist;
Alle thine wordes both i-sliked,
An so bi-semed and bi-liked,
That alle tho that hi avoth,
Hi weneth that thu segge soth."

(*The Owl and the Nightingale*, ll. 835-842. Thirteenth century.)

Quhen þis wes said, þai went þare way,
and till þe toun soyn cumin ar thai
sa prevely bot noys making,
þat nane persavit þair cummyng.
þai scalit throu þe toune in hy
and brak up dures sturdely
and slew all, þat þai mycht ourtak;
and þai, þat na defens mycht mak,
fall pitwisly couth rair and cry,
and þai slew þame dispitwisly.

(BARBOUR: *Bruce*, v. 89-98. ab. 1375.)

3yf þou ever þurghe folye
Dydyst ou3t do nygromauncye.
Or to the devyl dedyst sacryfyse
þurghe wychcraftys asyse,
Or any man 3af þe mede
For to reyse þe devyl yn dede,
For to telle, or for to wrey,
þynge þat was don awey;
3yf þou have do any of þys,
þou hast synnede and do a mys,

And þou art wurþy to be shent
þurghe þys yche commaundement.
[18]

(ROBERT MANNING of Brunne: *Handlyng Synne*, ll. 339-350. ab. 1300.)

Herknet to me, gode men,
Wives, maydnes, and alle men,
Of a tale þat ich you wile telle,
Wo so it wile here, and þer-to duelle.
Þe tale is of Havelok i-maked;
Wil he was litel he yede ful naked:
Havelok was a ful god gome,
He was ful god in everi trome,
He was þe wicteste man at nede,
Þat þurte riden on ani stede.
Þat ye mowen nou y-here,
And þe tale ye mowen y-lere.
At the beginning of ure tale,
Fil me a cuppe of ful god ale;
And y wile drinken her y spelle,
Þat Crist us shilde alle fro helle!

(*Lay of Havelok the Dane.* ll. 1-16. ab. 1300.)

For lays and romances, both French and English, the four-stress couplet was an easy and favorite form. Compare the remarks of ten Brink: "We see how the short couplet, which is the standing form of the court-romance, was not only transmitted to it from the legendary, didactic, and historical poems, but was also suggested to it by those songs to which it was indebted for its own subject-matter. Other tokens indicate that a short strophe composed of eight-syllabled lines, with single or alternating

rhymes, was a favorite form for many subjects in this *jongleur* poetry.... The simple form of the short couplet offered to the romance-poet no scope to compete in metrical technique with the skilled court-lyrists. He could prove his art only within a limited portion of this field: in the treatment of the *enjambement* and particularly of rhyme. The poet strove not only to form pure rhymes, but often to carry them forward with more syllables than were essential, and he was fond of all sorts of grammatical devices in rhyme." (*English Literature*, Kennedy trans., vol. i. pp. 174, 175.)

The world stant ever upon debate,
So may be siker none estate;
Now here, now there, now to, now
fro,
Now up, now down, the world goth
so,
And ever hath done and ever shal;
Wherof I finde in special
A tale writen in the bible,
Which must nedes be credible,
And that as in conclusion
Saith, that upon division
Stant, why no worldes thing may
laste,
Til it be drive to the laste,
And fro the firste regne of all
Unto this day how so befall
Of that the regnes be mevable,
The man him self hath be coupable,
Whiche of his propre governaunce
Fortuneth al the worldes chaunce.

(JOHN GOWER: Prologue to *Confessio Amantis*. Ed. PAULI, vol. i. pp. 22, 23.

ab. 1390.)

O god of science and of light,
Apollo, through thy grete might,
This litel laste bok thou gye!
Nat that I wilne, for maistrye,
Here art poetical be shewed;
But, for the rym is light and lewed,
Yit make hit sumwhat agreable,
Though som vers faile in a sillable;
And that I do no diligence
To shewe craft, but o sentence.
And if, divyne vertu, thou
Wilt helpe me to shewe now
That in myn hede y-marked is—
Lo, that is for to menen this,
The Hous of Fame to descryve—
Thou shalt see me go, as blyve,
Unto the nexte laure I see,
And kisse hit, for hit is thy tree.

(CHAUCER: *House of Fame*, ll. 1091-1108. ab. 1385.)

It was Gower and Chaucer, in the fourteenth century, who brought the use of the eight-syllable couplet to the point of accuracy and perfection. Gower made it the vehicle of the interminable narrative of the *Confessio Amantis*, using it with regularity but with great monotony. Chaucer transformed it into a much more flexible form (with freedom of cesura, *enjambement*, and inversions), using it in about 3500 lines of his poetry (excluding the translation of the *Roman de la Rose*), but early leaving it for the decasyllabic verse. In modern English poetry this short couplet has rarely been used for continuous

narrative of a serious character, except by Byron and Wordsworth.

But let my due feet never fail
To walk the studious cloister's pale,
And love the high embowed roof,
With antique pillars massy proof,
And storied windows richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light.
There let the pealing organ blow,
To the full-voiced choir below,
In service high, and anthems clear,
As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
Dissolve me into ecstasies,
And bring all heaven before my eyes.

(MILTON: *Il Penseroso*, ll. 155-166. 1634.)

A sect whose chief devotion lies
In odd, perverse antipathies,
In falling out with that or this
And finding something still amiss;
More peevish, cross, and splenetic
Than dog distract or monkey sick:
That with more care keep holyday
The wrong, than others the right way;
Compound for sins they are inclined to
By damning those they have no mind to....
Rather than fail they will defy
That which they love most tenderly;
Quarrel with mince-pies, and disparage

Their best and dearest friend plum-
porridge,
Fat pig and goose itself oppose,
And blaspheme custard through the
nose.

(SAMUEL BUTLER: *Hudibras*, Part I.
1663.)

Butler made the octosyllabic couplet so entirely his own, for the purposes of his jogging satiric verse, that ever since it has frequently been called "Hudibrastic." The ingenuity of his rimes added not a little to its effectiveness. In the *Spectator* (No. 249) Addison said that burlesque poetry runs best "in doggrel like that of *Hudibras*, ... when a hero is to be pulled down and degraded;" otherwise in the heroic measure. He speaks also of "the generality" of Butler's readers as being "wonderfully pleased with the double rhymes."

How deep yon azure dyes the sky,
Where orbs of gold unnumber'd lie,
While through their ranks in silver
pride
The nether crescent seems to glide!
The slumbering breeze forgets to
breathe,
The lake is smooth and clear beneath,
Where once again the spangled show
Descends to meet our eyes below.
The grounds which on the right
aspire,
In dimness from the view retire:
The left presents a place of graves,
Whose wall the silent water laves.
That steeple guides thy doubtful sight

Among the livid gleams of night.
There pass, with melancholy state,
By all the solemn heaps of fate,
And think, as softly-sad you tread
Above the venerable dead,
'Time was, like thee they life possest,
And time shalt be, that thou shalt
rest.'

(THOMAS PARNELL: *A Night-Piece on Death*, ab. 1715.)

Mr. Gosse speaks of Parnell's employment of the octosyllabic couplet in this poem as "wonderfully subtle and harmonious." (*Eighteenth Century Literature*, p. 137.)

A Hare who, in a civil way,
Complied with everything, like Gay,
Was known by all the bestial train
Who haunt the wood, or graze the
plain.
Her care was never to offend,
And every creature was her friend.
As forth she went at early dawn,
To taste the dew-besprinkled lawn,
Behind she hears the hunter's cries,
And from the deep-mouthed thunder
flies:
She starts, she stops, she pants for
breath;
She hears the near advance of death;
She doubles, to mislead the hound,
And measures back her mazy round:
Till, fainting in the public way,
Half dead with fear she gasping lay.

(JOHN GAY: *The Hare and Many Friends*, in *Fables*. 1727.)

Gay's use of the short couplet in his *Fables* sometimes shows it at its best for narrative purposes.

My female friends, whose tender
hearts
Have better learned to act their parts,
Receive the news in doleful dumps:
'The Dean is dead: (Pray what is
trumps?)
Then, Lord have mercy on his soul!
(Ladies, I'll venture for the vole.)
Six Deans, they say, must bear the
pall:
(I wish I knew what king to call).
Madam, your husband will attend
The funeral of so good a friend?
No, madam, 'tis a shocking sight:
And he's engaged to-morrow night:
My Lady Club will take it ill,
If he should fail her at quadrille.
He loved the Dean—(I lead a heart)
But dearest friends, they say, must
part.
His time was come: he ran his race;
We hope he's in a better place.'

(SWIFT: *On the Death of Dr. Swift.* 1731.)

Swift made use of the octosyllabic couplet in nearly all his verse, and with no little vigor and originality. Mr. Gosse remarks: "His lines fall like well-directed blows of the flail, and he gives the octosyllabic

measure, which he is accustomed to choose on account of the Hudibrastic opportunities it offers, a character which is entirely his own." (*Eighteenth Century Literature*, p. 153.)

Ye forms divine, ye laureat band,
That near her inmost altar stand!
Now soothe her to her blissful train
Blithe concord's social form to gain;
Concord, whose myrtle wand can steep
Even anger's bloodshot eyes in sleep;
Before whose breathing bosom's balm
Rage drops his steel, and storms grow calm;
Her let our sires and matrons hoar
Welcome to Britain's ravaged shore;
Our youths, enamored of the fair,
Play with the tangles of her hair,
Till, in one loud applauding sound,
The nations shout to her around,—
O how supremely thou art blest,
Thou, lady, thou shalt rule the West!

(COLLINS: *Ode to Liberty*. 1746.)

When chapman billies leave the street,
And drouthy neibors, neibors meet;
As market days are wearing late,
And folk begin to tak the gate,
While we sit bousing at the nappy,
An' getting fou and unco happy,
We think na on the lang Scots miles,
The mosses, waters, slaps and stiles,
That lie between us and our hame,
Where sits our sulky, sullen dame,

Gathering her brows like gathering
storm,
Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.

(BURNS: *Tam O'Shanter*, ll. 1-12. 1790.)

They chain'd us each to a column
stone,
And we were three—yet, each alone;
We could not move a single pace,
We could not see each other's face,
But with that pale and livid light
That made us strangers in our sight:
And thus together—yet apart,
Fetter'd in hand, but joined in heart,
'Twas still some solace, in the dearth
Of the pure elements of earth,
To hearken to each other's speech,
And each turn comforter to each,
With some new hope, or legend old,
Or song heroically bold.

(BYRON: *The Prisoner of Chillon*, iii.
1816.)

A mortal song we sing, by dower
Encouraged of celestial power;
Power which the viewless Spirit shed
By whom we first were visited;
Whose voice we heard, whose hand
and wings
Swept like a breeze the conscious
strings,
When, left in solitude, erewhile
We stood before this ruined Pile,
And, quitting unsubstantial dreams,

Sang in this Presence kindred themes.

(WORDSWORTH: *White Doe of Rylstone*, canto vii. ll. 282-291. 1815.)

Ill fared it then with Roderick Dhu,
That on the field his targe he threw,
Whose brazen studs and tough bull-
hide
Had death so often dash'd aside;
For, train'd abroad his arms to wield,
Fitz-James's blade was sword and
shield....
Three times in closing strife they
stood,
And thrice the Saxon blade drank
blood;
No stinted draught, no scanty tide,
The gushing flood the tartans dyed.
Fierce Roderick felt the fatal drain,
And shower'd his blows like wintry
rain;
And, as firm rock, or castle-roof,
Against the winter shower is proof,
The foe, invulnerable still,
Foil'd his wild rage by steady skill;
Till, at advantage ta'en, his brand
Forced Roderick's weapon from his
hand,
And backward borne upon the lea,
Brought the proud Chieftain to his
knee.

(SCOTT: *The Lady of the Lake*, canto v. st. xv. 1810.)

How this their joy fulfilled might

move
The world around I know not well;
But yet this idle dream doth tell
That no more silent was the place,
That new joy lit up every face,
That joyous lovers kissed and clung,
E'en as these twain, that songs were
sung
From mouth to mouth in rose-bowers,
Where hand in hand and crowned
with flowers,
Folk praised the Lover and Beloved
That such long years, such pain had
proved;
But soft, they say, their joyance was
When midst them soon the twain did
pass,
Hand locked in hand, heart kissing
heart,
No more this side of death to part—
No more, no more—full soft I say
Their greetings were that happy day,
As though in pensive semblance clad;
For fear their faces over-glad
This certain thing should seem to
hide,
That love can ne'er be satisfied.

(WILLIAM MORRIS: *The Earthly Paradise*;
The Land East of the Sun. 1870.)

FOOTNOTES:

[16] For Sievers's analysis of Anglo-Saxon verse into these types, see his articles in Paul and Braune's *Beiträge*, vols. x. and xii.; and the brief statement in the Appendix to Bright's

Anglo-Saxon Reader, from which the examples just quoted are taken.

[17] The term "tumbling verse," used for obvious reasons, appears at least as early as 1585, when King James, in his *Reulis and Cautelis* for Scotch Poetry, said: "For flyting, or Invectives, use this kynde of verse following, callit Rouncefallis, or Tumbling verse:

'In the hinder end of harvest
upon Alhallow ene,
Quhen our gude nichtbors rydis
(nou gif I reid richt)
Some bucklit on a benwod, and
some on a bene,
Ay trott and into troupes fra the
twylicht.'"

And again: "Ye man observe that thir Tumbling verse flowis not on that fassoun, as utheris dois. For all utheris keipis the reule quhilk I gave before, To wit, the first fute short the secound lang, and sa furth. Quhair as thir hes twa short, and ane lang throuch all the lyne, quhen they keip ordour: albeit the maist part of thame be out of ordour, and keipis na kynde nor reule of Flowing, and for that cause are callit Tumbling verse."

(Arber Reprint, pp. 68, 63, 64.)

See further on the persistent use of this rough measure in English, side by side with the more regular syllable-counting verse, Schipper's observations and examples in the *Grundriss der Englische Metrik*, pp. 109 ff. As a modern example Schipper cites one of Thackeray's ballads:

"This Mary was pore and in
misery once,

And she came to Mrs. Roney it's
more than twelve monce.
She adn't got no bed, nor no
dinner nor no tea,
And kind Mrs. Roney gave Mary
all three."

[18] This poem of Robert Manning's was a translation of a Norman French work, Waddington's *Manuel des Pechiez*. The following is the original of the passage here reproduced:

"Si vus unques par folye
Entremeissez de nigremancie,
Ou feites al deable sacrifise,
Ou enchantement par fol aprise;
Ou, a gent de tiel mester
Ren donastes pur lur jugler,
Ou pur demander la verite
De chose qe vous fut a dire,—
Fet avez apertement
Encuntre ceo commandement;
Ceo est grant mescreaunceie,
Duter de ceo, ne devez mie."

(Furnivall ed. of Manning, p. 12.
ll. 1078-1089.)

II. FIVE-STRESS VERSE

The five-stress or decasyllabic verse (iambic pentameter) is so much more widely used in modern English poetry than any other verse-form, that its history is of special interest. It is curious that a form so completely adopted as the favorite of English

verse should be borrowed rather than native; but, the syllable-counting principle once being admitted, there is nothing in five-stress verse inconsistent with native English tendencies. A very great part of such verse has really only four full accents, and this we have seen to be the number of accents in the native English verse. On this point, see further remarks in connection with the specimen from Spenser, p. 180 below.

This verse appears in two great divisions, rimed (the decasyllabic couplet) and unrimed (blank verse). The rimed form was the earlier, the unrimed being merely a modification of it under the influence of other unrimed metres.

A.—THE DECASYLLABIC COUPLET

Lutel wot hit anymon,
hou love hym haveþ ybounde,
Þat for us oþe rode ron,
ant boht us wiþ is wounde.
Þe love of hym us haveþ ymaked sounde,
ant ycast þe grimly gost to grounde.
Ever & oo, nyht & day, he haveþ us in is þohte,
He nul nout leose þat he so deore bohte.

His deope wounde bledeþ fast,
of hem we ohte munne!
He haþ ous out of helle ycast,
ybroht us out of sunne;
ffor love of us his wonges waxeþ
þunne,
His herte blod he ȝaf for al mon
kunne.
Ever & oo, etc.

(Song from Harleian MS. 2253. In BÖDDEKER'S *Altenglische Dichtungen*, p. 231.)

This early religious lyric is of interest as containing the first known use of the five-stress couplet in English. Here it is only in a few lines that the couplet occurs, and so sporadic an occurrence should perhaps be regarded as due to nothing more than chance. See Schipper, vol. i. p. 439, and ten Brink's *Chaucer's Sprache und Verskunst*, p. 173 f. Ten Brink calls attention to another fairly regular five-stress verse, found on p. 253 of Wright's *Political Songs*:

"For miht is riht, the loud is
laweless."[19]

And, as for me, though that my wit be
lyte,
On bokes for to rede I me delyte,
And in myn herte have hem in
reverence;
And to hem yeve swich lust and swich
credence,
That ther is wel unethe game noon
That from my bokes make me too

goon,
But hit be other up-on the haly-day,
Or elles in the joly tyme of May;
Whan that I here the smale foules
singe,
And that the floures ginne for to
springe,
Farwel my studie, as lasting that
sesoun!
Now have I therto this condicioun
That, of alle the floures in the mede,
Than love I most these floures whyte
and rede,
Swiche as men callen daysies in our
toun.
To them have I so greet affeccioun.

(CHAUCER: *Legend of Good Women*, Prologue, ll. 29-44. Text A. ab. 1385.)

A good man was ther of religioun,
And was a povre Persoun of a toun;
But riche he was of holy thoght and
werk.
He was also a lerned man, a clerk,
That Cristes gospel trewely wolde
preche;
His parisshens devoutly wolde he
teche.
Benigne he was, and wonder diligent,
And in adversitee ful pacient;...
He wayted after no pompe and
reverence,
Ne maked him a spyced conscience,
But Cristes lore, and his apostles
twelve,
He taughte, and first he folwed it

himselve.

(CHAUCER: Prologue to *Canterbury Tales*, ll. 477-484, 525-528. ab. 1385.)

With Chaucer we have the first deliberate use of the five-stress couplet, in continuous verse, known to English poetry. His earliest use of the pentameter line was in the *Compleynt to Pitee* (perhaps written about 1371), in the "rime royal" stanza; his earliest use of the pentameter couplet was in the *Legend of Good Women*, usually dated 1385. From that time the measure became almost his only instrument, and we find altogether in his poetry some 16,000 lines in the couplet, besides some 14,000 more in rime royal. Too much praise cannot be given Chaucer's use of the couplet. Although it was an experiment in English verse, it has perhaps hardly been used since his time with greater skill. He used a variety of cesuras (see ten Brink's monograph for the enumeration of them), a very large number of feminine endings (such as the still pronounced final-*e* and similar syllables easily provided), free inversions in the first foot and elsewhere, and many run-on lines (in a typical 100 lines some 16 run-on lines and 7 run-on couplets appearing). The total effect is one of combined freedom and mastery, of fluent conversational style yet within the limits of guarded artistic form. "Much more regularly than the French and Provençals, and yet without pedantic stiffness, he made his verse advance with a sort of iambic gait, and he was therefore able to give up and exchange for a freer arrangement the immovable cesura, which these poets had always made to coincide with a foot-ending." (Ten Brink, in *English Literature*, Kennedy trans., vol. ii. p. 48.) On Chaucer's verse, see, besides the monograph of ten Brink already cited,

Lounsbury's *Studies in Chaucer*, vol. iii. pp. 297 ff., and Schipper, vol. i. pp. 442 ff.

The common assumption is, that Chaucer borrowed the pentameter couplet directly from French poetry. On the history of this in France, see Stengel, in Gröber's *Grundriss der Romanischen Philologie*.[20] The decasyllabic verse was fairly common in France in the fourteenth century (being called "*vers commun*" according to Stengel); but in the form of the couplet it was not. Professor Skeat says: "To say that it [Chaucer's couplet] was derived from the French ten-syllable verse is not a complete solution of the mystery; for nearly all such verse is commonly either in stanzas, or else a great number of successive lines are rimed together; and these, I believe, are rather scarce. After some search I have, however, fortunately lighted upon a very interesting specimen, among the poems of Guillaume de Machault, a French writer whom Chaucer is known to have imitated, and who died in 1377. In the edition of Machault's poems edited by Tarbé, Reims and Paris, 1849, p. 89, there is a poem of exactly this character, of no great length, but fortunately dated; for its title is 'Complainte écrite après la bataille de Poitiers et avant le siège de Reims par les Anglais' (1356-1358). The first four lines run thus:

> "'A toy, Henry, dous amis, me complain,
> Pour ce que ne cueur ne mont ne plein;
> Car a piet suy, sans cheval et sans selle,
> Et si n'ay mais esmeraude, ne belle.'

... Now as Chaucer was taken prisoner in France in 1359, he had an excellent opportunity for making himself acquainted with this poem, and with others, possibly, in a similar metre, which have not come down to us." (*The Prioress's Tale*, Introduction, pp. xix, xx.) Paris has shown that the real date of the poem in question was 1340; the title quoted by Skeat is Tarbé's modern French caption. Professor Kittredge has called my attention to the fact that there is another poem of Machault's in the same

metre (P. Paris's edition of *Voir-Dit*, p. 56), and also a poem by Froissart, the "Orloge Amoureus."

Ten Brink calls attention to the possibility of the influence upon Chaucer's couplet of the Italian hendecasyllabic verse. The *Compleynte to Pitee*, it is true, was written probably before the Italian journey of 1372-1373; but in Italy the "full significance" of the metre may have become clear to Chaucer. "After that journey the heroic verse appears almost exclusively as his poetic instrument.... Of still greater significance is the fact that Chaucer's heroic verse differs from the French decasyllabic in all the particulars in which the Italian hendecasyllabic departs from the common source, and approaches the verse of Dante and Boccaccio as closely as the metre of a Germanic language can approach a Romance metre. It may be added also that the heroic verse in the *Compleynte to Pitee* stands nearer the French decasyllabic than that of the *Troilus* or the *Canterbury Tales*."

Dr. Lewis, on the other hand, in *The Foreign Sources of English Versification*, would minimize the foreign sources of Chaucer's couplet. Not only the unaccentual character of the French verse is opposed to the theory of the French source, but also, he believes, the fixed cesura. "In the English verse there is no such thing: indeed there is no cesura at all, in the French sense of the word.... Schipper relegates to a foot-note the suggestion that our heroic verse may have originated in a different way, either through an abridgment of the alexandrine or through an extension of the four-foot line. This is of course more nearly the true view, but it is entirely immaterial which of the last two explanations we hit upon. Accentual verses of four, six, and seven feet were already familiar long before Chaucer's time. They exhibited a more or less regular alternation of arsis and thesis. To devise a verse which should be essentially the same in principle, but should have five accents instead of four, six, or seven, was a task that Chaucer's genius might well achieve unaided" (pp. 98, 99).

It is quite possible that a combination of all these views may be nearest the truth. The objection to the French influence on the ground of the syllabic (non-accentual) quality of the French verse does not seem to be serious, since any imitation of French verse by an Englishman would be likely to take on the accentual form; and, that once done, the need for the fixed cesura would vanish. But it is worth while to emphasize the fact that the genius of English verse was not so averse to the formation of a decasyllabic five-stress line as to make it a serious innovation. This view is further emphasized by the next specimen.

Is not thilke the mery moneth of May,
When love-lads masken in fresh aray?
How falles it, then, we no merrier
bene,
Ylike as others, girt in gawdy greene?
Our bloncket liveryes bene all to
sadde
For thilke same season, when all is
ycladd
With pleasaunce: the grownd with
grasse, the Woods
With greene leaves, the bushes with
bloosming buds.
... Tho to the greene Wood they
speeden hem all,
To fetchen home May with their
musicall:
And home they bringen in a royall
throne,
Crowned as king: and his Queene
attone
Was Lady Flora, on whom did attend
A fayre flocke of Faeries, and a fresh
bend

Of lovely Nymphs. (O that I were
there,
To helpen the Ladyes their Maybush
beare!)
Ah! Piers, bene not thy teeth on edge,
to thinke

(SPENSER: *The Shepherd's Calendar, May*. 1579.)

This specimen is properly not in five-stress verse, but in irregular four-stress ("tumbling verse"); compare the specimen on p. 158, above. We have a close approach, however, to the regular five-stress verse, in such lines as the fourth, fifth, eleventh, thirteenth, and seventeenth. On this and similar passages in the *Shepherd's Calendar*, as illustrating the close relation between the native measure and the newer one, see an article by Professor Gummere, in the *American Journal of Philology*, vol. vii. pp. 53ff. Other verses cited by Dr. Gummere are:

"Whose way is wildernesse, whose
ynne Penaunce."
"And dirks the beauty of my
blossomes rownd."
"That oft the blood springeth from
woundes wyde."
"There at the dore he cast me downe
hys pack."

It is pointed out that the regular five-stress line, when having—as very frequently—only four full stresses (two or three light syllables coming together, especially at the pause), can hardly be distinguished from certain forms of the native four-stress verse. See also the Eclogues for February and August, in the

Shepherd's Calendar. Dr. Gummere's conclusion is, that "practically all the elements of Anglo-Saxon verse are preserved in our modern poetry, though in different combinations, with changed proportional importance."

> But the false Fox most kindly played
> his part;
> For whatsoever mother-wit or art
> Could work, he put in proof: no
> practice sly,
> No counterpoint of cunning policy,
> No reach, no breach, that might him
> profit bring,
> But he the same did to his purpose
> wring....
> He fed his cubs with fat of all the soil,
> And with the sweet of others'
> sweating toil;
> He crammed them with crumbs of
> benefices,
> And fill'd their mouths with meeds of
> malefices.
> ... No statute so established might be,
> Nor ordinance so needful, but that he
> Would violate, though not with
> violence,
> Yet under color of the confidence
> The which the Ape repos'd in him
> alone,
> And reckon'd him the kingdom's
> corner-stone.
>
> (SPENSER: *Mother Hubbard's Tale*, ll.
> 1137-1166. 1591.)

Spenser's use of the heroic couplet for the *Mother*

Hubbard's Tale is the earliest instance of its adoption in English for satirical verse,—a purpose for which its later history showed it to be peculiarly well fitted.

Upon her head she wore a myrtle
wreath,
From whence her veil reach'd to the
ground beneath:
Her veil was artificial flowers and
leaves,
Whose workmanship both man and
beast deceives:
Many would praise the sweet smell as
she past,
When 'twas the odor which her breath
forth cast;
And there for honey bees have sought
in vain,
And, beat from thence, have lighted
there again.
About her neck hung chains of
pebble-stone,
Which, lighten'd by her neck, like
diamonds shone.

(MARLOWE: *Hero and Leander*, ll. 17-26.
ab. 1590, pub. 1598.)

Too popular is tragic poesy,
Straining his tip-toes for a farthing
fee,
And doth beside on rimeless numbers
tread;
Unbid iambics flow from careless
head.
Some braver brain in high heroic
rhymes

Compileth worm-eat stories of old
times:
And he, like some imperious
Maronist,
Conjures the Muses that they him
assist.
Then strives he to bombast his feeble
lines
With far-fetch'd phrase.— ...
Painters and poets, hold your ancient
right:
Write what you will, and write not
what you might:
Their limits be their list, their reason
will.
But if some painter in presuming skill
Should paint the stars in centre of the
earth,
Could ye forbear some smiles, and
taunting mirth?

(JOSEPH HALL: *Virgidemiarum Libri VI.*,
bk. i. satire 4. 1597.)

Joseph Hall was the most vigorous satirist of the group of Elizabethans who, in the last decade of the sixteenth century, were imitating the satires of Horace, Juvenal, and Persius. Hall's satires have a curiously eighteenth-century flavor, and his couplets are frequently very similar to those of the age of Pope. Thus Thomas Warton (in his *History of English Poetry*) observed of Hall that "the fabric of the couplets approaches to the modern standard;" and Anderson, who edited the *British Poets* in 1795, said: "Many of his lines would do honor to the most harmonious of our modern poets. The sense has generally such a pause, and will admit of such a

punctuation at the close of the second line, as if it were calculated for a modern ear." On the verse of these Elizabethan satirists in general, see *The Rise of Formal Satire in England*, by the present editor (*Publications of the Univ. of Penna.*).

On the other hand, the verse of the satires of John Donne, from which the following specimen is taken, is the roughest and most difficult of all the satires of the group. The reputation of Donne's satires for metrical ruggedness has affected unjustly that of his other poetry and that of the Elizabethan satires in general. Dryden said: "Would not Donne's Satires, which abound with so much wit, appear more charming if he had taken care of his words and of his numbers?" (*Essay on Satire.*) And Pope "versified" two of them, so as to bring them into a form pleasing to the ear of his age.

Therefore I suffered this: towards me
did run
A thing more strange than on Nile's
slime the sun
E'er bred, or all which into Noah's ark
came:
A thing which would have posed
Adam to name;
Stranger than seven antiquaries'
studies,
Than Afric's monsters, Guiana's
rarities;...
Sleeveless his jerkin was, and it had
been
Velvet, but 'twas now (so much
ground was seen)
Become tufftaffaty; and our children

shall
See it plain rash awhile, then nought
at all.
This thing hath travelled, and faith,
speaks all tongues,
And only knoweth what to all states
belongs.

(JOHN DONNE: *Satire iv.* ll. 17 ff. ab. 1593.)

This fellow pecks up wit, as pigeons
peas,
And utters it again when God doth
please.
He is wit's pedlar, and retails his
wares
At wakes, and wassails, meetings,
markets, fairs;
And we that sell by gross, the Lord
doth know,
Have not the grace to grace it with
such show.
This gallant pins the wenches on his
sleeve.
Had he been Adam, he had tempted
Eve.
He can carve too, and lisp: why, this
is he
That kiss'd his hand away in courtesy;
This is the ape of form, monsieur the
nice,
That, when he plays at tables, chides
the dice
In honorable terms: nay, he can sing
A mean most meanly, and, in

ushering,
Mend him who can: the ladies call
him sweet;
The stairs, as he treads on them, kiss
his feet.

(SHAKSPERE: *Love's Labor's Lost*, V. ii.
315-330. ab. 1590.)

The use of rimed couplets in Shakspere's dramas is especially characteristic of his earlier work. In this play, *Love's Labor's Lost*, Dowden says, "there are about two rhymed lines to every one of blank verse" (*Shakspere Primer*, p. 44). In the late plays, on the other hand, rime disappears almost altogether. It will be observed that while Shakspere's heroic verse is usually fairly regular, with not very many run-on lines, it yet differs in quality from that of satires. The dramatic use moulds it into different cadences, and the single couplet is, perhaps, less noticeably the unit of the verse.

Shepherd, I pray thee stay. Where
hast thou been?
Or whither goest thou? Here be
woods as green
As any; air likewise as fresh and
sweet
As where smooth Zephyrus plays on
the fleet
Face of the curled streams; with
flowers as many
As the young spring gives, and as
choice as any;
Here be all new delights, cool streams
and wells,

Arbors o'ergrown with woodbines,
caves, and dells;
Choose where thou wilt, whilst I sit
by and sing,
Or gather rushes, to make many a
ring
For thy long fingers; tell thee tales of
love,—
How the pale Phoebe, hunting in a
grove,
First saw the boy Endymion, from
whose eyes
She took eternal fire that never dies;
How she conveyed him softly in a
sleep,
His temples bound with poppy, to the
steep
Head of old Latmus, where she stoops
each night,
Gilding the mountain with her
brother's light,
To kiss her sweetest.

(FLETCHER: *The Faithful Shepherdess*, I. iii. ab. 1610.)

Fletcher uses the couplet in this drama with a freedom hardly found elsewhere until the time of Keats; see the remark of Symonds, quoted p. 210, below.

If Rome so great, and in her wisest
age,
Fear'd not to boast the glories of her
stage,
As skilful Roscius, and grave Æsop,
men,

Yet crown'd with honors, as with riches, then;
Who had no less a trumpet of their name
Than Cicero, whose every breath was fame:
How can so great example die in me,
That, Allen, I should pause to publish thee?
Who both their graces in thyself hast more
Outstript, than they did all that went before:
And present worth in all dost so contract,
As others speak, but only thou dost act.
Wear this renown. 'Tis just, that who did give
So many poets life, by one should live.

(BEN JONSON: *Epigram LXXXIX, to Edward Allen.* 1616.)

Jonson is thought by some to have been the founder of the classical school of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which made the heroic couplet peculiarly its own. See on this subject an article by Prof. F. E. Schelling, "Ben Jonson and the Classical School," in the *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, n. s. vol. vi. p. 221. Professor Schelling finds in Jonson's verse all the characteristics of the later couplet of Waller and Dryden: end-stopped lines and couplets, a preference for medial cesura, and an antithetical structure of the verse. "No better specimen of Jonson's antithetical manner could be

found," he says further, than the Epigram here quoted. So far as this antithetical quality of Jonson's verse is concerned, Professor Schelling's view cannot be questioned; but that Jonson shows any singular preference for end-stopped lines and couplets may be seriously questioned.

These mighty peers placed in the
gilded barge,
Proud with the burden of so brave a
charge,
With painted oars the youths begin to
sweep
Neptune's smooth face, and cleave the
yielding deep;
Which soon becomes the seat of
sudden war
Between the wind and tide that
fiercely jar.
As when a sort of lusty shepherds try
Their force at football, care of victory
Makes them salute so rudely breast to
breast,
That their encounters seem too rough
for jest;
They ply their feet, and still the
restless ball,
Tossed to and fro, is urged by them
all:
So fares the doubtful barge 'twixt tide
and winds,
And like effect of their contention
finds.

(WALLER: *Of the Danger his Majesty [being Prince] escaped in the Road at St. Andrews.* 1623?)

Such is the mould that the blest
tenant feeds
On precious fruits, and pays his rent
in weeds;
With candied plantains, and the juicy
pine,
On choicest melons and sweet grapes
they dine,
And with potatoes fat their wanton
swine;
Nature these cates with such a lavish
hand
Pours out among them, that our
coarser land
Tastes of that bounty, and does cloth
return,
Which not for warmth but ornament
is worn;
For the kind spring, which but salutes
us here,
Inhabits there and courts them all the
year;
Ripe fruits and blossoms on the same
trees live,
At once they promise what at once
they give;
So sweet the air, so moderate the
clime,
None sickly lives, or dies before his
time....
O how I long my careless limbs
to lay
Under the plantain's shade, and all
the day
With amorous airs my fancy
entertain,

Invoke the Muses, and improve my
vein!

(WALLER: *The Battle of the Summer Islands*, canto i. 1638.)

Edmund Waller is the chief representative of the early classical poetry of the seventeenth century, and of the polishing and regulating of the couplet which prepared the way for the verse of Dryden and Pope. The dominant characteristic of this verse is its avoidance of *enjambement*, or run-on lines, still more of run-on couplets. The growing precision of French verse at the same time was perhaps influential in England. Malherbe, who was at the French court after 1605, set rules for more regular verse, and forbade, among other things, the use of run-on lines —a precept which held good in French poetry until the nineteenth century. The influence of Waller in England was, for a considerable period, hardly less than that of Malherbe in France. Dryden said that "the excellence and dignity" of rime "were never known till Mr. Waller taught it; he first made writing easily an art; first showed us to conclude the sense most commonly in distichs, which, in the verse of those before him, runs on for so many lines together that the reader is out of breath to overtake it. This sweetness of Mr. Waller's lyric poesy was afterward followed, in the epic, by Sir John Denham, in his *Cooper's Hill*." (Epistle Dedicatory of *The Rival Ladies*.) In another place Dryden observed that only Waller, in English, had surpassed Spenser in the harmony of his verse. Dryden's view was later echoed by Pope, who exhorted his readers to

"praise the easy
vigor of a

line
Where Denham's strength and
Waller's sweetness join."

(*Essay on Criticism*, l. 360.)

But the most remarkable praise of Waller is found in the Preface to his posthumous poems, 1690, generally attributed to Bishop Atterbury. "He was indeed the parent of English verse, and the first that shewed us our tongue had beauty and numbers in it.... The tongue came into his hands like a rough diamond; he polished it first, and to that degree that all artists since him have admired the workmanship, without pretending to mend it.... He undoubtedly stands first in the list of refiners, and for aught I know, last, too; for I question whether in Charles the Second's reign English did not come to its full perfection; and whether it has not had its Augustan Age, as well as the Latin.... We are no less beholding to him for the new turn of verse, which he brought in, and the improvement he made in our numbers. Before his time men rhymed, indeed, and that was all: as for the harmony of measure, and that dance of words which good ears are so much pleased with, they knew nothing of it. Their poetry then was made up almost entirely of monosyllables, which, when they come together in any cluster, are certainly the most harsh, untunable things in the world. If any man doubts of this, let him read ten lines in Donne, and he'll quickly be convinced. Besides, their verses ran all into one another, and hung together, throughout a whole copy, like the *hook't atoms* that compose a body in Des Cartes. There was no distinction of parts, no regular stops, nothing for the ear to rest upon. But as soon as the copy began, down it went like a larum, incessantly; and the

reader was sure to be out of breath before he got to the end of it. So that really verse in those days was but downright prose, tagged with rhymes. Mr. Waller removed all these faults, brought in more polysyllables and smoother measures, bound up his thoughts better and in a cadence more agreeable to the nature of the verse he wrote in: so that wherever the natural stops of that were, he contrived the little breakings of his sense so as to fall in with 'em. And for that reason, since the stress of our verse lies commonly upon the last syllable, you'll hardly ever find him using a word of no force there."[21] Waller's editor thus clearly discerns the very characteristics of his verse which are avoided by the master-poets—the coincidence of phrase-pauses and verse-pauses, and regularity in the placing of stress.

The most important discussion of the influence of Waller on English poetry, and on the heroic couplet in particular, is found in Mr. Gosse's book, *From Shakespeare to Pope*. Mr. Gosse regards Waller as inventing for himself the couplet of the classical school; "master," in 1623, of such verse as "was not imitated by a single poet for nearly twenty years" (p. 50). This view is criticised in an interesting article by Dr. Henry Wood, in the *American Journal of Philology*, vol. xi. p. 55. While Mr. Gosse places Waller's earliest couplets in 1621 and 1623, Dr. Wood would date them as late as 1626, and shows that Waller wrote nothing else until 1635. Meantime had appeared (the first volume at least as early as 1623) the translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, by George Sandys, in which, says Wood, all the characteristics of Waller's verse appear. "At all events," is his conclusion, "it was Sandys, and not Waller, who at the beginning of the third decade of the century, first of all Englishmen, made a uniform practice of writing in heroic

couplets, which are, on the whole, in accord with the French rule, and which, for exactness of construction, and for harmonious sification, go far towards satisfying the demands of the later 'classical' school in England." Dr. Wood emphasizes the probable influence of the French poets on these early heroic couplets, calling attention to the fact that Sandys was in France in 1610. There is no evidence, however, that he was there for more than a few days, *en route* to more eastern countries. Waller was not in France till 1643. The whole question of the influence of French poetry in England before the Restoration still remains to be carefully investigated. Meantime, the cautious student will hesitate to put too much stress on any single point of departure for the new style of versification. Many influences must have combined to make it popular. We have seen Professor Schelling emphasizing the influence of Jonson; he also very justly points out "that it is a mistake to consider that the Elizabethans often practised the couplet with the freedom, not to say license, that characterizes its nineteenth century use in the hands of such poets as Keats." Compare the couplets of even so romantic a poet as Marlowe, in the specimen given above from *Hero and Leander*. And even Mr. Gosse, in partial divergence from the doctrines of *From Shakespeare to Pope*, says of the satiric verse of the Elizabethan Rowlands: "There are lines in this passage which Pope would not have disdained to use. It might, indeed, be employed as against that old heresy, not even yet entirely discarded, that smoothness of heroic verse was the invention of Waller. As a matter of fact, this, as well as all other branches of the universal art of poetry, was understood by the great Elizabethan masters; and if they did not frequently employ it, it was

because they left to such humbler writers as Rowlands an instrument incapable of those noble and audacious harmonies on which they chiefly prided themselves." (Introduction to the *Works of Rowlands*, Hunterian Club ed., p. 16.)

A tribute to the incoming influence of the couplet is cited by Dr. Wood from the poems of Sir John Beaumont (1582-1627). In his verses *To His Late Majesty, concerning the True Forme of English Poetry*, Beaumont said:

"In every language now in Europe spoke
By nations which the Roman empire broke,
The rellish of the Muse consists in rime,
One verse must meete another like a chime....
In many changes these may be exprest,
But those that joyne most simply run the best:
Their forme surpassing farre the fetter'd staves,
Vaine care, and needlesse repetition saves."

(CHALMER'S *English Poets*, vol. vi. p. 31.)[22]

Rough Boreas in Æolian prison laid,
And those dry blasts which gathered clouds invade,
Outflies the South with dropping

wings; who shrouds
His terrible aspect in pitchy clouds.
His white hair streams, his swol'n
beard big with showers;
Mists bind his brows, rain from his
bosom pours.
As with his hands the hanging clouds
he crushed,
They roared, and down in showers
together rushed.
All-colored Iris, Juno's messenger,
To weeping clouds doth nourishment
confer.
The corn is lodged, the husbandmen
despair,
Their long year's labor lost, with all
their care.
Jove, not content with his ethereal
rages,
His brother's auxiliaric floods
engages.

(GEORGE SANDYS: *Ovid's Metamorphoses*, bk. i. 1621.)

On the significance of Sandys's verse, see preceding notes on Waller, and the note on its possible relation to Pope, p. 201 below.

My eye, descending from the hill,
surveys
Where Thames amongst the wanton
valleys strays;
Thames, the most loved of all the
Ocean's sons
By his old sire, to his embraces runs,

Hasting to pay his tribute to the sea,
Like mortal life to meet eternity....
No unexpected inundations spoil
The mower's hopes, nor mock the
ploughman's toil,
But godlike his unwearied bounty
flows,
First loves to do, then loves the good
he does;
Nor are his blessings to his banks
confined,
But free and common as the sea or
wind....
O could I flow like thee, and
make thy stream
My great example, as it is my theme!
Though deep, yet clear, though
gentle, yet not dull,
Strong without rage, without
o'erflowing full.

(SIR JOHN DENHAM: *Cooper's Hill*.
1642.)

"Denham," says Mr. Gosse, "was the first writer to adopt the precise manner of versification introduced by Waller." (Ward's *English Poets*, vol. ii. p. 279.) On his praise by Dryden and Pope, see notes on p. 188 above. The last four lines of the specimen here given have been universally admired.

But say, what is't that binds your
hands? does fear
From such a glorious action you
deter?
Or is't religion? But you sure disclaim
That frivolous pretence, that empty

name;
Mere bugbear word, devis'd by us to
scare
The senseless rout to slavishness and
fear,
Ne'er known to awe the brave, and
those that dare.
Such weak and feeble things may
serve for checks
To rein and curb base-mettled
heretics, ...
Such whom fond in-bred honesty
befools,
Or that old musty piece, the Bible,
gulls.

(JOHN OLDHAM: *Satires upon the Jesuits*,
Sat. i. 1679.)

"Oldham was the first," says Mr. Gosse, "to liberate himself, in the use of the distich, from this under-current of a stanza, and to write heroic verse straight on, couplet by couplet, ascending by steady strides and not by irregular leaps. (Any one who will venture to read Oldham's disagreeable *Satire upon the Jesuits*, written in 1679, will see the truth of this remark, and note the effect that its versification had upon that series of Dryden's satires which immediately followed it.) In Pope's best satires we see this art carried to its final perfection; after his time the connecting link between couplet and couplet became lost, and at last in the decline poems became, as some one has said, mere cases of lancets lying side by side. But in Dryden's day the connection was still only too obvious, and it strikes me that it may have been from a consciousness of this defect, that Dryden adopted that triplet, with a

final alexandrine, which he is so fond of introducing." (*From Shakespeare to Pope*, p. 201.)

Of these the false Achitophel was
first,
A name to all succeeding ages curst:
For close designs and crooked
counsels fit,
Sagacious, bold, and turbulent of wit,
Restless, unfixed in principles and
place,
In power unpleased, impatient of
disgrace;
A fiery soul, which, working out its
way,
Fretted the pigmy body to decay,
And o'er-informed the tenement of
clay.
A daring pilot in extremity,
Pleased with the danger, when the
waves went high,
He sought the storms; but, for a calm
unfit,
Would steer too nigh the sands, to
boast his wit.
Great wits are sure to madness near
allied,
And thin partitions do their bounds
divide;
Else, why should he, with wealth and
honor blest,
Refuse his age the needful hours of
rest?
Punish a body which he could not
please,
Bankrupt of life, yet prodigal of

ease?...
In friendship false, implacable in
hate,
Resolved to ruin or to rule the state;
To compass this the triple bond he
broke,
The pillars of the public safety shook,
And fitted Israel for a foreign yoke;
Then, seized with fear, yet still
affecting fame,
Usurped a patriot's all-atoning name.

(DRYDEN: *Absalom and Achitophel*, part I. ll. 150-179. 1681.)

Dryden was the first great English poet after Chaucer to make the heroic couplet his chief vehicle of expression, and he put far more variety and vigor into it than had been achieved by his nearer predecessors. As Pope said:

"Waller was smooth, but Dryden
taught to join
The varying verse, the full resounding
line,
The long majestic march, the energy
divine."

(*Epistle ii.*, 267.)

And Gray, some years later, symbolized Dryden's couplet in these fine lines of the *Progress of Poesy*:

"Behold, where Dryden's less
presumptuous car,
Wide o'er the fields of glory
bear

Two coursers of ethereal
race,
With necks in thunder clothed, and
long-resounding pace."

On Dryden's development of the couplet, see especially Saintsbury's *Life of Dryden* (English Men of Letters Series), pp. 17, 171. "The whole structure of the decasyllabic line before the middle of the seventeenth century was ill calculated for the perfecting of the couplet. Accustomed either to the stately plainness of blank verse, or to the elaborate intricacies of the stanza, writers had got into the habit of communicating to their verse a slow and somewhat languid movement." (p. 17.) "In versification the great achievement of Dryden was the alteration of what may be called the balance of the line, causing it to run more quickly, and to strike its rhymes with a sharper and less prolonged sound. One obvious means of obtaining this was, as a matter of course, the isolation of the couplet, and the avoidance of overlapping the different lines one upon the other. The effect of this overlapping, by depriving the eye and voice of the expectation of rest at the end of each couplet, is always one of two things. Either the lines are converted into a sort of rhythmic prose, made musical by the rhymes rather than divided by them, or else a considerable pause is invited at the end of each, or of most lines, and the cadence of the whole becomes comparatively slow and languid. Both these forms, as may be seen in the works of Mr. Morris, as well as in the older writers, are excellently suited for narration of some considerable length. They are less well suited for satire, for argument, and for the moral reflections which the age of Dryden loved. He therefore set

himself to elaborate the couplet with its sharp point, its quick delivery, and the pistol-like detonation of its rhyme. But there is an obvious objection, or rather there are several obvious objections which present themselves to the couplet. It was natural that to one accustomed to the more varied range of the older rhythm and metre, there might seem to be a danger of the snip-snap monotony into which, as we know, it did actually fall when it passed out of the hands of its first great practitioners. There might also be a fear that it would not always be possible to compress the sense of a complete clause within the narrow limits of twenty syllables. To meet these difficulties Dryden resorted to three mechanical devices—the hemistich, the alexandrine, and the triplet, all three of which could be used indifferently to eke out the space or to give variety of sound.... In poetry proper the hemistich is anything but pleasing, and Dryden, becoming convinced of the fact, almost discarded it. The alexandrine and the triplet he always continued to use." (pp. 171, 172.)

Do you remember, when their tasks
were done,
How all the youth did to our cottage
run?
While winter winds were whistling
loud without,
Our cheerful hearth was circled round
about:
With strokes in ashes, maids their
lovers drew;
And still you fell to me, and I to
you....
I know too well when first my love
began,

When at our wake you for the chaplet
ran:
Then I was made the lady of the May,
And, with the garland, at the goal did
stay:
Still, as you ran, I kept you full in
view;
I hoped, and wished, and ran,
methought, for you.
As you came near, I hastily did rise,
And stretched my arm outright, that
held the prize.
The custom was to kiss whom I
should crown;
You kneeled, and in my lap your head
laid down:
I blushed, and blushed, and did the
kiss delay;
At last my subjects forced me to obey:
But, when I gave the crown, and then
the kiss,
I scarce had breath to say, Take that,
—and this.

(DRYDEN: *Marriage à la Mode*, II, i.
1672.)

The use of the heroic couplet in the drama marks its effort to conquer the last citadel of English poetry; an attempt which, under the leadership of Dryden, seemed to succeed, but soon gave way to better judgment. Dryden favored the experiment in the Preface to *The Rival Ladies* (1663), and inserted a few couplets in that play. Etheredge accepted the suggestion, and put the serious parts of *The Comical Revenge* (largely prose) into couplets, in 1664. In the same year *The Indian Queen* (by Dryden and Sir

Robert Howard) appeared in heroic verse, and the fashion soon became so general that in the *Essay on Heroic Plays*, prefixed to *The Conquest of Granada* (1672), Dryden could say: "Whether Heroic Verse ought to be admitted into serious plays, is not now to be disputed: 'tis already in possession of the stage; and I dare confidently affirm, that very few tragedies, in this age, shall be received without it." Only six years later, however, in 1678, he returned to blank verse in *All for Love*, saying: "I have disencumbered myself from rhyme. Not that I condemn my former way, but that this is more proper to my present purpose." In all about five plays of Dryden's are in couplets; after 1678 he rarely returned to rime for the drama. As Atterbury said in his Preface to Waller's poems: "'Twas the strength of his genius that first brought it into credit in plays; and 'tis the force of his example that has thrown it out again." "The fashion of rhyme in the drama, then, to be exact," says Mr. Gosse, "flourished from 1664 until ... 1678." Some justification for its use is to be found in the wretched condition into which blank verse had fallen. "The blank iambics of the romantic dramatists had become so execrably weak and distended, the whole movement of dramatic verse had grown so flaccid, that a little restraint in the severe limits of rhyme was absolutely necessary." (Gosse, in *Seventeenth Century Studies*, p. 264.)

The present specimen is from a play in which the couplet was used but slightly; but it shows Dryden's use of it at its best. In the drama, as already remarked, the couplet is naturally less epigrammatic and pointed than in didactic and satiric verse.

For the arguments with which Dryden defended the use of rime in the drama, see the Preface to *The Rival Ladies*,

the *Essay of Heroic Plays*, the *Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, and the *Defence of an Essay of Dramatic Poesy*. "In the quickness of reparties (which in discoursive scenes fall very often), it has so particular a grace, and is so aptly suited to them, that the sudden smartness of the answer, and the sweetness of the rhyme, set off the beauty of each other. But that benefit which I consider most in it, because I have not seldom found it, is, that it bounds and circumscribes the fancy." (*Essays of Dryden*, ed. W. P. Ker, vol. i. p. 8.) In the *Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, Crites, representing Sir Robert Howard, opposes the use of rime on the ground of Aristotle's dictum that tragedy is best written in the kind of verse which is nearest prose. A play being an imitation of Nature, "the nearer anything comes to the imitation of it, the more it pleases." Neander, representing Dryden, answers that this line of argument will equally forbid blank verse. Blank verse is "properly but measured prose"; and rime may be "made as natural as blank verse, by the well placing of the words, etc." "But I need not go so far to prove that rhyme, as it succeeds to all other offices of Greek and Latin verse, so especially to this of plays, since the custom of all nations at this day confirms it, all the French, Italian, and Spanish tragedies are generally writ in it; and sure the universal consent of the most civilized parts of the world ought in this, as it doth in other customs, to include the rest." (*Ibid.* p. 98.) Again, while a play is a representation of Nature, it is "Nature wrought up to an higher pitch"; and for this purpose "heroic rhyme is nearest Nature, as being the noblest kind of modern verse." (pp. 100, 101.) In the *Essay of Heroic Plays* Dryden again summarizes the case for the other side by saying that "all the arguments which are formed against it can amount to no more than this, that it is not so near conversation as prose, and therefore not so natural. But it is very clear to all who understand Poetry, that serious plays ought not to imitate conversation too nearly." If, therefore, we begin to leave the mere "imitation of ordinary converse," we should go on consistently to "the last perfection of Art. It was only

custom which cozened us so long; we thought, because Shakespeare and Fletcher went no farther, that there the pillars of poetry were to be erected; that, because they excellently described passion without rhyme, therefore rhyme was not capable of describing it. But time has now convinced most men of that error." (*Ibid.* pp. 148, 149.)

Dryden was of course quite right in objecting to the claim that imaginative poetry ought to seek the form closest to the language of real life. The real question is whether rimed verse is a more imaginative and highly poetic form than blank verse; modern opinion would unanimously answer in the negative.

It strikes a modern reader as curious that Dryden and his contemporaries should have advocated the use of rime in tragedy rather than in comedy; but we have the clew to their feeling in the saying that "*serious plays* ought not to imitate conversation too nearly." In the Restoration period the comedy was thought of as a realistic representation of life; hence its characters should speak in natural prose, as they have continued to do, for the most part, ever since. The tragedy or heroic play, on the other hand, was in the region of artistic convention, much farther removed from reality; hence its language was to be "raised above the life." This distinction between the range of comedy and that of tragedy, which would have seemed strange to the Elizabethans, explains the widely diverging lines which we find the two forms of the drama following from the time of the Restoration.

On the verse of Dryden's rimed plays, see Schipper, vol. ii. p. 214, and O. Speerschneider's *Metrische Untersuchungen über den heroischen Vers in John Drydens Dramen* (Halle, 1897).

> But O, my muse, what numbers wilt
> thou find
> To sing the furious troops in battle
> join'd!

Methinks I hear the drum's
tumultuous sound,
The victor's shouts and dying groans
confound,
The dreadful burst of cannon rend the
skies,
And all the thunder of the battle rise.
'Twas then great Marlbro's mighty
soul was prov'd,
That, in the shock of charging hosts
unmov'd,
Amidst confusion, horror, and
despair,
Examin'd all the dreadful scenes of
war....
So, when an angel by divine
command
With rising tempests shakes a guilty
land,
Such as of late o'er pale Britannia
past,
Calm and serene he drives the furious
blast;
And pleas'd th' Almighty's orders to
perform,
Rides in the whirlwind, and directs
the storm.

(ADDISON: *The Campaign*. 1704.)

But most by numbers judge a poet's
song,
And smooth or rough, with them, is
right or wrong:
In the bright Muse, tho' thousand
charms conspire,

Her voice is all these tuneful fools
admire;
Who haunt Parnassus but to please
their ear,
Not mend their minds; as some to
church repair,
Not for the doctrine, but the music
there.
These equal syllables alone require,
Tho' oft the ear the open vowels tire;
While expletives their feeble aid do
join;
And ten low words oft creep in one
dull line;
While they ring round the same
unvaried chimes,
With sure return of still expected
rhymes;
Where'er you find 'the cooling
western breeze,'
In the next line, it 'whispers through
the trees';
If crystal streams 'with pleasing
murmurs creep,'
The reader's threaten'd (not in vain)
with 'sleep':
Then, at the last and only couplet
fraught
With some unmeaning thing they call
a thought,
A needless alexandrine ends the song,
That, like a wounded snake, drags its
slow length along.
Leave such to tune their own dull
rhymes, and know
What's roundly smooth, or

languishingly slow;
And praise the easy vigor of a line
Where Denham's strength and
Waller's sweetness join.

(POPE: *Essay on Criticism*, ll. 337-361.
1711.)

Why boast we, Glaucus, our extended
reign
Where Xanthus' streams enrich the
Lycian plain,
Our numerous herds that range the
fruitful field,
And hills where vines their purple
harvest yield,
Our foaming bowls with purer nectar
crowned,
Our feasts enhanced with music's
sprightly sound?
Why on those shores are we with joy
surveyed,
Admired as heroes, and as gods
obeyed;
Unless great acts superior merit
prove,
And vindicate the bounteous powers
above?
'Tis ours, the dignity they give to
grace;
The first in valor, as the first in place:
That when with wondering eyes our
martial bands
Behold our deeds transcending our
commands,
Such, they may cry, deserve the

sovereign state,
Whom those that envy dare not
imitate!
Could all our care elude the gloomy
grave,
Which claims no less the fearful than
the brave,
For lust of fame I should not vainly
dare
In fighting fields, nor urge the soul to
war.
But since, alas! ignoble age must
come,
Disease, and death's inexorable doom;
The life which others pay let us
bestow,
And give to fame what we to nature
owe;
Brave though we fall, and honored if
we live,
Or let us glory gain, or glory give!

(POPE: *Iliad*, bk. xii.)

Pope's couplet, while less vigorous and varied than Dryden's, has been generally considered the most perfect development of the typical measure of the classical school. Mr. Courthope thinks that in this speech from the *Iliad*, Pope "perhaps attains the highest level of which the heroic couplet is capable." (*Works of Pope*, vol. v. p. 167.)

"What he learned from Dryden," Mr. Courthope says in another place, "was the art of expressing the social and conversational idiom of the language in a metrical form. His conception of metrical harmony was, however, altogether different from his professed master's, and rather resembled that of Sandys, whose translation of

Ovid's *Metamorphoses* he told Spence he had read when very young, and with the greatest delight. He explains the system in a letter to Cromwell, dated November 25, 1710.

"'(1) As to the hiatus, it is certainly to be avoided as often as possible; but on the other hand, since the reason of it is only for the sake of the numbers, so if, to avoid it, we incur another fault against their smoothness, methinks the very end of that nicety is destroyed....

"'(2) I would except against the use of all expletives in verse, as *do* before verbs plural, or even the frequent use of *did* or *does* to change the termination of the rhyme....

"'(3) Monosyllable lines, unless very artfully managed, are stiff, languishing, and hard.

"'(4) The repeating the same rhymes within four or six lines of each other, which tire the ear with too much of the like sound.

"'(5) The too frequent use of alexandrines, which are never graceful, but where there is some majesty added to the verse by them, or when there cannot be found a word in them but what is absolutely needful.

"'(6) Every nice ear must, I believe, have observed that in any smooth English verse of ten syllables, there is naturally a pause either at the fourth, fifth, or sixth syllables.... Now I fancy that, to preserve an exact harmony and variety, none of these pauses should be continued above three lines together, without the interposition of another; else it will be apt to weary the ear with one continued tone.'"

(*Ibid.* pp. 20, 21.)

Here are implied all the characteristics of the Popean couplet. The cesura is to vary, but not from a fundamentally medial position. The avoidance of *enjambement* is not mentioned, doubtless because it is assumed as an essential of couplets professing any

degree of correctness.

Mr. Andrew Lang protests against the monotony of the verse of Pope's *Iliad* in some lines which cleverly adopt the same sort of measure:

My childhood fled your couplet's
clarion tone,
And sought for Homer in the prose of
Bohn.
Still through the dust of that dim
prose appears
The flight of arrows and the sheen of
spears;
Still we may trace what hearts heroic
feel,
And hear the bronze that hurtles on
the steel!
But ah, your Iliad seems a half-
pretence,
Where wits, not heroes, prove their
skill in fence,
And great Achilles' eloquence doth
show
As if no centaur trained him, but
Boileau!
Again, your verse is orderly,—and
more,—
"The waves behind impel the waves
before";
Monotonously musical they glide,
Till couplet unto couplet hath replied.
But turn to Homer! How his verses
sweep!
Surge answers surge and deep doth
call on deep;

This line in foam and thunder issues
forth,
Spurred by the West or smitten by the
North,
Sombre in all its sullen deeps, and all
Clear at the crest, and foaming to the
fall;
The next with silver murmur dies
away,
Like tides that falter to Calypso's Bay!

(ANDREW LANG: *Letters to Dead Authors; Pope*.)

Compare with this the equally clever defence of Pope's verse by Mr. Dobson:

Suppose you say your Worst of Pope,
declare
His Jewels Paste, his Nature a
Parterre,
His Art but Artifice—I ask once more
Where have you seen such Artifice
before?
Where have you seen a Parterre better
grac'd,
Or gems that glitter like his Gems of
Paste?
Where can you show, among your
Names of Note,
So much to copy and so much to
quote?
And where, in Fine, in all our English
Verse,
A Style more trenchant and a Sense
more terse?
So I, that love the old Augustan Days

Of formal Courtesies and formal
Phrase;
That like along the finish'd line to feel
The Ruffle's Flutter and the Flash of
Steel;
That like my Couplet as compact as
clear;
That like my Satire sparkling tho'
severe,
Unmix'd with Bathos and unmarr'd by
Trope,
I fling my Cap for Polish—and for
POPE![23]

(AUSTIN DOBSON: *Dialogue to the Memory of Mr. Alexander Pope.*)

Sweet was the sound, when oft at
evening's close
Up yonder hill the village murmur
rose;
There, as I passed with careless steps
and slow,
The mingling notes came softened
from below;
The swain responsive as the milkmaid
sung,
The sober herd that lowed to meet
their young;
The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the
pool,
The playful children just let loose
from school;
The watchdog's voice that bayed the
whispering wind,
And the loud laugh that spoke the
vacant mind;

These all in sweet confusion sought
the shade,
And filled each pause the nightingale
had made.
But now the sounds of population fail,
No cheerful murmurs fluctuate in the
gale,
No busy steps the grass-grown
footway tread,
For all the bloomy flush of life is fled.

(GOLDSMITH: *The Deserted Village*.
1770.)

"The heroic couplet," says Mr. Gosse, "was never employed, even by Pope himself, with more melody than by Goldsmith in this poem." (*Eighteenth Century Literature*, p. 320.) Its use at this time, when the revival of blank verse by Thomson and others had seriously affected the prestige of the couplet, was a sign of Goldsmith's reactionary tendency toward the school of Pope. His dislike of blank verse he expressed in his early work on the *Present State of Polite Learning*, saying that it might be reckoned among "several disagreeable instances of pedantry" lately proceeding "from a desire in the critic of grafting the spirit of ancient languages upon the English." (*Works*, Globe ed., p. 439.) This opinion was of course shared by Goldsmith's friend, Dr. Johnson, whose two important poems (*London* and *The Vanity of Human Wishes*) stand with the two of Goldsmith as the last notable pieces of English poetry of the classical school. While Johnson admitted that he could not "wish that Milton had been a rhymer," yet he never lost an opportunity to speak contemptuously of blank verse as a poetic form, and quoted approvingly the saying of a critic that it

"seems to be verse only to the eye." (*Life of Milton.*)

In front of these came Addison.
In him
Humor, in holiday and sightly trim,
Sublimity and Attic taste combined
To polish, furnish, and delight the
mind.
Then Pope, as harmony itself exact,
In verse well-disciplined, complete,
compact,
Gave virtue and morality a grace
That, quite eclipsing pleasure's
painted face,
Levied a tax of wonder and applause,
Even on the fools that trampled on
their laws.
But he (his musical finesse was such,
So nice his ear, so delicate his touch)
Made poetry a mere mechanic art,
And every warbler has his tune by
heart.
Nature imparting her satiric gift,
Her serious mirth, to Arbuthnot and
Swift,
With droll sobriety they raised a smile
At folly's cost, themselves unmoved
the while.
That constellation set, the world in
vain
Must hope to look upon their like
again.

(COWPER: *Table Talk*. 1782.)

Behold! in various throngs the
scribbling crew,

For notice eager, pass in long review:
Each spurs his jaded Pegasus apace,
And rhyme and blank maintain an
equal race;
Sonnets on sonnets crowd, and ode on
ode;
And tales of terror jostle on the road;
Immeasurable measures move along;
For simpering folly loves a varied
song,
To strange mysterious dulness still the
friend,
Admires the strain she cannot
comprehend.
Thus Lays of Minstrels—may they be
the last!—
On half-strung harps whine mournful
to the blast;
While mountain spirits prate to river
sprites,
That dames may listen to the sound at
nights;
And goblin brats, of Gilpin Horner's
brood,
Decoy young border-nobles through
the wood,
And skip at every step, Lord knows
how high,
And frighten foolish babes, the Lord
knows why.

(BYRON: *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*. 1809.)

View now the winter storm! above,
one cloud,

Black and unbroken, all the skies
o'ershroud:
The unwieldy porpoise through the
day before
Had rolled in view of boding men on
shore;
And sometimes hid and sometimes
showed his form,
Dark as the cloud and furious as the
storm.
All where the eye delights yet dreads
to roam,
The breaking billows cast the flying
foam
Upon the billows rising—all the deep
Is restless change; the waves so
swelled and steep,
Breaking and sinking, and the sunken
swells,
Nor one, one moment, in its station
dwells....
Darkness begins to reign; the
louder wind
Appals the weak and awes the firmer
mind;
But frights not him whom evening
and the spray
In part conceal—yon prowler on his
way.
Lo, he has something seen; he runs
apace,
As if he feared companion in the
chase;
He sees his prize, and now he turns
again,
Slowly and sorrowing—"Was your

search in vain?"
Gruffly he answers, "'Tis a sorry sight!
A seaman's body: there'll be more to-
night!"

(CRABBE: *The Borough*, letter i. 1810.)

Crabbe's poems are the latest to use the strict Popean couplet for narrative and descriptive purposes, and his couplets have a certain characteristic reticence and vigor. Professor Woodberry praises them in an interesting passage on "the old heroic rhymed couplet, that simplest form of English verse music, which could rise, nevertheless, to the almost lyric loftiness of the last lines of the *Dunciad*; so supple and flexible; made for easy simile and compact metaphor; lending itself so perfectly to the sudden flash of wit or turn of humor; the natural shell of an epigram; compelling the poet to practice all the virtues of brevity; checking the wandering fancy, and repressing the secondary thought; requiring in a masterly use of it the employment of more mental powers than any other metrical form; despised and neglected now because the literature which is embodied in it is despised and neglected, yet the best metrical form which intelligence, as distinct from poetical feeling, can employ." (*Makers of Literature*, p. 104.)

The flower-beds all were liberal of
delight:
Roses in heaps were there, both red
and white,
Lilies angelical, and gorgeous glooms
Of wall-flowers, and blue hyacinths,
and blooms

Hanging thick clusters from light
boughs; in short,
All the sweet cups to which the bees
resort;
With plots of grass, and leafier walks
between
Of red geraniums, and of jessamine,
And orange, whose warm leaves so
finely suit,
And look as if they shade a golden
fruit;
And midst the flowers, turfed round
beneath a shade
Of darksome pines, a babbling
fountain played,
And 'twixt their shafts you saw the
water bright,
Which through the tops glimmered
with showering light.

(LEIGH HUNT: *The Story of Rimini*.
1816.)

Of this poem Mr. C. H. Herford says: "*The Story of Rimini* is the starting-point of that free or Chaucerian treatment of the heroic couplet, and of the colloquial style, eschewing epigram and full of familiar turns, which Shelley in *Julian and Maddalo* and Keats in *Lamia* made classical." (*Age of Wordsworth*, p. 83.) The treatment of the couplet is still characterized by but slight use of run-on lines, and a preference for the medial cesura; but on the other hand there is a large degree of freedom in the inversion of accents and other alterations of the regular stress. Compare the last line of the present specimen, and such other lines as

"Of crimson cloths hanging a hand of
snow."
"Some, with a drag, dangling from the
cap's crest."
"'Who's there?' said that sweet voice,
kindly and clear."
"The other with the tears streaming
down both his cheeks."

The last of these lines, an alexandrine, is also characteristic. Hunt imitated Dryden in the use of both alexandrine and triplet. Of the latter he said: "I confess I like the very bracket that marks out the triplet to the reader's eye, and prepares him for the music of it. It has a look like the bridge of a lute." (Preface to *Works*, 1832.) Mr. A. J. Kent, in an article in the *Fortnightly Review*, says of Leigh Hunt that "he became the greatest master since the days of Dryden" of the heroic couplet. (1881, p. 224.)

A thing of beauty is a joy forever:
Its loveliness increases; it will never
Pass into nothingness; but still will
keep
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and
quiet breathing.
Therefore, on every morrow are we
wreathing
A flowery band to bind us to the
earth,
Spite of despondence, of the inhuman
dearth
Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,
Of all the unhealthy and o'er-
darkened ways

Made for our searching: yes, in spite
of all,
Some shape of beauty moves away
the pall
From our dark spirits. Such the sun,
the moon,
Trees old and young, sprouting a
shady boon
For simple sheep; and such are
daffodils
With the green world they live in; and
clear rills
That for themselves a cooling covert
make
'Gainst the hot season; the mid-forest
brake,
Rich with a sprinkling of fair musk-
rose blooms:
And such too is the grandeur of the
dooms
We have imagined for the mighty
dead;
All lovely tales that we have heard or
read:
An endless fountain of immortal
drink,
Pouring unto us from the heaven's
brink.

(KEATS: *Endymion*, ll. 1-24. 1818.)

In the couplet of Keats, and of a number of his successors, we have a really different measure from the "heroic couplet" proper. The individual line and the couplet alike cease to be prominent units of the verse. The effect is therefore closely allied to that of blank verse; the rimes, not being emphasized by

marked pauses, serving rather as means of tone color than as organizers of the verse. See Mr. Saintsbury's remarks (quoted in the notes on Dryden, p. 195, above), on "lines made musical by the rhymes rather than divided by them." In like manner Mr. Symonds says that "the couplets of Marlowe, Fletcher, Shelley, and Keats follow the laws of blank verse, and add rhyme—that is to say, their periods and pauses are entirely determined by the sense." (*Blank Verse*, p. 66.) This is true of the couplets of Shelley and Keats, and to a less degree of those of Fletcher's *Faithful Shepherdess*, but will hardly apply to Marlowe, nor, as we have seen, to the Elizabethans in general.[24]

There was a Being whom my spirit oft
Met on its visioned wanderings, far
aloft,
In the clear golden prime of my
youth's dawn.
Upon the fairy isles of sunny lawn,
Amid the enchanted mountains, and
the caves
Of divine sleep, and on the air-like
waves
Of wonder-level dream, whose
tremulous floor
Paved her light steps;—on an
imagined shore,
Under the gray beak of some
promontory
She met me, robed in such exceeding
glory,
That I beheld her not.

(SHELLEY: *Epipsychidion*, ll. 190-200. 1821.)

Shelley carries the free treatment of this measure to the utmost limit. The couplet is not felt to be of significance, and many lines are so irregular in stress as to make scansion difficult. Compare this passage:

"The ringdove in the embowering ivy
yet
Keeps up her love-lament; and the
owls flit
Round the evening tower; and the
young stars glance
Between the quick bats in their
twilight dance."[25]

The woods were long austere with
snow: at last
Pink leaflets budded on the beech,
and fast
Larches, scattered through pine-tree
solitudes,
Brightened, 'as in the slumbrous heart
o' the woods
Our buried year, a witch, grew young
again
To placid incantations, and that stain
About were from her caldron, green
smoke blent
With those black pines'—so Eglamor
gave vent
To a chance fancy. When a just
rebuke
From his companion; brother Naddo
shook
The solemnest of brows; 'Beware,' he
said,
'Of setting up conceits in nature's
stead.'

(BROWNING: *Sordello*, ii. 1-12. 1840.)

Above the stem a gilded swallow
shone,
Wrought with straight wings and eyes
of glittering stone
As flying sunward oversea, to bear
Green summer with it through the
singing air.
And on the deck between the rowers
at dawn,
As the bright sail with brightening
wind was drawn,
Sat with full face against the
strengthening light
Iseult, more fair than foam or dawn
was white.
Her gaze was glad past love's own
singing of,
And her face lovely past desire of
love.
Past thought and speech her maiden
motions were,
And a more golden sunrise was her
hair.
The very veil of her bright flesh was
made
As of light woven and moonbeam-
colored shade
More fine than moonbeams; white her
eyelids shone
As snow sun-stricken that endures the
sun,
And through their curled and colored
clouds of deep
Luminous lashes, thick as dreams in

sleep,
Shone as the sea's depth swallowing
up the sky's
The springs of unimaginable eyes.

(SWINBURNE: *Tristram of Lyonesse; the Sailing of the Swallow*.)

The huge high presence, red as earth's
first race,
Reared like a reed the might up of his
mace,
And smote: but lightly Tristram
swerved, and drove
Right in on him, whose void stroke
only clove
Air, and fell wide, thundering
athwart: and he
Sent forth a stormier cry than wind or
sea
When midnight takes the tempest for
her lord;
And all the glen's throat seemed as
hell's that roared;
But high like heaven's light over hell
shone Tristram's sword,
Falling, and bright as storm shows
God's bare brand
Flashed, as it shore sheer off the huge
right hand
Whose strength was as the shadow of
death on all that land.

(*Ibid.*: *The Last Pilgrimage*.)

It will be noticed that in Swinburne's use of the couplet the single line is even less the unit of

measure than in Keats and Shelley; the periods correspond closely to those in the blank verse of Milton and Tennyson. Compare the specimens of blank verse on pp. 230 and 245. The second specimen shows the occasional use of the triplet and alexandrine.

So stood she murmuring, till a
rippling sound
She heard, that grew until she turned
her round
And saw her other sisters of the deep
Her song had called while Hylas yet
did sleep,
Come swimming in a long line up the
stream,
And their white dripping arms and
shoulders gleam
Above the dark grey water as they
went,
And still before them a great ripple
sent.
But when they saw her, toward the
bank they drew,
And landing, felt the grass and
flowers blue
Against their unused feet; then in a
ring
Stood gazing with wide eyes, and
wondering
At all his beauty they desired so
much.
And then with gentle hands began to
touch
His hair, his hands, his closed eyes;
and at last

Their eager naked arms about him
cast,
And bore him, sleeping still, as by
some spell,
Unto the depths where they were
wont to dwell;
Then softly down the reedy bank they
slid,
And with small noise the gurgling
river hid
The flushed nymphs and the heedless
sleeping man.

(WILLIAM MORRIS: *Life and Death of Jason*, iv. 621-641. 1867.)

B.—BLANK VERSE

Unrimed five-stress verse early became the accepted form for English dramatic poetry, and in the modern English period has become the favorite form for long continuous poems, narrative and reflective as well. In general, as will appear from the specimens, it is marked not only by the absence of rime but by a prevalent freedom of structure rarely found in the couplet.

The impetus toward the writing of blank verse seems to have been given by the influence of classical humanism, the representatives of which grew sceptical as to the use of rime, on the ground that it was not found in classical poetry. In Italy Giovanni Trissino wrote his *Sophonisbe* and *Italia Liberata* (1515-1548) in rimeless verses, and was looked upon as the inventor of *versi sciolti*, *i.e.* verses "freed" from rime. (See Schipper, vol. ii. p. 4.) See also below, in the notes on Surrey, and later under Imitations of

Classical Verse, for notes on the same movement.

On the nature of English blank verse, see J. A. Symonds's *Blank Verse* (1895), a reprint of essays in the Appendix to his *Sketches and Studies in Southern Europe*. In his *Chapters on English Metre* (chap. iv.), Mr. J. B. Mayor criticises what he calls Mr. Symonds's "æsthetic intuitivism."

On the early history of English blank verse, see the article by Schröer, *Anfänge des Blankverses in England, Anglia*, vol. iv. p. 1, and Mr. G. C. Macaulay's *Francis Beaumont*, pp. 39-49.

Of Mr. Symonds's remarks on the general nature of blank verse the following are especially interesting: "English blank verse is perhaps more various and plastic than any other national metre. It is capable of being used for the most commonplace and the most sublime utterances.... Originally instituted for the drama, it received in Milton's hands an epical treatment, and has by authors of our own day been used for idyllic and even for lyrical compositions. Plato mentions a Greek musical instrument called *panharmonion*, which was adapted to express the different modes and systems of melodious utterance. This name might be applied to our blank verse; there is no harmony of sound, no dignity of movement, no swiftness, no subtlety of languid sweetness, no brevity, no force of emphasis, beyond its scope." (*Blank Verse*, pp. 16, 17.)

"It seems adapted specially for thought in evolution; it requires progression and sustained effort. As a consequence of this, its melody is determined by the sense which it contains, and depends more upon proportion and harmony of sounds than upon recurrences and regularities of structure.... Another

point about blank verse is that it admits of no mediocrity; it must be either clay or gold.... Hence, we find that blank verse has been the metre of genius, that it is only used successfully by indubitable poets, and that it is no favorite in a mean, contracted, and unimaginative age. The freedom of the renaissance created it in England. The freedom of our century has reproduced it. Blank verse is a type and symbol of our national literary spirit—uncontrolled by precedent or rule, inclined to extravagance, yet reaching perfection at intervals by an inner force and *vivida vis* of native inspiration." (*Ibid.* pp. 70-72.)

The earliest use of the term "blank verse," noted in the *New English Dictionary*, is in Nash's Preface to Greene's *Menaphon*, 1589: "the swelling bumbast of bragging blanke verse." Some ten years later Shakspere used it in *Much Ado about Nothing*, V. ii., where Benedick speaks of those heroes "whose names yet run smoothly in the even road of blank verse," but will not rime easily. In Chapman's *All Fools* (1605) the young gallant, in describing his manifold accomplishments, says he could write

"Sonnets in Dozens, or your
Quatorzains
In any rhyme, Masculine, Feminine,
Or Sdruciolla, or couplets, or Blank
Verse."

Sdruciolla is the Italian term for triple-rimed endings.

Forthwith Fame flieth through the
great Libyan towns:

A mischief Fame, there is none else so
swift;
That moving grows, and flitting
gathers force:
First small for dread, soon after
climbs the skies,
Stayeth on earth, and hides her head
in clouds.
Whom our mother the Earth, tempted
by wrath
Of gods, begat: the last sister, they
write,
To Cœus, and to Enceladus eke:
Speedy of foot, of wing likewise as
swift,
A monster huge, and dreadful to
descrive.
In every plume that on her body
sticks,—
A thing in deed much marvelous to
hear,—
As many waker eyes lurk underneath,
So many mouths to speak, and
listening ears.
By night she flies amid the cloudy
sky,
Shrieking, by the dark shadow of the
earth,
Ne doth decline to the sweet sleep her
eyes:
By day she sits to mark on the house
top,
Or turrets high, and the great towns
affrays;
As mindful of ill and lies as blazing
truth.

(EARL OF SURREY: *Æneid*, book IV. 223-242. ab. 1540. pub. 1557.)

Surrey's translation of two books of the *Æneid* may have been suggested by the translation (1541) made by Francesco Maria Molza, attributed at the time to Cardinal Ippolito de Medici. This was in Italian unrimed verse. (See Henry Morley's *First Sketch of English Literature*, p. 294, and his *English Writers*, vol. viii. p. 61.) The verse of Surrey, like Wyatt's, shows a somewhat mechanical adherence to the syllable-counting principle, in contrast to regard for accents. [26] Thus we find such lines as:

"Each palace, and sacred porch of the gods."
"By the divine science of Minerva."

There is a fairly free use of run-on lines; according to Schipper, 35 in the first 250 of the translation. Nevertheless, the general effect is monotonous and lacking in flexibility.

O Jove, how are these people's hearts abused!
What blind fury thus headlong carries them,
That, though so many books, so many rolls
Of ancient time record what grievous plagues
Light on these rebels aye, and though so oft
Their ears have heard their aged fathers tell
What just reward these traitors still

receive,—
Yea, though themselves have seen
deep death and blood
By strangling cord and slaughter of
the sword
To such assigned, yet can they not
beware,
Yet cannot stay their lewd rebellious
hands,
But, suff'ring too foul reason to
distain
Their wretched minds, forget their
loyal heart,
Reject all truth, and rise against their
prince?

(SACKVILLE and NORTON: *Gorboduc, or Ferrex and Porrex*, V. ii. 1-14. 1565.)

This tragedy, although Dryden curiously instanced it in defence of the use of rime on the stage, was the earliest English drama in blank verse. The metre is decidedly more monotonous than Surrey's, and gives little hint of the possibilities of the measure for dramatic expression. In general, the early experiments in blank verse suggest—what they must often have seemed to their writers—the mere use of the decasyllabic couplet deprived of its rime. Nevertheless, as Mr. Symonds remarks of a passage in *Gorboduc*, "we yet may trace variety and emphasis in the pauses of these lines beyond what would at that epoch have been possible in sequences of rhymed couplets." (*Blank Verse*, p. 20.)

For a specimen of the blank verse of Gascoigne's *Steel Glass* (1576, the earliest didactic poem in English blank verse), see p. 18, above.

Paris, King Priam's son, thou art
arraigned of partiality,
Of sentence partial and unjust, for
that without indifferency,
Beyond desert or merit far, as thine
accusers say,
From them, to Lady Venus here, thou
gavest the prize away:
What is thine answer?

Paris's oration to the Council of the Gods:

Sacred and just, thou great and
dreadful Jove,
And you thrice-reverend powers,
whom love nor hate
May wrest awry; if this, to me a man,
This fortune fatal be, that I must
plead
For safe excusal of my guiltless
thought,
The honor more makes my mishap
the less,
That I a man must plead before the
gods,
Gracious forbearers of the world's
amiss,
For her, whose beauty how it hath
enticed,
This heavenly senate may with me
aver.

(GEORGE PEELE: *The Arraignment of Paris*, IV. i. 61-75. 1584.)

This specimen shows the new measure introduced into the drama in connection with the earlier rimed

septenary. Peele's verse in general is characterized by sweetness and fluency, but there is still no hint of the possibilities of the unrimed decasyllabics.

Schröer, in the article cited from *Anglia*, enumerates the following additional specimens of blank verse before the appearance of Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*; Grimald's *Death of Zoroas* and *Death of Cicero*, in Tottel's *Songs and Sonnets*, 1557; *Jocasta*, by Gascoigne and Kinwelmarshe, 1566; Turberville's translation of Ovid's *Heroical Epistles*, 1567; Spenser's unrimed sonnets, in Van der Noodt's *Theatre for Worldlings*, 1569; Barnaby Rich's *Don Simonides*, 1584; parts of Lyly's *Woman in the Moon*, 1584; Greene's "Description of Silvestro's Lady," in *Morando*, 1587; *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, 1587;—the last two appearing probably in the same year with *Tamburlaine*, whether earlier or later is uncertain. Most of these specimens are short, and all are comparatively unimportant.

Now clear the triple region of the air,
And let the Majesty of Heaven behold
Their scourge and terror tread on
emperors.
Smile stars, that reigned at my
nativity,
And dim the brightness of your
neighbor lamps!
Disdain to borrow light of Cynthia!
For I, the chiefest lamp of all the
earth,
First rising in the East with mild
aspect,
But fixed now in the Meridian line,
Will send up fire to your turning
spheres,

And cause the sun to borrow light of
you.
My sword struck fire from his coat of
steel
Even in Bithynia, when I took this
Turk;
As when a fiery exhalation,
Wrapt in the bowels of a freezing
cloud
Fighting for passage, makes the
welkin crack,
And casts a flash of lightning to the
earth.

(MARLOWE: *Tamburlaine*, Part I, IV. ii.
30-46. pub. 1590.)

Ah,
Faustus,
Now hast thou but one bare hour to
live,
And then thou must be damned
perpetually!
Stand still, you ever-moving spheres
of Heaven,
That time may cease, and midnight
never come;
Fair Nature's eye, rise, rise again, and
make
Perpetual day; or let this hour be but
A year, a month, a week, a natural
day,
That Faustus may repent and save his
soul!
O lente, lente, currite noctis equi!
The stars move still, time runs, the
clock will strike,

The Devil will come, and Faustus
must be damned.
O, I'll leap up to my God! Who pulls
me down?
See, see where Christ's blood streams
in the firmament!
One drop would save my soul—half a
drop: ah, my Christ!
Ah, rend not my heart for naming of
my Christ![27]
Yet will I call on him: O spare me,
Lucifer!

(MARLOWE: *Doctor Faustus*, sc. xvi. ll. 65-81. Printed 1604; written before 1593.)

Marlowe is universally and rightly regarded as the first English poet who used blank verse with the hand of a master, and showed its possibilities. With him it became practically a new measure. Mr. Symonds says: "He found the ten-syllabled heroic line monotonous, monosyllabic, and divided into five feet of tolerably regular alternate short and long. He left it various in form and structure, sometimes redundant by a syllable, sometimes deficient, enriched with unexpected emphases and changes in the beat. He found no sequence or attempt at periods; one line succeeded another with insipid regularity, and all were made after the same model. He grouped his verse according to the sense, obeying an internal law of melody, and allowing the thought contained in his words to dominate their form.... Used in this fashion, blank verse became a Proteus. It resembled music, which requires regular time and rhythm; but, by the employment of phrase, induces a higher kind of melody to rise above the common and

despotic beat of time.... It is true that, like all great poets, he left his own peculiar imprint on it, and that his metre is marked by an almost extravagant exuberance, impetuosity, and height of coloring." (*Blank Verse*, pp. 22-27.) In the earlier verse of *Tamburlaine*, while showing these new qualities of a metrical master, Marlowe yet kept pretty closely to the individual, end-stopped line; in his later verse, as illustrated in the fragmentary text of *Faustus*, he seems to have attained much more freedom, resembling that of the later plays of Shakspere.[28]

Is it mine eye, or Valentinus' praise,
Her true perfection, or my false
transgression,
That makes me, reasonless, to reason
thus?
She's fair, and so is Julia that I love,—
That I did love, for now my love is
thawed,
Which, like a waxen image 'gainst a
fire,
Bears no impression of the thing it
was.
Methinks my zeal to Valentine is cold,
And that I love him not, as I was
wont:
O! but I love his lady too too much;
And that's the reason I love him so
little.
How shall I dote on her with more
advice,
That thus without advice begin to
love her?...
If I can check my erring love, I will;
If not, to compass her I'll use my skill.

(SHAKSPERE: *Two Gentlemen of Verona*,
II. iv. 196-208; 213, 214. ab. 1590.)

Ay, but to die, and go we know not
where;
To lie in cold obstruction and to rot;
This sensible warm motion to become
A kneaded clod; and the delighted
spirit
To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside
In thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice;
To be imprisoned in the viewless
winds,
And blown with restless violence
about
The pendant world; or to be worse
than worst
Of those that lawless and incertain
thoughts
Imagine howling,—'tis too horrible!
The weariest and most loathed
worldly life,
That age, ache, penury, and
imprisonment
Can lay on nature, is a paradise
To what we fear of death.

(SHAKSPERE: *Measure for Measure*, III. i.
118-132. ab. 1603.)

This Mr. Symonds cites as "a single instance of the elasticity, self-restraint, and freshness of the Shaksperian blank verse; of its freedom from Marlowe's turgidity, or Fletcher's languor, or Milton's involution; of its ringing sound and lucid vigor.... It illustrates the freedom from adventitious ornament and the organic continuity of Shakspere's

versification, while it also exhibits his power of varying his cadences and suiting them to the dramatic utterance of his characters." (*Blank Verse*, p. 31.)

Ye elves of hills, brooks, standing
lakes, and groves;
And ye that on the sands with
printless foot
Do chase the ebbing Neptune, and do
fly him
When he comes back; you demi-
puppets, that
By moonshine do the green-sour
ringlets make,
Whereof the ewe not bites; and you,
whose pastime
Is to make midnight mushrooms; that
rejoice
To hear the solemn curfew; by whose
aid
(Weak masters though ye be) I have
bedimm'd
The noontide sun, called forth the
mutinous winds,
And 'twixt the green sea and the
azur'd vault
Set roaring war: to the dread rattling
thunder
Have I given fire, and rifted Jove's
stout oak
With his own bolt: the strong-bas'd
promontory
Have I made shake; and by the spurs
pluck'd up
The pine and cedar: graves, at my

command,
Have wak'd their sleepers, op'd, and
let them forth
By my so potent art.

(SHAKSPERE: *The Tempest*, V. i. 33-50.
ab. 1610.)

No attempt can be made to represent adequately the blank verse of Shakspere. The specimens, chosen respectively from his earlier, middle, and later periods, illustrate the trend of development of his verse. In the earlier period it was characterized by the slight use of feminine endings and *enjambement*; in the later by marked preference for both, and by general freedom and flexibility. In other words, Shakspere's own development represents, in a sort of miniature, that of the history of dramatic blank verse. According to Furnivall's tables, the proportion of run-on lines to end-stopped lines in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* is one in ten, while in *The Tempest* it is one in three. The increased use of "light" and "weak" endings is closely analogous. Professor Wendell says of the verse of *Cymbeline*: "End-stopped lines are so deliberately avoided that one feels a sense of relief when a speech and a line end together. Such a phrase as

'How slow his soul sail'd on, how
swift his ship'

is deliberately made, not a single line, but two half-lines. Several times, in the broken dialogue, one has literally to count the syllables before the metrical regularity of the verse appears.... Clearly this puzzling style is decadent; the distinction between verse and prose is breaking down." (*William*

Shakspere, p. 357.)[29]

To fell the lofty cedar of the world
Germanicus; that at one stroke cut
down
Drusus, that upright elm; withered his
vine;
Laid Silius and Sabinus, two strong
oaks,
Flat on the earth; besides those other
shrubs,
Cordus and Sosia, Claudia Pulchra,
Furnius and Gallus, which I have
grubbed up;
And since, have set my axe so strong
and deep
Into the root of spreading Agrippine;
Lopt off and scattered her proud
branches, Nero,
Drusus; and Caius too, although
replanted.
If you will, Destinies, that after all,
I faint now ere I touch my period,
You are but cruel; and I already have
done
Things great enough. All Rome hath
been my slave;
The senate sate an idle looker-on,
And witness of my power; when I
have blushed
More to command than it to suffer: all
The fathers have sat ready and

prepared,
To give me empire, temples, or their
throats,
When I would ask 'em; and, what
crowns the top,
Rome, senate, people, all the world
have seen
Jove but my equal; Cæsar but my
second.
'Tis then your malice, Fates, who, but
your own,
Envy and fear to have any power long
known.

(BEN JONSON: *Sejanus*, V. iv. 1603.)

Jonson's blank verse, says Mr. Symonds, is that "of a scholar—pointed, polished, and free from the lyricisms of his age. It lacks harmony and is often labored; but vigorous and solid it never fails to be." He also instances the opening lines of the *Sad Shepherd* as exceptional in their "delicate music." Beaumont's verse is in many ways similar in structure to Jonson's, yet commonly more melodious.

(As he stands now) but the mere
name of Cæsar,
And should the Emperor enforce him
lesser,
Not coming from himself, it were
more dangerous:
He is honest, and will hear you.
Doubts are scattered,
And almost come to growth in every

household;
Yet, in my foolish judgment, were this mastered,
The people, that are now but rage, and his,
Might be again obedience. You shall know me
When Rome is fair again; till when, I love you."
No name! This may be cunning; yet it seems not,
For there is nothing in it but is certain,
Besides my safety. Had not good Germanicus,
That was as loyal and as straight as he is,
If not prevented by Tiberius,
Been by the soldiers forced their emperor?
He had, and 'tis my wisdom to remember it:
And was not Corbulo (even that Corbulo,
That ever fortunate and living Roman,
That broke the heart-strings of the Parthians,
And brought Arsaces' line upon their knees,
Chained to the awe of Rome), because he was thought
(And but in wine once) fit to make a Cæsar,
Cut off by Nero? I must seek my safety;
For 'tis the same again, if not beyond

it.

(FLETCHER: *Valentinian*, IV. i. ab. 1615.)

I can but grieve my ignorance:
Repentance, some say too, is the best sacrifice;
For sure, sir, if my chance had been so happy
(As I confess I was mine own destroyer)
As to have arrived at you, I will not prophesy,
But certain, as I think, I should have pleased you;
Have made you as much wonder at my courtesy,
My love and duty, as I have disheartened you.
Some hours we have of youth, and some of folly;
And being free-born maids, we take a liberty,
And, to maintain that, sometimes we strain highly....
A sullen woman fear, that talks not to you;
She has a sad and darkened soul, loves dully;
A merry and a free wench, give her liberty,
Believe her, in the lightest form she appears to you,
Believe her excellent, though she despise you;

Let but these fits and flashes pass, she
will show to you
As jewels rubbed from dust, or gold
new burnished.

(FLETCHER: *The Wild-Goose Chase*, IV. i. 1621.)

The verse of Fletcher is highly individual among the Jacobean dramatists, though in a sense typical of the breaking down of blank verse, in the direction of prose, which was going on at this period. The distinguishing feature of Fletcher's verse is the constant use of feminine endings, and the extension of these to triple and even quadruple endings, by the addition of one or more syllables. Twelve-syllable lines (not alexandrines, but ordinary lines with triple endings) are not at all uncommon; and the additional syllable or syllables may even be emphatic. In general the tendency was in the direction of the freedom of conversational prose. Such a line as

"Methinks you are infinitely bound to
her for her journey"

would not be recognized, standing by itself, as a five-stress iambic verse; properly read, however, it takes its place without difficulty in the scheme of the metre.[30]

Whatever ails me, now a-late
especially,
I can as well be hanged as refrain
seeing her;
Some twenty times a day, nay, not so
little,

Do I force errands, frame ways and
excuses,
To come into her sight; and I've small
reason for't,
And less encouragement, for she baits
me still
Every time worse than other; does
profess herself
The cruellest enemy to my face in
town;
At no hand can abide the sight of me,
As if danger or ill luck hung in my
looks.
I must confess my face is bad enough,
But I know far worse has better
fortune,
And not endur'd alone, but doted on;
And yet such pick-hair'd faces, chins
like witches',
Here and there five hairs whispering
in a corner,
As if they grew in fear of one another,
Wrinkles like troughs, where swine-
deformity swills
The tears of perjury, that lie there like
wash
Fallen from the slimy and dishonest
eye;
Yet such a one plucks sweets without
restraint.

(THOMAS MIDDLETON: *The Changeling*,
II. i. ab. 1623.)

Middleton carried on the work of fitting blank verse for plausibly conversational, as distinguished from poetic, effects. Often his lines are more difficult to

scan than Fletcher's, and still less seek melodiousness for its own sake. Characteristic specimens are verses like these:

"I doubt I'm too quick of apprehension
now."
"With which one gentleman, far in
debt, has courted her."
"To call for, 'fore me, and thou look'st
half ill indeed."

What would it pleasure me to have
my throat cut
With diamonds? or to be smothered
With cassia? or to be shot to death
with pearls?
I know death hath ten thousand
several doors
For men to take their exits; and 'tis
found
They go on such strange geometrical
hinges,
You may open them both ways; any
way, for Heaven sake,
So I were out of your whispering. Tell
my brothers
That I perceive death, now I am well
awake,
Best gift is they can give or I can
take....
—Pull, and pull strongly, for your
able strength
Must pull down Heaven upon me:—
Yet stay; Heaven-gates are not so
highly arched
As princes' palaces; they that enter
there

Must go upon their knees.—Come,
violent death,
Serve for mandragora to make me
sleep!—
Go tell my brothers, when I am laid
out,
They then may feed in quiet.

(JOHN WEBSTER: *The Duchess of Malfi*,
IV. ii. 1623.)

"Webster," says Mr. Symonds, "used his metre as the most delicate and responsive instrument for all varieties of dramatic expression.... Scansion in the verse of Webster is subordinate to the purpose of the speaker." (*Blank Verse*, pp. 45-47.) He also calls attention to such remarkable lines as—

"Cover her face; mine eyes dazzle; she
died young."
"Other sins only speak; murder
shrieks out."

Are you not frightened with the
imprecations
And curses of whole families, made
wretched
By your sinister practices?—
—Yes, as
rocks
are,
When foamy billows split themselves
against
Their flinty ribs; or as the moon is
moved,
When wolves, with hunger pined,
howl at her brightness.

I am of a solid temper, and, like
these,
Steer on, a constant course: with mine
own sword,
If called into the field, I can make
that right
Which fearful enemies murmured at
as wrong.
Now, for these other piddling
complaints
Breathed out in bitterness; as when
they call me
Extortioner, tyrant, cormorant, or
intruder
On my poor neighbor's right, or grand
incloser
Of what was common, to my private
use;
Nay, when my ears are pierced with
widows' cries,
And undone orphans wash with tears
my threshold,
I only think what 'tis to have my
daughter
Right honorable; and 'tis a powerful
charm
Makes me insensible of remorse, or
pity,
Or the least sting of conscience.

(PHILIP MASSINGER: *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*, IV. i. 1633.)

Massinger's verse is more regular than that of Fletcher and others, in the matter of extra final syllables and the like, but free and flexible in the use of run-on lines and generally progressive movement.

[31] It is an error to assume that there was no good blank verse written in this period when the drama in general is said to have been in a state of "decadence." The verse of Ford, for example, is noticeably strong and restrained (compare the remark of Mr. Symonds, on its "glittering regularity"). On the other hand, one may see the dramas of Richard Brome for specimens of the decadent metre at its worst. Brome wrote comedies both in prose and verse, and there is little difference between the two forms in his hands. See also the crude and lax verse of some of the early plays of Dryden, illustrated on p. 234 below. It was verse of this kind which, as Mr. Gosse observes, justified the introduction of the heroic couplet in all its strictness.

All in a moment through the gloom
were seen
Ten thousand banners rise into the air
With orient colors waving: with them
rose
A forest huge of spears: and thronging
helms
Appear'd, and serried shields in thick
array
Of depth immeasurable: anon they
move
In perfect phalanx to the Dorian
mood
Of flutes and soft recorders; such as
rais'd
To height of noblest temper heroes
old
Arming to battle, and in stead of rage
Deliberate valor breath'd, firm and
unmov'd

With dread of death to flight or foul
retreat,
Nor wanting power to mitigate and
swage
With solemn touches, troubl'd
thoughts, and chase
Anguish and doubt and fear and
sorrow and pain
From mortal or immortal minds....
... And
now
his
heart
Distends with pride, and hardening in
his strength
Glories: for never since created man
Met such embodied force, as nam'd
with these
Could merit more than that small
infantry
Warr'd on by cranes: though all the
giant brood
Of Phlegra with th' heroic race were
joined
That fought at Thebes and Ilium, on
each side
Mixed with auxiliar gods; and what
resounds
In fable or romance of Uther's son
Begirt with British and Armoric
knights;
And all who since, baptiz'd or infidel,
Jousted in Aspramont or Montalban,
Damasco, or Morocco, or Trebizond,
Or whom Biserta sent from Afric
shore

When Charlemagne with all his
peerage fell
By Fontarabbia.

(MILTON: *Paradise Lost*, Book I. ll.
544-559; 571-587. 1667.)

With head a while
inclined,
And eyes fast fixed, he stood, as one
who prayed,
Or some great matter in his mind
revolved:
At last, with head erect, thus cried
aloud:—
"Hitherto, Lords, what your
commands imposed
I have performed, as reason was,
obeying,
Not without wonder or delight
beheld;
Now, of my own accord, such other
trial
I mean to show you of my strength,
yet greater,
As with amaze shall strike all who
behold."
This uttered, straining all his nerves
he bowed;
As with the force of winds and waters
pent
When mountains tremble, those two
massy pillars,
With horrible convulsion to and fro
He tugged, he shook, till down they
came, and drew

The whole roof after them with burst
of thunder
Upon the heads of all who sat
beneath.

(MILTON: *Samson Agonistes*, ll.
1636-1652. 1671.)

The blank verse of Milton is characterized by greater freedom and flexibility than that of any earlier poet. The single line practically ceases to be the unit of the verse, which is divided rather into metrical paragraphs, or, as some would even call them, stanzas. Professor Corson quotes an interesting passage from a letter of Coleridge, giving an account of a conversation in which Wordsworth expressed his view of this sort of blank verse. "My friend gave his definition and notion of harmonious verse, that it consisted (the English iambic blank verse above all) in the apt arrangement of pauses and cadences, and the sweep of whole paragraphs,

with many a winding bout
Of linked sweetness long drawn out,

and not in the even flow, much less in the prominence or antithetic vigor of single lines, which were indeed injurious to the total effect, except where they were introduced for some specific purpose." (Corson's *Primer of English Verse*, p. 218.) In like manner Mr. Symonds says: "The most sonorous passages begin and end with interrupted lines, including in one organic structure, periods, parentheses, and paragraphs of fluent melody.... In these structures there are many pauses which enable the ear and voice to rest themselves, but none are perfect, none satisfy the want created by the opening

hemistich, until the final and deliberate close is reached." (*Blank Verse* pp. 56, 57.)

In Milton's own prefatory note to *Paradise Lost*, he called his blank verse "English heroic verse without rime." Rime he spoke of as "the invention of a barbarous age, ... graced indeed since by the use of some famous modern poets,"—not least among them, he might have said, being John Milton himself. He described also the special character of his verse in saying that "true musical delight ... consists only in apt numbers, fit quantity of syllables, and the sense variously drawn out from one verse into another,"—that is, by *enjambement*. "This neglect then of rime so little is to be taken for a defect, ... that it rather is to be esteemed an example set, the first in English, of ancient liberty recovered to heroic poem from the troublesome and modern bondage of riming."[32]

It appears from this note that Milton regarded his heroic blank verse as a different measure from the familiar dramatic blank verse. The latter he used in *Samson Agonistes*, the verse-structure of which will be seen to differ from that of *Paradise Lost*; the most salient distinction is the more frequent use of feminine endings. Mr. Symonds remarks interestingly on the "difference between Shaksperian and Miltonic, between dramatic and epical blank verse. The one is simple in construction and progressive, the other is complex and stationary.... The one exhibits a thought, in the process of formation, developing itself from the excited fancy of the speaker. The other presents to us an image crystallized and perfect in the poet's mind; the one is in time, the other in space—the one is a growing and the other a complete organism.... The one, if we may play upon a fancy, resembles Music, and the other

Architecture." (*Blank Verse*, p. 58.)

Methinks I do not want
That huge long train of fawning followers,
That swept a furlong after me.
'Tis true I am alone;
So was the godhead, ere he made the world,
And better served himself than served by nature.
And yet I have a soul
Above this humble fate. I could command,
Love to do good, give largely to true merit,
All that a king should do; but though these are not
My province, I have scene enough within
To exercise my virtue.
All that a heart, so fixed as mine, can move,
Is, that my niggard fortune starves my love.

(DRYDEN: *Marriage à la Mode*, III. i. 1672.)

She lay, and leaned her cheek upon her hand,
And cast a look so languishingly sweet,
As if, secure of all beholders' hearts,
Neglecting, she could take them: boys, like Cupids,

Stood fanning, with their painted
wings, the winds
That played about her face: but if she
smiled,
A darting glory seemed to blaze
abroad,
That men's desiring eyes were never
wearied,
But hung upon the object. To soft
flutes
The silver oars kept time; and while
they played,
The hearing gave new pleasure to the
sight,
And both to thought. 'Twas heaven,
or somewhat more;

(DRYDEN: *All for Love*, III. i. 1678.)

The first of these specimens of Dryden's blank verse illustrates the loose form of it found in many of the comedies, ill distinguished from prose and used interchangeably with prose, as in the case of the late Jacobean dramatists. It was with *All for Love* that Dryden dropped the use of the rimed couplet in tragedy, and turned his hand toward the construction of really noble blank verse. This play was professedly an imitation of Shakspere, and the passage here quoted is a paraphrase of one in *Antony and Cleopatra*, II. ii. Shakspere's blank verse doubtless exerted a good influence on the quality of Dryden's. "From this time on," says Mr. Gosse, "Dryden's blank verse was more severe than any which had been used, except by Milton, since Ben Jonson." (*Eighteenth Century Literature*, p. 14.)

Then hear me,

bounteous
Heaven!
Pour down your blessings on this
beauteous head,
Where everlasting sweets are always
springing:
With a continual-giving hand, let
peace,
Honor, and safety always hover round
her;
Feed her with plenty; let her eyes
ne'er see
A sight of sorrow, nor her heart know
mourning:
Crown all her days with joy, her
nights with rest
Harmless as her own thoughts, and
prop her virtue
To bear the loss of one that too much
loved;
And comfort her with patience in our
parting....
—Then hear me
too, just
Heaven!
Pour down your curses on this
wretched head,
With never-ceasing vengeance; let
despair,
Danger, or infamy, nay, all surround
me.
Starve me with wantings; let my eyes
ne'er see
A sight of comfort, nor my heart
know peace;
But dash my days with sorrow, nights

with horrors
Wild as my own thoughts now, and
let loose fury
To make me mad enough for what I
lose,
If I must lose him—if I must! I will
not.

(THOMAS OTWAY: *Venice Preserved*, V.
ii. 1682.)

This play was one of those marking the return of the serious drama to blank verse, after the brief domination of the couplet on the stage. While Otway's verse is not as good as Dryden's best, it is of fairly even merit, and shows that something had been learned from the practice of the couplet.

Eternity! thou pleasing, dreadful
thought!
Through what variety of untried
being,
Through what new scenes and
changes must we pass!
The wide, the unbounded prospect
lies before me;
But shadows, clouds, and darkness
rest upon it.
Here will I hold. If there's a power
above us
(And that there is all nature cries
aloud
Through all her works), he must
delight in virtue;
And that which he delights in must be
happy....
... The soul, secured in her existence,

smiles
At the drawn dagger, and defies its
point.
The stars shall fade away, the sun
himself
Grow dim with age, and nature sink
in years,
But thou shalt flourish in immortal
youth,
Unhurt amidst the wars of elements,
The wrecks of matter, and the crush
of worlds.

(ADDISON: *Cato*, V. i. ll. 10-18; 25-31. 1713.)

Tell us, ye dead! will none of you, in
pity
To those you left behind, disclose the
secret?
Oh! that some courteous ghost would
blab it out,—
What 'tis you are, and we must
shortly be.
I've heard that souls departed have
sometimes
Forewarn'd men of their death. 'Twas
kindly done
To knock, and give the alarum. But
what means
This stinted charity? 'Tis but lame
kindness
That does its work by halves. Why
might you not
Tell us what 'tis to die? Do the strict
laws

Of your society forbid your speaking
Upon a point so nice? I'll ask no more:
Sullen, like lamps in sepulchres, your
shine
Enlightens but yourselves. Well, 'tis
no matter;
A very little time will clear up all
And make us learn'd as you are, and
as close.

(ROBERT BLAIR: *The Grave*. 1743.)

This poem was one of those connected with the revival of blank verse, for didactic poetry, near the middle of the eighteenth century. Of Blair's verse Mr. Saintsbury says that it "is by no means to be despised. Technically its only fault is the use and abuse of the redundant syllable. The quality ... is in every respect rather moulded upon dramatic than upon purely poetical models, and he shows little trace of imitation either of Milton, or of his contemporary, Thomson." (Ward's *English Poets*, vol. iii. p. 217.)

Through the hushed air the whitening
shower descends,
At first thin wavering; till at last the
flakes
Fall broad, and wide, and fast,
dimming the day
With a continual flow. The cherished
fields
Put on their winter-robe of purest
white.
'Tis brightness all; save where the
new snow melts

Along the mazy current. Low the
woods
Bow their hoar head; and, ere the
languid sun
Faint from the west emits his evening
ray,
Earth's universal face, deep-hid and
chill,
Is one wild dazzling waste, that buries
wide
The works of man. Drooping, the
laborer-ox
Stands covered o'er with snow, and
then demands
The fruit of all his toil. The fowls of
heaven,
Tamed by the cruel season, crowd
around
The winnowing store, and claim the
little boon
Which Providence assigns them. One
alone,
The redbreast, sacred to the
household gods,
Wisely regardful of the embroiling
sky,
In joyless fields and thorny thickets
leaves
His shivering mates, and pays to
trusted man
His annual visit. Half-afraid, he first
Against the window beats; then, brisk,
alights
On the warm hearth; then, hopping
o'er the floor,
Eyes all the smiling family askance,

And pecks, and starts, and wonders
where he is—
Till, more familiar grown, the table-
crumbs
Attract his slender feet.

(THOMSON: *The Seasons; Winter*. 1726.)

Thomson's *Seasons* was undoubtedly the most influential of the poems of the blank-verse revival of this period. Saintsbury says: "His blank verse in especial cannot receive too much commendation. With that of Milton, and that of the present Poet Laureate [Tennyson], it must rank as one of the chief original models of the metre to be found in English poetry." (Ward's *English Poets*, vol. iii. p. 169.)

Other influential poems of the same period, written in blank verse, were Glover's *Leonidas* (1737), Young's *Night Thoughts* (1742-1744), and Akenside's *Pleasures of the Imagination* (1744). Much earlier than these had come the curious poem of John Philips on *Cider* (1708). Philips is praised by Thomson as the successor of Milton in some lines of *Autumn*:

"Philips, Pomona's bard, the second
thou
Who nobly durst, in rhyme-unfetter'd
verse
With British freedom sing the British
song."

In general, the blank verse of all these poets shows the influence of the couplet and lacks flexibility. Thus Mr. Symonds says: "The use of the couplet had unfitted poets for its composition. Their acquired canons of regularity, when applied to loose and

flowing metre, led them astray.... Hence it followed, that when blank verse began again to be written, it found itself very much at the point where it had stood before the appearance of Marlowe. Even Thomson ... wrote stiff and languid blank verse with monosyllabic terminations and monotonous cadences —a pedestrian style." (*Blank Verse*, pp. 61, 62.)[33]

Here unmolested, through whatever sign
The sun proceeds, I wander; neither mist,
Nor freezing sky nor sultry, checking me,
Nor stranger intermeddling with my joy.
Even in the spring and playtime of the year,
That calls the unwonted villager abroad
With all her little ones, a sportive train,
To gather kingcups in the yellow mead,
And prink their hair with daisies, or to pick
A cheap but wholesome salad from the brook,
These shades are all my own. The timorous hare,
Grown so familiar with her frequent guest,
Scarce shuns me; and the stockdove unalarmed
Sits cooing in the pine-tree, nor suspends

His long love-ditty for my near
approach.
Drawn from his refuge in some lonely
elm
That age or injury has hollowed deep,
Where on his bed of wool and matted
leaves
He has outslept the winter, ventures
forth
To frisk awhile, and bask in the warm
sun,
The squirrel, flippant, pert, and full of
play.
He sees me, and at once, swift as a
bird,
Ascends the neighboring beech; there
whisks his brush,
And perks his ears, and stamps and
scolds aloud,
With all the prettiness of feigned
alarm,
And anger insignificantly fierce.

(COWPER: *The Task*, book VI. ll.
295-320. 1785.)

"The blank verse of Cowper's *Task* is admirably adapted to the theme," says Professor Corson. "Cowper saw farther than any one before him had seen, into the secrets of the elaborate music of Milton's blank verse, and availed himself of those secrets to some extent—to as far an extent as the simplicity of his themes demanded." (*Primer of English Verse*, p. 221.) Professor Ward speaks, however, of the "lumbering movement" of Cowper's blank verse as being in contrast to "the neatness and ease of his rhymed couplets." (*English Poets*, vol. iii.

p. 432.) Cowper prided himself, not without reason, on the individuality of his blank verse. In a letter to the Rev. John Newton (Dec. 11, 1784) he said: "Milton's manner was peculiar. So is Thomson's. He that should write like either of them, would, in my judgment, deserve the name of a copyist, but not of a poet.... Blank verse is susceptible of a much greater diversification of manner than verse in rhyme: and why the modern writers of it have all thought proper to cast their numbers alike, I know not." In another letter (to Lady Hesketh, March 20, 1786) Cowper reveals his careful study of Milton's verse: "When the sense requires it, or when for the sake of avoiding a monotonous cadence of the lines, of which there is always danger in so long a work, it shall appear to be prudent, I still leave a verse behind me that has some uneasiness in its formation. It is not possible to read *Paradise Lost*, with an ear for harmony, without being sensible of the great advantage which Milton drew from such a management.... Uncritical readers find that they perform a long journey through several hundred pages perhaps without weariness; they find the numbers harmonious, but are not aware of the art by which that harmony is brought to pass, much less suspect that a violation of all harmony on some occasions is the very thing to which they are not a little indebted for their gratification."

Thou too, hoar Mount! with thy sky-
pointing peaks,
Oft from whose feet the avalanche,
unheard,
Shoots downward, glittering through
the pure serene
Into the depth of clouds, that veil thy
breast—

Thou too again, stupendous
Mountain! thou
That as I raise my head, awhile
bowed low
In adoration, upward from thy base
Slow travelling with dim eyes
suffused with tears,
Solemnly seemest, like a vapory
cloud,
To rise before me—Rise, O ever rise,
Rise like a cloud of incense from the
earth!
Thou kingly spirit throned among the
hills,
Thou dread ambassador from Earth to
Heaven,
Great Hierarch! tell thou the silent
sky,
And tell the stars, and tell yon rising
sun,
Earth, with her thousand voices,
praises God.

(COLERIDGE: *Hymn before Sunrise, in the Vale of Chamouni*, ll. 70-85. 1802.)

It was a den where no insulting light
Could glimmer on their tears; where
their own groans
They felt, but heard not, for the solid
roar
Of thunderous waterfalls and torrents
hoarse,
Pouring a constant bulk, uncertain
where.
Crag jutting forth to crag, and rocks
that seem'd

Ever as if just rising from a sleep,
Forehead to forehead held their
monstrous horns;
And thus in thousand hugest
phantasies
Made a fit roofing to this nest of woe.
Instead of thrones, hard flint they sat
upon,
Couches of rugged stone, and slaty
ridge
Stubborn'd with iron. All were not
assembled:
Some chain'd in torture, and some
wandering.
Cœus, and Gyges, and Briareus,
Typhon, and Dolor, and Porphyrion,
With many more, the brawniest in
assault,
Were pent in regions of laborious
breath;
Dungeon'd in opaque element, to keep
Their clenched teeth still clench'd,
and all their limbs
Lock'd up like veins of metal, crampt
and screw'd;
Without a motion, save of their big
hearts
Heaving in pain, and horribly
convuls'd
With sanguine feverous boiling gurge
of pulse.

(KEATS: *Hyperion*, book II. 1820.)

"In Keats at last," says Mr. Symonds, "we find again that inner music which is the soul of true blank verse.... His *Hyperion* is sung, not written.... Its music

is fluid, bound by no external measurement of feet, but determined by the sense and intonation of the poet's thought, while like the crotalos of the Athenian flute-player, the decasyllabic beat maintains an uninterrupted undercurrent of regular pulsations." (*Blank Verse*, p. 64.)

I have
learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing
oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of
ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have
felt
A presence that disturbs me with the
joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply
interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting
suns,
And the round ocean and the living
air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of
man:
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all
thought,
And rolls through all things.

(WORDSWORTH: *Lines Composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey*. 1798.)

Let not high verse, mourning the

memory
Of that which is no more, or
painting's woe
Or sculpture, speak in feeble imagery
Their own cold powers. Art and
eloquence,
And all the shows o' the world, are
frail and vain
To weep a loss that turns their lights
to shade.
It is a woe 'too deep for tears,' when
all
Is reft at once, when some surpassing
Spirit,
Whose light adorned the world
around it, leaves
Those who remain behind, not sobs or
groans,
The passionate tumult of a clinging
hope;
But pale despair and cold tranquillity,
Nature's vast frame, the web of
human things,
Birth and the grave, that are not as
they were.

(SHELLEY: *Alastor*, ll. 707-720. 1815.)

The old order changeth, yielding
place to new,
And God fulfils himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt
the world.
Comfort thyself: what comfort is in
me?
I have lived my life, and that which I
have done

May He within himself make pure! but thou,
If thou shouldst never see my face again,
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.
But now farewell. I am going a long way
With these thou seest—if indeed I go
(For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)—
To the island-valley of Avilion;
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard-lawns
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea,

Where I will heal me of my grievous
wound.

(TENNYSON: *Idylls of the King; The Passing of Arthur*. 1869.)

But that large-
moulded
man,
His visage all agrin as at a wake,
Made at me thro' the press, and,
staggering back
With stroke on stroke the horse and
horseman, came
As comes a pillar of electric cloud,
Flaying the roofs and sucking up the
drains,
And shadowing down the champaign
till it strikes
On a wood, and takes, and breaks,
and cracks, and splits,
And twists the grain with such a roar
that Earth
Reels, and the herdsmen cry; for
everything
Gave way before him: only Florian,
he
That loved me closer than his own
right eye,
Thrust in between; but Arac rode him
down:
And Cyril seeing it, push'd against the
Prince,
With Psyche's color round his helmet,
tough,
Strong, supple, sinew-corded, apt at

arms;
But tougher, heavier, stronger, he that
smote
And threw him: last I spurr'd; I felt
my veins
Stretch with fierce heat; a moment
hand to hand,
And sword to sword, and horse to
horse we hung,
Till I struck out and shouted; the
blade glanc'd;
I did but shear a feather, and dream
and truth
Flow'd from me; darkness closed me;
and I fell.

(TENNYSON: *The Princess*, v. 1847.)

She knew me, and acknowledg'd me
her heir,
Pray'd me to keep her debts, and keep
the Faith;
Then claspt the cross, and pass'd away
in peace.
I left her lying still and beautiful,
More beautiful than in life. Why
would you vex yourself,
Poor sister? Sir, I swear I have no
heart
To be your queen. To reign is restless
fence,
Tierce, quart, and trickery. Peace is
with the dead.
Her life was winter, for her spring
was nipt;
And she loved much: pray God she be
forgiven.

(TENNYSON: *Queen Mary*, V. v. 1875.)

Fresh as the first beam glittering on a
sail,
That brings our friends up from the
underworld,
Sad as the last which reddens over
one
That sinks with all we love below the
verge;
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no
more.

Ah, sad and strange as in dark
summer dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd
birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a
glimmering square;
So sad, so strange, the days that are
no more.

(TENNYSON: *The Princess*, iv.; "Tears,
Idle Tears." 1847.)

The blank verse of Tennyson is probably to be regarded as the most masterly found among modern poets.[34] Its flexibility is almost infinite, yet never unmelodious. The last of the specimens just quoted illustrates his use of blank verse for short lyrical poems,—an unusual and notable achievement. Perhaps only Collins's *Ode to Evening* can be compared with his success in this direction, and Collins used a more elaborate strophe to fill, in part, the place of rime. Of the unrimed lyrics in *The Princess*, Mr. Symonds says that they "are perfect

specimens of most melodious and complete minstrelsy in words." In the "Tears, Idle Tears," he goes on to say, the verse "is divided into periods of five lines, each of which terminates with the words 'days that are no more.' This recurrence of sound and meaning is a substitute for rhyme, and suggests rhyme so persuasively that it is impossible to call the poem mere blank verse." See also the specimens on p. 144 above.

In the case of both Tennyson and Browning the student should compare the form of the narrative blank verse on the one hand with that of the dramatic on the other. Yet in a sense all Browning's blank verse is dramatic. It is no less flexible than Tennyson's, but (as in most of Browning's poetry) sacrifices more of melody in adapting itself to the thought.

To live, and see her learn, and learn
by her,
Out of the low obscure and petty
world—
Or only see one purpose and one will
Evolve themselves i' the world,
change wrong to right:
To have to do with nothing but the
true,
The good, the eternal—and these, not
alone,
In the main current of the general
life,
But small experiences of every day,
Concerns of the particular hearth and
home:
To learn not only by a comet's rush
But a rose's birth,—not by the

grandeur, God,
But the comfort, Christ. All this, how
far away!
Mere delectation, meet for a minute's
dream!—
Just as a drudging student trims his
lamp,
Opens his Plutarch, puts him in the
place
Of Roman, Grecian; draws the patch'd
gown close,
Dreams, "Thus should I fight, save or
rule the world!"
Then smilingly, contentedly, awakes
To the old solitary nothingness.
So I, from such communion, pass
content.—
O great, just, good God! Miserable
me!

(BROWNING: *The Ring and the Book; Caponsacchi*. 1868.)

The Ring and the Book Professor Corson calls "the greatest achievement of the century ... in the effective use of blank verse in the treatment of a great subject.... Its blank verse, while having a most complex variety of character, is the most dramatic blank verse since the Elizabethan era.... One reads it without a sense almost of there being anything artificial in the construction of the language; ... one gets the impression that the poet thought and felt spontaneously in blank verse." (*Primer of English Verse*, pp. 224, 225.)

This eve's the
time,

This eve intense with yon first
trembling star
We seem to pant and reach; scarce
aught between
The earth that rises and the heaven
that bends;
All nature self-abandoned, every tree
Flung as it will, pursuing its own
thoughts
And fixed so, every flower and every
weed,
No pride, no shame, no victory, no
defeat;
All under God, each measured by
itself.
These statues round us stand abrupt,
distinct,
The strong in strength, the weak in
weakness fixed,
The Muse forever wedded to her lyre,
Nymph to her fawn, and Silence to
her rose:
See God's approval on his universe!
Let us do so—aspire to live as these
In harmony with truth, ourselves
being true!
Take the first way, and let the second
come!

(BROWNING: *In a Balcony*. 1855.)

The very God! think, Abib; dost thou
think?
So, the All-Great were the All-Loving
too—
So, through the thunder comes a
human voice

Saying, "O heart I made, a heart beats
here!
Face, my hands fashioned, see it in
myself!
Thou hast no power nor may'st
conceive of mine,
But love I gave thee, with myself to
love,
And thou must love me who have
died for thee."
The madman saith He said so: it is
strange.

(BROWNING: *Epistle of Karshish*. 1855.)

God's works—paint any one, and
count it crime
To let a truth slip. Don't object, "His
works
Are here already; nature is complete:
Suppose you reproduce her—(which
you can't)
There's no advantage! you must beat
her, then."
For, don't you mark? we're made so
that we love
First when we see them painted,
things we have passed
Perhaps a hundred times nor cared to
see;
And so they are better, painted—
better to us,
Which is the same thing. Art was
given for that;
God uses us to help each other so,
Lending our minds out.

(BROWNING: *Fra Lippo Lippi*. 1855.)

Of some of Browning's blank verse Mr. Mayor observes: "The extreme harshness of many of these lines is almost a match for anything in Surrey, only what in Surrey is helplessness seems the perversity of strength in Browning.... The Aristophanic vein in Browning is continually leading him to trample under foot the dignity of verse and to shock the uninitiated reader by colloquial familiarities, 'thumps upon the back,' such as the poet Cowper resented; yet no one can be more impressive than he is when he surrenders himself to the pure spirit of poetry, and flows onward in a stream of glorious music, such as that in which Balaustion pictures Athens overwhelmed by an advance of the sea (*Aristophanes' Apology*, p. 2)." (*Chapters on English Metre*, 2d ed., pp. 216, 217.)

But the majestic river floated on,
Out of the mist and hum of that low land,
Into the frosty starlight, and there mov'd,
Rejoicing, through the hush'd Chorasmian waste,
Under the solitary moon: he flow'd
Right for the Polar Star, past Orgunje,
Brimming, and bright, and large: then sands begin
To hem his watery march, and dam his streams,
And split his currents; that for many a league
The shorn and parcell'd Oxus strains along

Through beds of sand and matted
rushy isles—
Oxus, forgetting the bright speed he
had
In his high mountain cradle in
Pamere,
A foil'd, circuitous wanderer:—till at
last
The long'd-for dash of waves is heard,
and wide
His luminous home of waters opens,
bright
And tranquil, from whose floor the
new-bath'd stars
Emerge, and shine upon the Aral Sea.

(MATTHEW ARNOLD: *Sohrab and Rustum*. 1853.)

Here is the place: but read it low and
sweet.
Put out the lamp!
—The glimmering
page is clear.
"Now on that day it chanced that
Launcelot,
Thinking to find the King, found
Guenevere
Alone; and when he saw her whom he
loved,
Whom he had met too late, yet loved
the more;
Such was the tumult at his heart that
he
Could speak not, for her husband was
his friend,
His dear familiar friend: and they two

held
No secret from each other until now;
But were like brothers born"—my
voice breaks off.
Read you a little on.
—"And
Guenevere,
Turning, beheld him suddenly whom
she
Loved in her thought, and even from
that hour
When first she saw him; for by day,
by night,
Though lying by her husband's side,
did she
Weary for Launcelot, and knew full
well
How ill that love, and yet that love
how deep!"
I cannot see—the page is dim: read
you.
—"Now they two were alone, yet
could not speak;
But heard the beating of each other's
hearts.
He knew himself a traitor but to stay,
Yet could not stir: she pale and yet
more pale
Grew till she could no more, but
smiled on him.
Then when he saw that wished smile,
he came
Near to her and still near, and
trembled; then
Her lips all trembling kissed."
—Ah,

Launcelot!

(STEPHEN PHILLIPS: *Paolo and Francesca*, III. iii. 1901.)

The blank verse of Stephen Phillips is the most important—one may say perhaps the only important—that has been written since Tennyson's; and it is of especial interest as forming an actual revival of the form on the English stage. Aside from the dramas, it is seen at its best in *Marpessa*. Imitating Milton, and at the same time handling the measure with original force, Mr. Phillips introduces unusual cadences, for which he has been severely reproached by the critics. Such lines as the following are typical of these variations from the normal rhythm:

"O all fresh out of beautiful sunlight."
"Agamemnon bowed over, and from
his wheel."
"And to dispel shadows and shadowy
fear."
"My bloom faded, and waning light of
eyes."

For a criticism of Mr. Phillips's verse, see Mr. William Archer's *Poets of the Younger Generation*, pp. 313-327.

FOOTNOTES:

[19] One may easily find other instances of the sporadic appearance of the same measure in the midst of irregular "long lines" or rough alexandrines and septenaries. Compare, for example, the following, from early plays in Manly's *Specimens of the Pre-Shaksperean Drama*:

"To be alone, nor very
convenyent."
"Ye shall not touche yt, for that I
forbede."
"But ye shuld be as godes
resydent."
"And many a chaumbyr thou xalt
have therinne."
"In this flood spylt is many a
mannys blood."
"Therfore be we now cast in
ryght grett care."

The context of many of these lines shows that they were intended to be read as four-stress rather than five-stress; but such examples serve to make clear how easily English rhythm would fall into the decasyllabic line.

[20] See also an account of Zarncke's monograph (1865) *Ueber den fünffussiger Iambus*, in Mayor's *Chapters on English Metre*, Postscript.

[21] See the entire Preface in Chalmers's *English Poets*, vol. viii. p. 32, and in the Appendix to Gosse's *From Shakespeare to Pope*. For an analysis of Waller's verse with reference to this Preface, see "A Note upon Waller's Distich," by H. C. Beeching, in the Furnivall *Miscellany* (1901), p. 4.

[22] Beaumont's own verse is of no little interest, and Mr. Gosse, in a recent letter to the present editor, observes that he finds in Beaumont, "far more definitely than in George Sandys, the principal precursor of Waller."

[23] See also the verses of Oliver Wendell Holmes on *The Strong Heroic Line* (in Stedman's *American Anthology*, p. 161), where he says:

"Nor let the rhymester of the
hour deride
The straight-backed measure
with its stately stride:
It gave the mighty voice of
Dryden scope;
It sheathed the steel-bright
epigrams of Pope;
In Goldsmith's verse it learned a
sweeter strain;
Byron and Campbell wore its
clanking chain;
I smile to listen while the critic's
scorn
Flouts the proud purple kings
have nobly worn."

[24] On the verse of Keats in general, see the remarks of Mr. Robert Bridges in his Introduction to the Muses' Library edition of Keats.

[25] On Shelley's metres, see Mayor's *Chapters on English Metre*, 2d ed., chap. xiv.

[26] On the verse of Surrey in general, see W. J. Courthope, in his *History of English Poetry*, vol. ii. pp. 92-96. Mr. Courthope speaks highly of Surrey as a metrist, in particular attributing to him certain reforms in the handling of English verse: the attempt to use five perfect iambic feet to the line, the harmonious placing of the cesura, the avoidance of rime on weak syllables, the preservation of the accent on the even-numbered syllables. (To some of these reforms, as has been indicated, there are not a few exceptions.) In like manner ten Brink observes that Surrey "is more successful than Wyatt in adapting foreign rules to the rhythmical accent of the English language, and thus he is in reality the founder of the New-

English metrical system." (*English Literature*, Kennedy trans., vol. iii. p. 243.)

On the blank verse of Surrey, see also an article by Prof. O. J. Emerson, in *Modern Language Notes*, vol. iv. col. 466, and Mayor's *Chapters on English Metre*, 2d ed., chap. x.

[27] The edition of 1616 has:

"One drop of blood will save me:
O my Christ!
Rend not my heart for naming of
my Christ!"

and omits the preceding line.

(See Bullen ed., vol. i. pp. 279, 280.)

[28] On Marlowe's verse see also Mayor's *Chapters on English Metre*, 2d ed., chap. x.

[29] On the technical problems of Shakspere's verse, see Fleay's *Shakspere Manual*; Abbott's *Shakespearean Grammar*; G. Browne's *Notes on Shakspere's Versification*; and Mayor's *Chapters on English Metre*.

[30] "In a play of 2500 lines Massinger might possibly have as many as 1200 double or triple endings, Shakspere in his last period might have as many as 850, while Fletcher would normally have at least 1700, and might not improbably give as many as 2000." (G. C. Macaulay, in *Francis Beaumont*, pp. 43, 44. See the entire passage on Fletcher's metre as a test of authorship. Mr. Macaulay also remarks interestingly that Fletcher's metrical style is an outgrowth of his general use of the loose or disjointed, as opposed to the periodic or rounded, style of speech. To this "Shakspere worked his way slowly," while Fletcher "seems

to have at once and naturally adopted" it.) See also Fleay's *Shakespeare Manual*, p. 153.

[31] On Massinger's verse see also Fleay's *Shakespeare Manual*, p. 154.

[32] On Milton's verse, see, besides the entire third essay in Mr. Symonds's book, Masson's edition of Milton, vol. iii. pp. 107-133; Robert Bridges's *Milton's Prosody*; Mayor's *Chapters on English Metre*, 2d ed., pp. 71-77 and 96-105; chapter xii. of Corson's *Primer of English Verse*; and a passage in De Quincey's essay on "Milton v. Southey and Landor," in his works, ed. Masson, vol. xi. pp. 463 ff. Says De Quincey: "You might as well tax Mozart with harshness in the divinest passages of *Don Giovanni* as Milton with any such offence against metrical science. Be assured it is yourself that do not read with understanding, not Milton that by possibility can be found deaf to the demands of perfect harmony."

[33] Aaron Hill (1685-1750), an admirer of Thomson, wrote a "Poem in Praise of Blank Verse," opening:

> "Up from Rhyme's poppied vale!
> and ride the storm
> That thunders in blank verse!"

On the other hand, there were not wanting protestants against the form, like Dr. Johnson and Goldsmith (see above, p. 205). Robert Lloyd (1733-1764) wrote:

> "Some Milton-mad (an
> affectation
> Glean'd up from college-
> education)
> Approve no verse, but that
> which flows

In epithetic measur'd prose;...
the
metre
which
they
call
Blank, classic blank, their all in all."

(Quoted in Perry's *English Literature in the Eighteenth Century*, p. 385.)

[34] On its analysis, see Mayor's *Chapters on English Metre*, 2d ed., chap. xiii.

III. SIX-STRESS AND SEVEN-STRESS VERSE

A.—THE ALEXANDRINE (IAMBIC HEXAMETER)

The alexandrine was introduced into English from French verse, as early (according to Schipper) as the early part of the thirteenth century. Early poems in this metre alone, however, are almost wholly wanting, if they ever existed. The early alexandrines usually appear in conjunction with the septenary (seven-stress verse). The French alexandrine has almost always been characterized by a regular and strongly marked medial cesura, and this very commonly appears in the English form, but by no means universally.

The French alexandrine is of uncertain origin. Kawczynski would trace it to the classical Asclepiadean verse, as in

"Mæcenas atavis edite regibus,"

which at least has the requisite number of syllables. It appeared in France as early as the first part of the twelfth century, and in four-line stanzas was the favorite for didactic poetry as late as the beginning of the fifteenth century; otherwise, in the close of the fourteenth century, it was supplanted by the decasyllabic. In the middle of the sixteenth century it again won precedence over the decasyllabic—in part through the influence of Ronsard—and is of course the standard measure of modern French poetry. The name "alexandrine" seems to have been applied in the fifteenth century, from the familiar use of the measure in the Alexander romance. The earliest known mention of the term is in Herenc's *Doctrinal de la secunde Retorique*. (See Stengel's article in Gröber's *Grundriss der Romanischen Philologie*, from which these statements are taken.)

The French alexandrine is in a sense a quite different measure from the English form. Accent is an element of so comparatively slight importance in the French language and French rhythm, that its place seems partly to be filled by regularity of cesural pause and regularity in the counting of syllables. The French alexandrine, therefore, may often be described as a verse of twelve syllables, divided into two equal parts by a pause, with marked accents on the sixth and twelfth syllables, but with the other accents irregularly disposed. Often it seems to an English reader to have an anapestic effect, and to be best described as anapestic tetrameter. In English, however, while the regularity in the number of syllables is followed, and very commonly the medial pause, there is also observed the regularity of alternate accents which gives the verse the

characteristic form indicated by the term "six-stress."

'Ye nuten hwat ye biddeþ, þat of gode
nabbeþ imone;
for al eure bileve is on stokke oþer on
stone:
ac þeo, þat god iknoweþ, heo wyten
myd iwisse,
þat hele is icume to monne of folke
judaysse.'
'Loverd,' heo seyde, 'nu quiddeþ men,
þat cumen is Messyas,
þe king, þat wurþ and nuþen is and
ever yete was.
hwenne he cumeþ, he wyle us alle
ryhtleche;
for he nule ne he ne con nenne mon
bipeche.'

(*De Muliere Samaritana*, ll. 51-58. In Morris's *Old English Miscellany*, p. 84; and Zupitza's *Alt- und Mittelenglisches Übungsbuch*, p. 83. ab. 1250.)

This early poem illustrates the irregular use of alexandrines near the time of their introduction into English. The poem opens with a septenary—

"Tho Iesu Crist an eorthe was, mylde
weren his dede;"

and septenaries and alexandrines are used interchangeably. Dr. Triggs says, in his notes on the poem in McLean's edition of Zupitza's *Übungsbuch*, that lines 5, 6, 9-18, 25-28, 39, 40, 43, 44, 49-54, 57, 58, 63, 64, 66, 67, 70-72, 74, 75 are alexandrines. (Introduction, p. lxii.) The English tendency toward

indifference to regularity in the counting of syllables is also noticeable. In the same way the early poem called "The Passion of our Lord" (ed. Morris, E.E.T.S. xlix. 37), which is thought from the heading—"*Ici cumence la passyun ihesu crist en engleys*"—to be a translation from the French, shows a preponderance of alexandrines, although it opens in septenary. See also such poems as the "Death," "Doomsday," etc., in the *Old English Miscellany*. The alexandrine was easily confused by the Middle English writers, not only with the septenary, but with the native "long line," and it is often difficult to say just what rhythm was in the writer's mind. Thus a line like

> "Be stille, leve soster, thin herte the
> to-breke,"

from the *Judas*, may be regarded either as an alexandrine or a long four-stress line.

> In Westsex was þan a kyng, his
> [name] was Sir Ine.
> Whan he wist of the Bretons, of werre
> ne wild he fine.
> Messengers he sent thorghout Inglond
> Unto þe Inglis kynges, þat had it in
> þer hond,
> And teld how þe Bretons, men of
> mykelle myght,
> Þe lond wild wynne ageyn þorh force
> and fyght.
> Hastisly ilkone þe kynges com fulle
> suythe,
> Bolde men and stoute, þer hardinesse
> to kiþe.
> In a grete Daneis felde þer þei samned
> alle,

Þat ever siþen hiderward Kampedene
men kalle.

(ROBERT MANNING of Brunne:
Chronicle of Peter de Langtoft. Hearne
ed., vol. i. p. 2. ab. 1325.)

This poem is one of the very few representatives of distinctly alexandrine verse in Middle English. The original poem being in alexandrines, Manning followed it closely. In the first part, however, he put rimes only at the ends of the verses, whereas later he introduced internal rime, thus resolving the verse into short lines of three stresses. Schipper observes that the four following lines are each representative of a familiar type of the French alexandrine:

"Messengers he sent þorghout Inglond
Unto the Inglis kynges, þat had it in
þer hond."

"After Ethelbert com Elfrith his
broþer,
Þat was Egbrihtes sonne and ȝit þer
was an oþer."

(*Englische Metrik*, vol. i. p. 252.)

The so-called *Legend-Cycle* is also marked by a sort of alexandrine couplet. (See ten Brink's *English Literature*, Kennedy trans., vol. i. p. 274.)

O! think I, had I wings like to the
simple dove,
This peril might I fly, and seek some
place of rest
In wilder woods, where I might dwell

far from these cares.
What speedy way of wing my plaints
should they lay on,
To 'scape the stormy blast that
threatened is to me?
Rein those unbridled tongues! break
that conjured league!
For I decipher'd have amid our town
the strife.

(EARL OF SURREY: *Psalm. LV.* ab. 1540.)

This is a not very successful experiment in unrimed alexandrines. Others of Surrey's Psalms are in rimed "Poulter's Measure" (alexandrines alternating with septenary).

O, let me breathe a while, and hold
thy heavy hand,
My grievous faults with Shame
enough I understand.
Take ruth and pity on my plaint, or
else I am forlorn;
Let not the world continue thus in
laughing me to scorn.
Madam, if I be he, to whom you once
were bent,
With whom to spend your time
sometime you were content:
If any hope be left, if any recompense
Be able to recover this forepassed
negligence,
O, help me now, poor wretch, in this
most heavy plight,

And furnish me yet once again with
Tediousness to fight.

(*The Marriage of Wit and Science*, V. ii., in Dodsley's *Old English Plays*, ed. Hazlitt, vol. ii. p. 386. ab. 1570.)

In this play the alexandrine is the dominant measure, though mingled with occasional septenaries still. (See Schipper, vol. i. p. 256.)

While favor fed my hope, delight with
hope was brought,
Thought waited on delight, and
speech did follow thought;
Then grew my tongue and pen
records unto thy glory,
I thought all words were lost that
were not spent of thee,
I thought each place was dark but
where thy lights would be,
And all ears worse than deaf that
heard not out thy story.

(SIDNEY: *Astrophel and Stella*, Fifth Song. [In stanzas *aabccb*.] ab. 1580.)

See also Sidney's sonnet in alexandrines, p. 272, below.

Of Albion's glorious isle the wonders
whilst I write,
The sundry varying soils, the
pleasures infinite,
(Where heat kills not the cold, nor
cold expels the heat,
The calms too mildly small, nor winds

too roughly great,
Nor night doth hinder day, nor day
the night doth wrong,
The summer not too short, the winter
not too long)
What help shall I invoke to aid my
Muse the while?
Thou Genius of the place (this most
renowned isle)
Which livedst long before the all-
earth-drowning flood,
Whilst yet the world did swarm with
her gigantic brood,
Go thou before me still thy circling
shores about,
And in this wand'ring maze help to
conduct me out.

(DRAYTON: *Polyolbion*, ll. 1-12. 1613.)

This is by all odds the longest Modern English poem in alexandrines, and while the verse is often agreeable, it illustrates the unfitness of the measure —to English ears—for long, continuous poems.

The dew was falling fast, the stars
began to blink;
I heard a voice; it said, "Drink, pretty
creature, drink!"
And looking o'er the hedge, before me
I espied
A snow-white mountain-lamb with a
Maiden at its side.

(WORDSWORTH: *The Pet Lamb*. 1800.)

If hunger, proverbs say, allures the
wolf from wood,
Much more the bird must dare a dash
at something good:
Must snatch up, bear away in beak,
the trifle-treasure
To wood and wild, and then—O how
enjoy at leisure!
Was never tree-built nest, you
climbed and took, of bird,
(Rare city-visitant, talked of, scarce
seen or heard,)
But, when you would dissect the
structure, piece by piece,
You found, enwreathed amid the
country-product—fleece
And feather, thistle-fluffs and bearded
windlestraws—
Some shred of foreign silk,
unravelling of gauze,
Bit, maybe, of brocade, mid fur and
blow-bell-down:
Filched plainly from mankind, dear
tribute paid by town,
Which proved how oft the bird had
plucked up heart of grace,
Swooped down at waif and stray,
made furtively our place
Pay tax and toll, then borne the booty
to enrich
Her paradise i' the waste; the how and
why of which,
That is the secret, there the mystery
that stings!

(BROWNING: *Fifine at the Fair*, ix. 1872.)

Browning has made of the alexandrine in this poem an almost new measure, hardly more like the alexandrine couplet of earlier days than the measure of *Sordello* is like the "heroic couplet" proper. In general, the modern use of the alexandrine is characterized by increased freedom in the placing of the cesura. It is also distinguished from the early French and Middle English forms by the fact that the cesura and the ending are commonly masculine.

By far the most frequent use of the alexandrine in English poetry is as a variant from the five-stress line. For instances of this, see the section on the Spenserian stanza, pp. 102-108, above, and Corson's chapters on the Spenserian stanza and its influence, in his *Primer of English Verse*. In connection with Dryden's use of the alexandrine as a variant from the heroic couplet, Mr. Saintsbury makes some interesting observations on the measure: "The metre, though a well-known English critic has maltreated it of late, is a very fine one; and some of Dryden's own lines are unmatched examples of that 'energy divine' which has been attributed to him. In an essay on the alexandrine in English poetry, which yet remains to be written, and which would be not the least valuable of contributions to poetical criticism, this use of the verse would have to be considered, as well as its regular recurrent employment at the close of the Spenserian stanza, and its continuous use.... An examination of the *Polyolbion* and of *Fifine at the Fair*, side by side, would, I think, reveal capacities, somewhat unexpected even in this form of arrangement. But so far as the occasional alexandrine is concerned, it is not a hyperbole to say that a number, out of all proportion, of the best lines in English poetry may be found in the closing verses of the Spenserian stave as used by Spenser himself, by

Shelley, and by the present Laureate, and in the occasional alexandrines of Dryden. The only thing to be said against this latter use is, that it demands a very skilful ear and hand to adjust the cadence." (*Life of Dryden*, in Men of Letters Series, pp. 172, 173.)

B.—THE SEPTENARY

The septenary, or seven-stress verse (sometimes called the *septenarius*, from the Latin form of the word) was a familiar measure of mediæval Latin poetry. There it was more commonly trochaic than iambic, as in the famous drinking song of the Goliards:

"Meum est propositum in taberna
mori:
Vinum sit appositum morientis ori,
Ut dicant cum venerint angelorum
chori,
'Deus sit propitius huic potatori!'"

(See the "Confessio Goliae," in *Latin Poems attributed to Walter Mapes*, ed. Wright, p. 71.)

Another form of the measure is illustrated by some verses quoted by Schipper:

"Fortunae rota volvitur, descendo
minoratus,
Alter in altum tollitur, nimis
exaltatus."

In English, naturally enough, the measure always tended to be iambic. In both Latin and English there was considerable freedom as to the number of light

syllables. It will be noticed that in the specimens just quoted from the Latin there is rime not only between the ends of the verses but between the syllables just preceding the cesura. Where this was the case there was a tendency toward the breaking up of the verse into a quatrain of verses in four and three stresses, riming *abab*; such septenaries, indeed, were written at pleasure either in couplets or quatrains. We shall see the same phenomena in the English forms of the measure. But the seven-stress rhythm is not easily lost or mistaken, in whatever form it appears, and has a certain charm which at one time appealed very widely to metrical taste.

The earliest appearance of the septenary in English is in the *Poema Morale*, dated about 1170 by Zupitza, by others somewhat later. For a specimen of this, see p. 127, above. Here there is only end-rime, and the individuality of the long line is well preserved. There is some freedom, however, as to the number of light syllables, and some variation between the iambic and trochaic rhythm.

Blessed beo thu, lavedi, ful of hovene
blisse,
Swete flur of parais, moder of
miltenisse;
Thu praye Jhesu Crist thi sone that he
me i-wisse,
Thare a londe al swo ihc beo, that he
me ne i-misse.

(*Hymn to the Virgin*, in Mätzner's *Altenglische Sprachproben*, vol. i. p. 54.)

Mätzner prints this poem in short lines of four and three stresses, the cesura making such a division

natural enough. The next specimen is also frequently printed with the same division.

Þiss boc iss nemmnedd Orrmulum,
forr þi þatt Orrm itt wrohhte,
annd itt iss wrohht off quaþþrigan, off
goddspellbokess fowwre,
off quaþþrigan Amminadab, off
Cristess goddspellbokess;
forr Crist ma33 þurh Amminadab
rihht full wel ben bitacnedd;
forr Crist toc dæþ o rodetre all wiþþ
hiss fulle wille;
annd forrþi þatt Amminadab o latin
spæche iss nemmnedd
o latin boc spontaneus annd onn
ennglisshe spæche
þatt weppmann, þatt summ dede doþ
wiþþ all hiss fulle wille,
forþi ma33 Crist full wel ben þurrh
Amminadab bitacnedd.

(*The Ormulum*, ll. 1-9. ab. 1200.)

In this specimen we have the septenary without rime, a rare form. Orm's septenaries are also the most regular of the Middle English period, preserving an almost painful accuracy throughout the 20,000 extant lines of the poem. In general the measure appears in this period in combination with alexandrines and other measures, and with much irregularity. Like the alexandrine, it was sometimes confused with the long four-stress line. In the well-known poem called "A Little Soth Sermun" the first line is an unquestionable septenary ("Herkneth alle gode men and stylle sitteth a-dun"), but presently we find verse of six stresses, and even short four-stress

couplets.

Torne we aȝen in tour sawes, and
speke we atte frome
of erld Olyver and his felawes, þat
Sarazyns habbeþ ynome.
þe Sarazyns prykaþ faste away, as
harde as þay may hye,
and ledeþ wiþ hymen þat riche pray,
þe flour of chyvalrye.

(*Sir Fyrumbras*, ll. 1104-1107. In Zupitza'S *Alt- und Mittelenglisches Übungsbuch*, p. 107. ab. 1380.)

In this specimen—from a popular romance—we have the use of cesural rime as well as end-rime, just as in the Latin specimens cited above.

I tell of things done long ago,
Of many things in few:
And chiefly of this clime of ours
The accidents pursue.
Thou high director of the same,
Assist mine artless pen,
To write the gests of Britons stout,
And acts of English men.

(WILLIAM WARNER: *Albion's England*, ll. 1-8. 1586.)

Here we have the measure in its "resolved" or divided form, printed as short four-stress and three-stress lines, although with rime only at the seventh stress. Compare the "common metre" of modern hymns:

"Must I be carried to the skies
On flowery beds of ease,
While others fought to win the prize
And sailed through bloody seas?"

As when about the silver moon, when
air is free from wind,
And stars shine clear, to whose sweet
beams, high prospects, and the
brows
Of all steep hills and pinnacles, thrust
up themselves for shows,
And even the lowly valleys joy to
glitter in their sight,
When the unmeasured firmament
bursts to disclose her light,
And all the signs in heaven are seen,
that glad the shepherd's heart;
So many fires disclosed their beams,
made by the Trojan part,
Before the face of Ilion, and her
bright turrets show'd.
A thousand courts of guard kept fires,
and every guard allow'd
Fifty stout men, by whom their horse
eat oats and hard white corn,
And all did wishfully expect the
silver-throned morn.

(CHAPMAN: *Iliad*, book VIII. 1610.)

Chapman's translation of *Iliad* is the longest modern English poem in septenaries. Professor Newman, however (whose translation gave rise to Matthew Arnold's lectures *On Translating Homer*), used the same measure unrimed and with feminine endings;

thus,—

"He spake, and yelling, held afront
the single-hoofed horses."

Arnold objected to Chapman's measure that "it has a jogging rapidity rather than a flowing rapidity, and a movement familiar rather than nobly easy."

Rejoice, oh, English hearts, rejoice!
rejoice, oh, lovers dear!
Rejoice, oh, city, town and country!
rejoice, eke every shire!
For now the fragrant flowers do
spring and sprout in seemly
sort,
The little birds do sit and sing, the
lambs do make fine sport;
And now the birchen-tree doth bud,
that makes the schoolboy cry;
The morris rings, while hobby-horse
doth foot it feateously;
The lords and ladies now abroad, for
their disport and play,
Do kiss sometimes upon the grass,
and sometimes in the hay.

(BEAUMONT: *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, IV. v. ab. 1610.)

Here the septenary is introduced in the May-day song of Ralph, the London apprentice, doubtless because of its popularity for such unliterary verse.

In somer, when the shawes be sheyne,
And leves be large and long,
Hit is full mery in feyre foreste

To here the foulys song.

(*Ballad of Robin Hood and the Monk*, in Gummere's *English Ballads*, p. 77.)

It is an ancient Mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three.
"By thy long grey beard and glittering eye,
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?" ...

... He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.

(COLERIDGE: *The Ancient Mariner*, ll. 1-4, 614-617. 1798.)

These specimens show the ballad stanza, which is made of a sort of septenary resolved into short lines of four and three accents. It is often assumed that the measure was derived from the Latin septenary; but owing to the difficulty of supposing that a foreign metre should have been adopted for the most popular of all forms of poetry, some scholars prefer to think that the ballad stanza of this form is the same as that in which all lines have four accents (see specimen on p. 157, above), the last accent of the second and fourth lines having dropped off by natural processes. On the ballad stanzas in general, see Gummere's *English Ballads*, Appendix II. p. 303. Compare with the present specimens the metre of Cowper's *John Gilpin*.

That cross he now was fastening there, as the surest power and

best
For supplying all deficiencies, all
wants of the rude nest
In which, from burning heat, or
tempest driving far and wide,
The innocent boy, else shelterless, his
lonely head must hide.

(WORDSWORTH: *The Norman Boy*.
1842.)

This is a rare instance of the use of the long septenary in nineteenth-century poetry. Certainly in Wordsworth's verses the metrical effect cannot be called happy; the measure is made especially clumsy by the introduction of hypermetrical light syllables. In the succeeding specimen the same measure is used with feminine ending.

O poets, from a maniac's tongue was
poured the deathless singing!
O Christians, at your cross of hope a
hopeless hand was clinging!
O men, this man in brotherhood your
weary paths beguiling,
Groaned inly while he taught you
peace, and died while ye were
smiling!

(ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING:
Cowper's Grave. 1833.)

C.—THE "POULTER'S MEASURE."

In the Elizabethan age the alexandrine and the septenary were each used chiefly in conjunction with the other, in alternation of six-stress and seven-stress

verses. The name commonly applied to the combination is taken from Gascoigne's *Notes of Instruction* (1575), where he says: "The commonest sort of verse which we use now adayes (viz. the long verse of twelve and fourtene sillables) I know not certainly howe to name it, unlesse I should say that it doth consist of Poulters measure, which giveth xii. for one dozen and xiiii. for another." (Arber's Reprint, p. 39.) It strikes the reader with surprise to find the measure thus spoken of as "the commonest sort of verse," but a glance at any of the early Elizabethan anthologies will show the justness of Gascoigne's words. Yet the measure, while exceedingly popular, seems to have been instinctively avoided by the best poets (after the days of Surrey and Sidney); hence it is unfamiliar to modern readers.

The use of alexandrines and septenaries together, we have seen, was common even in the Middle English period, but not in regular alternation. The Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester (about 1300) mingles both measures, but with alexandrines predominating. In some of the early Mystery Plays they are found in alternation; for example, where Jacob, in one of the Towneley plays, is relating his hunger to Esau:

> "Meat or drink, save my life, or bread,
> I reck not what:
> If there be nothing else, some man
> give me a cat."

See also the specimen from *The Marriage of Wit and Science*, p. 256, above.

Schipper says that he does not know who first brought the two measures together in alternate use

for lyrical poetry. Guest says that the Poulter's Measure came into fashion soon after 1500 (*History of English Rhythms*), but gives no examples so early. The history of the measure should be further investigated.

After the Elizabethan period the Poulter's Measure practically disappears from English poetry. A curious suggestion of it may be found in a little poem of Leigh Hunt's (*Wealth and Womanhood*), cited by Schipper, who calls the verse "Poulter's Measure in trochaics":

"Have you seen an heiress in her
jewels mounted,
Till her wealth and she seemed one,
and she might be counted?"

Laid in my quiet bed, in study as I
were,
I saw within my troubled head a heap
of thoughts appear:
And every thought did show so lively
in mine eyes,
That now I sighed, and then I smiled,
as cause of thought doth rise.

(EARL OF SURREY: *How no Age is Content with his Own Estate*, in Tottel's *Songs and Sonnets*. Arber's Reprint, p. 30. Pub. 1557.)

Her forehead jacinth like, her cheeks
of opal hue,
Her twinkling eyes bedeck'd with
pearl, her lips as sapphire blue;
Her hair like crapal stone, her mouth

O heavenly wide;
Her skin like burnish'd gold, her
hands like silver ore untried.

(SIR PHILIP SIDNEY: *Mopsa*, in the
Arcadia. ab. 1580.)

IV. THE SONNET

The sonnet is an Italian verse-form, in fourteen five-stress lines, introduced into England at the time of the Italian literary influences of the sixteenth century. Almost from the first, the English sonnet has been divided into two classes: one based on more or less strict imitation of the structure of the Italian form, and variously called the Italian, the regular, or the legitimate sonnet; the other taking the Italian sonnet as the point of departure, but constructed according to more familiar English rime-schemes, and commonly called the Shaksperian or the English sonnet.

The origin of the sonnet in southern Europe is a matter of some disagreement. Some scholars trace it to the *canzone* strophe (*e.g.* Gaspary, in his *Geschichte der Italienischen Literatur*), others to the combination of the *ottava rima* with a six-line stanza (Welti, in his *Geschichte des Sonettes in der deutschen Dichtung*), others to Provençal and even German influence. (See Schipper, vol. ii. pp. 835 ff., and Lentzner's *Das Sonett und seine Gestaltung in der englischen Dichtung*, p. 1.) It seems first to have been a recognized form in Italy in the latter part of the thirteenth century (see

Tomlinson's *The Sonnet: its Origin, Structure, and Place in Poetry*); and was made glorious by Dante, Michael Angelo, Tasso, Ariosto, and—above all—Petrarch. On the different forms of the Italian sonnet, see Tomlinson's essay, just cited.

"The object of the regular or legitimate Italian sonnet," says Mr. Tomlinson, "is to express one, and only one, idea, mood, sentiment, or proposition, and this must be introduced ... in the first quatrain, and so far explained in the second, that this may end in a full point; while the office of the first tercet is to prepare the leading idea of the quatrains for the conclusion, which conclusion is to be perfectly carried out in the second tercet, so that it may contain the fundamental idea of the poem." (pp. 27, 28.)

The Italian form is always marked by the division into octave and sestet, although English usage has been very irregular in marking this division by a full pause. The octave is based on only two rimes (*abbaabba*); the sestet on either two or three, the most common arrangements being *cdecde, cdcdcd, cdedce*, and *cddcee*.

With regard to the pause at the point of division Lentzner says: "It should not be a full pause, because this would produce the effect of a gap or breaking-off, ...—not like the speaker who has reached the end of what he has to say, but like one who reflects on what has already been said, and then takes fresh breath to complete his theme."[35]

Most critics prefer those forms of sestet which avoid a final riming couplet. This Mr. Courthope explains as follows: "The reason for the avoidance of the couplet in the second portion of the sonnet is, I

think, plain. In the first eight lines the thought ascends to a climax; this part of the sonnet may be said to contain the premises of the poetical syllogism. In the last six lines the idea descends to a conclusion, and as the two divisions are of unequal length it is necessary that the lesser should be the more individualised. Hence while, in the first part, the expression of the thought is massed and condensed by reduplications of sound, and the general movement is limited by quatrains; in the second part the clauses are separated by the alternation of the rhymes, the movement is measured by tercets, and the whole weight of the rhetorical emphasis is thrown into the last line." (*History of English Poetry*, vol. ii. p. 91.)

The sonnet has remained, since its introduction into English poetry, a favorite form among poets and critics, but has never become genuinely popular. It is suited, of course, only for the expression of dignified and careful thinking; and the difficulty of giving it unity and confining the content to the precise limit of fourteen lines has made perfect success in the form a rare attainment. Furthermore, the complexity of the rime-scheme—the distance at which one rime responds to another—makes the appreciation of the form a matter of some delicacy, less suited to the prevailingly simple taste of the English ear than to the more complex taste of the Italian.

The following specimens are classified only in the two principal groups of the Italian and the English form. The common test of the Italian form is that the rime-scheme shall separate the first eight lines from the rest, these eight lines ordinarily showing "inclusive rime" of the *abba* type; the test of the English form is that the rime-scheme shall separate

the first twelve lines from the last two, the twelve lines ordinarily showing alternate rime.

Schipper groups English sonnets in five classes: (1) the strict Italian form, with pause between octave and sestet; (2) the Surrey-Shakspere or English form; (3) the Spenserian form; (4) the Miltonic form, with correct rime-arrangement but general neglect of the bipartite structure; (5) the modern Italian or Wordsworthian form, following the regular rime-scheme in general, but often with a third or even a fourth rime in the octave, and treated as a single strophe. (*Englische Metrik*, vol. ii. p. 878.)[36]

A.—THE REGULAR (ITALIAN) SONNET

In this group the student of the subject should note the detailed variations of the rime-scheme of the sestet, and the varying practice of the poets as to the division between octave and sestet.

In view of the connection of Petrarch's sonnets with Wyatt's introduction of the form into England, the first of them is reproduced as a typical specimen of the strict Italian form.

Voi ch' ascoltate in rime sparse il
suono
Di quei sospiri ond' io nudriva 'l core
In su 'l mio primo giovenile errore,
Quand' era in parte altr' uom da quel
ch' i' sono,
Del vario stile, in ch' io piango e
ragiono
Fra le vane speranze e 'l van dolore,
Ove sia chi per prova intenda amore
Spero trovar pietà, non che perdono.

Ma ben veggi' or sí come al popol tutto
Favola fui gran tempo, onde sovente
Di me medesmo meco mi vergogno;
E del mio vaneggiar vergogna è 'l frutto,
E 'l pentirsi, e 'l conoscer chiaramente
Che quanto piace al mondo è breve sogno.

(PETRARCA: *Sonetto* i.)

The longe love that in my thought I harber,
And in my heart doth kepe his residence,
Into my face preaseth with bold pretence,
And there campeth, displaying his banner.
She that me learns to love, and to suffer,
And willes that my trust, and lustes negligence
Be reined by reason, shame, and reverence,
With his hardinesse takes displeasure.
Wherwith love to the hartes forest he fleeth,
Leavyng his enterprise with paine and crye,
And there him hideth and not appeareth.
What may I do? when my maister feareth,
But in the field with him to live and dye,

For good is the life, endyng faithfully.

(SIR THOMAS WYATT: *The lover hideth his desire*, etc., in Tottel's *Songs and Sonnets*, p. 33. pub. 1557.)

It was Wyatt who introduced the sonnet into England. Thirty-one of his sonnets were published in Tottel's Miscellany, of which about a third are said to be translations or paraphrases of Petrarch's. Wyatt followed, of course, the regular Italian structure, but used unhesitatingly the form of sestet with the concluding couplet (*cddcee*). On this point Mr. Courthope says: "Wyatt was evidently unaware of the secret principle underlying the extremely complex structure of the Italian sonnet; ... and being unfortunately misled by his admiration for the *Strambotti* of Serafino, which sum up the conclusion in a couplet, he endeavored to construct his sonnets on the same principle, thereby leading all sonnet writers before Milton on a wrong path." (*History of English Poetry*, vol. ii. p. 91.)

Loving in truth, and fain in verse my
love to show,
That she, dear she, might take some
pleasure of my pain,—
Pleasure might cause her read,
reading might make her know,
Knowledge might pity win, and pity
grace obtain,—
I sought fit words to paint the
blackest face of woe;
Studying inventions fine, her wits to
entertain,
Oft turning others' leaves, to see if
thence would flow

Some fresh and fruitful showers upon
my sun-burn'd brain.
But words came halting forth,
wanting Invention's stay;
Invention, Nature's child, fled step-
dame Study's blows,
And others' feet still seem'd but
strangers in my way.
Thus, great with child to speak, and
helpless in my throes,
Biting my truant pen, beating myself
for spite,—
'Fool,' said my Muse to me, 'Look in
thy heart, and write.'

(SIR PHILIP SIDNEY: *Astrophel and Stella*,
i. ab. 1580.)

With how sad steps, O Moon, thou
climb'st the skies!
How silently, and with how wan a
face!
What, may it be that e'en in heavenly
place
That busy archer his sharp arrows
tries!
Sure, if that long-with-love-
acquainted eyes
Can judge of love, thou feel'st a
lover's case,
I read it in thy looks; thy languish'd
grace,
To me, that feel the like, thy state
descries.
Then, e'en of fellowship, O Moon, tell
me,

Is constant love deem'd there but
want of wit?
Are beauties there as proud as here
they be?
Do they above love to be loved, and
yet
Those lovers scorn whom that love
doth possess?
Do they call virtue, there,
ungratefulness?

(SIR PHILIP SIDNEY: *Astrophel and Stella*,
xxxi. ab. 1580.)

Sidney's favorite form for the sonnet sestet was that shown in these specimens (*cdcdee*), a form that suggests the influence of the Surrey or English sonnet rather than the Italian. The first of the sonnets is of course exceptional in being written in alexandrines, but is among the finest in the sequence. See also Sidney's sonnet of the English type, p. 291, below.

The *Astrophel and Stella* (containing 110 sonnets) is the earliest of the great sonnet-sequences or sonnet-cycles of English poetry, those of Spenser, Shakspere, Rossetti, and Mrs. Browning being later representatives. In the Elizabethan age the fashion of writing sonnets, and sonnet-sequences in particular, was at its height, especially in the last decade of the century (1590-1600). On this subject, see the Introduction to Professor Schelling's *Elizabethan Lyrics*, in the Athenæum Press Series, and Mr. Sidney Lee's *Life of Shakspere*. Other noteworthy sonnet-sequences besides those of Sidney, Spenser, and Shakspere were Constable's *Diana*, Daniel's *Delia*, Lodge's *Phyllis*, Watson's *Tears of Fancy*, Barnes's *Parthenophil*, Giles Fletcher's *Lycia*, and Drayton's

Idea,—all published in the years 1592-1594. A now forgotten poet by the name of Lok produced more than four hundred sonnets, proving himself an Elizabethan rival to Wordsworth.

I know that all beneath the moon decays,
And what by mortals in this world is brought
In time's great periods shall return to naught;
That fairest states have fatal nights and days.
I know how all the Muse's heavenly lays,
With toil of spirit which are so dearly bought,
As idle sounds, of few or none are sought;
And that naught lighter is than airy praise.
I know frail beauty like the purple flower,
To which one morn oft birth and death affords;
That love a jarring is of minds' accords,
Where sense and will invassall reason's power.
Know what I list, this all can not me move,
But that, O me! I both must write and love.

(WILLIAM DRUMMOND of Hawthornden: *Sense of the Fragility of All Things*, etc. 1616.)

Drummond was a sonneteer of great skill, and used many original combinations of rime-schemes,—some forty in all,—yet usually approximating to the Italian type. Leigh Hunt says: "Drummond's sonnets, for the most part, are not only of the legitimate order, but they are the earliest in the language that breathe what may be called the habit of mind observable in the best Italian writers of sonnets; that is to say, a mixture of tenderness, elegance, love of country, seclusion, and conscious sweetness of verse." (Essay on the Sonnet, in *The Book of the Sonnet*, vol. i. pp. 78, 79.)

Death, be not proud, though some
have called thee
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not
so;
For those whom thou think'st thou
dost overthrow
Die not, poor Death; nor yet canst
thou kill me.
From rest and sleep, which but thy
pictures be,
Much pleasure: then from thee much
more must flow;
And soonest our best men do with
thee go—
Rest of their bones, and souls'
delivery.
Thou'rt slave to fate, chance, kings,
and desperate men,
And dost with poison, war, and
sickness dwell,
And poppy or charms can make us
sleep as well
And better than thy stroke. Why

swell'st thou then?
One short sleep past, we wake
eternally,
And death shall be no more: Death,
thou shalt die.

(JOHN DONNE: *Holy Sonnets*, X. 1635.)

Donne's series of "Holy Sonnets" was one of the few Elizabethan sequences, or cycles, which dealt with other than amatory subjects. The seven sonnets of the series called *La Corona* are bound together into a "crown of sonnets,"—an Italian fashion, according to which the first line of each sonnet is the same as the last of the sonnet preceding, and the last line of the last sonnet the same as the first line of the first.

When I consider how my light is
spent
Ere half my days, in this dark world
and wide,
And that one talent which is death to
hide
Lodged with me useless, though my
soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and
present
My true account, lest He returning
chide,—
Doth God exact day-labor, light
denied?
I fondly ask:—But patience, to
prevent
That murmur, soon replies: God doth
not need
Either man's work, or His own gifts;
who best

Bear His mild yoke, they serve Him
best: His state
Is kingly; thousands at His bidding
speed
And post o'er land and ocean without
rest:—
They also serve who only stand and
wait.

(MILTON: *On his Blindness*. ab. 1655.)

Milton learned the sonnet direct from the Italian, and wrote five in that language. While following the Italian rime-schemes, however, he was not careful to observe any division between octave and sestet. Like Donne, he turned the sonnet to other subjects than that of love, or—in Landor's words—

"He caught the sonnet from the dainty
hand
Of Love, who cried to lose it, and he
gave
The notes to Glory."

(*To Lamartine.*)

Compare, also, Wordsworth's saying that in Milton's hand

"The Thing became a trumpet,
whence he blew
Soul-animating strains—alas, too
few!"

Besides the eighteen English sonnets in regular form, Milton wrote a "tailed," or "caudated," sonnet, following an Italian fashion,—"On the New Forcers

of Conscience under the Long Parliament." "He intended it," says Masson, "to be what may be called an Anti-Presbyterian and Pro-Toleration Sonnet; but by going beyond fourteen lines, converted it into what the Italians called a 'sonnet with a tail.'" (Globe ed., p. 440.) The "tail" rimes *cfffgg*.

Deem not devoid of elegance the sage,
By Fancy's genuine feelings unbeguiled,
Of painful pedantry the poring child,
Who turns, of these proud domes, th' historic page,
Now sunk by Time, and Henry's fiercer rage.
Think'st thou the warbling Muses never smiled
On his lone hours? Ingenuous views engage
His thoughts, on themes, unclassic falsely styled,
Intent. While cloistered Piety displays
Her mouldering roll, the piercing eye explores
New manners, and the pomp of elder days,
Whence culls the pensive bard his pictured stores.
Nor rough nor barren are the winding ways
Of hoar Antiquity, but strown with flowers.

(THOMAS WARTON: *In a Blank Leaf of Dugdale's 'Monasticon.'* ab. 1775.)

After Milton, the sonnet fell into disuse for a century. "Walsh," says Mr. Gosse, "is the author of the only sonnet written in English between Milton's, in 1658, and Warton's, about 1750." (Ward's *English Poets*, vol. iii. p. 7.) See, however, that of Gray on West, written in 1742, quoted p. 295, below. To the Warton brothers, pioneers in so many ways of the romantic revival, chief credit is given for the revival of the sonnet in the eighteenth century. Other sonneteers of the period were William Mason, Thomas Edwards, Benjamin Stillingfleet, and Thomas Russell (see Seccombe's *Age of Johnson*, pp. 254, 255, and Beers's *English Romanticism in the Eighteenth Century*, pp. 160, 161).

O Time! who know'st a lenient hand
to lay
Softest on sorrow's wound, and slowly
thence
(Lulling to sad repose the weary
sense)
The faint pang stealest, unperceived,
away;
On thee I rest my only hope at last,
And think when thou hast dried the
bitter tear
That flows in vain o'er all my soul
held dear,
I may look back on every sorrow past,
And meet life's peaceful evening with
a smile.
As some lone bird, at day's departing
hour,
Sings in the sunbeam, of the transient
shower
Forgetful, though its wings are wet

the while:
Yet ah! how much must that poor
heart endure
Which hopes from thee, and thee
alone, a cure!

(WILLIAM LISLE BOWLES: *To Time*.
1789.)

Bowles (1762-1850) wrote numerous sonnets, and was influential in carrying on the movement begun by the Wartons. His sonnets were admired, in particular, by Coleridge and Wordsworth, the former poet dedicating to him a sonnet beginning:

"My heart has thanked thee, Bowles!
for those soft strains
Whose sadness soothes me."

His sonnets were, however, neglectful of the regular Italian structure, so that under his influence, as Leigh Hunt observed, "the illegitimate order ... became such a favorite with lovers of easy writing who could string fourteen lines together, that ... it continued to fill the press with heaps of bad verses, till the genius of Wordsworth succeeded in restoring the right system." (*Essay on the Sonnet*, p. 85.) But see the notes on Wordsworth's sonnets, p. 280, below.

Mary! I want a lyre with other strings,
Such aid from Heaven as some have
feigned they drew,
An eloquence scarce given to mortals,
new
And undebased by praise of meaner
things,
That, ere through age or woe I shed

my wings,
I may record thy worth with honor
due,
In verse as musical as thou art true,
And that immortalizes whom it sings.
But thou hast little need. There is a
book
By Seraphs writ with beams of
heavenly light,
On which the eyes of God not rarely
look,
A chronicle of actions just and bright:
There all thy deeds, my faithful Mary,
shine,
And, since thou own'st that praise, I
spare thee mine.

(COWPER: *To Mrs. Unwin*. 1793.)

Nuns fret not at their convent's
narrow room;
And hermits are contented with their
cells;
And students with their pensive
citadels;
Maids at the wheel, the weaver at his
loom,
Sit blithe and happy; bees that soar
for bloom,
High as the highest peak of Furness
Fells,
Will murmur by the hour in foxglove
bells.
In truth the prison unto which we
doom
Ourselves no prison is; and hence to

me,
In sundry moods, 'twas pastime to be
bound
Within the sonnet's scanty plot of
ground,
Pleased if some souls (for such there
needs must be)
Who have felt the weight of too much
liberty,
Should find brief solace there, as I
have found.

(WORDSWORTH: *The Sonnet.* 1806.)

Scorn not the Sonnet; Critic, you have
frowned,
Mindless of its just honors; with this
key
Shakspere unlocked his heart; the
melody
Of this small lute gave ease to
Petrarch's wound;
A thousand times this pipe did Tasso
sound;
With it Camoens soothed an exile's
grief;
The Sonnet glittered a gay myrtle leaf
Amid the cypress with which Dante
crowned
His visionary brow: a glow-worm
lamp,
It cheered mild Spenser, called from
Faery-land
To struggle through dark ways; and,
when a damp
Fell round the path of Milton, in his
hand

The Thing became a trumpet, whence
he blew
Soul-animating strains—alas, too few!

(WORDSWORTH: *Scorn not the Sonnet.*
1827.)

The World is too much with us; late
and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste
our powers;
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a
sordid boon!
This Sea that bares her bosom to the
moon,
The winds that will be howling at all
hours
And are up-gather'd now like sleeping
flowers,
For this, for every thing, we are out of
tune;
It moves us not.—Great God! I'd
rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn,
—
So might I, standing on this pleasant
lea,
Have glimpses that would make me
less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the
sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed
horn.

(WORDSWORTH: *The World is too much*

with us. 1806.)

Wordsworth's complaint as to the number of Milton's sonnets ("alas, too few!") certainly cannot be applied to his own. They number about five hundred, ranking him as the most prolific English sonneteer. These include some of the finest sonnets in the language, and very many of admittedly indifferent quality. Mr. Swinburne regards his sonnets as on the whole "the best out of sight" in our poetry. In general he followed the Italian model, but with very great liberty. He not only practised great variety of rime-arrangement in the sestet, but frequently altered the scheme of the octave to such forms as *abbaacca*; see, for example, the specimen beginning "Scorn not the Sonnet." Wordsworth also showed no regard for the careful division of thought between octave and sestet. Indeed in a letter to Dyce, in 1833, he said that he regarded the sonnet not as a piece of architecture, but as "an orbicular body,—a sphere or a dew-drop." (*Works*, ed. Knight, vol. xi. p. 232.) Its excellence seemed to him to consist mainly in a "pervading sense of intense unity." Nevertheless, he admitted that "a sonnet will often be found excellent, where the beginning, the middle, and the end are distinctly marked, and also where it is distinctly separated into *two* parts, to which, as I before observed, the strict Italian model, as they write it, is favorable."

Mysterious Night! when our first
parent knew
Thee from report divine, and heard
thy name,
Did he not tremble for this lovely
frame,
This glorious canopy of light and

blue?
Yet 'neath a curtain of translucent
dew,
Bathed in the rays of the great setting
flame,
Hesperus with the host of heaven
came,
And lo! creation widened in man's
view.
Who could have thought such
darkness lay concealed
Within thy beams, O Sun! or who
could find,
Whilst fly, and leaf, and insect stood
revealed,
That to such countless orbs thou
mad'st us blind?
Why do we, then, shun death with
anxious strife?
If light can thus deceive, wherefore
not life?

(JOSEPH BLANCO WHITE: *To Night.* ab. 1825. In *The Book of the Sonnet*, i. 258.)

This famous sonnet was called by Coleridge "the best in the English language." He seems, however, to have been led to this opinion rather by the thought than the form.

I met a traveler from an antique land,
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs
of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them on the
sand,
Half sunk, a shatter'd visage lies,

whose frown
And wrinkled lip and sneer of cold
command
Tell that its sculptor well those
passions read
Which yet survive, stamp'd on these
lifeless things,
The hand that mock'd them and the
heart that fed;
And on the pedestal these words
appear:
"My name is Ozymandias, king of
kings:
Look on my works, ye mighty, and
despair!"
Nothing beside remains. Round the
decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and
bare,
The lone and level sands stretch far
away.

(SHELLEY: *Ozymandias of Egypt*. 1817.)

Shelley wrote but few sonnets, and all but one (*To the Nile*) are irregular in structure. The rime-scheme of the present specimen is, of course, wholly eccentric.

The poetry of earth is never dead:
When all the birds are faint with the
hot sun,
And hide in cooling trees, a voice will
run
From hedge to hedge about the new-
mown mead:
That is the Grasshopper's; he takes the

lead
In summer luxury; he has never done
With his delights, for, when tired out
with fun,
He rests at ease beneath some
pleasant weed.
The poetry of earth is ceasing never:
On a lone winter evening, when the
frost
Has wrought a silence, from the stove
there shrills
The Cricket's song, in warmth
increasing ever,
And seems to one in drowsiness half
lost
The Grasshopper's among some grassy
hills.

(KEATS: *The Grasshopper and Cricket.*
1817.)

Keats's sonnets are for the most part regular in both rime-scheme and bipartite structure; but a number of the posthumous sonnets are in the English form. The present specimen (which competes with the more familiar sonnet on *Chapman's Homer* for the chief place among those of Keats) is a particularly good example of the bipartite structure and its organic relation to the thought of the sonnet.

Amazing monster! that, for aught I
know,
With the first sight of thee didst make
our race
Forever stare! O flat and shocking
face,
Grimly divided from the breast

below!
Thou that on dry land horribly dost go
With a split body and most ridiculous pace,
Prong after prong, disgracer of all grace,
Long-useless-finned, haired, upright, unwet, slow!
O breather of unbreathable, sword-sharp air,
How canst exist? How bear thyself, thou dry
And dreary sloth! What particle canst thou share
Of the only blessed life, the watery?
I sometimes see of ye an actual *pair*
Go by, linked fin by fin! most odiously.

(LEIGH HUNT: *The Fish to the Man*. 1836.)

If I leave all for thee, wilt thou exchange
And be all to me? Shall I never miss
Home-talk and blessing, and the common kiss
That comes to each in turn, nor count it strange,
When I look up, to drop on a new range
Of walls and floors,—another home than this?
Nay, wilt thou fill that place by me which is
Fill'd by dead eyes, too tender to

know change?
That's hardest! If to conquer love, has
tried,
To conquer grief tries more, as all
things prove:
For grief indeed is love, and grief
beside.
Alas, I have grieved so I am hard to
love—
Yet love me—wilt thou? Open thine
heart wide,
And fold within the wet wings of thy
dove.

(ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING:
Sonnets from the Portuguese, xxxv.
1850.)

The forty-four *Sonnets from the Portuguese* (the title, of course, being purely fanciful) constitute one of the chief sonnet-sequences of the modern period. While true to the Italian rime-structure, Mrs. Browning cannot be said to have treated the sonnet either as a two-part poem or as a unit. Only three of the series, says Professor Corson (the first, fourth, and thirteenth), "can be said to realize with any distinctness the idea and the peculiar artistic effect of the sonnet proper." Hence while calling them "the most beautiful love-poems in the language," he thinks "they cannot be classed as sonnets." (*Primer of English Verse*, pp. 175, 176.)

A Sonnet is a moment's monument,—
Memorial from the Soul's eternity
To one dead deathless hour. Look that
it be,
Whether for lustral rite or dire

portent,
Of its own arduous fulness reverent:
Carve it in ivory or in ebony,
As Day or Night may rule; and let
Time see
Its flowering crest impearled and
orient.
A sonnet is a coin: its face reveals
The soul,—its converse, to what
Power 'tis due:—
Whether for tribute to the august
appeals
Of Life, or dower in Love's high
retinue,
It serve; or, 'mid the dark wharf's
cavernous breath,
In Charon's palm it pay the toll to
Death.

(ROSSETTI: Sonnet preceding *The House of Life*. 1881.)

When do I see thee most, beloved
one?
When in the light the spirits of mine
eyes
Before thy face, their altar, solemnize
The worship of that Love through
thee made known?
Or when in the dusk hours (we two
alone),
Close-kissed and eloquent of still
replies
Thy twilight-hidden glimmering
visage lies,
And my soul only sees thy soul its

own?
O love, my love! if I no more should
see
Thyself, nor on the earth the shadow
of thee,
Nor image of thine eyes in any spring,
—
How then should sound upon Life's
darkening slope
The ground-whirl of the perished
leaves of Hope,
The wind of Death's imperishable
wing?

(ROSSETTI: *The House of Life*: Sonnet iv. *Lovesight*. 1870.)

The sonnets of Rossetti are undoubtedly the most perfect representatives of the Italian form in English poetry of the nineteenth century, and *The House of Life* (in 101 sonnets) is probably to be regarded as the most important sonnet-sequence since the Elizabethan age. The bipartite character of Rossetti's sonnets is marked, in editions of his poems, by the printing of the octave and sestet with a space between them.

They rose to where their sovran eagle
sails,
They kept their faith, their freedom,
on the height,
Chaste, frugal, savage, armed by day
and night
Against the Turk; whose inroad
nowhere scales
Their headlong passes, but his

footstep fails,
And red with blood the Crescent reels
from fight
Before their dauntless hundreds, in
prone flight
By thousands down the crags and
through the vales.
O smallest among peoples! rough
rock-throne
Of Freedom! warriors beating back
the swarm
Of Turkish Islam for five hundred
years,
Great Tsernagora! never since thine
own
Black ridges drew the cloud and
brake the storm
Has breathed a race of mightier
mountaineers.

(TENNYSON: *Montenegro*. 1877.)

It is curious that the two chief representatives of English poetry of the Victorian period, Tennyson and Browning, should neither of them have given much attention to the sonnet nor have achieved any notable success in the form. Among Tennyson's poems there are some seventeen sonnets, of which the present specimen was considered by the poet to be the best. It represents a common form of the bipartite structure, where the octave is a narrative, and the sestet a comment upon what has been narrated. In the following specimen, from Matthew Arnold, the structure is similar. Lentzner quotes the *East London*, in his monograph on the English sonnet, as a case where the octave represents the thought in particular, the sestet in the abstract; in other cases

the order is the reverse.

'Twas August, and the fierce sun overhead
Smote on the squalid streets of Bethnal Green,
And the pale weaver, through his window seen
In Spitalfields, looked thrice dispirited.
I met a preacher there I knew, and said:
'Ill and o'er-worked, how fare you in this scene?'
'Bravely!' said he, 'for I of late have been
Much cheered with thoughts of Christ, the Living Bread!'
O human soul! so long as thou canst so
Set up a mark of everlasting light
Above the howling senses' ebb and flow,
To cheer thee and to right thee if thou roam,
Not with lost toil thou laborest through the night!
Thou mak'st the heaven thou hop'st indeed thy home.

(MATTHEW ARNOLD: *East London*. 1867.)

"Why?" Because all I haply can and do,
All that I am now, all I hope to be,—
Whence comes it save from fortune

setting free
Body and soul the purpose to pursue,
God traced for both? If fetters, not a few,
Of prejudice, convention, fall from me,
These shall I bid men—each in his degree
Also God-guided—bear, and gayly too?
But little do or can the best of us:
That little is achieved through Liberty.
Who, then, dares hold, emancipated thus—
His fellow shall continue bound? Not I.
Who live, love, labor freely, nor discuss
A brother's right to freedom. That is "Why."

(BROWNING: *Why I am a Liberal*. 1885.)

Browning's sonnets are few in number, mostly occasional, and none of them can be considered notable. For a study of them, see the article by Lentzner in *Anglia*, vol. xi. p. 500. Dr. Lentzner includes nine in his list, not all of which are included in Browning's collected poems. Three are so closely connected as practically to form a poem in three stanzas (appended to *Jochanan Hakkadosh*, 1883).

One saith: the whole world is a Comedy
Played for the mirth of God upon his

throne,
Whereof the hidden meanings will be known
When Michael's trumpet thrills through earth and sea.
Fate is the dramaturge; Necessity
Allots the parts; the scenes, by Nature shown,
Embrace each element and every zone,
Ordered with infinite variety.Another saith: no calm-eyed Sophocles
Indites the tragedy of human doom,
But some cold scornful Aristophanes,
Whose zanies gape and gibber in thick gloom,
While nightingales, shrill 'mid the shivering trees,
Jar on the silence of the neighboring tomb.

(JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS: from *Sonnets on the Thought of Death*. ab. 1880.)

Yon silvery billows breaking on the beach
Fall back in foam beneath the star-shine clear,
The while my rhymes are murmuring in your ear
A restless lore like that the billows teach;
For on these sonnet-waves my soul would reach
From its own depths, and rest within you, dear,

As, through the billowy voices
yearning here,
Great Nature strives to find a human
speech.
A sonnet is a wave of melody:
From heaving waters of the
impassioned soul
A billow of tidal music one and whole
Flows in the octave; then, returning
free,
Its ebbing surges in the sestet roll
Back to the deeps of Life's tumultuous
sea.

(THEODORE WATTS-DUNTON: *The Sonnet's Voice; a Metrical Lesson by the Sea-shore*. *Athenæum*, Sept. 17, 1881.)

The "sonnet on the sonnet" has become so familiar in recent times that a volume of such sonnets has been compiled, and a writer of humorous verse has satirized the fashion in a "Sonnet on the Sonnet on the Sonnet." Doubtless the two specimens quoted from Wordsworth lead all others of the class; but the present specimen is an interesting attempt to represent the characteristic metrical expressiveness of the form.

Oft have I seen at some cathedral
door
A laborer, pausing in the dust and
heat,
Lay down his burden, and with
reverent feet
Enter, and cross himself, and on the
floor
Kneel to repeat his Paternoster o'er;

Far off the noises of the world retreat;
The loud vociferations of the street
Become an undistinguishable roar.
So, as I enter here from day to day,
And leave my burden at this minster gate,
Kneeling in prayer, and not ashamed to pray,
The tumult of the time disconsolate
To inarticulate murmurs dies away,
While the eternal ages watch and wait.

(LONGFELLOW: *Sonnets on the Divina Commedia*, i. 1864.)

Caliph, I did thee wrong. I hailed thee late
"Abdul the Damned," and would recall my word.
It merged thee with the unillustrious herd
Who crowd the approaches to the infernal gate—
Spirits gregarious, equal in their state
As is the innumerable ocean bird,
Gannet or gull, whose wandering plaint is heard
On Ailsa or Iona desolate.
For, in a world where cruel deeds abound,
The merely damned are legion: with such souls
Is not each hollow and cranny of Tophet crammed?
Thou with the brightest of Hell's aureoles

Dost shine supreme, incomparably
crowned,
Immortally, beyond all mortals,
damned.

(WILLIAM WATSON: *To the Sultan*, in
The Year of Shame. 1897.)

Mr. William Archer says of Mr. Watson's political sonnets, that the form becomes in his hands "a weapon like the sling of David. In the octave he whirls it round and round with ever-gathering momentum, and in the sestet sends his scorn or rebuke singing through the air, arrow-straight to its mark." (*Poets of the Younger Generation*, p. 503.)

B.—THE ENGLISH (SHAKSPERIAN) SONNET

From Tuskane came my Ladies
worthy race:
Faire Florence was sometyme her
auncient seate:
The Western yle, whose pleasaunt
shore dothe face
Wilde Cambers clifs, did geve her
lively heate:
Fostered she was with milke of Irishe
brest:
Her sire, an Erle; her dame, of princes
blood.
From tender yeres, in Britain she doth
rest,
With kinges childe, where she tasteth
costly food.
Honsdon did first present her to mine
yien:

Bright is her hewe, and Geraldine she
hight.
Hampton me taught to wishe her first
for mine:
And Windsor, alas, dothe chase me
from her sight.
Her beauty of kind, her vertues from
above.
Happy is he that can obtaine her love.

(EARL OF SURREY: *Description and praise of his love Geraldine*. In Tottel's *Songs and Sonnets*, p. 9. Pub. 1557.)

Surrey experimented with the Italian sonnet as it had been introduced into England by his master Wyatt, but soon devised a variation from the Italian form, and wrote a majority of his sonnets in the new English form (nine out of the sixteen which are printed in Tottel's Miscellany). This new form is divided, not into octave and sestet, but into three quatrains, with alternate rime, and a couplet. It produces, therefore, an effect quite different from that of the legitimate Italian sonnet, the couplet at the end giving it a more epigrammatic structure. Surrey's form seems more consonant with common English taste for simplicity of rime-structure, and, besides being honored by its adoption by Shakspere, has remained a favorite side by side with the more "correct" original.[37]

Come, Sleep! O Sleep, the certain
knot of peace,
The baiting-place of wit, the balm of
woe,
The poor man's wealth, the prisoner's
release,

The indifferent judge between the high and low;
With shield of proof shield me from out the press
Of those fierce darts Despair at me doth throw.
O make me in those civil wars to cease;
I will good tribute pay, if thou do so.
Take thou of me smooth pillows, sweetest bed,
A chamber deaf of noise and blind of light,
A rosy garland and a weary head:
And if these things, as being thine in right,
Move not thy heavy grace, thou shalt in me,
Livelier than elsewhere, Stella's image see.

(SIDNEY: *Astrophel and Stella*, xxxix. ab. 1580.)

Care-charmer Sleep, son of the sable Night,
Brother to Death, in silent darkness born,
Relieve my languish, and restore the light;
With dark forgetting of my care return.
And let the day be time enough to mourn
The shipwreck of my ill-adventured youth:

Let waking eyes suffice to wail their
scorn,
Without the torment of the night's
untruth.
Cease, dreams, the images of day-
desires,
To model forth the passions of to-
morrow;
Never let rising Sun approve you
liars,
To add more grief to aggravate my
sorrow:
Still let me sleep, embracing clouds in
vain,
And never wake to feel the day's
disdain.

(SAMUEL DANIEL: *Care-charmer Sleep*.
1592.)

Daniel was one of the most skilful of the Elizabethans in the use of the English form of the sonnet. The greater number of his *Sonnets to Delia* are of this type. The subject of the present sonnet was a fashionable one in the sixteenth century (compare Sidney's, quoted above).

Since there's no help, come let us kiss
and part,—
Nay I have done, you get no more of
me;
And I am glad, yea, glad with all my
heart,
That thus so cleanly I myself can free;
Shake hands for ever, cancel all our
vows,
And when we meet at any time again,

Be it not seen in either of our brows
That we one jot of former love retain.
Now at the last gasp of love's latest
breath,
When, his pulse failing, passion
speechless lies,
When faith is kneeling by his bed of
death,
And innocence is closing up his eyes,
—Now if thou would'st, when all
have given him over,
From death to life thou might'st him
yet recover!

(DRAYTON: *Love's Farewell*. 1594.)

Rossetti called this sonnet "perhaps the best in the language." Drayton's sonnet-sequence, the *Idea*, follows the Shaksperian form; and the present specimen illustrates how the important division of this type of sonnet is between the quatrains and the final couplet.

One day I wrote her name upon the
strand;
But came the waves and washed it
away:
Again I wrote it with a second hand,
But came the tide and made my pains
his prey.
Vain man! said she, that dost in vain
essay
A mortal thing so to immortalize;
For I myself shall like to this decay,
And eke my name be wiped out
likewise.
Not so (quoth I); let baser things

devise
To die in dust, but you shall live by
fame;
My verse your virtues rare shall
eternize,
And in the heavens write your
glorious name,—
Where, whenas death shall all the
world subdue,
Our love shall live, and later life
renew.

(SPENSER: *Amoretti*, lxxv. 1595.)

The sonnets in Spenser's collected poems number 177, of which fifty-six are in the common English (Surrey) form, the remainder—like the present specimen—riming *ababbcbccdcdee*. This order of rimes reminds us of that in the Spenserian stanza, and must have been devised by Spenser at about the same time. It has never been adopted by other poets.

When, in disgrace with fortune and
men's eyes,
I all alone beweep my outcast state,
And trouble deaf heaven with my
bootless cries,
And look upon myself and curse my
fate;
Wishing me like to one more rich in
hope,
Featured like him, like him with
friends possest,
Desiring this man's art, and that man's
scope,
With what I most enjoy contented

least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost
despising,
Haply I think on thee—and then my
state,
Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth, sings hymns at
heaven's gate;
For thy sweet love remember'd such
wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my state
with kings.

(SHAKSPERE: *Sonnet* xxix. 1609.)

That time of year thou may'st in me
behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few,
do hang
Upon those boughs which shake
against the cold,
Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the
sweet birds sang:
In me thou see'st the twilight of such
day
As after sunset fadeth in the west,
Which by and by black night doth
take away,
Death's second self, that seals up all in
rest:
In me thou see'st the glowing of such
fire
That on the ashes of his youth doth
lie,
As the death-bed whereon it must
expire,
Consum'd with that which it was

nourish'd by:
—This thou perceiv'st, which makes
thy love more strong,
To love that well which thou must
leave ere long.

(SHAKSPERE: *Sonnet* lxxiii. 1609.)

These two specimens, perhaps the favorites of as many readers as any which could be chosen, must serve to represent the sonnets of Shakspere. The whole number of these is 154, and all are in the English form. Slight irregularities in the rime-scheme will be found in about fifteen. Number 99 has fifteen lines and 126 (sometimes called the Epilogue to the first part of the series) has only twelve. Number 20 is wholly based on feminine rimes.[38]

Lord, with what care hast Thou begirt
us round!
Parents first season us; then
schoolmasters
Deliver us to laws; they send us
bound
To rules of reason, holy messengers,
Pulpits and Sundays, sorrow dogging
sin,
Afflictions sorted, anguish of all sizes,
Fine nets and stratagems to catch us
in,
Bibles laid open, millions of surprises,
Blessings beforehand, ties of
gratefulness,
The sound of glory ringing in our
ears;
Without, our shame; within, our
consciences;

Angels and grace, eternal hopes and
fears.
Yet all these fences and their whole
array
One cunning bosom-sin blows quite
away.

(GEORGE HERBERT: *Sin*. 1631.)

In vain to me the smiling mornings
shine,
And reddening Phœbus lifts his
golden fire;
The birds in vain their amorous
descant join,
Or cheerful fields resume their green
attire.
These ears, alas! for other notes
repine,
A different object do these eyes
require;
My lonely anguish melts no heart but
mine,
And in my breast the imperfect joys
expire.
Yet morning smiles the busy race to
cheer,
And new-born pleasure brings to
happier men;
The fields to all their wonted tribute
bear;
To warm their little loves the birds
complain;
I fruitless mourn to him that cannot
hear,
And weep the more because I weep in

vain.

(GRAY: *On the Death of Richard West.* 1742.)

On the place of this sonnet in the eighteenth century, see p. 277, above.

Oh it is pleasant, with a heart at ease,
Just after sunset, or by moonlight skies,
To make the shifting clouds be what you please,
Or let the easily-persuaded eyes
Own each quaint likeness issuing from the mould
Of a friend's fancy; or, with head bent low
And cheek aslant, see rivers flow of gold
'Twixt crimson bank; and then, a traveler, go
From mount to mount through Cloudland, gorgeous land!
Or listening to the tide, with closed sight,
Be that blind bard who, on the Chian strand
By those deep sounds possessed with inward light,
Beheld the Iliad and the Odyssee
Rise to the swelling of the voiceful sea.

(COLERIDGE: *Fancy in Nubibus*. 1819.)

The sonnets of Coleridge, as has already been noted,

were written under the influence of those of Bowles, and are not of the Italian type. He defined the sonnet as "a short poem in which some lonely feeling is developed," thus emphasizing, like Wordsworth, the idea of unity rather than of progressive structure.

Darkly, as by some gloomed mirror
glassed,
Herein at times the brooding eye
beholds
The great scarred visage of the
pompous Past,
But oftener only the embroidered
folds
And soiled regality of his rent robe,
Whose tattered skirts are ruined
dynasties
And cumber with their trailing pride
the globe,
And sweep the dusty ages in our eyes;
Till the world seems a world of husks
and bones
Where sightless Seers and Immortals
dead,
Kings that remember not their awful
thrones,
Invincible armies long since
vanquished,
And powerless potentates and foolish
sages
Lie 'mid the crumbling of the mossy
ages.

(WILLIAM WATSON: *History*.)

FOOTNOTES:

[35] It will perhaps be found of interest to reproduce the "Ten Commandments of the Sonnet" given by Mr. Sharp in his Introduction to *Sonnets of this Century* (p. lxxviii):

"1. The sonnet must consist of fourteen decasyllabic lines.

"2. Its octave, or major system, whether or not this be marked by a pause in the cadence after the eighth line, must (unless cast in the Shakespearian mould) follow a prescribed arrangement in the rhyme-sounds—namely, the first, fourth, fifth, and eighth lines must rhyme on the same sound, and the second, third, sixth, and seventh on another.

"3. Its sestet, or minor system, may be arranged with more freedom, but a rhymed couplet at the close is only allowable when the form is the English or Shakespearian.

"4. No terminal should also occur in any other portion of any other line in the same system; and the rhyme-sounds (1) of the octave should be harmoniously at variance, and (2) the rhyme-sounds of the sestet should be entirely distinct in intonation from those of the octave....

"5. It must have no slovenliness of diction, no weak or indeterminate terminations, no vagueness of conception, and no obscurity.

"6. It must be absolutely complete in itself—*i.e.*, it must be the evolution of one thought, or one emotion, or one poetically apprehended fact.

"7. It should have the characteristic of apparent inevitableness, and in expression be ample, yet reticent....

"8. The continuity of the thought, idea, or emotion must be unbroken throughout.

"9. Continuous sonority must be maintained from the first phrase to the last.

"10. The end must be more impressive than the commencement."

These rules of course represent the ideal of the strictest Italian form, and are by no means derived from the prevailing practice of English poets.

[36] On the structure and history of the sonnet, see Schipper, as cited above; C. Tomlinson: *The Sonnet, its Origin, Structure, and Place in Poetry* (1874); K. Lentzner: *Ueber das Sonett und seine Gestaltung in der englischen Dichtung bis Milton* (1886); Leigh Hunt and S. A. Lee: *The Book of the Sonnet* (with introductory essay, 1867); W. Sharp: *Sonnets of This Century* (with essay, 1886); S. Waddington: *English Sonnets by Poets of the Past*, and *English Sonnets by Living Poets*; Hall Caine: *Sonnets of Three Centuries* (1882); H. Corson: *Primer of English Verse*, chap. x.

[37] In 1575, when Gascoigne wrote his *Notes of Instruction*, he found it necessary to say: "Some thinke that all Poemes (being short) may be called Sonets, as in deede it is a diminutive worde derived of *Sonare*, but yet I can beste allowe to call those Sonnets whiche are of fouretene lynes, every line conteyning tenne syllables. The firste twelve do ryme in staves of foure lines by crosse meetre, and the last two ryming togither do conclude the whole." (Arber's Reprint, pp. 38, 39.) It is, of course, the English sonnet which Gascoigne thus describes.

[38] Shakspere also introduced sonnets into

some of his earlier plays: *Love's Labor's Lost*, *All's Well that Ends Well*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Henry V*. See Fleay's *Chronicle of the English Drama*, vol. ii. p. 224, and Schelling's *Elizabethan Lyrics*, p. xxx.

V. THE ODE

The term Ode is used of English poetry with considerable vagueness. The Century Dictionary defines the word thus: "A lyric poem expressive of exalted or enthusiastic emotion, especially one of complex or irregular metrical form; originally and strictly, such a composition intended to be sung." Compare with this the definition of Mr. Gosse, in his collection of *English Odes*: "Any strain of enthusiastic and exalted lyrical verse, directed to a fixed purpose, and dealing progressively with one dignified theme."

Viewed from the purely metrical standpoint, English odes are commonly either (*a*) regular Pindaric odes, imitative of the structure of the Greek ode, or (*b*) irregular, so-called "Pindaric" or "Cowleyan" odes. A third group may be made of forms based on the imitation of the choral odes of the Greek drama. There is also a class of odes called "Horatian," made up of simple lyrical stanzas; the name "ode" is applied here only because of the content of the poem or because of resemblance to the so-called odes (properly *carmina* or songs) of Horace, and since these Horatian odes show no metrical peculiarities they will not be represented here.[39]

The characteristic effect of the ode is produced by

the varying lengths of lines employed, and the varying distances at which the rimes answer one another. This variety, in the hands of a master of verse, is capable of splendid effectiveness, but it gives dangerous license to the unskilled writer.

A.—REGULAR PINDARIC

III.[1] *The Strophe, or Turn*

It is not growing like a
tree
In bulk, doth make men
better be;
Or standing long an oak, three
hundred year,
To fall a log at last, dry, bald,
and sear:
A lily of a day
Is fairer far, in
May,
Although it fall and die
that night;
It was the plant of
flower and light.
In small proportions we just
beauties see;
And in short measures life may
perfect be.

III.[2] *The Antistrophe, or Counter-turn*

Call, noble Lucius, then
for wine,
And let thy looks with
gladness shine;

Accept this garland, plant it on
thy head,
And think, nay know, thy
Morison's not dead.
He leap'd the
present age,
Possess'd with holy
rage,
To see that bright
eternal day;
Of which we priests and
poets say
Such truths as we expect for
happy men:
And there he lives with memory,
and Ben.

III.[3] *The Epode, or Stand*

Jonson, who sung this of him, ere
he went,
Himself, to
rest,
Or taste a part of that full joy he
meant
To have
express'd,
In this bright
asterism!—
Where it were
friendship's
schism,
Were not his Lucius long
with us to tarry,
To separate
these

twi-
Lights, the
Dioscuri;
And keep the one half from
his Harry.
But fate doth so alternate the
design,
Whilst that in heaven, this light
on earth must shine.

(BEN JONSON: *A Pindaric Ode on the death of Sir H. Morison*. 1629.)

This ode of Jonson's is apparently the earliest, and remained for a long time the only, notable English ode based on the strict structure of the Greek original. The Greek ode was commonly divided into the strophe, the antistrophe, and the epode; the strophe and antistrophe being identical in structure, though varying in different odes, and the epode being of different structure. Jonson therefore followed the classical form carefully, and introduced English terms to express the original three divisions.

Professor Bronson observes, in his Introduction to the Odes of Collins: "It is a commonplace that the Pindaric Ode in English is an artificial exotic, of slight native force, and unable to reproduce the effects of the Greek original. The reason is obvious. The Greek odes were accompanied by music and dancing, the singers moving to one side during the strophe, retracing their steps during the antistrophe, ... and standing still during the epode. The ear was thus helped by the eye, and the divisions of the ode were distinct and significant. But in an English Pindaric the elaborate correspondences and differences between strophe, antistrophe, and epode

are lost upon most readers, and even the critical reader derives from them a pleasure intellectual rather than sensuous." (Edition of Collins, Athenæum Press Series, Introduction, pp. lxxiv, lxxv.)

I[1]

Daughter of Memory,
immortal Muse,
Calliope, what poet wilt thou
choose,
Of Anna's name to
sing?
To whom wilt thou thy fire
impart,
Thy lyre, thy voice, and
tuneful art,
Whom raise sublime on thy ethereal
wing,
And consecrate with dews of thy
Castalian spring?

I[2]

Without thy aid, the most
aspiring mind
Must flag beneath, to narrow
flights confin'd,
Striving to rise in
vain;
Nor e'er can hope with equal
lays
To celebrate bright Virtue's
praise.
Thine aid obtain'd, even I, the
humblest swain,
May climb Pierian heights, and quit

the lowly plain.

I[3]

High in the starry orb is hung,
And next Alcides' guardian arm,
That harp to which thy Orpheus sung,
Who woods and rocks and winds could charm;
That harp which on Cyllene's shady hill,
When first the vocal shell was found,
With more than mortal skill
Inventor Hermes taught to sound:
Hermes on bright Latona's son,
By sweet persuasion won,
The wondrous work bestow'd;
Latona's son, to thine
Indulgent, gave the gift divine:
A god the gift, a god th' invention show'd.

(CONGREVE: *A Pindaric Ode on the victorious progress of her Majesty's Arms*. 1706.)

To Congreve is due the credit for the revival of the

regular ode in the eighteenth century, after it had been long forgotten by English poets. Meantime the irregular form, devised by Cowley, had become popular; and against the license of this Congreve protested in his *Discourse on the Pindaric Ode*, prefixed to his Ode of 1706. (See Mr. Gosse's Introduction to *English Odes*, p. xvii., and his *Life of Congreve*, p. 158.)

> Congreve said in his Discourse: "The following ode is an attempt towards restoring the regularity of the ancient lyric poetry, which seems to be altogether forgotten, or unknown, by our English writers. There is nothing more frequent among us than a sort of poems entitled Pindaric Odes, pretending to be written in imitation of the manner and style of Pindar, and yet I do not know that there is to this day extant, in our language, one ode contrived after his model.... The character of these late Pindarics is a bundle of rambling incoherent thoughts, expressed in a like parcel of irregular stanzas, which also consist of such another complication of disproportioned, uncertain, and perplexed verses and rhymes.... On the contrary, there is nothing more regular than the odes of Pindar, both as to the exact observation of the measures and numbers of his stanzas and verses, and the perpetual coherence of his thoughts....
>
> "Though there be no necessity that our triumphal odes should consist of the three afore-mentioned stanzas, yet if the reader can observe that the great variation of the numbers in the third stanza (call it epode, or what you please) has a pleasing effect in the ode, and makes him return to the first and second stanzas with more appetite than he could do if always cloyed with the same quantities and measures, I cannot see why some use may not be made of Pindar's example, to the great improvement of the English ode. There is certainly a pleasure in beholding anything that has art and difficulty in the contrivance, especially if it appears so carefully executed that the difficulty does not show itself

till it is sought for....

"Having mentioned Mr. Cowley, it may very well be expected that something should be said of him, at a time when the imitation of Pindar is the theme of our discourse. But there is that great deference due to the memory, great parts, and learning, of that gentleman, that I think nothing should be objected to the latitude he has taken in his Pindaric odes. The beauty of his verses is an atonement for the irregularity of his stanzas.... Yet I must beg leave to add that I believe those irregular odes of Mr. Cowley may have been the principal, though innocent, occasion of so many deformed poems since, which, instead of being true pictures of Pindar, have (to use the Italian painters' term) been only caricatures of him."

(*Discourse on the Pindaric Ode*, in Chalmers's *English Poets*, vol. x. p. 300.)

Who shall awake the Spartan fife,
And call in solemn sounds to life
The youths whose locks divinely spreading,
Like vernal hyacinths in sullen hue,
At once the breath of fear and virtue shedding,
Applauding Freedom lov'd of old to view?
What new Alcæus, fancy-blest,
Shall sing the sword, in myrtles drest,
At Wisdom's shrine awhile its flame concealing
(What place so fit to seal a deed renowned?),

Till she her brightest lightnings
round revealing,
It leap'd in glory forth, and dealt her
prompted wound?
O goddess, in that feeling
hour,
When most its sounds would
court thy ears,
Let not my shell's misguided
power
E'er draw thy sad, thy
mindful tears.
No, Freedom, no, I will not
tell
How Rome before thy
weeping face,
With heaviest sound, a giant statue,
fell,
Push'd by a wild and artless
race
From off its wide ambitious
base,
When Time his Northern sons of
spoil awoke,
And all the blended work of
strength and grace,
With many a rude
repeated stroke,
And many a barb'rous yell, to
thousand fragments broke....

Beyond the measure vast of
thought,
The works the wizard Time
has wrought!
The Gaul, 'tis held of antique

story,
Saw Britain link'd to his now
adverse strand;
No sea between, nor cliff sublime
and hoary,
He pass'd with unwet feet
thro' all our land.
To the blown Baltic
then, they
say,
The wild waves
found
another way,
Where Orcas howls, his
wolfish mountains
rounding;
Till all the banded West at once
'gan rise,
A wide wild storm ev'n
Nature's self
confounding,
With'ring her giant sons with
strange uncouth surprise.
This pillar'd earth
so firm and
wide,
By winds and
inward
labors torn,
In thunders dread
was push'd
aside,
And down the
should'ring
billows
borne.

And see, like gems,
her laughing
train,
The little isles on
every side!
Mona, once hid from those who
search the main,
Where thousand
elfin shapes
abide,
And Wight, who
checks the
west'ring
tide;
For thee consenting Heaven has
each bestowed,
A fair attendant on her sovereign
pride.
To thee this blest
divorce she
ow'd,
For thou hast made her vales thy
lov'd, thy last abode!

(COLLINS: *Ode to Liberty*, strophe and
antistrophe. 1746.)

This ode consists of strophe, epode, antistrophe, and second epode. The antistrophe corresponds metrically to the strophe, as usual; the epodes are in four-stress couplets. It was Collins's habit to place the epode between the strophe and antistrophe, perhaps, as Professor Bronson suggests, in order that it may produce "an impression of its own analogous to that of the Greek epode, namely, an impression of relief and repose." Mr. Bronson says further of Collins's odes: "Collins was less scholarly than Gray, but he

was bolder and more original; and consciously or unconsciously he so constructed his odes that their organic parts stand out clearly distinct and produce effects analogous to those produced by the Greek ode. In brief, his method was, first, to make large divisions of the thought correspond to the large divisions of the form; and, second, to throw out into relief the complex strophe and antistrophe by contrasting them with a simple epode. The reader may not perceive the minute correspondences in form between strophe and antistrophe, but he can hardly fail to feel that the two answer to one another in a general way." (Athenæum Press edition of Collins, Introduction, p. lxxv.)

III[1]

Far from the sun and
summer-gale,
In thy green lap was Nature's
Darling laid,
What time, where lucid Avon
strayed,
To him the mighty Mother
did unveil
Her awful face. The dauntless
Child
Stretched forth his little arms,
and smiled.
This pencil take (she said) whose
colors clear
Richly paint the vernal year;
Thine too these golden keys,
immortal Boy!
This can unlock the gates of Joy,
Of Horror that, and thrilling
Fears,

Or ope the sacred source of
sympathetic Tears.

III[2]

Nor second he, that rode
sublime
Upon the seraph-wings of
Ecstasy,
The secrets of th' Abyss to spy,
He pass'd the flaming bounds
of Place and Time;
The living Throne, the sapphire-
blaze,
Where Angels tremble while they
gaze,
He saw; but, blasted with excess
of light,
Clos'd his eyes in endless night.
Behold, where Dryden's less
presumptuous car
Wide o'er the fields of glory bear
Two coursers of ethereal race,
With necks in thunder cloth'd, and
long-resounding pace.

III[3]

Hark, his hands the lyre
explore!
Bright-eyed Fancy hovering o'er
Scatters from her pictured urn
Thoughts that breathe, and words
that burn.
But ah! 'tis heard no more—
Oh! Lyre divine, what daring
spirit

Wakes thee now? tho' he
inherit
Nor the pride, nor ample pinion,
That the Theban Eagle bear
Sailing with supreme dominion
Thro' the azure deep of air;
Yet oft before his infant eyes
would run
Such forms as glitter in the
Muse's ray
With orient hues, unborrow'd of
the sun;
Yet shall he mount, and keep
his distant way
Beyond the limits of a vulgar
fate,
Beneath the good how far—but far
above the great.

(GRAY: *The Progress of Poesy.* 1757.)

Gray's *Progress of Poesy* is probably to be regarded as the chief of all English odes of the regular Pindaric form. Mr. Lowell said, indeed, that it "overflies all other English lyrics like an eagle." *The Bard* is in precisely the same form, and shows the same skill in the wielding of the intricately varying melodies of the lines of different length.

B.—IRREGULAR (COWLEYAN)

Whom thunder's
dismal noise,
And all that Prophets and
Apostles louder spake,
And all the creatures' plain

conspiring voice,
Could not, whilst they
liv'd, awake,
This mightier sound
shall make
When dead t'
arise,
And open tombs, and
open eyes,
To the long sluggards of five
thousand years.
This mightier sound shall wake
its hearers' ears.
Then shall the scatter'd atoms
crowding come
Back to their ancient
home.
Some from birds, from fishes
some,
Some from earth, and some
from seas,
Some from beasts, and some
from trees.
Some descend from clouds
on high,
Some from metals upwards
fly,
And where th' attending soul naked
and shivering stands,
Meet, salute, and join their
hands,
As dispers'd soldiers at the
trumpet's call
Haste to their
colors
all.

Unhappy most, like
tortur'd men,
Their joints new set, to be new-
rack'd again,
To mountains they for
shelter pray;
The mountains shake, and run about
no less confus'd than they.

Stop, stop, my Muse! allay thy
vig'rous heat,
Kindled at a hint so
great.
Hold thy Pindaric Pegasus closely in,
Which does to rage
begin,
And this steep hill would gallop up
with violent course;
'Tis an unruly and a hard-mouth'd
horse,
Fierce, and unbroken
yet,
Impatient of the spur or
bit;
Now prances stately, and anon flies
o'er the place;
Disdains the servile law of any settled
pace;
Conscious and proud of his own
natural force,
'Twill no unskilful touch
endure,
But flings writer and reader too that
sits not sure.

(COWLEY: *The Resurrection*, strophes iii.
and iv. 1656).

Cowley, as has already appeared, introduced the irregular ode into English poetry, calling it "Pindaric" under a misapprehension of the real structure of the Greek odes. He published fifteen "Pindarique Odes" in 1656 (see the Preface to these, in Grosart's edition of his works, vol. ii. p. 4). The present specimen illustrates the really not unskilful use which Cowley made of the varying cadences of the form, and also sets forth—in the amusing concluding lines—his own idea of its difficulties.

Under the influence of Cowley's odes, the new form speedily became popular. According to Dr. Johnson, "this lax and lawless versification so much concealed the deficiencies of the barren, and flattered the laziness of the idle, that it immediately over-spread our books of poetry; all the boys and girls caught the pleasing fashion, and they who could do nothing else could write like Pindar." (*Life of Cowley*.) Compare also the remarks of Mr. Gosse: "Until the days of Collins and Gray, the ode modelled upon Cowley was not only the universal medium for congratulatory lyrics and pompous occasional pieces, but it was almost the only variety permitted to the melancholy generations over whom the heroic couplet reigned supreme." (*Seventeenth Century Studies*, p. 216.)

It has been the habit of modern critics to treat the irregularities of the Cowleyan ode with no little contempt, and it is undoubtedly true that in the hands of small poets its liberties are dangerous; but it is also true that some of the greatest modern poets have adopted the form for some of their best work, and that they have generally preferred it to that of the regular Pindaric ode.

When in mid-air the golden trump

shall sound,
To raise the nations under ground;
When in the valley of Jehoshaphat
The judging God shall close the book of Fate,
And there the last assizes keep
For those who wake and those who sleep;
When rattling bones together fly
From the four corners of the sky;
When sinews o'er the skeletons are spread,
Those cloth'd with flesh, and life inspires the dead;
The sacred poets first shall hear the sound,
And foremost from the tomb shall bound,
For they are covered with the lightest ground;
And straight, with inborn vigor, on the wing,
Like mounting larks, to the new morning sing.
There thou, sweet saint, before the choir shalt go,
As harbinger of heaven, the way to show,
The way which thou so well hast learn'd below.

(DRYDEN: *To the Pious Memory of Mistress Anne Killigrew*, strophe x. 1686.)

See also specimen from the *Ode for St. Cecilia's Day*, quoted above, p. 52.

Dryden's odes for St. Cecilia's Day (especially the *Alexander's Feast*) are among the most highly esteemed of his poems; but parts, at least, of the ode on Mistress Killigrew are no less fine, and in this case we have a purely literary ode, whose irregularities are not designed—as in the case of the others—to fit choral rendering. The conclusion of the ode, here quoted, seems to owe something of both substance and form to the conclusion of Cowley's Resurrection Ode (see preceding specimen). Dr. Johnson called Dryden's Killigrew Ode "undoubtedly the noblest ode that our language ever has produced."

Last came Joy's ecstatic trial.
He, with viny crown advancing,
First to the lively pipe his hand addrest;
But soon he saw the brisk awak'ning viol,
Whose sweet entrancing voice he loved the best.
They would have thought, who heard the strain,
They saw in Tempe's vale her native maids,
Amidst the festal sounding shades,
To some unwearied minstrel dancing,
While, as his flying fingers kiss'd the strings,
Love fram'd with Mirth a gay fantastic round;
Loose were her tresses seen,

her zone unbound,
And he, amidst his frolic play,
As if he would the charming air repay,
Shook thousand odors from his dewy wings.

(COLLINS: *The Passions.* 1746.)

I marked Ambition in his war-array!
I heard the mailed Monarch's troublous cry—
"Ah! wherefore does the Northern Conqueress stay!
Groans not her chariot on its onward way?"
Fly, mailed Monarch, fly!
Stunned by Death's twice mortal mace,
No more on murder's lurid face
The insatiate hag shall gloat with drunken eye!
Manes of the unnumbered slain!
Ye that gasped on Warsaw's plain!
Ye that erst at Ismail's tower,
When human ruin choked the streams,
Fell in conquest's glutted hour,
Mid women's shrieks and infants' screams!
Spirits of the uncoffined slain,
Sudden blasts of

triumph swelling,
Oft, at night, in misty train,
Rush around her narrow
dwelling!
The exterminating fiend is fled—
(Foul her life, and dark her
doom)—
Mighty armies of the dead
Dance, like death-fires, round her
tomb!
Then with prophetic song
relate
Each some tyrant-murderer's
fate!

(COLERIDGE: *Ode on the Departing Year*, strophe iii. 1796.)

This ode was evidently intended to be in the regular Pindaric form, and was divided into strophes, antistrophes, and epodes; but it soon broke into irregularity. On Coleridge's odes see some remarks by Mr. Theodore Watts in the article on Poetry in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

Our birth is but a sleep and a
forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's
Star,
Hath had elsewhere its
setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we
come
From God, who is our

home.
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing boy,
But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,
He sees it in his joy;
The youth, who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;
At length the man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day....
O joy! that in our embers
Is something that doth live,
That nature yet remembers
What was so fugitive!
The thought of our past years in me doth breed
Perpetual benediction: not indeed
For that which is most worthy to be blest;
Delight and liberty, the simple creed
Of childhood, whether busy or at rest,
With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his breast:—

Not for these I raise
The song of thanks and
praise;
But for those obstinate
questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings;
Blank misgivings of a
creature
Moving about in worlds not realized,
High instincts before which our
mortal nature
Did tremble like a guilty thing
surprised:
But for those first
affections,
Those shadowy
recollections,
Which, be they what they
may,
Are yet the fountain light of all our
day,
Are yet a master light of all our
seeing;
Uphold us, cherish, and have
power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the
being
Of the eternal Silence: truths that
wake
To perish never;
Which neither listlessness, nor mad
endeavor,
Nor man nor boy,
Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
Can utterly abolish or destroy!

Hence in a season of calm weather,
Though inland far we be,
Our souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither,
Can in a moment travel thither,
And see the children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

(WORDSWORTH: *Intimations of Immortality*, strophes v. and ix. 1807.)

In this poem the English ode may be said to have reached its high-water mark. Professor Corson observes: "The several metres are felt, in the course of the reading of the Ode, to be organic—inseparable from what each is employed to express. The rhymes, too, with their varying degrees of emphasis, according to the nearness or remoteness, and the length, of the rhyming verses, are equally a part of the expression.... The feelings of the reader of English poetry get to be set, so to speak, to the pentameter measure, as in that measure the largest portion of English poetry is written; and, accordingly, other measures derive some effect from that fact. In the theme-metre, generally, the more reflective portions of the Ode, its deeper tones, are expressed. The gladder notes come in the shorter metres.... Wordsworth never wrote any poem of which it can be more truly said than of his great Ode, 'Of the soul the body form doth take.'" (*Primer*

of English Verse, pp. 32-34.)

Then gentle winds arose
With many a mingled close
Of wild Æolian sound and mountain-odor keen;
And where the Baian ocean
Welters with airlike motion,
Within, above, around its bowers of starry green,
Moving the sea-flowers in those purple caves
Even as the ever stormless atmosphere
Floats o'er the Elysian realm,
It bore me like an Angel, o'er the waves
Of sunlight, whose swift pinnace of dewy air
No storm can overwhelm;
I sailed, where ever flows
Under the calm Serene
A spirit of deep emotion
From the unknown graves
Of the dead kings of Melody.
Shadowy Aornos darkened o'er the helm
The horizontal ether; heaven stripped bare

Its depths over Elysium, where the
prow
Made the invisible water white as
snow;
From that Typhæan mount,
Inarime,
There streamed a sunlight vapor, like
the standard
Of some ethereal host;
Whilst from the coast,
Louder and louder, gathering round,
there wandered
Over the oracular woods and divine
sea
Prophesyings which grew articulate—
They seize me—I must speak them—
be they fate!

(SHELLEY: *Ode to Naples*, strophe ii.
1819.)

Bury the Great Duke
With an empire's lamentation,
Let us bury the Great Duke
To the noise of the mourning of a
mighty nation,
Mourning when their leaders fall,
Warriors carry the warrior's pall,
And sorrow darkens hamlet and hall.
Where shall we lay the man whom we
deplore?
Here, in streaming London's central
roar.
Let the sound of those he wrought for,
And the feet of those he fought for,
Echo round his bones for evermore.

Lead out the pageant: sad and slow,
As fits an universal woe,
Let the long long procession go,
And let the sorrowing crowd about it grow,
And let the mournful martial music blow;
The last great Englishman is low....

... We revere, and while we hear
The tides of Music's golden sea
Setting toward eternity,
Uplifted high in heart and hope are we,
Until we doubt not that for one so true
There must be other nobler work to do
Than when he fought at Waterloo,
And Victor he must ever be.
For though the Giant Ages heave the hill
And break the shore, and evermore
Make and break, and work their will;
Though world on world in myriad myriads roll
Round us, each with different powers,
And other forms of life than ours,
What know we greater than the soul?
On God and Godlike men we build our trust.
Hush, the Dead March wails in the people's ears:
The dark crowd moves, and there are sobs and tears:
The black earth yawns: the mortal

disappears;
Ashes to ashes, dust to dust;
He is gone who seemed so great.—
Gone; but nothing can bereave him
Of the force he made his own
Being here, and we believe him
Something far advanced in state,
And that he wears a truer crown
Than any wreath that man can weave
him.
Speak no more of his renown,
Lay your earthly fancies down,
And in the vast cathedral leave him.
God accept him, Christ receive him.

(TENNYSON: *On the Death of the Duke of Wellington*, strophes i, ii, iii, ix (in part). 1852.)

This ode of Tennyson's is one of the few poems in which he gave himself such liberty of form (compare some of the irregular measures of *Maud*). It shows his usual skill in the adaptation of metrical effects to the purposes of description. Dr. Henry Van Dyke has suggested that the varying—almost lawless—movements of the opening lines are designed to suggest the surging of the crowd through the streets of London, before the entrance into the cathedral for the funeral.

Bow down, dear Land, for thou hast
found release!
Thy God, in these
distempered days,
Hath taught thee the sure
wisdom of His ways,
And through thine enemies hath

wrought thy peace!
Bow down in prayer and
praise!
No poorest in thy borders but
may now
Lift to the juster skies a man's
enfranchised brow.
O Beautiful! my Country! ours
once more,
Smoothing thy gold of war-
dishevelled hair
O'er such sweet brows as never
other wore,
And letting thy set lips,
Freed from wrath's pale
eclipse,
The rosy edges of their smile lay
bare,
What words divine of lover or of
poet
Could tell our love and make
thee know it,
Among the Nations bright
beyond compare?
What were our lives
without thee?
What all our lives to
save thee?
We reck not what we
gave thee;
We will not dare to
doubt thee.
But ask whatever else, and we
will dare!

(LOWELL: *Harvard Commemoration Ode*,

strophe xii. 1865.)

This is undoubtedly the finest of odes by American poets, and remains one of the glories of new-world poetry. Its irregular measures were designed by Mr. Lowell to fit the poem for public reading (see his letter to Mr. Gosse on the subject, quoted in the Appendix to Gosse's *Seventeenth Century Studies*).

In the Year of the great Crime,
When the false English nobles and
their Jew,
By God demented, slew
The Trust they stood thrice pledged to
keep from wrong,
One said, Take up thy Song,
That breathes the mild and almost
mythic time
Of England's prime!
But I, Ah, me,
The freedom of the few
That, in our free Land, were indeed
the free,
Can song renew?
Ill singing 'tis with blotting prison-
bars,
How high soe'er, betwixt us and the
stars;
Ill singing 'tis when there are none to
hear;
And days are near
When England shall forget
The fading glow which, for a little
while,
Illumes her yet,
The lovely smile
That grows so faint and wan,

Her people shouting in her dying ear:
Are not jays twain worth two of any
swan!
Harsh words and brief asks the
dishonor'd Year.

(COVENTRY PATMORE: Ode ix. Printed 1868.)

Mr. Patmore's use of the irregular ode forms is of particular interest. He made a special study of the form, and applied it more widely than is commonly done. His first odes were printed (not published) in 1868, and from one of these the present specimen is taken. Later (1877), in connection with *The Unknown Eros*, he set forth his view of the ode form, treating it not as lawless but as governed by laws of its own. "Nearly all English metres," he said, "owe their existence as metres to 'catalexis,' or pause, for the time of one or more feet, and, as a rule, the position and amount of catalexis, are fixed. But the verse in which this volume is written is catalectic *par excellence*, employing the pause (as it does the rhyme) with freedom only limited by the exigencies of poetic passion. From the time of Drummond of Hawthornden to our own, some of the noblest flights of English poetry have been taken on the wings of this verse; but with ordinary readers it has been more or less discredited by the far greater number of abortive efforts, on the part sometimes of considerable poets, to adapt it to purposes with which it has no expressional correspondence; or to vary it by rhythmical movements which are destructive of its character. Some persons, unlearned in the subject of this metre, have objected to this kind of verse that it is 'lawless.' But it has its laws as truly as any other. In its highest order, the lyric or

'ode,' it is a tetrameter, the line having the time of eight iambics. When it descends to narrative, or the expression of a less exalted strain of thought, it becomes a trimeter, having the time of six iambics, or even a dimeter, with the time of four; and it is allowable to vary the tetrameter 'ode' by the occasional introduction of passages in either or both of these inferior measures, but not, I think, by the use of any other. The license to rhyme at indefinite intervals is counterbalanced ... by unusual frequency in the recurrence of the same rhyme." (From Patmore's Prefatory Note to *The Unknown Eros*; quoted by William Sharp, in the Introduction to *Great Odes*, p. xxxii.)[40]

On the shores of a Continent cast,
She won the inviolate soil
By loss of heirdom of all the Past,
And faith in the royal right of Toil!
She planted homes on the savage sod:
Into the wilderness lone
She walked with fearless feet,
In her hand the divining-rod,
Till the veins of the mountains
beat
With fire of metal and force of stone!
She set the speed of the river-head
To turn the mills of her
bread;
She drove her ploughshare
deep
Through the prairie's thousand-
centuried sleep.
To the South, and West, and
North,
She called Pathfinder

forth,
Her faithful and sole
companion
Where the flushed Sierra, snow-
starred,
Her way to the sunset
barred,
And the nameless rivers in thunder
and foam
Channeled the terrible
canyon!
Nor paused, till her uttermost
home
Was built, in the smile of a softer sky
And the glory of beauty yet to be,
Where the haunted waves of Asia die
On the strand of the world-wide
sea.

(BAYARD TAYLOR: *National Ode*,
strophe iii. 1876.)

Soon shall the Cape Ann children
shout in glee,
Spying the arbutus, spring's dear
recluse;
Hill lads at dawn shall hearken the
wild goose
Go honking northward over
Tennessee;
West from Oswego to Sault Sainte-
Marie,
And on to where the Pictured Rocks
are hung,
And yonder where, gigantic, willful,
young,
Chicago sitteth at the northwest gates,

With restless violent hands and casual
tongue
Moulding her mighty fates,
The Lakes shall robe them in ethereal
sheen;
And like a larger sea, the vital green
Of springing wheat shall vastly be
outflung
Over Dakota and the prairie states.
By desert people immemorial
On Arizonan mesas shall be done
Dim rites unto the thunder and the
sun;
Nor shall the primal gods lack
sacrifice
More splendid, when the white
Sierras call
Unto the Rockies straightway to arise
And dance before the unveiled ark of
the year,
Sounding their windy cedars as for
shawms,
Unrolling rivers clear
For flutter of broad phylacteries;
While Shasta signals to Alaskan seas
That watch old sluggish glaciers
downward creep
To fling their icebergs thundering
from the steep,
And Mariposa through the purple
calms
Gazes at far Hawaii crowned with
palms
Where East and West are met,—
A rich seal on the ocean's bosom set
To say that East and West are twain,

With different loss and gain:
The Lord hath sundered them; let
them be sundered yet....

... Ah no!
We have not fallen so,
We are our fathers' sons: let those
who lead us know!
'Twas only yesterday sick Cuba's cry
Came up the tropic wind, 'Now help
us, for we die!'
Then Alabama heard,
And rising, pale, to Maine and Idaho
Shouted a burning word.
Proud state with proud impassioned
state conferred,
And at the lifting of a hand sprang
forth,
East, west, and south, and north,
Beautiful armies. Oh, by the sweet
blood and young,
Shed on the awful hill slope at San
Juan,
By the unforgotten names of eager
boys
Who might have tasted girls' love and
been stung
With the old mystic joys
And starry griefs, now the spring
nights come on,
But that the heart of youth is
generous,—
We charge you, ye who lead us,
Breathe on their chivalry no hint of
stain!
Turn not their new-world victories to

gain!
One least leaf plucked for chaffer
from the bays
Of their dear praise,
One jot of their pure conquest put to
hire,
The implacable republic will require.

(WILLIAM VAUGHN MOODY: *An Ode in Time of Hesitation*, strophes iii. and ix. 1900.)

C.—CHORAL

Different from either of the two classes of odes already represented are the irregular choral measures used by a few English poets in translation or imitation of the odes of the Greek drama.

Chorus.

O dearly bought revenge, yet
glorious!
Living or dying thou hast fulfilled
The work for which thou wast
foretold
To Israel, and now liest victorious
Among thy slain self-killed;
Not willingly, but tangled in the fold
Of dire Necessity, whose law in death
conjoined
Thee with thy slaughtered foes, in
number more
Than all thy life had slain before.

Semi-chorus.

While their hearts were jocund and
sublime,
Drunk with idolatry, drunk with wine
And fat regorged of bulls and goats,
Chaunting their idol, and preferring
Before our living Dread, who dwells
In Silo, his bright sanctuary,
Among them he a spirit of phrenzy
sent,
Who hurt their minds,
And urged them on with mad desire
To call in haste for their destroyer.
They, only set on sport and play,
Unweetingly importuned
Their own destruction to come speedy
upon them.
So fond are mortal men,
Fallen into wrath divine,

As their own ruin on themselves to
invite,
Insensate left, or to sense reprobate,
And with blindness internal struck.

Semi-chorus.

But he, though blind of sight,
Despised, and thought extinguished
quite,
With inward eyes illuminated,
His fiery virtue roused
From under ashes into sudden flame,
And as an evening dragon came,
Assailant on the perched roosts
And nests in order ranged
Of tame villatic fowl, but as an eagle
His cloudless thunder bolted on their
heads.
So Virtue, given for lost,
Depressed and overthrown, as
seemed,
Like that self-begotten bird
In the Arabian woods embost,
That no second knows nor third,
And lay erewhile a holocaust,
From out her ashy womb now
teemed,
Revives, reflourishes, then vigorous
most
When most unactive deemed;
And, though her body die, her fame
survives,
A secular bird, ages of lives.

(MILTON: *Samson Agonistes*, ll.
1660-1707. 1671.)

Of this passage Mr. Swinburne says: "It is hard to realize and hopeless to reproduce the musical force of classic metres so recondite and exquisite as the choral parts of a Greek play. Even Milton could not; though with his godlike instinct and his godlike might of hand he made a kind of strange and enormous harmony by intermixture of assonance and rhyme with irregular blank verse, as in that last Titanic chorus of Samson which utters over the fallen Philistines the trumpet-blast and thunder of its triumphs." (*Essays and Studies*, pp. 162, 163.)

The lyre's voice is lovely everywhere;
In the court of gods, in the city of men,
And in the lonely rock-strewn mountain-glen,
In the still mountain air.
Only to Typho it sounds hatefully,—
To Typho only, the rebel o'erthrown,
Through whose heart Etna drives her roots of stone,
To embed them in the sea.
Wherefore dost thou groan so loud?
Wherefore do thy nostrils flash,
Through the dark night, suddenly,
Typho, such red jets of flame?
Is thy tortured heart still proud?
Is thy fire-scathed arm still rash?
Still alert thy stone-crushed frame?
Doth thy fierce soul still deplore
Thine ancient rout by the Cilician hills,
And that curst treachery on the Mount of Gore?
Do thy bloodshot eyes still weep

The fight which crowned thine ills,
Thy last mischance on this Sicilian deep?
Hast thou sworn, in thy sad lair,
Where erst the strong sea-currents sucked thee down,
Never to cease to writhe, and try to rest,
Letting the sea-stream wander through thy hair?
That thy groans, like thunder prest,
Begin to roll, and almost drown
The sweet notes whose lulling spell
Gods and the race of mortals love so well,
When through thy caves thou hearest music swell?

But an awful pleasure bland
Spreading o'er the Thunderer's face,
When the sound climbs near his seat,
The Olympian council sees;
As he lets his lax right hand,
Which the lightnings doth embrace,
Sink upon his mighty knees.
And the eagle, at the beck
Of the appeasing, gracious harmony,
Droops all his sheeny, brown, deep-feathered neck,
Nestling nearer to Jove's feet;
While o'er his sovran eye
The curtains of the blue films slowly meet.
And the white Olympus-peaks
Rosily brighten, and the soothed gods smile

At one another from their golden
chairs,
And no one round the charmed circle
speaks.
Only the loved Hebe bears
The cup about, whose draughts
beguile
Pain and care, with a dark store
Of fresh-pulled violets wreathed and
nodding o'er;
And her flushed feet glow on the
marble floor.

(MATTHEW ARNOLD: *Empedocles on Etna*, Act II. Song of Callicles. 1853.)

Wherefore to me, this fear—
Groundedly stationed here
Fronting my heart, the portent-
watcher—flits she?
Wherefore should prophet-play
The uncalled and unpaid lay,
Nor—having spat forth fear, like bad
dreams—sits she
On the mind's throne beloved—well-
suasive Boldness?
For time, since, by a throw of all the
hands,
The boat's stern-cables touched the
sands,
Has passed from youth to oldness,—
When under Ilion rushed the ship-
borne bands.

And from my eyes I learn—
Being myself my witness—their
return.

Yet, all the same, without a lyre, my
soul,
Itself its teacher too, chants from
within
Erinus' dirge, not having now the
whole
Of Hope's dear boldness: nor my
inwards sin—
The heart that's rolled in whirls
against the mind
Justly presageful of a fate behind.
But I pray—things false, from my
hope, may fall
Into the fate that's not-fulfilled-at-all!

Especially at least, of health that's
great
The term's insatiable: for, its weight
—A neighbor, with a common wall
between—
Ever will sickness lean;
And destiny, her course pursuing
straight,
Has struck man's ship against a reef
unseen.
Now, when a portion, rather than the
treasure
Fear casts from sling, with peril in
right measure,
It has not sunk—the universal freight,
(With misery freighted over-full,)
Nor has fear whelmed the hull.
Then too the gift of Zeus,
Two-handedly profuse,
Even from the furrows' yield for
yearly use

Has done away with famine, the
disease;
But blood of man to earth once
falling,—deadly, black,—
In times ere these,—
Who may, by singing spells, call
back?
Zeus had not else stopped one who
rightly knew
The way to bring the dead again.
But, did not an appointed Fate
constrain
The Fate from gods, to bear no more
than due,
My heart, outstripping what tongue
utters,
Would have all out: which now, in
darkness, mutters
Moodily grieved, nor ever hopes to
find
How she a word in season may
unwind
From out the enkindling mind.

(BROWNING: *Agamemnon*; chorus.
1877.)

Of the same general metrical character as the irregular odes are certain poems (like some of Patmore's) with no regularly organized structure and varying lengths of line. See, for example, Milton's verses *At a Solemn Music* and *On Time*; Swinburne's *Thalassius* and *On the Cliffs*; and William Morris's *On a fair Spring Morning*. Compare, also, the effect of the irregular strophic forms in Southey's *Curse of Kehama*, Shelley's *Queen Mab*, and the like.[41]

FOOTNOTES:

[39] On English ode-forms, see the introductions to Mr. Gosse's *English Odes* and Mr. William Sharp's *Great Odes*; also Schipper, vol. ii. p. 792.

[40] Mr. Patmore has used the same sort of verse for narrative poetry, with unusual daring but also with unusual success. For an example see his *Amelia*, included in the *Golden Treasury*, Second Series. The following passage exhibits the metrical method of the poem at its best:

"And so we went alone
By walls o'er which the lilac's
numerous plume
Shook down perfume;
Trim plots close blown
With daisies, in conspicuous
myriads seen,
Engross'd each one
With single ardor for her spouse,
the sun;
Garths in their glad array
Of white and ruddy branch,
auroral, gay,
With azure chill the maiden
flower between;
Meadows of fervid green,
With sometime sudden prospect
of untold
Cowslips, like chance-found
gold;
And broadcast buttercups at
joyful gaze,
Rending the air with praise,
Like the six-hundred-thousand-
voiced shout
Of Jacob camp'd in Midian put
to rout;

Then through the Park,
Where Spring to livelier gloom
Quickened the cedars dark,
And, 'gainst the clear sky cold,
Which shone afar
Crowded with sunny alps
oracular,
Great chestnuts raised
themselves abroad like
cliffs of bloom."

[41] The easy abuse of these irregular measures is amusingly parodied by Mr. Owen Seaman, in a burlesque of an ode of Mr. Le Gallienne's:

"Is this the Seine?
And am I altogether wrong
About the brain,
Dreaming I hear the British tongue?
Dear Heaven! what a rhyme!
And yet 'tis all as good
As some that I have fashioned in my
time,
Like *bud* and *wood*;
And on the other hand you couldn't
have a more precise or neater
Metre."

(*The Battle of the Bays*, p. 37.)

VI. IMITATIONS OF CLASSICAL METRES

While English verse is generally admitted to be based on a different system from that of Greek and Latin poetry (the element of accent obscuring that of

quantity in English prosody, as the element of quantity obscures that of accent in classical prosody), there have been repeated attempts to introduce the more familiar classical measures into English. Most of these attempts have been academic and have attracted the attention only of critics and scholars; a few have interested the reading public.

Imitations of classical verse in English may conveniently be divided into two classes: imitations of lyrical measures, and imitations of the dactylic hexameter. The latter group is of course much the larger, especially in modern poetry. It will appear that the classical measures might also be divided into two groups according to another distinction: those attempting to observe the quantitative prosody of the original language, and those in which the original measure is transmuted into frankly accentual verse.

The original impulse toward this classical or pseudo-classical verse was a product of the Renaissance, when all forms of art not based on Greek and Latin models were suspected. Rime, not being found in the poetry of the classical languages, was treated as a product of the dark ages,—the invention of "Goths and Huns." See Roger Ascham's *Schoolmaster* (1570) for the most characteristic representative of this phase of thought in England. The new forms of verse were, naturally enough, first tried in Italy. Schipper traces the beginning of the movement to Alberti (1404-1484). A century later Trissino wrote his *Sophonisbe* and *Italia Liberata* in unrimed verse, in professed imitation of Homer, and was looked upon as the inventor of *versi sciolti*, that is, verses "freed" from rime (compare the remarks of Milton in the prefatory note to *Paradise Lost*). In 1539 Claudio Tolomei wrote *Versi e Regole della Poesia Nuova*, a systematic attempt to introduce the classical versification. He also wrote hexameters and sapphics. In France there were similar efforts in the sixteenth century. Mousset

translated Homer into hexameters in 1530, and A. de Baïf, a member of the "Pleiade" (1532-1589), devised some French hexameters which he called *vers baïfins*. The English experiments were worked out independently, and yet under the same neo-classical influences. On this subject, see Schipper, vol. ii. pp. 2-12, 439-464.

A.—LYRICAL MEASURES

Reason, tell me thy mind, if here be reason
In this strange violence, to make resistance
Where sweet graces erect the stately banner
Of Virtue's regiment, shining in harness
Of Fortune's diadems, by Beauty mustered:
Say, then, Reason, I say, what is thy counsel?

(SIR PHILIP SIDNEY: *Phaleuciakes*, from the *Arcadia*, ab. 1580.)

This is the measure commonly called "Phalæcian." Compare Tennyson's imitation of it, in his Hendecasyllabics quoted below.

O sweet woods, the delight of solitariness!
O how much I do like your solitariness!
Where man's mind hath a freed consideration
Of goodness to receive lovely

direction.
Where senses do behold the order of
heavenly host,
And wise thoughts do behold what
the Creator is.

(SIR PHILIP SIDNEY: *Asclepiadics*, from
the *Arcadia*. ab. 1580.)

This is the measure now called "Lesser Asclepiadean."

My Muse, what ails this ardor
To blaze my only secrets?
Alas, it is no glory
To sing my own decay'd state.
Alas, it is no comfort
To speak without an answer;
Alas, it is no wisdom
To show the wound without cure.

(SIR PHILIP SIDNEY: *Anacreontics*, from
the *Arcadia*. ab. 1580.)

Sidney was a member of the little group of classical students who called themselves the "Areopagus," and who were interested in introducing classical measures into English verse. Others of the group were Gabriel Harvey and Edmund Spenser, from whose correspondence most of our information regarding the movement is derived. (See the letters in Grosart's edition of Harvey's Works, vol. i. pp. 7-9, 20-24, 35-37, 75-76, 99-107.) Spenser's only known efforts in the same direction are also preserved in this correspondence; a poem in twenty-one iambic trimeters, and this "tetrasticon":—

"See yee the blindfoulded pretie god,

that feathered archer,
Of lovers miseries which maketh
his bloodie game?
Wote ye why his moother with a
veale hath coovered his face?
Trust me, least he my loove
happely chaunce to
beholde."

It would seem that Spenser was attempting, more conscientiously than Sidney did, to follow the classical rules of quantity in making his verses; hence they are more difficult to read according to English rhythm. Sidney's experiments in the classical versification are perhaps the most successful, to modern taste, of all those made in the Elizabethan period. Among the other songs in the *Arcadia* will be found sapphics and hexameters.

See especially Spenser's letter of April, 1580, and Harvey's reply (*op. cit.*, vol. i. pp. 35, 99), for notable passages indicating the seriousness with which the members of the "Areopagus" were trying to orm English verse so as to bring it under the rules of classical prosody. The relations of quantity and accent were not understood, as indeed they may be said still not to be understood for the English language. Spenser suggests, in a frequently quoted passage, that in the word *carpenter* the middle syllable is "short in speech, when it shall be read long in verse,"—that is, because the vowel is followed by two consonants; hence it "seemeth like a lame gosling that draweth one legge after her.... But it is to be wonne with custome, and rough words must be subdued with use." Harvey resented the idea that the common pronunciation of words could be departed from in order to conform them to arbitrary metrical rules, and in his reply said: "You shall never have my subscription or consent ... to make your Carpēnter our Carpĕnter, an inche longer or bigger, than God and his Englishe people

have made him.... Else never heard I any that durst presume so much over the Englishe ... as to alter the quantitie of any one sillable, otherwise than oure common speache and generall receyved custome woulde beare them oute." But while all English verse must be consistent with "the vulgare and naturall mother prosodye," Harvey does not despair of finding a system that shall be at the same time "countervaileable to the best tongues" in making possible quantitative verse. The whole passage is well worth reading. The best account of the movement toward classical versification in the days of the "Areopagus" will be found in Professor Schelling's *Poetic and Verse Criticism in the Reign of Elizabeth* (Publications of the University of Pennsylvania).

O ye Nymphes most fine who resort
to this brooke,
For to bathe there your pretty breasts
at all times:
Leave the watrish bowres, hyther and
to me come at my request
nowe.

And ye Virgins trymme who resort to
Parnass,
Whence the learned well Helicon
beginneth:
Helpe to blase her worthy deserts,
that all els mounteth above
farre.

(WILLIAM WEBBE: Sapphic Verse, in *A Discourse of English Poetrie*. 1586.)

Webbe was another of those who believed "that if the true kind of versifying in immitation of Greekes and Latines, had been practised in the English tongue, ... it would long ere this have aspyred to as full

perfection, as in anie other tongue whatsoever." So he added to his *Discourse* (see Arber Reprint, pp. 67-84) a discussion of the principles of quantitative prosody, and some specimens of what might be done by way of experiment.[42] The Sapphics from which the present specimen is taken are a paraphrase of Spenser's praise of Elizabeth in the fourth eclogue of the *Shepherd's Calendar*. (For a specimen of Webbe's hexameters, see p. 334, below.)

Greatest in thy wars,
Greater in thy peace,
Dread Elizabeth;
Our muse only truth,
Figments cannot use,
Thy ritch name to deck
That itselfe adorns:
But should now this age
Let all poesye fayne,
Fayning poesy could
Nothing faine at all
Worthy halfe thy fame.

(THOMAS CAMPION: Iambic Dimeter,
"an example Lyrical," in *Observations in the Art of English Poesie*. 1602.)

Rose-cheekt Lawra come
Sing thou smoothly with thy beawtie's
Silent musick, either other
Sweetely gracing.

Lovely formes do flowe
From concent devinely framed,
Heav'n is musick, and thy beawtie's
Birth is heavenly.

(THOMAS CAMPION: Trochaic Dimeter,
ib.)

The full title of Campion's work was: "Observations in the Art of English Poesie; wherein it is demonstratively proved, and by example confirmed, that the English toong will receive eight severall kinds of numbers, proper to it selfe, which are all in this booke set forth, and were never before this time by any man attempted." Campion, like other classical versifiers, condemned rime as a barbarity; but in imitating the classical measures he does not violate the normal English accent, so that his verses read smoothly in English rhythm. Curiously enough, he includes among his innovations an iambic measure which proves to be ordinary decasyllabic verse:

"Goe numbers boldly passe, stay not
for ayde
Of shifting rime, that easie flatterer,
Whose witchcraft can the ruder eares
beguile".

Professor Schelling exclaims: "Where could the musical Doctor have kept his ears all this time? to propose this measure thus innocently for the drama, when the English stage had been ringing with his 'licentiate iambics' for more than two decades!"

The second of the specimens quoted above Campion describes as a dimeter "whose first foote may either be a Sponde or Trochy: the two verses following are both of them Trochaical, and consist of foure feete, the first of either of them being a Spondee or Trochy, the other three only Trochyes. The fourth and last verse is made of two Trochyes. The number is voluble and fit to expresse any amorous conceit."

(See also another of Campion's measures, in Part One, p. 27.)[43]

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries few, if any, notable English poems were written in the classical measures. Goldsmith, in one of his essays (xviii, on Versification), maintained the possibility of reducing English words to the classical prosody, and said: "We have seen several late specimens of English hexameters and sapphics so happily composed that, by attaching them to the idea of ancient measure, we found them in all respects as melodious and agreeable to the ear as the works of Virgil and Anacreon, or Horace." But whose these were it seems to be impossible to say.

Needy knife-grinder! whither are you
going?
Rough is the road, your wheel is out
of order—
Bleak blows the blast;—your hat has
got a hole in't,
So have
your
breeches!

Weary knife-grinder! little think the
proud ones
Who in their coaches roll along the
turnpike-
road, what hard work 'tis crying all
day, "Knives and
Scissors to
grind
O!"

(CANNING and FRERE: *Sapphics; the*

Friend of Humanity and the Knife-Grinder, in the *Anti-Jacobin*, November, 1797).

These "Sapphics" were a burlesque of some by Southey in similar stanzas, opening:

"Cold was the night wind, drifting fast
the snow fell,
Wide were the downs and shelterless
and naked,
When a poor wanderer struggled on
her journey,
Weary and
way-
sore."

"In this poem," said the *Anti-Jacobin*, not unjustly, "the pathos of the matter is not a little relieved by the absurdity of the metre."

O mighty-mouth'd inventor of
harmonies,
O skill'd to sing of Time or Eternity,
God-gifted organ-voice of
England,
Milton, a name to resound
for ages;
Whose Titan angels, Gabriel, Abdiel,
Starr'd from Jehovah's gorgeous
armories,
Tower, as the deep-domed
empyrean
Rings to the roar of an angel
onset.

(TENNYSON: *Milton; Alcaics.*)

O you chorus of indolent reviewers,
Irresponsible, indolent reviewers,
Look, I come to the test, a tiny poem
All composed in a metre of Catullus,
All in quantity, careful of my motion,
Like the skater on ice that hardly
bears him,
Lest I fall unawares before the people,
Waking laughter in indolent
reviewers.
Should I flounder awhile without a
tumble
Thro' this metrification of Catullus,
They should speak to me not without
a welcome,
All that chorus of indolent reviewers.
Hard, hard, hard is it, only not to
tumble,
So fantastical is the dainty metre.
Wherefore slight me not wholly, nor
believe me
Too presumptuous, indolent
reviewers.

(TENNYSON: *Hendecasyllabics.*)

On the first of these stanzas of Tennyson, compare his stanzas to Maurice, and note, p. 77, above. With the hendecasyllabics, compare the "Phaleuciakes" of Sidney, p. 331, above, and "Hendecasyllabics" in Swinburne's *Poems and Ballads*.

Tennyson took no little interest in the relations of classical and English metres, and seems to have believed in the possibility of genuine English quantitative verse. He did not, however, regard it as of practical value, and treated his own experiments

as trifles. In his Memoirs, written by his son, Tennyson is said to have observed that he knew the quantity of every English word except *scissors*, a mysterious saying which may be set beside Southey's declaration that *Egypt* is the only spondee in the English language. His son also preserves an extemporaneous line composed by Tennyson to illustrate the observance of quantity "regardless of accent":

> "All men alike hate slops, particularly
> gruel;"

and a sapphic stanza, also extemporized, quantitative but conforming to common accent:

> "Faded ev'ry violet, all the roses;
> Gone the glorious promise; and the
> victim,
> Broken in this anger of Aphrodite,
> Yields to the victor."
>
> (*Memoir*, vol. ii. p. 231.)

> God, on verdurous Helicon
> Dweller, child of Urania,
> Thou that draw'st to the man the
> fair
> Maiden, O Hymenæus, O
> Hymen, O Hymenæus!
>
> (ROBINSON ELLIS: *Poems of Catullus*,
> LXI. 1871.)

Mr. Ellis's translations from Catullus are all "in the metres of the original," and are among the most interesting specimens of modern classical versifying.

"Tennyson's Alcaics and Hendecasyllabics," he said in his Preface, "suggested to me the new principle on which I was to go to work. It was not sufficient to reproduce the ancient metres, unless the ancient quantity was reproduced also." Of special interest is the imitation of the "almost unapproachable" galliambic verse of the *Attis* (pp. 49-53):

> "When awoke the sun, the golden,
> that his eyes heaven-orient
> Scann'd lustrous air, the rude seas,
> earth's massy solidity,
> When he smote the shadowy twilight
> with his healthy team sublime,
> Then arous'd was Attis; o'er him sleep
> hastily fled away
> To Pasithea's arms immortal with a
> tremulous hovering."

As Mr. Ellis observes, the metre of Tennyson's *Boadicea* was modelled on this of Catullus. Compare also Mr. George Meredith's *Phaëthon*, "attempted in the galliambic measure":

> "At the coming up of Phœbus, the all-
> luminous charioteer,
> Double-visaged stand the mountains
> in imperial multitudes,
> And with shadows dappled, men sing
> to him, Hail, O Beneficent;
> For they shudder chill, the earth-
> vales, at his clouding, shudder
> to black."
>
> —Saw the white implacable
> Aphrodite,

Saw the hair unbound and the feet
unsandalled
Shine as fire of sunset on western
waters;
Saw the reluctant

Feet, the straining plumes of the
doves that drew her,
Looking always, looking with necks
reverted,
Back to Lesbos, back to the hills
whereunder
Shone Mitylene.

(SWINBURNE: *Sapphics*, in *Poems and Ballads*.)

Love, what ailed thee to leave life
that was made lovely, we
thought, with love?
What sweet visions of sleep lured thee
away, down from the light
above?

What strange faces of dreams, voices
that called, hands that were
raised to wave,
Lured or led thee, alas, out of the sun,
down to the sunless grave?

(SWINBURNE: *Choriambics*, in *Poems and Ballads*, Second Series, 1878.)

Swinburne's imitations of classical measures are frankly accentual, with no effort to introduce fixed quantities into English.

B.—DACTYLIC HEXAMETER

Lady, reserved by the heavens to do
pastors' company honor,
Joining your sweet voice to the rural
Muse of a desert,
Here you fully do find this strange
operation of love,
How to the woods Love runs, as well
as rides to the palace,
Neither he bears reverence to a prince
nor pity to beggar,
But (like a point in midst of a circle)
is still of a nearness,
All to a lesson he draws, neither hills
nor caves can avoid him.

(SIR PHILIP SIDNEY: *Dorus and Zelmane*,
in the *Arcadia*. ab. 1580.)

Sidney was evidently trying to write genuinely quantitative hexameters. Thus "of love," in the third line, may be regarded as a quantitative spondee (the *o* being followed by two consonants), although the *of* would not naturally be stressed. In like manner it is very possible that "pallace" was spelled with two *l*'s in order to make the first syllable seem long.

Sidney's hexameters are the first in literary verse which have come down to us; but there must have been earlier efforts at least by the time of Ascham's *Schoolmaster* (1570), which vigorously attacked "our rude beggerly ryming, brought first into Italie by Gothes and Hunnes, ... and at last receyved into England by men of excellent wit in deede, but of small learning, and less judgement in that behalfe."

(Arber Reprint, p. 145.) One hexameter distich by a contemporary and friend of Ascham's, Master Watson of Cambridge, is handed down to us by Webbe, as being "common in the mouthes of all men":

"All travellers doo gladlie report great
praise to Ulisses
For that he knewe manie mens
maners, and saw many citties."

(*Discourse of English Poetrie*, p. 72.)

But the Queene in meane while with
carks quandare deepe anguisht,
Her wound fed by Venus, with
firebayt smoldred is hooked.
Thee wights doughtye manhood leagd
with gentilytye nobil,
His woords fitlye placed, with his
hevnly phisnomye pleasing,
March throgh her hert mustring, al in
her brest deepelye she printeth.
Theese carcking cratchets her
sleeping natural hynder.
Thee next day foloing Phœbus dyd
clarifye brightlye
Thee world with luster, watrye shaads
Aurora remooved,
When to her deere sister with woords
haulf gyddye she raveth.
"Sister An, I merveyle, what dreams
me terrefye napping,
What newcom travayler, what guest
in my harborye lighted?
How brave he dooth court yt? what
strength and coorrage he

carryes?
I beleve yt certeyn (ne yet hold I yt
vaynelye reported)
That fro the great linnadge of gods his
pettegre shooteth."

(RICHARD STANYHURST: Vergil's *Æneid*,
bk. iv. 1582.)

Stanyhurst's *Vergil* is one of the curiosities of Elizabethan literature, not only from its verse-form but from its spelling and diction. The translator declares himself a disciple of Ascham, in his antipathy to rimed verse; "What Tom Towly is so simple," he asks, "that wyl not attempt too bee a *rithmoure*?" In an address to the Learned Reader he explains his system of English quantitative prosody. In 1593 Stanyhurst's hexameters were severely noticed in a passage by Thomas Nash directed primarily against the classical versifying of Gabriel Harvey. "The hexamiter verse," said Nash, "I graunt to be a gentleman of an auncient house (so is many an English begger), yet this clyme of ours he cannot thrive in; our speech is too craggy for him to set his plough in; hee goes twitching and hopping in our language, like a man running upon quagmiers, up the hill in one syllable and down the dale in another, retaining no part of that stately smooth gate which he vaunts himselfe with among the Greeks and Latins.... Master Stannyhurst (though otherwise learned) trod a foule lumbring boystrous wallowing measure, in his translation of Virgil." (Works of Nash, Grosart edition, vol. ii. pp. 237, 238.)

Stanyhurst was also ridiculed by Joseph Hall, in the Satires of his *Virgidemiarum* (1597):

"Another scorns the home-spun thread
of rhymes,
Match'd with the lofty feet of elder
times:
Give me the numbred verse that
Virgil sung,
And Virgil's self shall speak the
English tongue:
Manhood and garboiles shall he
chaunt with chaunged feet
And head-strong dactyls making
music meet.
The nimble dactyl striving to out-go,
The drawling spondees pacing it
below.
The lingring spondees, labouring to
delay,
The breathless dactyls with a sudden
stay.
Whoever saw a colt wanton and wild
Yok'd with a slow-foot ox on fallow
field,
Can right areed how handsomely
besets
Dull spondees with the English
dactylets."

(CHALMERS'S *English Poets*, vol. v. p. 266.)

Compare the lines of Chapman, in his *Hymn to Cynthia*, where he says that

"sweet
poesy
Will not be clad in her supremacy
With those strange garments (Rome's

hexameters)
As she is English; but in right prefers
Our native robes."

See also, in Arber's edition of Stanyhurst in the *English Scholar's Library*, an account of another work in hexameters, published anonymously in 1599: the *First Booke of the Preservation of King Henry the VII*. This writer admired Stanyhurst's effort, but desired "him to refile" his verses into more polished English:

"If the Poet Stanihurst yet live and
feedeth on ay-er,
I do request him (as one that wisheth
a grace to the meter)
With wordes significant to refile and
finely to polishe
Those fower *Æneis*, that he late
translated in English."

In the same connection the writer tells us definitely what is to be hoped from the "trew kind of Hexametred and Pentametred verse." "First it will enrich our speach with good and significant wordes: Secondly it will bring a delight and pleasure to the skilfull Reader, when he seeth them formally compyled: And thirdly it will incourage and learne the good and godly Students, that affect Poetry, and are naturally enclyned thereunto, to make the like: Fourthly it will direct a trew Idioma, and will teach trew Orthography."[44]

Tityrus, happilie thou lyste tumbling
under a beech tree,
All in a fine oate pipe these sweete
songs lustilie chaunting:
We, poore soules goe to wracke, and

from these coastes be
remooved,
And fro our pastures sweete: thou
Tityr, at ease in a shade plott
Makst thicke groves to resound with
songes of brave Amarillis.

(WILLIAM WEBBE: Vergil's First Eclogue, in *A Discourse of English Poetrie*. 1586.)

Webbe prefaces his hexameters with a reference to those made by Gabriel Harvey, and says: "I for my part, so farre as those examples would leade me, and mine owne small skyll affoorde me, have blundered upon these fewe; whereinto I have translated the two first Æglogues of Virgill: because I thought no matter of my owne invention, nor any other of antiquitye more fitte for tryal of thys thyng, before there were some more speciall direction, which might leade to a lesse troublesome manner of wryting." (Arber Reprint, p. 72.)

Thou, who roll'st in the firmament,
round as the shield of my
fathers,
Whence is thy girdle of glory, O Sun!
and thy light everlasting?
Forth thou comest in thy awful
beauty; the stars at thy rising
Haste to their azure pavilions; the
moon sinks pale in the waters;
But thou movest alone; who dareth to
wander beside thee?
Oaks of the mountains decay, and the
hard oak crumbles asunder;

Ocean shrinks and again grows; lost is
the moon from the heavens;
Whilst thou ever remainest the same
to rejoice in thy brightness.

(WILLIAM TAYLOR: Paraphrase of
Ossian's Hymn to the Sun. 1796.)

When English hexameters were revived at the end of the eighteenth century, it was in good part under German influence. Bodmer, Klopstock, and Voss, followed later by Goethe, made the German hexameter popular; and William Taylor of Norwich, who in many ways helped to familiarize his countrymen with German literature, became interested in the form. In 1796, the year of Goethe's *Hermann und Dorothea*, he contributed to the *Monthly Magazine* an article called "English Hexameters Exemplified," in which occurred the paraphrase from Ossian here quoted. Taylor pointed out that the hexameter of the Germans was purely accentual. They were "obliged, by the scarceness of long vowels and the rifeness of short syllables in their language, to tolerate the frequent substitution of trochees for spondees in their hexameter verse; and they scan, like other modern nations, by emphasis, not by position." (Quoted in J. W. Robberds's *Memoir of William Taylor of Norwich*, vol. i. pp. 157 ff.) Most later writers of English hexameters have followed the line here indicated, and have frankly abandoned the effort to represent the quantities of classical prosody.

Earth! thou mother of numberless
children, the nurse and the
mother,
Sister thou of the stars, and beloved

by the Sun, the rejoicer!
Guardian and friend of the moon, O
Earth, whom the comets forget
not,
Yea, in the measureless distance
wheel round and again they
behold thee!
Fadeless and young (and what if the
latest birth of creation?)
Bride and consort of Heaven, that
looks down upon thee
enamoured!

(COLERIDGE: *Hymn to the Earth.* 1799.)

Coleridge made several experiments in hexameters at this time, and planned, together with Southey, a long hexameter poem on Mohammed. To Wordsworth he sent an experiment of the same kind in a lighter vein:

"Smooth out the folds of my letter,
and place it on desk or on
table;
Place it on table or desk; and your
right hands loosely half-
closing,
Gently sustain them in air, and
extending the digit didactic,
Rest it a moment on each of the forks
of the five-forked left hand,
Twice on the breadth of the thumb,
and once on the tip of each
finger,
Read with a nod of the head in a
humoring recitativo;
And, as I live, you will see my
hexameters hopping before

you.
This is a galloping measure, a hop,
and a trot, and a gallop!"

(Wordsworth's *Memoirs*, quoted in Coleridge's Poems, Aldine edition, vol. ii. p. 307.)

Coleridge also translated from Schiller the well-known distich describing and exemplifying the elegiac verse of Ovid:

"In the hexameter rises the fountain's
silvery column;
In the pentameter aye falling in
melody back."

This distich, it is interesting to find, was revised by Tennyson so as to represent the measure quantitatively rather than accentually:

"Up springs hexameter, with might, as
a fountain arising,
Lightly the fountain falls, lightly the
pentameter."

Lift up your heads, ye gates; and ye
everlasting portals,
Be ye lift up! Behold, the Worthies are
there to receive him,—
They who, in later days or in elder
ages, ennobled
Britain's dear name. Bede I beheld,
who, humble and holy,
Shone like a single star, serene in a
night of darkness.
Bacon also was there, the marvellous

Friar; and he who
Struck the spark from which the
Bohemian kindled his taper;
Thence the flame, long and hardly
preserved, was to Luther
transmitted,—
Mighty soul; and he lifted his torch,
and enlightened the nations.

(SOUTHEY: *A Vision of Judgment*, ix. 1821.)

Southey followed the example of William Taylor in attempting to construct hexameters "which would be perfectly consistent with the character of our language, and capable of great richness, variety and strength," yet which should not profess to follow "rules which are inapplicable to our tongue." (Preface to *Vision of Judgment*, Southey's Works, ed. 1838, vol. x. p. 195.) [45] In the same Preface he briefly reviewed the history of earlier efforts to introduce the classical measures into English. It is to be feared that Southey's hexameters are to be counted among the worst of modern times.

Meanwhile apart, in the twilight
gloom of a window's
embrasure,
Sat the lovers and whispered
together, beholding the moon
rise
Over the pallid sea and the silvery
mist of the meadows.
Silently one by one, in the infinite
meadows of heaven,
Blossomed the lovely stars, the forget-
me-nots of the angels.

Thus was the evening passed.
Anon the bell from the belfry
Rang out the hour of nine, the village curfew, and straightway
Rose the guests and departed; and silence reigned in the household.

(LONGFELLOW: *Evangeline*, Part. I. 1847.)

Evangeline is undoubtedly the most popular and widely read poem in English hexameters, and may be said to have revived the vogue of the measure in the middle of the nineteenth century. Yet its metrical qualities have not pleased most careful critics. Matthew Arnold said that the reception which the poem met with indicated that the dislike for the metre "is rather among professional critics than among the general public. Yet," he went on to say, "a version of Homer in hexameters of the *Evangeline* type would not satisfy the judicious, nor is the definite establishment of this type to be desired." (*On Translating Homer*, Macmillan ed., p. 284.) Mr. Arnold had previously suggested that the "lumbering effect" of such hexameters as Longfellow's is "caused by their being much too dactylic"; more spondees should be introduced.

The editor of the Riverside edition of *Evangeline* remarks interestingly: "The measure lends itself easily to the lingering melancholy which marks the greater part of the poem. The fall of the verse at the end of the line and the sharp recovery at the beginning of the next will be snares to the reader, who must beware of a jerking style of delivery.... A

little practice will enable one to acquire that habit of reading the hexameter which we may liken, roughly, to the climbing of a hill, resting a moment on the summit, and then descending the other side."

Longfellow's hexameters were criticised most severely by his countryman, Edgar Poe. Poe denied the possibility of any adequate representation of the classical hexameter in English, largely because of the impossibility of using English spondees. The only genuine hexameters he knew, he declared, were some he had himself made, running:

"Do tell! when may we hope to make
men of sense out of the
Pundits,
Born and brought up with their
snouts deep down in the mud
of the Frog-pond?"

(See Poe's Works, ed. Stedman and Woodberry, vol. vi. p. 104.)

Another interesting American experiment in hexameters is found in the *Home Pastorals* of Bayard Taylor (1869-1874). Taylor modeled his verses after those of the Germans, particularly Goethe's in *Hermann und Dorothea*. See, for example, the opening lines of *November*:

"Wrapped in his sad-colored cloak,
the Day, like a Puritan,
standeth
Stern in the joyless fields, rebuking
the lingering color,—
Dying hectic of leaves and the chilly
blue of the asters,—

Hearing, perchance, the croak of a
crow on the desolate tree-top,
Breathing the reek of withered reeds,
or the drifted and sodden
Splendors of woodland, as whoso
piously groaneth in spirit:
'Vanity, verily; yea, it is vanity, let me
forsake it!'"
But as the light of day enters some
populous city,
Shaming away, ere it come, by the
chilly day-streak signal,
High and low, the misusers of night,
shaming out the gas-lamps—
All the great empty streets are flooded
with broadening clearness
Which, withal, by inscrutable
simultaneous access
Permeates far and pierces to the very
cellars lying in
Narrow high back-lane, and court,
and alley of alleys:—
He that goes forth to his walks, while
speeding to the suburb,
Sees sights only peaceful and pure; as
laborers settling
Slowly to work, in their limbs the
lingering sweetness of slumber;
Humble market-carts, coming in,
bringing in, not only
Flower, fruit, farm-store, but sounds
and sights of the country
Dwelling yet on the sense of the
dreamy drivers; soon after
Half-awake servant-maids unfastening
drowsy shutters

Up at the windows, or down, letting
in the air by the doorway,
School-boys, school-girls soon, with
slate, portfolio, satchel,
Hampered as they haste, those
running, these others maidenly
tripping;...
Meantime above purer air
untarnished of new-lit fires;
So that the whole great wicked
artificial civilised fabric—
All its unfinished houses, lots for sale,
and railway out-works—
Seems reaccepted, resumed to Primal
Nature and Beauty.

(ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH: *The Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich*. 1848.)

Clough's hexameters are quite unlike any others in English poetry, both in their metrical quality and in their use for serio-comic verse. As Matthew Arnold observed, they are "excessively, needlessly rough," but their free, garrulous effect has a charm of its own. Clough also wrote some hexameters intended to be strictly quantitative. (For a detailed criticism of the verse of the *Bothie*, see Robert Bridges's *Milton's Prosody*, 1901 ed., Appendix J.)

It was Clough's hexameters, together with some "English Hexameter Translations" by Dr. Hawtrey and Mr. Lockhart (1847), that chiefly encouraged Matthew Arnold to believe that the measure might be well adapted to a translation of Homer. "The hexameter, whether alone or with the pentameter, possesses a movement, an expression, which no metre hitherto in common use amongst us possesses,

and which I am convinced English poetry, as our mental wants multiply, will not always be content to forego." (*Ib.*, p. 210.) Mr. James Spedding replied to Mr. Arnold's suggestion, from the point of view of the classical scholar, urging that only hexameters purely quantitative could properly represent those of Vergil. He illustrated his views by an amusing "hexametrical dialogue," conducted alternately in Vergilian measure and "in that of Longfellow." Of the former are the lines:

"Verses so modulate, so tuned, so
varied in accent,
Rich with unexpected changes,
smooth, stately, sonorous,
Rolling ever forward, tidelike, with
thunder, in endless
Procession, complex melodies—pause,
quantity, accent,
After Virgilian precedent and
practice, in order
Distributed—could these gratify th'
Etonian ear-drum?"

(JAMES SPEDDING: *Reviews and Discussions*, 1879. p. 327.)

Arnold, however, wisely declined to be led into a discussion of the relations of accent and quantity in English. "All we are here concerned with," he said, "is the imitation, by the English hexameter, of the ancient hexameter *in its effect upon us moderns*.... The received English type, in its general outlines, is, for England, the necessary given type of this metre; it is by rendering the metrical beat of its pattern, not by rendering the accentual beat of it, that the English language has adapted the Greek hexameter.... I look

with hope towards continued attempts at perfecting and employing this rhythm; but my belief in the immediate success of such attempts is far less confident than has been supposed." (See the whole passage, *On Translating Homer*, pp. 275-284.)

The hexameters of Dr. Hawtrey, quoted by Arnold, are these:

Clearly the rest I behold of the dark-
eyed sons of Achaia;
Known to me well are the faces of all;
their names I remember;
Two, two only remain, whom I see
not among the commanders,
Kastor fleet in the car,—Polydeukes
brave with the cestus,—
Own dear brethren of mine,—one
parent loved us as infants.
Are they not here in the host, from
the shores of loved
Lakedaimon,
Or, though they came with the rest in
ships that bound through the
waters,
Dare they not enter the fight or stand
in the council of heroes,
All for fear of the shame and the
taunts my crime has
awakened?
—So said she. They long since in
Earth's soft arms were
reposing,
There, in their own dear land, their
fatherland, Lakedaimon.

(From *English Hexameter Translations*, p.

242.)

Arnold also illustrated his doctrine in some hexameters of his own, which have not usually been regarded as a happy experiment. They run in part as follows:

"Truly, yet this time will we save
thee, mighty Achilles!
But thy day of death is at hand; nor
shall we be the reason—
No, but the will of heaven, and Fate's
invincible power.
For by no slow pace nor want of
swiftness of ours
Did the Trojans obtain to strip the
arms from Patroclus;
But that prince among gods, the son
of the lovely-haired Leto,
Slew him fighting in front of the fray,
and glorified Hector.
But, for us, we vie in speed with the
breath of the West-Wind,
Which, men say, is the fleetest of
winds; 'tis thou who art fated
To lie low in death, by the hand of a
god and a mortal."

(*Ib.*, p. 234.)

Tennyson evidently viewed with small respect these various efforts to render Homer in English hexameters. See his lines beginning:

"These lame hexameters the strong-
wing'd music of Homer!

No—but a most burlesque barbarous
experiment."

(*In Quantity: Hexameters and Pentameters*.)

Compare the amusing lines of Walter Savage Landor:

"Askest thou if in my youth I have
mounted, as others have
mounted,
Galloping Hexameter, Pentameter
cantering after,
English by dam and by sire; bit,
bridle, and saddlery, English;
English the girths and the shoes; all
English from snaffle to
crupper;
Everything English about, excepting
the tune of the jockey?....
Seldom my goosequill, of goose from
Germany, fatted in England,
(Frolicsome though I have been) have
I tried on Hexameter, knowing
Latin and Greek are alone its
languages. We have a measure
Fashioned by Milton's own hand, a
fuller, a deeper, a louder.
.... Peace be with all! but afar be
ambition to follow the Roman,
Led by the German uncombed and
jigging in dactyl and spondee,
Lumbering shapeless jackboots which
nothing can polish or supple.
Much as old metres delight me, 'tis
only where first they were
nurtured,

In their own clime, their own speech:
than pamper them here, I
would rather
Tie up my Pegasus tight to the scanty-
fed rack of a sonnet."

(*English Hexameters*, in *The Last Fruit off an Old Tree*.)

In like manner Mr. Swinburne says: "I must say how inexplicable it seems to me that Mr. Arnold, of all men, should be a patron of English hexameters. His own I have tried in vain to reduce by scansion into any metrical feet at all; they look like nothing on earth, and sound like anapests broken up and driven wrong.... And at best what ugly bastards of verse are these self-styled hexameters! how human tongues or hands could utter or could write them except by way of burlesque improvisation I could never imagine, and never shall." (*Essays and Studies*, p. 163.) From this condemnation Mr. Swinburne excepts only the hexameters of Dr. Hawtrey, "but that is simply a graceful interlude of pastime."

See also the essay called "Remarks on English Hexameters," in the *Horæ Hellenicæ* of Professor John Stuart Blackie.

Hovering over the water he came,
upon glittering pinions,
Living, a wonder, outgrown from the
tight-laced fold of his sandals;
Bounding from billow to billow, and
sweeping the crests like a sea-
gull;
Leaping the gulfs of the surge, as he
laughed in the joy of his

leaping.
Fair and majestic he sprang to the
rock; and the maiden in
wonder
Gazed for a while, and then hid in the
dark-rolling wave of her
tresses,
Fearful, the light of her eyes; while
the boy (for her sorrow had
awed him)
Blushed at her blushes, and vanished,
like mist on the cliffs at the
sunrise.
Fearful at length she looked forth: he
was gone: she, wild with
amazement,
Wailed for her mother aloud: but the
wail of the wind only
answered.

(CHARLES KINGSLEY: *Andromeda*.
1858.)

Kingsley believed in the possibility of representing the quantitative verse of classical poetry in English, and at the same time holding to genuinely English rhythm.[46] Thus he tried to introduce more real spondees into his hexameters than Longfellow and others had done. Compare such a line as Longfellow's —

"Man is unjust, but God is just; and
finally justice"—

with Kingsley's—

"Then as a pine upon Ida when south-

west winds blow landward."

In the former the dissyllabic feet are in no sense spondees; in the latter there is an effort to fill them with genuinely long syllables.

Lover whose vehement kisses on lips
irresponsive are squandered,
Lover that wooest in vain Earth's
imperturbable heart;
Athlete mightily frustrate, who pittest
thy thews against legions,
Locked with fantastical hosts, bodiless
arms of the sky;
Sea that breakest for ever, that
breakest and never art broken,
Like unto thine, from of old, springeth
the spirit of man,—
Nature's wooer and fighter, whose
years are a suit and a
wrestling,
All their hours, from his birth, hot
with desire and with fray.

(WILLIAM WATSON: *Hymn to the Sea*, ii.)

Here the alternate lines represent the "pentameter" of the Latin elegiac verse, where the light syllables were omitted at the cesura and the end of the line.

When they came to the fair-flowing
river and to the places
Where stood pools in plenty prepared,
and water abundant
Gushed up, a cure for things manifold
uncleanly, the mules were

Unyoked from the waggons, driven
off to the bindweed pastures
By the rushing swirling river, and the
women set about it
Unloading the waggons, carrying
clothes down to the water,
One with other striving, stepping
hastily into the wash-troughs.
When washing and rinsing were done,
they brought the linen down
On to the sea-shore, and set it all out
thereupon in rows
Where the pebbles thrown up by the
waves most thickly abounded.

(WILLIAM JOHNSON STONE: Translation of *Odyssey*, vi. 85 ff., in *The Use of Classical Measures in English*. 1899.)

Mr. Stone, like the Elizabethan classical versifiers, seeks to write purely quantitative verse in English, and, so far from aiming at the same time to preserve the rhythm of the usual English hexameter, he regards the clash between accent and quantity as a beauty rather than a defect. The verses he intends to be read "with the natural accent unimpaired," the reader listening for the regular quantities at the same time.

The views of Mr. Stone on the nature of English accent and quantity are perhaps unique among modern writers on the subject. "The ordinary unemphatic English accent is exactly a raising of pitch, and nothing more," as in Greek. "The accent of emphasis is something quite different in character from the ordinary accent." To those who insist that to them the second syllable of *carpenter* is distinctly short, Mr. Stone replies: "You are associating yourselves by such an admission with the

vulgar actors of Plautus rather than the educated readers of Virgil;"—a truly terrible charge! Mr. Stone gives an interesting critical history of earlier efforts to introduce classical measures into English. His monograph is reprinted, but without the specimen translation, as the second part of the 1901 edition of Robert Bridges's *Milton's Prosody*.

For further discussion of the relations of classical and English prosody, and of accent and quantity in English, see Schipper, vol. i. pp. 21-27; A. J. Ellis: article in the *Transactions of the Philological Society*, 1875-1876; T. D. Goodell: article on "Quantity in English Verse," in the *Proceedings of the American Philological Society*, 1885; Edmund Gurney: *The Power of Sound*, pp. 429-439; J. M. Robertson: Appendix to *New Essays towards a Critical Method*, 1897; and the discussion in Part Three of the present volume.

FOOTNOTES:

[42] Puttenham's treatise on English poetry, which followed Webbe's (1589), and was the most thorough treatment of the subject written in the Elizabethan period, also discussed the "reformed versifying," but with less respect. The chapter is entitled: "How if all maner of sodaine innovations were not very scandalous, specially in the lawes of any langage or arte, the use of the Greeke and Latine feete might be brought into our vulgar Poesie, and with good grace inough." (Arber Reprint of *The Arte of English Poesie*, p. 126.) Puttenham seems to see the relations of quantity and accent somewhat more clearly than most of his contemporaries, and while he gives rules for adapting English words to quantitative prosody, he is disposed to think that "peradventure with us Englishmen it be somewhat too late to admit a new invention of

feete and times that our forefathers never used nor never observed till this day" (p. 132).

[43] Campion's *Observations* are reprinted in Mr. Bullen's edition of his poems, and also in Rhys's *Literary Pamphlets*, vol. i. His attack on the customary English rimed verse was answered by the poet laureate, Samuel Daniel, who published in the same year (1602) his *Defence of Ryme against a Pamphlet entituled Observations in the Art of English Poesie*. "Wherein is demonstratively prooved that Ryme is the fittest harmonie of words that comports with our Language." Daniel struck at the root of all the principles of the classical versifiers,—the supreme authority of the classics. "We are the children of nature as well as they," he exclaims with reference to the ancients. "It is not the observing of Trochaiques nor their Iambiques, that will make our writings ought the wiser." And he expounds the English accentual verse-system with clearness and vigor. This essay of Daniel's may be said to mark the end, if it did not bring about the end, of the Elizabethan experiments in classical metres. For other contemporary criticism of the effort, see under the following section, on the Hexameter.

[44] On the history of the English hexameter, see the admirable account in Mayor's *Chapters on English Metre*, 2d ed., chap. xv.

[45] Southey's effort was attacked by the Rev. S. Tillbrook, Fellow of Peterhouse, in a pamphlet entitled "Historical and Critical Remarks upon the Modern Hexameters, and upon Mr. Southey's *Vision of Judgment*." To this Southey replied in the second edition of his poem, saying to Mr. Tillbrook: "You try the measure by Greek and Latin prosody: you

might as well try me by the Laws of Solon, or the Twelve Tables. I have distinctly stated that the English hexameter is not constructed upon those canons." He further appealed to the success of the hexameter in Germany, and concluded: "I am glad that I have made the experiment, and quite satisfied with the result. The critics who write and talk are with you: so I dare say are the whole posse of schoolmasters. The women, the young poets, and the *docile bairns* are with me." (*Op. cit.*, Preface to the Present Edition, pp. xix, xxi.)

[46] For Kingsley's exposition of his theories, see the *Letters and Memories*, edited by his wife, vol. i. pp. 338-344. He declined to yield to "trocheism one atom. My ear always demands the equivalent of the 'lost short syllable.'" And again: "Every argument you bring convinces me more and more that the theory of our prosody depending on accent is false, and that it really is very nearly identical with the Greek.... I am glad to hear (being a lazy man) that I have more license than I wish for; but I do think that, with proper care, you may have as many spondees, without hurting the rhythm, in English as you have in Greek, and my ear is tortured by a trochee instead.... I must try for Homer's average of a spondee a line."

VII. IMITATIONS OF ARTIFICIAL FRENCH LYRICAL FORMS

A number of artificial lyrical forms, originating in the ingenuity of the mediæval Provençal poets, were

adopted by the Middle English imitators of the Romance lyrists, and were revived with no little vigor in the Victorian period. Chief among the influential models for these forms, in early times, were the poems of Machault (1284-1377), Deschamps (1328-1415), Froissart (1337-1410), and Villon (1431-1485). Again in the seventeenth century such forms as the rondeau were revived in France by Voiture (1598-1648), but with little effect in England. Finally, in the nineteenth century, the forms were reintroduced by M. Théodore de Banville, and later into England by Mr. Lang, Mr. Austin Dobson, Mr. Gosse, and others. For the history of these fashions in outline, see the admirable introduction to Mr. Gleeson White's *Ballades and Rondeaus* (1893); also Mr. Andrew Lang's *Lays and Lyrics of Old France* (1872); Mr. Austin Dobson's "Note on some Foreign Forms of Verse," in the collection of *Latter Day Lyrics* (1878); and an article by Mr. Edmund Gosse in the *Cornhill Magazine*, July, 1877.

Says Mr. Dobson: "It may be conceded that the majority of the forms now in question are not at present suited for ... the treatment of grave or elevated themes. What is modestly advanced for some of them ... is that they may add a new charm of buoyancy,—a lyric freshness,—to amatory and familiar verse, already too much condemned to faded measures and out-worn cadences. Further, ... that they are admirable vehicles for the expression of trifles or *jeux d'esprit*. They have also a humbler and obscurer use. If, to quote the once-hackneyed, but now too-much-forgotten maxim of Pope—

'Those move easiest that have learned
to dance,'

what better discipline, among others, could possibly be devised for 'those about to versify' than a course of Rondeaux, Triolets, and Ballades?" Mr. Dobson refers to the article by Mr. Gosse already cited, and "to the *Odes Funambulesques*, the *Petit Traité de Poésie Française*, and other works of M. Théodore de Banville. To M. de Banville in particular and to the second French Romantic School in general, the happy modernization in France of the old measures of Marot, Villon, and Charles of Orleans is mainly to be ascribed." (*Latter Day Lyrics*, ed. W. D. Adams, pp. 334 ff.)[47]

Says Mr. Gleeson White: "The taste for these *tours de force* in the art of verse-making is no doubt an acquired one; yet to quote the first attempt to produce a lyric with a repeated burden would take one back to the earliest civilization.... Whether the first refrains were used for decorative effect only, or to give the singer time to recollect or improvise the next verse, it matters little, since the once mere adjunct was made in later French use an integral and vital part of the verse. The charm of these strictly written verses is undoubtedly increased by some knowledge of their technical rules.... To approach ideal perfection, nothing less than implicit obedience to all the rules is the first element of success; but the task is by no means finished there. Every quality that poetry demands, whether clearness of thought, elegance of expression, harmonious sound, or faultless rhythm, is needed as much in these shapes as in unfettered verse.... It may be said, without fear of exaggeration, that all the qualities required to form a perfect lyric in poetry are equally needful here, *plus* a great many special ones the forms themselves demand. To the students of any art there is always a peculiar charm when the highest

difficulties are surmounted with such ease that the consummate art is hidden to all who know not the magic password to unveil it." (*Ballades and Rondeaus*, Introduction, pp. xli, xlii.) "No one is compelled to use these complex forms, but if chosen, their laws must be obeyed to the letter if success is to be obtained. The chief pleasure they yield consists in the apparent spontaneity, which is the result of genius, if genius be indeed the art of taking infinite pains; or, if that definition is rejected, they must yet exhibit the art which conceals art, whether by intense care in every minute detail, or a happy faculty for naturally wearing these fetters." (*Ib.*, pp. l, li.)

A.—THE BALLADE

The ballade commonly consists of three stanzas, with an envoy. In modern usage the stanzas usually contain either eight or ten lines, and the envoy half as many as the stanza; but in earlier usage both stanza and envoy varied, and the latter might be omitted altogether. The rimes in all the stanzas must be identical in the corresponding lines, but the riming words must be different. The most characteristic element is the refrain,—the keynote of the poem,—which forms the last line of each stanza, including the envoy. The favorite rime-scheme for the eight-line stanza is *ababbcbc*, with the envoy *bcbc*. Mr. White says of the envoy that it "is not only a dedication, but should be the peroration of the subject, and richer in its wording and more stately in its imagery than the preceding verses, to convey the climax of the whole matter, and avoid the suspicion that it is a mere postscript."

Flee fro the prees, and dwelle with sothfastnesse,
Suffyce unto thy good, though hit be smal;
For hord hath hate, and climbing tikelnesse,
Prees hath envye, and wele blent overal;
Savour no more than thee bihove shal;
Werk wel thy-self, that other folk canst rede;
And trouthe shal delivere, hit is no drede.

Tempest thee noght al croked to redresse,
In trust of hir that turneth as a bal:
Gret reste slant in litel besinesse;
And eek be war to sporne ageyn an al;
Stryve noght, as doth the crokke with the wal.
Daunte thy-self, that dauntest otheres dede;
And trouthe shal delivere, hit is no drede.

That thee is sent, receyve in buxumnesse;
The wrastling for this worlde axeth a fal.
Her nis non hoom, her nis but wildernesse:
Forth, pilgrim, forth! Forth, beste, out of thy stal!
Know thy contree, look up, thank God of al;

Hold the hye wey, and lat thy gost
thee lede:
And trouthe shal delivere, hit is no
drede.

Envoy

Therfore, thou vache, leve thyn old
wrecchednesse
Unto the worlde; leve now to be thral;
Crye him mercy, that of his hy
goodnesse
Made thee of noght, and in especial
Draw unto him, and pray in general
For thee, and eek for other, hevenlich
mede;
And trouthe shal delivere, hit is no
drede.

(CHAUCER: *Balade de bon conseyl.* ab.
1385.)

Here Chaucer follows the rules of the ballade carefully, but in the "rime royal" stanza. It will be noticed that the rime-word "al" seems to be repeated, but it is used each time in a distinct sense, hence—according to the rules of Chaucer's time, as of modern French—is regarded as a different rime-word each time.

Compare, also, Chaucer's *Fortune* ("*Balades de visage sanz peinture*"), made of three ballades, with one envoy; the *Balade to Rosemound* and *Moral Balade on Gentilesse*, without envoys; the ballades on *Lak of Stedfastnesse* and the *Compleint of Chaucer to his Empty Purse*, with envoys addressed to the king; also the ballade in the Prologue to the *Legend of Good Women*, B-text, ll. 249-269. The *Compleynt of Venus*, like *Fortune*, is in three ballades,

with one envoy, and is of special interest as being based on three French ballades of Graunson.[48] Says Chaucer:

> "And eek to me hit is a greet penaunce,
> Sith rym in English hath swich scarsitee,
> To folowe word by word the curiositee
> Of Graunson, flour of hem that make in
> Fraunce."

In the Prologue to the *Legend of Good Women*, when Chaucer is accused by the god of love for his translation of the *Romance of the Rose*, Alcestis defends him by enumerating his other works, which include:

> "many an ympne for your halydayes,
> That highten Balades, Roundels,
> Virelayes."
>
> (B-text, ll. 422 f.)

On the roundels, see below; none of Chaucer's virelays have come down to us. Chaucer's contemporary, John Gower, also wrote ballades, but in French.

> Tell me now in what hidden way is
> Lady Flora the lovely Roman?
> Where's Hipparcha, and where is
> Thais,
> Neither of them the fairer
> woman?
> Where is Echo, beheld of no man,
> Only heard on river and mere,—
> She whose beauty was more than
> human?—
> But where are the snows of yester-
> year?
>
> Where's Héloise, the learned nun,
> For whose sake Abeillard, I ween,
> Lost manhood and put priesthood on?

(From love he won such dule and
teen!)
And where, I pray you, is the
Queen
Who willed that Buridan should steer
Sewed in a sack's mouth down
the Seine?—
But where are the snows of yester-
year?

White Queen Blanche, like a queen of
lilies,
With a voice like any mermaiden,
—
Bertha Broadfoot, Beatrice, Alice,
And Ermengarde the lady of
Maine,—
And that good Joan whom
Englishmen
At Rouen doomed and burned her
there,—
Mother of God, where are they
then?—
But where are the snows of yester-
year?—

Nay, never ask this week, fair lord,
Where they are gone, nor yet this
year,
Except with this for an overword,—
But where are the snows of
yester-year?

(ROSSETTI: *The Ballad of Dead Ladies*,
from the French of François Villon,
1450.)

This is a notable translation of a notable ballade, but it will be observed that it does not follow the strict rules as to the number of rimes. In Mr. Andrew Lang's *Ballades of Blue China* is a formally correct translation.

Where are the cities of the plain?
And where the shrines of rapt
Bethel?
And Calah, built of Tubal-Cain?
And Shinar whence King
Amraphal
Came out in arms, and fought,
and fell,
Decoyed into the pits of slime
By Siddim, and sent sheer to hell;
Where are the cities of old time?

Where now is Karnak, that great fane
With granite built, a miracle?
And Luxor smooth without a stain,
Whose graven scriptures still we
spell?
The jackal and the owl may tell,
Dark snakes around their ruins climb,
They fade like echo in a shell;
Where are the cities of old time?

And where is white Shusan, again,
Where Vashti's beauty bore the
bell,
And all the Jewish oil and grain
Were brought to Mithridath to
sell,
Where Nehemiah would not
dwell,
Because another town sublime

Decoyed him with her oracle?
Where are the cities of old time?

Envoy

Prince, with a dolorous, ceaseless
knell,
Above their wasted toil and
crime
The waters of oblivion swell:
Where are the cities of old time?

(EDMUND GOSSE: *Ballad of Dead Cities.*)

In this ballade Mr. Gosse finely reproduces the more serious tones of the old form, and imitates the ancient custom of addressing the envoy to royalty. This *motif*, of old things lost, is a favorite one for the serious ballade, being suggested by Villon's *Ballade of Dead Ladies*. Compare Mr. Lang's *Ballade of Dead Cities*, in *Ballades of Blue China*.

On the other hand, the next specimen illustrates the use of the form for the light familiarity of *vers de société* and parody.

He lived in a cave by the seas,
He lived upon oysters and foes,
But his list of forbidden degrees
An extensive morality shows;
Geological evidence goes
To prove he had never a pan,
But he shaved with a shell when
he chose,
'Twas the manner of Primitive Man!

He worshipp'd the rain and the
breeze,

He worshipp'd the river that flows,
And the Dawn, and the Moon, and the trees,
And bogies, and serpents, and crows;
He buried his dead with their toes
Tucked up, an original plan,
Till their knees came right under their nose,
'Twas the manner of Primitive Man!

His communal wives, at his ease,
He would curb with occasional blows;
Or his state had a queen, like the bees
(As another philosopher trows):
When he spoke it was never in prose,
But he sang in a strain that would scan,
For (to doubt it, perchance, were morose)
'Twas the manner of Primitive Man!

Envoy

Max, proudly your Aryans pose,
But their rigs they undoubtedly ran,
For, as every Darwinian knows,
'Twas the manner of Primitive Man!

(ANDREW LANG: *Ballade of Primitive Man.*)

In Mr. Lang's *Ballades of Blue China* this appears as a

double ballade, with three more stanzas.

From the sunny climes of France,
Flying to the west,
Came a flock of birds by chance,
There to sing and rest:
Of some secrets deep in quest,—
Justice for their wrongs,—
Seeking one to shield their
breast,
One to write their songs.

Melodies of old romance,
Joy and gentle jest,
Notes that made the dull heart dance
With a merry zest;—
Maids in matchless beauty drest,
Youths in happy throngs;—
These they sang to tempt and test
One to write their songs.

In old London's wide expanse
Built each feathered guest,—
Man's small pleasure to entrance,
Singing him to rest,—
Came, and tenderly confessed,
Perched on leafy prongs,
Life were sweet if they possessed
One to write their songs.

Envoy

Austin, it was you they blest:
Fame to you belongs!
Time has proven you're the best
One to write their songs.

(FRANK DEMPSTER SHERMAN: *To Austin Dobson.*)

Mr. Austin Dobson is said to have been the first to reintroduce the ballade into English poetry, and the present specimen is a tribute to his success by an American poet.

Bird of the bitter bright gray golden
morn
Scarce risen upon the dusk of
dolorous years,
First of us all and sweetest singer
born
Whose far shrill note the world of
new men hears
Cleave the cold shuddering shade
as twilight clears;
When song new-born put off the old
world's attire
And felt its tune on her changed lips
expire,
Writ foremost on the roll of them
that came
Fresh girt for service of the latter lyre,
Villon, our sad bad glad mad
brother's name!

(SWINBURNE: *Ballad of François Villon, Prince of all Ballad-Makers*, st. i.)

This specimen represents the ballade in ten-line stanzas.

There is also an extended form of the ballade, called the *Chant Royal*, with five stanzas and envoy, the stanzas consisting of eleven verses. The usual rime-

scheme is *ababccddede*, with envoy *ddede*. For admirable specimens, see Mr. Dobson's *Dance of Death* and Mr. Gosse's *Praise of Dionysus*, in *Ballades and Rondeaus*, pp. 98, 100. Mr. White says of this form: "The chant royal in the old form is usually devoted to the unfolding of an allegory in its five stanzas, the envoy supplying the key; but this is not always observed in modern examples. Whatever be the subject, however, it must always march in stately rhythm with splendid imagery, using all the poetic adornments of sonorous, highly-wrought lines and rich embroidery of words, to clothe a theme in itself a lofty one. Unless the whole poem is constructed with intense care, the monotony of its sixty-one lines rhymed on five sounds is unbearable." (*Ballades and Rondeaus*, Introduction, p. liv.)

B.—THE RONDEAU AND RONDEL

Rondel is the old French form of the word *rondeau*, and the terms are therefore naturally interchangeable. They have been applied to a number of different forms, all characterized by a refrain so repeated as to link together different parts of the structure. Two of these forms are particularly familiar. The first (called more commonly the *rondel*) consists of fourteen lines, with only two rimes; the first two lines constitute the refrain, and are commonly repeated as the seventh and eighth and again as the thirteenth and fourteenth. The rime-scheme varies, but is often *ABba, abAB, abbaAB* (the capitals indicating the repeated lines of the refrain). Sometimes the form is shortened to thirteen lines, the second line of the refrain not being repeated at the close. The second principal form (called more commonly the *rondeau*) consists of thirteen lines,

with two rimes, and an unrimed refrain, taken from the opening words of the first line, which follows the eighth line and is again repeated at the end. The common rime-scheme is *aabba,aab (refrain), aabba (refrain)*. Both these forms are found in early French poetry, together with many variations. The modern distinction between *rondeau* and *rondel* is artificial but convenient.

i. *"Rondel" Type*

Now welcom somer, with thy sonne
softe,
That hast this wintres weders over-
shake,
And driven awey the longe nightes
blake!

Seynt Valentyn, that art ful hy on-
lofte,
Thus singen smale foules for thy sake:
Now welcom somer, with thy sonne
softe,
That hast this wintres weders over-
shake.

Wel han they cause for to gladen ofte,
Sith ech of hem recovered hath his
make;
Ful blisful may they singen whan they
wake:
Now welcom somer, with thy sonne
softe,
That hast this wintres weders over-
shake,
And driven awey the longe nightes

blake.

(CHAUCER: *Qui bien aime a tard oublie*,
in *The Parlement of Foules*, ll. 680-692.
ab. 1380.)

This is the "roundel" sung by the birds "to do Nature honour and plesaunce." "The note" we are told was made in France. It will be seen that Chaucer employs a form with three-line refrain, of which the first two lines are twice repeated, the last only once: *ABB,abAB,abbABB*. The same form is used in the three roundels of *Merciles Beaute*.

Too hard it is to sing
In these untuneful times,
When only coin can ring,
And no one cares for rhymes!

Alas! for him who climbs
To Aganippe's spring:—
Too hard it is to sing
In these untuneful times!

His kindred clip his wing;
His feet the critic limes;
If Fame her laurel bring
Old age his forehead rimes:—
Too hard it is to sing
In these untuneful times!

(AUSTIN DOBSON: *Too hard it is to sing.*)

Underneath this tablet rest,
Grasshopper by autumn slain,
Since thine airy summer nest
Shivers under storm and rain.

Freely let it be confessed
Death and slumber bring thee
gain
Spared from winter's fret and
pain,
Underneath this tablet rest.

Myro found thee on the plain,
Bore thee in her lawny breast,
Reared this marble tomb amain
To receive so small a guest!
Underneath this tablet rest,
Grasshopper by autumn slain.

(EDMUND GOSSE: *After Anyte of Tegea.*)

In this the second line of the refrain is omitted where we should expect it as line eight, the scheme of the first part of the rondel being changed to *ABab, abbA*.

The ways of Death are soothing and
serene,
And all the words of Death are
grave and sweet.
From camp and church, the
fireside and the street,
She signs to come, and strife and song
have been.

A summer night descending, cool and
green
And dark, on daytime's dust and
stress and heat,
The ways of Death are soothing and
serene,
And all the words of Death are
grave and sweet.

O glad and sorrowful, with
triumphant mien
And hopeful faces look upon and
greet
This last of all your lovers, and to
meet
Her kiss, the Comforter's, your
spirit lean.—
The ways of Death are soothing and
serene.

(W. E. HENLEY: *The Ways of Death.*)

ii. *"Rondeau" Type*

Ma foi, c'est fait de moi, car Isabeau
M'a conjuré de lui faire un rondeau.
Cela me met en peine extrême.
Quoi! treize vers, huit en *-èau*, cinq en
-ème!
Je lui ferais aussitôt un bateau.

En voilà cinq pourtant en un
monceau,
Faisons-en huit, en invoquant
Brodeau,
Et puis mettons, par quelque
stratagème:
Ma foi,
c'est
fait.

Si je pouvais encore de mon cerveau
Tirer cinq vers, l'ouvrage serait beau;
Mais cependant je suis dedans
l'onzième:

Et si je crois que je fais le douzième,
En voilà treize ajustés au niveau.
Ma foi,
c'est
fait!

(VOITURE: *Rondeau*, ab. 1640. In *Œuvres de Voiture*, ed. Ubicini, vol. ii. p. 314.)

This is perhaps the most famous of rondeaus of the type which Voiture did much to make popular.

What no pardy ye may be sure
Thinck not to make me to yor lure
With wordes and chere so contrarieng
Swete and sowre contrewaing
To much it were still to endure
Trouth is tryed where craft is in ure
But though ye have had my herte
cure
Trow ye I dote withoute ending
What no pardy
Though that with pain I do procure
For to forgett that ons was pure
Wtin my hert shall still that thing
Unstable unsure and wavering
Be in my mynde without recure
What no
pardye.

(SIR THOMAS WYATT: Rondeau in Wyatt MS., reproduced in *Anglia*, vol. xviii. p. 478. ab. 1540.)

Besides the rondeaus found in the Wyatt MS., three poems of Wyatt's, published in Tottel's *Songs and*

Sonnets (1557), were evidently intended as rondeaus (see Arber's Reprint, pp. 53, 73). The editor, not understanding the form or thinking it too unfamiliar to be popular, seems to have changed it to a sort of sonnet, omitting the refrain at the end and making a complete line of it as the ninth of the poem. These hidden rondeaus were discussed by Mr. Dobson in the *Athenæum* for 1878 (vol. i. p. 380); see also Alscher's *Sir Thomas Wyatt und seine Stellung*, etc.

Thou fool! if madness be so rife,
That, spite of wit, thou'lt have a wife,
I'll tell thee what thou must expect—
After the honeymoon neglect,
All the sad days of thy whole life;

To that a world of woe and strife,
Which is of marriage the effect—
And thou thy woe's own architect,
Thou fool!

Thou'lt nothing find but disrespect,
Ill words i' th' scolding dialect,
For she'll all tabor be, or fife;
Then prythee go and whet thy knife,
And from this fate thyself protect,
Thou fool!

(CHARLES COTTON: *Rondeau.* ab. 1675.
Quoted by Guest, *English Rhythms*,
Skeat ed., p. 645.)

A good rondeau I was induced to
show
To some fair ladies some short while
ago;
Well knowing their ability and

taste,
I asked should aught be added or
effaced,
And prayed that every fault they'd
make me know.

The first did her most anxious care
bestow
To impress one point from which I
ne'er should go:
"Upon a good beginning must be
based
A good
rondeau."

Zeal bid the other's choicest language
glow:
She softly said: "Recount your weal or
woe,
Your every subject, free from
pause or haste;
Ne'er let your hero fail, nor be
disgraced."
The third: "With varying emphasis
should flow
A good
rondeau."

(J. R. BEST: *Ung Bon Rondeau*, in *Rondeaulx*. Translated from the French, ed. 1527. 1838. Quoted in *Ballades and Rondeaus*, Introduction, p. xxxviii.)

Death, of thee do I make my moan,
Who hadst my lady away from
me,
Nor wilt assuage thine enmity

Till with her life thou hast my own;
For since that hour my strength has
flown.
Lo! what wrong was her life to thee,
Death?

Two we were, and the heart was one;
Which now being dead, dead I
must be,
Or seem alive as lifelessly
As in the choir the painted stone,
Death!

(ROSSETTI: *To Death, of his Lady*, from
the French of Villon, 1450.)

This represents an early short form of the rondeau.

With pipe and flute the rustic Pan
Of old made music sweet for man;
And wonder hushed the warbling
bird,
And closer drew the calm-eyed
herd,—
The rolling river slowlier ran.

Ah! would,—ah! would, a little span,
Some air of Arcady could fan
This age of ours, too seldom
stirred
With pipe and
flute!

But now for gold we plot and plan;
And from Beersheba unto Dan
Apollo's self might pass unheard,
Or find the night-jar's note

preferred.—
Not so it fared, when time began
With pipe and
flute!

(AUSTIN DOBSON: *With Pipe and Flute.*)

What is to come we know not. But we
know
That what has been was good—was
good to show,
Better to hide, and best of all to
bear.
We are the masters of the days
that were:
We have lived, we have loved, we
have suffered—even so.

Shall we not take the ebb who had
the flow?
Life was our friend. Now, if it be our
foe—
Dear, though it break and spoil
us!—need we care
What
is
to
come?

Let the great winds their worst and
wildest blow,
Or the gold weather round us mellow
slow:
We have fulfilled ourselves, and
we can dare
And we can conquer, though we
may not share

In the rich quiet of the afterglow
What
is
to
come.

(W. E. HENLEY: *What is to Come.*)

A man must live! We justify
Low shift and trick to treason high,
A little vote for a little gold,
To a whole senate bought and
sold,
With this self-evident reply.

But is it so? Pray tell me why
Life at such cost you have to buy?
In what religion were you told
"A man must live"?

There are times when a man must die.
Imagine for a battle-cry
From soldiers with a sword to
hold—
From soldiers with the flag
unrolled—
This coward's whine, this liar's lie,
"A man must live"!

(CHARLOTTE PERKINS STETSON: *A Man Must Live.*)

A Roundel is wrought as a ring or a
starbright sphere,
With craft of delight and with
cunning of sound unsought,
That the heart of the hearer may

smile if to pleasure his ear
A
roundel
is
wrought.

Its jewel of music is carven of all or of
aught—
Love, laughter, or mourning—
remembrance of rapture or fear
—
That fancy may fashion to hang in the
ear of thought.

As a bird's quick song runs round, and
the hearts in us hear—
Pause answers to pause, and again the
same strain caught,
So moves the device whence, round
as a pearl or tear,
A
roundel
is
wrought.

(SWINBURNE: *The Roundel*, in *A Century of Roundels*.)

Mr. Swinburne has reintroduced the old word-form "roundel," to distinguish this style of rondeau, of his own devising, with nine long lines, riming *aba, bab, aba*, the refrain riming also with the *b* lines.

C.—THE VILLANELLE

This highly intricate form was originally used for pastoral or idyllic verse, and it is commonly

reserved, as Mr. Dobson observes, for subjects "full of sweetness and simplicity." In its typical form it consists of nineteen lines, divided into five groups or stanzas of three and one of four. There are but two rimes, and the two verses which constitute the refrain recur again and again, line 1 reappearing as line 6, line 12, and line 18, while line 3 reappears as line 9, line 15, and line 19. The rime scheme of all the tercets is *aba*, of the conclusion *abaa*. Those villanelles are considered most highly finished in which the refrain recurs with slightly different significations.

On the history of this form, see J. Boulmier's *Les Villanelles*, Paris, 1878. The modern development of the villanelle has been largely influenced by the work of Passerat (1534-1602), whose most famous villanelle is the following specimen:

J'ay perdu ma tourterelle;
Est-ce-point elle que j'oy?
Je veux aller après elle.

Tu regrettes ta femelle;
Hélas! aussy fay-je moy:
J'ay perdu ma tourterelle.

Si ton amour est fidèle,
Aussy est ferme ma foy;
Je veux aller après elle.

Ta plainte se renouvelle?
Toujours plaindre je me doy:
J'ay perdu ma tourterelle.

En ne voyant plus la belle
Plus rien de beau je ne voy:

Je veux aller après elle.

Mort, que tant de fois j'apelle,
Prens ce que se donne à toy:
J'ai perdu ma tourterelle.
Je veux aller après elle.

(JEAN PASSERAT: *Villanelle.*)

When I saw you last, Rose,
You were only so high;—
How fast the time goes!

Like a bud ere it blows,
You just peeped at the sky,
When I saw you last, Rose!

Now your petals unclose,
Now your May-time is nigh;—
How fast the time goes!

And a life,—how it grows!
You were scarcely so shy
When I saw you last, Rose!

In your bosom it shows
There's a guest on the sly;
How fast the time goes!

Is it Cupid? Who knows!
Yet you used not to sigh,
When I saw you last, Rose;—
How fast the time goes!

(AUSTIN DOBSON: *When I Saw You Last, Rose.*)

A dainty thing's the Villanelle.

Sly, musical, a jewel in rhyme,
It serves its purpose passing well.

A double-clappered silver bell
That must be made to clink in chime,
A dainty thing's the Villanelle;

And if you wish to flute a spell,
Or ask a meeting 'neath the lime,
It serves its purpose passing well.

You must not ask of it the swell
Of organs grandiose and sublime —
A dainty thing's the Villanelle;

And, filled with sweetness, as a shell
Is filled with sound, and launched in time,
It serves its purpose passing well.

Still fair to see and good to smell
As in the quaintness of its prime,
A dainty thing's the Villanelle,
It serves its purpose passing well.

(W. E. HENLEY: *Villanelle.*)

Wouldst thou not be content to die
When low-hung fruit is hardly clinging
And golden Autumn passes by?

Beneath this delicate rose-gray sky,
While sunset bells are faintly ringing,
Wouldst thou not be content to die?

For wintry webs of mist on high
Out of the muffled earth are springing,
And golden Autumn passes by.

O now when pleasures fade and fly,
And Hope her southward flight is winging,
Wouldst thou not be content to die?

Lest Winter come, with wailing cry
His cruel icy bondage bringing,
When golden Autumn hath passed by;

And thou with many a tear and sigh,
While life her wasted hands is wringing,
Shall pray in vain for leave to die
When golden Autumn hath passed by.

(EDMUND GOSSE: *Villanelle.*)

Spring knocks at winter's frosty door:
In boughs by wild March breezes swayed
The bonnie bluebirds sing once more.

The brooks have burst their fetters hoar,
And greet with noisy glee the glade;
Spring knocks at winter's frosty door.

The swallow soon will northward soar,
The rush uplift its gleaming blade,

The bonnie bluebirds sing once more.

Soon sunny skies their gold will pour
O'er meads that breezy maples
shade;
Spring knocks at winter's frosty door.

Along the reedy river's shore,
Fleet fauns will frolic unafraid,
The bonnie bluebirds sing once more.

And Love, the Love we lost of yore,
Will come to twine the myrtle
braid;
Spring knocks at winter's frosty door,
The bonnie bluebirds sing once more.

(CLINTON SCOLLARD: *Spring Knocks at Winter's Frosty Door.*)

D.—THE TRIOLET

The triolet is really a diminutive form of the Rondeau, and was not originally distinguished by name. It consists of eight lines, with two rimes, lines 1 and 2 recurring as lines 7 and 8, and line 1 also as line 4. The rime-scheme is *ABaAabAB*. Here, as in the villanelle, a change of signification in the repeated lines is thought to add to the charm of the form.

A French specimen, from Ranchin, is cited by Mr. Gleeson White as being called by some "the king of triolets":

Le premier jour du mois de mai
Fut le plus heureux de ma vie:
Le beau dessein que je formai,

Le premier jour du mois de mai!
Je vous vis et je vous aimai.
Si ce dessein vous plut, Sylvie,
Le premier jour du mois de mai
Fut le plus heureux de ma vie.

Easy is the Triolet,
If you really learn to make it!
Once a neat refrain you get,
Easy is the Triolet.
As you see!—I pay my debt
With another rhyme. Deuce take
it,
Easy is the Triolet,
If you really learn to make it!

(W. E. Henley.)

Rose kissed me to-day,
Will she kiss me to-morrow?
Let it be as it may,
Rose kissed me to-day.
But the pleasure gives way
To a savor of sorrow;—
Rose kissed me to-day,—
Will she kiss me to-morrow?

I intended an Ode,
And it turned to a Sonnet.
It began *à la mode*,
I intended an Ode;
But Rose crossed the road
In her latest new bonnet.
I intended an Ode,
And it turned to a Sonnet.

(AUSTIN DOBSON: *Rose Leaves.*)

In an earlier version of this last "rose-leaf" the ode is said to have "turned into triolets," when Rose crossed the road "with a bunch of fresh violets."

A little kiss when no one sees,
Where is the impropriety?
How sweet amid the birds and bees
A little kiss when no one sees!
Nor is it wrong, the world agrees,
If taken with sobriety.
A little kiss when no one sees,
Where is the impropriety?

(SAMUEL MINTURN PECK: *Under the Rose.*)

Worldly designs, fears, hopes,
farewell!
Farewell all earthly joys and
cares!
On nobler thoughts my soul shall
dwell!
Worldly designs, fears, hopes,
farewell!
At quiet, in my peaceful cell,
I'll think on God, free from your
snares;
Worldly designs, fears, hopes,
farewell!
Farewell all earthly joys and
cares!

(PATRICK CAREY: in *Trivial Poems and Triolets*, 1651; reprinted by Scott, 1819; this triolet also quoted in *Ballades and Rondeaus*, Introduction, p. xxxvi.)

Originally, the triolet was often used for serious sentiment. The present and the following specimen are rare instances of its serious use in English.

In his arms thy silly lamb
Lo! he gathers to his breast!
See, thou sadly bleating dam,
See him lift thy silly lamb!
Hear it cry, "How blest I am!—
Here is love and love is rest."
In his arms thy silly lamb
See him gather to his breast!

(GEORGE MACDONALD.)

E.—THE SESTINA

This form, although originally found in Provençal like the others of the group, has been more used in Italy than in France, and, as the English form of the word indicates, was introduced into England under Italian influence. It was invented at the end of the thirteenth century, by the troubadour Arnaut Daniel, celebrated in the following specimen. The common form of the sestina has six stanzas of six lines each, with a tercet at the end. There is usually no rime, but the stanzas are based on six end-words, which are the same in all stanzas; in the tercet three of these words are used in the middle of the lines, and three at the ends. The order of the end-words changes in each stanza according to a complex system: thus (in the common modern form) if the end-words of the first stanza be represented by 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, the order in the second stanza will be 6, 1, 5, 2, 4, 3; in the third, 3, 6, 4, 1, 2, 5; in the fourth, 5, 3, 2, 6, 1, 4; in the fifth, 4, 5, 1, 3, 6, 2; in the sixth, 2, 4, 6, 5, 3, 1. Sometimes the end-words also rime by twos and threes.

In fair Provence, the land of lute and
rose,
Arnaut, great master of the lore of
love,
First wrought sestines to win his
lady's heart;
For she was deaf when simpler staves
he sang,
And for her sake he broke the bonds
of rhyme,
And in this subtler measure hid his
woe.

"Harsh be my lines," cried Arnaut,
"harsh the woe,

My lady, that enthroned and cruel
rose,
Inflicts on him that made her live in
rhyme!"
But through the metre spake the voice
of Love,
And like a wildwood nightingale he
sang
Who thought in crabbed lays to ease
his heart.

It is not told if her untoward heart
Was melted by her poet's lyric woe,
Or if in vain so amorously he sang.
Perchance through crowd of dark
conceits he rose
To nobler heights of philosophic love,
And crowned his later years with
sterner rhyme.

This thing alone we know: the triple
rhyme
Of him who bared his vast and
passionate heart
To all the crossing flames of hate and
love,
Wears in the midst of all its storm and
woe—
As some loud morn of March may
bear a rose—
The impress of a song that Arnaut
sang.

"Smith of his mother-tongue," the
Frenchman sang
Of Lancelot and of Galahad, the
rhyme

That beat so bloodlike at its core of
rose,
It stirred the sweet Francesca's gentle
heart
To take that kiss that brought her so
much woe,
And sealed in fire her martyrdom of
love.

And Dante, full of her immortal love,
Stayed his drear song, and softly,
fondly sang
As though his voice broke with that
weight of woe;
And to this day we think of Arnaut's
rhyme,
Whenever pity at the laboring heart
On fair Francesca's memory drops the
rose.

Ah! sovereign Love, forgive this
weaker rhyme!
The men of old who sang were great
at heart,
Yet have we too known woe, and
worn thy rose.

(EDMUND GOSSE: *Sestina.*)

For a specimen of the rimed sestina, see Swinburne's *Poems and Ballads*, Second Series, p. 46.

The Virelai, which we have seen was one of the forms used by Chaucer, though not represented in his extant poetry, has been but slightly imitated in English. It was a poem of indeterminate length, composed of longer and shorter lines, the longer

lines in each stanza riming, the shorter lines in the same stanza also riming, while in the succeeding stanza the short-line rime of the previous stanza became the long-line rime. The last stanza took the unrepeated rime of the first stanza as its new rime; so that in the whole poem each rime was used in two stanzas. Charles Cotton, one of whose rondeaus has been quoted, also wrote a virelai. A modern specimen, by Mr. John Payne, is quoted in *Ballades and Rondeaus*, p. 276.

The Pantoum is another very interesting form belonging in this group rather than elsewhere, although it originated not in France but Malaysia. It was imitated in French by Victor Hugo and other poets, and through French influence has found a place in English verse. It consists of an indeterminate number of stanzas of four lines each, the second and fourth line of each stanza being repeated as the first and third of the succeeding stanza, while the second and fourth lines of the last stanza repeat the first and third lines of the first stanza. Thus the whole forms a sort of interwoven circle, and is used most appropriately to represent any kind of monotony,—the dull round of repetition. From *Love in Idleness* (1883) Mr. White reprints the following admirable specimen:

Monologue d'outre Tombe.

Morn and noon and night,
Here I lie in the ground;
No faintest glimmer of light,
No lightest whisper of sound.

Here I lie in the ground;
The worms glide out and in;

No lightest whisper of sound,
    After a lifelong din.

The worms glide out and in;
    They are fruitful and multiply;
After a lifelong din
    I watch them quietly.

They are fruitful and multiply,
    My body dwindles the while;
I watch them quietly;
    I can scarce forbear a smile.

My body dwindles the while,
    I shall soon be a skeleton;
I can scarce forbear a smile,
    They have had such glorious fun.

I shall soon be a skeleton,
    The worms are wriggling away;
They have had such glorious fun,
    They will fertilize my clay.

The worms are wriggling away,
    They are what I have been;
They will fertilize my clay;
    The grass will grow more green.

They are what I have been.
    I shall change, but what of that?
The grass will grow more green,
    The parson's sheep grow fat.

I shall change, but what of that?
    All flesh is grass, one says.
The parson's sheep grow fat,
    The parson grows in grace.

All flesh is grass, one says;
Grass becomes flesh, one knows;
The parson grows in grace:
I am the grace he grows.

Grass becomes flesh, one knows.
He grows like a bull of Bashan.
I am the grace he grows;
I startle his congregation.

He grows like a bull of Bashan,
One day he'll be Bishop or Dean.
I startle his congregation;
One day I shall preach to the
Queen.

One day he'll be Bishop or Dean,
One of those science-haters;
One day I shall preach to the Queen.
To think of my going in gaiters!

One of those science-haters,
Blind as a mole or bat;
To think of my going in gaiters,
And wearing a shovel hat!

Blind as a mole or bat,
No faintest glimmer of light,
And wearing a shovel hat,
Morning and noon and night.

FOOTNOTES:

[47] On the early history of these forms in France, see Stengel's article in Gröber's *Grundriss der Romanischen Philologie*. vol. ii. pp. 87-96.

[48] On these ballades of Graunson, a "knight of Savoy," see the articles by A. Piaget, in *Romania*, vol. xix., and Lounsbury's *Studies in Chaucer*, vol. iii. p. 450.

PART THREE

THE TIME-ELEMENT IN ENGLISH VERSE[49]

Nearly all modern writers on the theory of verse have admitted that English words have no fixed syllabic quantities such as are postulated for the classical languages, but that English quantities, so far as they exist, are variable and (in part at least) subjective in character. To this it is true there are exceptions, chiefly among the poets, like some of those considered in the preceding section on Imitations of Classical Metres.

Writers who have agreed that English words have no fixed quantities, are still at variance as to the relation of the element of syllabic time to the element of accent in English verse. Two extremes may at once be distinguished: that represented by the familiar statement that our rhythms differ from those of classical poetry in being based wholly on accent, and that represented most notably by the late Sidney

Lanier, who held that syllabic time-values in English verse are as exact and regular (hence as accurately measurable) as the notes of music. Lanier applied his theory with admirable consistency, and represented all sorts of English verse, even that of the Anglo-Saxon period, in musical notation. He is almost universally regarded, however, as having been led by the analogy between music and poetry to carry his method to quite impossible lengths. The most characteristic example of this is his representation of the familiar "blank verse" measure in "three-four" time, each accented syllable being given a time-value twice as long as that of the adjacent unaccented syllable—a method of reading which can easily be shown to be contrary to all common practice. It should not be forgotten, however, that a debt of gratitude is owed Mr. Lanier for having been one of the first to emphasize adequately the fact that verse, like music, is *rhythmical sound*.

Besides those who make English verse to depend wholly on accent, and those who give it time-values equally regular and measurable with those of music, there is a third class disposed to confuse the two elements of quantity and accent. Of this class was Edgar Poe, who in his essay on The Rationale of Verse constantly spoke of accented and unaccented syllables as "long" and "short," respectively, and was even disposed to carry the identification into Latin verse itself. This essay of Poe's has lately been defended by Mr. John M. Robertson, in the interesting Appendix to his *New Essays toward a Critical Method* (1897). Unfortunately Mr. Robertson seems to have perpetuated deliberately the confusion which he found in Poe in the use of the terms "accent" and "quantity." He even says that the attempt to distinguish them is ill-founded, "that

quantity in speaking *must* amount substantially to the same thing as stress," and, again, that "Poe's identification of stress with length is perfectly sound." Whatever be the fundamental fact here, the use of terms cannot be commended. If quantity is swallowed up in accent, so that accent alone dominates our verse, that is one thing; if the conditions are such that a heavy stress and a long quantity nearly always coincide, that is also a possible doctrine; but that is not to say that the two things should be identified. If all tall men wear long coats, or if all men—tall and short—wear long coats, it follows in neither case that tallness and long-coatedness are the same thing. It is a mere matter of physics that duration of sound and intensity of sound are perfectly distinguishable, and that they have no necessary connection with each other. The problem is: how are they related in practice?

It has already been observed that Mr. Lanier did good service in emphasizing the analogy between music and poetry, but that he carried the analogy too far. It may, therefore, be worth while to consider at just this point the elements of likeness and of difference in the two forms of art. Both are forms of *rhythmical* art: music and verse are alike rhythmical sound. Lanier showed with sufficient certainty that rhythm is dependent upon both *time* and *accent*. He said, to be sure, that "time is *the* essential" element; [50] but this does not seem to have been altogether what he meant, for he himself pointed out that the ear insistently marks off time-elements by the sense of variation of stress, even when there is no real variation, as in the tick-tack of the clock. He also pointed out that accent marks the rhythm of music quite as truly as that of verse, the rule being that ordinarily the first note of each measure shall receive

a special stress. It seems, then, that the rhythm of music is based on the recurrence of accented sounds at equal time-intervals. The same thing is true of the rhythm of verse. For every kind of metre there is a normal verse-rhythm which is present in the mind as the basis on which the verse is built up, no matter how many variations may constantly occur. This normal rhythm is formed by a succession of accents at exactly equal time-intervals,[51] such as can be marked off by a metronome, or by the mechanical beating of the foot on the floor. We realize that the verse as commonly read frequently departs from this regularity of intervals; but without the regularity as a norm to which to refer it, we should not recognize it as verse. The normal accent-interval we call a "foot."

Exception must therefore be taken, it seems to me, to another contention of Mr. Robertson's; namely, that "there is no time-unit." "Our feet," he says, "are a pure convention, and the sole rhythmic fact is the fluctuant relativity of long and short, or stress and slur." I am glad to be able to believe that the fundamental rhythmic fact is something more definite than this.[52] But the latest writer on the subject, Mr. Mark Liddell, in his *Introduction to the Scientific Study of Poetry*, joins Mr. Robertson in finding no feet in English verse. Nay, he represents the metrist who makes use of the old conventions of rhythmical measurement as one who will "flounder ceaselessly amid the scattered timbers of iambuses, spondees, dactyls, tribrachs, never reaching the firm ground of truth"! Mr. Liddell points out that we do not pronounce English words, even in verse, with mechanically regular alternations of stress; and he rejects the explanation that there is nevertheless a typical form in the poet's and the reader's mind, on the ground that it is "a strange state of affairs that

the æsthetically imperfect should produce a greater pleasure than the æsthetically perfect." Strange, perhaps, but as familiar as sunrise, if by "æsthetically perfect" we mean absolutely regular. Here we need to recur to the analogy of music, where the phenomenon in question is so obvious. Let any one attempt to follow a symphony with a metronome in his hand, and he will soon discover that if the metronome represents the æsthetically perfect rhythm, the orchestra represents a more pleasurable imperfection. Its accelerations and retardations carry on a continual conflict with the typical time of the music, yet that typical time is not only printed on every sheet, but is in the mind of every player. It is precisely so with verse.

It is true, of course, that the variations from regularity of rhythm are more numerous and conspicuous in verse than in music. The reason is obvious: the sounds of verse have constantly to effect a compromise between the typical rhythm to which they are set and the irregular stress-and time-variations of human speech, while music has no such complicated task. Lyrical verse, being closest to music, keeps the typical rhythm freest from interruption; and it is worthy of remark that Mr. Liddell's study of English rhythms is based very largely on those of a non-lyrical character, although he himself points out (p. 271) that these are the least regular. The drama is dominated, most of all forms of verse, by the necessity of representing natural human speech; hence it is not the place to look for the fundamental laws of verse at their purest.

There is, then, a unit of time on which all verse-rhythms, like all musical rhythms, are based; and this is what we commonly call in music the *measure*, and

in verse, the *foot*, I shall recur to this matter a little later in considering the terminology of the subject; for the present let us return to the relations of verse and music. Both, we have seen, are based on the recurrence of accented sounds at equal time-intervals. There is some difference, however, in the emphasis which one naturally places on the respective parts of the statement. In music we feel that the fact of chief importance is that the measures shall be equal in time, while the recurring accent seems a mere means of marking this equality; but in verse we feel that the chief fact is that the accents shall recur, the equality of time-intervals being in a sense a secondary source of pleasure. In music, therefore, as we have seen, we treat departures from regularity of time-intervals as somewhat more exceptional than in verse. But the rhythm would suffer, would even disappear, were either element wholly removed.

If we look for further distinctions between verse and music, we find them in the separate sounds which go to make up the unit-measures. Not only are the measures of music of mathematically equal length, but all the sounds bear exact time-relations to each other: each is either half as long, or twice as long, or a quarter as long, or four times as long, as its neighbor. On the other hand, the number of separate sounds in the measure constantly varies; it is sufficient that the total length be that of the full measure. In verse these conditions are reversed. The separate syllables, while they doubtless vary in length, are not mathematically coördinated as to duration by the ordinary reader. It is almost as difficult to say just what the time-relation of any two adjacent syllables is, as to be sure that one is stressed just twice as strongly as the other. On the other

hand, the *number* of syllables in the foot (in good modern English verse) is tolerably constant.

For the sake of completeness, one may add two other fundamental distinctions which, *apart* from the elements of rhythm, differentiate verse from music. Music, apart from rhythm, characteristically depends on variation of pitch, and only incidentally (as in the case of the use of different instruments in orchestration) on variation of sound-quality; whereas verse, apart from rhythm, characteristically depends on variation of sound-quality,—that is, on the different sounds of the different words,—and only incidentally on changes of pitch. Finally, the changing sounds of music are only vaguely symbolic, while the changing sounds of verse are symbolic of definite ideas.

For the sake of easy comparison we may put these observations in a rough sort of table:

MUSIC	VERSE
Rhythmical Sound, i.e.	
Recurrence of accented sounds *at equal time-intervals*.	Recurrence of *accented sounds* at equal time-intervals.

Separate sounds mathematically related in length, and constantly varying in number and arrangement.	Separate sounds not mathematically related in length, and generally with unchanged number and arrangement.
Apart from rhythm, dependent on variation of *pitch* (incidentally on sound-*quality*).	Apart from rhythm, dependent on variation of sound-*quality* (incidentally on *pitch*).
Sounds vaguely symbolic.	Sounds symbolic of definite ideas.

Let us now consider more closely the time-values of the separate syllables of verse, asking just what we mean by a "long" or a "short" syllable in English. It has already been indicated that the ear recognizes no such fixed proportions in the length of our syllables as are recognized for musical notes, or as are postulated for the syllables of Greek and Latin verse. It must also be remembered that the terms "long" and "short," as commonly used of English vowels, are of little significance for the matter of real quantity. They are applied for historical reasons, and do not describe present facts. Thus we call the *o* in "hotel" *long*, and that in "cot" short; but it is fairly clear that

the *o* of "cot" takes rather more time, as commonly uttered, than that of "hotel." The so-called "short *o*" is, in fact, a sound so open that it has lost the *o*-quality. In the same way what we call "long *a*" is a short-*e* sound diphthongized. We cannot be said to preserve in modern English any single vowels with fixed long quantity, such as we hear in German words like *Saal* and *See*,—sounds which obviously take more time in utterance than others.

Can we speak accurately, then, of long syllables and short syllables in modern English? It may be said that we have a large number of genuine diphthongs; and such double sounds, especially where they are so open as to require unusual effort on the part of the vocal organs (like *-ow*, for example), may be assumed to take a longer time in utterance than monophthongs. Even such a sound as is represented by *-au* or *-aw*, though it has but slight diphthongal quality, seems to sound longer than most monophthongs. But in none of these cases does ordinary pronunciation make the sound-length at all conspicuous, except where it coincides with strong stress; and it requires a moment's reasoning to convince one's self that the vowel in *fine* is any longer than that in *fan*. It is more than doubtful, then, whether our vowel sounds can be regarded as of significance for metrical time. A word like "saw" or "now," occurring in such a place in the verse as to be passed over with the briefest and lightest utterance, would be pronounced with rapidity by the ordinary reader, with no thought that the vowel-sound was too "long."

But in the earlier languages a syllable might be long, not only from the presence of a long vowel, but also from the presence of two or more consonants

following the vowel. May this be said to hold good for modern English? In general, prolonged consonantal sounds seem to be avoided, as in the case of vowels. We pass over them rapidly, and have, for instance, no such clearly stopped syllables due to double consonants as are heard in Italian words like *madonna*. Yet we cannot doubt that two or three consonants require more time than one, and in words like *strength*, *flushed*, *fists*, and the like, every one would find the consonantal length perceptible. More than this, two consonants often serve to "close" the preceding syllable, by making it impossible to run the consonant at the end of it over into the following syllable, and hence really lengthen it. This, of course, is the reason why the first syllable of the Latin *avis* is said to be short, but that of *alvus* to be long. The Elizabethan metrists tried to apply these Latin rules of "quantity by position" to all English words; and many modern English writers, who have been trained from childhood in the appreciation of Latin quantities, easily perceive the differing consonantal quantities of English words. These quantities may, then, certainly be said to exist; but in ordinary English pronunciation, and to the ordinary, untrained English ear, they must be strongly marked in order to attract attention. When thus strongly marked, they doubtless play some part in the structure of verse. In some lines attributed to Raleigh,

"His desire is a dureless content,
And a trustless joy,"

the syllable *trust*-occupies the time of two syllables; the typical metre would require something like

"And a pitiless joy."

Now, the fact that *trust*-is a noticeably long syllable, especially when closed by the following *l*, makes it well fitted to fill the place of two syllables; and we should find the line distinctly less pleasing if a short syllable were there instead. *Boundless* would do as well, because equally long; *trusty* would not be quite so good; *silly* would be very bad. Conversely, when a noticeably long syllable occupies the place of a light syllable, in rapid tri-syllabic verse, we feel that the verse is injured. Mr. William Larminie criticises a line of Mr. Swinburne's on this ground,—

"Time sheds them like snow on
strange regions;"[53]

the combination *-ange*, with its final *-nj* sound, made still longer by the following *r*, and preceded, too, by the combination *n-st*, has too much quantity for the place where it stands in the verse. In the verse of inferior writers many worse cases could easily be found. These illustrations, then, may serve to show that while we do not coördinate our consonantal syllable-lengths as absolute "shorts" and "longs," we perceive certain degrees of length, and find these playing a part in our verse.

So much for intrinsic quantity as found in English syllables. But there is much more to be said for syllables made long or short at the will of the speaker, under certain conditions. If we address a friend in surprise, saying, "*Why, John!*" we not only throw a heavy stress on both the words, but also perceptibly prolong them. In like manner, we realize that unimportant words, especially proclitics (like the italicized words in the phrase "*The* land *of the* free") are not only unstressed, but are hurried over in shorter moments than the accented words. Examples

like this suggest what may in fact be expressed in a general statement, that accented syllables are very commonly prolonged. This is not, as we have seen, from any essential connection between the nature of accent and the nature of quantity. In certain cases, unaccented syllables even show a tendency to length beyond that of those bearing the stress, as in words like *follow*, *dying*, and others where the final sound is easily prolonged. The coincidence of stress and length, then, is due simply to the operation of the same cause—the grammatical or rhetorical importance of the syllable in question. This fact, that the important (stressed) syllables are likely to be held a little longer than the others, will not warrant us in representing them as *twice* as long, in the exact mathematical relations of musical notes; but it may explain why a musician like Lanier tried to represent them in such notation. It must also be the cause of Mr. Robertson's attempt to identify quantity and stress. His statement that "quantity in fact, in spoken verse, consists of stress *and* of the consonantal total of syllables," may be regarded as much more satisfactory than those already quoted from his essay. It is, however, not quite accurate.

Still another kind of relative syllable-length remains to be considered, and for metrical purposes it is probably the most important. The *accents* of English words not only vary in degree according to the different stresses which they receive in different prose sentences, but in verse they are made artificially to vary also so as to conform as closely as possible to the scheme of the metre. Thus the first syllable of the word *over* is accented far more strongly when it occurs at the opening of a dactylic verse,

"Over the ocean wave,"

than when it occurs at the opening of an anapestic verse,

"Over land, over sea."

This being the case with accent, which tends to be strongly fixed in English words, we might naturally expect that it would be still more clearly the case with the element of time; and so it is. Syllables will be lengthened and shortened by the reader in order to preserve as nearly as possible the fundamental equal time-intervals between the principal accents. This is most easily recognized, and most commonly practised, in the case where syllables are shortened because there are more of them than the normal scheme of the verse would imply. The old "tumbling verse" of our ancestors depended on this principle, and so did the revival of it in Coleridge's *Christabel*. For example:

"A little door she opened straight,
All in the middle of the gate,
The gate that was ironed within and
without,
Where an army in battle array had
marched out."

Here the rhythm of the last verse is brought into the four-beat measure of the first verse, by passing lightly and rapidly over all syllables save the four that mark the metre. In prose, the word *marched* would be stressed quite as much as the word *out*, but there is no difficulty in reducing the stress in reading the verse.[54] It cannot be said, however, that there is no difficulty in reducing its *length*, for the final

consonant combination *-cht* takes up considerable time, and the whole word follows a syllable (*had*) which has been closed and so lengthened by the *d* + *m*. Sensitive readers would probably agree, therefore, that the quantity in this verse is too much for the smoothness of the rhythm. On the other hand, the long syllable *ironed* helps us to fill the place of the light syllable which is missing after it, and we find the rhythm easier than it would be in this form:

"The gate that was ironed both within
and without."

Once more, for the sake of convenience, let us attempt to put our conclusions into the form of a summary. An English syllable may be said to be *long*, not absolutely but *relatively*, from:

[1. The naturally long character of its vowel-sound, due either
to open quality or diphthongization.]

2. The presence of two or more consonants which require a
perceptible time for utterance.

3. Prolongation by the speaker
(*a*) because of the importance of the syllable, or
(*b*) because of the time which it ought to occupy in the scheme of the verse.

The artificial lengthening and shortening of syllables, then, is constantly and naturally practised in the reading of verse which has a strong lyrical swing such as guides the reader into a sense of its structure. In verse more subtle and less lyrical in character the time-intervals are not so strongly marked, and by the

ear not trained to listen for rhythm they are not so easily observed. The five-stress iambic line, especially when unrimed, has developed far more freedom and subtlety in English poetry than any other measure, and it is to this that one finds these writers invariably turning who wish to prove that our verse is not based on regular time-intervals. A verse like this:

"The lone couch of his everlasting
sleep,"

if read as an ordinary prose phrase, has no obvious metrical character. The second foot ("couch of") inverts the normal order of accent and no-accent, and in common speech the second and third syllables would be long and followed by a phrase-pause, while the fourth and fifth syllables would be made very short and jointed closely to what follows. There is no rhythm in such a group of words. But when we know that they are part of a poem in five-stress verse, we can readjust them so as to approach more closely to the rhythmical scheme in our minds. We cannot accent either *of* or *his*, without destroying the sense; nor can we deprive either *lone* or *couch* of its accent; but we can *lengthen* the words *of his* beyond their natural time in speech, pronouncing them more deliberately, and we can also, perhaps, diminish the phrase-pause after *couch*. This would tend to equalize the five time-intervals to which the verse, as a verse, should fit itself. It would be too much to say that this is what the ordinary reader would do, because the ordinary reader is likely to have his mind fixed on expressing the sense, neglecting the rhythm which is equally an element of the poetry; but it is what the careful reader could do without difficulty.

The first line of *Paradise Lost*,

> "Of man's first disobedience, and the
> fruit,"

always a favorite specimen for metrists to dissect, is of like character. Mr. Robertson, in the essay already cited, makes considerable use of this verse as showing the vanity of the usual method of dividing verses into equal feet. He quotes approvingly Professor Shairp's account of the way in which Clough analyzed the line: "The two feet 'first disobe-' took up the time of four syllables, two iambic feet: the voice rested awhile on the word 'first'; then passed swiftly over 'diso-,' then rested again on 'be-' so as to recover the previous hurry." Now this seems to be merely a description of the way in which the words would be uttered in prose, and to neglect the rhythm of the poem in which they stand. In the second foot one can and should give the syllable *dis-* full syllabic time, instead of hurrying over it as in prose speech,—a rendering made easy by the fact that it frequently has a marked secondary accent. Conversely, one can give *first* somewhat less time than it would occupy in prose, without thereby diminishing its accent. The word *and*, in the fourth foot, would in prose utterance be allowed almost no time-value; and it may be treated in the same way in the verse, by permitting the pause at the comma to fill up the normal time of the foot. It would seem to be better, however, to give *and* a fairly distinct utterance for metrical purposes (without, of course, adding any stress), and thus to approach more closely to the scheme of time-intervals. It is highly improbable that any one would read this verse—or almost any other verse of *Paradise Lost*—with such exact observance of the equal time-intervals as

would appear in regular lyrical poetry. We have already seen that blank verse departs more constantly from the typical scheme of the measure than any other of our verse-forms. Nevertheless, the reader with a well-trained ear listens always for the flow of the typical metre underneath the surface irregularities, and, by a delicate adjustment of syllable-lengths, can bring the poet's words into far more rhythmical utterance than they would find in prose.

There is one other method of varying the time-elements in verse which has already been suggested by what was said of the pause at the comma in the line of *Paradise Lost*. It will be seen very generally that light syllables, such as one wishes to utter in brief periods of time, are found on either side of the phrase-pauses in our verse.

"The first in valor, as the first in
place"

is a typical line in this respect. The natural pause, indicated by the comma, takes up part of the time of the third foot, which there are no syllables fitted wholly to fill. It might almost be said that, in ordinary five-stress verse, such verses are quite as numerous as those with five complete feet. The pause satisfies the ear, so far as the time-intervals are concerned, quite as well as a long syllable.

Pauses not only fill up the incomplete time of a foot containing only short syllables, but they also fill the time of wholly missing syllables. In the verse

"Come from the dying moon, and
blow"

we start out with trisyllabic rhythm, but have only two syllables in the second and in the third foot. It does not seem certain whether the missing syllable after *dying* is to have its place filled by a pause or by a prolongation of either or both of the syllables *dy-ing*—perhaps by all three means combined. In the same way the missing syllable after *moon* may have its place filled either by the prolongation of the *oo*, or by the pause indicated by the comma, or by both. But in other cases the pause occupies the entire syllable-moment; for examples, see under Pauses in pages 20-22 above. The whole matter was well summed up in Lanier's saying that "rhythm may be dependent on silences" as well as on sounds.

Let us now try to gather what we have been considering into the form of definite statements regarding the place of the time-element in our verse.

1. *In the normal verse, accents appear at equal time-intervals.* This, of course, does not preclude all manner of variations; the unit of measure is not the distance between the accents as they are found in each verse, but between the points where they belong in the typical metre.

2. *There is a tendency toward the coincidence of long and accented, and of short and unaccented, syllables.* This we have seen to be true in two different senses. In the first place, an accented syllable is likely to be lengthened for the same reason that it is accented—because of its relative importance in the place where it stands. In the second place, syllables noticeably long are avoided in those places in the verse where the accent does not fall, and are preferred where the stress is heavy.

3. *In the reading of verse, the length of the syllables is*

varied artificially, so as to tend to preserve the equal time-intervals.

4. *In like manner, pauses are introduced where syllables are short or wanting, to preserve these intervals.*

It is quite possible that these laws might be stated more fully and definitely. In Anglo-Saxon verse the conditions were perhaps not so different from those of modern English as we are likely to think; there we know that the principal stresses of the verse always fell on long syllables, and scholars like Sievers, by analyzing the remains of our early poetry, have formulated certain other laws as to the position and relations of the short syllables. If similar laws were to be formulated for our modern verse, we should probably find them no more perplexing than our ancestors would find those we have formulated for their verse. In every case the "law" is only an attempt to express what the ear has long known and obeyed. Mr. Goodell, in an article on "Quantity in English Verse," in the *Proceedings of the American Philological Society* for 1885, attempted to do for our verse what has just been suggested. He stated such laws as these:

"The thesis becomes a triseme if the next syllable bears the ictus. No syllable can be placed in this position which is incapable of prolongation."

"If the arsis is monosyllabic, a short vowel in the thesis followed by a single consonant is not lengthened by the ictus; the arsis is instead prolonged."

"With arsis monosyllabic, the strong tendency is to make the thesis short."

Perhaps these rules are on the right track; the

terminology is somewhat difficult, and makes one hesitate to criticise carefully. But since, as we have seen, the terms "long" and "short," as applied to English syllables, have come to be so purely relative, since our syllabic quantities vary so much at the will of the reader, and since the whole matter of the reading of our verse is in good measure one of subjective interpretation, it seems very doubtful whether any statements more explicit than those already laid down would be found of practical service.

Finally, we come back to the question whether we shall use for English verse the classical terminology which has for so long been applied to it. Those who object to such terminology do so either on the ground that it implies that English accented and unaccented syllables are equivalent respectively to Latin long and short syllables, or on the still more fundamental ground that there is nothing in our verse which can properly be called a "foot." It is undoubtedly true that the use of terms based on quantity has given rise to some confusion when applied to phenomena based on accent, yet the terms are now understood with as fair a degree of clearness as any terms relating to so disputed a subject as English verse; and it seems very doubtful whether it is not easier to explain them than to introduce new ones. Experiments in the latter direction have not been very successful. The latest writer on the subject objects, with considerable severity, to the classical nomenclature "hardly pressed and barbarously misapplied." Our current prosody, he says later, "ignores" the frequent occurrence of an accented syllable at the beginning of a line of Shakspere's verse, "turning it off with the statement that 'a trochaic foot may begin an iambic verse.'" Yet when

we reach the summary of the author's discussion of the subject, we find the same phenomenon "turned off" with this statement: "In rising rhythm a thought-moment may begin with a falling wave-group." One cannot avoid querying whether this interesting combination of words conveys any simpler and better idea to the normal English reader than the familiar statement that "a trochaic foot may begin an iambic verse." The case is instructive as to the danger of attempting a new terminology where one is already established, and of imagining that one has thereby made the discussion of the subject more scientific.

The second of the objections to the usual terminology, that there is no real *foot* in English verse, has already been considered. If there are no regular units of measure in our verse, then to attempt constantly to find such units, and to use terms that imply their existence, is certainly a mistake. But those are on the wrong track who would find the divisions of the verse in the natural phrase-divisions of English speech.[55] In "*arma virumque cano*" the syllable *vi-* is far more closely connected with the syllable *-rum*, for all prose purposes, than with the preceding syllables; but in the verse the Romans thought of it as being in the same foot with *arma*; and later in the verse the last syllable of *cano* is rhythmically connected (over the barrier of a comma) with the first of *Trojæ*. Indeed, the Latin poets instinctively avoided the regular coincidence of metrical units with word or sentence units. Precisely the same thing is true of English verse. It has been suggested more than once that the great preponderance, among English dissyllables, of those accented on the first syllable, goes to explain our preference for iambic over trochaic measures;

and that one reason why the rhythm of *Hiawatha*, for example, so soon wearies the ear, is because its metrical divisions and word divisions so frequently coincide. The fundamental principle of verse is that it sets up a new order of progress which constantly conflicts with, yet without destroying, the order of progress of common prose speech.

So the *foot* means, not a unit of measure for the words, but for the syllables viewed as rhythmical sound; and the attempt has already been made to show that it represents the time-interval between the regularly recurring accents of the normal metre. When there are two syllables in the interval, it is convenient to call the foot an iambus, a trochee, a pyrrhic, or a spondee; when there are three, it is convenient to call the foot an anapest or a dactyl. According to this system, the number of feet in the metre will always depend on the number of regularly recurring accents, which of course is not the case in classical prosody. For the same reason, all exceptional feet can be named by one of the six terms indicated, except where (as in Swinburne's "Choriambics") some classical metre is deliberately imitated. There is no sufficient reason for speaking of the choriambus as occurring in Shakspere's verse, because where four syllables occur in such succession as to form a sort of choriambus, they will be found to fill the place of *two* ordinary feet, not of one; hence it would be irrational to combine them into one exceptional foot. But on this matter of convenience in the terminology of verse, one cannot do better than to refer the reader to Mr. Mayor's *Chapters on English Metre*, where a refreshingly simple system is set forth, such as will not break down under any reasonable test.

There is one defect, it may be freely admitted, in these classical names of feet. They provide no place for the secondary accent. A foot made up of a fully accented plus a slightly accented syllable must be called either a spondee (the second syllable being thought of as approaching the stress of the first) or a trochee (the syllable being thought of as approaching no stress). The abundant use of secondary or compromised accents—and one might say, too, of secondary or compromised quantities—is a Germanic characteristic, for which no classical terminology can provide. There is, theoretically, room for some new names of feet recognizing these ambiguous syllables. Yet since degrees of accent are purely relative, and no two readers would be sure of agreeing as to which syllables are fully stressed, and which are half-stressed, it is not likely that such additional terms would make our terminology any more exact for practical purposes. The present system does, in fact, represent a characteristic feature of modern English as distinguished from early English verse; namely, that our metres strive after a regular alternation of stress and no-stress, and that the ear imagines this alternation even where (if it were a matter of prose utterance) it can scarcely be said to exist.

It would be absurd to strive with any warmth for the classical system of terminology in English prosody. It is undoubtedly not an ideal system, nor such a one as we should adopt if we were naming everything anew; few existing terminologies are. The only object of the present defence of its carefully limited use is to show that it does stand for some fundamental facts in our verse, and to suggest that it is usually wiser to make the best of the vocabulary we have than to fly to one we know not of. The important thing, in any case, is not the question of terms, but the end that

we should not lose hold of the musical rhythms of our verse, made up of delicately adjusted elements of accent and time.

FOOTNOTES:

[49] This discussion is in part a reproduction of an article with the same title originally published in *Modern Language Notes*, December, 1899.

[50] *Science of English Verse*, p. 65.

[51] On the nature of our sense of rhythm, see Mr. T. L. Bolton's account of his experiments relating to the subject, given in the *American Journal of Psychology*, vol. vi, p. 145. He reaches the conclusion that, in order to awaken the sense of rhythm, it is necessary that "the accents in a line shall recur at regular intervals."

[52] Similarly, so distinguished a scholar as Professor Skeat has lately opposed the scansion of English verse by feet, in the *Transactions of the Philological Society* for 1897-1898. For an ample examination of his views the reader must be referred to the new edition of Mr. Mayor's *Chapters on English Metre*, chap. vii.

[53] See Mr. Larminie's article on "The Development of English Metres" in the *Contemporary Review* for November, 1894. In this article there is one of the clearest statements of the place of quantity in our verse that one can easily find. Mr. Larminie seems disposed, however, to place too much stress on the element of fixed or natural quantity, and sometimes to use the terms "long" and "short" with merely traditional meanings. The most characteristic feature of his discussion is, that

he establishes certain principles of quantity, and judges the poets by their conformity to these principles. The inductive method is less pretentious and perhaps safer: to inquire what the poets do, and how in the reading of their verse we may preserve the rhythm which they undoubtedly had in mind. Both methods are legitimate. One will lay down rules for the poet, another for the reader; and there is perhaps as much chance of one being followed as of the other.

[54] At least no difficulty has generally been found; but Mr. Liddell marks the word as one which *must* be stressed from its grammatical importance. He even finds Coleridge untrue to the metre in putting *where* in an unstressed place in the verse, on the ground that it means "through which." It would perhaps be safe to guess that no unsophisticated English reader has ever found difficulty in the accents of the line in question. The matter is worthy of remark as illustrating the tendency of one class of readers to emphasize *sense*-reading at the expense of rhythm. On the other hand, for an illustration of the opposite extreme see Professor Bright's article on "Grammatical Ictus in English Verse," in the Furnivall *Miscellany* (1901), where we are told, in effect, that the metrical accent must always triumph over the sense-accent. As usual, the truth seems to lie somewhere between the extremes.

[55] This seems to be a part of the old effort to seek a grammatical rather than a musical origin for metre. On this subject the reader should see the brilliant discussion of Professor Gummere in *The Beginnings of Poetry*, from which a few paragraphs are quoted in Part Four.

PART FOUR

THE PLACE AND FUNCTION OF THE METRICAL ELEMENT IN POETRY

The following extracts from important critical discussions are selected with reference to their bearing on two questions: Is metre an essential or only an incidental element of poetry? and, What are its functions in the total content and effect of poetry? The student of the subject will do well to analyze the answers to the second question, determining under how many aspects of the metrical element they can be grouped.

Poetry in general seems to have sprung from two causes, each of them lying deep in our nature. First, the instinct of imitation is implanted in man from childhood.... Next, there is the instinct for harmony and rhythm, metres being manifestly sections of rhythm. Persons, therefore, starting with this natural gift developed by degrees their special aptitudes, till their rude improvisations gave birth to Poetry.

(ARISTOTLE: *Poetics*, iv. Butcher's translation, pp. 15, 17.)

Poetry, music, and dancing constitute in Aristotle a group by themselves, their common element being imitation by means of rhythm—rhythm which admits of being applied to words, sounds, and the movements of the body. The history of these arts bears out the views we find expressed in Greek writers upon the theory of music; it is a witness to the primitive unity of music and poetry, and to the

close alliance of the two with dancing.... The intimate fusion of the three arts afterward known as the "musical" arts—or rather we should perhaps say, the alliance of music and dancing under the supremacy of poetry—was exhibited even in the person of the artist. The office of the poet as teacher of the chorus demanded a practical knowledge of all that passed under the term "dancing," including steps, gestures, attitudes, and the varied resources of rhythmical movement.... The poet, lyric or dramatic, composed the accompaniment as well as wrote the verses; and it was made a reproach against Euripides, who was the first to deviate from the established usage, that he sought the aid of Iophon, son of Sophocles, in the musical setting of his dramas. The very word "poet" in classical times often implies the twofold character of poet and musician, and in later writers is sometimes used, like our "composer," in a strictly limited reference to music.

Aristotle does full justice to the force of rhythmic form and movement in the arts of music and dancing. The instinctive love of melody and rhythm is, again, one of the two causes to which he traces the origin of poetry, but he lays little stress on this element in estimating the finished products of the poetic art. In the *Rhetoric* he observes that if a sentence has metre it will be poetry; but this is said in a popular way. It was doubtless the received opinion, but it is one which he twice combats in the *Poetics*, insisting that it is not metrical form that makes a poem....

The general question whether metre is necessary for poetical expression has been raised by many modern critics and poets, and has sometimes been answered in the negative, as by Sidney, Shelley, Wordsworth.

It is, however, worth observing that from Aristotle's point of view, which was mainly one of observation, the question to be determined was rather as to the vehicle or medium of literary *mimesis*; and so far as the *mimesis* doctrine is concerned, it is undeniable that some kinds of imaginative subject-matter are better expressed in prose, some in verse, and that Aristotle, who had before him experimental examples of writings poetic in spirit, but not metrical in form, had sufficient grounds for advocating an extension of meaning for the term *poietes*. But as regards the *Art* of Poetry, his reasoning does not lead us to conclude that he would have reckoned the authors of prose dialogues or romances among poets strictly so called. As Mr. Courthope truly says, "he does not attempt to prove that metre is not a necessary accompaniment of the higher conceptions of poetry," and he, "therefore, cannot be ranged with those who support that extreme opinion." Still there would appear to be some want of firmness in the position he takes up as to the place and importance of metre. In his definition of tragedy (chap. vi. 2) "embellished language" is included among the constituent elements of tragedy; and the phrase is then explained to mean language that has the twofold charm of metre (which is a branch of rhythm) and of melody. But these elements are placed in a subordinate rank and are hardly treated as essentials. They are in this respect not unlike scenery or spectacular effect, which, though deduced by Aristotle from the definition, is not explicitly mentioned in it. The essence of the poetry is the "imitation"; the melody and the verse are the "seasoning" of the language.... Aristotle, highly as he rates the æsthetic capacity of the sense of hearing in his treatment of music, says nothing to show that he

values at its proper worth the power of rhythmical sound as factor in poetry; and this is the more striking in a Greek, whose enjoyment of poetry came through the ear rather than the eye, and for whom poetry was so largely associated with music. After all, there can hardly be a greater difference between two ways of saying the same thing than that one is said in verse, the other in prose. There are some lyrics which have lived and will always live by their musical charm, and by a strange magic that lies in the setting of the words. We need not agree with a certain modern school who would empty all poetry of poetical thought and etherealize it till it melts into a strain of music; who sing to us we hardly know of what, but in such a way that the echoes of the real world, its men and women, its actual stir and conflict, are faint and hardly to be discerned. The poetry, we are told, resides not in the ideas conveyed, not in the blending of soul and sense, but in the sound itself, in the cadence of the verse. Yet, false as this view may be, it is not perhaps more false than that other which wholly ignores the effect of musical sound and looks only to the thought that is conveyed. Aristotle comes perilously near this doctrine.

(S. H. BUTCHER: *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art*. pp. 138-147.)

It is not riming and versing that maketh a poet, no more than a long gown maketh an advocate; who, though he pleaded in armor, should be an advocate and no soldier. But it is that feigning notable images of virtues, vices, or what else, with that delightful teaching which must be the right describing note to know a poet by; although, indeed, the senate of poets hath chosen verse as their fittest raiment, meaning,

as in matter they passed all in all, so in manner to go beyond them: not speaking (table-talk fashion, or like men in a dream) words as they chanceably fell from the mouth, but poyzing each syllable of each word by just proportion according to the dignity of the subject....

It is already said (and as I think, truly said) it is not riming and versing that maketh poesy.... But yet, presuppose it were inseparable (as, indeed, it seemeth Scaliger judgeth) truly it were an inseparable commendation. For if *oratio* next to *ratio*, speech next to reason, be the greatest gift bestowed upon mortality, that cannot be praiseless, which doth most polish that blessing of speech, which considers each word, not only (as a man may say) by his forcible quality, but by his measured quantity, carrying even in themselves a harmony, without (perchance) number, measure, order, proportion, be in our time grown odious. But lay aside the just praise it hath, by being the only fit speech for music (music, I say, the most divine striker of the senses); thus much is undoubtedly true, that if reading be foolish, without remembering, memory being the only treasurer of knowledge, those words which are fittest for memory are likewise most convenient for knowledge. Now, that verse far exceedeth prose in the knitting up of the memory, the reason is manifest. The words (besides their delight, which hath a great affinity to memory), being so set, as one word cannot be lost, but the whole work fails, which accuseth itself, calleth the remembrance back to itself, and so most strongly confirmeth it. Besides, one word so as it were begetting another, as be it in rime or measured verse, by the former a man shall have a near guess to the follower.... So that, verse being in itself sweet and orderly, and being best for

memory, the only handle of knowledge, it must be in jest that any man can speak against it.

(SIR PHILIP SIDNEY: *An Apologie for Poetrie*.)

Versification, or the art of modulating his numbers, is indispensably necessary to a poet. Every other power by which the understanding is enlightened, or the imagination enchanted, may be exercised in prose. But the poet has this peculiar superiority, that to all the powers which the perfection of every other composition can require, he adds the faculty of joining music with reason, and of acting at once upon the senses and the passions. I suppose there are few who do not feel themselves touched by poetical melody, and who will not confess that they are more or less moved by the same thoughts, as they are conveyed by different sounds, and more affected by the same words in one order than another. The perception of harmony is, indeed, conferred upon men in degrees very unequal; but there are none who do not perceive it, or to whom a regular series of proportionate sounds cannot give delight.

(SAMUEL JOHNSON: *The Rambler*, No. 86.)

Various causes might be pointed out why, when the style is manly, and the subject of some importance, words metrically arranged will long continue to impart such a pleasure to mankind as he who proves the extent of that pleasure will be desirous to impart. The end of poetry is to produce excitement in coexistence with an overbalance of pleasure; but, by the supposition, excitement is an unusual and irregular state of the mind; ideas and feelings do not,

in that state, succeed each other in accustomed order.... Now the co-presence of something regular, something to which the mind has been accustomed in various moods and in a less excited state, cannot but have great efficacy in tempering and restraining the passion by an intertexture of ordinary feeling, and of feeling not strictly and necessarily connected with the passion. This is unquestionably true; and hence, though the opinion will at first appear paradoxical, from the tendency of metre to divest language, in a certain degree, of its reality, and thus to throw a sort of half-consciousness of unsubstantial existence over the whole composition, there can be little doubt but that more pathetic situations and sentiments—that is, those which have a greater proportion of pain connected with them—may be endured in metrical composition, especially in rime, than in prose.... This opinion may be further illustrated by appealing to the reader's own experience of the reluctance with which he comes to the reperusal of the distressful parts of *Clarissa Harlowe*, or the *Gamester*; while Shakspere's writings, in the most pathetic scenes, never act upon us as pathetic beyond the bounds of pleasure—an effect which, in a much greater degree than might at first be imagined, is to be ascribed to small, but continual and regular impulses of pleasurable surprise from the metrical arrangement.[56] On the other hand (what it must be allowed will much more frequently happen), if the poet's words should be incommensurate with the passion, and inadequate to raise the reader to a height of desirable excitement, then (unless the poet's choice of his metre has been grossly injudicious), in the feelings of pleasure which the reader has been accustomed to connect with metre in general, and in the feeling, whether cheerful or

melancholy, which he has been accustomed to connect with that particular movement of metre, there will be found something which will greatly contribute to impart passion to the words, and to effect the complex end which the poet proposes to himself.

If I had undertaken a systematic defence of the theory here maintained, it would have been my duty to develop the various causes upon which the pleasure received from metrical language depends. Among the chief of these causes is to be reckoned a principle which must be well known to those who have made any of the Arts the object of accurate reflection; namely, the pleasure which the mind derives from the perception of similitude in dissimilitude. This principle is the great spring of the activity of our minds, and their chief feeder.... It would not be a useless employment to apply this principle to the consideration of metre, and to show that metre is hence enabled to afford much pleasure, and to point out in what manner that pleasure is produced. But my limits will not permit me to enter upon this subject, and I must content myself with a general summary.

I have said that poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings; it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity; the emotion is contemplated till, by a species of reaction, the tranquillity gradually disappears, and an emotion, kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind. In this mood successful composition generally begins, and in a mood similar to this it is carried on; but the emotion, of whatever kind, and in whatever degree, from various causes, is

qualified by various pleasures, so that in describing any passions whatsoever, which are voluntarily described, the mind will, upon the whole, be in a state of enjoyment. If Nature be thus cautious to preserve in a state of enjoyment a being so employed, the Poet ought to profit by the lesson held forth to him, and ought especially to take care that, whatever passions he communicates to his reader, those passions, if his reader's mind be sound and vigorous, should always be accompanied with an overbalance of pleasure. Now the music of harmonious metrical language, the sense of difficulty overcome, and the blind association of pleasure which has been previously received from works of rime or metre of the same or similar construction, an indistinct perception perpetually renewed of language closely resembling that of real life, and yet, in the circumstance of metre, differing from it so widely—all these imperceptibly make up a complex feeling of delight, which is of the most important use in tempering the painful feeling always found intermingled with powerful descriptions of the deeper passions. This effect is always produced in pathetic and impassioned poetry; while, in lighter compositions, the ease and gracefulness with which the Poet manages his numbers are themselves confessedly a principal source of the gratification of the reader. All that it is necessary to say, however, upon this subject, may be effected by affirming, what few persons will deny, that of two descriptions, either of passions, manners, or characters, each of them equally well executed, the one in prose and the other in verse, the verse will be read a hundred times where the prose is read once.

(WORDSWORTH: Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*, 2d ed.)

The true question must be,[57] whether there are not modes of expression, a construction, and an order of sentences, which are in their fit and natural place in a serious prose composition, but would be disproportionate and heterogeneous in metrical poetry; and, *vice versa*, whether in the language of a serious poem there may not be an arrangement both of words and sentences, and a use and selection of (what are called) figures of speech, both as to their kind, their frequency, and their occasions, which on a subject of equal weight would be vicious and alien in correct and manly prose. I contend that in both cases this unfitness of each for the place of the other frequently will and ought to exist. And, first, from the origin of metre. This I would trace to the balance in the mind effected by the spontaneous effort which strives to hold in check the workings of passion. It might be easily explained likewise in what manner this salutary antagonism is assisted by the very state which it counteracts; and how this balance of antagonists became organized into metre (in the usual acceptation of that term) by a supervening act of the will and judgment, consciously and for the foreseen purpose of pleasure. Assuming these principles as the data of our argument, we deduce from them two legitimate conditions, which the critic is entitled to expect in every metrical work. First, that as the elements of metre owe their existence to a state of increased excitement, so the metre itself should be accompanied by the natural language of excitement. Secondly, that as these elements are formed into metre artificially, by a voluntary act, with the design and for the purpose of blending delight with emotion, so the traces of present volition should throughout the metrical language be proportionally discernible....

Secondly, I argue from the effects of metre. As far as metre acts in and for itself, it tends to increase the vivacity and susceptibility both of the general feelings and of the attention. This effect it produces by the continued excitement of surprise, and by the quick reciprocations of curiosity still gratified and still re-excited, which are too slight indeed to be at any moment objects of distinct consciousness, yet become considerable in their aggregate influence. As a medicated atmosphere, or as wine during animated conversation, they act powerfully, though themselves unnoticed. Where, therefore, correspondent food and appropriate matter are not provided for the attention and feelings thus roused, there must needs be disappointment felt;—like that of leaping in the dark from the last step of a staircase, when we had prepared our muscles for a leap of three or four.

The discussion on the powers of metre, in the Preface, is highly ingenious, and touches at all points on truth. But I cannot find any statement of its powers considered abstractly and separately. On the contrary, Mr. Wordsworth seems always to estimate metre by the powers which it exerts during (and, as I think, in consequence of) its combination with other elements of poetry. Thus the previous difficulty is left unanswered, what the elements are with which it must be combined in order to produce its own effects to any pleasurable purpose.... For any poetic purposes, metre resembles (if the aptness of the simile may excuse its meanness) yeast, worthless or disagreeable by itself, but giving vivacity and spirit to the liquor with which it is proportionally combined....

Metre in itself is simply a stimulant of the attention, and therefore excites the question, Why is the

attention to be thus stimulated? Now the question cannot be answered by the pleasure of the metre itself; for this we have shown to be conditional, and dependent on the appropriateness of the thoughts and expressions to which the metrical form is superadded. Neither can I conceive any other answer that can be rationally given, short of this: I write in metre, because I am about to use a language different from that of prose....

Thirdly, I deduce the position from all the causes elsewhere assigned which render metre the proper form of poetry, and poetry imperfect and defective without metre. Metre, therefore, having been connected with poetry most often, and by a peculiar fitness, whatever else is combined with metre must, though it be not itself essentially poetic, have nevertheless some property in common with poetry, as an intermedium of affinity.

(COLERIDGE: *Biographia Literaria*, chap. xviii.)

In the youth of the world, men dance and sing and imitate natural objects, observing in these actions, as in all others, a certain rhythm or order. And, although all men observe a similar, they observe not the same order, in the motions of the dance, in the melody of the song, in the combinations of language, in the series of their imitations of natural objects. For there is a certain order or rhythm belonging to each of these classes of mimetic representation, from which the hearer and the spectator receive an intenser and purer pleasure than from any other: the sense of an approximation to this order has been called taste by modern writers....

Language, color, form, and religious and civil habits

of action are all the instruments and materials of poetry; and they may be called poetry by that figure of speech which considers the effect as a synonym of the cause. But poetry in a more restricted sense expresses those arrangements of language, and especially metrical language, which are created by that imperial faculty whose throne is curtained within the invisible nature of man. And this springs from the nature itself of language, which is a more direct representation of the actions and passions of our internal being, and is susceptible of more various and delicate combinations than color, form, or motion, and is more plastic and obedient to the control of that faculty of which it is the creation.... Sounds as well as thoughts have relation both between each other and towards that which they represent, and a perception of the order of those relations has always been found connected with a perception of the order of the relations of thoughts. Hence the language of poets has ever affected a certain uniform and harmonious recurrence of sound, without which it were not poetry, and which is scarcely less indispensable to the communication of its influence than the words themselves, without reference to that peculiar order.... An observation of the regular mode of the recurrence of harmony in the language of poetical minds, together with its relation to music, produced metre, or a certain system of traditional forms of harmony and language. Yet it is by no means essential that a poet should accommodate his language to this traditional form, so that the harmony, which is its spirit, be observed.

(SHELLEY: *A Defence of Poetry*.)

Poetry, in its matter and form, is natural imagery or feeling, combined with passion and fancy. In its

mode of conveyance, it combines the ordinary use of language with musical expression. There is a question of long standing in what the essence of poetry consists, or what it is that determines why one set of ideas should be expressed in prose, another in verse. Milton has told us his idea of poetry in a single line:

> "Thoughts that voluntary move
> Harmonious numbers."

As there are certain sounds that excite certain movements, and the song and dance go together, so there are, no doubt, certain thoughts that lead to certain tones of voice, or modulations of sound, and change "the words of Mercury into the songs of Apollo." ... The jerks, the breaks, the inequalities and harshnesses of prose are fatal to the flow of a poetical imagination, as a jolting road or a stumbling horse disturbs the reverie of an absent man. But poetry "makes these odds all even." It is the music of language, answering to the music of the mind, untying, as it were, "the secret soul of harmony." Wherever any object takes such a hold of the mind as to make us dwell upon it, and brood over it, melting the heart in tenderness, or kindling it to a sentiment of enthusiasm; wherever a movement of imagination or passion is impressed on the mind, by which it seeks to prolong and repeat the emotion, to bring all other objects into accord with it, and to give the same movement of harmony, sustained and continuous, or gradually varied, according to the occasion, to the sounds that express it—this is poetry. The musical in sound is the sustained and continuous; the musical in thought is the sustained and continuous also. There is a near connection

between music and deep-rooted passion. Mad people sing. As often as articulation passes naturally into intonation, there poetry begins.... It is to supply the inherent defect of harmony in the customary mechanism of language, to make the sound an echo to the sense, when the sense becomes a sort of echo to itself—to mingle the tide of verse, "the golden cadences of poetry," with the tide of feeling, flowing and murmuring as it flows—in short, to take the language of the imagination from off the ground; and enable it to spread its wings where it may indulge its own impulses:

> "Sailing with supreme dominion
> Through the azure deep of air,"

without being stopped, or fretted, or diverted with the abruptnesses and petty obstacles, and discordant flats and sharps of prose, that poetry was invented. It is to common language what springs are to a carriage, or wings to feet. In ordinary speech we arrive at a certain harmony by the modulations of the voice; in poetry the same thing is done systematically by a regular collocation of syllables. It has been well observed, that every one who declaims warmly, or grows intent upon a subject, rises into a sort of blank verse or measured prose.... An excuse might be made for rime in the same manner. It is but fair that the ear should linger on the sounds that delight it, or avail itself of the same brilliant coincidence and unexpected recurrence of syllables, that have been displayed in the invention and collocation of images. It is allowed that rime assists the memory.... But if the jingle of names assists the memory, may it not also quicken the fancy?

(WILLIAM HAZLITT: *On Poetry in*

General.)

With regard to the principle of Variety in Uniformity by which verses ought to be modulated, and oneness of impression diversely produced, it has been contended by some that poetry need not be written in verse at all; that prose is as good a medium, provided poetry be conveyed through it, and that to think otherwise is to confound letter with spirit, or form with essence. But the opinion is a prosaical mistake. Fitness and unfitness for *song*, or metrical excitement, just make all the difference between a poetical and prosaical subject; and the reason why verse is necessary to the form of poetry is that the perfection of poetical spirit demands it—that the circle of its enthusiasm, beauty, and power is incomplete without it. I do not mean that a poet can never show himself a poet in prose; but that being one, his desire and necessity will be to write in verse; and that, if he were unable to do so, he would not and could not deserve his title. Verse to the true poet is no clog. It is idly called a trammel and a difficulty. It is a help. It springs from the same enthusiasm as the rest of his impulses, and is necessary to their satisfaction and effect.... Verse is the final proof to the poet that his mastery over his art is complete. It is the shutting up of his powers in "*measureful* content"; the answer of form to his spirit; of strength and ease to his guidance.... Verse, in short, is that finishing, and rounding, and "tuneful planeting" of the poet's creations which is produced of necessity by the smooth tendencies of their energy or inward working, and the harmonious dance into which they are attracted round the orb of the beautiful. Poetry, in its complete sympathy with beauty, must of necessity leave no sense of the beautiful, and no

power over its forms, unmanifested; and verse flows as inevitably from this condition of its integrity as other laws of proportion do from any other kind of embodiment of beauty....

Every poet, then, is a versifier; every fine poet an excellent one; and he is the best whose verse exhibits the greatest amount of strength, sweetness, straightforwardness, unsuperfluousness, variety, and oneness;—oneness, that is to say, consistency in the general impression, metrical and moral; and variety, or every pertinent diversity of tone and rhythm, in the process.... It is thus that versification itself becomes part of the sentiment of a poem, and vindicates the pains that have been taken to show its importance. I know of no very fine versification unaccompanied with fine poetry; no poetry of a mean order accompanied with verse of the highest.

(LEIGH HUNT: *What is Poetry?* Cook ed., pp. 37-40, 61.)

No literary expression can, properly speaking, be called poetry that is not in a certain deep sense emotional, whatever may be its subject-matter, concrete in its method and its diction, rhythmical in movement, and artistic in form.... That poetry must be metrical or even rhythmical in movement, however, is what some have denied. Here we touch at once the very root of the subject.... While prose requires intellectual life and emotional life, poetry seems to require not only intellectual life and emotional life but rhythmic life.... Unless the rhythm of any metrical passage is so vigorous, so natural, and so free that it seems as though it could live, if need were, by its rhythm alone, has that passage any right to exist? and should it not, if the substance is

good, be forthwith demetricized and turned into prose? ... Aristotle ignored, and Plato slighted, the importance of versification (though Plato on one occasion admitted that he who did not know rhythm could be called neither musician nor poet).... On the whole, however, the theory that versification is not an indispensable requisite of a poem seems to have become nearly obsolete in our time. Perhaps, indeed, many critics would now go so far in the contrary direction as to say with Hegel (*Æsthetik*, iii. p. 289) that "metre is the first and only condition absolutely demanded by poetry, yea even more necessary than a figurative picturesque diction."

(THEODORE WATTS: Article on "Poetry"
in *Encyclopædia Britannica*.)

Verse-rhythm in words is the imposition of a *sensible* order on what naturally and normally has only a *logical* order; and there is piquancy in the feeling that so little is this ideal control a fettering instrument, that each order seems to gain verve and spontaneity from the other, or rather from the latent sense that the other, though present and operative, is powerless to hamper it. Much more important, however, is it to notice how the sense that one single thing—the word-series—is lending itself to this joint dominance may take the form of a sort of transfigured surprise. (The root-principle here involved is the old one of "unity in variety," the *single* line of words, "dominated at once by the idea which they express in their grammatical connection and by their metrical adjustment," clearly possessing *two* independent functions or aspects. See the fuller discussion of "The Sound-element in Verse," in chapter xix. of *The Power of Sound*.) ... When, as in verse, the sounds are pointedly addressed *both* to the ear and to the

understanding, the rarity of the combination of aspects contributes a strain of feeling partly akin to that with which we follow an exhibition of skill, and partly to that with which we receive an unexpected gratuity....

Nor is this all. Rhythm perpetually not only transfigures the poetical expression of an idea, but makes the existence of that expression possible. This is tolerably obvious in the case of what is often called *par excellence* poetical language—language which keeps clear of prosaic homeliness and prosaic precision and of technical and abstract terms, and confines itself to a more picturesque and loftier vocabulary.... Clearly it is the rarity of rhythmic, as compared with non-rhythmic, speech that supports such rarity of poetic as compared with non-poetic diction; that is to say, verse, being in one respect—namely, its effect on the ear—a marked exception from ordinary language, thereby establishes for itself the means of being exceptional, without seeming unnatural, in other ways....

... In dwelling on the non-reasonable part in poetical beauty, I am in no way committed to the assertion that all its constituents are excluded from prose, but only to the assertion that the metrical form makes a difference of kind. It cannot be for nothing that the very idea of "poetical prose" inspires dread; and the instances of prose-writing where we find delight of the intangible and non-reasonable kind are exceptions that only prove the rule. One has but to test by self-examination the living force of words in a specimen of verse and of poetical prose which may respectively seem to oneself first-rate of their kind. For such typical passages may often be regarded as fairly on a par in respect of the ideas and emotions

which they reasonably express; and the prose may unquestionably further resemble the poetry in a certain subtle individuality of life in its more prominent words, so far as this life can be quickened in them by the idea itself, aided by such qualities of sound-arrangement as are possible apart from metre. So far the poetical merits of the respective passages may be equal; yet only one of them is Poetry.... Language, which in prose does little more than transmit thought, like clear glass, becomes—even as that becomes—by art's adjustments and the moulding of measured form, a lens, where the thought takes fire as it passes. The poet speaks through a medium which seems to intensify the point and to extend the range of what he would tell us by some power outside his own volition. Such a power, in fact, a rhythmic order, in its fundamental appeal to human nerves, literally is.... The *ictus* of the verse comes upon us as the operative force which shocks the words into their unwonted life.

... In considering the total contribution of metre to imaginative language, it is impossible to overlook the quality of *permanence*. I do not mean permanence merely in the sense that metrical words live in the memory.... This is, of course, a most important fact; but I am here dealing only with elements of effect that enter into the actual moment of enjoyment.... It is a sense of combined parts, and their indispensableness one to another, which gives us a sense of permanence in an arch as compared with a casual heap of stones; it is a similar indispensableness which gives to metrical language an air of permanence impossible even to the most harmonious sentence whose sounds conform to no genuine scheme. And again, in the case of this constituent as of the others, we have no difficulty in

seeing that its influence is really a joint one of sound and sense—that, though founded in the nature of metrical sound as such, it is not merely a sound-quality superposed *ab extra* on the intelligible beauty of the words, but depends for its existence on their intelligible character.... We cannot glory in the enshrining for memory of things that we do not care to remember. But for that which is of true spiritual significance the fairly-fitted body of sound is greeted as the inevitable investiture; and thus justified and quickened, the strength of the mutually indispensable parts seems no longer that of mere structure but of organic life.

(EDMUND GURNEY: Essay on "Poets, Critics, and Class-Lists," in *Tertium Quid*, vol. ii. pp. 162-179, *passim*.)

Why have poets always written in metre? The answer is, Because the laws of artistic expression oblige them to do so. When the poet has been inspired from without in the way in which we saw Scott was inspired to conceive the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*—that is to say, when he has found his subject-matter in an idea, universally striking to the imagination, when he has received this into his own imagination, and has given it a new and beautiful form of life there, then he will seek to express his conception through a vehicle of language harmonizing with his own feelings and the nature of the subject, and this kind of language is called verse. For example, when Marlowe wishes to represent the emotions of Faustus, after he has called up the phantom of Helen of Troy, it is plain that some very rapturous form of expression is needed to convey an adequate idea of such famous beauty. Marlowe rises to the occasion in those "mighty lines" of his:

"Was this the face that launched a
thousand ships,
And burned the topless towers of
Ilium?"

But it is certain that he could only have ventured on the sublime audacity of saying that a face launched ships and burned towers by escaping from the limits of ordinary language, and conveying his metaphor through the harmonious and ecstatic movements of rhythm and metre....

I think Wordsworth's analysis of emotion is clearly wrong. The reason why the harrowing descriptions of Richardson are simply painful, while Shakspere's tragic situations are pleasurable, is that the imagination shrinks from dwelling on ideas so closely imitated from real objects as the scenes in *Clarissa Harlowe*, but contemplates without excess of pain the situation in *Othello*, for example, because the imitation is poetical and ideal. Prose is used by Richardson because his novel professedly resembles a situation of real life; metre is needed by Shakspere to make the ideal life of his drama real to the imagination. Wordsworth, if I may say so, has put the poetical cart before the horse....

The propriety of poetical expression is the test and the touch-stone of the justice of poetical conception.... Poetry lies in the invention of the right metrical form—be it epic, dramatic, lyric, or satiric—for the expression of some idea universally interesting to the imagination. When the form of metrical expression seems *natural*—natural, that is, to the genius of the poet and the inherent character of the subject—then the subject-matter will have been rightly conceived.... Apply this test of what is

natural in metrical expression to any composition claiming to be poetically inspired, and you will be able to decide whether it fulfils the universal conditions of poetical life, or whether it is one of those phantoms, or, as Bacon calls them, idols of the imagination, which vanish as soon as the novelty of their appearance has exhausted its effect. For instance, the American poet, Walt Whitman, announces his theme, and asks for the sympathy of the reader in these words:

"Oneself I sing, a simple, separate
person,
Yet utter the word Democratic, the
word En Masse.
Poets to come, orators, singers,
musicians to come,
Not to-day is to justify me and answer
what I am for,
But you, a new brood, native,
athletic, continental, greater
than
before known,
Arouse! for you must justify me!..."

To this appeal I think the reader may reply: The subject you have chosen is certainly an idol of the imagination. For if you had anything of universal interest to say about yourself, you could say it in a way natural to one of the metres, or metrical movements, established in the English language. What you call metre bears precisely the same relation to these universal laws of expression, as the Mormon church and the religion of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young bear to the doctrines of Catholic Christendom.[58] ...

Why do we so often find men in these days, either using metre ... where they ought to have expressed themselves in prose, or expressing themselves in verse in a style so far remote from the standard of diction established in society that they fail to touch the heart? I think the explanation of this curious phenomenon is that, though metre can only properly be used for the expression of universal ideas, there is in modern society an eccentric or monastic principle at work, which leads men to pervert metre into a luxurious instrument for the expression of merely private ideas.

(WILLIAM JOHN COURTHOPE: *Life in Poetry, Law in Taste*, pp. 71-83.)

Language is colloquial and declarative in our ordinary speech, and on its legs for common use and movement. Only when it takes wings does it become poetry. As the poet, touched by emotion, rises to enthusiasm and imaginative power or skill, his speech grows *rhythmic*, and thus puts on the attribute that distinguishes it from every other mode of artistic expression—the guild-mark which, rightly considered, establishes the nature of the thing itself.... Our new empiricism, following where intuition leads the way, comprehends the function of *vibrations*: it perceives that every movement of matter, seized upon by universal force, is *vibratory*; that vibrations, and nothing else, convey through the body the look and voice of nature to the soul; that thus alone can one incarnate individuality address its fellow; that, to use old Bunyan's imagery, these vibrations knock at the ear-gate, and are visible to the eye-gate, and are sentient at the gates of touch of the living temple. The word describing their action is in evidence; they "thrill" the body, they thrill the

soul, both of which respond with subjective, interblending vibrations, according to the keys, the wave-lengths, of their excitants. Thus it is absolutely true that what Buxton Forman calls "idealized language,"—that is, speech which is imaginative and rhythmical,—goes with emotional thought; and that words exert a mysterious and potent influence, thus chosen and assorted, beyond their normal meanings....

Aside from the vibratory mission of rhythm, its little staff of adjuvants, by the very discipline and limitations which they impose, take poetry out of the plane of common speech, and make it an art which lifts the hearer to its own unusual key. Schiller writes to Goethe that "rhythm, in a dramatic work, treats all characters and all situations according to one law.... In this manner it forms the atmosphere for the poetic creation. The more material part is left out, for only what is spiritual can be borne by this thin element." In real, that is, spontaneous minstrelsy, the fittest assonance, consonance, time, even rime, ... come of themselves with the imaginative thought.... Such is the test of genuineness, the underlying principle being that the masterful words of all poetic tongues are for the most part in both their open and consonantal sounds related to their meanings, so that with the inarticulate rhythm of impassioned thought we have a correspondent verbal rhythm for its vehicle. The whole range of poetry which is vital, from the Hebrew psalms and prophecies, in their original text and in our great English version, to the Georgian lyrics and romances and the Victorian idyls, confirms the statement of Mill that "the deeper the feeling, the more characteristic and decided the rhythm." The rapture of the poet governs the tone and accent of his

"high and passionate
thoughts
To their own music chanted."

(EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN: *The Nature and Elements of Poetry*, pp. 51-55.)

We agree, then, to call by the name of poetry that form of art which uses rhythm to attain its ends, just as we call by the name of flying that motion which certain animals attain by the use of wings; that the feelings roused by poetry can be roused by unrhythmic order of words, and that rhythmic order of words is often deplorably bad art, or "unpoetic," have as little to do with the case as the fact that a greyhound speeding over the grass gives the spectator quite the exhilaration and sense of lightness and grace which is roused by the flight of a bird, and the fact that an awkward fowl makes itself ridiculous in trying to fly, have to do with the general proposition that flying is a matter of wings.... As a matter of fact, all writers on poetry take rhythm for granted until some one asks why it is necessary; whereupon considerable discussion, and the protest signed by a respectable minority, but a minority after all, that rhythm is not an essential condition of the poetic art. This discussion, as every one knows, has been lively and at times bitter. A patient and comprehensive review of it in a fairly impartial spirit has led to the conclusion, first, that no test save rhythm has been proposed which can be put to real use, even in theory, not to mention the long reaches of a historical and comparative study; secondly, that all defenders of the poem in prose are more or less contradictory and inconsistent, making confusion between theory and practice; and thirdly, that

advocates of a rhythmic test, even in abstract definition, seem to have the better of the argument....

All reports of primitive singing, that is, of singing among races on a low plane of culture, make rhythm a wholly insistent element of the verse.... Rhythm is obscured or hidden by declamation only in times when the eye has usurped the functions of the ear, and when a highly developed prose makes the accented rhythm of poetry seem either old-fashioned or a sign of childhood. Not that one wishes to restore a sing-song reading, but rather a recognition of metrical structure, of those subtle effects in rhythm which mean so much in the poet's art; verse, in a word, particularly lyric verse, must not be read as if it were prose. Dramatic verse is a difficult problem.... For in drama one wishes nowadays to hear not rhythm, but the thought, the story, the point.... As thought recedes, as one comes nearer to those primitive emotions which were untroubled by thought, they get expression more and more in cadenced tones. And again, this cadenced emotional expression, as it grows stronger, grows wider; the barriers of irony and reserve, which keep a modern theatre tearless in the face of Lear's most pathetic utterance, break down; first, as one recedes from modern conditions, comes the sympathetic emotion of the spectators expressed in sighs and tears; ... then comes the partial activity of the spectators by their deputed chorus; and at last the throng of primitive times, common emotion in common expression, with no spectators, no audience, no reserve or comment of thought,—for thought is absorbed in the perception and action of communal consent; and here, by all evidence, rhythm rules supreme....

If, now, the curve of evolution in Aryan verse begins with an absolutely strict rhythm and alternate emphasis of syllables, often, as in Iranian, to the neglect of logical considerations; if the course of poetry is to admit logical considerations more and more, forcing in at least one case the abandoning of movable accent and the agreement of verse-emphasis with syllabic-emphasis, an undisputed fact; if poetry, too, first shakes off the steps of dancing, then the notes of song, finally the strict scanning of the verse, until now recited poetry is triumphantly logical, with rhythm as a subconscious element; if, finally, this process exactly agrees with the gradual increase of thought over emotion, with the analogous increase of solitary poetry over gregarious poetry,—then, surely, one has but to trace back this curve of evolution, and to project it into prehistoric conditions, in order to infer with something very close to certitude that rhythm is the primal fact in the beginnings of the poetic art....

The hold of rhythm upon modern poetry, even under conditions of analytic and intellectual development which have unquestionably worked for the increased importance of prose, is a hold not to be relaxed, and for good reason. The reason is this. In rhythm, in sounds of the human voice, timed to movements of the human body, mankind first discovered that social consent which brought the great joys and the great pains of life into a common utterance.... The mere fact of utterance is social; however solitary his thought, a poet's utterance must voice this consent of man with man, and his emotion must fall into rhythm, the one and eternal expression of consent. This, then, is why rhythm will not be banished from poetry so long as poetry shall remain emotional utterance; for rhythm is not only sign and warrant of

a social contract stronger, deeper, vaster, than any fancied by Rousseau, but it is the expression of a human sense more keen even than the fear of devils and the love of gods—the sense and sympathy of kind.[59]

(Francis B. Gummere: *The Beginnings of Poetry*, chap. ii, "Rhythm as the Essential Fact of Poetry." Pp. 30, 31, 82-85, 114, 115.)

FOOTNOTES:

[56] Compare with this a passage in a letter of Goethe's to Schiller about *Faust*: "Some tragic scenes were done in prose; by reason of their naturalness and strength they are quite intolerable in relation to the other scenes. I am, therefore, now trying to put them into rime, for there the idea is seen as if under a veil, and the immediate effect of this tremendous material is softened." (Translation of Professor F. B. Gummere, in *The Beginnings of Poetry*, p. 73.)

[57] In these chapters of the *Biographia Literaria*, Coleridge was replying to the theories of Wordsworth as set forth in his Preface.

[58] Compare the amusingly vigorous remarks of Mr. Swinburne on the want of metre in Whitman's poems:

> "'Did you ask dulcet rhymes from me?' inquires Mr. Whitman. ... No, my dear good sir: ... not in the wildest visions of a distempered slumber could I have dreamed of doing anything of the kind. ... But metre, rhythm, cadence, not merely appreciable but definable and reducible to rule and measurement, though we do not expect from

you, we demand from all who claim, we discern in the works of all who have achieved, any place among poets of any class whatsoever.... The question is whether you have any more right to call yourself a poet, or to be called a poet, ... than to call yourself or to be called, on the strength of your published writings, a mathematician, a logician, a painter, a political economist, a sculptor, a dynamiter, an old parliamentary hand, a civil engineer, a dealer in marine stores, an amphimacer, a triptych, a rhomboid, or a rectangular parallelogram."

(*Studies in Prose and Poetry*, pp. 133, 134.)

[59] Professor Gummere also gives this analysis of Karl Bücher's essay on "Labor and Rhythm" (*Arbeit und Rhythmus*, Leipzig, 1896): "Fatigue, which besets all work felt as work by reason of its continued application of purpose, vanished for primitive man, as it vanishes now for children, if the work was once freed from this stress of application and so turned to a kind of play. The dance itself is really hard work, exacting and violent; what makes it the favorite it is with savages as with children? Simply its automatic, regular, rhythmic character, the due repetition of a familiar movement which allows the mind to relax its attitude of constant purpose. The purpose and plan of work involve external sources and external ends; rhythm is instinctive, and springs from the organic nature of man; it is no invention. The song that one sings while at work is not something fitted to the work, but comes from movements of the body in the specific acts of labor; and this applies not only to the rhythm, but even to the words. So it was in the festal dance.... That poetry and music were always combined by early man, and, along with labor, made up the primitive three-

> in-one, an organic whole, labor being the basal fact, with rhythm as an element common to the three; and that not harmony or pitch, but this overmastering and pervasive rhythm, exact, definite, was the main factor of early song,—these are conclusions for which Bücher offers ample and convincing evidence." (*Ib.* pp. 108, 109.)

APPENDIX

TABLE ILLUSTRATING THE HISTORY OF THE HEROIC COUPLET

The following table is designed, in the first place, to illustrate the history of the decasyllabic couplet in English verse, by making possible a comparison of the characteristic details of its form in different periods; and, in the second place, to suggest a method by which, through the careful tabulation of facts, one may substantiate or correct general statements as to the qualities of verse.

Any such statistics as are here presented must be accepted, if at all, with no little caution. The table is based on passages of one hundred lines each, believed to be fairly representative of the verse of the several authors. No passage of this length, however, can be known to be perfectly typical. A still greater difficulty is found in the necessarily subjective character of any such tabulation. Most lines of English decasyllabic verse can be read—with

reference to the distribution of accents and pauses—in more than one way. It is unlikely, therefore, that any two readers would reach the same results in trying to form a table of this kind. The *absolute* validity of the figures is therefore doubtful; but on condition that they all have been computed by the same person, consistently with a single standard of judgment, their relative validity, for purposes of *comparison*, may be fairly assumed.

The facts here set down for each specimen of verse group themselves in four divisions. In the first place, each line of verse is either "run-on" or "end-stopped"; and, in riming couplets, it is also of interest to know whether the second line of the couplet is run-on into the following couplet. In the second place, the cesural pause occurs either near the middle of the line or elsewhere, or—it may be—is omitted altogether. In the third place, the line may have a feminine ending. In the fourth place, it may contain some other foot than the regular iambus.

There is some room for difference of judgment as to whether a given line is "end-stopped" or "run-on"; but with occasional exceptions the presence or want of a mark of punctuation may be made the determining element. Obviously one may find such clear phrase-pauses, without punctuation, as will justify the caption "end-stopped."

There is far more divergence of judgment in the recognition of the cesura. Some writers on prosody treat practically every line of ten syllables as having a cesural pause, and certainly some slight phrase-pause may almost always be found. In the following table, however, the cesura has been recognized only when there is a grammatical or rhetorical pause so

considerable as—in most cases—to require a mark of punctuation. Such a verse, then, as—

> "Fate snatch'd her early to the pitying
> sky"

is counted as having "no cesura." The cesura is counted as "medial" when occurring after the fourth, fifth, or sixth syllable; elsewhere it is regarded as "variant." The significance of this distinction is very clear in the comparison of the heroic couplet of the "classical" with that of the "romantic" school of poets. [60]

It is in the last group of facts, those relating to substituted feet, that the subjective element is most embarrassing. There can be no very general agreement among readers as to the degree of accent necessary to change a pair of syllables from an "iambus" to a "pyrrhic" or a "spondee." The other two forms of substitution (inverted accent, giving "trochees," and trisyllabic feet, giving "anapests") are somewhat more definitely determinable. In the following table the naming of all these feet is based on what is believed to be the natural reading of the verse, with a due regard for both rhetorical and metrical accent. In the verse—

> "By these the springs of property were
> bent"

the fourth foot is counted a pyrrhic; so also in this—

> "Their busy teachers mingled with the
> Jews,"

although here a certain secondary accent on the eighth syllable is possible. In such a verse as—

"There is a path on the sea's azure
floor"

the third foot is counted a pyrrhic and the fourth a spondee.[61]

One may get, then, from a table of this sort, a general view of the character of any particular piece of verse, in respect to the poet's preference for run-on lines, for feminine endings, for breaking the verse into two equal parts, for varying the cesura, or for substituting exceptional feet. The description would be more nearly complete if there were also indicated the *places* in the verse where substituted feet occur; a trochee in the second foot is a very different thing from one in the first; but it is difficult to tabulate facts of this order without complicating one's results beyond the point of serviceable clearness.

Some students of verse are doubtless offended by the use of statistics in connection with a subject of this kind; and it is easy to ridicule the obvious incongruity of mathematical methods and poetry. A recent magazine critic makes merry over certain statistical studies in rhythm, carried on in a laboratory by recording the beats in nursery-rimes on the one hand and in hymns on the other. "There is a certain class of problems," he observes most justly, "whose external aspects may possibly yield to statistical tabulation, but which in the last resort must be spiritually discerned."[62] Poetry is unquestionably of this class. Yet this would not seem to forbid the study, by scientific methods, of those "external aspects" admittedly susceptible of tabulation. One is not likely to recommend elementary students to count trochees and cesuras in order to increase their appreciation of good verse.

But when one comes to the point of generalizing as to the laws or history of verse-forms, it is well to have a method of correction, representable in figures black and white, for the vague impressions which are all that appreciative reading can give. Perhaps the real service of such a method as has just been described is to prevent one from making hasty generalizations which statistics will not support.

Obviously the same system can be applied to blank verse, with the omission of the second category in the table. A convenient method of making such a study is to use sheets of paper ruled for twenty-five lines and seven columns. Each horizontal line represents a line of verse analyzed. The columns are headed "Cesura," "T," "P," "S," "A," "Run-on," and "Fem. Ending." A cesural pause between the third and fourth syllables is indicated by the figures 3/4 in the first column. A trochee in the first foot is indicated by the figure 1 in the "T" column; a spondee in the fourth foot by the figure 4 in the "S" column; and so on. A simple check-mark in the sixth or seventh column indicates respectively a case of *enjambement* or of feminine ending. When the tabulation is complete, one can easily note the proportion of run-on lines and exceptional cesuras, and can also determine at a glance not only the number of exceptional feet but the parts of the verse in which they occur.

In the following table the figures regarding the couplets of Spenser are based on his *Mother Hubbard's Tale*; those relating to Joseph Hall, on the Satires of his *Virgidemiarum* (see p. 182); those relating to Leigh Hunt, on *The Story of Rimini*; those relating to Keats, on *Endymion*; to Browning, on *Sordello*.

	Chaucer (ab. 1385)	Spenser (1591)	Joseph Hall (1597)	Jonson (1616)	Wa (a 16
Run-on Lines	16	14	10	26	1
Run-on Couplets	7	4	1	8	1
Medial Cesura	33	31	37	48	5
No Cesura	58	64	58	29	4
Variant Cesura	9	5	5	23	8
Feminine Endings	64	6	0	6	0
[a]Trochees	15	13	18	22	2
[a]Pyrrhics	26	29	24	35	4
[a]Spondees	0	13	14	18	1
[a]Anapests	4	0	0	6	0

[a] No account is taken in the table of more than a single occurrence of the same exceptional foot in any one line.

FOOTNOTES:

[60] Here a word of caution is needed. It will be observed that the regularly balanced line of the classical couplet requires not only a medial pause, but also a pause at the end. Hence where we find, as in the verse of Keats, a large number of medial cesuras but at the same time a very large number of "run-on" lines, the characteristic effect of the medial pause is almost entirely lost, and the number of medial pauses is not significant.

[61] This combination (of pyrrhic and

spondee) is of course very frequent; and where both substitutions occur together, the general average of accents is maintained, only with exchange of position. On the other hand, where there appears a large number of pyrrhics with almost no spondees (as in the case of Dryden), a different sort of verse is indicated,—one where the lines gain a certain lightness and rapidity from the lack of the full number of fully accented syllables.

[62] "Divination by Statistics," in the *Atlantic Monthly*, January, 1902.

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P. 129: "I hope to get safely out of ..." (had "... safety ...")
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