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HISTORY OF ENGLISH RHYTHMS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

It is said, by such as professe the mathematicall sciences, that all things stand by proportion, and that without it nothing could stand to be good or beautiful.

Puttenham, Arte of English Poesie, Lib. ii. c. 1.

J. B. NICHOLS AND SON, 25, PARLIAMENT STREET.

A HISTORY OF

ENGLISH RHYTHMS

BY EDWIN GUEST Esq. M.A.

FELLOW OF CAIUS COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

VOL. II.

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Note (G). The Alexandrine, 431.

ERRATA TO VOL. II.

Page line
2, 13, *dele the sentence beginning* The sentiments and language, &c. *and read* The sentiments and language seem to have been considered as appurtenants of the metre, rather than as essential elements of our poetry.
2, 33, *for* beed, *read* been.
7, 28, *for* dependent, *read* derivative.
9, 36, *for* risen, *read* arisen.
16, 4, *for* never, *read* very seldom. *At the time this sentence was written, I had not seen the Paris Psalter, quoted in* p. 279.
21, 22, *for* held, *read* holden.
23, 29, *for* John, *read* our first Henry.
26, 3, *after* sped, *insert the accentual mark*|.
26, 7, *Perhaps this verse would have been better scanned,*
Ec|ean driht|nes : ac | he bith a | rice
27, 12, *note* 6, *here referred to, is omitted. It merely contained a reference to* Vol. i. p. 172.
28, 15, *dele the mark of accentuation between* selfra *and* ræd.
29, 3, *for*
Angel throngs
Bright with bliss
read
Angel throngs
Bliss refulgent !
30, 2, *dele the mark of accentuation at the end of* o|ferhygd|. *See* note (C).
31, 22, *for* torture terrors, *read* torture-terrors.
32, 6, *for* ide|l, *read* id|el.
32, 26, *for* leoht| forth cum|an, *read* leoht| forth | cuman. *See* note (B).
34, 14, *for* ar, *read* arn.
36, 21, *for* bebbead, *read* bebead.
38, 5, *after* gedon *insert the mark of accentuation.*
38, 11, *Perhaps we had better read* the | wæs of eorth|an geworht|.
38, 21, *for* gwortne, *read* geworhtne.
38, 23, *for* sanlum, *read* saulum.
38, 31, *dele* note 2.
52, 4, *This and the following verse would be better scanned,—*
He | wæs Thra|cia thiod|a al|dor : and Re|tie-ric|es hird|e. *See* note (E).
56, 6, *after* wæs, *insert the mark of accentuation.*
58, 1, *for* enforas, *read* eaforas.
58, 4, *This line seems to be corrupt, as there is no alliteration.*
58, 30, *after* of, *insert the mark of accentuation.*
60, 1, *This and the following verse had better be read,—*
Thæt Mod | mon|na æn|iges : eal|lunga to | him æ|fre mæg| onwend|an. *See* note (E).
60, 18, *for* tot he, *read* to the.

Page line

65, 4, *The notion that* sad, *satiated, was always spelt with an* a, *led me to construe* sæd *as a substantive. But though the adjective is often spelt with an* a, *especially in composition, as* win-sad *heavy with wine, yet it also very commonly takes the diphthong. The passage ought certainly to have been rendered—*

There lay many a soldier
By the darts brought low.—Northern men,
Over shield shot—so Scotchman eke,
Weary! war-tired!

67, 12, *for* Trechour, *read* treachour.
70, 12, *for* the sections 1. and 5, *read* the sections 1. and 2.
79, 26, *for* Oft in hall he flourished, &c.
read

Oft in in hall he gat
Memorable largess. Him from among the Myrgings
Nobles rear'd.

Perhaps we might translate onwocon *begat, in which case the Gleeman may have been a noble. See* p. 78. n. 2.

80, 8, *There is little doubt this verse is corrupt.*
85, 24, *for* There Guthere gave it me fortune blest,
read There Guthere gave me a precious gift.
89, *dele* note 9.
92, 6, *for* sethe | for|e, *read* Se|the for|e.
96, 2, *for* goteoh, *read* geteoh.
115, 33, *for* eniht, *read* cniht.
122, *dele* note 1.
132, 19, *for* obnoxe, *read* obnixe.
150, 12, *for* git|sunge, *read* git|sunge|.
160, 25, *for* eehe, *read* eche.
161, 1, *for* simple, *read* simpler.
165, 22, *for* 1484, *read* 1384.
166, 24, *for* to ryd|e al|le arayd|e
read to ryd|e alle arayd|e.
166, 26, *for* uch|e wyz|e on | his way|
read uch|e wyz|e on his way|
166, 27, *for* lor|d, *read* lord.
166, 30, *for* by lyne, *read* by lyve.
168, 3, *for* cal|de him | ther out|e,
read cal|de him ther out|e.
168, 24, *for* at uch|e wend|e un|der wand|
read at uch|e wen|de under wand|.
170, 4, *for* by lyne, *read* by lyve.
173, 18, *dele* has.
174, 10, *for* Westmerland, *read* Westmoreland.
179, 31, *for* the San Graal, *read* the story of the San Graal.
190, 36, *for* only four great Gothic races in the north of Europe—the Sweon, the Dene, the Engle, and the Swefe, *read* only five great Gothic races in the north of Europe—the Sweon, the Dene, the Geats, the Engle, and the Swefe.
200, 5, *for* Westmerland, *read* Westmoreland.
201, 9, *for* Glascow, *read* Glasgow.
209, 1, *for* though it generally keeps its two syllables, appears to be represented occasionally by *ligg*, *read* though sometimes represented by *ligg*, seems more generally to take two syllables *lice*.
217, 6, *The words* to serve and so to please him *should have been printed in roman letters.*
217, 22, *for* unpaired, *read* unpained.

Page	line	
219,	14,	*for* " rhythm," *read* " rhythmi."
220,	6,	*for* chil|d|, *read* child|.
221,	21,	*for* thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, *read* fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.
227,	3,	*for* litil *read* little.
237,	5,	*dele the semicolon after* Chaucer.
240,	8,	*for* negleet, *read* neglect.
253,		*for* Chapter VIII. *read* Chapter IX.
258,	15,	*for* for | there|in, *read* for there|in.
269,	5,	*for* hollow-ribb'd, *read* hollow ribb'd.
271,	4,	*for* the | light|, *read* the light|.
272,	7,	*for* cares, *read* eares.
286,	6,	*for* candati, *read* caudati.
289,	8,	*for* omnisi mago, *read* omnis imago.
291,	22,	*for* Galuron, *read* Galaron.
291,	29,	*for* in danger I dwell, *read* in dongeon I dwell.
291,	33,	*for* gledĕs, *read* gledes.
292,	11,	*for* corentes, *read* coventes.
292,	13,	*for* at, *read* al.
293,	13,	*for* The Spenser-stave will furnish materials for the sixth chapter, and the broken-stave for the seventh, *read* The broken-stave will furnish materials for the sixth chapter, and the Spenser-stave for the seventh.
297,	10,	*dele the semicolon after* life.
299,	24,	*for* bless, *read* bliss.
300,	23,	*for* wilton, *read* wiltou.
300,	25,	*for* salton, *read* saltou.
302,	7,	*for* schal, *read* schort.
312,	7,	*for* repeated three times, *read* twice repeated.
312,	19,	*for* verelay, *read* virelay.
318,	23,	*In Michael's song, the verses of three accents are brought forwards, and those of four accents put back—the arrangement should have been directly the reverse.*
326,	15,	*If this line be rightly construed, we should read* friga, *instead of* frige.
327,	22,	*for* council, *read* counsel.
328,	14,	*for* gr, *read* ær.
329,	9,	*for* High Denings, *read* High-Denings.

CHAPTER I.

SYSTEMS—NATURAL AND ARTIFICIAL.

Few things appear, at first sight, more easy, or upon trial are found more difficult, than the clear and orderly arrangement of many and varied particulars. To class them according to their several relations, so that they may follow each other in due subordination, would seem rather an exercise of patience than of intellect; to require industry, or at most some little discrimination, rather than depth of thought, or an enlarged comprehension of the subject. But it has ever been by a slow and tedious process, that theory has disentangled itself from mere knowledge of fact; and we soon learn how much easier it is to collect materials, than to form with them a consistent whole. The many systems, which have been hazarded in the *exact* sciences, may well make us cautious, when we treat of matters, from their very nature, so much more vague and indeterminate.

The systems of the naturalist have been called (with no great accuracy of language) natural or artificial, accordingly as they were founded on more or less extensive analogies. The same terms have been applied to the systems of philology, accordingly as they were based on the gradual developement of language, or accommodated to the peculiarities of a particular dialect. If we may use these terms, when speaking of our literature, I would venture to denounce as artificial, every system, which makes *time* or *place* the rule of its classification. The example of

Warton* shows us, how difficult it is to follow a merely chronological arrangement; and the claims, which have been made by local vanity or prejudice, to appropriate certain portions of our literature, are listened to with less patience, as our knowledge of that literature becomes more widely extended.

The success of our critics might have been greater, if their ambition had been less; had they noticed with more care the outward make and fashion, and confined themselves less exclusively to the *spiritual tendencies* of our poetry. The instinct of imitation appears to have seized the points most tangible—the rhythm and the versification. The sentiments and the language seem rather to have been looked upon as necessary appurtenants, than as independent and essential elements. We find particular trains of thought, and particular idioms (in some cases amounting almost to a change of dialect) for ages appropriated to certain rhythms.

The history of our language has suffered, equally with that of our poetry, from overlooking the peculiarities of our poetical dialect. Some of our critics will have Chaucer to exhibit a faithful specimen of the English tongue, during the fourteenth century—but who, judging from style and language, would suppose him to be a contemporary of Langland? or that, in the following century, the *same* hand wrote the "Twa mariit women and the Wedo," and "The Golden Targe?" How widely does the foreign and artificial stateliness of the ballet style differ from the rude but native vigour of our alliterative poetry!

A complete history of our rhythms would probably lead to a very satisfactory arrangement of our poetry; and enable us to trace, with more truth and precision than has hitherto beed done, at once the progress of our language, and the gradual developement of our inventive genius.

---

* All must admit his failure as regards the arrangement of his subject;—however much they admire the taste and learning of this accomplished scholar.

Unfortunately, the published specimens of our early literature are so scanty, as rarely to furnish us with an unbroken series of any early rhythm. Large gaps occur, which can only be filled up by a laborious search into manuscripts, scattered through the country, and not always very easy of access. In such cases similarity of idiom, or of subject may sometimes aid us; and enable us to recognise a particular rhythm, when the changes it has undergone might otherwise make us hesitate.

With better means of information, I might probably see reason to modify much that is advanced in the following book; but I cannot think that any of the more important divisions would require *material* alteration.

ARRANGEMENT OF THE SUBJECT.

The next chapter will be devoted to the consideration of Anglo-Saxon rhythm—that main stock, from which have branched almost all the later rhythms of the language. In the third chapter, we shall treat of our sectional metres—or such as were produced by making each section a distinct verse. In the fourth, we shall trace the progress of such metres as were based on the shorter Anglo-Saxon rhythms; and in the fifth, the history of our old English alliterative metre—or, in other words, of that metre, which resulted from modifying the longer Anglo-Saxon rhythms by the accentual rhythm of the Latin chaunts. The origin of the Psalm-metres may be considered as the converse of this; they appear to be the natural growth of the Latin rhythm modified by the native rhythm of the language. These will form the subject of the sixth chapter. The metre of five accents will be considered in the seventh chapter; and the tumbling metre in the eighth. We shall, in the ninth chapter, notice certain loose rhythms, which have been occasionally used; and in the tenth, such new metres as have from time to time been invented or adopted by our English poets.

CHAPTER II.

Before we enter upon the subject of Anglo-Saxon rhythm, it may forward our inquiry, if we first throw a rapid glance over the present state of Anglo-Saxon literature.

Among the writers, to whom this literature has hitherto been considered as very deeply indebted, must be ranked the names of Hickes, Lye, and Conybeare. The first of these published his Thesaurus in 1705; Lye's Dictionary followed after the lapse of half a century; and Conybeare's "Illustrations" appeared, as a posthumous publication, so late as the year 1826.

The censures, which have been passed upon these works latterly, have been fully equal to any former eulogies. It would require much care, and some discrimination, fairly to portion out the merit due to their respective authors. Their errors, it is true, are many, but the subjects on which they speculated were *new;* and, when an art is in its infancy, an increased range of knowledge is sometimes of more importance than extreme accuracy. They, who devote themselves to discovery, have rarely time for minute investigation; and their mistakes may well claim the forbearance of those, who have profited by their labours. It is no slight praise, that the materials, which these writers furnish, are readily seized upon, even by those, whose criticism has been most hostile. No one, I believe, has studied Anglo-Saxon literature, since these "blundering works" were published, without having them at his elbow.

The interest, which has been felt of late years in favour of these studies, has not however been confined to our own country. It has spread to the scholars of Denmark and of Germany; and their enthusiasm, backed by an unremitting industry, has given a marked impulse to Anglo-Saxon literature.

Of their various publications, the Grammar of Rask and the *Deutsche Grammatik* of Grimm, are certainly the most valuable. Upon these two works, and the influence which they have exerted, I would make a few observations; and if, in so doing, I dwell chiefly on what appear to be their defects, it should be remembered that a mistake becomes the more dangerous, the greater the merit of the work which contains it.

The first of these scholars was a native of Copenhagen, and devoted the whole of a short life to the study of the Northern languages. His knowledge of the Icelandic was accurate and profound; his *familiar* acquaintance with the kindred dialects may admit of some question. But it was as a philological critic, as one of the most zealous promoters of what may be called *comparative philology*, that he has the fairest claim to our respect. In this field he was one of the earliest labourers; and the discovery of many a curious analogy was the reward of his zeal and ingenuity. His varied knowledge enabled him to detect, by comparison, minute peculiarities of construction, which would certainly have escaped the notice of one, who had given his attention solely to a particular dialect.

It was with these advantages that he began his Anglo-Saxon Grammar; and to these he owes whatever success that work has met with. There are few English scholars who can peruse this grammar without benefit; there are probably none, who will rise from its perusal, with any very high notion of its author's candour, or even—so far as regards the Anglo-Saxon dialect—of his scholarship.*

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* After the publication of Conybeare's "Illustrations," Rask noticed the longer rhythms of Cædmon, "which had escaped him while engaged in the first edition of his Grammar, not having Cædmon then at hand," &c. *Could* they have escaped the notice of any one who had read that poet ?

The terms in which he speaks of Hickes and Lye are but little to his credit. Without the aid derived from their labours, his book would never have been written; and though, in some cases, his mastery of the Icelandic enabled him to correct their errors, in others, his triumph, though equally loud, is far more questionable.

The Accidence is by far the most valuable portion of his grammar; the Syntax and the Prosody (and more especially the latter) must, I think, be considered as failures. According to him, the alliterative syllables alone take the accent; all those which precede them, form merely a "complement," and are "toneless." Great care must be taken not to confound this complement with the verse itself, "lest the alliteration, the structure of the verse, and even the sense, be thereby destroyed!" Were these strange notions sanctioned by Anglo-Saxon prosody, the jingle of a nursery rhime would be music, compared with the rhythm of Anglo-Saxon verse. He has treated Hickes' theory of a temporal metre with little ceremony—it would be difficult to say which of the two theories be the more futile, the one he has adopted, or that which he repudiates.

The great defect of the *Deutsche Grammatik* is a want of *sound* distinction—of a jealous and a penetrating criticism. Words of like ending, or of like beginning, are classed together, many of which we know must belong to different formations, for we can resolve them into their elements, and prove a different construction. We have also a large portion of the work, devoted to the changes of the letters; but the *laws*, which regulate these changes, are barely glanced at, and it would seem imperfectly understood, for we have letters represented as original, which are certainly corruptions; and others degraded as corruptions, which are, as certainly, original. The declensions again are divided into the weak and the strong, or, as Rask has it, into the simple and the complex; and this has been called a *natural* division. Had it any claim to such a title it would be more widely applicable; we have only to test it by some of the kindred languages, to see at once its unsoundness.* As an *artificial* system, it does not possess the ordinary merit of convenience; it is at once cumbrous and imperfect. His arrangement of the conjugations approaches nearer to a natural order, and is far more convenient.

But, with all these defects, the *Deutsche Grammatik* is a work of surpassing thought and labour. No man that studies the nature and structure of language, can neglect it with safety. It is a mine of learning; and, though we may sometimes quarrel with the arrangement of its materials, we may well be grateful that such masses of knowledge have been arranged at all. In what manner they may be best turned to account in the study of language, is an inquiry of some difficulty, but of far greater interest.

Now dialect is a term merely relative. The Gothic is a dialect of the Indo-European language; the Anglo-Saxon is a dialect of the Gothic. When we compare the Indo-European languages, we seize the points of resemblance, and pass slightly over those of difference. When we compare the Gothic languages, we find many of these points of difference become leading features—such as are, in many cases, strikingly characteristic of these new dialects. The same thing is to be expected, and certainly takes place in comparing our English dialects. To argue then from such a knowledge as we can now obtain of any parent language, to the peculiarities of a dependent dialect, requires the *greatest* caution. In studying the Anglo-Saxon, we can only look upon the *Deutsche Grammatik* as a collection of useful *hints*—hints not to be adopted at once and without reflection, but to be worked out and tested, by a careful examination of Anglo-Saxon authorities.

---

* The nouns of *all* the Indo-European languages may, I think, be ranged under a very small number of declensions. I will venture to answer for the Sanscrit, the Greek, the Latin, the Slavish dialects, and the Gothic. Even the anomalies of the Celtic may be reduced (in part at least) under the same laws. The distinctions between the declensions are *essential*, and deeply rooted in the very structure of these languages.

After the publication of these two books, Mr. Thorpe, the friend of Rask and translator of his Grammar, returned to England. To this gentleman we owe the version of Cædmon, which was published about four years ago by the Society of Antiquaries. Another gentleman, who had, I believe, been admitted to the intimacy of Grimm, distinguished himself about the same time by his zealous admiration of that scholar; and expressed his opinion of *English* scholarship in terms, that were, to say the least, somewhat unguarded. An answer soon appeared, and "the Controversy" followed.* In the warmth of this dispute extreme opinions have been advanced on *both* sides; some of which I think, the writers themselves would, upon reflection, see reason at least to modify.

May we not appreciate the learning of Hickes, the masterly command of idiom shown by Lye, and the elegant scholarship of Conybeare, and yet acknowledge the many grammatical errors, of which these writers have been guilty? May we not admire the patient investigation of Grimm, and the quicker but less sound perception of Rask, without blinding ourselves to their faults, or embarking with them in ill-considered theory or vague generalization?

Of these two parties, the "new Saxonists" have been certainly the most enterprising. The peculiar notions which they maintain, and *act* upon, have been thus stated by one of their earliest and most zealous advocates. "All persons who have had much experience of Anglo-Saxon MSS. know how hopelessly incorrect they in general are; when every allowance has been made for date and dialect, and even for the *etymological ignorance of former times*, we are yet met *at every turn with faults of grammar*, with omissions or redundancies of letters and words, which can only be accounted for on the supposition, that professional copyists brought to their task (in itself confusing enough) both lack of knowledge, and lack of care. A modern edition made by a person *really conversant* with the language which he illustrates, will, in all probability, be *much more like the original than the MS. copy*, which even in the earliest times was made by an ignorant and indolent transcriber. But while he makes the necessary corrections, no man is justified in withholding the original readings: for, although the laws of a language, ascertained by wide and careful examination of all the cognate tongues, of all the hidden springs and ground-principles on which they rest in common, are *like the laws of the Medes and Persians and alter not*, yet the very errors of the old writer are valuable, and serve sometimes as guides and clues to the inner being and spiritual tendencies of the language itself."

---

* The papers on this subject appeared in the Gentleman's Magazine at various times during the last two years.

That I differ from several of the opinions here advanced, may be partly gathered from what has gone before. But I think it due to a gentleman, who has laid Anglo-Saxon literature under some obligation, to state my reasons more fully; and as the question is one of *great* importance, and as a very loose meaning is sometimes given to the words, "correct copy" and "original readings," perhaps I shall be excused, if I enters omewhat minutely into the points at issue.

Our modern editors take the liberty (without any warning to the reader) of altering the text in *three* particulars. They change the accents,* which in certain cases are used to distinguish the long vowels; they compound and resolve words; and they alter the stops and pauses—or in other words the punctuation and versification—at their pleasure.

With respect to the accents, Rask professes to have been guided by the authority of printed Anglo-Saxon works, aided by a comparison of the kindred dialects. I do not inquire if he acted up to these principles; but under the circumstances, (unable as he was to procure Anglo-Saxon MSS.) none better could have been followed. The editor of Cædmon informs us, that in the accentuation, "which confirms, in almost every case, the theory of Professor Rask," he has "followed the authority of MSS, and except in a few instances that of the MS. of Cædmon himself." I will not stop to ask, what constitutes the *theory* of Rask, or in what cases this gentleman differs from his friend, but I have compared his edition with the MS. at Oxford, and find accents omitted or intruded without authority, at the rate of some twenty a page—by what license of language can these be called a *few* instances?

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* In the following remarks, the word *accent* has the same meaning, as is generally given it by our Anglo-Saxon editors. Much confusion might have risen if we had ventured upon a change of phraseology.

If the reader ask what theory has been followed, after this bold departure from the original?—an answer would be difficult. The very same words are found, in one page, with long vowels, and in another with short, as if the accent were inserted or omitted, as the whim of the moment dictated.

To the edition of Beowulf these observations only partially apply. The editor has shown more deference to his reader, and has distinguished between theory and fact—between his own accents, and the accents of the MS.*

I cannot help thinking, however, that in the present state of Anglo-Saxon scholarship, all these speculations are premature. Here is a language, with whose accidence and syntax we are very imperfectly acquainted—the nature of whose dialects we have not yet investigated—and we are endeavouring to measure the length of its vowel-sounds, with a nicety, to which they who spoke it made no pretension. It is probable that the quantity of the vowels varied with the dialects—if so, *their* peculiarities should be first studied; it is almost certain that the quantity was sometimes indicated by the spelling—if so, the system of Anglo-Saxon orthography should be first ascertained and settled.

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* In one of his papers (Gent. Mag. Dec. 1834, p. 605) he promises to explain "the system," on which he has regulated his accentuation. Would it not have been safer policy, if he had *first* established the system, and *then* had acted upon it?

If we look into Anglo-Saxon MSS. we find some without any accents; and few, in which they have been systematically adopted. In the Beowulf MS. the whole number of accents cannot amount to more than a few dozens. In the MS. of Cædmon, they were also at first very sparingly used; but were profusely added by the same hand that corrected the MS.

To charge these conflicting usages upon the ignorance of the writers, is a ready method of solving a very difficult question. That some of our Anglo-Saxon MSS. have been carelessly transcribed, may be admitted, but I cannot allow that such is their *general* character. Many of them are beautifully written, and have minute corrections, which show they have been revised with equal care; and these MSS. agree no better than the others, with any theory that has yet been started, on the subject of Anglo-Saxon orthography. To pare down their peculiarities to a level with German criticism, is an easy task, but one I think that is little likely to aid the progress of Anglo-Saxon scholarship.*

Another license, very commonly taken, is that of compounding and resolving words.

In English we write some compounds continuously, as

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* I have elsewhere suggested, (vol. I. p. 106,) that there *may* have been *three* degrees of Anglo-Saxon quantity. This, of course, is mere hypothesis, and would be given up with very little reluctance; but I certainly could wish to have had *an opportunity* of testing its correctness.

redbreast; others we split, as it were, into distinct words, as *coal mine;* or link together by means of the hyphen, as *pear-tree.* The hyphen was unknown to the Anglo-Saxons; but compounds were frequently resolved into their elements, and written as though they formed distinct words. Now there is no objection to the hyphen, if it be used only to tye together the scattered elements of a compound; for even if there be blunders in the construction of a passage, and words united that *should* be separate, yet the reader possesses an easy remedy—he has merely to strike out the hyphen, and the real text is before him. But the case is widely different, when the hyphen is also used in the *resolution* of words. He must then rest content with such readings as are given him. The editor is secure from criticism.

Most of our modern editors take this double license. The reader *may* think that the hyphen is occasionally used to prop a false translation, or that it sometimes mars the rhythm of a section; but he must have a greater confidence in the soundness of his opinion, than would be generally warranted by the present state of Anglo-Saxon scholarship, if he venture an objection. He *may* be quarrelling with the original, when he thinks he has only the editor to cope with. He cannot be safe unless he have his finger on the manuscript.

What is the object proposed by this resolution of words, is far from clear. Few of our editors follow the same plan; nor are there many of them consistent even with themselves. Sometimes the prefix is separated from its verb; sometimes linked to it by means of the hyphen; sometimes the two are written continuously.* The common adjectival compounds* generally take the hyphen, but in many hundred instances, they are separated into distinct words, as *mere flod, god cyning,*† &c. &c. So that not only is the integrity of the manuscript violated, but the reader gets nothing in exchange—not even a theory.‡

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* The English reader must not consider this a mere question of orthography. It sometimes happens, that an adverb is tacked as a prefix to a verb, and not only the rhythm of the line, but even its sense, destroyed.

The versification of our MSS. has been treated with little more ceremony than their system of accents.

I have already mentioned, that Anglo-Saxon poetry was written continuously like prose. In some manuscripts (as in that of Cædmon) the point separated the sections; in others (as in the Dunstan Chronicle) it separated the couplets; in others (as in the Beowulf MS.) the point was used merely to close a period, and the versification had nothing but the rhythm to indicate it.§ The point was *often* omitted; and sometimes, though very rarely, it was misplaced. Now it would seem easy enough, to copy the MS. correctly, and to mention in the notes the omission or the false position of the points; and it is matter of regret, that the confidence reposed in some eminent grammarian has too often led our editors to "restore" the versification, without informing the reader. The alterations which have been thus made are, I fear, but too numerous; and more than one scholar has thus impaired his usefulness, whose services, in other respects, may well deserve our thanks.*

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* See vol. i. p. 102.

† The hyphen is very commonly forgotten, when an adjective and substantive are compounded, (even in cases where change of accent points infallibly to a compound,) unless the peculiarities of the *syntax* be such, as cannot be got rid of without it.

‡ In the MSS. from which I have taken the extracts, which will shortly be submitted to the reader, the preposition is generally joined to its substantive, as *onbearm.* I have written them separately, as I could not satisfy myself whether or not this custom applied to *all* the prepositions. The negative particle *ne* is also generally joined to its verb; and sometimes the article to its substantive. I have written them separately in *all* cases. With these exceptions, the reader will have only to strike out the hyphen, to get a tolerably pure text.

§ The writer generally leaves a slight interval between his sections; but, as might be expected, this is often forgotten. The Editor should have mentioned the omission of the dot, and have let his reader know that he was, to a great extent at least, answerable for the versification.

In their punctuation, the Anglo-Saxons used three kinds of stops. The first was somewhat like our semicolon (;); the second was merely the same stop reversed (⁏); and the third consisted of three dots (∴). Most manuscripts have merely the rhythmical point (.), and that too in cases where it is required also to mark the versification—a clear proof how closely the two systems were at first connected. The same hand that altered the spelling, and sometimes even the wording of the Cædmon MS. added also the stops. The task however was carelessly performed; and Junius has pointed *his* edition, according to his own notions of the author's meaning. The compiler of the Analecta, also, has furnished his text with commas, semi-colons, &c. in the same way as if it were an English composition; but as the sense often depends on the punctuation, the reader ought always to know, how far it is borne out by the original. Many persons may differ with an editor, in the construction of a passage, who would not have confidence enough to impugn the punctuation of a manuscript.†

A modern edition therefore aims at being an *improved version,* and not merely a copy of the MS. The editors claim the merit of *restoring* the text; and unfortunately so little do they distrust their amendments, as seldom to give the reader that warning he has a right to look for. These claims we have examined; but there are others (and strangely inconsistent ones) sometimes brought forward, which should not pass, altogether, without observation. One editor, who has entirely altered the accentuation of his manuscript—who has often changed the versification—who has compounded words and resolved words, "lays claim at least to one merit, that of exhibiting a *faithful* text." Another, who is no less free in the composition and resolution of words, and who marks in the same way an erasure of the MS., and (what he considers to be) a defect in the syntax or the prosody, tells us, he has printed his "text letter for letter as he found it." It seems difficult to reconcile these professions with the claims elsewhere made by these gentlemen, and hardly possible to reconcile them with their practice.

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* The evening before I examined the MS. of Cædmon I marked down between twenty and thirty cases of doubtful prosody. In every one of these instances, but two, the text had been altered.

The motive for these changes was in general obvious enough; it was to bring two alliterative syllables into the first section—or to begin the second section with the *chief-letter*, as Rask terms it—or to support some of the other prosodial canons of that grammarian. To effect these objects, we have periods ending in the midst of a section, and pauses immediately between a preposition and its substantive!

† As I believe the Cædmon MS. *originally* had no stops, I have in such extracts as are taken from it, seldom thought it worth while to notice them.

In the following extracts, we shall first state the law which defines the versification; and then carefully note every deviation from it. When the point occurs in the midst of a section, it will be inserted, so as to give the reader every means of forming an independent judgment. It will be seen, that the point often divides a *compound section,* in a way that strongly supports the hypothesis, elsewhere started as to the origin of such section.*

The sections will be ranged in couplets, notwithstanding the protest of Rask. It will be useless to follow this critic through his long, and (as it seems to me) very inconclusive reasoning upon this subject. Half a dozen sentences may embrace all the merits of the question. Our English verse was at first written like prose, the point sometimes separating the couplets, but generally the sections. About the end of the 12th century, a new mode of writing came into fashion, and a line was given to each couplet. The Icelanders followed a different plan, and made each section a distinct verse; but I have never seen regular alliterative metre, so written, in English. As far therefore as *authority* goes, an Icelander would naturally make a verse of each section, and an Englishman of each couplet. It is however, as Conybeare remarked, a mere question of convenience. I prefer the couplet for Anglo-Saxon verse, because in such form it seems better calculated to illustrate the origin of our later rhythms.

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* Vol. i. p. 164. A scrupulous adherence to the punctuation of the manuscript will also leave open another question, which cannot, I think, be looked upon as fully decided—the question, I mean, whether an alliterative section ever occurs *singly*.

In marking the accented syllables, I have met with great difficulty; and fear I have sometimes mistaken the rhythm of my author. It might perhaps be sufficient to say, it was a work of difficulty, and the *first* time it had been attempted; but it may also be said, that much of the difficulty arises from the liberties, which have been taken with the versification of our manuscripts.* I have been very anxious to arrive at accuracy; for the scansion of an Anglo-Saxon verse is not a matter of mere curiosity. There can be little doubt that the modern accentuation of our language is mainly built upon that of its earliest dialect; and that we must investigate the latter, before we can arrive at any satisfactory arrangement of the former.

As to the English version, I fear it will often stand in need of the reader's indulgence. I cannot hope to escape much better than those who have attempted the task before me; and in every translation from the Anglo-Saxon, that has fallen under my notice, there are blunders enough to satisfy the most unfriendly critic. The Anglo-Saxon student has to work against the evils of a scanty vocabulary,* an imperfect grammar, and idioms, that must have taken root in the very infancy of our language. Price appears to have been the only scholar, who has fairly met these difficulties with a running commentary. I shall endeavour to follow his example, but as the discussion of some questions may be too lengthy for the compass of a note, I shall take this opportunity of discussing certain

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* I once wished to ascertain the accentuation of a particular class of compounds, and collected for that purpose seventeen sections, in which such compounds occurred. Of these, *nine* were indecisive; *five* gave one mode of accentuation, and *three* another. I satisfied myself, that in one of these sections a hyphen had been used improperly, but the other two continued puzzles, till I had an opportunity of seeing the MS., when I found the point had in both cases been misplaced by the Editor.

I felt half inclined to agree with the learned biographer of Ritson, and to denounce the corruption of a MS. *as a crime little less than felony!*

ANGLO-SAXON IDIOMS.

There are some words, compounded of an adjective and a substantive, in which the latter, though it remains unchanged, has the force of an inflected noun. It would seem, that this class of compounds place the negative prefix before the adjective. Thus *græs-grene* is green with grass, and *græs-ungrene*† not green with grass. The modern idiom, which most nearly resembles the present, is found in the comparison of certain compounds, wherein one adjective qualifies another, as *heavenly-bright*, *sweet-tempered*. These are compared by adding the *er* and the *est* to the *first* adjective.

> Thrice blessed they, that master so their blood,
> To undergo such maiden pilgrimage;
> But *earthlier happy* is the rose distill'd,
> Than that, which, withering on the virgin thorn,
> Grows, lives, and dies, in single blessedness.
> *M. N. D.* 1. 1.

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* Much difficulty arises from the vast number of duplicates and triplicates among our Anglo-Saxon nouns. Very many of these have more than one termination and more than one gender and declension. Other nouns (both substantive and adjective) occasionally take an *e* in the nominative, and as *e* is one of the commonest inflexions, the perplexity, thence arising, is considerable. A collection of these puzzling synonymes would be of the greatest service to the student.

† In the last edition of Cædmon, these are made two distinct words. It is clear, from the prosody, that they are compound; for the prefix loses its accent.

Græs|-úngrén¦e : gár¦secg theah|te. *Cæd.* 7.

And many blows, though with a little axe,
Hew down and fell the *hardest-timber'd* oak.
3 *H.* 6, 2. 1.

Again, certain compound prepositions may be divided, so as to inclose the substantive they govern.

Tha thry comon : *to* theodne *foran**
The three came the king before. *Cæd.* 176.

Burnon scealcas
Ymb ofn *útan*
Burnt were the servants
Round about the oven. *Cæd.* 186.

This idiom we long retained in the phrases, *to* God-*ward*, *to* him-*ward*, *to* Windsor-*ward*, &c. There was also an idiom very like it in the Latin.

It would seem too, that, when one substantive qualified another, the compound sometimes opened and admitted an adjective.

The Anglo-Saxon *winter weder*, *mere wic*, *sumer dæg*, &c. answer to our modern phrases, *winter weather*, *sea station*, *summer day*, &c. In the following passages these compounds admit the adjective—at least it is only on this supposition, that I can render them into intelligible English.

Byrnende fy'r : and beorht sumor
Nergend hergath : niht somod and dæg
And thec landa gehwilc : leoht and theostro
Herige on háde : somod hát and ceald
And thec frea mihtig : forstas and snawas
Winter biter† *weder :* and folcen-faru
Lofige on lyfte

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* I quote from Mr. Thorpe's text, but refer to the page of the *manuscript*, which is given in both the Editions.

† Grimm links these two words together as a compound, *winter-biter*, bitter as winter. Mr. Thorpe follows his example, but *evades* the consequence,

And thee, mighty Lord! the frosts and snows
The *winter's bitter weather*, and the heaven's course,
Praise in the air.

He

Burning fire, and bright summer
Hery their preserver! night also and day;
And Thee each land, light and darkness,
Hery in their station! also heat and cold;
And Thee, mighty Lord, the frosts and the snows,
The bitter winter weather, and the welkin's course
Praise in the lyft! *Cædmon*, 192.

For thæm that is sio an rest: eallra geswinca
Hyhtlicu hyth: heaum ceolum
Modes usses: *mere* smylta *wic*[*]

For that it is the one rest of all labours,
The desired haven for the lofty barks,
Our soul's mild roadstead. *Alfred*, 93. 1.

Hwæt thu fæder wercest
Sumur lange[†] *dagas:* swithe hate
Thæm winter dagum: wundrum sceorta
Tida getiohhast

Lo! thou, Father, makest
Long summer-days intensely hot,
And to the winter-days wondrously short
Times hast given! *Alfred*, 16. 5.

Æthelstan cyning: eorla drihten
Beorna beag gifa: and his brothor eác
Eadmond ætheling: ealdor langne[‡] tír
Geslógon æt sake

He cannot keep both his compound and his translation. One or other must be given up.

[*] Mr. Fox renders the line thus,

Of our mind a great tranquil station,

but this would require *mære* instead of *mere*.

[†] Mr. Fox (from whose edition I am quoting) makes these two words a compound, *sumur-lange*, long as summer; but, like Mr. Thorpe, he evades the consequence,

Behold! thou, O Father, makest
Summer long days very hot.

[‡] Lye renders the passage, *langne tir geslogon*, &c., thus—diuturnam victoriam reportârunt in prælio. Mr. Thorpe has greatly improved upon Lye, by making *ealdor-langne* a compound—"gained life-long glory in the battle;" vide *slean* in Glossary. But objections may be taken even to this

Æthelstan king, of earls the Lord,
Of barons the beigh-giver, and his brother eke
Edmund the etheling, elders a long train
Slew in battle. *Brunanburgh War-Song.*

There is another idiom, or, to speak more accurately, a rule of syntax, which has hitherto been most strangely overlooked. A substantive singular, when taken in a collective sense, may always be joined to a verb plural. Almost every page of Anglo-Saxon poetry will furnish us with examples.

Mægth sithedon
Fæmnan and wuduwan : freondum beslegene
From hleow-stóle : *hettend læddon*
U't mid æhtum : abrahames mæg

The maidens departed—
Damsels and widows, shorn of their friends;
From his place of refuge, the spoiler led
Out with his goods, Abraham's kinsman. *Cæd.* 94.

Thær æfter him : folca thry'thum
Sunu simeónes : sweotum *comon*

There after them, in peopled bands,
The sons of Simeon came in crowds. *Cæd.* 160.

Him on laste *setl*
Wuldor-spedum welig : wíde *stódan*
Gifum growende : on godes ríce
Beorht and geblædfast : buendra leas

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version. In the first place, I am not satisfied, that *tir* (glory) is masculine. In the second place, the meaning given to the word *slean* may be doubted. *Sléan*, to strike, to slay, has two sets of derivative meanings; to fix (as it were by striking), to establish—as *geteld slean*, to fix a tent, *eorldom slean*, to establish an earldom; and to gain (as it were by striking) in which sense we might even now use the primitive verb, as *sige slean*, to strike a victory, *huthe slean*, to strike a prey. But I think we should be pushing this analogy too far, if we talked of *striking a glory;* at least, I would not so translate, without a clearer authority than the passage before us. Lastly, the promise of merely *life-long* glory, for such a victory, would be much too meagre flattery.

On their hinder path,
Rich with glories, their seats stood widely
(With riches flourishing within God's realm,
Bright and precious !)—void of habitants. *Cæd.* 5.

Handum *brugdon*
Hæleth of scæthum : hring-mæled sweord

With their hands the heroes
Drew from the sheaths the ring-colour'd sword. *Cæd.* 93.

Eodon tha sterced-ferththe *hæleth*
Went the stern-hearted heroes. *Judith.*

Wigend cruncon : wundum werige
The warriors quailed, with wounds dispirited.
Death of Byrthnott.

An adjective, connected with the noun, may be put in the singular number, as in the third example; or in the plural, as in the last.

It is curious to observe how this idiom has been rendered in our translations. Sometimes, when the meaning was obvious, it has been rightly construed, and the "false concord" passed over in silence. In other cases, it has led to very bad translation, and more than once to very unsound criticism. It has been held* for instance, that the masculine nouns of the second declension sometimes reject their plural ending *as ;* so that *hettend, wigend,* and *hæleth* may stand for *hettendas, wigendas,* and *hælethas.* But this hypothesis is much too narrow for its object. In the examples above quoted, *mægth* is feminine, and has *mægtha* in the plural; *setl* is neuter, and has *setlu ;* and *sunu,* though masculine, forms its plural in *a, suna.*

There is yet another rule, which is no less important than the last, and appears to have been equally overlooked. The passive participle may be considered as declinable, or *not,* at the pleasure of the writer.

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* See Glossary to the Analecta, under the heads *Gar.* and *Hæleth ;* and Cædmon, p. 278, note *b.*

Oththæt he ádám: on eorth-ríce
Godes hánd-gesceáft: geárone fúnde
Wíslice *gewórht*: and hís wíf sómed

Until he Adam upon earth's realm,
God's handywork! ready found
Wisely y-wrought; and his wife with him. *Cæd.* 23.

Gewitan him tha gangan: geomer-móde
Under beám-sceade: blæde *bereafod*

Gan they then depart, sad at heart,
Under tree-shadow—joy-bereft! *Cæd.* 40.

And him bi twégen: beámas stódon
Tha wæron útan: ófætes gehlædene
Gewéred mid wæstme

And them beside, two trees there stood;
They were without, with food y-laden—
Cover'd with fruit. *Cæd.* 23.

Her wæs his maga sceard
Freonda *gefylled*: on folc-stede
Forslegen æt sace: and his sunu forlet
On wæl-stowe: wundum *forgrunden*
Geongne æt guthe

Here was loss of kin—
Of friends hewn down—on crowded field
Slain at the fight! and his son he left
On the carnage-place, with wounds laid low,
Though young in war. *Brunanburgh War-Song.*

Ne wearth wæl máre
On thys eglande · æfre gyta
Folces *afylled*

Was no greater carnage,
Ever yet within this island,
Of men hewn down— *Brunanburgh War-Song.*

Adjectives also, when they partake of the character of participles, are sometimes used without declension.

Nalles wolcnu tha giet
Ofer rúmne grúnd : régnas bæron
Wann[*] mid winde
Nor clouds as yet
O'er the wide earth bore rains
Wan-coloured with wind. *Cæd.* 12.

That hie wurdon *lâth* Gode
That they might be loathed of God. *Cæd.* 23.

Heo wæron *leof* Gode
They were beloved of God. *Cæd.* 13.

Æ't thisses ofetes : thonne wurthath thín eagan swa *leoht*
Eat of this fruit—then will be thine eyes so brightened.
Cæd. 27.

It would be easy to multiply examples; but our limits are narrow, and will oblige us to pass over some peculiarities of Anglo-Saxon grammar, which I would fain have noticed. We will proceed at once to the main subject of our inquiry.

Cædmon, of whom we have heard so much, was one of those gifted men, who have stamped deeply and lastingly upon the literature of their country, the impress of their own mind and feelings. He was the first Englishman—it may be, the first individual of Gothic race—who exchanged the gorgeous images of the old mythology for the chaster beauties of Christian poetry. From the sixth to the twelfth century, he appears to have been the great model, whom all imitated, and few could equal. For upwards of five centuries, he was the father of English poetry; and when his body was discovered in the reign of John, it seems to have excited no less reverence than those of the kings and saints by which it was surrounded.

Nothing shows more clearly the influence which this extraordinary man exerted upon our national modes of thought and expression, than a comparison between the Anglo-Saxon and early Icelandic literatures. So striking is the contrast, both as to style and subject, that Rask has even ventured to maintain they were radically distinct. A better knowledge of the Anglo-Saxon would have shown him his mistake. But though it might easily be proved, that our fathers had poems on almost all the subjects which were once thought peculiar to the Eddas, yet the remains of them are so scanty, or the allusions to them so ambiguous, as rather to baffle criticism, than to enlighten it. The revolution effected by Cædmon appears to have been complete.

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[*] Mr. Thorpe has rightly translated this passage, but doubts the correctness of his translation, for, "to justify it, we ought to have *wanne* in the original."

The manuscript, which is supposed to contain the poems of Cædmon, was a gift from Archbishop Usher to the celebrated Junius, and by him was bequeathed to the Bodleian Library. From the style of the writing, it must have been written about the end of the tenth, or the beginning of the eleventh century; and as about that time there was an Abbott Ælfwine at Winchester, at whose expense certain manuscripts (which are still extant) were written and illuminated, much in the same way as the Cædmon manuscript, and as a head occurs among the illuminations with the name of Ælfwine written over it, it has been surmised, that *he* was the patron to whom we owe the preservation of the poems.

Junius, who published this manuscript at Amsterdam in 1665, and who was an Anglo-Saxon scholar of the first class, put the name of Cædmon upon his title-page without hesitation. The style of the poems, so strongly resembling that of the fragment preserved by Bede—the absolute identity of the subjects with those on which we know that Cædmon wrote—and the marks of antiquity so abundantly scattered throughout, were to *his* mind proofs, amply sufficient to warrant him in so doing. Hickes did not agree in this opinion; but the notions which he held upon the subject of Anglo-Saxon dialect, and upon which he chiefly grounded his dissent, have been long since exploded.

Versions of Cædmon have been twice attempted; first by Lye, and afterwards by Mr. Thorpe. Lye's translation has never been published; but if we may judge from such extracts as appear in his Dictionary, I would say he has often shown great sagacity, and a singularly familiar acquaintance with Anglo-Saxon idiom. His MS. is now the property of the Society of Antiquaries, having been presented to that body by Mr. Thorpe, the well-known bookseller. The editor of Cædmon has denied any knowledge of this manuscript version; but of the many and copious extracts to be found in the dictionary he has diligently availed himself. In several instances he has corrected Lye's mistakes; but a version of Cædmon is a work of *immense* difficulty, and it reflects no discredit on either of these scholars to say, that many and very large portions of the poem *have not yet been translated.*

As the point separates the sections in the MS., the reader may assume that it always coincides with the middle and final pauses, unless a note inform him to the contrary. When the point is found in the middle of a section, it will be inserted.

Common type will be used instead of Anglo-Saxon; and, as in modern orthography *th* represents both a vocal and a whisper sound, it will stand both for ð and þ.

It is thus our earlier Milton introduces his subject to the reader;—

U´s | is riht | mic|el : thæt | we rod|era weard |
Wer|eda wul|dor-cin|ing : word|um her|igen[1]
Mod|um luf|ien : he | is mæg|na sped[2]
Heaf|od eal|ra : heah|-gesceaf|ta[3]
Frea | æl|mihtig : næs|him frum|a æf|re
O´r | gewor|den : ne | nu en|de cymth |
Ec|ean driht|nes : ac | he bith | á ric|e
Of|er heof|en-stol|as : heag|um thrym|mum
Soth|-fæst and swith-|ferom [4]

As *fitness of numbers* is one of the chief merits of this passage, I will endeavour briefly to point out, in what I conceive this fitness to consist. In other cases it will be left to the reader, to apply these or similar principles himself.

In the first line, the pause before *micel* gives that word a certain emphasis; and we have a sameness of rhythm, to mark the repetition of our Saviour's titles,

Rod|era weard |
Wer|eda wul|dor-cining

and also to fix in the mind the double duty, which we owe to him,

Word|um her|igen
Mod|um luf|ien

The accent thrown upon *he*, in the third line, opens the sec-

Swegl|-bosmas heold |
Tha wær|on geset|te : wid|e and sid|e
Thurh | geweald | [5]god|es : wul|dres bearn|um

---

[1] Herian A.S. to praise, to *hery*,
And *hery* Pan with orisons and alms. *Drayton.*

[2] Ille est virtutum exemplar. *Lye.* He is of power the essence. *Thorpe.* I have never met with *sped* in either of these senses.

[3] The head of all exalted *creatures.—Thorpe.* The context clearly requires the more general and abstract term. In the MS. there is no metrical point after *ealra.*

Mickle right it is, that we heaven's guard
(Glory-king of hosts !) with words should hery,
With hearts should love. He is of pow'rs the efficacy,
Head of all high creations,
Lord Almighty ! In him beginning never
Or origin hath been, nor end cometh now
To the eternal Lord ; but he is aye supreme
Over heaven-thrones, with high majesty,
Righteous and mighty.

tion, and is therefore, as it ought to be, strong and forcible. The repetition of the diphthong *ea* in the fourth line calls up the idea of multitude;[6] and the pause before *ælmihtig*, after the flowing rhythm that preceded it, makes that word strikingly emphatic. The parallelism, which follows, is enforced by a similarity of rhythm;

næs | him frum|a æf|re
Or | geword|en,
ne | nu en|de cymth |
Ec|ean driht|nes—

while the flowing rhythm, in the two following sections, exhibits a contrast, which suits well the change from a negative to an affirmative proposition. The firm rhythm of the next section binds the whole together; and the last section affords us a specimen of that *elastic* rhythm, which is so often found at the close of Cædmon's periods.

Heaven's depths he sway'd ;
They were y-set, wide and far,
Through God's pow'r, for the sons of glory—

---

[4] Mr. Thorpe closes his period with the section, *Ofer heofen-stolas*; but the present division seems better suited to the usual flow of Cædmon's rhythm.

[5] The emphatic stop.

Gas|ta weard|um [1] : hæf|don gleam | and dream | [2]
And heor|a ord|-fruman : [3] eng|la threat|as
Beorh|te bliss|e : [4] wæs heor|a blæd | mic|el

Theg|nas thrym|-fæste : theod|en her|edon
Sæg|don lus|tum lof :| heor|a líf|-frean
Dem|don driht|nes : [5] dug|ethum|[6]
Wær|on swith|e gesæ|lige

Synna ne cuthon
Fyr|ena frem|man : [7] ac | hie on frith|e lif|don
Ec|e mid heor|a aldor : el|les ne | ongun|non
Rær|an on rod|erum : nym|the riht | and soth |
Ær|thon eng|la weard| : for o|ferhyg|de
Dæl | [8] on gedwil|de

Nol|dan dreog|an leng |
Heor|a self|ra | ræd| : ac | hie of sib|-lufan
God|es ahwurf|on : hæf|don gielp | mic|el
Thæt hie | with driht|ne : dæl|an meah|ton
Wul|dor-fæst|an wic| : wer|odes thrymme
Sid | and swegl|-torht [9]

---

[1] See vol. i. p. 172, l. 13.

[2] Cædmon seldom uses even a rhiming section, without an object. The repetition of the diphthong *ea*, and the double rhime in the preceding section, call up the ideas of extent and multitude. See vol. i. p. 172.

[3] Had lustre and joy
Of their original the hosts of angels,
Bright bliss, their reward was great : *Thorpe.*

Mr. Thorpe considers the *and* redundant. I cannot see any reason for rejecting it.

[4] Mr. Thorpe makes *beorhte* the accusative feminine, agreeing with *blisse*, and perhaps rightly. There will be a perfect syntax with either construction.

[5] No metrical point after *drihtnes.*

Gastas the spirits, *werod* the host, and *duguth* the nobility seem to have meant the great body of angels ; while *engla-weardas*, or *gasta-weardas*, the angel-guards, or spirit-guards, were the "throned powr's."

Mr. Thorpe renders the line thus :

They judged by the Lord's power.

[6] Here Mr. Thorpe alters his text. According to Rask, *dugethum* can have only one accent. See vol. i. p. 79. Mr. Thorpe therefore (without authority from the MS. or notice to the reader) takes *wæron* from the section following ; duge|thum wær|on— thus violating what I will venture to assert *is* a canon of Anglo-Saxon prosody —the rule namely, which forbids us to place a stop in the midst of a section·

For the spirit-guards. Light had they and joy,
And their Creator! Angel-throngs,
Bright with bliss, mickle was their meed!

Thanes, most glorious their leader heried!
Told joyfully the praise of their Life-king!
Ruled the Lord's high chivalry!
And were right happy!

Sins knew they not,
Or crimes to frame—but they in peace lived,
For aye with their prince. Nought else gan they
Uphold in heaven, save the right and true;
Ere that the angel-guard, by reason of pride
Was lost in error.

They would no longer work
Their own good; but they from Gods
Father-love turn'd them. They had mickle boast,
That they with the Lord would share
The resplendent mansion, with the host's glory
Wide-filled and heaven-bright.

---

[7] *Synna* and *fyrena* seem to be the genitive cases after the verb *cuthon*, —*They knew not of sins or crimes—to frame.*

[8] Lapsus est in errorem. *Lye.* Sank in error. *Thorpe.*

Dæl is probably the past tense of some verb, but I know not where Lye found the meaning he has given to it. Such a construction, too, requires the accusative *gedwild.* I have construed *dæl* as if it were the past tense of a neuter verb *delan*, bearing the same relation to *dol* error (Cædmon 18) as *dwelan* or *gedwelan* to *dwola* or *gedwola.* It is the best I could make of a very difficult passage.

[9] Habebant jactationem magnam quod illi cum domino participare possent gloriosam mansionem, exercitus cœlestis turmam. *Lye.*

Mr. Thorpe renders the passage thus;

They had the great presumption
That they against the Lord could divide
The glory-fast abode, that multitude of host.

Lye considered *thrymme* as the accusative of *thrym* (it is in fact the dative); and as Mr. Thorpe follows Lye so closely, I presume he has fallen into the same mistake. It is *possible* that he may have found a neuter duplicate in *e;* but there is no such word as *thrymme* in his index. The passage is certainly one of difficulty. *Torht* appears to be one of those participial adjectives, which sometimes escape inflection; and *sıd* is certainly one of those adjectives which occasionally have the force of an adverb. The

Him | thær sar | gelamp|
Æfst | and of|erhygd| : and | thæs eng|les mod |
The thon|e un|ræd : ongan[1] | ær|est frem|man
Wef|an and wec|cean

Tha | he word|e[2] cwæth |
Nith|es ofthyrs|ted : thæt he on north|-dæle[3]
Ham | and heah|-setl : heof|ena ric|es
Ag|an wol|de

Tha | wearth yr|re god|
And | tham wer|ode wrath| : the | he ær wur|thode
Wlit|e and wul|dre : sceop | tham wer|logan[4]
Wræc|licne ham| : weorc|e[5] to lean|e
Hel|le heaf|as : heard|e nith|as
Heht | thæt wit|e-hus : wræc|na bid|an
Deop | dream|a leas| :[6] drih|ten u|re
Gas|ta weard|as[7]

Tha | he hit gear|e[9] wiste
Syn|nihte | beseald| : sus|le gein|nod
Geond-fol|en fyr|e : and fær|-cyle|
Réc|e and read|e leg|e : heht | tha geond | thæt ræd|-lease hof |
Weax|an wit|e-brog|an

---

phrase might perhaps be written, in German fashion, *sid- and swegl-torht*, widely and heavenly bright.

[1] Here again Mr. Thorpe has deviated from the text; he reads

The thone unræd ongan : ærest fremman

[2] Then spake he the words. *Thorpe.*

Some neuters, I believe, occasionally take *e* in the plural, but I think it far better to construe *worde* as the dative.

[3] To haste
Homeward, with flying march, where we possess
The quarters of the *North.*

A foe
Is rising, who intends t'erect his throne
Equal to ours, throughout the spacious *North.* *Par. Lost*, 5.

And ye choice spirits that admonish me—
You speedy helpers, that are substitutes
Under the lordly monarch of the *North!*
Appear! 1 *H.* 6, 5. 3.

[4] No metrical point.

There on them fell pain,
Envy and pride, and that angels mood—
His, who this folly gan first to frame,
To weave and wake.

Then in words quoth he,
With hate athirst, that he on the North side,
House and high seat of heaven's realm
Would have.

Then was God ireful,
And wrath with the host, whom erewhile he honour'd
With brightness and glory. He shap'd out for that false one
An exile-home—anguish for his mead!
Hell-groans! torments dread!
He bade that torture-house of the exiles abide
Deep and joyless (he our Lord)
The spirit-guards.

When he knew it well,
Foul with lasting night, sulphur-heap'd,
Wide fill'd with fire, and fierce chill,
Reek and red low—then bade he, through that house of folly,
Wax high the torture terrors!

---

[5] This is one of those puzzling duplicates, which are so apt to mislead—*weorc* and *weorce* both signify anguish.

[6] There may be some doubt, if the Anglo-Saxons did not pronounce these words as a compound. If so, the section would probably be accented thus—

Deop | dream|a-leas.

Here Cædmon converts the stop, indicating a sequence, into a sectional pause.

[7] Bade the torture-house await the exiles,
Deep, void of joys, our Lord,
The guardians of spirits. *Thorpe.*

If I understand this rightly, Mr. Thorpe puts *the exiles* in apposition to *the guardians of the spirits*—that is, the genitive *wræcna* in apposition to the accusative *weardas.* This *must* be faulty; but I have doubts as to the correctness of my own version, for *bidan* to await, to abide, generally governs a genitive. It is however the only method of construction which presents itself.

[8] Mr. Thorpe construes *geare* as if it were an adjective;

When he knew it *ready,*

—but it is doubtless the well known adverb.

There then follow about sixty couplets, some of which contain such difficulties of construction, as would require

Ne | wæs her | tha giet| : nym|the heol|ster-scead|o
Wiht | geword|en : ác | thes wid|a grund|
Stod deop | and dim| : driht|ne frem|de [1]
Ide|l[2] and ún|nyt
On thon|e eag|um wlat|
Stith|-frihth cin|ing : and | tha stow|e beheold|
Dream|a leas|e : geseah | deorc | gesweorc|
Sem|ian[3] sin|nihte : sweart | under rod|erum
Wonn[4] | and wes|te : oth | thæt theos wor|uld-gesceaft|
Thurh word | gewearth| : wul|dor-cyn|inges

Her ær|est gesceop| : éc|e drih|ten
Helm | eall|-wihta : heof|on and corth|an
Rod|or arær|de : and | this rum|e land|
Gestath|elod|e : strang|um miht|um
Frea | æl|mihtig
Fol|de was | tha gyt|
Græs|-úngren|e [5] : gár|-secg theah|te
Sweart | syn|nihte : sid|e and wid|e
Won|ne wæg|as
Tha | wæs wul|dor-torht|
Heof|on-weard|es gast| : of|er hólm | boren
Mic|lum sped|um
Met|od eng|la heht|
Lif|es bryt|ta : leoht | forth cum|an
Of|er rum|ne grúnd| : rath|e wæs | gefyl|led
Heah|-cining|es hæ's| : him | wæs hal|ig leoht|
Of|er wést|enne : swa | se wyrh|ta bebead|

Tha | gesún|drode : sig|ora wal|dend
Of|er lag|o-flod|e : leoht | with theos|trum

---

[1] *Fremde* has a double ending in the nominative—one vowel, the other consonantal.

[2] *Idel* A.S. barren, idle. Deserts *idle.—Othello. Idle* pebbles.—*Lear.*

[3] *Seman* is the active verb; *semian* I believe is always neuter. In Cædmon 4. Mr. Thorpe makes it active; but to support his construction

more discussion, than we have now time to enter upon We then come to the *Creation.*

Ne had there here as yet, save the vault-shadow,
Aught existed; but this wide abyss
Stood deep and dim—strange to its Lord,
Idle[2] and useless.

On it with eyes glanc'd
The stalwart king, and the place beheld
All joyless. He saw dark cloud
Lour with lasting night, swart under heaven,
Wan[4] and waste; till this world's creation
Rose through the word of the glory-King.

Here first shap'd the eternal Lord
(Head of all things!) heaven and earth;
Sky he rear'd, and this wide land
He stablish'd—by his strong might,
Lord Almighty!

Earth was not as yet
Green with grass; ocean cover'd,
Swart with lasting night, wide and far,
Wan[6] pathways.

Then glory-bright,
Was the spirit of Heaven's-Guard o'er the water borne,
With mighty speed.

Bade the Angel-maker,
(The Life-dispenser) light to come forth
O'er the wide abyss. Quick was fulfill'd
The high King's hest—round him was holy light,
Over the waste, as the Maker bade.

Then parted the Victor-Lord
O'er the water-flood, light from darkness—

---

he is guilty of one or two grammatical errors, and (a far graver charge) has corrupted his text. Junius points the passage correctly.

[4] *Wan,* in the sense of dismal, was long known to our poetry;

Min is the drenching in the sea so *wan.* *Chau. Knightes Tale.*

[5] As to nature of this compound see p. 17.

[6] See note 4.

Scead|e with scim|an : sceóp | tha bam nam|an
Lif|es bryt|ta : leoht | wæs ær|est
Thurh driht|nes wórd| : dæg | genem|ned
Wlit|e beorht|e gesceaft|
Wel | lic|ode
Fré|an[3] æt frym|the : forth|-bæro tíd|
Dæg | ær|esta
Geseah | deorc|-sceado
Sweart | swith|rian : geond sid|ne grund|
Tha | seo tid | gewat| : of|er tib|er sceac|an
Mid|dan-geard|es [4]
Met|od æf|ter sceaf|
Scir|um scim|an : scip|pend ur|e
Æf|en ær|est : him ar | on last|
Thrang | thys|tre genip| : tham | the se theod|en self|
Sceop niht|e nam|an : ner|gend ur|e
Hie | gesun|drode[5] : sith|than æf|re
Drug|on and dyd|on : driht|nes wil|lan
E'|ce of|er eorth|an

---

[1] Throned in celestial *sheen.—Milton.*

[2] Such seems to be the force of the definite adjective in this place.

[3] Words, ending in *ea* and *eo*, resolve the diphthongs into the component vowels, when they take the inflexion *n*. Thus *frea* in the nominative is a monosyllable, but the dative *frean* is a dissyllable. So *beon*, the present infinitive of *beo*, has two syllables. This rule appears to be an important one.

Mr. Thorpe thus renders the passage,

Well pleased
The Lord at the beginning, the procreative time.
The first day saw the dark shadow, &c.

To support this construction, he removes *geseah* to the first section; though, not only does the metrical point follow *æresta*, and the rules of prosody forbid such change, but a regular stop has been added to the metrical point in the MS. The reader, as usual, has no notice of these changes.

Sweart appears to be one of those adjectives which are sometimes used adverbially.

[4] Then the time passed, over the fruitful region,
Of mid earth.—*Thorpe.*

Here Mr. Thorpe makes *tiber sceacan* a compound, and supposes *sceacan* a mistake for *sceatan*. The text is certainly correct. *Sceacan* is to fly or haste away, and an infinitive of some verb of motion very commonly follows the verbs *cuman*, *gewitan*, and others of the same kind. We have the very phrase in *Judith*,

Shade from sheen.[1] Gave then names to both
The Life-dispenser. Light was erst,
By the Lord's word, named day—
That[2] beauty-bright creation !

Well pleas'd the Lord
At the beginning, Creation's hour—
Day the first !

He saw dark shadow
Swart prevail, o'er the wide abyss—
Then gan the day to close o'er the off'ring
Of this mid earth.

Drove afterwards the Maker
From the clear sheen (he our Creator !)
The Even first. On its footsteps ran
And throng'd dark cloud, to which the Lord himself
Gave the name of Night—he our Redeemer !

These, being parted, sithen ever
Dree'd[6] and did the Lord's will,
For aye, o'er earth.

Hi tha hreowig-mode
Wurpon hyra wæpen ofdune : *gewitan him* werig-ferhthe
On fleam *sceacan.*

They then sorrowing
Cast their weapons down ; gan they, heavy at heart,
To flight betake them.

In his Glossary, Mr. Thorpe makes *hreowig*, cruel ; *werig-ferhth*, weary of life ; and renders *sceacan*, by the verb *to shake.* These are errors into which any one might have fallen. I merely point them out, as showing, that *no one* (in the present state of Anglo-Saxon Literature) has a right to draw so largely on the good opinion of his reader, as to publish a Glossary, *without giving his authorities.*

[5] Mr. Thorpe makes *gesundrode* a verb.

Our preserver
Them separated ; always since
They have suffered, &c.

[6] *Dreogan* A.S. to endure, to *dree.*

The sorow
Which that I *drie* I may not long endure.—*Chau. Tro. and Cress.*

The word is still common in the North. See Brockett's Glossary, and Carr's Craven Dialect.

Tha | com oth|er dæg|
Leoht | æfter theos|trum : heht | tha lif|es weard|
On mer|e-flod|e[1] : mid|dum weorth|an
Hyht|lic heof|on-tim|ber : hol|mas dæl|de
Wald|end ur|e : and | geworh|te tha|
Rod|eras fæs|ten : thæt | se ric|a áhóf|
U′p | from eorth|an : thurh | his ag|en word|
Frea | æl|mihtig

Fold | wæs ádæ|led
Un|der heah|-rodor|e : hal|gum miht|um
Wæt|er óf wæt|rum : tham | the wun|iath gyt|
U′n|der fæs|tenne : folc|a hróf|es [2]

Thá | com of|er fold|an : fus | [3] sith|ian
Mær|e merg|en thrid|da : nær|on met|ode | [4] tha gy′t|
Wíd-|lond. ne weg|as nyt|te : ác stod | bewrig|en fæs|te
Fol|de mid flod|e

Frea | engla heht|
Thurh | his word | wes|an : wæ|ter gemæ′n|e
Tha nu | under rod|erum : heor|a ry′n|e heal|dath
Stow|e gestefn|de[5] : tha stod | hrath|e
Holm | under heof|onum : swa | se hal|ga bebhead|
Síd | æt som|ne

Tha | gesun|drod wæs|
Lag|o with lan|de : geseah | tha lif|es weard|
Drig|e stow|e : dug|otha hyrd|e
Wid|e æteowd|e : thá | se wul|dor-cyn|ing
Eorth|an nem|de

Here is the first gap in the manuscript, no less than three leaves having been torn out. We will therefore pass, at once, to the speech of Satan. Here Cædmon lengthens his rhythms, and assumes greater pomp of

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[1] No metrical point.

[2] Mr. Thorpe construes thus,

Water from waters, *for those*, who yet dwell
Under the fastness of the roof of nations.

I do not clearly see his meaning. Surely he cannot mean *for mankind.*

[3] *Fus* is one of those adjectives which are sometimes used as adverbs.

[4] Lye considered *metod* as the participle of *metan*, which, however, has *gemeten* for its participle. Mr. Thorpe, in this instance, follows Lye,

Then came the second day—
Light after darkness. Bade then life's Guardian,
On the sea-flood (in the midst) to stand
A joyous heaven-structure. The waters he parted
(He our Ruler!) and then he wrought
The skies—a firmament. This the mighty one rais'd
Up from earth, by his own word,
Lord Almighty!

Earth was parted,
Under high heav'n, by holy might;
The water from the waters—those that yet won
Under the firmament of this world's roof.

Then gan, o'er earth, quickly advance
The great third Morn; nor had the Maker as yet
Wide land, nor pathways useful—but fast beset
With flood earth stood.

The Lord of angels bade
By his word the waters to be collected,
Which now, under heaven, hold their course,
In place appointed. Then quickly stood
The sea, under heaven, (as the Holy one bade)
Far and wide united.

Then was parted
Water from land; then saw our life's Guard
(The nobles' pastor) the dry regions
Wide display'd; then the Glory-king
Named earth.

language. It has been supposed this speech was not unknown to Milton, when he wrote the first book of his Paradise Lost.[6]

Were not meted yet
Wide land nor useful ways, &c.

[5] Mr. Thorpe makes these words the accusative plural;
That now, under heaven, hold their course,
And their places fixed.

[6] It would not be difficult to show, that Milton knew nothing of Anglo-Saxon. Cædmon therefore must have been to him a sealed book, unless he procured a translation from Junius, or some other scholar of that period.

I′s|thés æng|a styd|e . ún|gelic swith|e : tham oth|rum the |
we æ′r | cuthon
He|án on heof|on-ríc|e : the me | mín hear|ra onlag|
Theah | we hin|e for | tham al|waldan : ag|an ne mos|ton
Róm|igan ur|es ric|es : næfth | he theah riht | gedón
Thæt | he us hæfth | befiel|led : fy′r|e to bot|me
Hél|le thæ|re hát|an : heof|on-ríc|e benúm|en
Háf|ath hit | gemeár|cod : mid mon|-cynne|
To | geset|tane

Thæt | mé is sorg|a mæst|
Thæt ad|am sceal| : the wæs | of eorth|an geworht|
Min|ne strong|lican : stol | beheal|dan
Wés|an him | on wy′n|ne : and wé | this wit|e thol|ien
Hearm | on this|se hel|le

Wál|á aht|e ic . [4]min|ra hánd|a geweáld|
And mos|te án|e tíd | : út|e weorth|an
Wés|an an|e win|ter-stund|e : thon|ne ic mid | thys wer|ode

A′c lic|gath me ym|be : ír|en-bend|a[5]
Ríd|eth rac|entan sal| : íc | eom ríc|es leas|
Hab|bath me | swa heard|e : hel|le clom|mas
Fæs|te befang|en : hér | is fy′r | mic|el
Uf|an and neoth|one : ic á | ne geseah|
Lath|ran land|scipe : lig | ne aswam|ath[6]
Hát | ofer hel|le : me hab|bath hring|a gespong|
Slith|-hearda sál| : [7] sith|es amyr|red
Afyr|red me | mín feth|e : fét | synt gebun|dene
Hán|da gehæ′f|te : synt this|sa hél|-dora
Weg|as forwórht|e : [8] swa | ic mid wíht|e ne mæ′g|
Of this|sum lióth|o-bend|um

---

[1] *Styde*—place, *stead*.

Fly, therefore, fly this fearful *stead* anon. *F. Q.*

It is still used in the North. See Carr and Brockett.

[2] "Is this the region, this the soil, the clime,"
Said then the lost Archangel, "this the seat,
That we must change for heaven," &c. *P. L.* 1.

[3] Mr. Thorpe construes the section, "must cede our realm," but the active verb is *ryman; rumigan* and *rumian* are, I believe, always used as neuters.

[4] The metrical point here divides the compound section.

[5] *Benda* has been changed to *bendas*, in the MS. Probably *bend* was both a masculine and a feminine noun. When the text has been altered,

This narrow stead[1] is much unlike to that other,[2] which erst we knew,
High in heaven's realm, which on me my Lord bestow'd;
Though, for the All-wielder, it we may not have—
Must quit us of our realm ![3] Yet hath he not right y-done,
In that he us hath fell'd, to the fiery bottom
Of this hot hell; hath heaven's realm bereft us,
And it hath destin'd by mankind
To be peopled !
That of my sorrows is the greatest,
That Adam shall (he that of earth was wrought)
My strong-establish'd seat possess,
And be his joy—and *we* this torture suffer,
Pain within this hell !
O that I had sway of hand,
And might one season out fare !
Bide one winter's space ! Then I with this host———
But around me lie iron bonds !
Presseth the fetters link !—I am realmless !
Me so strongly hold hell-chains
Fast bound. Here is huge fire
Aboon and beneath ! aye saw I not
A loathlier landskip; the flame ne'er fadeth
Hot over hell. Me hath the rings clasp,
The hard-polish'd link from onward course disabled—
From progress barr'd; my feet are bound !
Hands y-chained ! Of these hell-doors
The ways are lost, as with aught I cannot
From these jointed bonds !

Mr. Thorpe sometimes copies the original, and sometimes the amended reading. I have, in all cases, given the former.

[6] I have given to this word the same meaning as Lye, though I never met with it elsewhere.

[7] Lye renders this phrase, *mordax vinculum*, and perhaps rightly.

[8] Mr. Thorpe follows Lye in his construction of this passage,

Of these hell-doors are
The ways obstructed, so that with aught I cannot
From these limb-bonds escape.

That the ways are *open*, though lost to the fettered angel, is clear from what follows. I think too that *swa* is not rightly rendered.

Licg|ath me ymb|utan
Heárd|es ir|enes : hát|e geslæg|ene
Grind|las great|e : mid thy | me god | hafath
Gehæf|ted be | tham heals|e [2]

Swa | íc wat | he min|ne hig|e cuth|e
And | thæt wis|te eac| : wer|oda drih|ten
Thæt sceol|de unc ad|áme[3] : yf|ele | gewurth|an
Ymb | thæt heof|on-ric|e : thær | íc ah|te min|ra han|da geweald|[4]

A'c thol|iath wé | nú threa | on hel|le : thæt syn|don thys|tro
and hæt|o
Grim|me grund-|lease : haf|ath us god | sylfa
Forswap|en on | thas sweart|an mis|tas : swa | he us | ne mæg
æn|ige syn|ne gestæl|an
Thæt we | him on | tham lan|de lath | gefrem|edon

He hæfth | us theah | thæs leoht|es bescyr|ede
Beworp|en on eal|ra wit|a mæs|te : ne mag|on we | thæs wrác|e
gefrem|man
Gelean|ian him | mid lath|es wiht|e : thæt | he us haf|ath thæs
leoht|es bescyr|ede

He hæfth | nu gemeár|cod . án|ne mid|dan-geard| : thær | he hæfth
món | gworht|ne
Æf|ter hís ón|licnes|se : mid tham | he wil|e eft | geset|tan
Heof|ona ríc|e . mid hlutt|rum san|lum

Wé | thæs scul|on hycg|an georn|e
Thæt | we on ád|áme gif | we æf|re mæg|en : and on | his eaf|rum
swa sóm|e . ánd|an gebet|an

---

[1] As far as we can judge from the drawing which accompanies the description, the *grindel* was a kind of heavy iron grating, which rather encumbered the prisoner by its weight, than fixed him in its grasp.

Mr. Thorpe renders *hate geslægene*, forg'd with heat.

[2] Though I have not marked this passage, I rather suspect that Junius has (in part at least) rightly pointed it. In the hurry of comparison, the misplacing of the dot may possibly have escaped me.

Grindlas greate : mid thy me God
Hafath gehæfted : be tham healse
Swa ic wat he minne hige cuthe : and that wiste eac weroda drihten.

[3] This passage, like many others which have to do with the dual number, is very obscure. I have construed, as if *unc Adame* were an idiom, similar to *wit Adam twa*, we two, Adam and I.—Cæd. 222. Mr.

Lie around me
Huge grindles [1] of hard iron,
Fixed hot; with them God
Hath me fetter'd by the neck!

So wot I well, he my heart knew,
And wist eke this, the Lord of hosts,
That, through me and Adam, evils must ensue,
About that heaven's realm, where I had sway of hand!

But endure we now throes in hell! darkness that is, and heat
Grim and bottomless!—Us hath God self
Swept into these swart mists, so of sin he may not us convict,
That we gainst him, in that land, evil frame.

He hath us though of light bereft!—
Hurl'd us to greatest tortures! Nor may we for this vengeance frame,
Or quit him aught of evil, for that of light he us bereft!

He hath now design'd a mid-earth, where he hath man y-wrought,
After his likeness; with whom he wills again to people
Heaven's realm with shining souls.

This should we endeavour strongly,
That we on Adam (if ere we may) and on his offspring too our hate may wreak—

Mr. Thorpe considers *unc* to refer to the Deity and himself (Satan);
That should us, through Adam, evil befall, &c.

[4] Mr. Thorpe here marks a hiatus of several lines. The MS. shows no erasure (though a drawing intervenes) and the sense appears continuous. The mention of Heaven brings before the fallen angel his present misery; then follow—hate against God, justified by a wretched sophistry—despair of success as against *him*—and the outpourings of envy and malice against his creature.

In comparing the Satans of Milton and of Cædmon, we see at once the difference of their genius; the dramatic power, or (in German phrase) the *objectiveness* of the one, and the intense *subjectiveness* of the other. Milton's devil is an abstraction—a God; Cædmon's a real existence. Milton's is the nobler picture; Cædmon's the more natural, and if (as we are taught) man be but little lower than the angels—the *truer* portrait.

Onwend|an [1] him | thær wil|lan sín|es : gif | we hit mæg|en wih|te athenc|an
Ne | gelyf|e [2] íc | me nu| . thæs leoh|tes fur|thor : thæs|the him thenc|eth lang|e nióť|an
Thæs eád|es mid | his eng|la cræf|te : ne mag|on we thæt | on al|dre gewin|nan,
Thæt | we mih|tiges God|es mód | onwæ'c|en : ut|on othwen|dan hit|nú . mon|na bearn|um
Thæt heof|on-ric|e nu wé | hit hab|ban ne mot|on : gedon | thæt hie | his hyl|do forlæt|en
Thæt hie | thæt onwend|on . thæt he | mid his word|e bebeád| : thon|ne weorth | he hím wrath | ón mod|e
A'-hwet [3] | hie from | hís hyl|do : thon|ne scul|on hie | thas hel|le sec|an
And | thas grim|man grúnd|as : thon|ne mot|on we | hie us | to giong|rum hab|ban
Fir|a beárn| . on this|sum fæs|tum clom|me

Ongin|nath nu ymb|tha fyrd|e thenc|ean
Gif | íc æn|egum thég|ne : theó|den-mad|mas
Geár|a forgeaf|e ; then|den wé on | than gód|an ric|e
Gesæl|ige sæt|on : and hæf|don ur|e set|la geweáld|
Thon|ne he | me na | on leof|ran tid| : lean|um ne meah|te
Min|e gif|e gyl|dan : gif | his [4] gien | wolde
Min|ra theg|na hwilc| : gethaf|a wurth|an
Thæt | he úp | heonon : ut|e miht|e
Cum|an thurh | thas clus|tro : and hæf|de cræft | mid hím
Thæt | he mid feth|er-hóm|an : fleog|an meah|te

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[1] Verbs which take the prefix *on* appear to be variously accented. They should be carefully watched.

[2] This passage seems a mere burst of despair. Mr. Thorpe, however, supposes it to relate generally to Adam, and that in the phrase, "*his* angels," the pronoun refers to him, "who was created like the angels."

Now I have no confidence further, in this bright state, that which he seems long destined to enjoy.
That happiness with *his* angel's power.

Throughout his poem, Cædmon alludes to the "portion in light" which was once granted to the fallen angel.

"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, *son of the morning*."
Is. 14. 12.

[3] *Hwettan* and *ahwettan* mean to sharpen, to whet, to excite, to inflame. The meaning given to it in the text agrees well enough with the context, but

There pervert him in his will—if we may in ought devise it.
Nor hope I now light further (so pleaseth him) long while t' enjoy,
Or happiness with his angels power. Nor may we this ere gain,
That we of mighty God the rage should weaken. Let us snatch it then from the sons of men,
That heaven's realm, now *we* it may not have—cause that they his favour lose—
That they pervert, what he by his word hath bidden. Then gainst them wrath at heart he 'll be,
Will drive them from his favour—then must they seek this hell,
And these grim gulfs; then mote we them for subjects have—
The sons of men—in this fast bondage.

Begin ye now about this raid to think,
If I to any thane lordly treasures
Gave of yore, (while we in that good realm
Sat happy, and o'er our seats had sway,)
Then he, in happier hour, might not with meed
My gift repay,—if indeed of this
Any one of my thanes would be th' abettor—
That upward hence he would outfare,
Through these barriers, and should have strength within him,
That he with feathery mantle might flee,

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has no authority to support it.

á, instead of a prefix, *may* be the adverb. If so, the passage should be rendered,

Aye drive them from his favour, &c.

[4] *his* appears to be the genitive case after *gethafa*. Mr. Thorpe seems to look upon *gien* as a preposition governing it,

If in return for it he would
(Any of my followers) be my supporter, &c.

This passage is rather involved; the meaning seems to be, "if any one owe me a favour, now is the time to repay it; if indeed any will pass these barriers, and should be strong enough to reach the earth." The contrast, so abruptly introduced, at the end of the passage, appears to me extremely beautiful.

Wind|an on wolc|ne : thær | geworht | stond|ath
A′d|am and év|e : on corth|-ríce|
Mid wél|an bewun|den : and we | synd aworp|ene hid|er
On | thas deop|an dal|o

Nu | hie driht|ne synt|
Wurth|ran mic|le : and mót|on him thon|e wél|an ág|an
The wé | on heof|on-ríc|e : hab|ban sceol|don
Ríc|e mid riht|e[1] : is | se ræd | gescyr|ed
Mon|na cyn|ne : thæt | me ís | ón mod|e min|um[2] swa sar|
On min|um hyg|e hreow|eth : thæt hie | heof|on-ríc|e
Ag|an to al|dre

Gif | hit eow|er æn|ig mæg|e
Gewend|an mid wiht|e : thæt | hie word | God|es
Lar|e forlæt|en : son|á híe hím | the lath|ran beoth|
Gif | hie brec|ath hís | gebód|scipe : thon|ne he him | abolgen wurth|eth
Sith|than bith hím | se wel|a onwend|ed : and wyrth | him wit|e gegar|wod
Sùm heard | harm|-scearu

Hyc|gath his eal|le
Hú | ge hi | beswic|en : sith|than ic | me fest|e mæg|
Res|tan on this|sum rac entum : gif hím | thæt ric|e los|ath
Se|the thæt | gelæs|teth : him | bith lean | gearo
Æf|ter to al|dre : thæs | we her-in|ne | mag|on
On thys|sum fy′r|e forth| : frem|ena | gewin|nan
Sit|tan læ′t|e íc hin|e with | me sylf|ne

Here the manuscript has lost a leaf. It appears the offer has been accepted, and the fiend is preparing for his journey. The following extract deserves notice, as it contains rather a striking example of that peculiar character-

Angan | hin|e tha gyr|wan : god|es ánd|saca
Fus | on fræ′t|wum : hæf|de fæ′cne hyg|e

---

[1] Mr. Thorpe joins this section with the last sentence,
Our realm by right; this council is decreed
For mankind.

And wind him through the welkin, where stand y-fashion'd
Adam and Eve, upon earth's realm,
With weal wound round ! and *we* are hither hurl'd
Into these deep gulfs !

Now they to Lord
Are dearer far, and mote that weal possess,
Which *we* in heaven's realm should have ;
That realm with right is the lot assigned
To mankind ! This lies on my mind so sore !
Rueth me in my heart, that *they* heaven's realm
Possess for ever !

If any of you may
This change with aught, that they God's word
And lore desert, soon they to him the more loath'd will be.
If they break his command,—then he gainst them enrag'd
becomes,
Sithen will be their weal all chang'd, and for them punishment
prepar'd,
Some dread torture-portion.

Think all of this—
How them ye may beguile ; sithen I fast may rest me
In these fetters—if to *them* that realm be lost.
He who this performs—for him a meed's prepared
For ever after, (as far as we herein,
—Henceforth in this fire—of good may win)
Him will I let sit, by myself !

istic of Anglo-Saxon verse, to which Conybeare has given the name of *parallelism.* The boldness and the wickedness of the attempt is dwelt upon in no less than four successive passages.

Gan him then prepare God's adversary,
Quick with his attire—mind of fraud had he.

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[2] Mr. Thorpe transposes these words,
thæt me is on minum mode swa sar

Hæl|eth-helm | on heaf|od aset|te : and thón|e full heárd|e gebánd|
Spenn | mid spáng|um : wist|e him spræ′c¦a fél|a
Wor|a word|a

Wand | him up thán|on
Hwearf | him thurh | tha hell|-dora : hæf|de hyg¦e strang|ne
Leólc[1] | on lyf|te : lath|wende mod| [2]

Swáng | thæt fy′r | on twá| : feónd|es cræ′f|te
Wol¦de deár|nunga : driht|nes geong|ran
Mid mán|-dæ′dum| : mén | beswíc|an
Forlæ′d|an and | forlæ′r|an : that | hie wur|don láth | god|e

He | tha geférd¦e : thurh feond|es cræft|
Oth|thæt he ád|ám : on eorth|-ríce|
God|es hánd|-gescéaft : geár|one fúnd|e
Wís|lice | gewórht| : and | his wíf | sómed

The *Temptation* is much too long for insertion; we will,

Driht|en send|e
Regn | from rod|erum : and | eac rum|e lét|
Wil|le-burn|an : on wor¦uld thring|an
Of æd|ra gehwær|e

Eg|or-stréam|as
Sweart|e swóg¦an : sæ′s | úp | stigon
Of|er stæth|-weallas

Strang | wæs and reth|e
Se|the wæt|rum weold| : wreah | and theah|te
Man|fæhthu [5] bearn| : mid|dan-geard|es

Won¦nan wæ′g|e : wer|a éth|el-lánd
Hóf | her|gode : hyg|e teon|an [7] wræc
Met|od on mon¦num : mer|e swith|e gráp|
On fæg|e folc|

---

[1] This is a very curious contraction for *leolic*; if indeed the omission of the vowel be not a mere clerical blunder.

[2] *Mod* is here clearly neuter. Sometimes it is masculine. See Cædmon 18.

[3] *Burna* A.S. a stream, a *bourn*.

My little boat can safely pass the per'lous *bourn*. *Spenser.*
And every bosky *bourn*. *Comus.*

[4] *Sweg-an* A.S. to murmur, to give a hollow sound, to *sough*.

Hero's helm on head he set, and it full hard y-bound,
And lac'd with clasps—wist he of speeches fele,
Of wary words.

Sprang he up thence,
And shot him through hell-doors ; heart strong had he,
Lion-like aloft—a mind of hate.

Smote he that fire in two, with fiendish strength—
Covertly would he, with ill-practise,
The Lord's lieges, men beguile,
Mislead and lure astray, that they might be loathed of God.

He then journeyed with fiendish strength,
Until he Adam, upon earth's realm,
(God's handywork !) ready found,
With wisdom fashioned, and his wife with him, &c.

therefore, finish our notice of Cædmon with his description of the Deluge.

The Lord sent
Rain from the sky ; and eke, far and wide,
Let the welling bourns [3] on the world pour,
From every vein.

Ocean's streams,
Black they soughed ;[4] seas uprose
Over the strand-walls.

Strong was he and fierce,
That wielded the waters ; he cover'd and o'erwhelm'd
The hate-brooding children of this mid-earth.

With the wan [6] wave man's mother-land
And mansion he harried ; the hearts sins wreak'd
The Maker on men ; ocean laid strong gripe
On the fey [8] folk.

A noise like that of a great *soughing* wind
Hist. Roy. Soc. see Todd.

Sough, as a substantive, is still common in the north of England. It is found in Chaucer, Gower, and Ben Jonson.

[5] It would seem, there are two forms of this substantive, *fæhth* and *fæhthu*.

[6] See p. 33, n. 4.

[7] Lye construes thus " animi molestiam (propter offensas) ultus est."

[8] See p. 63, n. 8.

Feo|wertig dag|a
Niht|a oth|er swilc| : nith | wæs réth|e
Wæll|-grim wer|um : wul|dor-cyn|inges
Yth|a wræc|on : ár|leasra feorh|
Of flæsc|-homan|[1]

Flód | ealle wreah|
Hreoh | under heof|onum : héa|-beorgas|
Geond síd|ne grund| : and | on sund | áhóf|
Earc|e from eorth|an : and | tha æth|elo míd|
Tha seg|nade|[2] : sel|fa drih|ten
Scyp|pend us|ser : tha | he that scip | beleac|
Sith|than wíd|e rád| : wolc|num un|der
Of|er hol|mes hrincg| : hof | sel|este

Fór | mid fearm|e : fæ′r|e ne mos|ton
Wæg|-lithend|um : wæt|res brog|an
Hæs|te hrín|on[3] : ac hie | hal|ig God|
Fer|ede and ner|ede[4]

Fif|tena stód|
Deop | ofer dún|um : sæ | drenc|e-flód[5]
Mon|nes elna[6]

Thæt | is mær|o wyrd|[7]
Tham | æt niehst|an : wæs nán | to gedál|e
Nym|the heo | wæs : áhaf|en on | tha he|án lyft|

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[1] We still use the phrase *to be avenged of*, and in the North *to be wroken of*. I have translated accordingly, though the common idiom in A.S. is *wræcan on*. Mr. Thorpe turns the passage differently;

the King of Glory's
Waves drove the lives of the impious
From their carcases.

I do not however recollect ever meeting with the verb in the sense here given to it.

[2] Lye renders *segnian* by *signare*, *obsignare*. It is the Flemish *segenen* and Dutch *zegenen*, and in its primary sense meant to *mark* or *consecrate by a sign* (as the cross), and secondarily to *bless*. It is still retained in the Northern phrase, "God *saine* you." Scott has often used it.

Sain ye and save ye, and blithe mot ye be,
For seldom they land, that go swimming with me. *Monastery*.

There is no metrical point after *segnade*.

[3] Mr. Thorpe translates,

gushing streams might not
The wave-faring, horrors of the waters,
Furiously touch.

But I doubt if *hrinan* governs a dative.

Forty days—
Nights other forty too—his rage was fierce,
Slaughter-grim against men. The King of glory's
Billows wreak'd the life of the wicked
On the mantle of flesh.

Flood cover'd all
(Dread under heaven) the high hills
Through the wide world; and afloat upheav'd
The ark from earth, and the nobles therewith,
Whom sained the Lord himself,
Our Maker! when he that ship lock'd fast.
Sithen wide it rode, under the welkin,
O'er the ocean's round—that house most blessed!

It went with its freight! To the ark must not come
—Wave o'erriding—the water's terrors!
The sea-rush they touch'd; but them holy God
Led and rescued!

Fifteen it stood
Of man's ells, high o'er the downs,
The sea—one drenching flood!

'Tis a mighty weird!
From them at last, was none separate——
Save them, was none on the high lift uprais'd! [8]

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[4] The proper mode of scanning this section is by no means clear. It would seem that a double rhime was intended: if so, we must contract the verbs,

fer'de and ner'de

but if this were allowable how could the hearer distinguish between *ferede* and *ferde?* Was there a doubly accented rhime?

Fer|ede | and ner|ede|,

or did the section elide the final vowel of *ferede?*

Fered' and nerede.

[5] Mr. Thorpe compounds *sæ-drence;* but, by so doing, he destroys the alliteration,

Deop ofer dunum : sæ|-drence flód|

[6] *Eln* A.S. an *ell*, or length of a man's fore-arm from the *el*-bow to the wrist.

[7] *wyrd* A.S. a fate, a destiny, a *weird.*

[8] I can only construe this passage on the hypothesis that *nan* is under-

Tha | se ég|or-her|e : eorth|an tud|dor
Eall | acweal|de : but|on thæt earc|e bórd|
Heold | heof|ona frea|

The extracts we have given are not perhaps those which would most strike the reader. The passages, in which Cædmon puts on all his sublimity, are unfortunately among the most difficult. These extracts, however, may serve, in some measure, to show the masterly manner in which he manages his numbers. His accent always falls in the right place, and the emphatic syllable is ever supported by a strong one. His rhythm changes with the thought,—now marching slowly with a stately theme, and now running off with all the joyousness of triumph, when his subject teems with gladness and exultation. There is reason to believe, that to these beauties our forefathers were deeply sensitive; and that Cædmon owed to them no small portion of his popularity. In these respects, he has no superior, in the whole range of our literature, and perhaps but *one* equal.

From the middle of the seventh century, when Cædmon wrote, we have no poem, whose date is ascertained, for more than two hundred years. In the latter half of the ninth century Alfred translated, or rather paraphrased the Metres of Boethius. The MS. which contained these translations has perished; but a copy had been taken by Junius, and is now in the Bodleian Library. This copy

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stood after *wæs*. Mr. Thorpe renders it differently :

That was an awful fate,
From what at last was naught exempt
Unless 'twere rais'd in the high air;

but as *wyrd* is feminine, this construction would require *thære* instead of *tham*.

It may be observed that Mr. Thorpe has *twice corrected* his MS. in this short passage—once that he may begin the section with an alliterative syllable, and in a second place, that he may have the two alliterative syllables in the same section.

Tham at niehstan wæs : nan to gedale
Nymthe heo wæs ahafen : on tha hean lyft.

Then the sea-host earth's offspring
All o'erwhelmed; but that ark-hull
Heaven's Lord upheld.

is of course the best authority we can now refer to, and it is much to be regretted that, in a late edition, it has been estimated so lightly. Mr. Fox considers Junius as already "convicted of faulty punctuation" in his transcript of Cædmon,* and he has therefore remodelled the versification, according to his own notions. The reader, who may question the correctness of his text, is "referred to Rawlinson's edition," and (as the transcript of Junius was not at hand) to that edition I have had recourse.

That the reader may judge in what manner Alfred has paraphrased his author, we will first give the Metre, as Boethius wrote it:

Vela Neritii ducis
Et vagas pelago rates
Eurus appulit insulæ,
Pulchra qua residens dea,
Solis edita semine,
Miscet hospitibus novis
Tacta carmine pocula;
Quos ut in varios modos
Vertit herbipotens manus,
Hunc apri facies tegit;
Ille Marmaricus leo
Dente crescit et unguibus;
Hic, lupis super additus,
Flere dum parat, ululat;
Olle, tigris ut Indica,
Tecta mitis obambulat.
Sed licet variis malis
Numen Arcadis alitis
Obsitum miserans ducem,
Peste solverit hospitis.
Jam tamen mala remiges
Ore pocula traxerant;
Jam sues Cerealia
Glande pabula verterant;
Et nihil manet integrum,
Voce corpore perditis;
Sola mens stabilis super
Monstra, quæ patitur gemit.
O levem nimium manum,
Nec potentia gramina,
Membra quæ valeant licet
Corda vertere non valent.
Intus est hominum vigor,
Arce conditus abditâ;
Hæc venena potentius
Detrahunt hominem sibi,
Dira quæ penitus meant,
Nec nocentia corpori
Mentis ulcere sæviunt.
B. 4. Metr. 3.

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* A note directs us to the preface of Mr. Thorpe's Cædmon, page xiv.

Hit | gesæl|de gio| : on sum|e tid|e
thæt Au|lixes| : un|derhæf|de
thæm Ca|sere| : cyn|e-ric|u twa|
He | wæs Thrac|ia[2] : thiod|a al|dor
and Re|tie|[3] : ric|es hird|e

Wæs | his frea|-Drihtnes : folc|-cuth nam|a
Ag|amem|non : se eal|les weold|
Crec|a ric|es

Cuth | wæs wid|e
Thæt on | tha tid|e : Tro|ian|a gewin|
Wearth | under wolc|num

For wig|es heard|[4]
Crec|a driht|en : camp|sted sec|an
Au|lixes mid| : an | hund scip|a
Læd|de ofer lag|u-stream|

Sæt long|e thær|
Tyn | winter[5] full| : tha | sio tid | gelomp|
Thæt hi | thæt ric|e : geræht | hæf|don
Deor|e gecep|te : Drih|ten Crec|a
Tro|ia-burh| : til|um gesith|um

Tha | tha[6] Aulix|es : leaf|e hæf|de
Thrac|ia-cyn|ing : thæt | he thon|an mos|te
He | let him | behind|an : hyrnd|e ciol|as
Nig|on and |[7] hund-nig|ontig : Næn|igne[8] thon|an
Mer|e-heng|esta : ma | thonne æn|ne
Fer|ede on fif|el[9]-stream| : fam|ig[10] bord|on

---

[1] *Aulixes*, that is Ulysses. There are reasons for believing that, in some of the Anglo-Saxon dialects, *x* was pronounced merely as a sibilant aspirate. Archbishop Cæna in his rhiming hexameters makes *is* rhime to *ix*.

Vivendo fel*ix*, Christo laurate triumph*is*
Vita tuis seclo specimen charissime cœlo,
Justitiæ cultor, verus pietatis amator, &c.

[2] No metrical point.

[3] No metrical point—Ithaca was called Neritia from the mountain Neritus, and thence doubtless Alfred got his Retie. Why he makes Ulysses king of Thracia it would be difficult to say.

[4] This is one of those substantives which have a duplicate in *e*.

[5] In Anglo-Saxon, nouns of number were accented more strongly than the

It happ'd of yore, upon a time,
That Aulixes[1] had under
The Kaiser kingdoms two;
He was elder of the Thrakia-clans,
And of Retia's realm the leader.

His sovereign Lord's far-known name
Was Agamemnon; *he* wielded all
The Creeks' realm.

Known was it widely,
That, on that tide, the Troyan war
Happ'd under welkin.

Forth went the war-leader—
The Creeks' Lord—battle-stead to seek;
Aulixes with him a hundred ships
Led o'er the sea-stream.

He sat long there—
Ten winters full. When the time fell,
That they that realm had taken,
Dearly won the Creeks' Lord
Troya-burgh, with his good comrades.

Then, when Aulixes had leave,
(Thrakia's king) that he might thence—
He left behind him horned keels,
Nine and ninety. From thence no more
Of the sea-stallions, than one, he led
On Fifel-stream—with foamy sides,

---

substantive. Hence the accentuation of our modern compounds, *twelve|month*, *sen|night*, &c.

[6] *Thu* in Rawlinson's edition.

[7] It would seem that the prefix *hund* did not take the accent, *hund-seof|ontig*, *hund-eah|tatig*, &c.

[8] Mr. Fox, in this place, changes *nænigne* into *nænige;* but with an honesty, not common among Anglo-Saxon editors, gives his reader fair warning. He has mistaken *ferede*, the past tense of *ferian*, for *ferde*, the past tense of *feran*. Rawlinson points the passage thus—Nænigne thonan mere hengesta ma . thonne ænne ferede.

[9] There have been several attempts to explain this phrase; but none, I think, satisfactory.

[10] It would seem, from this line, that *ceol* is neuter.

Thrie|rethre ceol| : thæt | bith thæt mæst|e
Crec|iscra scip|a

Tha | wearth ceald|-weder
Stearc | storm|a gelac| : stun|ede | sio brun|e
Yth | with oth|re : ut | feor adraf|
On wend|elsæ| : wig|endra [3] scol|a
Up on | thæt ig|land : thær Ap|ollin|es
Doh|tor wun|ode : dæg|-rimes worn|

Wæs | se Ap|ollin|us : æth|eles cyn|nes
Iob|es eaf|ora : se | wæs gio| [5] cyning
Se lic|ette| : lit|lum and mic|lum
Gum|ena | gehwylc|um : thæt | he Good | wære
Hehst | and halg|ost : swa | se hlaf|ord tha|
Thæt dys|ige folc| : on | gedwol|an læd|de
Oth|thæt hym | gelyf|de : leod|a un|rim
For|thæm he wæs | . mid riht|e : ric|es hyrd|e
Heor|a cyn|e-cyn|nes

Cuth | is wid|e
Thæt on | tha tid|e : theod|a æghwilc
Hæf|don heor|a hlaf|ord : for thon|e heahs|tan God|
And weorth|odon| : swa | swa wul|dres cyn|ing
Gif | he to | thæm ric|e : wæs | on riht|e bor|en
Wæs | thæs Iob|es fæd|er : God[6] | eac swa he|
Sat|urnus thon|e : sund|-buend|e het|on
Hæl|etha bearn| : hæf|don tha mæg|tha
Ælc|ne æf|ter oth|rum : for ec|ne God| [2]

Sceol|de eac | wesan : Ap|ollin|es doh|tor

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[1] Alfred's interest in every thing that related to his marine is well known. He greatly improved upon the Danish and Friesish ships, before his time the best in Europe.

[2] That is, the Mediterranean.

[3] There are three genitives plural, in this metre, which end in *ra*—*wiggendra*, *thegnra*, and *wildra*; *wildra* also is found in Cædmon.

[4] The Anglo-Saxons had no *v*.

[5] *Gio* is certainly the alliterative syllable of this section. In Anglo-Saxon we often find the adverb taking one of the strongest accents in the sentence. We have still some traces of this usage in our language, as in our mode of accenting the modern compound *welcome*.

A three bank'd keel—that is the greatest,
Of Creekish ships.
Then was cold weather—
Storms a huge plenty; dash'd the brown wave
One gainst other, and out far drave,
On Wendel-sea,[5] the warrior-bands,
Upon that island, where Apollin's
Daughter wonn'd, days a number.

This Apollinus was of noble kin—
Yob's[6] son. *He* was king of yore,
He pretended to small and great,
(To every man) that he was God
Highest and holiest. So this lord then
That silly folk into error led,
Till him believed, a host of people,
For that he was, of right, the kingdom's leader—
Of their kingly kin.
Known is it widely,
That, on that tide, the nations each one
Had their Lord for the highest God,
And worship'd him, like as the Glory-king,
If he to the realm of right was born;
(This Yob's father was God eke as he;
Saturnus him sea-dwellers call'd—
The sons of men[7]); the nations had
Each one after other, for the eternal God![8]

Must also be Apollin's daughter

---

[6] Here we have for the alliterative syllable *Iob* and *God*, and a few couplets above *Iob* and *gio*. May we not infer that among the West-Sexe, *g* sometimes took the sound of *y*? *Gott* is still pronounced *Yott* in Hanover.

[7] That is, the sailors (the great astronomers of those days) called his star Saturnus.

[8] Mr. Fox construes thus:—

Him Saturn the sea-dwellers
Call, even the children of men; they esteemed their kinsmen
One after another as the eternal God.

But as *mægth* is feminine, this construction would require *ælce* instead of *ælcne*.

Deor|-boren| : dys|iges folc|es
Gum|-rinca gyd|en : cuth|e gald|ra fel|a
Drif|an dry|cræftas : hio | gedwol|an fylg|de
Man|na swith|ost : man|egra theod|a
Cyn|inges doh|tor : sio Cir|ce wæs [2]
Hat|en for her|igum [3] : hio | ric|sode
On | thæm ig|londe : the Au|lixes|
Cyn|ing Thracia[4] : com | ane to|
Ceol|e lith|an.

Cuth | wæs son|a
Eal|re thær|e mæn|ige : the hir|e mid | wun|ode
Æth|el ing|es sith| : hio | mid un|gemet|e
Lis|sum luf|ode : lith-|monna frea|[5]
And | he eac | swa sam|e : eal|le mæg|ne
Ef|ne swa swith|e : hi | on sef|an luf|ode
Thæt | he to | his eard|e : æn|ige nys|te
Mod|es myn|lan : of|er mægth | giunge
Ac | he mid | thæm wif|e : wun|ode sith|than
Oth|thæt him | ne meah|te : mon|na æn|ig
Thegn|ra sin|ra : thær | mid [6] | wesan
Ac | hi for|thæm yrm|thum : eard|es lys|te [7]
Myn|ton for-læt|an : leof|ne hlaf|ord

Tha | ongun|non wer|can : wer|theoda spell|
Sæd|on thæt | hio sceol|de : mid hir|e scin|lace
Beorn|as forbred|an : and | mid bal|o-cræf|tum
Wrath|um weorp|an : on wild|ra lic|
Cyn|inges thegn|as : cys|pan sith|than
And | mid rac|entan eac| : ræp|an mæn|igne
Sum|e hi | to wulf|um wurd|on : ne meah|ton thon|ne
word | forth bring|an
Ac | hio thrag|-mælum : thiot|on ongun|non

---

[1] To *drive* a bargain, a trade, a craft, are still well-known idioms.

[2] Here is no metrical point.

[3] Mr. Fox construes thus:

The king's daughter was Circe
Called for her oppressions.

I doubt if this meaning can be given to the word *herigum.* Besides, how is the name *Circe* descriptive of an oppressor?

[4] I suspect this is a mistake for *Thracia cyning.*

[5] I have construed this line, on the supposition that *frea* is a mistake for *frean,* the accusative.

(As nobly born) the sylly folks—
The people's Goddess. She couth of many arts,
Charm-crafts to drive;[1] error she followed
Of all people most, through many nations—
The king's daughter! She was Circe hight
Fore her shrines. She reigned
In that island, which Aulixes
(Thrakia's king) happ'd with one
Ship to sail to.

Known was soon
To all the menie, that with her wonn'd,
The Etheling's journey. She, without limit,
Passionately lov'd the seamen's lord;
And he eke the same, with all his main,
E'en as strongly, her lov'd in soul;
That he tow'rd his land wist not any
Heart's affection, beyond that young maiden;
But he with that woman sithen wonn'd,
Till there might not any of the men—
Thanes of his—there with him bide.
But they, for the yearnings of their country's love,
Minded to leave him their lief Lord.

Then gan to work the people spells;
Said they, that she would, with her magic,
The men lay low, and with ill-crafts
Cruelly throw into beasts' shapes
The king's thanes—sithen fetter,
And eke with chains, bind many a one.
They, some like wolves became; ne might they then one
word forth bring;
But they at times to howl began.

---

[6] When a preposition *follows* the word it governs, it takes a stronger accent; and when it immediately precedes the verb at the close of the sentence, its accent is generally the predominant one in the sentence. The former part of this rule may explain the accentuation of our modern compounds; *thereby*|, *thereto*|, *hereby*|, *herein*|, &c.

[7] Lye renders the passage in the same way. The construction requires that *lyst* should be feminine, which is rather doubtful. Perhaps it would be safer to construe thus:

But they for their wretchedness—for their country's love
Minded to leave, &c.

Sum|e wær|on enf|oras : á | grym|eted|on
Thon|ne hi sar|es hwæt| : siof|ian sciol|don
Tha | the le|on wær|on : ongun|non lath|lice
Yr|renga ryn|a : thon|ne hi sceol|don
Clip|ian | for corth|re : cniht|as wurd|on
Eal|de ge giung|e : eall|e forhwerf|de
To sum|um dior|e : swelc|um he ær|or
On | his lif|-dagum| : gelic|ost wæs|
But|on tham cyn|inge : the | sio cwen | luf|ode
Nol|de thar|a oth|ra : æn|ig onbit|an
Men|nisces met|es : ac | hi ma | luf|edon
Deor|a droht|ath : swa | hit gedef|e ne wæs|
Næf|don hi mar|e : mon|num gelic|es
Eorth|-buend|um : thon|ne in|gethonc|
Hæf|don an|ra gehwilc| : his ag|en Mod|
Thæt | wæs theah swith|e : sorg|um gebund|en
For|thæm earf|othum : the | him on|sæton.[1]

Hwæt | tha dys|egan men| : the thys|um dry|cræftum
Long[2] | lyf|don : leas|um spel|lum
Wis|son hwæth|re : thæt | thæt gewit| ne mæg|
Mod | onwend|an : mon|na æn|ig
Mid dry|cræftum| : theah | hio gedon | meahte
Thæt | tha lich|oman : lang|e thrag|e
Onwend | wurd|on.

Is | thæt wun|derlic
Mæg|en-cræft mic|el : mod|a gehwilc|es
Of|er lich|oman : læn|ne and sæn|ne

Swilc|um and swilc|um : Thu | meaht sweot|ole | ongit|an
Thæt | thæs lich|oman : list|as and cræf|tas
Of thæm Mod|e cum|ath : mon|na gehwil|cum
Æn|lepra ælc| : thu | meaht eath|e ongit|an
Thæt | te ma | dereth : mon|na gehwilc|um
Mod|es un|theaw : thon|ne met|trymnes
Læn|es lich|oman.

Ne | thearf leod|a nan|
Wen|an thær|e wyrd|e : thæt | thæt wer|ige flæsc|

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[1] Here is no alliteration, unless we accent the prefix *on*. See V. 2, p. 42, n. 8.

Some were boars; aye they grunted,
When aught of sorrow they would bemoan.
They, that were lions, horribly gan
Angrily to roar, when they would
Call for the crew. The men became,
Old and young, all changed
To some beast, such as he erst
In his life-days likest was—
All but the king whom the queen lov'd.
Of the others, would not any eat
Of man's meat; but they more lov'd
The company of beasts—as was ill fitting.
Ne had they more of likeness to men,
That people earth, than the power of thought.
Each of them had his own mind,
But that was greatly sorrow-bound,
For the troubles, which them beset.

But then the foolish men, that in these charm-crafts
Long believed—in idle tales—
Knew, however, that no man may
The wit, or the mind change,
With charm-crafts; though she might cause
That their bodies, for a long throw,
Changed should be.
'Tis wonderful—
The mickle power of might of each man's mind
Over the body weak and sluggish!

By such and such things, thou may'st plainly see
That the body's faculties and pow'rs
From the mind come, to every man—
Ilk one of them. Thou may'st readily see,
That more hurteth every man
The mind's ill habit, than the sickness
Of the frail body.
Nor needs any one
Look for this hap—that the wretched flesh

---

[2] *Long* is, probably, a mistake for *longe*.

Thæt Mod[3] : mon|na æn|iges
Eal|lunga to | him : æ|fre mæg | onwen|dan
Ac | tha un|theawas : ælc|es mod|es
And | thæt in|gethonc : ælc|es mon|nes
Thon|e lich|oman lit| : thid|er hit wil|e

Alfred's versification shows poorly indeed beside that of Cædmon. He seems to have had little more command over his rhythm, than some of our modern poets. The sectional pause (always a dangerous thing to meddle with) is often used by him, and seldom happily; and the management of his accents is such, as very rarely to assist his meaning.

But Alfred was something greater than a poet. Who can read these lines without emotion, when he remembers that the writer--while discharging his kingly duties as no other man discharged them—was daily sinking under a painful disease, that ended only with his life?

We must now pass tot he days of Alfred's grandson. In the year 937, was fought the battle of Brunanburgh —a battle, that involved more important interests, than any that has ever yet been fought within the Island. It was indeed a battle between *races:* and had England failed, her name might have been lost for ever. The forces on either side were worthy of the stakes they played for. Round the banner of Athelstan were ranged

937 Her
Æth|elstan cing|[6] : eor|la drih|ten.
Beor|na beag|-gifa : and | his bro|thor eác|

---

[3] Here a section appears to be wanting. No metrical point.

[4] The Dunstan MS. Tib. A. VI; the Abingdon, Tib. B. I; and the Worcester, Tib. B. IV. I have taken copies from all these MSS., and also from the Plegmund MS. in Ben'et Library. The Dunstan MS. appears to be by far the most correct transcript of the four.

[5] He has not, however, confined himself to his three authorities. Some of his readings are not to be found in any of the MSS. which I have seen; nor can I tell whence he got them.

The mind of any man
Altogether to it e'er may turn ;
But the ill habits of ilk mind,
And the *thought* of each man,
The body leads thither it will.

one hundred thousand Englishmen, and before them was the whole power of Scotland, of Wales, of Cumberland, and of Galloway, led on by sixty thousand Northmen. The song, which celebrated the victory, is worthy of the effort that gained it.

This song is found in all the copies of the Chronicle, but with considerable variations. Price collated three of them,[4] and formed a text, so as best to suit the convenience of translation.[5] The result might have been foreseen, and is such as little encourages imitation. I shall rather give the text, as it is found in *one* of these copies—the Dunstan MS. Not a word need be altered, to form either good sense or good poetry.

As the metrical point in this MS. divides the couplets, I am of course answerable for the position of the middle pause. When it marks the final pause, it will be inserted, so as to render unnecessary a constant reference to the notes.

937 Now[7]
Æthelstan king,[8] of earls the Lord,
Of barons the beigh[9]-giver, and his brother eke,

---

[6] A metrical point.

[7] This is the common form, which introduces the events of each year in our venerable Chronicle.

[8] The first begotten, and the only heir
Of *Edward king*, the third of that descent. 1 *H.* 6, 2. 6.

[9] The *beigh* was a kind of armlet. "Broche and beigh" is a common alliteration in our old romances ; and the plural *beighs* is still used in Norfolk, to signify any costly ornaments, as jewels, &c. See Forby's Vocabulary.

Ead|mund æth|eling : eal|dor lang|ne tír|.
Gesl\u00f3g|an æt sak|e : sweord|a ecg|gum.
Em|be brun|an-burh
Bórd|-weall cluf|an.
Heow|an heath|o lin|a : ham|ora láf|um.
Eaf|oran ead|weardes : swa him | geæth|ele wæs|.
Fram cneo|-magum| : that hie | æt cam|pe oft|.
With lath|ra gehwan|e : land | eal|godon.
Hord | and hám|as
Het|tend[7] crun|gon
Scot|ta leod|e : and scip|-flotan|.
Fæg|e[8] feol|lan : feld | den|nade.[9]
Sec|ga swat|e : sith|than sun|ne upp|.
On mor|gen-tíd| : mær|e tun|gol.
Glad | ofer grun|das : god|es can|del beorht|.
Ec|es driht|nes[13] : that|[14] seo æth|ele | gesceaft|.
Sah | to set|le[15]

---

[1] *Etheling* meant a prince in its *general* sense, and in its *particular*, an heir to royalty—apparent or presumptive.

[2] *Tir* A.S. a train, a *tire;*

> Such one was wrath, the last of that ungodly *tire*. *F. Q.* 1. 4. 35.

The construction of this passage has been already discussed, see p. 19.

[3] *Sweorda ecgum*, with the edges of the swords; and in another part of the poem *sweordes ecgum*, with the edges of *the sword*. The A.S. sword was long, pointed, and *two*-edged. Hence the propriety of the phrase.

[4] *Lina* is clearly a mistake for *linda*, which is found in the other MSS. *Lind*, the linden tree, was (as Price has shown) the poetical name for the shield; as *æsc*, the ash, for the spear. The latter was long preserved in our literature:

> Let me twine
> Mine arms around that body, where against
> My grained *ash* an hundred times hath broke. *Cor.*

[5] We meet very commonly, in A.S. poetry, with the phrases *eald laf*, *yrfe laf*, *heatho laf*, *hamera laf*, &c., as expressions for the sword. Price always gives to *laf* its common meaning, and is followed, in so doing, by Mr. Thorpe and Mr. Kemble—the old *relic*, the *relic* of inheritance, the battle *relic*, the *relic* of the hammers, &c. But *laf*, in these cases, is clearly the Icelandic *lauf-i*, a sword, a glaive. We thus get phrases that have a meaning; the old *glaive*, the hereditary *glaive*, the battle-*glaive*, the *glaive* of the hammers—that is, as I take it, the well-tempered glaive.

[6] By my *fader kin*,
Your herte hongeth on a jolly pin. *Chau. Merchantes Tale.*

Edmund the etheling,[1] elders a long tire,[2]
Slew in battle, with sword-edges,[3]
Round Brunanburgh.

Shield-wall they clave,
They hew'd battle-lindens,[4] with hammer-glaives,[5]
The sons of Edward! As in them 'twas of birthright,
From their father-kin,[6] that they in war oft,
Against each foe, their land should save,
Their wealth and homes.

The spoiler quail'd;
The Scottish people, and the ship-crews
Feymen[8] fell. The field stream'd
With soldier-sweat,[10] sithen the sun on high,
At morning-tide (the mighty star![11])
Glided o'er earth, God's candle[12] bright,
(The eternal Lord's!)—till this noble handywork
Sank to its seat.

---

[7] This is a collective noun and therefore takes a plural verb, see p. 20. An ignorance of this principle has led Price into some very serious errors.

[8] *Fæge* A.S. death-doomed, *fey*.

And through they dash'd, and hew'd, and smash'd,
Till *feymen* died awa, man. *Burn's Sheriff Muir.*

[9] The true meaning of this verb Price discovered in the Icelandic. His note is a happy piece of criticism.

[10] That is—with *blood*. Price however is mistaken, when he says the Anglo-Saxon poets never used *swat* in its ordinary sense; see Cædmon 24. It is not without reference to its old poetical meaning, that Shakespeare uses the word:

The honorable captain there
Drops bloody *sweat* from his war-wearied limbs. 1 *H.* 6, 4. 3.

[11] So the moon is called by Shakespeare,

The moist *star*,
Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands. *Ham.* 1. 1.

[12] So Cædmon calls the sun, *folca frith candel*—man's candle of life. The word was not rejected from our poetry till after the 16th century.

Night's *candles* are put out. *Rom. and Jul.*

[13] A metrical point.

[14] The other MSS. have *oth*, until. I have seen the phrase *swa lange—thæt*, such time—until; but never before *siththan—thæt*. Price reads *oth—thæt*, but without authority.

[15] A metrical point.

Thær | læg secg | man|ig.
Gar|um forgrun|den[1] : gum|an north|erne .
Of|er scyld | sceot|en : swyl|ce scyt|tisc eac|.
Wer|ig wig|ges sæd|[2]

West|-sexe forth|.
And|langne dæg| : eor|ed-cys|tum.
On last | leg|don : lath|um theod|um.
Heow|an her|e-flym|an ; hínd|an thearl|e.
Mec|um myl|en-scearp|um[4] : myrc|e ne wyrn|don.
Heard|es hand|-plegan : hæl|etha nan|um.
Thar|a the | mid an|lafe : of|er ear|-gebland.
On lid|es bos|me : land | gesoh|tan.
Fæg|e to | gefeoh|te[5]

Fif|e lag|on.
On | thæm camp|-stede : cin|ingas geong|e.
Sweord|um aswef|ede : swilc|e seof|one eac|.
Eorl|as an|lafes[6] : un|rím herg|es.
Flot|tan and scot|ta[7]

Thær | geflym|ed wearth|.
North|manna breg|o : ned|e gebǽd|ed.
To lid|es stef|ne[8] : lyt|le weor|ode.
Cread|[9] cnear | on flot| : cing | út | gewát|.
On feal|one flód| : feorh | gener|ede .

---

[1] A metrical point.

[2] Price thus construes the passage,

There lay many a warrior
Strew'd by darts, northern *man*
Shot over the shield. So Scottish eke
Weary of war——

leaving the passage without further explanation. To support this construction, we must suppose *guman* a nominative singular. Now the nouns of this declension *do* sometimes take an *n* in the nominative, see *Sarran*, Cæd. 109. and *Deman*, Cæd. 229. These instances are very rare; but Price has his version countenanced, in some measure, by Dr. Ingram's reading *guma northerna*. If this be admitted, we might construe,

There lay many a soldier
By the darts brought low; the man of the North
Over shield shot; so Scotchman eke—
A wretched war-spawn! Price

There lay many a soldier,
By the darts brought low—Northern men,
Over shield shot: so eke the Scotchman's
Wretched war-spawn!

The West-Sexe then
—The livelong day—in banded throngs,
At foot[3] laid on the loathed people;
They hew'd down the fliers fast from behind
With swords mill-sharpen'd. Nor did the Myrce grudge
Any one of the heroes the hard hand-play—
Of those, that with Anlaf o'er the tumbling sea,
In the ship's bosom, sought the land
Fey men for the fight.

Five lay
On that war-stead—youthful kings,
Sword-silenced. So also seven
Earls of Anlaf; and a host of the robber-band,
Ship-men and Scots.

There was chased
The Northman leader, force-driven
To the ship's bow, with slender train;
Drove keel afloat—the king out-fled—
On fallow flood, life he saved!

Price has more than once changed *swylce* for *swylc*. I cannot see either reason or motive for so doing.

This pause is marked with a metrical point in the MS.

[3] Follow him *at foot*, tempt him with speed aboard. *Hamlet*, 4. 3.

[4] A metrical point. *Mylen-scearp* is a very remarkable compound—if it be rightly construed, and I do not see how otherwise it can be rendered.

[5] A metrical point.

[6] A metrical point.

[7] Literally "Of the fleet and of the Scots."

[8] Price first settled the meaning of this word.

[9] I have followed Price, who considers *cread* as the past tense of a verb *crud-an*, to press forward, to crowd. It should be observed, however, that in all the Old English examples which he quotes, this verb to *crowd* occurs as an active verb, never as a neuter one.

Swyl|ce thær eac | se fród|a : mid fleam|e cóm|.
On | his cyth|the north| : constantín|us.
Hár | hil|derinc

Hrem|an ne thórf|te
Mec|ca geman|an : her | wæs his mag|a sceard|[1].
Freon|da gefyl|led : on folc|-stede|.
Forsleg|en æt sac|e : and | his sun|u forlet|.
On wæl|-stowe|[2] : wund|um forgrund|en.
Geong|ne æt guth|e

Gylp|an ne thorf|te.
Beorn | bland|en-fex[3] : bill|-geslyht|es.
Eald | in|witta : ne an|laf[4] the|ma|.
Mid heor|a her|e-laf|um : hlih|han ne thorf|tan.
Thæt | hie bead|o-weorc|a : bet|eran wurd|an.
On camp|-stede| : cum|bol-gehnas|tes.
Gár|-mittung|e : gum|ena | gemót|es.
Wæp|en-gewrix|les : thæs | [7] hie on wæl|-felda.
With ead|weardes|[8] : eaf|oran pleg|odon.

Gewit|an him | tha north|men : nægl|ed[9] cnear|rum
Dreor|ig dar|otha láf| : on dyng|es[10] mer|e.
Of|er deop -wæter : dyf|len sec|ean.
Eft | ír|a land : æw|isc-mod|e.

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[1] Price's attempt to render this passage is an obvious failure. *Sceard* is clearly the Icelandic *skard*, a cutting off, a loss. In that dialect they have a compound *frœnd-skard*, a loss of friends, which is almost the expression in the text, *freonda sceard*.

[2] A metrical point.

[3] A metrical point.

[4] How could Price make the singular noun *Anlaf* agree with the plural verb *thorftan ?*

[5] *That* was used in the sense of, *for that*, *because*, till the middle of the 17th century. The Paradise Lost may afford us examples, as well as our beautiful Liturgy.

[6] Price thus renders the passage,

At the conflict of banners
The meeting of spears, the assembly of men,
The interchange of weapons.

I suspect however that the poet intended to mark out the progress of the fight from the distant skirmish to the melée. I have doubts if *cumbol-*

So there eke the sage one in flight came
Northward to his kith—Constantinus—
Hoary warrior!

Needed not to boast
Of the sword-greeting! Here was loss of kin—
Of friends hewn down, on the crowded field
Slain at the fight. And his son he left
On the slaughter-place, with wounds laid low,
Though young in war.

Needed not to vaunt
Of the bills slaughter, the grey-hair'd Baron—
Nor had the old Trechour, nor Anlaf more,
With their army-wrecks, need to laugh,
That[5] they were the better in works of war
On battle-stead—in the banner-strife—
The javelin-mingle[6]—the soldiers close—
The weapon barter—since they play'd
On slaughter-field, with Edward's sons!

Gan then the Northmen, in their nailed barks,
(The darts' sad leavings, on the noisy sea:)
Over deep water Dyflen to seek——
The land of the Ire[11] once more—shame-hearted!

---

gehnastes be rightly translated by either of us. One of Dr. Ingram's MSS. reads *gehnades*—but this helps us little, for it does not occur elsewhere. *Gar-mittunge* is clearly the flight of darts or javelins—for *gar* meant a missile, not a spear. *Wæpen-gewrixles* seems to be the interchange of weapons, or the fight hand to hand.

[7] Price reads *thæs the*, and construes thus,

"Of that which they on the slaughter-field," &c.

but *thæs*, and *thæs the*, are both of them mere conjunctions.

[8] A metrical point.

[9] Price gives us *nægledon*, without authority from either of his three MSS.; unless the reading of the inaccurate Worcester MS. be considered such—*dægled ongarum*. Dr. Ingram however has found *næcledon* in some of *his* MSS.

[10] The Worcester MS. has *dyniges*, but I never met with either *dyng* or *dynig* elsewhere.

[11] That is Ire-land. *Dyflen* is Dublin, where Anlaf was then reigning.

Swilc|e tha | gebroth|or : beg|en æt som|ne.
Cing | and æth|eling : cyth|the soh|tan.
West|-seaxna land| : wig|ges hrem|ige.

Let|an him | behind|an : hraw | bryt|tigean.
Sal|owig-pád|an[1] thon|e sweart|an hræfn|.
Hyrn|ed-neb|ban : and thon|e[2] has|o-pad|an.
Earn | æf|tan hwít|[4] : æs|es brúc|an.
Græd|igne guth|-hafoc : and | thæt græg|e deor|.
Wulf | on weal|de[5]

Ne | wearth wæl | máre.
On | thys[6] eg|lande : æf|re gyt|a.
Folc|es afyl|led : befor|an thys|sum.
Sweord|es ecg|um : thæs | the us secg|eath[7] béc|.
Eald|e uth|witan : syth|than east|an hid|er.
Eng|le and sex|an : upp | becom|an.
Of|er brad|e brim|u : bryt|ene soht|an
Wlanc|e wig|-smithas : weal|as of|ercom|an
Earl|as ar|hwate[10] : eard | begeat|on.

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[1] From a passage in Beowulf, Mr. Kemble was led to offer a very ingenious, and I think the true explanation of this phrase. One of the reasons, however, which his friend Mr. Thorpe gives for adopting it—viz. that *padan* would hardly be used twice together with the same meaning—is more questionable. I have little doubt, that *haso-padan* is a compound of precisely the same kind as *salowig-padan*.

The Anglo-Saxons seem to have used *sallow* in the sense of dusky. The raven is called *sallow* both by Cædmon and the author of Judith.

Ac him fleah on laste
Earn ætes georn : urig fethera
Salowig pada : sang hilde leoth
Hyrned nebba. *Judith.*

But on their footsteps flew
The ern greedy for its prey, with hoary feathers;
He of the sallow coat sang the battle-song—
The bird with horned nib!

That is, the eagle followed, and the raven croaked. Price applied the phrase *sallowig pada* in the last extract, to the eagle; and, if we may judge from his mode of pointing the passage, so does Mr. Thorpe.

[2] *Haso* seems to have been a mixture of white with some darker colour. Cædmon used it in describing the culver or wood-pigeon.

[3] The sea-eagle. It would seem, from this line, that *earn* was sometimes used as a neuter noun.

So the brothers, both at once
(King and etheling,) sought their kith,—
The land of the West-Sexe—in the fight exulting!

Left they behind them (the carcase to share)
Him of the sallow[1] coat—the swart raven
With horned nib; and him of the grizzled coat—
The ern[3] white-plumaged behind, his prey to gorge;
The greedy war-hawk; and the grey beast,
The wolf of the weald.

Was no greater carnage
Ever yet, within the island,
(Before this) of men fell'd
By the sword-edges, (as the books tell us—
The writers old) since from the east hither,
Up came Engle and Sexe,[8]
And, o'er the broad seas, sought Britain;
And mighty war-smiths[9] the Waels o'ercame;
And earls, after honour keen, gat the land.

---

[4] A metrical point.

[5] A metrical point.

[6] The Abingdon MS. agrees here with the text. The Worcester MS. reads "on thisne! iglande" In Cædmon we sometimes find this pronoun without inflexion, as in the text. See Cædmon 19.

[7] Price thus renders the passage,

Of that, that say to us in books
Old historians.

Now in the first place, *bec* is the nominative plural; and secondly, the section, *thæs the us secgath bec*, is very commonly found *by itself*, in Anglo-Saxon poems. There can be little doubt, that *uth witan* is a nominative, in *apposition* with *bec*.

Thæs the too is a mere conjunction.

[8] *Sexen* and *Sexe* are the real names of that energetic race, to whom England owes one-third of its population. Why must we go to France for a name, when we have two English ones to choose between?

[9] Compounds of this formation, were common till of late years; as *fig-smith*, a liar; *shape-smith*, a posture master, &c. &c. The pause is here marked with a metrical point.

[10] Price considers the *ar* in *arhwate* merely an augmentative prefix. I am not however convinced by his reasoning.

Anglo-Saxon rhythm may, in some measure, be considered as a *genus*, containing only one *species*. These specimens have therefore been ranged according to their date. But the reader must not conclude that it had no *varieties*. We have already seen how Cædmon lengthens his rhythm, when he thinks the dignity of his subject requires greater pomp of language. The fervour and energy of lyrical poetry demanded a quicker and more marked recurrence of the accent; and in poems of this class, the *abrupt* sections greatly outnumbered those which began with an unaccented syllable—sometimes in the proportion of ten or fifteen to one. The sections 1 and 5 of two accents, were those most frequently used—indeed, so frequently as sometimes to form two-thirds of the whole. They were mostly lengthened, and sometimes doubly lengthened.

I have elsewhere [1] hazarded an opinion, that these short, abrupt, and forcible rhythms were the earliest that were known to our language. They are such as would naturally be prompted by excited feeling, and are well fitted

1066 Her
Ead|ward kingc : eng|la hlaf|ord
Send|e soth|-fæ [ste][5] : sawl|e to crist|e.
On god|es wær|a[6] : gast | hal|igne.

He | on wor|ulda her| : wun|ode thrag|e.
On kyn|e-thrym|me : cræf|tig ræd|a.
Feo|wer and twen|tig[9] : freo|lice weal|dend.
Win|tra gerim|es[1] : weolm[11] brytnode.

---

[1] Vol. I. p. 175.

[2] The same rhythm is also found in such parts of Cædmon's poem, as partake of the lyrical character.

[3] See p. 61.

[4] See p. 61, n. 7.

[5] The Worcester MS. has *soth fæste;* in the Abingdon MS. the three last letters are torn off.

[6] Certain nouns regularly formed their dative in *a*. In the present poem we have *wæra* and *woralda*.

[7] Such appears to be the force of the preposition *on*. In the Menelogia we have,

for those lyrical outpourings, which form the earliest poetry of all languages.[2]

In the longer rhythms, alliteration appears something intrusive and artificial, but it must have been naturally suggested by these earlier rhythms; for the main qualities, which fitted them for the lyrical song, are such as alliteration would greatly strengthen. It is highly probable, that to these rhythms the alliterative system owed its origin.

We have already had one specimen of lyrical song, I will now give another of later date. In both, there is the same kind of rhythm; but the one was a song of triumph over the public enemy, and the other commemorates the death of an English king.

The Confessor's Death-Song is found both in the Abingdon and Worcester copies of the Chronicle. My text is taken from the former. The metrical point divides the sections; and I have marked it (for the reason already given [3]) whenever it was found indicating the final pause.

1066 Now[4]
King Edward, lord of the Engle,
Sent his righteous soul to Christ,
(In God's promise trusting)[7] a spirit holy.

He, in the world here, wonn'd a throw;[8]
Amid the kingly throng, sage in his counsels.
Four-and-twenty winters, in number,
Gen'rously ruling, wealth he parted.

Æthele Andreas: upon roderum
His gast ageaf: *on Godes wære*
Fus on forthweg.

The noble Andreas, aloft in the heavens,
His spirit render'd—in God's promise trusting!
Prompt for departure!

[8] See p. 89, n. 1.

[9] In the MSS. we have the letters xxiiii.

[10] No metrical point.

[11] This is doubtless a mistake for *weolan*. See *welan brytnodon*, p. 72, l. 15.

And healfe tid[1] : hæl|etha weal|dend.
Weold | wel | gethung|en[2] : wal|um and scot|tum.
And brytt|um eac| : byr|e æth|elred|es
Eng|lum and sex|um : or|et-mægc|um.

Swa | ymb-clyp|path : ceald|-brimmas|[3].
Thæt eall | ead|warde : æth|elum king|e.
Hyrd|on hold|lice : hag|e-steal|de[6] menn|.

Wæs á | blith|e-mod : beal|u-leas kyng|.
Theah | he lang | æ′r : land|e bereaf|od.
Wun|ode wræc|lastum : wid|e geond eorth|an.
Syth|than cnut | ofercóm| : kynn | æth|elred|es.
And den|a[7] weol|don : deor|e ric|e.
Eng|la land|es

Eaht | and twen|tig[8].
Win|tra gerim|es : wel|an bryt|nodan
Syth|than forth | becóm| : freo|lice[9] in|geatwum|.
Kyn|ingc-kys|tum gód| : clæn|e and mil|de.
Ead|ward se æth|ela : eth|el bewer|ode.
Land | and leod|e : oth|thæt lung|er becom|.
Death | se byt|era : and | swa deor|e[10] genam|.
Æth|elne | of eorth|an

Eng|las fer|edon.
Soth|fæste sawl|e : in|nan sweg|les leoht|.

---

[1] The Worcester MS. gives the section thus, *And he* | *hæl|o-tid.* I have construed the passage, with this reading as I can make nothing satisfactory of *healfe tid.* The reader, however, may be more successful.

[2] No metrical point.

[3] The Worcester MS. has *cealda* (cealde) *brimmas;* but *cald brimmas* is possibly correct, for this adjective *ceald* is frequently compounded.

[4]
Witness you ever burning lights above,
You elements, that *clip* us round about. *Othello*, 3. 3.
Where is he living, *clipp'd in* by the sea,
That chides the banks of England, Scotland, Wales—
Which calls me pupil, &c.? 1 *H* 4, 3. 1.

There is some difficulty as to the proper accentuation of verbs which take *ymb* for a prefix. Here the prefix is clearly *not* accented.

[5] We have an idiom very similar to this in Fletcher's lines,

All that comes a' near him,
He thinks *are* come on purpose to destroy him. *Nob. Gent.* 2.

And he, in his day of strength (the Lord of heroes)
Rul'd most righteously, Waels and Scots
And likewise Brits (child of Ethelred he!) —
Engle too, and Sexe, the sons of battle.

Whatsoe'er the cold seas enclip—[4]
All that[5] Edward, the noble king,
Faithfully serv'd—the men of princely seat.

Aye blithe-hearted was the harmless king;
Though he long erst, of land bereft,
In exile-wand'rings dwelt—widely o'er earth;
Sithen Knut o'ercame the kin of Ethelred,
And Danes ruled the dear realm
Of Engle-land.

Eight-and-twenty
Winters in number, wealth they parted.
Sithen forth came, sumptuous in attire,
For kingly bounties famous, pure and mild,
Edward the noble. His country he shielded,
His land and people; till on a sudden came
The bitter death, and took (to our cost!)
The noble man from earth.

Angels bare
His righteous soul into heaven's light;

---

[6] *Hægsteald* and *Heahsteald* are found with the meanings—unmarried, a bachelor, a virgin. *Hægsteald* and *Hægsteald-man* are used by Cædmon, in the sense of prince or noble. There can be little doubt that the latter part of the compound is the same as *gesteald*, a station. The first syllable *hæg* or *heah* may be the adjective *heah*, high; but this does not well agree with the first meaning of the compound. Can it be *hæg*, an inclosure, a partition? If so, *hægsteald* might mean, one with a seat apart—whether prince or bachelor. *Hagesteald*, in the text, seems to be equivalent to *Hæg-gesteald*.

[7] *Dena*, in the purer dialects *Dene*.

[8] In the MSS. xxviii.

[9] The Worcester MS. has *freolic*, and I think more correctly.

[10] *Deore* seems to be used in this line, in the same sense, in which we now use *dearly*—"dearly did he rue it," &c.

And | se frod|a swa theah| : befæst|e thæt ric|e.
Heah|-thungen|um menn| : har|olde sylf|um.
Æth|elum eorl|e : se | in eal|le tid|.
Hyrd|e hold|lice : hær|ran syn|um.
Word|um and dæd|um : wih|te ne | agæl|de[1].
Thæs | the thearf | wæs : thæs theod|-kyning|es.

The following poem is found in a volume of homilies, supposed to have been written in the twelfth century, and now in the Bodleian Library. It affords us one of the latest specimens of Anglo-Saxon versification. As I have

The | wes bold | gebyld| : er thu | ibor|en wer|e
The | wes mol|de[2] imynt| : er thu | of mod|er com|e
Ac | hit nes | no idiht| : ne | theo deop|nes imet|en
Nes | gyt iloc|ed : hu long | hit the wer|e

Nu | me[3] the bring|æth : ther | thu be|on scealt|
Nu | me sceal | the met|en : and | tha mold | seoth|tha

Ne bith | no thín hús| : hea|lice | itin|bred
Hit bith | unheg [4] | and lah| : thon|ne thu list | ther-in|ne
The hel|e-wag|es beoth lag|e : sid|-wages | unheg|e[4]
The róf | bith ibyld| : thi|re bros|te ful neh|

Swa | thu scealt | on mold| : wun|ien | ful cald|[5]
Dim|me and deorc|æ : thæt den | ful|æt on hond|

Dur|eleas is | thæt hús| : and dearc | hit is | within|nen
Thær | thu bist fes|te bidytt| : and dæth | hefth tha cæg|e
Lad|lic is | thæt eorth|-hus : and grim | in|ne to wun|ien
Ther | thu scealt wun|ien : and wurm|es the | todel|eth

Thus | thu bist | ilegd| : and lad|æst thin|e frond|en
Nefst | thu nen|ne freond| : the | the wyl|le far|en to|
Thæt æf|re wul|e lok|ien : hu | the thæt hús | the lik|ie
Thæt æf|re undón|[4] : the wul|e tha dur|e
And the | æfter lih|ten : for son|e thu | bist lad|lic
And lad | to iseon|ne [6]

The context seems to require that *agælde* should be here construed as a neuter verb.

[2] The substantive has two forms, *mold* and *molde*.

[3] This word is very commonly met with in Robert of Gloucester. I do not remember to have seen it in the purer Saxon.

But the wise prince entrusted the realm
To a high-minded man, to Harold self,
The noble earl; he, at every season,
Faithfully serv'd his Lord
In word and deed; nor fail'd in aught,
Of that was needful for the people's king.

not had an opportunity of consulting the MS., my text has been taken from the copy in Mr. Thorpe's Analecta. It is certainly more correct than Conybeare's.

For thee was a dwelling fixt, ere thou wert born;
For thee was earth appointed, ere thou of thy mother camest.

But it is not dight, ne the depth y-measur'd,
Ne is it yet look'd to, how long it should be for thee.

Now man thee bringeth, where thou shalt bide;
Now man shall measure thee, and sithen the ground.

Nor will thy house be highly timber'd—
'Twill be unhigh and low; when thou ly'st therein,
The heel-walls will be low, the cover-walls unhigh,
The roof will be fixt thy breast full nigh.

So thou shalt in earth won full cold,
Dimly and darkly—that den is foul toth' touch.

Doorless is that house, and dark it is within;
There shalt thou be fast shut in, and death have the key
Loathly is that earth-house, and grim to won in,
There shalt thou won, and worms share thee.

Thus thou shalt be laid, and loathsome to thy friends;
Ne hast thou one friend, that thee will fare to,
That ever will look, how that house likes thee,
That ever for thee will undo the door,
And to thee go down; for soon thou shalt be loathly,
And loathsome to see.

---

[4] False accentuation.

[5] In this verse is no alliteration.

[6] The language of this poem seems to differ from Layamons (see ch. 3) only in being more correctly written.

Other lines follow, but many of the letters are illegible.

In this poem, the alliteration is very feebly marked; and in one verse it appears to have been entirely superseded by the middle rhime. The section 7. *p* occurs twice, and the negative prefix *un* never takes the accent—clear proofs that the change which gradually produced our modern rhythm and accentuation, had already begun to operate. The peculiarities of the language also well deserve our notice; such as the old English plural in *fronden*, and the use of the preposition *to* before the Present Infinitive, in *to wunien*. This is the earliest example I have met with of an idiom, *now* so common.

There is one poem with pretensions to an antiquity so remote, as may probably justify us in referring it to a distinct æra. It is found in the celebrated Exeter MS.[7]; and has been named by Conybeare "The Song of the Traveller." It appears without introduction or explanation,[8] among other Anglo-Saxon poems, so that from internal evidence alone can we judge of its age, or of its origin.

The Song of the Traveller professes to record the wanderings of a certain "Gleeman," the contemporary of Eormanric and of Ætla.[9] As the East-Got died in 375, and Ætla was not king (as described in the poem) till 433, these wanderings must have lasted nearly sixty years. We are told that he visited the court of Eormanric in his *first* journey, as the follower of Ealhild, and probably as the youthful page of that princess. If this were so, the poem may have been written soon after the age of eighty —an advanced age, it is true, but one that agrees well with the general style and character of the poem.

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[7] This MS. was given to the Cathedral by Bishop Leofric in the reign of the Confessor; and may have been written in the latter half of the 10th or early in the 11th century.

[8] The poem opens with a sort of preface, like that prefixed to Alfred's metres; but it is in verse and of almost equal antiquity with the poem.

[9] The Hermanaric and Attila of Roman History.

About the year 370, began the great struggle between the Goth and the Hun. The former, though driven from the plains of Hungary, withstood the invader step by step, till, in the year 439, they bent before the genius and the power of Ætla. The hoof, beneath which the grass withered, was then turned upon the Empire.

Now it seems clear that the Goths, though a defeated, were still, when this poem was written, an independent people; the enemies—not the allies of Ætla. It seems no less clear, from the slight mention made of him, that the king of the Huns had not yet run the course, which made him a hero of the Gothic *myth*, no less than of Roman History. If this reasoning be sound, the poem must have been written between the years 433 and 440.

If we would test its genuineness by its agreement with history, we must first pick out the Gothic annals from the Greek and Latin writers of the period, aided by such scanty notices as the monks have left us. With these helps, we may fix between the years 375 and 435, the Ostrogoth Hermanaric, the Visigoth Wallia, the Burgundians Gibica and Gundicarius—and these are respectively the Eormanric, the Wala, the Gifica, and the Guthhere of the Gleeman. Theodric the Amaling, and Leodwig the Frank, were a few years too late; and the conqueror of Italy, though he soon became the great centre of our early romance, is not once alluded to. The sober manner, in which Eormanric and his generals are spoken of, is also worthy of notice. We see none of the fable which soon afterwards inveloped their names; they are still the mere creatures of history.

The geography of the poem is full as remarkable as its historical allusions. The different Gothic races appear still to have held the lands on which Tacitus found them. The Swefe had not yet migrated to the Rhine; they were still on the Baltic, and neighbours to the English. The East-Goten also were "east from Ongle," an expression from which more than one important inference may be drawn. I think it shows that the preface (in which it occurs) was written by an Englishman, who had not yet left the continent; and that the East-Goten, though "east of Ongle" in the time of Eormanric, had already left their native plains for the luxuries of Italy—or why should their former seats be pointed out with such particularity? The preface may have been written about the close of the fifth, or the beginning of the sixth century.

Of the different theories which may be started as to the origin of this singular poem, the one which seems to me beset with fewest difficulties, is that which maintains its genuineness. If we suppose it to be a forgery, where shall we discover a *motive* for the fraud? where shall we find any analogous case in the history of that early period? Above all, where shall we find the learning and the knowledge necessary to perpetrate such a fraud successfully?

Upon the changes, which the language of the poem may have undergone in the five centuries which elapsed before the MS. was written, I shall not venture an opinion. Our knowledge of that language seems to me much too scanty to speculate upon such a subject safely. Nor is it much easier to form a judgement, as to the matter which may have been interpolated. It has been indeed

Wid|-sith math|olad|e : word|-hord onleac|
Se|the mæst| : [1] mærth|a of|er eorth|an
Folc|a geond-ferd|e : oft|he flett|e gethah|
Myn|e-lic|ne math|thum : hin|e from myrg|ingum
Æth|ele | onwoc|on [3] : he | mid ealh|-hilde
Fæl|re freoth|u-web|ban : form|an sith|e
Hreth|-cyning|es : ham| gesoh|te

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[1] Mr. Kemble marks this section as "hopelessly in fault." I do not see his difficulty.

[2] That is "who most visited the great," &c.

[3] There is difficulty in the construction of this passage. *Onwacan* is commonly used as a neuter verb in one of the senses, *to awake*, *to be descended from.* Here it is clearly active, and I have given it the meaning which seems best to suit the context. I have also not met with *myne-lic*

supposed, that a Gleeman of the 4th century could hardly have heard of the Medes and the Persians, the Assyrians and the Idumeans, the Israelites and the Jews. But Ulphilas had already translated the Scriptures, and all the leading Gothic tribes were Christians—better Christians, if we believe the Roman historian, than his own countrymen. We must remember too, that the Wendle were lords of Africa, the Swefe of Spain, the West-Goten of Gaul, and that Rome had been already once visited by a Gothic conqueror—what is there surprising in one of the same race availing himself of the facilities, which then existed, for travelling through the Empire? In some districts, he would find his countrymen the rulers; in others, he would be secured by the fears of a degenerate, or the courtesies of a civilized people.

Conybeare has given a translation of this poem; but his transcript was an inaccurate one, and his version more faulty than it probably would have been, had he lived to publish it. My text is taken from the Museum copy of the MS., which has had the advantage of a careful revision by Sir Frederic Madden. It differs, in some few particulars, from the transcript which Mr. Kemble has given us in his edition of Beowulf.

Wide travel told—his word-store unlock'd,
He who most Greatness [3] over earth
And Nations visited. Oft in hall he flourish'd;
Him from among the Myrgings, though mean in station,
Nobles rear'd. He, with Ealh-hild,
(Leal artificer of love! [4]) in his first journey,
Sought the home of the fierce king,

---

elsewhere, and have rendered it as if it were a mere variation from *mænelic*.

It has been said that the Traveller was "of high birth among the Myrgings." If my construction be correct, he was of low station; if (as is very possible) it be incorrect, I am still at a loss how to make him a noble.

[4] Literally, *love-weaver*. This epithet is applied to women in other Anglo-Saxon poems.

East|an of ong|le : eor|man-ric|es
Wrath|es wær|-logan
Ongan|tha worn | sprec|an

Fel|a ic mon|na gefrægn| : mæg|thum weald|an
Sceal theod|a . gehwylc| : theaw|um lif|gan
Eorl | æfter oth|rum : eth|le ræd|an
Se|the his theod|en-stol| : gethe on wil|e .
Thar|a wæs [4] : wal|a hwil|e sel|ast .
And al|ex-and|reas : eal|ra ric|ost .
Mon|na cyn|nes : and | he mæst | gethah|
Thar|a . the | ic of|er fold|an : gefræg|en hæb|be .

Æt|la weold hun|num : eor|man-ric got|um .
Bec|ca ban|ingum [9] : bur|gundum gif|ica .
Cas|ere | weold creac|um [9] : and cæl|ic finnum .
Hag|ena holm|-rycum : and hend|en glom|mum .
Wit|ta weold swæf|um [9] : wad|a hæls|ingum .
Meac|a myr|gingum [9] : mearc|-healf hund|ingum .
Theod|ric weold fronc|um [9] : thyl|e rond|ingum
Breoc|a brond|ingum [9] : bil|ling wern|um

---

[1] The poet distinguishes between the people *Engle*, and their country *Ongle*.

[2] The last cruel act of Eormanric has been worked up into many a wondrous tale (*myth*, the Germans would call it) by the active invention of the north. Earlier writers give us the simple history. When the Huns first began to press upon the Goths, one of Eormanric's chiefs proved false. The tyrant ordered his wife *Suanielh* to be torn asunder by wild horses, and soon after, fell beneath the swords of her two brothers *Sarus* and *Ammius*. The latter we shall hear more of presently.

[3] That is, *of nations he had visited.*

Here ends the introduction, which I think must have been written before the Engle left the continent, for the poet clearly refers to the old country under the title of *Ongle*, and we know this name was given to the new settlement, at a very early period of its history. From the attention paid to the geography, I suspect it was also written after the Ostrogoths had left the Vistula—probably between the years 480 and 547, the date of Ida's landing at Bamborough.

[4] A metrical point follows *wæs*, and thus preserves the alliteration. Mr. Kemble has sacrificed it by his division,

Thara wæs Wala : hwile selsat

The metrical point is, as the reader will see, of very rare occurrence.

East from Ongle—[1] the home of Eormanric,
Wrathful trechour ! [2]
Gan he the number tell .[3]

Many men I wot of, nations ruling !
Must each people live under laws ;
Each earl, after other, for his land take counsel—
He that wills his throne to flourish.
Of these was Wala[5] whilom most prosperous ;
And Alex-andreas [6] of all most powerful,
Amongst mankind ; and most he flourished
Of those, that o'er earth heard of I have.

Ætla[7] rul'd the Huns ; Eormanric the Goten [8] ;
Becca the Banings ; Gifica [10] the Burgends ;
The Kaiser rul'd the Creeks, and Cælic the Fins,
Hagene the men of Holm-ric ; and Henden the Glomms ;
Witta rul'd the Swæfe ; [11] Wada the Hælsings ;
Meaca the Myrgings ; Mearc-healf the Hundings ;
Theodric rul'd the Fronks ; Thyle the Rondings ;
Breoca [12] the Brondings ; Billing the Werne ; [13]

---

[5] This is doubtless the Wallia of Roman history ; he who brought Spain under the dominion of the Emperor, and settled the Visigoths in the district round Tholouse, A.D. 417.

[6] Who Alex-andreas is may be doubted. If the poet mean the Macedonian, it is the only instance in which he has noticed any one, *not* a contemporary.

[7] The poet here enumerates those princes, he visited during his sixty years of wandering, who seemed best to discharge their duties. Thus he makes Gifica king of the Burgundians, though he also visited their king Guthere ; and Meaca king of the Myrgings, though he received a favour from his successor Eadgils. As Ætla reigned sixty years after Eormanric, these several princes were certainly not contemporaries of each other.

[8] I have endeavoured to preserve the real names of these several tribes. The Goten and the Geats were distinct races as early as the fourth century ; were we to translate these words by our modern term Goths, this distinction would be lost.

[9] A metrical point.

[10] The Gibica of the Burgundian laws.

[11] The Suevi of the Latins.

[12] Brecca with his Brondings are mentioned in Beowulf, as the enemies of the Geats.

[13] Probably the Varini of Tacitus. They lived in Pomerania.

Os|wine | weold eow|um [4] : and yt|um gef|wulf .
Fin|folc|-walding : fres|na cyn|ne .
Sig|e-her|e leng|est : sæ|denum weold| .
Hnæf | hoc|ingum [4] : helm | wulf|ingum .
Wald | wo|ingum [4] : wod | thyr|ingum .
Sæ|ferth sycg|um : swe|om ong|end-theow .
Sceaft|-here ym|brum[4] : sceaf|a long|-beardum
Hún|-hæt wer|um [4] : and hol|en wros|num
Hring|-weald wæs hat|en : her|e-far|ena cyn|ing .
Of|fa weold ong|le : ale|wih den|um
Se|wæs thar|a manna : mod|gast eal|ra .

No|h wæthre [9] he | ofer of|fan : eorl|-scype frem|ede .
Ac of|fa geslog| : ær|est monna
Cniht| [11] wes|ende : cyn|e-ric|a mæst|
Næn|ig e|fen-eald him| : eor|l-scipe mar|an
Onoret|te : an|e sweord|e
Merc|e gemær|de : with [12] myr|girgum|
Bifi|-fel dor|e . heold|on forth | siththan
Eng|le and swæf|e : swa|hit of|fa geslog|

Hroth|wulf and hroth|gar : heold|on lengest
Sib|be æt som|ne : suh|tor-fæd|ran [16]

---

[1] Perhaps the men of Eo-land.

[2] Fin and Folcwalda are mentioned in Beowulf. The conquest of Fin's stronghold, Finnes-burgh, was the subject of a noble poem, of which only a fragment has survived to us.

Whether the Fresen, whom Fin ruled, were settled south of the Elbe, where lived the Roman Frisii, and the modern Friese, or were the Strand-Friese of Holstein, may be doubted. As many Fresen came over with Ida, we have an interest in the question, but it is one of too much difficulty, to be discussed in the compass of a note.

[3] Hnæf is mentioned in Beowulf, and Hoce as his ancestor. It is probable, that the Hocings and the Wulfings were two families, rather than two races.

[4] A metrical point.

[5] The Woings are mentioned in Beowulf.

[6] The Thyrings lived in the centre of Germany—in the modern Thuringerwald.

[7] The Suiones of Tacitus, ancestors of the Swedes.

[8] I give these people their real name. Long-beardan does not mean *long-beards*, but *long-bearded ones.*

[9] Clearly a mistake for *hwæthre.*

[10] That is the reputation and influence of a great earl or chieftain.

Oswine rul'd the Eows, [1] and Gefwulf the Yts,
Fin, Fokwaldas son, [2] the Fresen kin ;
Sige-here long while the Sea-dene rul'd,
Hnæf [3] the Hocings, Helm the Wulfings,
Wald the Woings,[5] Wod the Thyrings,[6]
Sæferth the Sycgs, Ongen-theow the Sweon,[7]
Sceaft-here the Ymbre, Sceafa the Long-bearden,[8]
Hun-hæt the Wers, and Holen the Wrosnen,
Hring-weald was hight king of the army-comrades,
Offa rul'd Ongle, Alewih the Dene.
He was of all these men the haughtiest—

No where did he, beyond Offa, earlship [12] frame ;
But Offa stablisht (earliest of all men—
While yet a youth !) kingdom the largest.
No one, of equal age with him, greater earlship
Foster'd. With unaided sword,
The marches he widened, against the Myrgings,
By Fifel door.[13] Held thenceforth
Engle and Swæfe, as Offa fixt it.[14]

Hrothwulf and Hrothgar [15] held long while
Peace together, (brothers' sons they !)

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[11] Mr. Kemble makes a compound of these two words,
cniht-wesende.

[12] On this preposition hangs the question, whether the wandering poet was by birth an Englishman or a Swæf. If we might construe, " *over against* the Myrgings," he was English. But I fear, that when used in this sense, *with* never governed a dative. Yet it is strange, that a Myrging should thus speak of one that had triumphed over his country—is it an interpolation ?

[13] Like *Fifel-stream*, (see p. 53, n. 2.) this word is without satisfactory explanation.

[14] It is clear from this, that the Engle and the Swæfe were neighbouring nations ; and consequently that the latter had not yet left the coasts of the Baltic. This is one of the many circumstances, that prove the great antiquity of the poem.

Mr. Kemble supposes the Swæfe to have " generally acknowledged the power of Offa." They appear to have been vanquished by him, but certainly were never subject to him.

[15] These cousins reigned together over Denmark.

[16] *Fædera* commonly means a father's brother ; here it is clearly an uncle's son. So *patruus* in the Latin, and *vetter* in the German, mean both uncle and cousin.

I never saw *suhtor* elsewhere, but *suhtriga* means a cousin.

Sith|than hy|for-wræc|on : wic|inga cynn|
And ing|eldes| : ord | for-big|dan
For-heow|an æt heor|ote : heath|o-beard|na[5] thrym| .

Swa | ic geond-ferd|e fel|a : fremd|ra land|a
Geond gin|ne grund| : god|es and yf|les .
Thær | ic cun|nade : cnos|le bidæl|ed
Freo|-mægum feor| : fol|gade wid|e .
For|thon ic | mæg sing|an : and secg|an spell|
Mæn|an for|e mengo[6] : inmeod|u-heal|le
Hu|me cyn|e-god|e : cys|tum doh|ten .

Ic wæs | mid hun|um : and | midhreth|-gotum .
Mid swe|om and | mid geat|um : and | midsuth|-denum .
Mid wen|lum icwæs | and mid wærn|um : and | mid wic|ingum .
Mid gef|thum icwæs | and mid win|edum[11] : and | mid geff|legum .
Mid eng|lum icwæs . | and mid swæf|um : and | mid æn|enum .
Mid seax|um icwæs | and syc|gum : and | mid sweord|-werum .
Mid hron|um icwæs | and mid dean|um : and | midheath|oreamum .
Midthyr|ingum | icwæs| : and | mid throw|endum
And | mid bur|gendum : thær|ic beah | gethah .[15]
Me | thær guth|-here | forgeaf| : glæd|licne math|thum
Song|es tolean|e : næs | thæt sæn|e cyn|ing .

---

[1] That is *punished*.

[2] The pirates were called *Wicings*, or baymen, from the bays where they hid themselves.

[3] Ingeld was Hrothgar's uncle. There is mention made of his sword in Beowulf, but I cannot easily reconcile the two passages.

[4] Heorot was Hrothgar's palace, the scene of Beowulf's struggle with the terrific Grendel.

[5] As *long-beardan* were the long-bearded ones, so *heatho-beardan* were the war-bearded ones. A war-beard I suppose was a short one, such as we have reason to believe was worn by the northern pirates.

[6] *Mængo*, A.S. the attendants, the court, the *meiny*.

They summon'd their *meiny*—straight took horse. *Lear.*

[7] Thorkelin would fix the Geats in Pomerania, but there is little doubt they were of Jutland.

[8] No doubt the Wendla-leod of Beowulf, and the Vandals of the Romans.

[9] The Gefths are mentioned in Beowulf; were they not the Gepidæ of the Latin historians?

Sithen they wreak'd[1] the Wicing-race,[2]
And Ingeld's[3] sword brought low,
And fell'd, at Heorot,[4] the Heatho-bearden crowd.

So I fared through many stranger-lands,
Through the spacious earth; of good and evil
There I tasted; from family parted,
From kinsmen far, widely I served.
Therefore may I sing, and story tell—
Relate fore the meiny, in mead-hall,
How me the high-born with largess blest.

I was with the Huns, and with the Hreth-Goten,
With the Sweon, and with the Geats,[7] and with the south Dene,
With the Wenle[8] I was, and with the Wærne, and with the Wicings,
With the Gefths[9] I was, and with the Wineds,[10] and with the Gefflege
With the Engle I was, and with the Swæfe, and with the Ænene[12]
With the Sexe I was, and with the Sycgs, and with the Swordmen,
With the Hrons[13] I was, and with the Deane, and with the Heatho-Reame,[14]
With the Thyrings I was, and with the Throwends,
And with the Burgends—there I a beigh got,
There Guthere[16] gave it me, fortune-blest,
For my songs meed—no sluggish king was he!

---

[10] The Venedi of Tacitus. This Slavish race under the name of Wends play a very important part in the history of Germany. They occupied the vacant seats of the East-Goten. Even at the present day we may consider the Elbe as the boundary line between the two races—the Slaves and the Goths.

[11] A metrical point.

[12] The men of Ænen?

[13] *Hrons*-ness is mentioned in Beowulf.

[14] The Heatho-Reome, or War-Reome *may* have been the pirates of Rum near Sleswic.

[15] *Getheon* is generally considered a neuter verb, but in this passage seems to be active. I would also say it was active in Cæd. 161. Neither Lye's construction of the passage nor that of Mr. Thorpe is satisfactory.

[16] In the Codex of the Burgundian Laws we find the names of four kings, Gibica, Gislaharius, Gothomarus, and *Gundaharius*. The first and last were probably the Gifica and Guth-here visited by the Traveller. Both these

Midfronc|um icwæs |. and mid frys|um : and | mid frumting|um .
Mid rug|um icwæs | and midglom|mum : and | mid rum|-walum .
Swilc|e icwæs | on eat|ule : mid ælf|-wine|
Se hæf|de mon|-cynnes : min|e gefræg|e
Leoht|este hond| : lof|es to wyr|cenne
Heort|an un|hneawest|e : hring|a gedal|es .
Beorht|ra beag|a : bearn | ead|wines .

Mid ser|cingum | icwæs | : and | mid ser|ingum .
Mid creac|um icwæs| . and mid finn|um [5] : and | mid cas|ere
Se|the win|burga : geweald | ah|te .
Wiolane and wilna : and wal|a ric|es .
Mid scot|tum ic wæs | and mid peoh|tum[5] : and | mid scrid|efin|num.
Mid lid|-wicing|um icwæs. | and mid leon|um [5] : and | mid long|-beardum.
Mid hæth|num . and | mid hæl|ethum[5] : and | mid hund|ingum.
Mid is|rael|um icwæs|[5] : and | mid ex|syring|um.
Mid ebr|eum. and | mid in|deum[5] : and | mid eg|yptum.
Mid moid|um icwæs | and mid pers|um : and | mid myr|gingum . and mof|dingum
And | ongend myrg|ingum : and | mid am|othing|um[14]
Mid east|-thyring|um icwæs | and mid e|olum [5] : and | mid is|tum . and id|uming|um.

---

princes must have reigned during the sixty years of wandering; for all writers agree that Gundaharius was killed by the Huns, and though they differ as to the time of his death, yet no one places it lower than the reign of Ætla.

The intrusion of an *n*, before a *d* or *t* may be paralleled even in our own dialects; thus *dilantory*, *solantory*, *vomint*, for *dilatory*, *solitary*, and *vomit*. See Forby's Vocabulary.

[1] According to German antiquaries, the Glommi were a Sorabic tribe.

[2] The Rumwaels were the Italians, and other Welsh (Celtic) races under the sway of Rome.

[3] Italy.

[4] *Leohtest*, A.S. most active, lightest.
Light of foot as a wild roe. 2 *Sam*. 2. 18.

[5] A metrical point.

[6] This *may* have been the great Theodosius.

[7] Mr. Kemble makes *Wiolane* and *Wilna* proper names. The section is a puzzling one on any hypothesis.

With the Fronks I was, and with the Frysen, and with the Frumtings,
With the Ruge I was, and with the Glomms,[1] and with the Rumwaels,[2]
Likewise I was in Eatule[3] with Ælfwine
He had, of all mankind (to my mind)
Hand the lightest[4] in earning of praise—
Heart most free, in dealing out of rings,
And bright beighs—Edwine's bairn !

With the Sercings I was, and with the Serings
With the Creacs I was, and with the Fins, and with the Kaiser,[6]
He that o'er war-burghs held the sway,
O'er[7] and o'er Wael-ric[8] .
With the Scots I was, and with the Peohts, and with the Scride-Fins,[9]
With the Lid-wicings I was,[10] and with the Leons : and with the Long-bearden[11] .
With the Heathen I was, and with the Heroes,[12] and with the Hundings,
With the Israele I was, and with the Ex-syrings,[13]
With the Ebree, and with the Indee, and with the Egypte,
With the Moids I was, and with the Perse, and with the Myrgings, and with the Mofdings,
And again with the Myrgings, and with the Amothings,
And with the East-Thyrings I was, and with the Eols, and with the Iste,[15] and with the Idumings.

---

[8] See note 2.

[9] The Scride-fins are mentioned by Procopius. They appear to have been the most powerful tribe of the Fins.

[10] The Lid-wicings were the Bretons of France.

[11] The Lombards had not as yet left their seats on the Elbe.

[12] In the year 360 Ulphilas translated the Scriptures into Gothic, and in the course of 50 years all the great German tribes bordering upon the Empire—the East Goten, the Burgends, the Wenle, the Swæfs of Spain—and it would seem from this passage the Swæfs of Germany also—were Christians. The Sweon, the Dene, the Engle and Franks were still heathen.

[13] As to the pronunciation of the *x* see p. 52, n. 3.

[14] These verses run very aukwardly. Mr. Kemble divides them differently, but I think not satisfactorily.

[15] No doubt the Estii of Tacitus, the men of modern East-land (Esthonia.)

And | icwæs | mid eor|man-ric|e : eal|le thrag|e
Thær|me got|ena cyn|ing : god|e doht|e
Se|me beag | forgeaf| : burg|-waren|a frum|a
On[2]|tham siex | hund wæs| : smæt|es[3] gold|es
Gescyr|ed sceat|ta : scil|ling-rim|e
Thon|e ic ead|gilse : onæht | seal|de
Min|um hleo|-drihtne : tha | ic toham | bicwom
Leof|um tolean|e : thæs | the he | me lond | forgeaf |
Mi|nes fæd|er eth|el : frea | myr|ginga .

And me|tha ealh|hild : oth|erne | forgeaf|
Dryht|-cwen dug|uthe : doh|tor ead|wines

Hyr|e lof | leng|de : geond lond|a fel|a
Thonn | ic be song|e : sec|gan sceol|de
Hwær | ic un|der swegl| : sel|ast wis|se
Gold|-hroden|e cwen| : gief|e bryt|tian .
Thonn | wit scil|ling : scir|an reor|de
Forun|crum sig|e-driht|ne : song | ahof|an
Hlud|e bihearp|an : hleoth|or swin|sade .
Thonn mon|ige men| : mod|um wlon|ce
Word|um sprec|an : tha|the wel | cuthan
Thæt | hi næf|re song| : sel|lan[9] nehyrd|on .

---

[1] *Thrag* A.S. a period of time—a throw.

down himself he laid,
Upon the grassy ground to sleep a *throw*. F. Q.

[2] It appears that the preposition before a pronoun took the accent, so, at this day, we say *on* | *it*, *on* | *him*, &c.

[3] The proper meaning of *smæt* is by no means clear.

[4] This passage is obscure. The shilling (*scilling*) was a coin worth twenty shots (*sceatas*). Now *scilling* has been derived from the verb *scyllan*, to divide, and the German *scheide-munze*, small change, clearly comes from *scheid-en* to divide. It is likely, that the custom (which I believe still prevails in America) of actually dividing the larger coins, was known at this period to the Goths. If so, we see the propriety of the phrase *gescyred*, shorn off. It should, however, be noticed that *gescyred may* be rendered by the word *given*.

The precise meaning of *scilling-rim*, shilling-tale, I do not know. Mr. Kemble, I observe, makes it two distinct words. The word shot, *sceat*, is still in daily use among our sailors; its *primitive* meaning was a *part*, a *portion*.

[5] Liefe was a term of respect often addressed by inferiors to their Lord or Lady. When Melissa discovers Pastorel, and runs to inform her mistress,

My Liefe, she said, you know that long ago,
Whilst ye in durance dwelt, ye to me gave
A little maid— F. Q. 6. 12. 17.

And I was with Eorman-ric a whole throw;[1]
There me the Gotens' king with largess blest;
He me a beigh gave—chief of the burgh-men!
For it were shorn off, of beaten gold,
Six hundred shots, in shilling-tale;[4]
That, for a possession, gave I to Eadgils,
My guardian-Lord (when home I came)
For my Liefes[5] meed; for that land he gave me,
My father's native seat[6]—Lord of the Myrgings!

And me then Ealh-hild another gave—
Lady-queen of the nobles! daughter of Eadwine!

Her praise I spread through many lands,
When I in song had to say,
Where best, under Heaven, I knew
Gold-clad queen gifts to bestow;
When we two,[7] (the shilling at feast to share)
Fore our conqu'ring lord the song uplifted,
And loud to the harp the voice resounded;
When many men, proud of soul,
Said in words (they that couth[8] well)
That they never better song heard.

---

[6] In this curious passage we see the lord taking his fine upon renewal of the feud. We see also, even at this early period, a strong tendency towards hereditary descent; for the gleeman succeeded not to his father's land, but to his fathers *ethel*, or native soil. There must have been three generations in possession at the least.

This passage shows that the Traveller was a landholder; but he still may have been of low condition, for the *folc-land* or public demesne was held by freemen of all ranks; the *boc-land*, or allodium was chiefly in the hands of the great nobles.

[7] This is another puzzling passage. We might get a better construction if we divided the lines thus

Thonn witt scilling sciran
Reorde for uncrum sige drihtne: song ahofan—

—but then we should miss *one* section, and have *another* containing four accents, which is contrary to the usual rhythm of the poem. This passage confirms what many circumstances would lead us to conjecture, that the gleemen sung in *pairs*—one probably answering the other.

[8] A little flock, but well my pipe they *couth*. *Sidney.*

[9] *Sellan* in this line must certainly be a mistake for *selran*. I have rendered the passage on this supposition.

Thon|an iceal|ne geond-hwearf| : eth|el got|ena
Soh|te ic á sith|a[1] : thasel|estan|
Thæt | wæs inn|-weorud : eor|man-ric|es

Heth|can soht|e ic and beade|can : and her|eling|as.
Em|ercan soht|e ic and fridl|an : ond east|-gotan|
Frod|ne and god|ne : fæd|er un|wenes .
Sec|can soh|te ic and bec|can : seaf|olan | and theod|ric .
Heath|oric | . and sif|ecan : hlith|e and inc|gentheow .
Ead|wine soh|te ic and el|san : eg|elmund | and hung|ar
And | tha wlon|can gedryht| : with|-myrging|a .
Wulf|-here soh|te ic and wyrm|-here : fuloft | thærwig | ne alæg| .
Thon|ne hread|a her|e : heard|um sweord|um
Ymb wist|lá-wud|u : werg|an sceold|on
Eald|ne eth|el-stol : æt|lan leod|um

Ræd|-here soh|te ic and rond|-here : rum|-stan and gisl|-here
With|ergield | . and freoth|eric : wud|gan and ham|an .
Newær|on thæt[7] | ge-sith|a : tha sæm|estan|
Theah|the ichy | á nihst| : nem|nan sceold|e
Ful oft | oftham heap|e : hwin|ende[8] fleag
Giel|lende gar| : on grom|e theod|e.
Wræc|can thær weold|an : wund|nan gold|e
Wer|um and wif|um[9] : wud|ga and ham|a

Swa | ic thæt sym|le onfond[10] : onthær|e fer|inge
Thæt se|bith leof|ast : lond|-buend|um
Se|the him god | syleth : gum|ena ric|e
To|geheal|denne : thend|en he her | leofath .

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[1] The construction here is not an easy one.

[2] Names of individuals I have given unaltered from the Saxon, but names of races I have endeavoured to reduce to the modern standard of our language—thus the Saxon *Gota* is represented by *Got*, for the final vowel disappeared during the progress of the 15th century. To this rule, however, I have made one exception. The final *e* has been retained, and I have written *Engle*, *Swæfe*, &c., as did the Saxons. Were we to discard the *e*, we should find it very difficult to distinguish the singular from the plural.

[3] Mr. Kemble writes this compound as two words. But in the first place, from such a reading I can extract no satisfactory meaning; and secondly, the prosody requires *with* to be an accented syllable. A sectional pause never occurs immediately between a preposition and its substantive.

[As

Thence I turn'd me through all the Gotens country,
Sought I, at all times, the noblest—
Them that were the household of Eormanric.

Hethca sought I, and Beadeca, and the Herelings;
Emerca sought I, and Fridla; and the East-Got,[2]
The wise and good father of Unwen;
Secca sought I, and Becca, Seafola, and Theodric,
Heathoric and Sifeca, Hlithe and Inc-gentheow;
Eadwine sought I, and Elsa, Egelmund and Hungar,
And the proud Lord of the With-Myrgings,[3]
Wulfhere sought I, and Wyrmhere—there oft war ceased not,
Then the Hreads[4] army, with hard swords,
'Round Wistla[5]-wood, had to guard
Their old native soil from Ætla's bands.

Ræd-here sought I, and Rond-here, Rum-stan and Gisl-here,
Withergield and Freotheric, Wudga and Hama[6]—
Nor were these of comrades the least worthy,
Though them I last must name.
Full oft from that troop whistling flew
The hissing dart, 'mongst the grim band;[9]
Exiles, there they sway'd, by aid of the twisted gold
Both men and women—Wudga and Hama![11]

So this I ever found, in these wanderings,
That *he* is dearest to the people,
Who gives them wealth—men's government
To hold, while here he liveth.

As we know not the position of the Myrgings, we cannot hope to fix that of the With-Myrgings.

[4] Can these *Hreads* be the same as the *Hreth-Goten* above mentioned?

[5] The wood of the Vistula.

[6] This is doubtless the Ammius mentioned in note [2], p. 80. He long flourished in the Gothic "myths," as the general of Eormanric.

[7] As to this use of the neuter pronoun see the Confessor's Death-Song, note [5], p. 72.

[8] The A.S. *hwin-an* appears to be the same verb as the Icelandic *hvin*, to make a noise like the wind or the sea.

[9] That is, the Huns.

[10] A metrical point.

[11] This passage may perhaps admit of the following paraphrase. "Though

Swa scrith|ende|: gesceap|um hweorf|ath
Gleo|-men gum|ena : geond grund|a fel|a
Thearf|e secg|ath : thonc|-word sprec|ath
Sym|le suth | oththe north| : sum|ne gemet|ath
Gyd|da gleaw|ne : geof|um un|hneawne
Sethe|for|e dug|uthe : wil|e dóm | árær|an
Eorl|-scipe æf|nan

Oth|thæt eal | scæceth
Leoht | and lif|somod : lof | se ge-wyrceth|
Haf|ath un|der heof|onum : heah|-fæstne dóm| .

We have now before us, specimens of almost all the Anglo-Saxon poems, whose dates are known. In giving these extracts, it has been my first wish to deal fairly with the reader; and in all cases to lay the text before him, such as it was found in the manuscript.* He is thus enabled to form his own judgment, and (when necessary) to correct *my* errors. I am, however, fully alive to the advantages, that have been relinquished. A slight change of the dot, or the insertion of a few asterisks,† would, in many cases, have been most convenient. If the text were

---

driven from their native seats, in Pannonia or Hungary, by the Huns, still these chiefs kept their people together by their largesses, and made head against the invaders on the Vistula." The East-Goten did not yield to the Huns, till nearly 60 years afterwards. Their subjection lasted only during Ætla's life.

* The reader will remember the cautions given him in p. 13, n. ‡. In the *Song of the Traveller*, however, and in the Rhiming Poem, which will be given in the third chapter, I have not taken even the liberties there mentioned; but have followed the MS. even where it seemed inconsistent with itself. The slightest alteration required more confidence than I could pretend to in the midst of so much difficulty.

Almost every early MS. has some peculiarities in the mode of writing, which are, of course, familiar to those who have *studied* it, and easily distinguished from casual blunders. No editor will do his duty who neglects to notice them; but the same scrupulous exactness will hardly be expected from one, who consults the MS. for the sake of an extract.

† A line of asterisks, or a dash, is frequently used to show a defect in the manuscript—real, *or suspected*. This is a common, but most indefensible practice.

Thus wandering, at men's bidding
The Gleemen turn them o'er many lands ;
Their need they tell—thanks they render ;
Always, south or north, some one they meet with,
(Skill'd in songs—free in gifts)
That, fore the nobles, would rear his sway,
And earlship stablish.
Till all flitteth,
(Light and life together) he that gets him praise,
Hath under heav'n exalted sway !

not bettered, the reader might at least have been baffled, and the blunders of translation secured from criticism.

The merit of a faithful *text* is claimed with some degree of confidence ; that of a faithful *version*, I dare only say, I have done my best to deserve. But no attempt has been made at *concealment;* the translation, whether right or wrong, is never, I trust, so literal as to be unintelligible, nor so loose as to leave in doubt the construction, which has been put upon the original. The difficulties of the subject have been, at least, *honestly* met; if sometimes unsuccessfully—the failure will not, it is hoped, be visited with any very great severity. Upon the reader's indulgence I must throw myself.

CHAPTER III.

SECTIONAL METRE,

or that which results from making each section a distinct verse, most probably owed its origin to the middle rhime. Like sounds, recurring at definite intervals, very quickly strike the ear; and when they *regularly* close the section, the division of the couplet becomes the more marked, and its sections are soon looked upon, for all practical purposes, as distinct verses.

Middle rhime is found in Anglo-Saxon poems of the tenth, and, it may be, even of the ninth century. The rhiming couplet, for the most part, occurs singly; but sometimes the middle rhime runs through a whole passage. There is, however, but one Anglo-Saxon poem, as yet discovered, into whose rhythm it enters as an *essential* characteristic.

I would willingly pass over this poem altogether, were not its rhythm so singular, as almost to *force* it upon our notice. The writer, who aims at scientific arrangement, must choose his subjects not as inclination leads him but as rule prescribes. In the stead of those which might generally interest, or whose scope and tendency he has fully mastered, he must sometimes take such as are imperfectly understood, or of very partial interest, or of trivial import. All these objections may be made to the introduction of the following poem; but it fills too large a place in the history of our rhythms to be left unnoticed, and its peculiarities are so intricate and varied, that a slight notice would be any thing but satisfactory.

"Conybeare's rhiming poem," as it has been called, is found in the Exeter MS. and presents such difficulties to the translator, that the scholar, whose name it bears, would not attempt an English version. His editor, however, has given a translation, which Rask commends as a "meritorious attempt."* The last-named critic himself has risked the translation of a couplet, and would fain account for the difficulties of the poem on the score of *dialect*. Other reasons might have been given, and I think with greater candour. I see few marks of dialect, which may not be found in the works of Cædmon or of Alfred. Peculiarities of construction are rare; and even the words whose meanings are unknown, are generally formed according to well-known analogies. They are not, however, met with in the narrow round of Anglo-Saxon scholarship; and the abrupt and broken style of the poem, which is made up, as it were, of shreds and patches, seldom enables us to guess the meaning of a word from its connexion with the context.

As the reader might naturally wish to know for what kind of sentiments a rhythm so singular has been chosen, I have ventured to offer a translation, however imperfect. In many cases the meaning given to the text is mere conjecture; and where the reasons for the conjecture were not obvious, or such as could not be suggested in a few words, the sentence has been left a blank. As we perfect our vocabulary these difficulties will vanish; it would be waste of time to *dwell* upon uncertainties, when a single passage, luckily hit upon, might decide the question.

Who the minstrel-king may be, who thus contrasts the evils of exile with days of bygone happiness, will be left for the reader to determine.

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* Whatever were the defects of this version, the remarks which preface it must disarm criticism.

Me lif|es onlah|: se|this leoht | onwrah|
And | thæt torh|te goteoh| : til|lice | onwrah|

Glæd | wæs ic gliw|um : gleng|ed hiw|um
Blis|sa bleo|um : blost|ma hiw|um.

Secg|as mec seg|on : sym|bel ne | aleg|on[2]
Feorh|-giefe | gefeg|on : fræt|wed wæg|um

Wic | ofer wong|um : wen|nan[3] gong|um
Lis|se mid long|um : leom|a getong|um

Tha | wæs wæst|mum aweaht| : world|-onspreht| [4]
Un|der rod|erum | areaht| : ræd|-mægne of|er-theaht| [5]

Giest|as geng|don : ger|-scipe [6] meng|don
Lis|se leng|don : lust|um gleng|don.

Scrif|en scrad | glad| : thurh | gescad | inbrad|
Wæs | on lag|u-stream|e lad| : thær | me leoth|u [7] ne | biglad|

Hæf|de ic hean|ne hád| : ne|wæs me | inheal|le gád| .
Thæt | thær rof|-weord rád| : oft | thær rinc | ge-bád|

That | he insel|e sæg|e : sinc | ge-wæg|e .
Thegn|um gethyht|e : thend|en wæs | ic mæg|en .

Horsc|e mec her|edon : hild|e gener|edon
Fæg|re fer|edon : feond|on bewer|edon .

Swa | mec hyht|-giefu heold| : hyg|e dryht | befeold|.
Stath|ol æht|um steald| : step|e-gong|um weold|

Swylc|e eorth|e ol| : aht|e iceal|dor-stol|
Gald|or-word|um gol| : gom|el-sib|be ne|of-oll [8]

Acw æs gefest gear : gellende sner
Wun|iend|o wæ'r | wil|-bec bescær|

Scealc|as wær|on scearp|e : scyl | wæs hearp|e[9]
Hlud|e hlyn|ede ; hleoth|or dyn|ede
Swegl|-rád swin|sade : swith|e nemins|ade

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[1] The meaning of this passage seems to be—" He that made *me*, created light, and showered his bounty alike on *both* creations."

[2] *Alegon* seems to be the plural of *aleah*—as *gefegon* of *gefeah*, and *segon* of *sah*.

[3] *Wennan*, the same as *winnan ?*

[4] *Aansprek-en*, Du. to converse with.

In me life kindled he, who this light reveal'd,[1]
And that brightly he brought forth, bounteously he reveal'd.

Glad was I with glees, adorn'd with hues—
With the colours of bliss, with the hues of the blossoms.

Men look'd on me—the feast they fail'd not;
In life's gift they joy'd—in ornamented paths—

A mansion o'er the fields, to win in their journies,
With long pleasure—a light for the prostrate.

Then by abundance was awaked wordly converse—
Under heav'n uprais'd, by strength of counsel, reflection.

Guests came—jokes they mingled;
They lengthen'd out the pleasure—with joys adorn'd me.

On the sea-stream was journeying—there injury came not past me.

Lofty state I held; no trouble was in my hall,
For that there a high-wierd sat; hero there oft abode—

That in hall he might see a weight of silver,
And to the Thanes quaff—whilst potentate I was.

Nobly they heried me; in battle rescued me;
Fairly escorted me; from enemies guarded me.

So me hope's gift possest; heart the Lord enwrapt;
Seat with wealth he stablish'd; step-goings he directed.

Also earth brought forth; held I princely throne;
In magic words I sung; nor from old kindred fell.

My servants were sharp; a crowd was round the harp;
Loud it resounded; the strain re-echoed;
Heaven's course sung; nor ceas'd its loudness;

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[5] *Overdenk-en*, Du. to reflect.

[6] Is not this word connected with the Islandic *gar*, a joke, a quiz?

[7] The same as *lætho?*

[8] *Of-oll*, the same as *offeal*, or rather *afeal?*

[9] *Scyll*, the same as *sceol?*

Burg|-sele beof|ode : beorht | hlif|ade
El|len eac|nade : ead | beac|nade
Fre|aum frod|ade[1] : from|um god|ade .
Mód | mæg|nade : min|e[2] fæg|nade .
Treow | tel|gade[3] : tír | wel|gade[4]
Blæ'd | blis|sade : . . . .[5]

Gold | gear|wade[6] : gim|hwearf|ade .
Sinc | sear|wade[7] : sib | near|wade

From| icwæs | infræt|wum : freo|lic ingeat|wum .
Wæs | mindream | dryht|lic : droht|ath hyht|lic
Fold|an ic freoth|ode : folc|um ic leoth|ode .

Lif | wæs min long|e : leod|um in|ge-mong|e
Tir|um ge-tong|e : teal|a gehong|e .

Nu|min hreth|er is hreoh| : heow|-sithum sceoh|[8]
Nyd|-bysgum neah| : gewit|eth niht|es infleah|[9]

Se ær | indæg|e wæs dyr|e : scrith|ed nu | deop fyr|

Brond|-hord geblow|en : breost|um in|for-grow|en
Flyht|um to-flow|en : flah[9] | is geblow|en.

Mic|lum in|gemyn|de : mod|es gecyn|de
Gret|eth ungryn|de : grorn | efen pyn|de .

Beal|o fus byrn|eth : byt|tre toyrn|eth.

Wer|ig win|neth : wid|-sith ongin|neth.
Sár | nesin|nith : sorg|um cin|nith
Blæd | his blin|nith : blis|se lin|nath
Lis|tum lin|neth : lus|tum netin|neth.

Dream|as swa her | gedreos|ath : dryht|-scype|[11] gehreos|ath.
Lif | her men | forleos|ath : leah|tras oft | geceos|ath

Treow | thrag is|to trag|[6] : seo | untrum|e genag|
Steap|um eat|ole | misthah : ond|eal stund | genag|

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[1] *Frodade*, another form for *freothode ?*
[2] *Minni*, Icel. ; the thought, the memory.
[3] A verb formed from *telga ?*
[4] A verb formed from *welig ?*
[5] Here a section seems missing.
[6] A metrical point.
[7] The substantive *searo* means a war-machine, a means of defence ; may

The burgh-hall trembled; bright it glitter'd;
Wax'd high confidence; happiness beacon'd;
Lords it befriended; brave men assisted;
The heart was strengthened; the thought exulted;
The tree branch'd forth; glory abounded;
Fruit bless'd us; ....[5]

Gold deck'd me; gems flew round me;
Wealth made a bulwark; kinsmen clos'd around me.

Brave was I in ornaments, comely in attire.
My joy was lordly, sojourn joyous.
The land I befriended, to the people I sung.

Life was mine long-while, among men,
On glories reclining, nobly supported.

Now my mind is disturb'd, from colour'd paths 'tis fled—
With pressing cares beset, by night,[9] into exile it wendeth.

Who erst in day was dear, shroudeth *now* deep fire!

The brand-heap is full blown, o'er his breast 'tis spread—
By wand'rings brought low, his vagabond lot is full blown.

Bale quickly burneth; bitterly it o'ertaketh him.

Enemy warreth; wide wand'ring beginneth.
Affliction showeth no favour, with sorrows it is pregnant;
His happiness endeth; his joys cease;

So here fall pleasures; lordships sink;
Life here men lose; and sins oft choose.

---

not this meaning have passed to the verb? A metrical point follows *searwade.*

[8] Same as *sceoc?*

[9] See *flyg*, or *flyh*, Cæd. 215; and also *flug*, Icel.

[10] That is, the night of adversity.

[11] Here *dryht-scipe* seems to be taken in a collective sense. See vol. ii. p. 20.

Swa | nu world | wend|eth : wyrd|e send|eth
And het|es hent|eth : hæl|ethe scynd|eth

Wen|cyn[1] ge-wit|eth : wæl-gár slit|eth
Flah|-mah flit|eth : flan|-mon hwit|eth
Burg|-sorg bit|eth : bald|-ald thwit|eth
Wræc|-fæc writh|ath : wráth|-áth smit|eth
Sin|grynd sid|ath[2] : sæc|ra[3] fear|o glid|eth

Grom | torn græf|eth : græft | haf|ath.

Sear|o-hwit sol|ath : sum|ur-hat col|ath
Fold|-wela feall|eth : feon|-scipe weal|leth
Eorth|-mægen eal|dath : el|len col|ath.

Me | thæt wyrd | gewæf| : and | gehwyrt | forgeaf|
Thæt | ic grof|e græf| : and | thæt grim|me græf|

Fle|an flæs|ce ne mæg| : thonn flan[5] | hred dæg|

Nyd|grapum nim|eth : thonn | seo neah | be-cym|eth

Seo|me eth|les ónfónn|[6] : and | mec her heard|es ón-cónn|.

Thon|ne lich|oma lig|eth : lim|a wyrm frit|eth
Ac|him wen|ne[7] ge-wig|eth : and | tha wist | gethyg|eth

Oth|thæt beoth|tha bán án| : and | æt nyh|stan nán|.[8]

Nefne se neda tan balawun herge hlotene
Nebith se hlisa adroren

Ær|thæt ead|ig gethenc|eth : hebin|e the of|tor swenc|eth

Byrg|eth him | tha bit|ran syn|ne : hog|ath tothær|e bet|ran wyn|ne

Gemon | morth|a liss|e : hersind|on milt|sa bliss|e

Hyht|lice | on heof|ona . ric|e : ut|on nú hal|gum gelic|e

Scyl|dum biscyr|ede : scyn|dan gener|ede
Wom|mum biwer|ede : wul|dre gener|ede.

Thær mon|-cyn mot| : for meot|ude rot| .

Soth|ne god | gese|on : and áa | insib|be gefe|an .

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[1] In the MS. *wencyn* and *ge* are united, *wencynge*.

[2] Same as *sithath ?*

[3] Conybeare suggests *searo* for *sæcra*. By this substitution we preserve the sectional rhime.

[4] Nes non so hot, that hit ne colath,
Nes non so hwit that hit ne solath.
Hule and Niȝtengale, l. 1265.

[5] *Flan* appears to be the past tense of some verb, answering to the Icelandic *flana*, to rush headlong.

So now the world changeth; fate it sendeth;
And hate it followeth; upon man it rusheth.

Hope's offspring flitteth; the death-dart pierceth,
The archer fighteth; the javelin-man .... ?
The borough-grief biteth; bold eld .... ?
The vengeance-hour flourisheth; the anger-oath smiteth:
Sin's foundation departeth; the snare-path glideth away.

Treacherous white soileth; summer heat cooleth;[4]
World's weal falleth; strife upwelleth;
Earth's might ageth; courage cooleth.

This for me wove my wierd; and as my lot it gave me,
That I should dig my grave; and the grim grave to fly,

To flesh is not given, when the swift day is gone.

Fate in her gripe seizeth, when nigh she cometh.

She from country took me, and here with hardship tried me.

When the carcase lieth, limbs the worm eateth;
But with him ...... ? warreth, and the feast partaketh,

Till there be bone alone, and at last be none.

......................., the ofter himself he afflicteth;

He avoideth the bitter sin; after the better joy he yearneth;

He rememb'reth of crimes the pardon. Here are mercies in bliss,

Aloft in heaven's realm! May we now, like the saints,

From sins all cleansed, approach it[9]—redeemed!
From every stain safe-guarded! with glory redeemed!

There mote mankind, fore their Maker exulting,

The true God see, and aye in peace rejoice.

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[6] Same as *onfeng ?*

[7] In the MS. *wenne* and *ge* are joined together—*wennege*. Lye gives us *wen*-wyrm with the interpretation, *a species of worm*. *Wenne* may be some connected word.

[8] This couplet is probably corrupt, for the alliteration is disturbed. In the lines that follow I can trace neither rhime nor alliteration; and they seem equally destitute of meaning. This gap throws some doubt on the construction of the next perfect line.

[9] That is, heaven.

From this poem we learn, that the singular artificial rhythms, whose rules form so large a portion of Icelandic prosody, were known to our poets, at least *in genere*, as early as the close of the tenth century. There is every reason to believe them of native growth, and that we have here a very early specimen of their peculiarities. We do not indeed find the stanzas of eight verses, or the verses of three and four syllables, these are probably the invention of a later age; but the artificial flow of the rhythm, and the rhime, both final and sectional, may be found alike in the Icelandic metres and in the poem before us. The different varieties of rhythm were not, however, as yet separated; nor were the pauses, as yet, subjected to the rhime; we still find the stops falling in the midst of a couplet.

We may trace through our early literature a series of

The shup|pare that | huem shup|te : to shom|e he huem shad|de
To flos | ant to flay|e : to tyk|e and to dad|de
So | seyth rom|anuȝ : whos|e ryht rad|de
Ffloh | com of flor|e : aut lous | com of lad|de, &c.

Nou | beoth cap|el-claw|eres[1] : with shom|e to shrud|e
Hue bus|keth huem | wyth bot|onus : as|e hit wer|e a brud|e
With low|e lac|ede shon| : of | an hays|re hud|e
Hue pik|eth of her|e prov|endre : al huer|e prud|e, &c. &c.

The "short measures" of Skelton, so popular with the lower classes at the beginning of the sixteenth century, may perhaps be looked upon as the *direct* descendants of the Anglo-Saxon rhythms, though it must be con-

He frown|eth ev|er,
He laugh|eth nev|er,
Ev|en, nor mor|owe;
But oth|er men's sor|owe
Caus|eth him | to grin|,
And | rejoice | therein|.
No slepe | can him catche|,
But ev|er doth watche|;
He is | so bete|
Wyth mal|ice and hete|,
Wyth ang|er and yre|.
His foule | desire|

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[1] *Capel-clawere*s, that is, horse-curriers, or grooms.

poems written with short, abrupt, and artificial rhythms of two or three accents, and for the most part devoted to whim, satire, or ridicule. I cannot help thinking that these rhythms, though certainly foreign in their origin, were strongly influenced by the peculiarities of the metre we are now considering. The sections 2 and 6 very frequently occur, and we often find a strong tendency towards the sectional rhime. I will give a short extract from a satire, probably of the thirteenth century. It is found in the Harl. MS. 2253; and was directed against the insolent menials—the grooms, pages, and "boyes with boste,"—who always, in that age of show and splendour, accompanied the great. The rhime is only found at the end of the couplet, but through a large portion of the poem the sections are written in separate lines, as though they formed distinct verses.

The Maker that made them, to shame he consign'd them,
To fleas and to fly, to tike and to blow;
So saith Romance, whoso reads rightly—
Flea came from floor, and louse came from lad, &c.

Now be capul-clawers y-clad to their shame;
They busk them with buttons, as though t'were a bride,
With low-laced shoon of a ...... ? hide;
They pick from their provender all their pride! &c. &c.

fessed they much resemble, in their flow, the *lais* and *virelais* of the fifteenth century. His description of Envy is a favourable specimen.

Wyl suff|er no sleep|
In his head | to creep|.
His foule | semblaunte|
Al dis|plesaunte|,
Whan oth|er are glad|,
Than | is hee sad|,
Fran|ticke and mad|;

His tounge | never styll|
For | to saye yll|,
Wry th|ing and wring|ing,
Bit|ing and sting|ing;
And thus | this elf|
Consum|eth himself|. &c. &c.

Skelton's metre not unfrequently reminds one of the loose but quaint rhythm of the Minnelieder; and it is far from unlikely that both may belong to the same parent stock. He thus winds up his abuse of the "vilitissimus Scotus," Dundas.

Dundas|, that dronke as|,
That rat|is and rank|is,
That prat|is and prank|is
On Hunt|ley bank|is,
Take this | our thank|is—
Dun|de bar|,
Walke Scot|, walke sot|,
Rayle | not to far|.

Poor Jonson's letter to "Master John Burgess" will probably recur to the reader's memory—what Englishman can read it and not feel humbled?

Fa|ther John Bur|gess,
Necess|itie ur|ges
My wo|full crie|
To Sir Rob|ert Pie| ;
And that | he will ven|ter,
To send | my *deben|ter*.
Tell | him, his Ben|
Knew | the time when|
He lov'd | the Mus|es,
Though now | he refus|es
To take | apprehen|sion
Of | a year's pen|sion.
And more | is behind|, &c. &c.

Cowper also has trifled, very amusingly, with this jingle.

The sectional metres, which succeeded to the *older* Anglo-Saxon rhythms, differ in several respects from those we have been last considering. Layamon affords us an early, and, at the same time, a very curious specimen of their peculiarities. His history was probably written during the latter half of the twelfth century, though the MS.,[*] which contains it, is of later date, probably later than the reign of John. It is written continuously like Anglo-Saxon verse; but the frequency of the middle rhime, and the subjection of the middle pause to the final, are peculiarities, which strongly characterise the early sectional metres of our Old English dialect.

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[*] Calig. A. ix. There are also extant the *fragments* of a later copy, Otho, C. xiii.

Before we examine Layamon's metre, it may be well to take some notice of his dialect; and as this presents many difficulties, we will clear the way by first making some general observations on the history of our language.

The Anglo-Saxons had three vowel-endings, *a*, *e*, and *u*, to distinguish the cases of the noun, and the different conjugations of the verb. In the Old English all these vowel-endings were represented by the final *e*; and the loss of the final *e* is the characteristic mark of our modern dialect. It is obvious that either of these changes must have brought with it a new language. The confusion of the vowels, or the loss of the final *e*, was a confounding of tense and person, of case and number; in short, of those grammatical forms to which language owes its precision and its clearness. Other forms were to be sought for, before our tongue could again serve the purposes of science or of literature.

The oldest of the Gothic tongues, the Anglo-Saxon and the Mæso-Gothic, must take their place with the nobler and the purer languages, with the Greek, the Latin, and the Sanscrit. The causes, which in the twelfth century gave birth to the Old English, worked nearly at the same time a like change in all the kindred dialects, save the most northerly, which, safe from their influence amid the snows of Iceland and of Sweden, long retained (and indeed still retain) many of the earliest features of our language. The Old English runs side by side with the later German dialects, and the change it underwent in the fifteenth century would doubtless have been *theirs* also, but for an event which no one could have foreseen, and whose consequences even the experience of four centuries has not enabled us to calculate. As it is, our modern dialect stands alone.

A difference is always to be found between the written and the spoken language of a people. The look, the tone, the action, are means of expression which the speaker may employ, and the writer cannot; to make himself understood, the latter must use language more precise and definite than the former. There is also another reason for this difference. When a language has no written literature, it is ever subject to change of pronunciation, and so determinate is the *direction* of these changes, that it may be marked out between limits much narrower than any one has yet ventured to lay down. But with a written literature a new element enters into the calculation. A standard for composition now exists, which the writer will naturally prefer to the varying dialect of the people, and, as far as he safely may, will do his best to follow. In this way the written and the spoken languages will act and react upon each other; and it must depend upon the value of the literature and the reading habits of the people, which of them shall at last prevail.

As to Anglo-Saxon literature, scanty as are the relics which have been left us, enough remains to show its beauty and its worth; and vainly shall we search our annals for any thing its equal,* till we come to the gifted men who immortalized the era of Elizabeth. Taught in the monastery, and *fixed* in the literature of the country, the forms of Anglo-Saxon grammar remained without a change for centuries. Local dialects there certainly were, and the dialect of the poet varied from that of the prose writer; but no changes have been yet pointed out, which can fairly be considered as owing to the mere lapse of time. Oversights are, however, sometimes met with in the carelessly written MSS. of the eleventh century, which show that, although the written language might be fixed, the popular dialect was still following out its natural tendencies. The language of our earlier literature fell at last a victim, not to the Norman Conquest, for it survived that event at least a century—not to the foreign jargon which the weak but well-meaning Edward first brought into the country, for French did not *mix* with our language till the days of Chaucer—it fell before the same deep and mighty influences, which swept every living language from the literature of Europe.

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* I do not forget Chaucer and Langland (*if* Langland be the name); but two men of genius do not make a literature.

When the south regained its ascendancy, and Rome once more seized the wealth of vassal provinces, its favourite priests had neither the knowledge requisite to understand, nor tastes fitted to enjoy, the literature of the countries into which they were promoted. The road to their favour and their patronage lay elsewhere; and the monk, giving up his mother-tongue as worthless, began to pride himself only upon his Latinity. The legends of his patron saint he Latinized, the story of his monastery he Latinized; in Latin he wrote history, in Latin he wrote satires and romances. Amid these labours, he had little time to study the niceties of Anglo-Saxon grammar, and the Homilies, the English Scriptures, Cædmon's Paraphrase, the national songs, the magnificent Judith, and other treasures of native genius, must soon have lain on the shelves of his cloister as little read, or, if read, almost as little understood* as if they had been written in a foreign tongue. When he addressed himself to the unlearned, noble † or ignoble, he used the vulgar dialect of his shire, with its idioms, which the written language had probably rejected as wanting in precision, and with its corrupt pronunciation, which alone would require new forms of grammar. In this way, many specimens of our old English dialects have been handed down to us; and these, however widely they differ from each other, agree in one particular—in confounding the characteristic endings of the Anglo-Saxon.

For want of a standard literature none of these dialects could *fix* its grammar. Every century brought with it fresh changes; and the student, who sits down to Robert of Gloucester, will derive but little aid from his previous knowledge of Layamon. In the fourteenth century, the final *e* began to waver;* and during the following century our language may be considered as once more in a state of disorganization. It is a singular fact, that several of the other European languages were shortly after threatened with a revolution of the very same nature; when the press came to their aid, and by doubling the influence of their literature put a stop to further changes.†

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* See the version of the Brunanburgh War-song, made or rather attempted by Henry of Huntingdon.

† Layamon wrote his history expressly for the *nobles;* and Robert of Brunne "schewed his Inglis" for the "*lordes* lewed."

Hitherto little mention has been made of the Latin or the French. The various ways in which these languages influenced our own, have never yet been clearly traced, and by some writers have been most strangely misunderstood. There are not wanting those, who look upon the English tongue as a mongrel jargon, invented for purposes of intercourse between the Norman and his Saxon serf; a notion which can only be matched by the theory, that was once started as to the origin of the Sanscrit. The Latin and the French deranged the vocabulary of our language, but never its form and structure; and the streams which successively came from these two sources flowed through various channels, and at periods widely separated from eath other.

Latin words are found in Anglo-Saxon MSS. of a very early date; especially when the subjects are connected with the economy and discipline of the church. Thus we find *mynster,* a minster, monasterium; *portic,* a porch, porticus; *cluster,* a cloister, claustrum; *munuc,* a monk, monachus; *bisceop,* a bishop, episcopus; *arcebisceop,* an archbishop, archiepiscopus; *sanct,* a saint, sanctus; *profast,* a provost, præpositus; *pæll,* a pall, pallium; *calic,* a chalice, calix; *candel,* a candle, candela; *psalter,* a psalter, psalterium; *mæsse,* a mass, missa; *pistel,* an

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* There are two dates, which, as regards the history of our language, it is important to have fixed—the earliest period when the final *e* became mute, and also the period when it was first used for mere purposes of orthography —to lengthen, for example, the vowel of the preceding syllable. Both these dates will, I think, be found in the fourteenth century; the first near the beginning, the latter probably near the close.

† The final *e* is still very commonly dropt in the *boor-speech* of Germany, and even in the classical language there are many traces of the same mutilation.

epistle, epistola; *prædic-ian,* to preach, prædic-are; *prof-ian,* to prove, prob-are, &c. &c. From the Latin also came the names of foreign animals and plants, as *leon,* the lion, leo; *camell,* the camel, camelus; *ylp,* the elephant, elephas; *fic-beam,* the fig-tree, ficus; *fefer-fuge,* the feverfew, febrifugia; *peterselige,* parsley, petroselinum, &c. &c. and of many articles of merchandise the growth or manufacture of distant countries, as *pipor,* pepper, piper; *purpura,* purple, purpura; *pumic-stan,* the pumice-stone, pumex, &c. &c.

Some of these words had to share their honours with English duplicates; but there can be little doubt the greater part had, at a very early period, sunk deeply into the language. They are nearly all *concrete* terms, and are found in almost equal profusion in all the kindred dialects. The *abstract* Latin terms, which begin to show themselves in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, may, I think, be laid to the account of careless, or rather of pedantic translation.* A latinized style was looked upon as a proof of *clerkship;* and the scholar was always ready with such easy proof of his learning. We have but little space to follow the corruptions, which flowed from this source at later periods.

Norman-Romance became the court language in the reign of the Confessor; and *the law* appears to have been the channel, through which it first mixed with the native language of the country. The Aula regia, or King's household-court, enrolled its proceedings in Latin, but in its pleadings, &c. used the language of the Palace. Those, who feared local influence in the county courts, purchased the judgment of the sovereign; and the King's court, by degrees, became that of the nation. Hence its legal terms grew familiar, and early in the thirteenth century we find sprinkled through our MSS. such words as *cancelere,* a chancelour; *curt,* a court; *pleit,* a plea; *prisun,* a prison; *battel,* a conflict (originally trial by combat); *clame,* a claim; *fin,* an end, &c. &c. As this source of corruption was peculiar to our country, few words of this class are to be met with in the other Gothic dialects.

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* Hampole, in his version of the Psalms, which was written about the middle of the fourteenth century, plainly tells us he used words, "most like unto the Latyne, so that thai that knowes noght the Latyne, bi the Ynglis may come to mani Latyne words."

From the court-dialect were also taken many terms relating to courtly pastime and pageantry; more particularly those of the chase; and sometimes we have French salutations and exclamations, introduced much in the same way as in our fashionable novels, though certainly with less of impropriety. But it was not till the rage for translation came upon us, during the latter half of the fourteenth century, that foreign words overspread the language. It is painful to think how many men of genius have forwarded the mischief. Perhaps we might point to the "ballades" and "envoys" of Chaucer and his school, as offering the worst French specimen of our language; and to Johnson as the writer, who has most laboured to swamp it in the Latin.

The evils resulting from these importations have, I think, been generally underrated in this country. When a language must draw upon its own wealth for a new term, its forms and analogies are kept fresh in the minds of those, who so often use them. But with the introduction of foreign terms, not only is the symmetry—the *science*—of the language injured, but its laws are brought less frequently under notice, and are the less used, as their application becomes more difficult. If a new word were added to any of the purer languages, such as the Sanscrit, the Greek, or the Welsh, it would soon be the root of numerous offshoots, substantives, adjectives, verbs, &c., all formed according to rule, and modifying the meaning of their root according to well-known analogies. But in a mixed and broken language few or no such consequences follow. The word remains barren, and the language is "enriched," like a tree covered over with wreaths taken from the boughs of its neighbour; which carries a goodly show of foliage, and withers beneath the shade.

The language of Layamon may perhaps (at least in substance) be considered as the dialect spoken in South Gloucestershire during the twelfth century. One of its most striking peculiarities is its *nunnation,* if we may be allowed to use a term, already familiar to the scholar. Many words end in *n,* which are strangers to that letter, not only in the Anglo-Saxon, but in all the later dialects of our language; and as this letter assists in the declension of nouns, and the conjugation of verbs, the *grammar* of this dialect becomes, to a singular degree, complicated and difficult.

Perhaps the following changes of termination may give a tolerably correct notion of the masculine declension.

	Sing.	Plur.
N. A.	God	God-es
G.	God-es	God-e
D.	God-e	God-en*
		-es

The neuter nouns are declined in the same way, but take no inflexion in the plural save the *e* of the genitive, and perhaps the *en* of the dative. In both genders the *e* of the dative singular is often omitted.†

The feminine nouns take *e* as their only inflexion in either number, but, I think, in some few instances make the dative plur. in *en.* Some feminines have the genitive singular in *es,* as in the Anglo-Saxon.

There is also what may be termed the *n* declension, common to all the three genders. The singular ends in *e,* and the plural in *en;* the genitive, however, sometimes taking *ene.* As some nouns have the *n* even in the nominative singular, it is difficult to say whether *n* be used as an inflexion in that number.

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* The inflexion in *en* is always a matter of great uncertainty.

† The Anglo-Saxon noun also sometimes omits the inflexion of the dative.

The indefinite adjective has almost the same declension as in the Anglo-Saxon.

	Sing.			Plur.
	m.	f.	n.	m. f. n.
N.	god	god	god	god-e
G.	god-es	god-re	god-es	god-re -e
D.	god-e -en*	god-re	god-e -en*	god-en -e
A.	god-ne	god-e	god	god-e

When the adjective is definite (that is, connected with the definite article, a possessive pronoun, or a genitive case), it takes an *e* and is indeclinable. Sometimes, however, the definite adjective appears to take *en*.

The verbs are conjugated much in the same way as in the Anglo-Saxon; the endings *a* and *e*, *an* and *en*, *ath* and *eth*, being, of course, confounded. The *i* conjugation is still clearly distinguished, as *clepien*, to call, ic *clepie*, I call, &c.; and the gerund in *enne* is sometimes met with. The points in which Layamon's verb differs from the Anglo-Saxon may, I think, be ranged under three heads.

1. The plural of the present indicative sometimes ends in *en*, instead of *eth*; and the first and third persons singular, in the past tense of the "complex" verb, sometimes take an *e*. Both these peculiarities may, I think, be traced to the same cause—the use of the subjunctive mood instead of the indicative. In some of our dialects the former mood seems, at length, entirely to have supplanted the latter.

2. The plural of the past tense, and also the past participle sometimes ends in *e*, instead of *en*. But, I believe, that in neither of these cases was the vowel-ending quite unknown even to the Anglo-Saxon.

3. The first person singular of the present indicative, and the third person singular of the past tense indicative, and of the present optative or imperative, sometimes end in *en* instead of *e*. The *en* in the first person of the present

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* See note *, p. 111.

reminds one of the Frankish; but its occurrence in the other cases is, I believe, peculiar to this singular and perplexing dialect.

The third person of the present indicative sometimes ends in *ethe* instead of *eth*, but I can only consider this as a blunder of the transcriber.

Among the possessive pronouns we find *min* and *thin*, and also *mi* and *thi*.* The vowel of the definite article is singularly varied, but in other respects its inflexions closely resemble the Anglo-Saxon. As it is constantly occurring I will here give its declension.

	Sing.			Plur.
	m.	f.	n.	m. f. n.
N.	the	the	that	the
G.	thes	there	thes	there
D.	thon	there	thon	thon
A.	thene	the	that	the

That this slight sketch is *very* imperfect, and in some points probably inaccurate, I am well aware. It would require a much better acquaintance with the MS. than I can lay claim to, always to distinguish between blunders of transcription and peculiarities of dialect, between the syllable which makes part of the *root*, and that which is merely its inflexion. The whole MS. will, however, be published; and by a gentleman who, I have little doubt, will do justice to a very difficult subject.

Layamon informs us that he was a priest, and lived at Ernley,† by Severn. The books from which he compiled his history, were "the English book" which Bede wrote, a book in Latin composed by St. Austin and St. Albin, and the book of the Frankish clerk Wace. The extract* which follows, describes the famous battle of Bath. The "Kaiser," it should be observed, had already been once in Arthur's power, had agreed to quit the

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* I cannot agree with Mr. Thorpe in considering these latter pronouns as mere corruptions of the former; I believe them to be distinct words, and probably of far higher antiquity.

† I can find no parish or hamlet of this name on the banks of the Severn.

Chil|dric the Kai|sere . | biwon| : al | that he lok|ede on .
He | nom sum|er-set|e : and | he nom | dorset|e .
And | al deu|ene[1] scir|e : that | volc al | for-ferd|e .
And | he wil|tun-scir|e : mid with|ere[2] | igræt|te .
He | nom al|le tha lond|es : in | to thær|e sæ[3] stron|de .
Tha | æt than last|e : tha let|te heo blaw|en .
Horn|es and bem|en : and bon|nien | his ferd|en .
And forth | he wol|de buȝ|en : and bath|en al | bilig|gen .
And æc | bristow|e : abut|en birouw|en .
This | was heor|e ibeot| : ær heo | to bath|e com|en .

To bath|e com | the kaiser|e : and | bilæi | thene cas|tel ther|e .
And | tha men | within|nen : oht|liche | agun|nen .
Step|en up|pen[4] stan|ene wal| : wel | iwep|ned ou|er al| .
And wer|eden | tha rich|e : with | than strong|e childrich|e .
Ther lai | the Kaiser|e : and Col|grim his | iuer|e .
And bal|dulf his broth|er : and mon|i an oth|er .

Arth|ur wes | binorth|e : and noht | her of nus|te .
Fer|de geond al | scotlond : | and set|te het an | his ag|ere hond|[5].
Or|canei|e and Gal|ewei|e : man. | and mure|ue .
And al|le tha lond|es : the ther | to læ|ien .
Ar|thur hit wen|de : to | iwis|lichen thing|e .
That chil|dric ilith|en weor|en : to | his ag|ene lon|de .
And that | he nav|ere mær|e : nol|de cum|en her|e .
Tha com|en tha tid|ende : to Ar|thure King|e .

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* *th* has been substituted for the Anglo-Saxon characters ð and þ, as the facilities thus afforded to the English reader seemed to outweigh any inconnience, which might result from confounding these two letters. But the Old English ȝ can be represented by no letter of our modern alphabet, without danger of some mistake. It is found answering to *g*, to *h*, to *s*, and to *th*; and was, in all probability, pronounced as a strong dental breathing, and may now be considered as quite obsolete. This character ȝ will therefore be used, in such Old English extracts, as there may be occasion to quote.

[1] *Devene* is the gen. pl. of *Deven*, which answers to the Anglo-Saxon *Defan*, the men of Devonshire.

[2] I have never met with this substantive elsewhere, but there can be little doubt of its meaning.

country for ever, had broken his pledge, and was now wasting the land with fire and sword.

Childric the Kaïser won : all that he looked on,
He took Somerset : and he took Dorset,
And all the Devon-shire : —that folk were all destroy'd ;
And he Wilton-shire : with cruelty oppress'd.
He took all the land : unto the sea-strand.
Then, at the last : caused they to blow
Horns and trumps : and their soldiers to be boon ;
And forth he wish'd to fare : and the Baths all beset,
And eke Bristow : round about to row ;
This was their threat : ere to Bath they came.
To Bath came the Kaiser : and beset the castle there ;
And the men within : gallantly began
Step upon the stonern wall : well yweapon'd over all,
And defended them the great ones : gainst the strong Childric.
There lay the Kaiser : and Colgrim his fere,
And Baldulf his brother : and many an other.

Arthur was in the north : and nought hereof wist he ;
He journey'd over all Scotland : and brought it under his own hand ;
Orkeney and Galoway : Man and Morey,
And all the lands : that thereby lay.
Arthur ween'd it : as a settled thing,
That Childric was gone : to his own land ;
And that he never more : would come here.
Then came the tidings : to Arthur King,

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[3] *Sæ*, is here the genitive case singular ; in which number this substantive is rarely found declined, even in the Anglo-Saxon.

[4] The preposition *uppen* governs both an accusative case and a dative. If *wal* be the accusative, the adjective ought, according to rule, to have been stanen*ne* ; but we sometimes find the definite adjective in cases where the ordinary rules of grammar would seem to require the indefinite—in such phrases as, *ænne Sæxisce eniht*. Sometimes, though very rarely, we find the indefinite, where we might look for the definite adjective, as in the words, *thes hezes kinges*. If these be not mere blunders on the part of the transcriber, I cannot satisfactorily account for them.

[5] *Hond* is here the dative singular, in which case it is often found without inflexion in the Old English.

That Chil|dric tha kæi|sere : icum|en wes | to lond|en .
And | ithan suth|-ende : sor|ȝen ther worht|en .

Tha Ar|thur seid|e : Ath|elest king|en .
Wal|a wa wal|awa : that | ich spar|ede min|e iua| .
That | ich nau|ede | on hol|te : mid hun|gere hin|e adef|ed .
Oth|er mid sweord|e : al hin|e to swug|en .
Nu he | me gilt med|e : for mir|e god-ded|e .
Ah | swa me hælp|en drih|ten : thæ scop | thæs dæ|ies lih|ten .
Ther for|e he scal | ibid|en : bit|terest al|re bal|uwen .
Hard|e gom|enes : his bon|e ich wul|le iwur|then .
Col|grim and Bal|dulf : bei|ene ich wul|le aquel|len .
And | al heor|e duȝ|ethe : dæth | scal ithol|ien .
Gif | hit wul|e iun|nen : wald|ende hæf|nen .
Ich wol|le wurth|liche wrek|en : al|le his with|er-ded|en .
ȝif | me mot | ilas|ten : that lif | amir|e breos|ten .
And | hit wul|le me | iun|ne : that | iscop mon|e and sun|ne .
Ne | scal næv|ere chil|dric : æft | me bichar|ren .

Nu cleop|ede Arthur : ath|elest king|en .
Whar | beo ȝe min|e cniht|es : oht|e men | and with|te .
To hors|e . to hors|e : ye hal|ethes god|e .
And | we scul|led buȝ|en : tou|ward Bath|e swith|e .
Let|eth up fus|en : heȝ|e fork|en .
And bring|eth her | tha gæf|les : bifor|en ur|e cniht|es .
And | heo scul|len hong|ien : on hæȝ|e treow|en .
Ther | he let|te fordon| : feow|er and twe|ti child|erren[2] .
Al|emain|isce men| : of swith|e heȝ|e cun|nen .

Tha com|en tid|ende : to Ar|thure | than king|e .
That seoc | wes how|el his mæi| : ther for|e he | wes sar|i .
Iclud | lig|ginde : and ther | he hin|e bilæf|de .

Hiȝ|enlich|e swith|e : forth | he gon lith|e .
That he | behal|ues bad|e : beh | to an|e uel|de .
Ther | he alih|te ; and | his cnih|tes al|le .
An on | mid heor|e burn|en : beorn|es sturn|e .

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[1] The *holt* refers to the wood of Caledon, into whose hilly recesses Arthur, according to the history, drove Childric before his submission.

[2] This is the earliest instance I know, of the plural ending *eren* in our language. In the *Dutch* there are many such plurals, *blad-eren*, leaves; *lied-eren*, songs; *kind-eren*, children; *eij-eren*, eggs; *kalv-eren*, calves; &c. &c.

That Childric the Kaiser : was y-come to land,
And in the south quarter : sorrows there wrought.
Then Arthur said : (noblest of kings,)
"Walawa! walawa! : that I spared my foe!
"That I had not on the holt[1] : with hunger kill'd him!
"Or with the sword : him all silenced!
"Now does he pay me back the meed : for my good deed!
"But, so help me the Lord : that shaped the light of day,
"Therefore he shall bide : the bitterest of all bale!
"Pains full grievous! : his bane I will be.
"Colgrim and Baldulf : both I will quell,
"And all their nobles : death shall suffer.
"If it will grant : He that weilds the heavens,—
"Worthily will I wreek : all his misdeeds;
"If the life may last : within my breast,
"And He will grant it : that shaped sun and moon,—
"Childric shall never : again slip by me!"
Now call'd out Arthur : (noblest of kings),
"Where be ye my knights : gallant men and wight?
"To horse, to horse : ye nobles good!
"And we must turn us : tow'rd Bath quickly;
"Let them haste up : the high gallows,
"And bring here the pledges : before our knights,
"And they shall hang : on the high trees."
There he caus'd them slay : four-and-twenty youths,
Alemannish men : of right noble kins.

Then came tidings : to Arthur the king,
That sick was Howel his kinsman : (therefore was he sorry)
In Clyde lying : and there he left him.
With full great speed : forth gan he fare,
Till beside Bath : he turn'd him to a field,
Where he alighted : and his knights all;
And on with their burnies[3] : the barons stern;

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[3] The *burnie* seems to have been a kind of breastplate, accommodated in the mail armour of the period. The word is constantly occurring in the Old English romances.

And he | a fif[1] | dæle : dæl|de his feord|e .
Tha | he haf|de al | iset| : and | æl hit | isem|ed .
Tha dud|e he on | his burn|e : ibroid|e of stel|e .
The mak|ede | on al|uisc smith| : mid ath|elen | his craf|te .
He | wes ihat|en wyg|ar : the wit|eȝe wurh|te .
His sconk|en he hel|ede : mid hos|en of stel|e .
Cali|beorn|e his sweord| : he cwem|de bi | his sid|e .
Hit | wes iworht | in av|alun : mid wiȝ|ele-ful|le craf|ten .
Halm | he set | on haf|de : hæh[2] | of stel|e .
Ther on | wes mon|i gim-ston| : al | mid gol|de bi-gon| .
He | wes ud|eres : thas ath|elen king|es .
He | wes ihat|en Gos|whit : æl|chen oth|ere un|ilic| .

He heng | an his sweor|e : æn|ne sceld deor|e .
His nom|e wes | on brut|tisc : thrid|-wen ihat|en .
Ther | wes in|nen igrau|en : mid red|e gol|de stan|en .
An on|-licnes deor|e : of driht|enes mod|er .
His sper|e he nom | an hond|e : tha ron | wes ihat|en .
Tha | he haf|den al | his iwed|en : tha leop | he on | his sted|en .
Tha | he miht|e bi|hald|en : tha | bihal|ues stod|en .
Then|e uæi|reste cniht| : the verd|e scol|de led|en .
Ne | isæh næv|ere na | man : sel|ere | cniht nen|ne .
Then|ne him | wes Ar|thur : Ath|elest cun|nes .

Tha cleop|ede Ar|thur : lud|ere stæf|ne .
Lou|war [3] her | bifor|en us| : heth|ene hund|es .
The sloȝ|en ur|e al|deren : mid luth|ere heor|e craf|ten .
And | heo us beoth | on lon|de : læth|est al|re thing|e .
Nu fus|en we | hom to| : and stærc|liche | heom leg|gen on| .
And wræk|en wun|derlich|e : ur|e cun | and ur|e rich|e .
And wrek|en then|e much|ele scom|e : that heo | us iscend | habbeoth .
That heo | ouer uth|en : com|en to dert|e-muth|en .
And al|le heo beoth | for-swor|ene : and al|le heo beoth | for-lor|ene.

Heo | beoth for-dem|ed al|le : mid driht|enes fuls|te .
Fus|e we | nu forth|-ward : uas|te to som|ne .

---

[1] See vol. ii. p. 53. n. 7.

[2] This adjective takes no inflexion, according to the rule in vol. ii. p. 22.

And he in five portions : dealt out his army.
When he had all set out : and it all array'd,
Then don'd he his burnie : wide-spread with steel ;
An elvish smith it made : with his noble craft,
(He was hight Wygar : the soothsaying smith) ;
His shanks he cover'd : with hosen of steel ;
Caliburn his sword : he fitted by his side ;
It was wrought in Avalon : with arts of grammary .
Helm he set on head : high-rais'd of steel ;
Thereon was many a gem-stone : all with gold beset ;
It was Uther's : the noble king's ;
It was hight Goswhit : — to every other unlike.

He hung on his neck : a precious shield,
Its name in British : Thridwen was hight ;
Therein was graven : with red gold stones,
A precious likeness : of our Lord's mother.
His spear he took in hand : that Ron was hight.
When he had all his weeds : then leapt he on his steed.
Then might they behold : who beside him stood,
The fairest knight : that host could lead,
And ne'er saw man : better knight any,
Than was Arthur : — he of noblest kin.

Then cried out Arthur : with loud voice,
" Lo ! every where here before us : the heathen hounds,
" That slew our elders : with their loathed arts ;
" And to us they be, on earth : loathed most of all things ;
" Now haste we to them : and stoutly on them lay,
" And wondrously avenge : our kin, and our realm ;
" And wreek the mickle shame : that they have done us,
" For that o'er the waves : they came to Derte-mouth ;
" And they be all forsworn : and they be all forlorn !

" They be doomed all : with the Lord's help !
" Haste we forward : quickly together,

---

[3] Does this word answer to the Anglo-Saxon *la æghwer ?*

Æf|ne al | swa sof|te : swa we | nan uf|el ne thoh|ten .
And then|ne we | heom cum|eth to| : mi seolf | ic wul|len onfon|.
An al|re freom|este : that fiht | ich wul|le bigun|nen .
Nu | we scul|len rid|en : and ou|er land glid|en .
And na | man bi | his liu|e : lud|e ne wurch|en .
Ah far|en fæst|liche : driht|en us fulst|en .

Tha rid|en agon| : Ar|thur the rich|e mon| .
Beh|ouer wæl|de : an Bath|en wol|de isech|en .
Tha tid|ende com | to childrich|e : than strong|en and | than rich|en .
That Ar|thur mid ferd|e com| : al ȝar|u to fih|te .
Chil|dric and | his oht|e men| : leop|en heom | to hors|en .
And grip|en heor|e wep|nen : heo wus|ten heom | ifæi|ed .

This | isæh Ar|thur : ath|elest king|e .
Isæh | he æn|ne hæth|ene[1] eorl| : hæl|den him | to ȝein|es .
Mid seou|en hun|dred . cniht|en : al ȝær|ewe | to fiht|en .
The eorl | him seolf ferd|en : bifor|en al | his geng|e .
And Ar|thur him | seolf arn|de : biuor|en al | his ferd|e .
Ar|thur the ræi|e : ron | nom an hon|de .
He strah|te scaft stærc|ne : stith|imod|en[3] king| .
His hors | he let|te ir|nen : that | tha eorth|e dun|ede .
Sceld | he braid | on breos|ten : the king | wes abol|ȝen .
He | smat bor|el then|e eorl| : thurh ut | tha breos|ten .
That | thæ heor|te to chan| : and | the king cleop|ede | anan| .
The for|meste | is fæi|e : Nu ful|sten us drih|te .
And | tha hef|enlich|e quen|e : tha drih|ten aken|de .

Tha cleop|ede ar|thur : ath|elest king|e .
Nu | heom to nu | heom to| : that for|mest is wel | idon| .
Brut|tes hom leid|en on : swa me | scal aluth|ere don| .
Heo bit|tere swip|en gef|uen : mid ax|es and | mid sweord|es .

Ther feol|le chel|driches men| : ful|le twa | thusend|.
Swa neu|ere ar|thur ne les| : næv|ere æn|ne of his| .

---

[1] See p. 115, n. 4.

[2] I am not satisfied as to the meaning of this word. In the following passage,

> Then sayde that rich *raye*,
> I will have that fayr May,
> And wedde her to my quene.—*Emare*, 430.

[it

" E'en all as softly : as we no evil thought,
" And when we to them come : myself will take
" The bravest of them all : — that fight I will begin.
" Now must we ride : and o'er the land glide,
" And no man for his life : must loudly work;
" But fare we stoutly ! : the Lord assist us ! "

Then gan to ride : Arthur the mighty man,
He turn'd him o'er the weald : and the Baths would seek.

Then came tidings to Childric : the strong and the mighty,
That Arthur with army came : all yare for the fight;
Childric and his gallant men : lept on their horses,
And griped their weapons ; — they wist themselves feymen !

This saw Arthur : (noblest of kings !)
He saw a heathen earl : bending his course against him,
With seven hundred knights : all yare for the fight.
The earl himself went : before all his troop,
And Arthur himself ran : before all his army.
Arthur the ray [3] : took Ron in hand,
He levell'd the strong shaft : (sternhearted king !)
His horse he let run : that the earth shook ;
Shield he spread on breast : — the king was wrath—
He smote Borel the earl : out through the breast,
That the heart split : —and the king cried anon,
" The foremost one is fey ! : Now help us the Lord,
" And the heavenly Queen : that bare the Lord."

Then cried out Arthur : (noblest of kings !)
" Now on them ! now on them ! : the first part is well done."
The Brits laid on them : as on villain man should do,
Bitter blows they gave : with axes and with swords.

There fell Childric's men : full two thousand,
So never Arthur lost : never one of his.

---

it might be taken as closely connected with the Old English *roy*, a king ; but, as used in Piers Ploughman, a familiar, if not a low meaning is attached to it.

[3] Here we have the definite adjective, with *en* in the nominative singular. The definite adjective was frequently used to express admiration ; and we still use the definite article for that purpose, as, *Alfred, the good king !*

Ther weor|en sæx|isce| men : folk|en al|re ærm|est .
And | tha al|emain|isce men| : ȝeom|erest al|re leod|en .
Ar|thur mid | his sweord|e : fæi|e-scip|e wurh|te .
Al | that he | smat to| : hit | wes son|e fordon| .
Al wæs | the king | abol|ȝen : swa bith | the wil|de bar| .
Then|ne he | ithan mæs|te [1] : mon|ie imet|eth .
This | isæh Chil|dric : and gon | him to char|ren .
And beh | him ou|er au|ene : to bur|ȝen him seol|uen .
And ar|thur him læc | to : swa hit | ali|un weor|en .
And fus|de heom | to flod|e : mon|ie ther weor|en fæi|e .

Ther sunk|en to | than grund|e : fif|and twen|ti hun|dred .
Tha al | wes au|ene stram| : mid stel|e ibrug|ged .
Chel|dric ou|er that wat|e flæh| : mid fif|tene hun|dred cniht|en .
Thoh|te forth sith|en : and ou|er sæ lith|en .
Ar|thur isæh | Col|grim : clim|ben to munt|en .
Buȝ|en to | than hul|le : tha ou|er bath|en stond|eth .
And Bald|ulf beh | him af|ter : and seou|e thus|end cniht|es .
Heo thoht|en i|than hul|le : hæh|liche | at ston|den .
Weor|ien heom | mid wep|nen : and Ar|thur awæm|men .

Tha | isæh Ar|thur : ath|elest king|en .
Whar Col|grim at stod| : and | æc stal | wrohte .
Tha clup|ede | the king| : ken|liche lud|e .
Bald|e min|e thein|es : buh|ȝeth to | than hul|les .
For ȝers|tendæi | wæs Col|grim : mon|nen al|re ken|nest .
Nu him | is al | swa ther|e gat| : ther | he then|e hul wat| .
Hæh | uppen hul|le : seht|eth mid horn|en .
Then|ne com|ed the wlf| [2] wil|de : touw|ard hir|e wind|en.
Theh | the wulf be|on an|e : but|en ælc | iman|e .
And | ther weor|en in an|e lok|en : fif hun|dred gat|en .
The wulf | heom to | iwit|eth : and al|le heom | abit|eth .
Swa | ich wul|le nu | to dæi| : Col|grim al | fordemen .
Ich | am wulf | & he | is gat| : the gum|e scal be|on fai|e .

Many of Layamon's couplets have both alliteration and the middle rhime; very few—originally, it may be, none—

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[1] *Mæst* seems here to mean the acorns or forest-fare of the wild boar. I do not, however, remember to have seen it used in this sense by any Anglo-Saxon writer.

There were Sexish men : of all folks most wretched,
And the Alemannish men : saddest of all people!
Arthur with his sword : death-doings wrought,
All that he smote against : quickly was it done for.
The king was enraged : all as the wild boar,
When, mid his mast : many he meeteth.
This saw Childric : and gan him to turn,
And bent his way o'er Avene : himself to save ;
And Arthur gave them play : as 'twere a lion,
And drove them to the flood : — many there were fey!

There sunk to the ground : five and twenty hundred ;
Then was Avene-stream : all bridged with steel.
Childric over that water fled : with fifteen hundred knights ;
He thought to haste hence : and over sea sail.
Arthur saw Colgrim : climb up the mountains,
And turn him to the hill : that o'er the Baths standeth.
And Baldulf gat him after : and seven thousand knights ;
Thought they on the hill : aloft to stand out,
Defend them with their weapons : and Arthur scare.

Then saw Arthur : (noblest of kings!)
Where Colgrim stood out : and form'd eke his array.
Then call'd out the king : with keen cry,
" My bold thanes : turn ye to the hills,
" For yesterday was Colgrim : of all men the keenest,
" Now is't with him, as with the goat : where she keeps the hill ;
" High upon the hill : she sitteth with her horns,
" Then cometh the wild wolf : towards her trail,
" Though the wolf be alone : without any fellow,
" And there should be in one flock : five hundred goats,
" The wolf to them wendeth : and all of them it biteth.
" So now will I to-day : Colgrim all doom,
" I am wolf, and he is goat : — that man shall be fey!

are without either one or the other. The relative value, in which he held his rhime and his alliteration, deserves

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[2] *Wl* was used for *wol* in English MSS. and even for *vul* in Latin MSS. during the 12th century, as *wlpes* for *vulpes*, *wltus* for *vultus*, &c.

some notice. In Anglo-Saxon verse, the syllables, which take the alliteration, are always accented; but the sectional rhime, and in one or two instances even the middle rhime, may be found resting upon a syllable which has no accent. When the later alliterative metres take the final rhime, the rhiming syllable imperatively demands the accent; and the alliteration is often thrown upon an unaccented syllable. Layamon appears to take a middle course. It would seem, he gave accents both to his rhiming and his alliterative syllables; but the former were often obliged to content themselves with a false accent—the proper rhythm of the sentence being sacrificed for that purpose. We very seldom find the rhime and the alliteration placed upon adjacent syllables, and each striving for the accent, as is often the case in later poems.

The struggle between alliteration and final rhime began later, and continued much longer in this country than on the continent. King Edgar's death-song has one or two couplets, in which alliteration appears to be forgotten; but the MS. is so faulty, and in some parts of the poem so obviously corrupt, that no one can safely speculate on such doubtful premises. On the other hand, Otfrid's Evangeley, which may date about the year 870, has few or no traces of alliteration. Its rhimes often rest upon a false accent, and its rhythm strongly resembles such as may be found in some of our early sectional metres. It affords us a curious instance, how like will often be the changes of two kindred dialects, long after they cease to influence each other. The following extract is taken from the opening of the second book.

<table>
<tr><td>Vuol|a druht|in min|</td><td>Oh! my Lord!</td></tr>
<tr><td>ja | bin ih | salc thin|</td><td>truly be I slave of thine!</td></tr>
<tr><td>Thiu arm|a muat|er min|</td><td>Wretched mother[1] mine</td></tr>
<tr><td>eig|an thiu ist | si thin</td><td>thine own handmaiden is she!</td></tr>
</table>

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[1] That is, the Church.

Fing|ar thin|an	Finger thine
dua an|a mund min|an	place within my mouth,
Heu ouh | hant thin|a	Lift up eke thine hand
in | thia zung|un min|a	upon my tongue,
Thaz ich | lob thin|az	That I thy praise
si | luden|thaz	be singing—
Giburt | sunes thin|es	The birth of thy son
thrut|ines min|es	my Lord !
Joh ih | bigin|ne red|inon	Yea, that I begin to tell
uuio er | bigon|da bred|igon	how he began to preach ;
Thaz ih | giuuar | si har|to	That I be right heedful
ther|o sin|ero uuor|to	of his words ;
Joh zei|han thiu | er det|a tho|	Yea, signs that he did then
thes | uuir bir|un nu | so fro|	(whence we are now so glad) ;
Joh uuio | thiu sel|ba hei|li	Yea, how the self salvation
nust uuor|olti | gimein|i	now to the world is common ;
Thaz ih | ouh hiar | giscrib|e	That I eke here may write
uns | zi reht|emo lib|e	(to further our righteous life)
Uuio | firdan| [1] er un|sih fand|	How sinful he us found,
tho | er sel|bo doth|es ginand|	when of death himself he tasted;
Joh uuio | er fuar | ouh than|ne	Yea, eke how he fared then
ub|ar him|ila al|le	over the heavens all,
Vb|ar sun|nan lioht|	Over the sun's light,
joh al|lan thes|an uuor|olt thiot|	and all this world's rout ;
Thaz | ih druh|tin than|ne	That, O Lord ! I then
in ther|o sag|u ne | firspin|ne	in this tale err not,
Noh | in them|o uuah|en	Nor in this recital
thiu uuort | ni miss|ifah|en	any words missay.

The poor monk then prays, that he may sing to God's laud, and (with needless scruple) *not* for his own glory.

The reflection contained in the following extract, seems to have been a favourite one ; for it may be found in different MSS. and with considerable variations. As here given from a Cotton MS.[2] it is probably of the 12th century. Alliteration seems to be quite neglected, and there is but one line that rhimes.

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[1] This word (if indeed it be rightly rendered) does not take the plural inflexion.

[2] Layamon MS. Cal. A. IX.

Hwan | thu sixt | on leod|e : king | that is wil|ful.
And domesmon —— ? : preost | that is wil|de.
Bisch|op slou| : old|-man lech|ur.
ȝunch|-mon lieȝ|er : wim|mon schom|eles.
Child | un|theand : thral | un|buxsom.
Ath|eling brith|eling : lond | withut|e laȝ|e
Al | so seid|e Beod|e : wo ther|e theod|e

For the most part, however, those poems, which rejected alliteration, took the rhime. The Romance of Horn may afford us an example; and may at the same time teach us, how long it was before the *sectional verse* was generally recognised as such in our manuscripts. In the Cambridge MS.[1] indeed, though some of the couplets are written continuously, most of them are divided

Al|le be|on he blith|e : that | to my | song lith|e.

A sang | ihc schal | ȝou sing|e : [2]of mur|ry [3] the king|e.
King | he was | biwes|te : so lang|e so | hit last|e.
God|hild het | his quen| : [2]faire [4] ne miȝ|te non ben|.
He had|de a son|e that | het horn| : fair|er ne mist|e non | beo born|.
Ne | no rein | upon | birin|e : ne sun|ne upon | bischin|e
Fair|er nis | non than|e he was| : he | was briȝt | so the glas|.
He | was whit | so the flur| : ros|e-red | was his | colur|.
On non|e king|e rich|e : nas non | his ilich|e.

Twelf fer|en he had|de : that alle [5] with him ladde.
Al|le rich|e man|nes son|es : and all | he wer|e fair|e gom|es.
With | him for | to plei|e : and mest | he luu|ede twe|e.
That on | him het hath|ulf child| : and | that oth|er ffik enild|.
Ath|ulf was | the bes|te : and fik|enild | the werst|e.

Hit was | upon | a som|eres day| : al|so ihc | you tel|le may|.
Mur|ri the god|e king| : rod | on his | pleing|.
Bi|the se sid|e : as|e he was won|ed rid|e.
He fond | bi the stond|e [6] : ariu|ed on | his land|.

---

[1] Univ. Lib. Gg. 4. 27.

[2] No metrical point.

[3] The difference of names in the two MSS. will not escape notice. It would be easy to show the greater correctness of the Cambridge copy, but space is wanting.

When thou see'st 'mongst a people king that is wilful,
And justicer ——; priest that is wild;
Bishop sluggish; old man a lechur;
Young man a liar; woman shameless;
Child not thriving; thrall disobedient;
Nobleman prodigal; a land without law—
E'en as Beode said, "Wo to that people!"

into two short verses; but in the Harl. MS. which is later by three fourths of a century, the poem is written after the old fashion, *in couplets.*

I make the following extracts from the Cambridge MS. The reader may compare them with those, which Warton has taken from the Harleian.

All they be blithe : that to my song listen!

A song I will you sing : of Murry the King
King he was by west : (as long as it lasted);
Godhild hight his queen : — fairer could none be;
He had a son that hight Horn : — fairer could none be born,
Nor rain rain upon : nor sun shine upon;
Fairer is there none than he was : he was bright as the glass,
He was white as the flow'r : rosy-red was his colour;
In no king's realm : was any his like!

Twelve feres he had : that he with him led,
(All great men's sons : and all of them were fair men)
With him for to play : and most he loved two.
The one by him was call'd child Athulf : and the other Fikenild;
Athulf was the best : and Fikenild the worst.

It was upon a summer's day : (as I you may tell)
Murry the good king : rode for his sport,
By the sea side : as he was wont to ride.
He found by the strand : arriv'd in his land,

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[4] This is *probably* a mistake for *fairer*.

[5] Here the Harl. MS. reads, *that he with him ladde;* I have construed accordingly.

[6] Clearly a mistake for *stronde*.

Schip|es fiften|e : with sar|azins[1] ken|e .
He asc|ede what | isoȝ|te : oth|er to lon|de broȝ|te . &c.

We will now pass, with Warton, to the education of

The kyng | com in | to hal|le : among | his kniȝ|tes al|le .
Forth | he clup|ede ath|elbrus| : that | was stiw|ard of | his hus| .
Stiw|ard tac | nu her|e : mi fund|lyng for | to ler|e .
Of thin|e mester|e : of wud|e and of | riuer|e .
And tech | him to harp|e[2] : with | his nay|les scharp|e .
Beuor|e me | to keru|e : & of | the cup|e seru|e .
Thu tech | him of al|le the lis|te : that | thu eu|re of wis|te .
On | his feir|en thou wis|e : on | to oth|ere | seruis|e
Horn | thu un|deruong|e : & tech | him of harp|e & song|e .

Ath|ilbrus | gan ler|e : horn | and his | yfer|e .
Horn | in hert|e laȝ|te : al | that he | him taȝ|te .
In | the curt | and ut|e : and el|les al|abut|e
Luu|ede men | horn child| : and mest | him lou|ede Rym|enhild|.
The kyng|es oȝ|ene dos|ter[4] : he | was mest | in thoȝ|te .

Heo lou|ede so | hornchild| : that neȝ|heo gan wex|e wild| .
For heo | ne miȝ|te at bord|e : with | him spek|e no word|e .
Ne noȝt | in the hal|le : among | the kniȝt|es al|le .
Ne no|whar in | non oth|er sted|e : of folk | heo had|de dred|e .
Bi dai|e ne | bi niȝt|e : with | him spek|e ne miȝ|te .
Hir|e sor|eȝe ne | hire pin|e : miȝt|e neu|re fin|e .
On heort|e heo had|de wo| : and | thus hir|e bithoȝ|te tho| .

Heo send|e hir|e son|de : Ath|elbrus | to hond|e .
That | he com|e hir|e to| : and al|so schold|e horn do| .
Al|in to bur|e : for | heo gan | to lur|e .
And | the sond|e seid|e : that sik | lai that maid|e .
And bad | him com|e swith|e : for | heo nas noth|ing blith|e .

The stu|ard was | in hert|e wo| : for | he nus|te what | to do| .
Wat rym|enhild hur|e thoȝt|e : gret wun|der him thuȝ|te .[5]

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[1] If this be not a mere blunder for *Sarazines*, it is one of the earliest instances I have met with of the contracted plural-ending.

[2] No metrical point.

[3] *Nægl* A.S. was a kind of *plectrum*, with which the harper struck the strings of his instrument.

Ships fifteen : of Sarazins keen.
He asked what they sought : or what to land they brought, &c.

Horn, and the love of poor Rymenhild.

The king came in to hall : among all his knights.
Forth he called Athelbrus : that was steward of his house,
" Steward, take now here : my foundling to teach him
" Of thy mystery : of wood and of river.
" And teach him to harp : with his nails[3] sharp,
" Before me to carve : and with the cup to serve.
" Do thou teach him all the arts : that ever thou wist of.
" His feres do thou instruct : in *other* service—
" Horn take to thee : and teach him harp and song."

Athelbrus gan teach : Horn and his feres ;
Horn by heart caught : all that he him taught.
In the court and out : and every where else about,
Men lov'd child Horn : and him most loved Rymenhild,
The king's own daughter :—he was most in her thought.

She so lov'd child Horn : that she gan nigh wax wild
For she could not, at table : with him speak one word,
Nor in the hall : among all the knights,
And nowhere in other place :—of people she had dread ;
By day or by night : with him speak she could not !
Her sorrow and her pain : never might have end ;
In heart she had woe : and then bethought her thus.

She sent her message : to the hand of Athelbrus,
That to her he should come : and also should make Horn
Come all to her bow'r : for she gan to sadden.
And the message said : that sick lay the maid,
And bade him come quickly : for she was nothing blithe.

The steward was sad in heart : for he wist not what to do.
What Rymenhild was thinking of : great wonder seem'd to him—

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[4] Here we have *doster* written for *doȝter*—a clear proof how close was the connexion between the two letters *s* and ȝ.

[5] *Thuhte* A.S. is the past tense of *thencan* to seem—*thohte* the past tense of *thincan* to think. The distinction is preserved in the words *thuȝte* and *thoȝte*. We now confound these verbs.

Abut|e horn | the yong|e : to bur|e for | to bring|e .
He thoȝte upon | his mod|e : hit nas | for non|e god|e .
He tok | him anoth|er [1] : ath|ulf horn|es broth|er .

Ath|ulf he sed|e riȝt | anon| : thu | schalt with | me to bur|e gon| .
To spek|e with rym|enhild stil|le : and wit|en hur|e wil|le .
In horn|es ilik|e : thu | schalt hur|e biswik|e
Sor|e ihc me | of-dred|e : he wol|de horn | misred|e .

Ath|elbrus | gan Ath|ulf led|e ' : and in|to bur|e with | him ȝed|e .
Anon | upon Ath|ulf child| : Rym|enhild | gan wex|e wild| .
He wend|e that horn | hit wer|e : that | heo hau|ede ther|e .
Heo set|te him | on bed|de : with Ath|ulf child | he wed|de .
On hir|e arm|es twey|e : Ath|ulf heo | gan lei|e .

Horn | quoth heo | wel long|e : ihc hab|be the lu|ued strong|e .
Thu | schalt thi trewth|e pliȝt|e : on | myn hond | her riȝ|te .
Me | to spus|e hold|e : and ihc | the lord | to wol|de . [2]

Ath|ulf sed|e on hir|e ir|e : so stil|le hit wer|e
Thi tal|e nu | thu lyn|ne : for horn | nis noȝt | her in|ne .
Ne beo | we noȝt | ilich|e : horn | is fair|er and rich|e .
Fair|er bi on|e rib|be : thane an|i man | that lib|be .
Theȝ horn | were un|der mold|e : oth|er el|les wher | he wold|e .
Oth|er hen|ne a thus|end mil|e : ihc nol|de him | ne the | bigil|e .

Rym|enhild hir|e biwen|te : and ath|elbrus ful|e heo schent|e .
Hen|nes thu go | thu ful|e theof| : ne wurs|tu me neu|re mor|e
leof| .
Went ut | of my bur| : with much|el mesau|entur| . &c. &c.

I fully agree in the opinion advanced by Price, as to the origin of this Romance. In its present shape it may be of later date than the Norman version, but the *original* was in all probability Anglo-Saxon. The notions which Ritson

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[1] A metrical point.

[2] In the Harl. MS. *wolde* and *holde* change places, as they certainly ought to do. One might almost think they were misplaced in this MS. from a spirit of waggishness.

About the youth Horn : —the bringing him to bow'r ;
He thought in his mind : it was for no good ;
He took him another man : Athulf, Horn's brother.

"Athulf," he said right anon : "Thou shalt wend with me to bow'r,
"To speak to Rymenhild quietly : and learn her will.
"In likeness of Horn : thou shalt her deceive,
"Sore I fear me : she would Horn mislead."

Athelbrus gan Athulf lead : and to bow'r with him he went,
Anon, upon child Athulf : Rymenhild gan wax wild.
She ween'd that it was Horn : that she had there.
She set him on the seat : with child Athulf went she mad !
Within her arms two : Athulf gan she lay.

"Horn," quoth she, "full long : I have loved thee strongly.
"Thou shalt thy troth plight : here on my hand rightly,
"Me as thy spouse to rule : and I thee as my Lord to hold."

Athulf said in her ear : as softly as might be,
"Cease now thy tale : for Horn is not here,
"Nor be we in aught alike : Horn is fairer and is rich,
"Fairer by a rib[1] : than any man that lives.
"Though Horn were under ground ; or else where'er he would,
"Or hence a thousand miles : I would not him nor thee beguile."

Rymenhild turn'd her round : and foully Athelbrus she shent,
"Hence go thou, thou foul thief : nor shalt thou to me ever
more be dear,
"Wend out of my bow'r : with mickle *mesaventure*, &c. &c.

held on this subject, have been long since losing ground ; and may now be considered as exploded.

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[1] That is, I suppose, *taller* by a rib. I never met with the phrase elsewhere.

CHAPTER IV.

THE METRE OF FOUR ACCENTS has its origin involved in much obscurity. It may be doubted, in the first place, whether it originated in the Latin rhythm of four accents, or is of native growth; and secondly, supposing it of English origin, whether it be a sectional metre, or one that has sprung from the alliterative couplet.

The metre of four accents and eight syllables, was familiar to our *Latinists* at a very early period. In their verses, as in our later English rhythms, we find not only the false accent, but alliteration subordinate to the rhime, and often resting upon unaccented syllables. Of this character are the well-known verses of Aldhelm, written about the close of the seventh century;

Lec tor cas|te cath|olic|e
At|que ob|ses ath|letic|e
Tu|is pul|satus | preci|bus
Ob|noxe | flagi|tanti|bus
Hym|nista | carmen | ceci|ni, &c.[1]

and those of his friend, the great apostle of Germany.

Vale | frater | floren|tibus|
Juven|tutis | cum vir|ibus|
Ut flor|eas | cum Dom|ino|
In sem|piter|no so|lio|, &c.

Now we have early Norman poems, which closely follow the rhythm of these Latin verses; but I have hitherto vainly searched for it in any *English* poem. As soon as the writer turns to his mother-tongue, the tale of syllables is no longer counted, and the rhythm is measured by the ear. As English and Norman poems are often found in the same MS. the contrast is brought distinctly under the eye of the reader, and may, probably, convince him that, although these Latin rhythms may have forwarded the developement of our English metre, they were not the source whence it took its origin.

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[1] These accentual verses are not modelled on the Trochaic Dimeter, which is not mentioned by Bede, and seems to have been unknown to his contemporaries; but on the Dimeter "Iambic Colophon," (Bede calls it *tetrameter*) consisting of an anapæst, two iambics, and a supernumerary syllable. This was a favourite metre, in the 6th and 7th centuries. The verses of Boniface are modelled on the common Iambic Dimeter.

Whether this metre be sectional or not, is a question of greater difficulty. The Gothic dialects of Northern Europe had a metre of four accents, which was clearly of this character; and our own sectional metres abound in verses of four accents, and occasionally exhibit almost all the peculiarities of the metre before us. Still however the position of the stops, the general flow of the rhythm, and even what remains of the alliteration, all tend to throw doubt on the conclusion, to which these facts would seem to lead us.

For instance, we often find stops in the midst of a verse—sometimes even such as close a period.

And leyghten of heore justeris gode
And yeod|en on fot|e : men | they met|ten
And everiche other faire gretten.

And they lighted from their chargers good,
And went on foot. Men they met
And each the other fairly greeted.—*Alisaunder*, 6801.

The subordinate stops are of constant occurrence.

Nis non | so hot| : that hit | ne col|ath
Ne noȝt | so hwit| : that hit | ne sol|ath
Ne noȝt | so leof| : that hit | ne aloth|ath
Ne noȝt | so glad| : that hit | ne awroth|ath

There is nought so hot, that it cooleth not;
And nought so white, that it soileth not;
And nought so dear, that it doth not disgust,
And nought so pleas'd, that it is not angry.
Hule and Niȝtingale, 1266.

Nu son|e heo sed|e . hav|e this ring| .
Whil | he is thin| : ne du|te nothing| .
That fur | the bren|ne[1] : ne adren|che sa.
Ne ire ne steel ne mai the sle.

Now, son, she said, take thou this ring,
Whilst it is thine, fear nothing,
That fire burn thee, or sea drown—
Nor iron nor steel may slay thee.
Floriȝ and Blaunchefiur.

Again, in such poems as show traces of alliteration, we have the rhiming letters varying, for the most part, in each verse. Were the metre *sectional*, I think they would be found, more frequently, running through the couplet. As it is, not only is the alliteration confined to the verse, but such verse often fulfils all the conditions of the alliterative couplet, and this, sometimes, through passages of considerable length. In Ywaine and Gawaine nine out of the twelve first[2] verses are of this character.

Almygh|ti god| : that ma|de mankyn| ,
He schil|de[3] his ser|vandes : out | of sin| !
And mayn|tene them| : with might | and mayne
That her|kens[4] Y|waine : and | Gawaine| !
Thai war knightis : of the tabyl rownde
Tharfor|e lis|tens[5] : a lyt|el stownde .

Ar|thur the kyng| : of Yyn|gland|[6]
That wan al Wales to his hand
And | al Scot|land : als sayes | the buke|
And man|i mo| : if men | will luke|
Of al knightes he bar the prysc
In werld | was non| : so war | ne wise| &c.

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[1] A metrical point in MS.

[2] In poems of the 14th and 15th centuries, the opening lines often betray the model, which the author had in view, though he widely deviates from it, as the poem advances, and he becomes careless in his versification.

[3] 3rd pers. pres. Opt. "May he keep his servants," &c.

[4] 3rd pers. pl. pres. Ind. North. Dialect. "That harken to," &c. An invocation of blessings upon the hearers was a common mode of introduction, both to the Romance and the Mystery.

The oldest English poem, I know of, in this metre is the Hule and Niȝtengale. It is found both in the Layamon MS.[7] and in an Oxford MS.[8] of later date; and was probably written not long after the year 1200. Its author, I have little doubt, was John of Guildford; for it follows (in the Oxford MS.) a poem, that was avowedly written by him; and the praises it bestows upon Nichol of Guildford, could only have proceeded from one, who was an intimate and friend. The two were probably fellow-townsmen.

This poem has certainly been underrated by Warton.[9] I do not think it wanting either in "invention" or "poetry"; but the quality which most distinguishes it, is what John of Guildford would doubtless have termed its *wisdom*. The contrast he draws between the useful and the brilliant, occasionally shews both depth of observation and soundness of judgment.

I shall, however, take those passages which make mention of "Nichole of Guldevorde." So little is known of our earlier writers, that almost any allusion to them must be matter of interest. Nichol appears to have written in praise of the nightingale—probably in some work on the nature of animals.[10]

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[5] 2nd pers. plur. Imperative. Northern Dialect.

[6] *Yngland* was doubtless intended to have three syllables. The Anglo-Saxon *Engla land* had in the Old English sometimes two, sometimes three syllables, and was written both *Engleland* and *England*. These were often confounded.

[7] Cal. A. IX.

[8] Jesus MSS. 86.

[9] It is pretty clear, from his observation upon the rhimes, and also from his notice of the contents, that Warton never read the poem. He seems, indeed, but seldom to have opened a MS.; and when he gives an extract, or ventures a criticism, both extract and criticism will generally be found in the *Catalogue*. Upon the accuracy of the note in the Catalogue he relied in the present case; and it has misled him.

[10] Works on this subject, or "Bestiares" as they were called, seem to have been very popular during the 12th and 13th centuries.

The two rivals are selecting a judge, to decide between

Ich wot | wel quath| : the niȝt|ingal|e .
Ne thar|ef thar | of : bo | no tal|e .
Mais|ter nich|ole : of guld|evord|e .
He | is wis| : an war | of word|e .
He | is of dom|e : suth|e gleu| .
An him | is loth| : eu|rich untheu| .
He | wot in|siȝt : in ech|e song|e .
Wo sing|et wel| : wo sing|et wrong|e .
An he | can sched|e : from | the riȝ|te .
That woȝ|e that thus|tre : from | the liȝ|te .

Tho hul|e one wil|e : hi | bi thoȝ|te .
An af|ter than| : this word | up broȝ|te .
Ich gran|ti wel| : that he | us dem|e .
Vor theȝ | he wer|e : wil|e brem|e .
An lof | him ther|e : niȝ|tingal|e .
An oth|er wiȝ|te : gen|te an smal|e .
Ich wot | he is | nu : suth|e acol|ed .
Nis | he vor | the : noȝt | afol|ed .
That he | for thin|e : ol|de lou|ue .
Me | adun leg|ge : an | the buu|e .
Ne schal|tu neu|re : so | him quem|e .
That | he for|the : fals | dom dem|e .
He | is him rip|e : and | fast red|e .
Ne lust | him un|to : non|e unred|e .
Nu him | ne lust| : na mor|e ple|ie .
He wul|e gon| : a riȝt|e wei|ȝe .

From the next passage we learn Nichol's residence and circumstances. An inquiry after the former obtains the following answer, which shows that if the scholars of the

Hwat nuȝ|te ȝe| : cwath heo | his hom| .
He wuneth at portes hom .
At on|e tun|e : in|e dorset|e .
Bi thar|e see| : in or|e ut-let|e .
Thar | he dem|eth man|ie : riȝ|te dom| .
An diht | an writ| : man|i wisdom| .

them;

I wot wel, quoth the Nightingale,
Thereof need there be no dispute.
Master Nichole of Guldevorde,
He is wise, and wary of words;
He in judging is right skilful,
And hateful to him is every wrong;
He has insight in all songs—
Who sings well, who sings badly;
And he can distinguish from the right
The wrong—the darkness from the light.

The Owl awhile bethought her,
And afterwards this word she spake.
I well agree that he should judge us,
For though he was whilom proud,
And his was the *praise of the Nightingale,*
And of other creatures gent and small,
I wot he is now greatly cooled,
For thee he is no longer fooled,
So that he, for thy old love,
Should put me down, and thee above.
Nor shalt thou ever so him please,
That he for thee false judgment give;
He is ripe and strong in judgment,
Nor welcome to him is any folly;
Now pleaseth him no more to play,
He will go a rightful way.

12th century were sometimes neglected, they were, by no means, backward in obtruding their merits and resenting the affront.

What! know ye not, quoth she, his home?
He wonneth at Portesham,
At a town in Dorset,
By the sea, at an outlet,[1]
There he giveth many a judgment just,
And maketh and writeth many a piece of wisdom,

---

[1] Portisham is a parish near Weymouth. The manor and advowson belonged to the monastery of Abbotsbury.

An thar | his muth|e : an thar | his hond|e .
Hit | is the bet|ere : in | to scot-lon|de .
To sech|e hin|e : is liht|lich thing| .
He nau|eth but|e : on|e woning| .
That | his bisch|open : much|el scham|e .
An al|le wan | the : of | his nom|e .
Hab|beth ihert| : an of | his ded|e .
Hwi nul|leth hi nim|en : heom | to red|e .
That | he wer|e : mid heom | ilom|e .
For thech|e heom| : of his | wisdom|e .
An giu|e him ren|te : aual|e sted|e .
That he | miȝte heom| : ilom|e be nud|e .

Cer|tes cwath | the hul|e : that | is soth| .
Theos rich|e men| : wel much|e misdoth| .
The let|eth than|e : god|e mon| .
The of | so feol|e : thing|e con| .
An giu|eth rent|e : wel | mislich|e .
An | of him let|eth : wel | lihtlich|e .
With heor|e cun|ne : heo | beoth mil|dre .
And giv|eth rent|e : lit|le chil|dre .
Swo heor|e wit| : hi demth | adwol|e .
That eu|er abid| : mais|tre nichol|e .

As the thirteenth century advanced, many English poems were written in this metre. Unfortunately the *manuscripts* are for the most part of later date, and as our language began to change in the fourteenth century, few of them can be implicitly relied on, in any question relating to the rhythm. A Cambridge MS. of the thirteenth century[2] contains a fragment of Floriȝ and Blancheflur, and also a poem on the Assumption of the Virgin.[3] The

Among | the lef|dis : in | the sted|e .
God | to ser|vi : he hir|e dud|e .

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[1] That is—his spoken judgments and his written works. Nichol seems to have presided in some ecclesiastical court.

[2] University Libr. Gg. 4. 27.

[3] There is another copy of this poem, but with considerable variations,

And there his mouth, and there his hand '—
They are the best, as far as Scotland !
To seek him is an easy thing,
He hath but *one* dwelling ;
That may his bishops greatly shame,
(And all, when they of his name
Have heard, and of his works !) ;
Why will they not take thought together
That he with them might often be,
For to teach them of his wisdom ?
And give him the rent of some good place
That he to them might oft be useful ?

Certes, quoth the Owl, that is true ;
These rich men do much amiss ;
They pass by the good man,
That knoweth of so many things ;
And give rents with very different view,
And of *him* think very lightly ;
To their kinsmen they be more indulgent,
And they give rents to little children !
So *their* wit they deem but little,
Whosoever wait for Master Nichole.

rhythm is much looser than in the Hule and Nyȝtingale, often varying from the common to the triple measure ; and the number of accents is much more uncertain. The following extract, from the second of these poems, shows us the part, which the monks assigned to the Virgin, after the resurrection. St. John, we are told, took her to the temple, and when she came,

Among the ladies,[4] in that place,
God to serve she made her ready ;

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in one of the lately purchased MSS. of the Museum. The MS. is of the 14th century.

[4] In the later MS. these ladies become *Nuns*.

Thar | bilef|te heo : al hur|e lif| .
Ne lou|ede he| : nother fiȝt | ne strif| .
Theo | that in| : the tem|ple wer|e .
Me miȝ|te noȝt| : hir|e forber|e .
With al | hure miȝ|te : the whil|e heo was ther|e .
Heo ser|vede both|e : las|se and mor|e .
Pour|e and sik|e : he dud|e god| .
And ser|vede hem| : to hond | and fot| .
Pour|e and hong|rie : wel fair|e he fed|de .
And sik|e heo broȝ|te : in | here bed|de .
Nas | ther non| : so hol | ne fer| .
That | to her| : nad|de mester| .
Hi lou|ede hur|e al|le : with her|e miȝ|te .
For | heo ser|uede : hem | wel riȝ|te .
He wak|ede mor|e : than|e slep| .
Hire son|e to ser|ui : was al | hire kep| .
To | him he clup|ede : with mur|ie [1] stev|ene .
And hir|e he sen|te : an an|gel fram hev|ene .
To glad|ie hir|e : him self | he cam| .
Crist | that fless| : of hir|e nam| .

Seint Jon hire kepte &c.

Several poems were written in this metre during the thirteenth century, among which may be reckoned the romances of Ipomydon, Richard, Kyng Alisaunder, and Havelok;[2] and in all probability that curious satire called the land of Cockaigne,[3] and the Harrowing of Hell.[4] I doubt, however, if there be a MS. of any of these poems, which can date earlier than the year 1300. The rhythm

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[1] The meaning of this word *murie* has been fully discussed in the "Observations upon Mr. Fox's letter to Mr. Grey," a work, which was printed at Cambridge some twenty or thirty years back, for private circulation. In this truly elegant piece of criticism, it is shown, that the *merry* note, which Chaucer attributes to the nightingale, implied nothing more than *sweetness* of sound, and that it is, by no means, inconsistent with the *plaintive* character, which others of our great poets assign to the "nocturnal note." The arguments of the accomplished scholar who wrote it might receive (if

There liv'd she all her life,
Nor lov'd she either fight or strife;
They, that in the temple were,
Could not with her dispense.
With all her might the while she was there,
She served both humble and great;
To poor and sick she did good,
And serv'd them with hand and foot;
The poor and hungry right fairly she fed,
And the sick she brought unto their bed;
Was there none so whole or fair,
That need of her had not;
They lov'd her all, with all their might,
For she serv'd them right well;
She watch'd more than she slept;
Her son to serve was all her care;
To him she called with sweet voice,
And to her he sent an angel from heaven;
To pleasure her himself he came—
Christ! that of her took flesh!

Saint John maintained her, &c.

in all of them is loose, and remarkably so in the Alisaunder. The different *fyttes* in this poem are divided by a few lines, containing some general reflection or description, and for the most part ending with the same rhime. In these passages, the rhythm very generally inclines to the triple measure. The following is a specimen.

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they needed any) strong confirmation from the text, for the word *murie* is actually replaced in the other MS. by *rueful*.

[2] The three first of these poems were printed by Weber in his Metrical Romances, and the last edited by Sir F. Madden for the Roxburghe Club.

[3] Hickes published this poem in his Thesaurus, from a MS. of his friend Tanner—the man, by all antiquaries, "summo cum honore nominandus.' There can be little doubt that this MS. is now the Harl. MS. 913; it opens with the satire.

[4] Harl. 2253. The poem was published in the Archæologia.

Av|eril is meor|y : and long|ith the day|
Lad|ies lov|en : sol|as and play|
Swayn|es jus|tes : knygh|tis turnay|
Syng|eth the nygh|tyngal|e : gred|eth theo jay|
The hot|e sun|ne : chong|eth the clay|
As | ye well : yse|en may|

April is merry, and length'neth the day;
Ladies love solace and play;
Swains the jousts; knights the tournay;
Singeth the nightingale; screameth the jay;
The hot sun changeth the clay;
As ye well may see. — *Alisaunder*, 140.

The gradual change to the common measure is characteristic of the author's rhythm.

In this romance, the sectional rhime is common; and, as regards the final rhime, there is a peculiarity which deserves notice. When the verse is lengthened, the writer often contents himself with a rhime between the accented syllables; making *carpith* answer to *harpe*, l. 5990, and *deontis* to *tent*, l. 1848. This kind of rhime is occasionally found in other poems of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, among others in Havelok.

The Alisaunder was translated partly from the French, and partly from the Latin; the Richard appears to be a loose translation of an earlier Norman poem, and the same was the case with the Ipomydon;[1] but there can

Hwan | he was hos|led and shriv|en
His quis|te mak|ed : and for | him giv|en
His knic|tes ded|e : he al|le sit|e
For thor|w them | : he wold|e wit|e
Hwo mic|te yem|e : his|e chil|dren yung|e
Till | that he couth|en : spek|en wit tung|e
Spek|en and gang|en : on hors|e rid|en
Knict|es and sweyn|es : bi het|e [3] sid|en

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[1] The *Norman* poem was written by Hugh of Rutland (Hue de Roteland).

[2] Laud. 108. The lives of the saints, and the other poems which fill up the MS. are mostly written in the southern dialect.

be little doubt, that both the Norman and the English versions of Havelok are founded on an older poem, of English growth, and probably belonging to the Anglo-Saxon period. The romance (in its present form) appears to have been written by a Lincolnshire man, and in the dialect of that county; but the *manuscript*[2] was probably written in a religious house of some southern county, and to the transcriber may perhaps be imputed such traces of the southern dialect, as are occasionally met with.

This romance has all that interest for an English reader, which must ever attach to an old English story. Whether it be founded on historical fact or not, we know it was most devoutly received as history; and, I take it, not many generatious have passed, since the good folks of Grimsby would but ill have borne any scepticism on the subject. The tale is but a short one, and, in this matter-of-fact age we cannot calculate on the reader's knowledge of such trifles. Grim the fisherman finds a child floating on the waters; he grows up a hero, and after various adventures turns out to be the son of a Danish king, and marries the daughter of a king of England. The foster-father, with his aid, builds Grimsby. Upon this *myth* is founded the romance, which has some merit merely as a poem, and at one time appears to have enjoyed extraordinary popularity. The following extract may give the reader some notion of its style. It describes the death-bed of King Birkabeyn.

When he was housled and shriven,
His bequests made, and for him given,
His knights he made all sit,
For from them would he know,
Who should keep his children young,
Till they knew how to speak with tongue,
To speak, and walk, and ride on horse,
Knights and servants by their side.

---

[3] This is clearly a mistake for *here*.

He spok|en there offe : and chos|en son|e
A rich|e man was| : that un|der mon|e
Was | the trew|est : that | he wen|de
God|ard the king|es : oun|e frende|
And seyd|en he mouc|the : hem | best lok|e
Yif | that he| ; hem un|dertok|e
Till | hise son|e : mou|the ber|e
Helm | on heu|ed : and le|den ut her|e
In | his hand| : a sper|e stark|
And king | ben mak|ed : of | Denmark|

He | wel trow|ede : that | he sey|de
And | on God|ard : hand|es ley|de
And sey|de her|e : bitech|e I the|
Min|e chil|dren : al|le thre|
Al Den|emark| : and al | mi fe|
Til | that mi son|e : of el|de be|
But | that ich wil|le : that | thou swer|e
On au|ter and| : on mess|e ger|e
On | the bel|les : that | men ring|es
On mes|se bok| : the prest | on sing|es
That thou | mine chil|dren : shalt | we[2] yem|e
That hir|e kin| : be ful | wel quem|e
Till | mi son|e : mow|e ben knicth|
Than|ne bitech|e him : tho | his ricth|
Den|emark| : and that | thertil long|es
Cas|teles and toun|es : wod|es and wong|es, &c.

Early in the fourteenth century was written, in nearly the same dialect as Havelok, a version of the psalms[3]—many of them in the metre of four accents. It would not be extravagant praise, to call this one of the best of our English versions; it is indeed a work of singular merit, and some of the psalms are translated with a nerve and spirit, that might do credit even to one of our classical writers.

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[1] When the verse is lengthened, we sometimes find the rhime confined to the accented syllable, as in the Alisaunder; see p. 142. *Wende* has clearly two syllables, but I never remember seeing *frend* with more than one. The *e* is probably a blunder of the transcriber.

They spoke thereof——and chosen soon
Was a rich man, that, under moon,
Was the truest that they knew—
Godard, the king's own friend ;
And said they, *he* might best them keep
If their charge he undertook,
'Till his son might bear
Helm on head, and lead out host,
(In his hand a sturdy spear)
And king of Denmark should be made.

He trusted wel to what they said,
And on Goddard hands he laid,
And said, " Here I entrust to thee
" My children all three,
" All Denmark, and all my fee,
" Till that of age my son shall be.
" But I would, that thou swear,
" On altar and on the mass-gear,
" On the bells that men ring,
" And on mass-book from which the priest sings,
" That my children thou shalt well keep,
" So that their kinsmen be well content,
" Till my son may be knight—
" Then give thou him his right,
" Denmark, and what thereto pertains,
" Castles and towns, woods and plains, &c.

In the MS., which contains this version, the vocal *th* is represented by *y*, as *you*, *yi*, *yai*, &c. for *thou*, *thy*, *they*, &c. This is the earliest instance I have met with, of a mode of spelling which still survives; for instance in the abbreviations y^e, y^m, &c. for *the*, *them*, &c.[4]

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[2] One peculiarity of the dialect is the frequent loss of the *l* final—*we* stands for *well*.

[3] Vesp. D. VII.

[4] If ever our orthography be reformed, the best, because the most familiar, representative of the vocal *th* will be *y*. Our present *y* might resume its old form ẏ and so prevent all fears of a mistake.

I think there can be little doubt that the character of this letter has been

The following is the version of the sixth psalm.

Lau|erd ne thret|e me : in | yi wreth|
Ne ou|er tak|e me : in | yi breth|
Lau|erd haf| : mercy | of me|
Ffor | yat sec|e : am I | to se|
Hel|e me lau|erd : best | you mai|
Ffor al|le mi ban|es : drou|ed ar yai|
And | my saule| : mikel drou|ed isse|
Bot | you lau|erd : towhen | al yisse|
Torn lau|erd and| : mi saule | outtak|e
For | yi mer|cy : sauf | me mak|e
For noght | es in ded|e : yat is myn|ed of ye|
And in hel|le hwa to | ye : schryv|en sal be|
I swank | in mi sygh|ing sted|e
I sal wasch|e bi| : al night|es mi bed|e
With | mi ter|es : in | mi bed|e
Sal | i wet|e : mi lig|yng sted|e
Let | es fra wreth| : myn egh | for yi|
Betwex | my faes| : al el|ded I|

Wit|es fra me| : al yat work|es wyk thing|
For lau|erd herd steu|en : of mi | wepyng|
Herd lau|erd besek|ing of me|
Lau|erd mi bed|e : kep|id has he|

Yai sham|e and to dreu|e : al my faes | swiftely|
Yai biwent | and sham|e : swith rad|ely|

The verses of three accents, which occur in this and in other poems of the same metre, oppose a formidable obstacle to the hypothesis, which has been suggested at the opening of the chapter. They may be attributed to the influence either of the sectional metres, or of certain very peculiar rhythms which we shall notice more at large, in Chapter IX. The Anglo-Saxon writers

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mistaken, and that too, by one of the most cautious and least speculative of our modern editors. Sir Frederic Madden tells us in his edition of Havelok, that he altered such letters as were "manifestly false," as "*th* (þ) for *w* (ƿ), *y* for *th* (þ.)" There is every likelihood of his having confounded the vocal and the whisper letters.

Lord ! threaten me not in thy wrath,
Nor overtake me with thy breath !
Lord ! have mercy on me,
For that I am sick to see !
Heal me, Lord ! (best thou may'st)
For all my bones, vexed are they !
And my soul right vexed is.
But thou Lord ! change all this ;
Turn, Lord ! and snatch forth my soul,
For thy mercy make me whole !
For nought is there in death, that is mindful of thee,
And in hell who before thee shriven shall be ?
I have labour'd in my place of sighing,
I must wash ev'ry night my bed ;
With my tears, in my bed,
Must I wet my place of lying.
Clos'd therefore is mine eye for wrath,
Amongst my foes all aged am I !

Hie from me all ye, that work the wicked thing—
For the Lord heard the cry of my weeping,
The Lord heard my beseeching,
The Lord my prayer—he has kept it !

May they be sham'd and wide-driven all my foes swiftly !
May they be turn'd back, and sham'd right speedily !

sometimes gave a very definite rhythm to their *prose*, and occasionally affected rhime in the syllables, which closed the different members of a sentence. We have an example in the following passage, which, there is reason to believe, was written by the sainted Wulstan—the good and venerable bishop of Worcester. As it contains a very striking notice of King William, and as it is curious

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[1] That is *received it.*

to see how the writer gradually raises his style, till he gives to prose almost the rhythm of poetry, I shall quote it at some length.

No copy of the Chronicle, within reach, containing the passage, I have extracted it from Dr. Ingram's Edition.

——— Gif hwa gewilniged to gewittane hu gedon man he wæs . oththe hwilcne wurthscipe he hæfde . oththe hu fela lande he wære hlaford . thonne wille we be him awritan swa swa we hine ageaton . the him onlocodon . and othre hwile on his hirede wunedon. Se cyng Willelm the we embe sprecath wæs swithe wis man . and swithe rice . and wurthfulre and strengere thone ænig his fore gengra wære. He wæs milde tham godum mannum the God lufedon . and ofer ealle gemet stearc tham mannum the withcwædon his willan. On tham ilcan steode the God him geuthe thet he moste Engleland gegan . he rærde mære mynster . &c.

Eac he wæs swithe wurthful . thriwa he bær his cyne helm ælc geare . swa oft swa he wæs on Englelande . on eastron he hine bær on Winceastre . on pentecosten on Westmynstre . on mide winter on Gleawe ceastre . and thænne wæron mid him ealle tha rice menn ofer eall Engla land . arce bisceopas . and leod bisceopas abbodas and eorlas . thegnas and cnihtas. Swylce he wæs swithe stearc man and ræthe . swa thet man ne dorste nan thing ongean his willan don. He hælde eorlas in his bendum . the dydan ongean his wyllan. Biscopas he sætte of heora biscoprice . and abbodas of heora abbodrice . and thegnas on cweartern . and æt nextan he ne sparode his agenne brothor, &c.

Betwyx othrum thingum nys na to forgytane thet gode frith the he macode on thisan lande . swa thet an man the himsylf aht wære mihte faran ofer his rice mid his bosom full goldes ungederad . and nan man ne dorste slean otherne man . næfde he næfre swa mycel yfel gedon with thone otherne . &c.

He rixade ofer Englæ land . and hit mid his geapscipe swa thurh smeade . thet næs an hid landes innan Englæ lande . thet he nyste hwa heo hæfde . oththe hwæs heo wurth wæs . and siththan on his gewrit gesætt. Bryt land him wæs on gewealde . and he thær inne casteles geworhte . and thet Man cynn mid ealle ge-

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[1] Some mention of his bounty to the church.

[2] Some account of Odo.

The rhiming syllables are marked in Italics, and when two members of a sentence, or (if we may use the term) two *sections* seem closely knit together by the rhythm, their accents are defined in the same way as if they formed a verse.

——— If any wish to know what manner of man he was, or what state he held, or of how many lands he was Lord—then will we of him write, as we him knew, we that upon him looked, and other whiles in his court abode. The king Willelm, of whom we speak, was a very wise man and very rich, and more stately and powerful than any of his predecessors were. He was mild to the good men, that loved God, and beyond all measure stern to the men that withsaid his will. In the same place, where God granted him that he might England gain, he rear'd a mighty minster, &c. [1]

Eke he was right stately. Thrice he bare his crown each year, as oft as he was in England; at Easter he bare it in Winchester, at pentecost in Westminster, at midwinter in Gloucester; and then were with him all the rich men over all England—archbishops and folk-bishops, abbots and earls, thanes and knights. So was he a right stern man and hot, so that anything against his will durst no man do; he kept *earls* in his custody, that did aught against his will. Bishops he put from their bishopric, and abbots from their abbacy, and thanes into prison, and at last he spared not his own brother, &c. [2]

Amongst other things should not be forgotten the good peace that he made within this land, so that a man, that himself were aught,[3] might pass through his kingdom, with his bosom full of gold, uninjured. And no man durst slay his fellow-man, had he done never so mickle evil against that other, &c.

He ruled over England, and by his skill so thoroughly scrutinised it, that there was not a hide of land in England, that he wist not who had it, and what it was worth and then put it in his book. Britland was in his power, and he therein built castles, and the wealde. Swylce eac Scotland he him underthædde for his micele strengthe. Normandige thet land wæs his gecynde . and ofer eorldome the Mans is gehaten he rixade . and gif he moste tha gyt twa gear lybban . he hæfde Irlande mid his werscipe gewunnon . and withuton ælcon wæpnon.

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[3] The A.S. *aht* is opposed to the A.S. *naht* vile, naught. It is the O.E. *oht* and the modern *owt* of Lancashire—*nowt that 's owt*, naught that 's good. —*Tim Bobbin, sc.* 2.

Witodlice on his timan hæfdon men mycel geswinc . and swithe manige teonan. Cas|teles | he let wyrc|ean . and earm|e men swith|e swenc|ean . se cyng wæs swa swithe stearc . and benam of his undertheoddan man manig marc goldes . and ma hundred punda seolfres . thet | he nam | be *riht*|*e* . and | mid mic|elan | un*riht*|*e* . of | his *leod*|*e* . for lit|telre *neod*|*e* . he | wæs on git|sunge ge*fal*|*lan* . and græd|ines|se he luf|ode | mid *cal*|*lan*.

He sæt|te mic|el *deor* | *frith* . and | he læg|de lag|a *thær* | *with* .[2] Thet swa | hwa swa slog|e heort | oththe hind|e. Thet hin|e man sceol|de blend|ian. He | forbead | tha heort|as . swylc|e eac | tha bar|as . swa swith|e he luf|ode | tha *hea* | *deor* . swylc|e he wær|e heor|a *fæd*|*er* . Eac | he sæt|te be | tham *har*|*an* . Thet | he mos|ten freo *far*|*an* . his ric|e men | hit mænd|on . and | tha earm|e men | hit beceor|odon . ac | he wæs | swa *stith*| .[3] thet | hene roht|e heora eall|ra *nith*| . ac | hi mos|ton mid eal|le· thes cyng|es wil|le folg|ian . gif | hi wol|don *lib*|*ban* . oth|the land *hab*|*ban* . land | oththe *eah*|*ta* . oth|the wel | his *seht*|*a* . Wal|la*wa* . [3] thet æn|ig man sceol|de mod| igan *swa* . hin|e self | up aheb|ban and o|fer eal|le men tel|lan . Se æl|mihtig|a God cyth|æ his saul|e mild|heort*nis*|*se* . and do | him his syn|na forgif|e*nys*|*se* .

I cannot help thinking that this rhythmical prose was *one* of the instruments in breaking up the alliterative system of the Anglo-Saxons. Its influence may be traced in the rhythm of Layamon; and I think it must also, in some instances, have modified the metre, whose properties we are now investigating. The connexion between them may perhaps be made plainer, if we examine the

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[1] *Werscipe may* mean the reputation of one's manhood, as *eorlscipe* means the reputation of a great leader or earl; see p. 82, n. 10. But I rather think, in the present case, that it is merely a corruption of *wærscipe*.

Man-people he ruled withal. So eke Scotland he subdued by his mickle strength. The land of Normandy was his by birth; and over the earldom, that is hight Mans, he reigned; and if he might yet have lived two years, he had won Ireland by his prudence,[1] and without any weapons.

Assuredly, in his time, had the people much toil, and very many sufferings. Castles he let men build, and the poor people sorely harass. The king was so very stern! And he took from his liege-man many a mark of gold, and moreover many a hundred of pounds of silver. That he took, with right—and with mickle *unright*—from his people, with little need. He was fallen into covetousness, and greedyness he loved withal.

He laid out a mickle dear-forest, and he laid down laws therewith—that whoso slew hart or hind, that him they should blind. He forbade to kill the harts, so also the boars. As strongly he lov'd the great game, as though he had been their father. Eke he made laws for the hares, that they should freely pass. His rich men bemoan'd it, and the poor men murmur'd at it; but he was so stern, that he reck'd not all their hate; but they must, withal, the king's will follow, if they would live, or land have—land or possessions, or even his peace. Walawa! that any man should be so proud! himself uplift, and over all men vaunt! may the almighty God show to his soul mercy, and grant him of his sins forgiveness!

rhythm of certain verses, that were written in the early half of the twelfth century.

The following hymn to the virgin is attributed[4] to St. Godric, who died at Finchale near Durham in the year 1174, after living the life of a hermit, in that sheltered and leafy nook, some sixty years.

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[2] I think the proper accentuation would be *thær with*|, but the writer clearly intended it to rhime with *deor* | *frith*.

[3] No metrical point.

[4] I have taken my copy from the King's MS. 5 F. VII.

Sain|te Mar|ie | virgin|e
Mod|er Jhes|u Cris|tes Naȝ|aren|e
Onfo | schild | help | thin Godric|
Onfang | bring heg|elich with | the in God|es rich|e

Sain|te Mar|ie cris|tes bur|
Maid|enes clen|had mod|eres flur|
Dil|ie min sin|ne rix | in min mod|
Bring | me to win|ne with the | selfd god|

In the second of these staves (if we may so term them) each verse divides itself into two regular sections;* but the rhythm of the first stave can hardly be distinguished from that of the prose we have just been noticing. In this kind of rhythm were also written the verses, which

Mer|ie sung|en the mun|eches bin|nen Ely|
Tha Cnut | ching reu | ther by|
Row|eth kniht|es noer | the lant|
And her|e we | thes mun|eches sang|

After all, the formation of this metre shows itself under such different aspects, when seen from different points of view, that a writer, who should exclusively adopt any one hypothesis, might give better proof of his courage, than of his prudence. Whatever be its origin—whether the stream has flowed from one source, and coloured its waters with the strata over which it passed—or resulted from the union of two or more independent streamlets, which, in blending their waters, have mixed their properties—it will be admitted, on all hands, that no license should be granted in any classical metre, which

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* In the two last verses we should also notice the rhime between *sinne* and *winne;* if this be not accidental, it is the first instance, I have met with, of an interwoven rhime in our language.

Saint Mary! Virgin!
Mother of Jesu Christ the Nazarene!
Take, shield, help thy Godric!
Take, bring him speedily with thee to God's realm.

Saint Mary! Christ's bower!
Maiden's purity! the mother's flower!
Hide my sin! reign in my heart!
Bring me to joy, with thyself good!

are found in the Book of Ely. The monk, who wrote the MS. in 1170, *tells* us they were made by king Knut, as he approached the isle, on one of the great festivals; they were probably composed not long after the year 1100.

Sweetly sung the monks in Ely,
When Knut king row'd thereby,
"Row, knights, near the land,
"And hear we these monks' song.

is clearly adverse to the usual flow of the rhythm, or strikingly inconsistent with its general character. On this ground, I would still venture to uphold the criticism, which was hazarded in the first volume.* I must still think that the middle pause is *essential* to this metre; or—to say the least—that when, as in the Allegro and Penseroso, the rhythm has brought it prominently under notice, it cannot be, at pleasure, abandoned. With this exception, the versification of these poems is as exquisite as the poetry; and as to *that* there can be but one opinion—had Milton written nothing else, his name must have been immortal.

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* Page 161.

CHAPTER V.

OLD ENGLISH ALLITERATIVE METRE.

In the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries many poems were written in a metre, which exhibits all the more essential properties of our Anglo-Saxon rhythms. Each verse may be divided into two sections; the first of which contains *two,* and the latter *one* accented syllable, marked with the alliteration.* It differs from the alliterative couplet of the Anglo-Saxons in the nature of its pauses, the middle pause being always subordinate to the final; in its greater length, the number of accents being generally 5 or 6, very seldom indeed so few as 4; and in the greater comparative importance of the first section, which has generally more accents than the second. All these points of difference may, I think, be attributed to the influence of the Psalm-metres, of which we shall have more to say in the next chapter.

That an alliterative metre, like the present, should have resulted from the causes which were then in action, might have been expected; but the sudden manner in which it seems to have started into existence, is by no means easy to account for. The year 1360 is the earliest date we can *positively* assign to any poem in this metre; and I know of none which we can, with any show of reason, suppose to have been written more than twenty or thirty years earlier. If we consider Layamon as an alliterative poet, here is a gap of nearly two centuries; and, if we deny him that character, of more than two centuries and a half, since the last known date of any regular alliterative poem.

It is, I think, not improbable that alliterative rhythm may have yielded, in the south,* to the more fashionable novelties of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; and have kept its place in the north and west, till the success of Langland again made it one of our classical metres. This hypothesis would account for the blank, which breaks in upon the series of our alliterative poems; and must, if admitted, in some measure lessen our hopes of regaining what is lost.

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* In place of an obscure or obsolete word, the copyists would often substitute some *gloss;* and, from the liberty thus taken, the alliteration has in many cases suffered. The rule given in the text agrees with that laid down by Crowley, in his edition of Piers Plowman, A. D. 1550, that there must be "*three* wordes, at the leaste, in every verse, whiche beginne with some one letter." We seldom find the rule violated in the older MSS.

There are, however, critics who go much further, and consider this metre an *invention* of the fourteenth century. Warton, with some hesitation, would yield the honour to Langland; but, as William and the Werwolf was certainly written before the Vision of Piers Ploughman, the claim, which its editor seems half inclined to make in favour of *his* author, is certainly the better founded of the two. In his preface he quotes the following verses,

In this wise hath William al his werke ended,
As fully as the Frensche text fully wold aske,
And as his witte him wold serve thouȝh it were febul.
But though the metur be nouȝt made at eche mannes paye,
Wite him nougt that it wrouȝt he wold have do beter,
ȝif is wite in eny weiȝes wold him have served.

In this way hath William ended all his work,
As fully as the French text would require it to be done;
And as his wit would serve him (though that indeed be feeble).
But though the metre be not made to each man's content,
Blame not him that made it, he would have done better,
If his wit, in any way, would have served him.

from which he infers, that "the alliterative form of Alexandrine verse had not yet become popular, and was, in fact, but lately introduced." But surely the language of the poet is not that of a man, who is *beforehand* with his hearers. He seems rather to fear the censures of a *critical* audience—one, that might be ill-satisfied with an old-fashioned rhythm, or at any rate alive to the slightest violation of a metre, that had probably been familiar to them from childhood.

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* The reader need hardly be reminded of Chaucer's lines,

But trusteth well, I am a *southerne* man,
I cannot rhime *rim*, *ram*, *ruf*, by my letter.

William's patron, Humphrey Bohun, Earl of Hereford, is twice mentioned as still living. As he succeeded to the earldom in 1335, and died in 1361, the romance must have been written sometime between these two dates. It was a translation of a French tale, which had itself been translated from the Latin in the twelfth century;* and

Hit | bifel | in that for|est : ther|e fast | by sid|e
Ther won|ed a wel | old cherl| : that was | a cou|herde
That fel|e win|teres in | that for|est : fayr|e had ke|pud
Men|nes ken | of the cun|tre : as | a com|en herd|e,
And thus | it bitid|e that tim|e : as tel|len our|e bok|es
This cow|herd com|es on | a tim|e : to kep|en is bes|tes
Fast | by sid|e the bor|wȝ : ther|e the barn | was in|ne
The herd | had with | him an hound| : his hert | to liȝt|
For|to bayt|e on his bes|tes : wan|ne thai | to brod|e went|
The herd | sat than | with hound| : aȝen|e the hot|e sun|ne
Nouȝt ful|ly a fur|long : fro | that fayr|e child|
Clouȝ|tand kynd|ely | his schon| : as | to here craft | fal|les
That whil|e was | the wer|wolf : went | a bout|e his pray|e
What | beho|ued to | the barn| : to bring | as he miȝt|

The child | than dark|ed in | his den| : dern|ly him on|e
And was | a big | bold barn| : and brem|e of his ag|e
For spak|ly spek|e it couth|e tho| : and sped|elich|e to waw|e
Lov|ely lay | it along| : in | his lon|ely den|ne
And bus|kede him out | of the busch|ys : that | were blow|yd gren|e
And lev|ed ful lov|ely : that lent | grete schad|e
And brid|des ful brem|ely : on | the bow|es sing|e
What | for mel|odye that | thei mad|e : in | the mer|y se|soun
That lit|el child lis|tely : lork|ed out | of his cav|e
Fair|e flour|es for|to fecch|e : that he | be for|e him sey|e
And | to gad|ere of | the gras|es : that gren|e wer|e and fayr|e
And whan | it was | out went| : so wel | hit him lik|ed
The sa|vour of | the swet|e se|soun : and song | of the brid|des
That ferd|e fast | a bout|e : flour|es to gad|ere
And layk|ed him long | while : to list|en that merth|e

The cou|herdes hound | that tim|e : as hap|pe by tid|de
Feld fout|e of the child| : and fast | thider ful|wes

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* By command of "La Contesse Yolent," daughter of Baldwyn, Earl of Hainault. One MS. of the French version, and I believe the only one now extant, is in the King's library at Paris.

may, perhaps, be looked upon as the oldest specimen of this metre, that has yet been discovered.

The MS. is of the fourteenth century. The middle pause is *not* marked; and the opening of the tale is missing. The child, who plays the hero, has been carried off by the Werwolf to a distant forest, and hidden in the beast's den. His discovery by the cowherd is told as follows.

It chanced in that forest (fast beside it)
There dwelt a right old churl, that was a cowherd,
That many winters, in that forest, had fairly tended
Men's cattle, of the neighbourhood, as a common herd.
And thus it chanced that time (as our books tell us)
This cowherd comes, on a time, to tend his beasts,
Fast beside the hole, wherein the child was.
The herdsman had with him a hound, to glad his heart,
And to set on his beasts, when they ranged too widely.
The herdsman sat then with his hound in the warm sunshine,
Not quite a furlong from that fair child,
Clouting as usual his shoon (as is the custom of their craft).
That time was the werwolf gone about his prey,
To bring, as he might, what was needful for the child.

The child then lurk'd in his den, all secretly alone,
And was a big bold barn, and strong for his age;
For readily could it speak then, and quickly move about.
Lovely lay it along in its lonely den!
And he gat him out of the bushes, that were greenly blow'd,
And leaved full lovely, so that they gave great shade.
And the birds right shrilly sing on the boughs!
Forsooth for the melody that they made in the merry season,
That little child, with joy, crept out of his cave,
Fair flowers to fetch that he saw before him;
And to gather some of the grasses, that were green and fair.
And when he had gone forth, so well it pleas'd him,
The savour of the sweet season, and the song of the birds,
That he rambled fast about, flowers to gather,
And amused him long while with listening to that merry-making.

The cowherd's hound that time, as chanc'd to happen,
Caught scent of the child, and follow'd fast thitherward.

And son|e as | he it seiȝ| : soth|e for | to tel|le
He gan | to berk|e on that barn| : and to bai|e it hold/
That | it war neiȝ | of his witt| : wod | for fer|e
And com|sed than | to cry|e : so ken|y and schil|ly
And wep|te so won|der fast| : wit|e thou | for soth|e
That | the son | of the cry| : com | to the cow|herde ev|ene
That | he wist wit|erly| : it was | the vois | of a child|e

Than ros | he up rad|ely : and ran | thider swith|e
And drow | him toward | the den| : by | his dog|ges noyc|e
Bi | that tim|e was | the barn| : for ber|e of that houn|de
Draw|e him in | to his den| : and dark|ed ther sti|le
And wept | ev|ere as | it wol|de : a wed|e for fer|e
And ev|ere the dog|ge at the hol|e : held | it at | a bay|e
And whan | the kou|herd com | thide : he cour|ed low|e
To | bi|hold | in at | the hol|e : whi | his hound | berk|yd
Than|ne of saw | he ful son|e : that sem|liche child|
That, | so lov|elich|e lay | and wept| : in that loth|ly cav|e
Cloth|ed ful com|ly : for an|y kud king|es son|e
In god|e cloth|es of gold| : a greth|ed ful rich|e
With per|rye and pel|lure, &c.

Many other alliterative romances appear to have been written in the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. One of the earliest of these may be the poem, which is found at the end of the *Roman d'Alexandre*, in the Bodleian Library.* Its subject is Alexander's visit to the Gymnosophists, and it was avowedly added for the purpose of supplying an omission in the French romance. It contains more than 1200 verses; and was probably written not long after the French poem was transcribed, perhaps about the middle of the fourteenth century. Another alliterative poem, relating to Alexander, is found

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* Bodl. MSS. B. 264. The poem I have merely glanced over, but have seen enough to show me the gross inaccuracy of Warton's quotation. Verses are run into each other, and the common word *hem* (them) is rendered *hevi!* Price should have corrected these blunders.

† Ashm. MSS. 44. This MS. I have not seen. According to Warton it is divided into 27 passus, according to Whitaker (or rather Conybeare), into 16 cantos. See Preface to Whitaker's Piers Ploughman.

And soon as he sees him, the sooth to tell,
He gan to bark upon that child, and to hold it at bay,
So that it was nigh out of its wits, mad for fear;
And gan then to cry so keenly and shrilly,
And wept so wondrously fast (for sooth believe it)
That the sound of the cry reach'd even to the cowherd,
So that he knew right well it was the voice of a child.

Then rose he up speedily, and ran thither quickly,
And drew him toward the den, guided by the noise of his dog.
By that time had the child, on account of the hound's baying,
Withdrawn him into the den, and there lurk'd without stirring,
And wept ever as it would go mad for fear;
And ever the dog at the hole held it at bay.
And when the cowherd came thither, he cower'd low,
To look in at the hole, why his dog barked.
Then saw he full soon that beautiful child,
That so lovely lay and wept, in that loathly cave,
Clothed full comely, fit for any far-famed king's son,
In good clothes of gold trick'd out full richly
With jewels and fur, &c.

among the Ashmolean MSS.† Warton "believed" this to be the same as the one last mentioned; but it does not appear that his belief was founded on any examination of the manuscript.

One of the Cotton MSS.‡ contains a string of Scripture histories, written in this metre; such as the story of Noah, of Abraham and the three Angels, of Daniel, and of Jonah. The poem is, for several reasons, curious, and especially so to the philologist; but I do not think it of much earlier date than the manuscript, which certainly belongs to the latter half of the fourteenth century. Another Cotton MS.§ the date of which may be some forty or fifty years later, furnishes us with two alliterative romances, the "Chevalere Assigne," and the "Sege || of

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‡ Nero, A. x.

§ Cal. A. II.

|| There is another version of this poem in the metre of 4 accents, which appears to have been made by Adam Davie, early in the fourteenth century.

Jerusalem." A short extract from the latter will enable us to compare the costly habiliments of the fifteenth cen-

Vaspasiane dressede hym fro his bedde : and arayde him fayre
Fro the foote to the forhedde : in fyne cloth of golde
And aftur putteth that prince : aboue his gay a ray
An haburione browdered thikke : wit a brest plate

The grate on the graye steele : was of golde ryche
Ther on castede he a cote : of color of his armes
And a grete gyrdell of golde : wit oute gere more
He leyde on his lendes : wit lachettes full monye

A bryȝte burnysched swerde : he gyrdeth hym a bowte
Of pure polysched golde : bothe pomell and hyltes
A brode shynynge schelde : on his schulder he hanged
And bokeled wit bryȝte golde : a bouen at the nekke

The gloves of graye steele : wit golde were hemmed
When he was a rayde thus : his hors sone he asked
The golde heweid helme : him wæs browȝte thenne after
Wit visor and ventayle : avysed for the nones

And a crowne of clene golde : was closed a bouen
Rayled rounde a boute the helme : full of ryche stones
Pyȝte prowdely wit perlis : the helme rounde a bowte
And with safyres sette : the sythes to and fro

He strydeth on a stiffe steede : and styred on the grounde
Lyȝte as a lyon were losed[2] : of his cheyne
His menne syȝe hym eche oone : and euery manne sayde to other
This is a komely kynge : knyȝtes to lede.

He pryked to the barres : ere he a byde wolde
And beteth on wit his swerde : that the brasse ryngedde
Cometh out ȝe kaytyfes he seyde : that cryste slewe
And knowe hym for ȝor god : ore ye cacche more.

ȝe may fette ȝou no foode : thogh ȝe dye schulde
And also to ȝor watyr : wynne ȝe maye nevere
A droope thogh ȝe dye schulde : dayes in ȝor lyue
The pale[3] that here pyght as : passe who so may.

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[1] The *grit* was the metal worked into the steel.

[2] Here the middle pause is misplaced in the MS. It ought to have followed the word *lyon*.

tury with the simple toilet, which contented "fair knighthood" in the twelfth.[3]

Vespasian gat him from his bed, and array'd him fairly,
From the foot to the forehead, with fine cloth of gold.
And afterwards that prince putteth above his gay array
A habergeon thickly embroider'd, and a breastplate;

The grit,[1] on the gray steel, was of rich gold.
Thereon he cast a coat, of the colour of his arms;
And a great girdle of gold, without more apparel,
He laid on his loins with ties full many.

A bright burnish'd sword he girdeth about him
Of pure polish'd gold, both pummel and hilt.
A broad shining shield on his shoulder he hung,
And buckled with bright gold above at his neck.

The gloves of gray steel with gold were hemm'd.
When he was thus arrayed his horse soon he ask'd for.
The gold-colour'd helm was then afterwards brought him,
With visor and ventaile, prepared for the nonce.

And a crown of clear gold was encircled above,
Circled round about the helm, full of rich stones;
Proudly fix'd with pearls, round about the helm,
And set with saphyrs to and fro the sides.

He steppeth upon a stiff steed, and pranced on the earth,
Light as a lion, that were loosed from his chain.
His men saw him each one, and every man said to other,
"This is a comely king, knights to lead."

He prick'd to the gates, ere he would stop,
And beateth on them with his sword, so that the brass rung again.
"Come out ye caitifs, that slew Christ,
"And know him for your God, ere ye suffer more.

"Ye may fetch you no food, though ye should die for't,
"And also to your water never may ye get.
"Not a drop (though ye should die for't) all the days of your life,
"The pale[4] that here is fix'd, let him pass whoso may;

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[3] See p. 119.

[4] *Pale*, (*peel*, in the northern dialect,) originally meant an earthen work; but was afterwards used for any small fortalice, of whatever materials constructed.

It is full bygge at the banke : and hath ȝor cyte closed
Ffor that fowrty menne to fyȝte : aȝens five houndred
Thogh ȝe were deueles echon : aȝeyn turne ȝe schull
And ȝette more worshyppe hit were : mercy to be seche.

Then for to marre meteless : ther no myght helpyth
Ther were none to speke on worde : but waited her tyme
If any styrte out a straye : wit stones to kyllc
Wroth as a wylde bore : he wendeth his brydell

Thogh ȝe dye as dogges : the devell have that rekketh
And thogh I wende fro the wall : ȝe shull a byde me here
And ofte spedelyer speke : ere I ȝor speche here *&c.*

The right scansion of these verses is a matter of difficulty, owing to the license taken in the use of the *e* final. This letter is sometimes used for the mere purposes of orthography, and sometimes forms an integral portion of the word; and, in the latter case, it is sometimes pronounced and sometimes mute. As there are other difficulties arising from blunders of transcription,* I thought it safer to leave these verses without scanning them.

The poem is divided into staves, after the model, it would seem, of the psalm-metres ; but as the rhythm is very slightly, if at all, affected by this division, I have treated it as a specimen of the common alliterative metre.

The latest alliterative tale yet discovered, is the "Scottish Field," written by Leigh of Baguleigh, soon after the year 1515. It was found in the Percy MS.; and, according to the editor, contains a very curious and detailed account of the Scottish invasion, which ended with the battle of Flodden. It were to be wished he had been more copious in his extracts.

But the most valuable specimens of this metre are to be found in the satires and allegories, which the success of Langland appears to have called into existence. They are valuable not only as pictures of manners, but as showing the prevailing modes of thinking, and the currents

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* How faulty this copy must be, we may partly learn from the imperfect alliteration.

"It is full large at the bank, and hath your city enclosed,
"So that forty men might fight against five hundred.
"Though ye were devils each one, turn and meet me ye should,
"And yet more worthy thing it were to ask for mercy,

"Then to waste without meat, where no strength availeth."
There were none to speak one word, but they waited their time;
If any stray'd out from shelter, with stones to kill him.
Wroth as a wild boar he turneth his bridle,

"Though ye die as dogs, the devil have him that recketh,
"And though I turn from the wall, ye shall abide me here,
"And speak often and more readily, ere I your speech hear."

of public opinion. The work of Langland is also curious. as being the product of a rich and powerful mind, drawing upon its own stores, unaided (perhaps I might have said unfettered) by rule and precedent. When carefully examined, it will not be found wanting in the important quality of *unity,* the absence of which so much lessens our enjoyment of many contemporary poems; but the execution of the work is certainly superior to its conception, and shows indeed a wonderful versatility of genius. A high tone of feeling is united to the most searching knowledge of the world; sarcastic declamation is succeeded by outpourings of the most delicate poetry; and broad humour or homespun mother-wit by flights, which neither Spenser nor Milton have disdained to follow.

The author's *name* is first mentioned by Bale, in the year 1559. This writer styles him Robert Langland, a native of Mortimers Cleobury, in Shropshire; and is confirmed, both as to name and birth-place, by Holinshed, who also calls him a secular priest. But according to Stow and Wood, he was named John Malvern, and was Fellow of Oriel; and, according to the latter, a Worcestershire man. Wood also tells us, that he became a Benedictine at Worcester, and was by some persons called Robert Langland.

It is very unlikely that the name and history of our most popular poet (after Chaucer) should be matter of dispute within a century and a half of his death. Both these, seemingly conflicting, accounts may be true, and may be reconciled, as it appears to me, without much difficulty. The poet's christian name of Robert may, according to a common practice, have been changed into John when he entered the monastery. As to his surname of Langland, this may have been taken from the farm where he was born; and as he makes Malvern (which was then as important an ecclesiastical station, as it still is a striking object in the landscape) the scene of his vision, we may readily understand how the surname, derived from an obscure homestead, was supplanted by one so familiar to his fellow-monks of Worcester. As Cleybury, moreover, lies on the borders of Worcestershire, Wood's mistake, in calling him a native of that shire, is easily accounted for.

Another difficulty was started by Tyrwhitt. In some MSS. the title of the work is *Visio Wil' de Piers Plouhman*, and the sleeper throughout is addressed by the name of *Wille.** To write however in a fictitious character was agreeable to the spirit of the age; and the dreamer's name of William, his house on Cornhill, and his daughters, Kitty and Calot, are, I believe, as much inventions of the poet, as the dream itself.

The popularity of this writer is shown by the many copies, which are still extant, of his Visions. But the variations between them are so many and important, that neither difference of dialect, nor carelessness on the part of the copyist, will satisfactorily account for them. One set of these MSS. agree well with the early printed editions; and a second may be represented by the modern edition of Mr. Whitaker. As there are copies, in both sets, which clearly belong to the fourteenth century, and were probably written during the lifetime of the author, it has been conjectured, that Langland himself revised the poem; and, according to Whitaker, *his* copy exhibits the poem as it first came from the hands of its author. But Price found this satire,' as it were, in outline, in the Harl. MS. 6041. Though the *copy* be a late one, the poem shows all the freshness of invention; few of the episodes are inserted, and many passages but slightly touched, which, in all the printed editions, are worked up with much particularity of detail.

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* Ritson attempted, very ingeniously, to get over the difficulty, by melting down *Wille* into an abstraction, " a personification of the mental faculty," and by considering the *title* a mistake, arising from the misapprehension of the copyist. But, unfortunately, in some MSS. instead of *Wille*, we have the name at full length, *William.*

From this copy I have hitherto quoted; and, had space allowed, it was my intention to have extracted the first *passus*, which answers to the first and second of the printed editions. In the *fifth* passus are to be found the verses* which refer to the "south-west wind, on Saturday at eve;" and which fix the date of the poem.† There is therefore little doubt that the poem, even in this its earliest form, was not written before the year 1362.

Piers Plouhman's *Crede* is generally coupled with Langland's Visions. It must have been written after the year 1484, for Wiclif is mentioned as no longer living. This however is the extent of our knowledge; the author's name or circumstances are alike unknown.

With these poems may be classed the allegory in the Percy MS. called *Life and Death;* and the Vision, which the learned editor extracted from "a small 4to MS. in private hands." The former of these poems was probably written a short time before, and the latter a short time after the year 1400. Dunbar's *Twa marriit Women and the Wedo,* may have been written about the year 1500. Its wit is more than equalled by its grossness.

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* They are found in the *sixth* passus of the printed editions.

† Tyrwhitt, with the sagacity that was natural to him, and which, if it had been equally shown in his philological speculations, would have fully entitled him to Whitaker's epithet κϱιτικωτατος, pointed out a passage in the Decem Scriptores, c. 21, &c. which records, that on the 15th day of January, 1362, "circa horam vesperarum ventus vehemens notus australis africus tantâ rabie erupit, &c." The 15th of January was a *Saturday*: and Langland, we may infer, during this winter was writing his Visions.

Besides the alliterative poems already mentioned, there are others which are divided into *staves.* Strictly, perhaps, these ought not to be noticed in the present book; but, as it is important to take one general view of our alliterative metre, the rule may, I think, in this instance, be departed from with more advantage than inconvenience.

Of these poems one of the most curious is found in the Cotton MS. Nero, A. x. It is quoted by Mr. Stevenson and Sir F. Madden, under the title of "Gawayn and the Green Knight," and is referred to by Price, as "the Aunter of Sir Gawain." All reference to their MS. is carefully avoided by these writers,* and possibly there may be copies of the poem, which have escaped my notice. As Price uses a title, which is found in Wynton's Chronicle, he would probably, like Wynton, have attributed the

Ful er|ly befor|e the day| : the folk | uprys|en
Gcs|tes that go | wolde : hor grom|es thay cal|den
And | thay bus|ken up | bily|ue : blon|kkeȝ to fad|el
Tyf|fen her tak|les : trus|sen her mal|es
Rich|en hem | the rych|est : to ryd|e al|le arayd|e
Lep|en up lyȝtl|y : lach|en her bryd|eles
Uch|e wyȝ|e on | his way| : ther | hym wel | liked
The leu|e lor|d | of the lon|de : watȝ | not the last|
Aray|ed for | the ryd|yng : wit renk|keȝ ful mon|y
Et|e a sop has|tyly : when | he had|e herde mas|se
Wit bu|gle to bent|-felde : he bus|keȝ by lyn|e
By that | that an|y day-lyȝt| : lem|ed up|on erth|e

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* Price certainly intended to publish this poem, and therefore his jealousy with respect to the MS. is readily understood; may we infer that the other two have the same intention?

The word *blonk* means properly a grey horse; but it was afterwards used as a general name for that animal.

poem to "Huchown," or Hugh. The rhiming chronicler quotes the "Gest hystoriale," of one "Huchown of the Awle ryale," who

> ——— made the gret Gest of Arthure,
> And *the Awntyre of Gawayn,*
> The Pistil als of Swete Susane.
> He wes curyows in his style,
> Fair of Facund, and subtile;
> And ay to plesans of delyte,
> Made in meeter meit his dyte.

As Wynton wrote about the year 1420, Hugh may have flourished at the close of the fourteenth century. He is certainly the oldest English poet, born north of Tweed, whose works have reached us. His stave is peculiar to him; and consists of an irregular number of verses, separated by a kind of wheel, or burthen. The following passage, which describes a grand hunting party, contains two of these staves; and will give the reader a more correct notion of their peculiarities than any description. The middle pause is not marked in the MS.

Full early before the day, the folk uprise;
Guests, that wish'd to go, their grooms they call'd,
And they busk up quickly, their greys [1] to fettle,
They tiff [2] their tackle-gear, truss their males,
Rig themselves out most richly, to ride all array'd;
They leap up lightly, and catch their bridles,—
Each man on the way, where him best pleased.
The dear Lord of the land was not the last,
Array'd for the riding, with fellows full many.
He eats a sop hastily, when he had heard mass;
With bugle to the bent-field,[3] he busketh quickly.
By the time any daylight gleamed upon earth,

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[2] To *tiff*, to deck out, to dress, is still a common word in several of our counties.

[3] *Bent* is the coarse wiry grass which grows upon the upland. It was also sometimes used for the uplands themselves.

He | wit his hath|eles : up|on hyȝ|e hors|ses wer|en
Then|ne thise cach|eres that couth|e : cowp|led hor houn|deȝ
Unclos|ed the ken|el dor|e : and cal|de hem | ther out|e
Blwe byg|ly in bug|leȝ : thre bar|e-mot|e
Brach|es bay|ed ther-for|e : and brem|e noys|e mak|ed
And | thay chas|tysed | and char|red : on chas|ing that went|
A hun|dreth of hun|teres : as | I haf herde[2] | tel|le
of | the best|
To trys|tors vew|ters ȝod|
Coup|les hun|tes of-kest|
Ther ros | for blas|teȝ god|e
Gret rurd | in that | forest|
At | the first queth|e of the quest| : quak|ed the wyl|de
Oer-drof | in the dal|e : dot|ed for dred|e
Hiȝ|ed to | the hyȝ|e : bot het|erly | thay wer|e
Restay|ed at | the stab|lye : that stout|ly astry|ed
Thay let | the hert|tes haf | the gat|e : wit | the hyȝ|e hed|es
The brem|e buk|kes al|so ; wit | hor brod|e paum|eȝ
For | the fre|-lorde had|e de-fende| : in fer|myson tym|e
That | ther schul|de no | mon men|e : to | the mal|e der|e
The hin|deȝ were hal|den in| : wit hay | and war|
The do|es dry|uen wit | gret dyn| : to | the dep|e slad|eȝ
Ther | myȝt mon se | as thay slip|te : slen|ting of ar|wes
At uch|e wen|de un|der wan|de : wap|ped a flone|
That big|ly bote | on the bronn| : wit | ful brod|e hed|es
What | thay bray|en and bled|en : bi bonk|kes thay dey|en
And | ay rach|ches in | a res| : rad|ly hem fo|lȝes
Hun|teres | wyth hyȝ|e horn|e : has|ted hem aft|er
Wyth such | a crak|kande kry| : as klyf|fes had|en brust|en
What wyl|de so | at-wap|ed : wyȝ|es that schot|ten

---

[1] *Baremote* appears to be the name given to some note on the bugle. The last syllable is clearly the old English word *moot*.

[2] There is a mystery with respect to the final *e*. sometimes found at the end of the past participle. In this case, however, I do not think it was pronounced.

[3] The *vewters* seem to be the same as the *feuterers* of our dramatists—that is, the men who led the lime-hounds in couples.

[4] The *quest* was the opening cry of the hounds.

[5] The *hyȝe* seems to be the circle formed at the opening of the forest by

He with his nobles upon high horses were.
Then these drivers (that well knew how) coupled their hounds,
Unclosed the kennel-door, and call'd them thereout.
They blew loudly on bugles three *baremotes*;[1]
The braches bayed therefore, and a furious noise made;
And they chastised and drove them back, (they that went to the chase)—
A hundred of hunters, as I have heard tell,
of the best!
To the stations the dog-keepers[3] went,
Their couples the huntsmen cast off,
On account of the good blasts there rose
A great din in that forest.
At the first sound of the *quest*[4] quaked the wild deer;
They drove along, in the dale, mad for fear;
Hied to the hedge,[5] but eagerly were they
Stopp'd at the *stablye*, that stoutly opposed them.
They let the harts have the road, with their high heads;
The fierce bucks also, with their broad palms;[6]
For the good Lord had forbidden, in *fermyson* time,[7]
That any man should make an attempt on the male deer.
The hinds were holden in with the hedge and fear;
The does driven with great din to the deep slades.
There might man see, as they slipt, glancing of arrows.
At each, that went under bough, wapp'd a shaft,
That hugely beat on the branches, with full broad heads.
How they bray and bleed! beside hillocks they die,
And ay lurchers, with a rush,[8] quickly follow them,
Hunters with long horns hasted after them,
With such a cracking cry, as if the cliffs had bursten.
What game soever they let fly at (the men that shot)

---

the *stablye*, or marksmen, at the stations, towards whom the game was driven.

[6] The *palms* was a word used by our dramatists for the broad part of a deer's antlers.

[7] The winter season. The bucks were kept for summer killing, as at that time they were fat and in good plight.

[8] Whether there was any, and what difference, between a *rach* and a *brach*, I know not; both appear to have hunted by the scent. *Rach* seems to have been used chiefly in the northern dialect.

Watȝ all | to rac|ed and rent| : at | the res|ayt
Bi | thay were ten|ed at | the hyȝ|e : and tays|ed to | the wat|reȝ
The led|eȝ were | so lern|ed : at | the loȝ|e trys|teres
And | the gre|honndes | so gret|e : that get|en hem | byly|ne
And hem | to fylch|ed as fast| : as frek|es myȝt lok|e.
Ther ryȝt|
The lorde | for blys | abloy|
Ful oft | cun lann|ce and lyȝt|
And drof | that day | with joy|
Thus | to the derk|[2] nyȝt

That this poem *is* the "Awntyre of Gawayn," which Wynton attributes to Huchown, or Hugh, is probable, for several reasons; and there is *one* which seems almost decisive—at the head of the MS. is written, in a hand which belongs to a period not much later than the year 1500,[3] what appears to be the unfinished name of its author—*Hugo de.* Hugh's other work, the "Pistill of Swete Susane," is probably the poem entitled *Sussan,* in

Hyr kynrade hyr cousyns : and alle that her knewe
Wrongon hondys ywys : and wepten ful sare
Certys for Sussan sothfast : and semyly of hewe
All wyues and wydowes : awondred they were
They dyde hyr in a downgon : wher never day dewe
Tyll domes mon hadde dempte : the dede to declare
Marred wit manacles : that mede were newe
Meteles fro the morn : till midday and mare
In drede
Tho come her fadyr so fre
With all hys affynyte
The prestes were wit out pyte
And full of falshede

---

[1] The *resayt* appears to mean the stations in the valley, near the river. The game was driven from the woody hills towards the *stablye*, and when they had slipt by, on their road to the valley, they were chased by the men at "the low stations." The whole puts one in mind of the hunting scenes in Germany; though probably a more zealous sportsman might see important differences between them.

Was all pulled down and torn at the *resayt,*[1]
After they were baited at the hedge and driven to the waters—
The people were so skilful at the low stations!
And the greyhounds so great, that got them quickly,
And filch'd them (as fast as people could look at them).
There, right well!
The Lord for bliss —— ?
Full oft gan he leap and be merry;
And the day drove on with joy,
Thus to the dark night.

the Cotton MS. Cal. A. II.; [4] and there are reasons for believing that even "the gret gest of Arthure" would be forthcoming, if diligently looked for.

The poem of *Sussan* is written in staves, which are formed by joining to the stave of 8 lines with alternating rhime, a certain kind of wheel or burthen, of which we shall have much to say hereafter. The following is a specimen:

Her kindred, her cousins, and all that knew her,
Wrung their hands ywiss, and wept full sorely—
Certes for righteous Susan, so seemly of hew!
All wives and widows, astounded were they!
They put her in a dungeon, where never day dawn'd,
(Till the doomster gave judgment, to pronounce on the deed,)
Oppress'd with manacles, that were made new,
Meatless from the morn till midday and more—
All in dread!
Then came her father so good,
And all his kinsmen.
The priests were without pity,
And full of falshood!

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[2] Qy. *derke.*

[3] The MS. was written about the year 1400.

[4] A more perfect copy may be found in the Vernon MS. of the Bodleian Library, and a third copy in one of Whitaker's MSS. See Pref. to Piers Ploughman.

In the same kind of stave are written the two poems which Pinkerton published under the titles of "Sir Gawane and Sir Galaron," and "Gawane and Gologras;" also Holland's satirical fable called *The Howlat;* and Gawin Douglas's well-known Prologue to the 8th Æneid. But there is one peculiarity in these poems which should not pass unnoticed. The short line, or in technical language the *bob*, which introduces the wheel, is lengthened out into a full alliterative verse; and is always closely connected with the wheel, instead of being separated from it by a stop. The same peculiarity is found in every Scotch poem of the fifteenth century, that admits a wheel of this kind—a strong argument to show, that the poems, from which we have quoted, are of earlier date. This notion is also, in some measure, countenanced by Dunbar. In his "Lament for the death of the Makars," he mentions,

> The gude Schir Hew of Eglentoun,

who was probably Wynton's *Huchown;* and afterwards laments for another writer, who may have written the tales which Pinkerton published,

> *Clerk of Tranent* eik he (Death) hes tane
> That made the auntris of Gawane.

Douglas's Prologue, whether we look to its subject, or to its present waning popularity, may well take for its text "all is vanity." Its merit is not easy to estimate under the disadvantages of an obsolete dialect, bygone idioms, and a reference to a state of life and manners so unlike our own. Many strokes of satire, which at the time may have had a direct and personal application, are now sunk into vapid generalities, or lost from our ignorance of local circumstances. Still enough remains to excuse, if not to justify, the praises that were once lavished on this favourite poem. The crowd of images, and the grotesque combinations, produce almost the same effect on the mind as the noise, and hubbub, and confusion of another vanity-fair upon the ear of Bunyan's pilgrim. The broken and sketchy style, and the curious idiomatic turns, must, even at the time, have given the work a character of quaintness and oddity; and may have recommended it to many, who otherwise were little likely to pay attention to the lessons it read them. Want of space alone prevents me from extracting it.

There are also alliterative poems, written in the common ballet-stave of eight verses. One of these, entitled "Little John Nobody,"* was composed as late as the year 1550.

I have, in the course of this chapter, called Hugh the oldest English poet, born north of Tweed, whose works have reached us. Tyrwhitt, on the faith of a passage in Robert of Brunne, which he thought attributed the Gest of Tristrem to Erceldon and Kendale, gave these writers, or rather the first of them, the credit of its authorship; and Sir Walter Scott has supported the claim in an elaborate criticism. Were this criticism sound, Erceldon would precede Hugh by at least a century. I think, however, that the general opinion, both at home and abroad, is against it. To me it always seemed, that the first stave of the poem went far to exclude Erceldon from all share in composition.

I was at Erceldoune
With Tomas spak Y thare,
Ther herd Y rede in roune
Who Tristrem gat and bare.
Who was king with croun;
And who him fosterd yare;
And who was bold baroun
As thair elders ware
Bi yere—
Tomas tells in town
This auentours as thai ware.

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* See Percy's Reliques.

Now the story of Tristrem (as we shall presently see) was variously told; and it was a common practice to solicit the confidence of the hearer by quoting some well-known name as authority. The earlier "diseur" sheltered himself under the name of Breri; the Germans preferred the story of Thomas the Cornish Chronicler; and *Kendale,* it appears, followed Thomas of Erceldon. Whether Erceldon told the tale in English or Romance, in prose or verse, we have no means of ascertaining. From him the Westmerland poet learned the *story,* and this seems to be the extent of his obligations. Had the poem been a mere copy, we should doubtless have heard something of the original—of the "boc" or the "parchemin."

The dispute as to the authorship of Tristrem involved another (and one of much greater interest), as to the origin of British romance. This cycle of fictitious narrative has exerted so powerful an influence on the early literature of Europe, that I shall probably be forgiven if I lay before the reader some speculations on the subject.

The early romances, which relate to our race or country, may be divided into two classes—English stories,* such as the Fall of Fins-burgh, Beowulf, Byrthnoth, Horn, Havelok, &c.; and British, or such as treat of Arthur, and other knights of Wales, Cornwall, or Britany. The first class may be traced up to the fifth century, and perhaps to a period even more remote; but we have no specimen of the second, in our mother-tongue, till the latter half of the thirteenth century. These two cycles of romantic fiction exhibit a striking contrast, not only as to style, but also in their incidents, the state of manners which they unfold, and their general moral tendencies. Our present inquiry relates only to the British cycle.

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* In this class I would range all the romances which the Engle appear to have brought with them from the Continent, though the merit of their *invention* may possibly belong to other Gothic races—such as the tales of Ætla, of Theodric, and perhaps of Weland. English romances on these subjects were certainly extant in the eleventh century, but it is now impossible to say how far they agreed with the tales on the same subjects, which are still extant in the Icelandic and the German.

The earliest names recorded, in connexion with the authorship of these tales, are those of three Englishmen,* Luke Gast, who is said to have lived near Salisbury; † Walter Mapes, the jovial, witty, and satirical Archdeacon of Oxford; and Robert Borron. The first of these is said to have translated the Tristrem from Latin into Romance; ‡ the second, to have written, in Latin, the Birth and Life of Arthur, the Launcelot, the Saint Graal, and the Death of Arthur, the last at the express suggestion of our Henry the Second; § and, by command of the same monarch, Robert Borron is said to have translated into Romance, from Walter Mapes's Latin, the Launcelot and the Saint Graal.|| There is still extant a copy of the Tristrem,¶ which cannot be later than the early half of the thirteenth century, and *may* be the version of Luke Gast; also a MS. of the Launcelot,** of the twelfth century, which, as far as it goes, agrees with the French printed copy,†† and is probably Robert Borron's translation above referred to; but the Latin versions of Walter Mapes seem utterly to have perished.

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* Two or three other persons are said to have *assisted* in the writing of these tales, all of whom appear to have been attached to the English court.

† In the neighbourhood of this city was the royal palace of Clarendon, which may account for the importance given to it in some of these romances.

‡ Bibl. du Roi, Cod. 6776, and Cod. 6956. See Montfaucon.

§ Histoire du Roy Artus, &c. Rouen, A. D. 1488.

|| Bibl. du Roi, Cod. 6783, at the end. The Vatican MS. 1687, says he translated the Saint Graal from Latin into romance *by order of holy Church*. The Saint Graal, it may be observed, was the miraculous cup which received our Lord's blood, and the adventures undergone in search of it are the subject of the romance.

There are some reasons for believingthat Luke Gast began this translation, and that Robert Borron merely finished it.

¶ Harl. 20. D. 2.

** Harl. 20. D. 3.

†† The Histoire du Roy Artus, &c. (see n. §), contains the life of Launcelot, &c.

With one doubtful exception,* all these tales appear to have been written in prose. But before the year 1200 the Tristrem was certainly versified by the French poet, Christian of Troyes; and also, it has been conjectured, by a poet named *Thomas,* round whose name has gathered a cloud of mystery, which has misled not a few who have endeavoured to pierce it.

The French government has lately published the early romances which relate to Tristrem; and, among others, a Norman MS.† of the thirteenth century, and the well-known Douce MS. which probably belongs to the same period. The former refers to *Berox,* as the best authority for the story, and the latter to *Breri,*

> Who knew the gests and tales
> Of all the kings—of all the counts,
> Who had been "en Bretagne."

The Douce MS. also tells us, that *Thomas* would not admit certain parts of the story, but undertook to prove them false. Now Godfrey of Strasburg, who translated the Tristrem into German soon after the year 1200, mentions *Thomas of Britannia,* as being well-read in British books, and the best authority upon the subject. As Godfrey professes to follow him, and as it is clear, from his use of French words and phrases, that the German had a French original before him, it has been supposed that Thomas wrote the life of Tristrem in French. Were this so, our first conjecture would naturally be, that Thomas of Erceldon was the man; but, as it is impossible to reconcile the dates, the opinion of Sir F. Madden may be entitled to some weight, which attributes a Norman version of the tale to Thomas of Kent—the same who assisted in composing the Roman d'Alexandre, and who may probably claim an interest in the Norman versions of Horn and Havelok, both of which refer to a *Thomas* as their author.*

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* One edition of the Saint Graal (Paris, A.D. 1516), states that Robert Borron translated the Saint Graal first into *rhime,* and then into prose.

† Some of the French critics conjecture, that this is the version of Christian of Troyes; but, as the dialect is clearly Norman, they would meet with great difficulties in maintaining this criticism.

But, as if to double the confusion, another German poet, Wolfram von Eschenbach, mentions Thomas of Britany's *Chronicle of Cornwall,* as the authority he followed in one of his romances. Hence it would appear, that Thomas was a chronicler; and unless we conclude that a Welsh *Thomas* chronicled the story, which an English *Thomas* versified, and a Scotch *Thomas* most strangely appropriated, it would be difficult to admit the hypothesis above stated.

On the whole, it may perhaps be safest to conclude, that Godfrey had before him the Romance poem of some nameless author, which professed to give the story of Thomas the Chronicler, rather than the highly wrought tale which Luke Gast had put together; but I cannot tell in what way Thomas of Erceldon was connected with the story, except as being one of the famous "seggers" of the thirteenth century.

A like preference of the Chronicler to the mere story-teller is met with in other romances. In the fifteenth century Henry Skynner gave an English version of the story, which "Maister Robert of Borrown" translated into French; but he tells † those, that

will knowen in sertaygne
What kynges that weren in grete Bretaygne
Sithan that Christendom thedyn was browht
They scholen hem fynde has so that it sawht

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* From the introduction of English phrases, and allusion to English customs, it is clear that the Norman version of Horn, Harl. 527, was the work of an Englishman.

† Nasmyth, as quoted by Warton, furnishes the extract. Either the MS. or his transcript of it, must have been very carelessly written.

In the storye of Brwttes book
There scholen ze it fynde and ye weten look
Which that *Martyn de Bewre* translated here
From Latyn into Romaunce in his manere.

I incline to think the "Brwttes book" here attributed to Martin of Bury, is still extant. The Harl. MS. 1605 contains the fragments of a British History, written in the same language and metre as Langtoft's Chronicle, that is, in Norman Alexandrines, with the rhime running through fifteen or twenty verses.* The poem was probably written before the year 1200, for the manuscript cannot be of much later date; by an ecclesiastic, from the frequent allusions to Scripture history; and by an Englishman, from the intimate knowledge displayed of the English language. It shows all the learning of the cloister, and the skill of the practised versifier, and, moreover, an imagination to the full as active as the "manere" is curious. It may have given rise to much of the romantic fiction of the thirteenth century; and is, I think, full as likely to be the "British History" referred to by French and German romauncers, as the Latin of Geoffrey, or the cold and prosaic narrative of Wace. Perhaps it would not be so difficult, as might appear at first sight, to connect this Martin of Bury with the *Breri* and the *Berox*, whom we have seen quoted as authorities, on the subject of Tristrem. Breri *may* be a Norman blunder (perhaps the usual and recognized corruption,†) for Beri, a mode of spelling which is sometimes met with in the thirteenth century; and in the old English dialect of that and the preceding century, the writer would also be termed Martin Burigs,* (or according to diversity of spelling, *Berox*) that is Martin of Bury. I would say then, (if we may be allowed to speculate on such slender premises,) that Martin of Bury may have left some account† of Tristrem, which agreed with that afterwards given by Thomas the Chronicler, and generally followed by later and more scrupulous romancers.

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* De la Rue has advanced some strong arguments to show that Geoffrey Gaimar must, like Wace, have versified the Brut; and that his history of the Anglo-Saxon Kings is merely the sequel. But the poem referred to in the text has neither his *metre*, nor, if I may be allowed to judge, his *style*.

† Like *Duresme* for Dunholm, and *Nichole* for Lincoln. Durham is one of the few instances in which the Norman corruption has permanently got the better of the English name. Bristol, I believe, is another instance.

Where the property in these tales lay *originally* is a question not very easily answered. Many *Welsh* copies of the Brut are met with in our libraries; and in one of them, written in the year 1470, by a Welsh poet named Guttyn Owen, the Brut is ascribed to Tyssilio, a bishop, and son of Brocmael Yscythroc, King of Powis. It has been conjectured, indeed, that these Welsh copies may be translations from Geoffrey's Latin; but, as several of the names bear a close analogy to those which figure in history, while the corresponding names in the Latin can only be reconciled to history, by supposing them to be the latinized forms of the Welsh names—the Welsh version is probably the original *Brut y Brenhined*, which Geoffrey translated. There is also a Welsh San Graal; but, as the Welsh certainly translated some English romances, this may possibly have been of the number.

Perhaps we may come nearest to the truth, by supposing that our early English romancers invented *some* of these tales from the scanty notices which they found in the Brut and other works of the same kind; and translated *others* either from the Welsh, or from Latin stories written by Welshmen. The Morte Arthur may have been the invention of Walter Mapes, but the San

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* The same idiom is still met with in the names of places, as Leamington *Priors*, Leamington of the Prior, St. Saviour *Overies*, St. Saviour of the Over, or strand.

† Possibly interpolated into some part of his "Brwttes bok," which is now missing.

Graal is certainly of earlier date; and we have some faint notices of a "British Hermit," who lived at the beginning of the eighth century, and is said to have written a book entitled *Sanctum Graal, de Rege Arthure et rebus gestis ejus, de mensâ rotundâ, &c.* This work was probably in Welsh. The Latin Tristrem, from which Luke Gast translated, may have been a version from the same language.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PSALM-METRES.

By this name we have hitherto designated a class of metres, which seem to have been borrowed from the Church-hymns, and used, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, chiefly for purposes connected with the Church-service. The name of Church-metres, however, would have been too comprehensive; and the present title was thought not inappropriate, inasmuch as the staves, which are commonly used in our versions of the Psalms, may be directly traced to these metres, as their origin.

The Church-hymns may be divided into two classes, accordingly as the rhythm is measured by quantity or accent. The versification of the first class seems to have been known by the name of "metrum," and that of the latter by the name of "rhythmus." Bede, in his work *De Metris*, after noticing such of the classical metres as were popular in his time, has a chapter upon "Rhythmus." It presents us with difficulties, arising as well from the nature of the subject, as from the discrepancies which are found to exist between the different copies. I think however we may gather, that in "rhythmus" quantity was disregarded, and the number of syllables *fixed*—so that, although in "metrum" a foot of three syllables might, in some cases, be used for one of two, this license was not allowed in the corresponding "rhythmus." He quotes as an instance of accentual verse, made in imitation of the Iambic metre, "that celebrated hymn,

"Rex æterne Domine,[*]
Rerum Creator omnium,
Qui eras ante sæcula
Semper cum Patre Filius, &c.

and many others of Ambrosius."[†] "They sing," he also tells us, "in the same way as the trochaic metre, the hymn on the day of judgment, running through the alphabet.[‡]

Apparebit repentina dies magna Domini,
Fur obscurâ velut nocte improvisos occupans," &c.

Some critics are of opinion, that the laws, which governed these accentual verses, corresponded with those that regulated the *accentus*, or sharp tones of the classical metres; while others consider their accents as substitutes for the *metrical ictus*. I shall not venture to discuss a question, which Bentley and Dawes and Foster have failed in answering satisfactorily—more especially as there still exist MSS. which treat expressly of the structure and peculiarities of this class of verses.[§] It may, however, be observed, that, as the later Latin poets seem to have preferred, and in some feet required, the coincidence of the sharp tone with the *ictus*, the question whether the accent of the "rhythmus" represented the *ictus* or the *accentus* of the "metrum," is not of that *very great* importance it would appear at first sight. I incline also to think, that some of these "rhythmi" had their accents determined by causes, which were wholly independent both of the one and of the other.

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[*] This verse is deficient by a syllable. Must we split the diphthong, and read *aeterne ?*

[†] The celebrated Bishop of Milan.

[‡] The first verse, it will be seen, begins with *A*.

[§] When we remember how little is known, and what different opinions have been holden, on the subject of *arsis* and *thesis*, and how much light must necessarily be thrown upon it by an examination of these MSS. it is by no means creditable to modern scholarship, that they have been so long neglected.

The Iambic "rhythmus," noticed by Bede, was a favourite one during the middle ages; and is probably the origin of the common metre of eight syllables, now so common throughout Europe.* His trochaic "rhythmus" was modelled on the Catalectic Tetrameter; and, in his verses *on the year,* was used with final rhime.

An|nus so|lis con|tine|tur : quat|uor | tempor|ibus|
Ac | dein|de ad|imple|tur : du|ode|cim men|sibus|
Quin|quagin|ta et | dua|bus : cur|rit heb|domad|ibus|
Tre|cente|nis sex|agin|ta : at|que quin|que di|ebus| &c.

From the sixth to the fourteenth century, this "rhythmus" was common throughout Europe. The *complete* tetrameter (though little, if at all, known to the monks) was doubtless the classical metre, on which St. Austin modelled his verses against the Donatists.

A|bundan|tia † pec|cator|um : so|let fra|tres con|turba|re
Prop|ter hoc | Domin|us nos|ter : vo|luit | nos præ|mone|re
Com|parans | regnum | cœlo|rum : ret|icu|lo mis|so in mar|e
Con|gregan|ti mul|tos pis|ces : om|ne ge|nus hinc | et in|de ‡
Quos | cum trax|issent | ad lit|tus : tunc | cœpe|runt sep|ara|re
Bon|os in | vasa | mise|runt : re|liquos | malos | in mare, &c.

In one of the letters § of the Irish Saint Columban, we find a rhythmus, which, from its pause and cadence, seems to have been formed upon the trochaic *septenarius.* It was written about the year 600.

Mun|dus is|te tran|sit et| : quotid|ie | decres|cit
Ne|mo vi|vens man|ebit| : nullus | vivus | reman|sit
To|tum hu|manum | genus| : ortu | uti|tur pa|ri,
Et | de sim|ili | vitâ| : fine | cadit | æqua|li,|| &c.

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[*] Whether our English metre of four accents *originated* in this "rhythmus," or was merely influenced by it, has been discussed in Chapter IV.

[†] Among the licenses taken by the writers of "rhythmus," *crasis* appears to have been one of the most frequent.

[‡] Here is no rhyme.

[§] See Usher's Vet. Epist. Hib. Sylloge, p. 9.

[||] Here we have a specimen of the Irish or vowel rhime.

Another rhythmus, closely resembling the last, was very popular in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, particularly among our countrymen. The first stave of Walter Mapes' celebrated drinking song may serve as an example. I cannot satisfactorily connect it with its "metrum."

Mi|hi est | propos|itum| : in | taber|na mo|ri
Vi|num sit | appos|itum| : mo|rien|tis o|ri
Ut | dicant | cum ven|erint| : an|gelo|rum cho|ri
De|us sit | propi|tius| : hu|ic po|tato|ri.

But no "rhythmus" has left more traces in our English versification, than that which was borrowed from the Greek church in the twelfth century, and modelled on the Catalectic Iambic Tetrameter. One of the earliest specimens is the work of Psellus on the Civil Law, addressed to Michael Ducas, the "Royal Kaisar," or heir apparent. As he ascended the throne in 1071, it must have been written before that year. It opens thus,

Πολὺ καὶ δυσθεώρητον τὸ μάθημα τοῦ νόμου,
Ἐν πλατεῖ δυσπερίληπτον, ἄσαφες ἐν σύνοψει,
Καὶ λόγω δυσερμήνευτον, ἀλλ' ὅμως ἀνάγκαιον,
Καὶ δεῖ τὸν αὐτοκράτορα τούτον μᾶλλον φροντίζειν,
Δικαίως γάρ τε δίκαιον ἐν δίκαις φυλάκτεον·
Ὅθεν ἐγώ σοι τὰ πολλὰ τοῦ λόγου συνοψίσας,
Ευθήρατον τι σύνταγμα πεποίηκα τῶν νόμων.

Wide spread and hard to theorize : the Law's important science !
Both hard in full to comprehend : and darken'd by abridgement,
And hard in words to construe right : but ne'ertheless 'tis *needful*—
And most an Emp'ror it behoves : to weigh well all its bearings,
For justly in his judgements he : should ever deal out justice ;
So now in compass small I 've brought : full many things together,
And of our laws a simple sketch : have made for thee to study.

Strange to say, Foster, whose learning and good sense no man will question, considered the *στίχοι πολίτικοι* not as "iambics regulated by accent, but loose trochaics, as independent of it as any in Euripides ;" and a writer in one of our Reviews,* who acknowledges them as accentual, nevertheless connects them with the Trochaic metre. Were they so connected, we should have the Trochaic "rhythmus" of the Latins accented on the *odd*, and that of the Greeks on the *even* syllables—a discrepancy that might well startle us. The Reviewer asserts, that the Iambic Tetrameter has not the same division, and but rarely the same cadence. I believe neither of these assertions will bear examination. The cadence of the Catalectic Tetrameter, or in other words the position of its sharp-toned syllables, is very commonly found to be the same, as in these accentual verses; and, both in the metrum and rhythmus, the pause immediately follows the close of the second metre. The *full* tetrameter, indeed, divided after the first syllable of the third metre, and this very probably led to the Reviewer's mistake.

In the same rhythm, as these Greek verses, was written, during the latter half of the twelfth century, a very long and curious English poem. The writer tells us, he was christened by the name of *Ormin;* and, in another place, he gives the title of *Ormulum* to his work, "because that *Orm* it made." Of his mode of spelling we have already spoken; † it appeared to some of our critics so barbarous,‡ that they at once denounced him as a Dane, and fixed him as a native in one of our eastern counties. A later writer, who entertains juster notions of his orthography, tells us § nevertheless, that "Orm's dialect merits, if any, to be called *Dano-Saxon;* his name also betrays a Scandinavian descent."

Why his name should be "Scandinavian," I cannot tell, unless it be that the Danish word *orm* answers to our

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* Edin. Rev. xii. 10.

† See Vol. I. p. 108.

‡ What would Ormin have said to the orthography, in which these gentlemen conveyed their censures?

§ Analecta Anglo-Saxonica, p. x.

English *worm!* But is not *Orm* the abbreviation of *Ormin,* like Will for William, or Rob for Robert? and is not Ormin the German Herman, and the Latin Arminius?* We need not, however, rest content with speculation. Reginald of Durham, who lived in the reigns of Stephen and of Henry, having occasion to mention this name of *Orm,* expressly calls it an *English* name, and thus he distinguishes it from the Northern or Danish name of Wilhelm.†

To the native purity of his language the poet himself bears witness. In one place, he terms it "thiss Ennglissh;" in another, "thiss Ennglisshe writt;" and in a third, he tells us that he wrote, "Ennglisshe menn to lare," that is, for the *lore* or instruction of Englishmen. I consider it as the oldest, the purest, and by far the most valuable specimen of our Old English dialect, that time has left us. Layamon seems to have halted between two languages, the written and the spoken. Now he gives us what appears to be the Old English dialect of the West; and, a few sentences further, we find ourselves entangled in all the peculiarities of the Anglo-Saxon. But Ormin used the dialect of his day; and, when he wanted precision or uniformity, he followed out the principles on which that dialect rested. Were we thoroughly masters of his grammar and vocabulary, we might hope to explain many of the difficulties, in which blunders of transcription and a *transitional* state of language have involved the syntax and the prosody of Chaucer.

In taking even a rapid view of our literature, we cannot fail being struck with the varying forms, through which our language passes. To notice all these changes, would leave us little room for any other inquiry; but wholly to pass them by, might deprive the reader of information, which, in some cases, may be necessary, for the full elucidation of passages that will be laid before him. So far as the changes have been effected by lapse of *time*, they have already furnished matter for speculation;* I would now offer some remarks on the influence of *place*, as the subject of local dialect is more directly brought before our notice, by the work of Ormin.

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* It may perhaps be questioned, if Herman be not the Anglo-Saxon Hereman, and a different name from Arminius; but there can be little doubt that Arminius was the same as Ormin.

† Reginaldi Monachi Dunelm. Libellus, &c. p. 105. This curious book was published by the Surtees Society in 1835.

In a late article,† upon our "English dialects," was quoted the following passage from Higden, written about the year 1350. "Although the English, as being descended from three German tribes, at first, had among them three different dialects; namely Southern, Midland, and Northern; yet being mixed, in the first instance with Danes, and afterwards with Normans, they have in many respects corrupted their own tongue, and now affect a sort of outlandish babble (peregrinos captant boatus et garritus). In the above threefold Saxon tongue, which has barely survived among a few country people, the men of the east agree more in speech with those of the west—as being situated under the same quarter of the heavens—than the northern men with the southern. Hence it is that the Mercians or Midland English—partaking as it were the nature of the extremes—understand the adjoining dialects, the northern and the southern, better than those last understand each other. The whole speech of the Northumbrians, especially in Yorkshire, is so harsh and rude, that we southern men can hardly understand it."

With this division of our dialects the Reviewer is dissatisfied; he thinks it "*certain*, that there were in his (Higden's) time, and probably long before, *five distinctly marked forms*, which may be classed as follows: First, Southern or standard English, which in the fourteenth century was perhaps best spoken in Kent and Surrey, by the body of the inhabitants. Secondly, Western English, of which traces may be found from Hampshire to Devonshire, and northward as far as the Avon.* Thirdly, Mercian, vestiges of which appear in Shropshire, Staffordshire, south and west Derbyshire, becoming distinctly marked in Cheshire, and still more in south Lancashire. Fourthly, Anglian, of which there are three subdivisions—the East Anglian of Norfolk and Suffolk—the Middle Anglian of Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, and east Derbyshire—and the North Anglian of the west riding of Yorkshire, spoken most purely in the central part of the mountainous district of Craven. Fifthly, Northumbrian, of which we shall speak more fully in the sequel."

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* See p. 105.

† Quart. Rev. No. 120, Art. 3.

It were to be wished, the Reviewer had told us, what were the distinctive peculiarities † of his five dialects, and by what process of reasoning and investigation he arrived at the results here stated. I have myself been led to very different conclusions. So far from "southern or standard English" being the language generally spoken in Kent and Surrey, during the fourteenth century, I think it may be shown, very satisfactorily, that till the beginning of the seventeenth "western English" was to be met with at the very gates of London. By western English, I presume, is meant that dialect, which still prevails in Wiltshire and Somerset, and, with greater purity, in Devonshire; which prefers the vocal letters *v, z, dh*, to the whisper-letters *f, s, th;* which ends the third person of its verb in *th*,*—*he lovth, he zeeth*, &c.; and takes *ich* or *ch* for its first personal pronoun, *ch'ad, ch'am, ch'ull*, &c.

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* The Avon of Bristol, or of Warwickshire?

† He only *once* alludes to these peculiarities—he makes *k* characteristic of the "Anglian," and *ch* of the "Mercian" dialect. I incline to think, that *ch has* been substituted for *k*, somewhat more generally in the western, than in the eastern countries; but to make it a test of dialect, is very hazardous criticism. Have we not *karl* a churl, *kink*hoast a chincough, *skriking* shrieking, *flick* a flitch, &c. in the "Mercian" dialect of South Lancashire? and *planch* a plank, *milcher* a milker, &c. in the "Anglian" dialect of Suffolk? Rob. of Brunne, though an "Anglian," seems to have preferred the *ch*, witness his *bishopriche* a bishopric, *oliche* alike, *betech* to betake, *cheitiff* a caitif, *Chain* Cain, &c.

There are marks of this dialect, in the poems of John of *Guildford*,† almost as decided as in those of Robert of *Gloucester*; and in the "Ayenbyte of Inwyt,"‡ which was written "mid Englis of *Kent*," A.D. 1340, we see its peculiarities even more clearly developed. But we need not dwell upon these early instances, for we find it overspreading the south of England, as late as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It is put into the mouth of the Essex peasantry § by the author of Gammer Gurton's Needle; of the Middlesex yeomanry by Jonson; || of the men of Kent by Sir Thomas More ¶ and Shakespeare.**

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* This verbal inflexion is no longer heard, east of the Parret (see Jenning's Obs. on the Western Dialects); but, at an earlier period, it was used throughout the south of England, even in the formation of the plural verb.

† See p. 136.

‡ Arundel MS. 57.

§ That the scene of this play was laid *north* of Thames, we learn from poor Hodge, Act 3, Sc. 3.

——————ich know, thar's not, *within this land*,
A murriner cat than Gib is, *betwixt the Tems and Tine*,
Sh'ase as much wit in her head, almost as ch'ave in mine.

John Still, the author (the future Master of St. John's and Trinity) was rector of Hadleigh, which is about four miles from Essex; and Cambridge, where the play was acted, is some twelve. The Gammer's *St. Sith* is clearly the virgin saint of Essex—the queenly Osith: and in the language we may trace a mixture of the northern dialect, (the third person of the verb sometimes ending in *s*, instead of *th*, and the second in *s* instead of *st*) just as we might expect on the borders of the two counties, Essex and Suffolk. There can be little doubt, that Still used the dialect, which he heard spoken around him—in other words, the dialect of North Essex.

|| See his *Tale of a Tub*. The speakers, it should be observed, come from the very suburbs of London—from Kilburn, Islington, and St. Pancras.

¶ In his well-known story of the Tenterden Steeple.

** Lear, 4. 6. Shakespeare gives to *I'se* the force of a future—*ise try*, I'll try; and in Gammer Gurton's Needle, we have *ise teach*, I'll teach, *we'se ha*, we'll have, &c. In the Northern dialect this form generally indicates future time, but, I believe, always *present* time in the dialect of Devonshire. It is however sometimes used in Lancashire, as in Devon; see *ise think*, I think.—*Tim. Bobbin, sc.* 7.

It seems, indeed, to have reached from Devon over all England south of Thames; over south Gloucestershire; and north of the river, over Essex and Middlesex. It may, I think, be fairly considered as the Old English dialect of the *Sexe;* and seems to have overrun (if *ever* they were different) the dialects of the *Cant-ware* and the *Wiht-ware*—that is of the Iutish settlers in Kent and Hampshire.

There are many circumstances, which might lead us to expect a difference, between the dialects spoken north and south of Thames. The Gothic races are described, in the third and fourth centuries, as forming one people, and speaking one language; but a comparison between the Mæso-Gothic and the Anglo-Saxon will convince us, that even thus early there were *dialects;* which probably melted, the one into the other, and showed more marked peculiarities of structure, as the races, which spoke them, were more widely separated. These dialects have long since ranged themselves into four great classes—the Northern, the English, the Low-Dutch, and the High-Dutch. The English connects the Northern dialects with those spoken by the Low-Dutch or Netherlanders; and the latter link in with the various dialects of the High-Dutch or German. Now the *Sexe*[*] came from the south-western corner of the ancient "Ongle," and were parted only by the Elbe from the Netherlandish races; while the

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[*] There is reason to believe, that this word *Sexe* meant nothing more than *Seamen*, and that it was first given to such of the *Engle*, as made piracy their trade. But after these *Sexe* settled in Britain, though, as it would seem, they sometimes called their speech *English*, their new country *Engle-land*, and themselves the *Engle-kin*, yet they were, for the most part, distinguished from the Engle of the North—the phrase *Engle and Sexe* being made use of, when the writer would include the entire English population of the island.

That the Sexe *were* a tribe of Engle, I think there can be little doubt. Every thing tends to show, that at the beginning of the fifth century there were only *four* great Gothic races in the North of Europe—the *Sweon*, the *Dene*, the *Engle*, and the *Swefe*.

Engle, who landed at Bamborough, came from the north-eastern coast, and were neighbours to the Dane. We might therefore expect, that the dialects of the Engle would partake more of the northern character, and those of the Sexe of the Netherlandish; and moreover, that the distinction would be the more marked, inasmuch as a whole century elapsed, before the kindred races again met each other, on the banks of Thames.

That the dialects spoken north of this river, *did* possess a common character, which long distinguished them from the southern dialects, may, I think, be shown even at this late period; but the changes they have undergone are so many, that it is now very difficult to point out the peculiarities, which once bound them together as one great dialect.

One of these peculiarities I take to be the conjugation of the verb. To what extent its inflexions differed from those of the southern verb, will be seen in the following table. The vowels are accommodated to that stage of our language, which has been called the Old English.

	South Dial.	North Dial.
Indic. Pres.	Ich hop-e	I hop-es
	Thou hop-est	Thou hop-es
	He hop-eth	He hop-es
	We Ye } hop-eth Hi	We Ye } hop-es Hi
Indic. Perf.	Thou hoped-est	Thou hoped-es
Imper. Pres.	hop-eth ye	hop-es ye
Infin. Pres.	to hop-en	to hop-e

In the Northern inflexions we may detect those of a conjugation, which is fully developed in the Swedish. They were used by Aldred, in his version of the Durham Bible, which Wanley assigns to the age of Alfred; at a later period by the author of Havelok, Robert of Brunne, and other men of Lincolnshire and the adjoining counties;

by the men of the west, one of whom, I take it, turned William and the Werwolf into English; and generally by Scottish writers of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries. Churchyard, a Shrewsbury man and one of Elizabeth's courtiers, often ends his third person plural in *s;* and the same form may be found in Shakespeare. The peasantry of the midland counties not unfrequently use this inflexion, in the first person singular and the third person plural; and the Quakers, who are *not* an uneducated body, use it in the second person singular both of the present and perfect tenses.*

Other peculiarities of the Northern dialect seem to be, a less frequent use of the articles, the conjunctions, and the personal pronouns;† a dislike of the *n* declension; and the use of a very curious inflexion *es* ‡ in the plural adjective or participle, as "the god*es* briddes," the good birds, "the knychtis were tan*ys*," the knights were ta'en.

Our northern dialect also, not unfrequently, added *er* to the substantives of the south (in this particular again resembling the languages of northern Europe) as *wulfer* a wolf, *hunker* a haunch, *heather* heath, *flitcher* a flitch, *teamer* a team, *plancher* a plank, *fresher* a frog—in the dialect of Essex *frosh.*

As to the changes of the letters—it is probable, that the vowels varied too capriciously to form any safe test, whereby to distinguish between the two dialects; but I have little doubt, that a preference of the vocal letters was, from the first, a marked feature of the southern English. It will, I think, explain some apparent inconsistencies of Anglo-Saxon orthography, and especially as regards the use of the þ and the ð. Again the use of the

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* They excuse it, as being less *formal* than the inflexion in *est.*

† Why have they been so *studiously* inserted in those extracts from the Durham Bible, which appear in the Analecta?

‡ I have only seen this inflexion in MSS. which belonged to the Northern dialect.

t for *th* appears to have been far more common in the northern than the southern counties; and seems at last to have given rise, in the northern dialect, to two very curious laws of euphony.

In some MSS.* *t* is substituted for *th,* whenever it follows, in the same verse or member of a sentence, a word that ends in *d* or *t;* and in other MSS. † the same change takes place, both when the preceding word ends with one of these two letters, and also when it ends with *s.* I incline to think, the first-mentioned MSS. must have been written in the eastern and midland counties, and the second set in Lincolnshire or north of Trent. Those, who know Lancashire or the rival county, will readily call to mind such phrases, as " does *to,*" "houd *teh* tongue," and other illustrations of these two rules.

It is a curious fact, that both our universities are situated close to the boundary line, which separated the northern from the southern English; and I cannot help thinking, that the jealousies of these two races were consulted, in fixing upon the sites. The histories of Cambridge and Oxford are filled with their feuds; and more than once has the king's authority been interposed, to prevent the northern men retiring, and forming within their own limits a university, at Stamford or Northampton.

The union of these two races, at the university, must have favoured the growth of any intermediate dialect; and to such a dialect the circumstances of the country, during the ninth and tenth centuries, appear to have given birth. While the North was sinking beneath its own feuds, and the ravages of the Northman, the closest ties knit together the men of the midland and the southern counties; and this fellowship seems to have led, among the former, to a certain modification of the Northern dialect.

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* See the Ormulum; the Chronicle from 1132 to 1140; and the Lives of St. Catharine, St. Margaret, and St. Juliane. King's Lib. A. 27. The lives of the three saints seem to have been translated by one John Thayer.

† See the Legend of St. Catharine, and the Institutio Monialium. Tit. D. 18. The Inst. Mon. is a very curious work, both as to subject and dialect. There is a later copy in the Southern dialect, in Nero, A. 10; and an ancient one in Cleop. C. VI. which I think must be written in the Midland dialect. The Latin original, I believe, is at Magd. Coll. Oxford.

This change of *th* into *t* was, in some few cases, to be met with in *Southern* MSS.; and in the modern dialect of Somerset we may still occasionally hear the East-of-England phrase, " now and *tan.*"

The change seems to have been brought about, not so much by adopting the peculiarities of southern speech, as by giving greater prominence to such parts of the native dialect, as were common to the south. The southern conjugations must, at all times, have been familiar (at least in dignified composition*) to the natives of the northern counties, but other conjugations were *popularly* used, and in the gradual disuse of these, and other forms peculiar to the north, the change consisted. We have MSS. of the twelfth and thirteenth centúries, in which the more marked features of the northern dialect are studiously avoided; but generally the intrusion of some verbal inflexion *es*, or of some other popular idiom, shows the country of the writer as effectually, as the misplacing of a single *will* betrays the unfortunate Irishman.

These are some of the reasons, which, independently of Higden's authority,† would lead me to the conclusion, that in the middle of the fourteenth century, there were *three* great English dialects—the Northern, the Midland, and the Southern; and, I think, that even amid the multiplied varieties of the present day, these three divisions may yet be traced. What in the fourteenth century were the *limits* of the Midland English, is a question of difficulty. The Trent seems to have been long a boundary. Surrounding with a deep and rapid stream a thinly-peopled district—the fells of Derbyshire and the wilds of Shirewood—this river opposed physical obstacles, which were but very slowly surmounted. The new dialect seems to have spread over the plains of Staffordshire, and the rich flats of Lincoln, long before it penetrated the sister-counties of Derby and Nottingham. Both these, I believe, would have been excluded by Higden; and probably too, the adjacent counties of Stafford and Lincoln.

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* If not, we must look on our copy of Cædmon, as only a Southern version of the poem.

† Not that I think his authority of slight moment, in a case, like the present. Whatever we may think of his *philosophy*, his testimony to a fact, directly within his own knowledge, and connected with a subject which he had evidently *studied*, is of great value.

As the northern dialect was retreating northwards, *two* vigorous efforts were made to fix it as a literary language; the first, in the thirteenth century, by the men of Lincolnshire *—the same, whose taste and genius yet live in their glorious churches; and a second, in the fifteenth century, by the men of Lothian. But the convenience of a dialect, essentially the same as the northern, and far more widely understood, its literary wealth, and latterly the patronage of the court, gave the Midland English an ascendancy, that gradually swept all rivalry before it.

The southern dialect kept its ground more firmly than the northern. Little more than two centuries have gone by, since it first began to give way before the midland dialect; and the extent to which it has yielded in different counties, is, even at this day, the best means we have of distinguishing its several varieties. The easternmost variety has now lost all the more marked features of the Southern English; and is chiefly remarkable for that confusion † of the *v* and the *w*, which is sometimes thought

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* The number of MSS. written about the year 1300, which (judging from dialect, and other circumstances) must be referred to this county, or one of the neighbouring shires, is singularly great. Its literary activity seems to have been chiefly owing to its flourishing monasteries, Croyland, Sempringham, &c.

† The laws, which regulate the use of the letters *u*, *v*, *w*, *y*, throughout the east of England, have been little studied, and are exceedingly puzzling. I have tried to bring these letters under rule, but without much success; and as the *y* and the *w* are not very readily distinguishable in our MSS. I fear I may sometimes have mistaken them, in such extracts as have been laid before the reader.

[It

peculiar to the Londoners. As we go westward, we gradually fall in with the Wiltshire variety; with the *z*s and the *v*s, *thick* that, and *ich* I; with that curious form of the verb substantive, *he'm, we'm, you'm, they'm,** and the infinitive in *y,* to sow*y*, to reap*y*, to nurs*y*,† &c.; with *dr*, instead of the initial *thr*, as *droo, drash, drong, drawt, drub,*‡ &c.; and with that singular, but very ancient misplacing of the *r* and the *s,* in *girt, pirty, hirch, hirn, bursh, hursh,* § &c. *claps, haps, aps,* || &c. The Anglo-Saxon diphthong *ea* is changed into *ya,* and the later diphthongs *oa* and *oi* into *wo* and *wī* (*i* long), as *yarth, yarm, yaker, yal, yel,* &c. *woth, wock, whot, dwont, gwon*, &c. *spwile, bwile, pwint, pwison, bway,* &c.; *ay* is replaced by *â,* and the long *o* by *au,* as *pâ, wâ, stâ, zâ,* &c. *zaw, paw, gawld, hawld, clawze, suppawse,* &c. When we cross the Parret, we find ourselves in the midst of the Devonshire variety, which, beside possessing almost all the peculiarities already noticed, retains yet stronger marks of the parent language—for instance *ees* for I, and the verbal inflexion *th, he zeeth,* &c.

The midland dialect (supposing it to reach the Humber) may, I think, be *conveniently* divided into *six* varieties.

It may be observed, that the change of *v* into *u* or *w*, in the middle of words, as *eun* even, *euning* evening, &c. *ower* over, *ewil* evil, &c. is common in most of our counties.

* This verb is also found in Bedfordshire. I will venture to assert, that the whole range of the Gothic dialects does not contain a word, more instructive to the philologist—one, that promises to be a more important link in the history and philosophy of language.

† This inflexion seems to be a relic of the *i* conjugation. In our older MSS. it is written *ie*.

‡ That is *thro*, *thrash*, *throng*, *throat*, *throb*, &c. According to Forby, a like change of letters is met with in Norfolk, save that, instead of the *d*, its whisper-letter is used, as might be expected. He gives as examples, *troat*, *tread*, *treaten*, *trough*.

§ That is, *great*, *pretty*, *rich*, *run*, *brush*, *rush*, &c. *Girt* and *pirty* are common in other parts of the kingdom, but the transposition of the *r* before other letters than *t*, is rarely met with, but in the south.

|| *Clasp*, *hasp*, *asp*.

The easternmost is noted for a very general narrowing of its vowels, as *haeve, gaether, raedish, saeck, waex,* &c. *creedle, cheen, dreen, keeve,* &c. *hiven, thrid, riddy, brist, frind,* &c. *byle, syle, spyle, jyne, destrye,* &c. *fule, stule, mune, spune, bute, smuthe,* &c.; for the omission of the definite article after verbs implying motion to or from a place, as *walk into house, go up chamber, come out of barn, put them into basket,* &c.; for the use of *ta* instead of *it,* and the apparent want of inflexion in the third person singular of its verb, as *ta dew,* it does.* It is found in Norfolk, Suffolk, and Cambridgeshire; and, at no distant period, must have spread over Huntingdonshire, and up the valley of the Ouse into the heart of Bedfordshire. The Worcester variety † spreads west from Oxfordshire, over the greater part of which it is spoken. Like the last, it has a marked peculiarity of *tone*, but, unlike the whining drawl of the eastern counties, its pronounciation is quick and decided. The intermediate variety,* which may perhaps be termed the Leicestershire, is remarkable for its want of tone. It has contributed, more than any of our living dialects, to the formation of our present standard English.

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* See Moor's "Suffolk Words and Phrases," and Forby's "Vocabulary of East Anglia." Some notice of the Bedfordshire dialect may be found in Batchelor's "Orthoepical Analysis of the English Language."

† In Duncombe's History of Herefordshire, there is a scanty list of provincial phrases used in that county; and I am told, that a work on the Shropshire dialect, written by Mr. Hartshorne, is now in the press at Cambridge. It were to be wished these dialects were more widely studied. Gloucestershire is full of words and phrases, as yet unrecorded; and, when we learn that in some of the Oxfordshire villages, the shepherd yet *tells his tale,* (that is, counts his flock) every morning, we see, at once, the meaning of those much abused lines,

And ev'ry shepherd *tells his tale,*
Under the hawthorn, in the dale.

and, at the same time, the importance of these inquiries.

In one of the little volumes of Old English poetry, lately published by Pickering, the ingenious editor "suspects," that the tales of "the Basyn," and "the Frere and the Boy," were written in the *Shropshire* dialect. The frequent use of *ye* and *wo* (as in *yessee, yether, yeverychene,* &c. *wother, wone, wonly,* &c.) and the use of *f* for *th* in *affurst,* are the reasons, which led him to this conclusion. But these diphthongs *ye* and *wo* are common, all over the West of England, from Cumberland to Somerset; and the use of *f* for the initial *th* is also very general. In Suffolk, Bedfordshire, and other counties, they still say *fill-horse* for thill-horse, *fistle* for thistle, *freaten* for threaten, &c.; and a like change of letters is found both in the northern and in the southern dialect.

I should have fixed on a more northern county. The use of *oy* for the long *o,* as *boyt* for both, *soyt* for soth, *roys* for rose, *goys* for goes, &c.

It may be worth while observing (though I do not lay any very great stress upon the fact) that these divisions agree, pretty accurately, with the limits assigned to three races, well known to our early history—the East-Engle, the Middle-Engle, and the Wic-ware.

The Cheshire variety reaches from the Staffordshire collieries to the banks of the Ribble.† It often uses *ya*

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points to the West Riding, or one of the neighbouring shires; and the western diphthongs (if we may so term them) *ye* and *wo*, direct us to the adjoining county of Lancashire. When, in addition to this, we find that, in later versions, the scene of *both* these tales is laid in Lancashire, I cannot hesitate in assigning the dialect to the southern part of that county.

* Few of our dialects have been more neglected than the present one, though (for several reasons) one of the most important. A slight notice of its peculiarities, as spoken in Leicestershire, may be found in Macaulay's History of Claybrook; specimens of Northamptonshire speech occur in Clare's poems; and I am told, that a book on the Warwickshire dialect may be shortly expected, from the pen of a gentleman, now living at Lichfield.

We have a minute examination of the *Bedfordshire* dialect, in Batchelor's "Orthoepical Analysis," &c. but the greater part of this county may be fairly assigned to the eastern dialect.

In the preface to the Exmoor Scolding, published A.D. 1775, we have the following given us as a specimen of the "*Buckinghamshire* farmers'" speech, "I ken a steg gobblin at our leer deer;" that is, "I see a gander feeding at our barn-door." *Steg* a gander, *ken* see, *leer* and *leath* a barn, are words *now* only heard in the northern counties; and, if the whole be not a blunder on the part of the editor, (which I think most probable) the northern dialect must have left such traces behind it in the agricultural districts, as will render the classification of our present midland dialects, a work of great difficulty.

† I make this river the boundary of the Cheshire dialect, in deference to Whitaker. In the History of Whalley, we have a list of words, used south of the Ribble, compared with the synonyms used to the north of it. The

and *wo,* for the diphthongs *ea* and *oa;* also *oi* for the long *i, ow* for *au,* and *eaw* for *ou,* as *oi, droy, woif, loive, foine, moind, noice,* &c. *bowt, fowt, browt,* &c. *theaw, heaw, keaw, eawt, eawl,* &c.; and it inflects the present tense of its verb thus,

Oi hope
Theaw hopes
He hopes
We
Ye } hop-en
Tha

In the West Riding, the long *o* is changed into *oi,* and *oo* into *ooi,* as *coyl, hoyl, moite, oits, broich, cloise,* &c. *sooin, mooin, fooil, cooil, mooid, booick,* &c.; the final *k* also (in place of *ch*) is very prevalent—as *birk, perk, thack, benk, pick, ick,* &c.; and the old northern verb (singular and plural alike ending in *s*) is here more frequently met with, than elsewhere.* The Lincolnshire variety has been almost wholly neglected. Its peculiarities, I think, well

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comparison shows us—*not* (as Whitaker supposes) that the Ribble parted Mercia from Northumberland, for many of the northern terms were, a few centuries ago, common throughout the midland counties, but—that this river is the obstacle which, of late years, has stopped the midland dialect in its progress northward.

The chief works illustrative of this dialect are Collier's Tim Bobbin, and Wilbraham's Vocabulary of Cheshire Words and Phrases. In Knight's Quarterly Mag. for 1822, there is an account of the Staffordshire Colliers, and a short but excellent specimen of their dialect.

It should be observed, that in South Lancashire are found many of the peculiarities, which distinguish the speech of the West Riding, especially the use of *oi* for the long *o.*

* See Hunter's Hallamshire dialect, Watson's dialect of Halifax, and the other vocabularies published in Mr. Hunter's work. In the Towneley Mysteries, we have an interesting specimen of this dialect, as spoken four hundred years ago. Mr. Douce considered these plays the property of South Lancashire; but the conclusion, at which the editor arrived, by tracing the local allusions, is fully borne out by an examination of the dialect. They were certainly written at Woodkirk, near Wakefield.

justify a separate classification; some of them will be noticed hereafter.*

The Northern dialect may also, as it seems to me, be conveniently divided into six varieties. The Yorkshire spreads over the east and north ridings, over Westmerland, and over North Lancashire. It uses the long *a* (as heard in *father*) for the long *o*, and *eea* for *oo*, as *staan*, *alaan*, *haam*, *saa*, *maar*, *saar*, &c. *feeal*, *skeeal*, *leeak*, *neeak*, *seean*, *neean*, &c.† The Durham variety, which, with the addition of the *bur*, spreads over Northumberland, uses *ae* for the long *o*, *aw* for *ow*, *a* for short *o*, and *ui* for *oo*, as *sae*, *tae*, *bane*, *stane*, *aith*, *baith*, *aik*, *maist*, *sare*, &c. *blaw*, *knaw*, *awn*, *sawl*, &c. *strang*, *sang*, *warse*, *warld*, &c. *luik*, *buik*, *cuil*, *fuil*, &c.‡ The Cumberland variety is chiefly distinguished from the latter, by the frequent use of the diphthong *wo* in the place of the long *o*, as *cwoach*, *cwoal*, *cwoat*, *dwoated*, *fwoal*, *fwolk*, *jwoke*, *rwose*, *whope*, *whole*, § &c. In both these dialects the diphthong *ya* is common, and owing to the narrowing of the vowels is sometimes used, where other dialects have the *wo*, as *yak* an oak, *yaits* oats, *byeth* both, *hyel* whole, &c. It may be observed, that in these northern dialects not only has the *k* kept its ground very generally against the intruding *ch*, but also *d* is often used for *th*, as *fadder*,

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[*] See p. 205. Ben Jonson, in his Sad Shepherd, has imitated the dialect spoken two centuries ago, in the vale of Belvoir. It was clearly a branch of the Lincolnshire.

[†] See Specimens of the Yorkshire Dialect, Knaresborough, 1808; and the Westmoreland Dialect, by A. W. (Ann Walker) Kendal, 1790. The Craven Dialect, of which the Rev. Mr. Carr has published a good vocabulary, seems to be *intermediate*, between the dialects of the North and West Ridings. The dialect found in Hayward's "Witches of Lancashire," though some of its peculiarities are those of North Lancashire, seems, on the whole, to belong to the southern part of that county. It was written in 1638.

[‡] See Brockett's Northern Dialect. There are also specimens of this dialect in Brome's "Northern Lass."

[§] See Ballads in the Cumberland Dialect, by R. Anderson, Carlisle, 1808.

mudder, anudder, whedur, togedur, &c. The initial *qu* is moreover sometimes softened into *wh,* as *whiet, white, whart, whaker,* &c.

The varieties of the Northern dialect, spoken north of Tweed, may perhaps be ranged under the three heads—the Nithsdale, the Clydesdale, and the Lothian. Burns has made the first familiar, and the two latter may readily be called to mind, as forming (at least in great measure) the brogues of Glascow and of Edinburgh. With respect to the dialects, which prevail beyond the Forth, I shall venture no opinion, either as to their origin or affinities—the subject is surrounded with too many difficulties.

Nothing has been said of the *Danish* elements of our language, for traces of them have been found neither in our MSS. nor in our dialects.* No where have I met with those grammatical forms, which bind the Northern languages into one great family—the *r* inflexion of the verb, the passive voice, the definite affixes of the substantive, the neuter inflexion of the adjective—and as to certain words, which philologists assure us are the "shibboleth" of the "Dano-English," such as *gar* to make, *at* that or to, &c. *these* may be found in districts, where the Northman never settled, and are missing from counties, where he certainly did. His language, from the first, must have been little more than an English dialect, and his descendants have now been mingled with a kindred race for nearly one thousand years—is it not likely that peculiarities of dialect have vanished, with all recollection of their origin?

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* Doctor Jamieson discovered not only Danish dialects, but also traces of a Scandinavian language, which must have been introduced *before* the Northman invasions. The Doctor was resolved, at any cost, to make *Picts* of his Lowlanders; and to his theory was too often content to sacrifice his dictionary! Were it not for this hapless theory, we should now have had an excellent dictionary of our northern dialect.

The Reviewer, whom I have already quoted, considers the Romance of Havelok, "more strongly impregnated with Danish, than any known work of the same period," which appears "not only in individual words, but in various grammatical inflexions, and, most remarkably, in the dropping of the final *d* after liquids—*shel, hel, hon, behel*—which exactly accords with the present pronounciation of the Danes." Quart. Rev. cx. 3. Now in all discussions, relating to language, it is most important, to illustrate *rule by example.* Of the "grammatical inflexions," the reviewer has given us no specimen. I can find none. As to the dropping of the final *d,* I would merely ask, if *this* be a test of the Dano-English, where can we escape from that dialect? If we travel to the south, have we not, using the orthography of Jennings, the *veel, nill* (Shakespeare's *nield*), *chile,* &c. the *hon, ston, roun, groun, mine, behine,* &c. of Somerset? If to the north, have we not the *scawl, warl, chiel,* &c. the *han, stan, en, frien, min, kin, behin,* &c. of Nithsdale?

Some parts, however, of the British islands were *wholly* peopled with Northmen—as the Orkneys, Caithness, and much of the eastern coast north of Forth. Harrison,* writing in the year 1576, tells us, that in the Orkneys "and such coasts of Britaine as do abbut upon the same, the Gottish or Danish speech is altogether in use," but afterwards † qualifies this, by talking of "*some sparks* yet remaining among them of that language." Perhaps, if the history of these dialects were traced out, and the process investigated by which they melted into English, we might by analogy discover, if our other dialects had been affected by the intrusion of the Northman.

In tracing the subdivisions of our three great dialects, I have made the vowels the test, rather than the consonants, as being, on the whole, less subject to derangement from external causes. A word, imported from the written language of the period, generally carried with it its own peculiar consonants; thus we have *fader* in the Coventry mysteries, though the provincial term is, and probably has been for the last thousand years, *faether*. But the *vowel* was generally accommodated to the pronunciation of the district; thus *spite* in Staffordshire became *spoite*, *note* in the West Riding became *noite*, and a little further north *crown* became *crawn*. The districts, however, in which these vowel-sounds prevail, and the periods to which we may refer their origin, can only be marked out within limits that leave much room for uncertainty.

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* Descr. of Brittaine, c. 6.

† Ibid. c. 10.

In ancient MSS. (as in provincial speech) we have the local dialect almost always more or less modified by the written language—as in Burn's poems, we find his native Ayrshire combining, in almost every proportion, with our standard English. Now, many obsolete grammatical forms (the Southern conjugation for instance) were once well-known to our *literature*, and, therefore, will not enable us to fix the country of the writer; but the inflexions of the Northern conjugation, and the Southern *v* will generally be decisive; and as (before the year 1350) one or other of these peculiarities was seldom absent from MSS. written elsewhere than in the midland counties, we have, in most cases, a ready method of distinguishing between a northern, a midland, and a southern MS.

Again, during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the subjunctive mood seems to have been *very widely* used, instead of the indicative; in some MSS.* indeed, almost its entire exclusion. The third person singular of the Eastern dialect, and the Staffordshire plural, may, very probably, be relics of this usage. They now strike the ear as marked peculiarities, but would not, I think, justify speculations as to *radical*, or even very ancient differences of dialect.

To separate the native growth of any dialect from these various importations, to define the time when, and the degree in which it has yielded to the written language, requires research at once extensive and minute. The great fault, however, of our modern philology is that common vice of theory—the arguing from *too remote analogies*. Our critics wander to the dialects of the Heptarchy, or to the "Scandinavian," or to the Greek and Latin, when they should be diving into our MSS. and seeking illustration in our dialects, as spoken some four or five centuries ago. Such research may be obscure labour, and the produce not always very malleable to a theory; but it holds out good promise of leading to the *truth*,—which will hardly be reached by the vague speculations of the indolent and dreaming antiquary.

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* Such MSS. are found written *both* in the Southern and in the Northern Dialect.

Our older critics and dramatists have left us occasional notices of our dialects, which have, I think, been too much neglected. Some of these have been already referred to; but there is one, which is more than usually instructive, and as it serves in some measure to illustrate the views already advanced, I shall lay it before the reader. It is found in the *Logonomia Anglica* of Gill, the well-known Master of St. Paul's;* and was written about the year 1619.

This scholar divided our language into six dialects. Of these, two were the *Common* and the *Poetical*. The remaining four were the *Northern*, to which he seems to have given nearly the same limits we have assigned to it; the *Eastern*, in which he seems to have included the Essex and the Middlesex; the *Southern*, which appears to have spread over the southern counties east of Wiltshire; and finally, the *Western*.

To the men of the midland counties he assigns no particular dialect, doubtless considering them as speaking that variety of English, which he designated as the *Common* dialect. He thus begins his notice of our Northern English.†

"*Ai* is used, in the north, for the long *i*, as *faier* for *fier* (fire); and *au* for *ou*, as *gaun* or even *geaun* for *gown*, and also for the sound of *oo*, as *waund* for *wound*. They also often use *ea* for the long *e*, as *meat*—(with the diphthong clearly pronounced); and for *o*, as *beath* for *both*. Even in my own county of Lincoln, you may hear *toaz* and *hoaz*, for *toes* and *hose*. They say also, *kest* or even *kussn*, instead of *cast; fulla* instead of *follow; klōth* with a long *o*, instead of *cloth;* and on the contrary, *spokn* with a short *o*, instead of *spoken; doon* for *done;* and *toom* for *time;** *rīch*† with a long *i*, instead of *rich; thore* instead *there; breeks* instead of *breeches*, *seln* instead of *self; hez*‡ instead of *hath; aus* for *also; sud* for *should; Il, Ist* and even *Ail* and *Aist* for I will; and so in the other persons *thoult* or *thoust*, &c. In *ay* they throw away the *i*, as *paa* for *pay; saa* for *say;* and for *said* they use *sed.* § Some words they invent, || in place of the more common ones, as *strunt* and *runt* for *rump*, and *sark* for shirt. *Gang* in the place of *go* (whence *gangrel* a beggar), and *yeed* or *yode* for *went*, they got from their ancestors.

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* The master, too, who taught Milton!

† As we have to translate from a very peculiar orthography into our ordinary modes of spelling, I have been obliged to take occasional liberties with the Latin, to make the pronunciation of some words intelligible.

"The people of the south use *oo* for the long *e*, as *hoo* for *he;* also *v* for *f*, as *vill* for *fill*, *vetch* for *fetch*; ¶ and on the contrary *f* for *v*, as *finegar* and *ficcar* for *vinegar* and *vicar.*** They use also *o* for *a*, as *ronk* for *rank; z*

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* I sal yow tel, if I have *tome*,
Of the seuen Sages of Rome.—*The Seuyn Sages, l.* 4.

Weber supposes the word to have been altered "for the sake of the rhime."

† This word in South Lancashire becomes *roitch*, according to the analogy which regulates the vowels of that district.

‡ Long after the southern conjugation had generally yielded to the northern, it kept possession of the auxiliary verb *to have*. Even at the close of the eighteenth century, Fielding always puts *hath* into the mouth of his fine gentlemen and ladies; and, I believe, this word is still used in some parts of the South of England, even by the educated classes.

§ Here is another provincial term, which has now become licensed.

|| The reader will often see reason to dissent from the *speculations* of the author.

¶ This use of *v* for *f*, *z* for *s*, and *ich* for *I*, clearly shows that, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the western dialect was spoken *south* of London.

** In Bedfordshire, they still say *fenum* and *foluntine* for *venom* and *valentine*. Other instances of this change should be collected.

for *s*, as *zing* for *sing;* and *ich* for *I*, *cham* for *I am*, *chill* for *I will*, *chi voor ye* for *I warrant ye*. They also resolve the diphthong *ay*, and most odiously lengthen the first vowel, as *paa-y*, *thaa-y*, for *pay* and *they*.*

"On the other hand, the men of the eastern counties narrow their vowels, for they say *feer* instead of *fier* (fire); *kiver* instead of *cover;* and use *ea* for the long *a*, as *deans* for *dance;* *v* for *f*, as *vellow* for *fellow;* *z* for *s*, as *zai* for *say*.† Our Mopsæ πυγόϛολοι particularly affect this ισχνότην, and narrow their letters to such a degree, that it would seem they hated an *o* or an *a*, as much as Appius Claudius a *z*. Thus our dames do not buy *laun* and *cambric*, but *leen* and *keembric;* nor do they eat a *capon*, but a *keepn;* nor does their mouth water for *butchers' meat*, but *bitchers' meat*. And as they are all *gentlimmen* (not *gentlwimmen*), they call their servants, not *maids*, but *meeds*. I must however retract what I have said of the *a*, for whenever a full-sounding *o* should be heard, they make it give place to this letter, and many a time do they come mincing to me, *I pree ya gee yar skallers leev ta plee*, that is, *I pray you give your scholars leave to play*.

"But of all our dialects none equal the *Western* in barbarism, especially if you hear it spoken by the country people of Somerset; for one might well doubt, whether they spoke English, or some foreign idiom. They still use certain antiquated words, as *sax* a knife, and *nem* or *nim* to take. Others of their own they palm upon us for English, as *lax* a part, *toit* a settle, and some others.

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* It is to be regretted, that this dialect has been so much neglected. The Wealds of Kent and Sussex abound in peculiarities of idiom, which, if collected, might throw the most important light on the structure of our language. Indeed any of the agricultural districts round London would well repay the attention of the philologist.

† Hence it appears, that, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, some of the counties *east* of London used the *v* and the *z*, instead of the corresponding whisper-letters. Essex and Middlesex were no doubt in the author's eye. See p. 189.

But even genuine words they corrupt, either by giving them a false meaning, or by their mode of pronouncing them, as *weezwai* a bridle; *weetpot* a sausage;[*] *ha vang,* throw here, or catch what is thrown; *hee vang tu mi at vant,* he undertook for me at font (baptism); *zit am*, sit; *zadrauth,*[†] essay thereof, that is, taste; *hee iz gone avist,* he is gone a fishing. So also they say *throtteen* for *thirteen, narger* for narrower, *sorger* for more sorrowful. They also prefix *i* to those participles, which begin with a consonant, as *ifrore* or *ivrore* for frozen; *hav ye idoo,* have ye done; they also vary, in the plural, those nouns ending in *se,* which in the common dialect remain unchanged, as *hozn, peezn,* instead of *hose* and *pease.*"[‡]

Lengthy as this digression has proved, it has been much too short for the full discussion of a question, so intricate and difficult, as that of our local dialects. The peculiarities, which characterize these dialects, are not easily confined, or preserved within bounds and limits. They spread occasionally to the neighbouring shires; and, in some cases, are only to be gleaned from such scattered and remote villages, as have not yet been reached by the ravages of the schoolmaster. It is however hoped, that some assistance has been rendered to the student; and that he will be enabled to form, at least, some loose notion of the dialect, in which a particular MS. has been written. But if he be wise, he will aid his judgment with all the helps that can be furnished by the history of such MS. the nature of its contents, and the notices which may have been taken of them by other writers.

In Ormin's dialect, we find none of those features which mark distinctively either the northern or the southern dialect. He changes the *th* into *t*, when it follows a word ending with *d* or *t*;* but this seems to have been the only peculiarity in his pronunciation. His verb takes the southern inflexions, but *eth* is always used in the third person, never, I think, *th*; the *i* conjugation seems to have been unknown to him, and he drops the *e* of the second person singular in the past tense of the "complex" verb, as *thu badd*, thou bad'st, *thu behett*, thou promised'st. The declensions of his substantives are very simple. The masculines and neuters take *es* in the plural and genitive singular, and sometimes, it would seem, *e* in the dative singular; the neuters, however, sometimes have their plural without inflexion, as in the Anglo-Saxon. The feminine nouns take *e*, in the genitive, dative, and accusative of both numbers; but, in the genitive singular, have sometimes the *es*, as is also the case with the older dialect. The definite adjective ends in *e*, and occasionally, as it would appear, in *en*; the indefinite adjective forms its plural in *e*, but takes no other inflexion.

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[*] *Farcimen.*

[†] Here we have *dr* for *thr,* see p. 196; and *th* for *f*, as in Leicestershire they still say, *thurrow* for *furrow.* We might write the words "za drauth."

[‡] The substantives in *se*, very commonly, form their plural in *en*, even in the midland counties; thus we hear, *houzen, plazen, clozen,* and even *horsen.*

His nouns are sometimes formed with endings different from those which are found in the Anglo-Saxon. Thus the ending *nis* becomes a dissyllable *nesse*, whence our modern *ness*; and the adjectival ending *lic*, though it

Nu bro|therr Wall|terr[1] bro|therr min| : affterr | the flæsh|ess kin|de.
And bro|therr min | i criss|tenndom| : thurrh ful|luhht and | thurrh troww|the.
And bro|therr min | i god|ess hus| : get o | the thrid|e wis|e.
Thurrh thatt | witt haf|enn tak|enn ba| : an regh|ell boc | to foll|ghenn.
Vnnderr | kanunn|kess had |. and lif| : swa summ | sannt Awws|tin . sette.

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* See p. 193.

[1] This word I have spelt with two *r*'s, but in the MS. it is written with the common contraction *wallt'*; so also *afft'*, and some others. I would

generally keeps its two syllables, appears to be represented occasionally by *ligg.*

It may be observed, that the final *e* is always elided before a word beginning with a vowel or with *h*; and that *to* coalesces with its verb, as *tunnderstanndenn,* to understand.

If I were called upon to say, in what part of England a dialect such as Ormin's was ever spoken, I should fix upon some county north of Thames, and south of Lincolnshire. That portion of the Chronicle, which contains the same permutation of the *th,* as we find in the Ormulum, was, in all probability, written by one of the monks of Peterborough; and it is, by no means, unlikely, that Ormin lived in one of the neighbouring shires. The critics, who made him a native of the east of England, though they guessed in the dark, may not have guessed wrongly.

Ormin professes to have collected together in his Ormulum, "nigh all the Gospels, that are in the mass-book, through all the year, at mass," and to have accompanied each "Gospel," with an exposition of its meaning. His brother, who like himself appears to have been a Regular Canon, suggested to him this plan, as we learn from the following affectionate address :

Now brother Walter, brother mine : after nature of the flesh,
And brother mine, in Christendom : by baptism and by faith,
And brother mine in God's house : yet in the third wise
For that we two have taken both : *one* rule-book to follow,
In the Canon's rank and life : e'en as Saint Austin ruled—

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here observe, there are certain marks in the MS. the use and object of which I do not fully understand. It ought to be published, and *all* its peculiarities investigated.

Icc haf|e don | swa summ | thu badd| : and forth|eddte[1] | thin wil|le .
Icc haf|e wennd | inntill | Ennglissh| : goddspell|ess halg|he lar|e .
Affterr | that lit|tle witt | tatt me| : min drihh|tin haf|ethth len|edd .

It would seem, this plan was not much favoured by some

Wit shul|enn tred|enn unn|derrfott| : and all | thwerrt ut | forrwerr|penn .
The dom | off all | that lath|e flocc| : that iss | thurrh nith | forrblen|dedd .
That tæl|ethth thatt | to lof|enn iss| : thurrh nith|full mod|igness|e .
Thegg shul|enn læt|enn hæth|elig| : off un|ker swinnc | lef bro|therr .
And all | theg shul|enn tak|enn itt| : on un|nitt and | on i|dell .
Acc nohht | thurrh skill | acc all | thurh nith| : and all | thurrh thegg|re sin|ne .
And unnc | birrth bid|denn God | tatt he| : forrgif|e hemm her|e sin|ne .
And unnc | birrth bath|e lof|enn God| : off thatt | itt wass | bigun|nenn .
And thannk|enn God | tatt itt | iss brohht| : till en|de thurhh | hiss hellp|e .

The following are the reflections suggested by the miracle at Cana. They may afford us a fair sample of Ormin's style; and, at the same time, a curious specimen

This mid|dell ard|ess ald | is all| : o sex|e dal|ess dæl|edd .
Fra thatt | tatt ad|am sha|penn wass| : anan | till noth|ess ti|me .
All thatt | fresst off | thiss werrl|dess ald| : wass all | the forr|me tim|e .
And all | thiss firrs|te ti|mess fresst| : wass o|pennlig | bitac|nedd .
I ca|na gal|ile | thurrh an| : of tha | stanen|e fet|less .
And all | thiss firrs|te ti|me wass| : thurrh hal|ghe wit|ess fill|edd .

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[1] I presume this is a compound, *forthed te*, that is, *forwarded for thee*. Mr. Thorpe, who has quoted this passage in his Analecta, supposes *forthedte*

I have done e'en as thou bad'st : and forwarded thy will;

I have turn'd into English : the gospel's holy lore,
After the little knowledge that : to me my Lord hath lent.

of his brother churchmen; but Ormin's firmness was equal to his piety.

We two should tread under our foot : and out all from us cast

The notion of all that hateful crew : that is with malice blinded,

That blameth what deserveth praise : in their malicious pride.
They would hinder in their hate : our labour ! brother dear,

And all they would look on it : as useless and as idle !
With *reason* not, but all in *hate* : and all through their sins !

And us befits to pray to God : that he forgive their sins ;

And us befits both God to praise : for that it was begun,

And God to thank that it is brought : to end, all by his help.

of the manner in which Scripture was allegorized during the twelfth century.

The age of this mid earth is all : into six parts divided.
From thence that Adam shapen was : right on to Noah's time,
All the course of this world's eld : was all the earliest period.

And all this first periods course : was openly betoken'd,
In Cana Galilee, by one : of the stonern vessels.
And all this first period was : by holy sages fill'd

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to represent the Anglo-Saxon *forthode ;* but in this place we want *not* the perfect tense, but the participle.

Off staff|lig wit|eghunn|gess drinnch | : thurrh writ|ess . and | thurrh werr|kess .
Rihht swa | summ all | that ti|mess fresst| : off wa|terr fil|ledd wæ|re .
And itt | wass turr|nedd in | till win| : thurhh ie|su cris|tess com|e .
Thurrh thatt | heet [1] gaff | hiss hall|ghe follc| : gastlik|e tunn|derrstann|denn .

And her | iss o|thiss boc | off that| : stafflik|e wit|eghunng|e .
That all | thatt for|me ti|me wass| : thurrh wit|ess fil|ledd off|e .
Swa summ | the firrst|e fet|less wass| : brerdfull | off wa|terr fill|edd .
And her | I se | summdel | off thatt| : stafflik|e wit|eghunng|e .
And icc | itt wil|e shæw|enn guw| : all for | ure al|re ned|e .

Caym | adam|es son|e toc| : nith gæn | abæl | hiss bro|therr .
Off that | he sahh | that he | wass god| : and rihht|wis man | and clen|e .
Forr def|less theww|ess haf|enn agg| : strang nith | gæn cris|tess theww|ess .
And cris|tess theww|ess bid|den crist| : that he | theggm thurrh | his ar|e .
And thurrh | his mil|ce gif|e mahh|t : to bet|enn thegg|re sin|ne .
And Ca|ym toc | thurrh he|te and nith| : abæl | hiss agh|enn bro|therr .
And led|de hemm ut | upp o|the feld| : and sloh|himm but|enn gillt|e .

And giff | thu bis|ne tak|enn will|t : off thiss|e twegg|enn breth|re .
To fol|ghenn god|ess theww | abæl| : and hiss | unskath|inesse .
And to | forrwerr|penn het|e and nith| : and all | caym|es bis|ne .
Tha tak|esst tu | that wit | tu wel| : vt off | the forr|me ti|me .
Stafflik|e drinnch | ga to | thin lif| : ga to | thin sawl|e bath|e .
Thatt mik|ell magg | the gegg|nenn her| : to winn|enn heff|ness bliss|e .
Alls iff | thu drunnk|e wa|ter drinnch| : vt off | the firrs|te fet|less .
Thatt magg | the slekk|en wel | thin thirrst| : giff thatt | iss that | te thirrs|teth .

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[1] I suspect, in this place, some error in my copy of the MS.

[2] This name was thus written with an *m*, even so late as the fifteenth

With drink of letter'd prophecy : by writings and by works ;

Right as if all that periods course : with water filled were,

And it was turned into wine : by Jesu Christ his coming,
For that it gave his holy folk *in sp'rit* to understand it.

And here is somewhat (in this book) : of that letter'd prophecy,
Whereof all that first period : by sages filled was,
Like as the first vessel was : brimful with water fill'd.

And here I see some portion : of that letter'd prophecy ;
And I will shew it unto you : all for our common wants.

Caÿm [2] Adam's son conceived : hate gainst his brother Abel,
For that he saw that he was good : and righteous man and pure ;

(For the devil's ministers have aye : strong hate 'gainst Christ his servants !
And Christ his servants Christ beseech : that he them—through his mercy,
And through his pity—may give strength : to amend their sins !)
And Caÿm in his hate and malice : took Abel his own brother,

And led him out upon the field : and *slew* him—without guilt !

And if thou wilt example take : by these brethren twain—
To follow God's own servant Abel : and his guiltlessness,
And far cast from thee hate and malice : and all Caÿm's example—
Then takest thou (that wot thou well) : from out of the first period,
Scripture-drink, both for thy life : and for thy soul both,
That much may gain thee here : tow'rds winning heaven's bliss ;

As if thou had'st drunk water-drink : from out of the first period,
That well for thee may slake thy thirst : if so be that thou thirstest.

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century ; see the Towneley Mysteries, Inditium, p. 317.
Ye cursed catyfs of *Cames* kyn.

And giff | thu thiss | thurrh hal|ig gast| : deplik|err unn|derr-stann|dest .
That a|bel that | all gil|teless| : wass slog|enn thurrh | hiss bro|-therr .
Bitac|neth th u|re laf|erd crist| : that nagg|led wass | o rod|e .
Thurrh thatt | iudiss|kenn hæf|edd follc| : that he | was bor|enn of|fe .
And wass | himm onn | hiss mo|derr hallf| : sibb alls | it wæ|re hiss bro|therr .
Tha tak|est tu | gastlik|e witt| : off staff|lig wit|eghunng|e :
And drink|esst ta | that win | that iss| : ut off | the waterr wharf|-edd .
That win | thatt turrn|enn magg | thin thohht| : thurrh gast|lig drunnk|ennes|se .
Al fra | the werrl|dess luf|e and lust| : and fra | the flesh|ess wil|le .
To foll|ghen agg | unwherr|fedleggc| : to win|nenn heff|ness bliss|e .
Fra noth|ess flod | till ab|raham| : was all | thatt o|therr ti|me, &c.

As our limits are narrow, we will omit the story of the

Godd segg|de thuss | till ab|raham| : tac y|saac | thin wenn|chell .
And snith | itt alls | itt wæ|re an shep| : and legg | itt upp | onn all|terr .
And brenn | itt all | till ass|kess thær| : and of|fre itt me | to lak|e .
And ab|raham | wass forrth|right bun| : to don | drihhten|es wil|le .
And toc | hiss sun|e son|e anan| : and band | itt fet | and hand|e .
And legg|de it upp | on all|terr swa| : and droh | hiss swerd | off shæth|e .
And hof | the swerd | upp with | hiss hannd| : to smit|enn itt | to dæd|e .
Forrthat | he woll|de ben | till godd| : herrsumm | onn all|e wis|e .
And godd | sahh that | he wol|de slæn| : the child | withth swerd|ess egg|e .
And segg|de thuss | till hab|raham| : thatt witt | tu wel | to soth|e .
Hald ab|raham | hald up | thin hand| : ne sla | thu nohht | tin wenn|chell .
Nu wat | i thatt | tu dræd|est godd : and luf|est godd | withth herr|te .

And if thou this by the holy ghost : *more deeply* understandest—

That Abel, who all guiltless was : slain by his own brother,

Betokeneth our Lord Christ : that nail'd was on the rood,
By that Jewish tribe : whereof he was born,

And was to him on's mother's side : kin, as it were a brother,

Then takest thou the sp'ritual sense : of scripture prophecy,
And drinkest then the wine that is : from out the water changed—

The wine that may convert thy thought : through sp'ritual drunkenness,
All from this world's love and lust : and from the flesh's will,
To follow aye unchangingly : to win thee Heaven's bliss.
From Noah's flood to Abraham : was all the *second* period, &c.

Deluge; and proceed, with Ormin, in search of the moral and type furnished us by the events of the *third* period.

God said thus to Abraham : "take Isäac thy little one,
"And slay him, as he were a sheep : and lay him on an altar,

"And burn him all to ashes there : and off'r him a gift to me."

And Abraham was straightway boon : to do the Lord his will,
And took his son quickly anon : and bound him feet and hands,
And laid him on an altar so and drew his sword from sheath,

And rais'd the sword up with his hand : to smite him to the death—

For that he would be unto God : obedient in all wise !
And God saw that he would slay : the child with edge of sword,

And said thus to Abraham : (that wot thou well as sooth)
"Hold, Abraham, hold up thine hand : do not thou slay thy little one,
"Now wot I that thou dreadest God : and lov'st God with thine heart;

Tacc thær | an shep | bafftenn | thin bacc| : and off|re itt forr | thin wenn|chell .
And ab|raham | tha snath | thatt shep| : and let | his sun|e libb|en .
Forr thatt | he wolld|e ben | to godd| : hersumm | onn al|le wis|e .

And giff | thu nim|est mi|kel gom| : till ab|raham|es ded|e .
And giff | thu tak|est bis|ne att himm| : to foll|ghenn herr|summness|e .
To wurr|thenn herr|summ till | drihhtin| : to thew|enn himm | to cwem|e .
To lak|enn himm | withth that | tatt himm| : iss lef|esst off | thin ahht|e .
To wurr|then herr|summ to | thin prest| : and till | thin tun|ess laf|errd .
Till al|le tha | that haf|enn the| : to ge|menn and | to ster|enn .
To ben | herrsumm | till al|le tha| : inn al|le god|e thinng|e .
Forr niss | nan herr|summness|e sett| : to for|then if|ell-ded|e .
Giff thatt | tu foll|ghest tus | the sloth| : off a|braham|es bis|ne .
Tha tak|est tu | thatt witt | tu well| : vt off | the thridd|e ti|me .

Stafflik|e drinnch | god to | thin lif| : and to | thin sawl|e bath|e .
That magg | the mik|ell gegg|nen her | &c.

And giff | thu thiss | thurh ha|lig gast| : deplik|err unn|derrstan|dest .
Thatt ab|raham | onn hæf|edd iss| : the fa|derr upp | off heff|ne
And tatt | hiss wenn|chel y|saac| : iss cris|tess godd|cunndnes|se
And tatt | hiss shep | thatt off|redd was| : iss cris|tess menn|iscness|e .
That off|redd wass | forr all | mannkinn| : to tho|lenn dæth|o rod|e .
Swa that | hiss godd|cunndness|e wass| : all cwicc| . and all unnpin|edd .
All swa | summ y|saac | att brasst| : unnwun|dedd and | unwemm|ed .
Tha tak|esst tu | gastlik|e witt| : off staff|lig wit|eghung|e
And drinn|kesst ta | that win | thatt iss| : vt off | the wa|terr wharrf|edd .
Thatt win | thatt turr|nenn magg | thin thohht| &c.

"Take there a sheep behind thy back : and off'r it for thy child."

And Abraham then slew the sheep : and his son let live—
For that he would be unto God : obedient in all wise !
And if thou takest mickle heed : unto Abraham's act,
And tak'st example by him : obedience to follow,

To be obedient to the Lord : *to serve and so to please him,*

To offer him what to him is : dearest of all thy goods,

To be obedient to thy priest : and to thy household's master

To all those, whoso have thee : to care for, and to govern—
To be obedient to all these : in all *righteous things,*
For no obedience is enjoin'd : to further evil deeds—
If that thou followest thus the track : of Abraham's example,
Then takest thou (that wot thou well) : from out of the third period,
Scripture-drink good for thy life : and for thy soul both
That much may gain thee here ; tow'rds winning heaven's bliss
As if thou hadst drunk water-drink, &c.
And if thou this, by the holy ghost : *more deeply* understandest,

That Abraham, *in first place ?* is the Father on high of Heaven,
And that his young child Isäac : is Christ's divinity,
And that his sheep that off'red was : is Christ's humanity,

That off'red was for all mankind : on the cross to suffer death—

So that his godly nature was : all living and unpaired,

E'en so as Isäac escaped : unwounded and uninjured ;

Then takest thou the *sp'ritual* sense : of scripture-prophecy,
And drinkest then the wine that is : from out the water changed,

The wine that may convert thy thought ; &c.

If a judgment may be formed from such extracts as I have made, (and, though certainly a very small portion of the whole, they are nevertheless copious,) I would say that the doctrines of the Ormulum are singularly free from those fatal errors, which the policy of Rome had, at length, succeeded in forcing upon our Church. To appreciate this merit at its full value, we must remember that there are still extant the sermons of contemporary *bishops*, in which it is hard to say, whether folly or blasphemy most predominate. Lawrence, prior of Durham—a churchman neither mean in station nor in talents—had already clothed his favourite Saint with all the attributes of our Saviour; and Walter Mapes, while lashing with fearless hand the ignorance and the vices of the Romish clergy, seems nevertheless to have holden the worship of the Virgin as the first duty of a priest. Amid heathenism like this, we may forgive Ormin, if, in the honesty of his

Ol|de ant yong|e i | preit [2] ou : oure fol|ies for | to let|e
Thench|et on god | that gef | ou wit| : oure sun|nes to bet|e
Her|e i | mai tel|len ou| : wid word|es feir|e aut swet|e
The vi|e of on|e mei|dan : was hot|en Mar|egret|e

Hire fad|er was | a pat|riac| : as ic | ou tel|len mai|
In Aun|tiog|e wif | eches| : i | the fals|e lay|
Dev|e god|es ant dum|be : he ser|ved nitt | and day|
So did|en mon|y oth|ere| : that sing|et wei|laway|

The|odo|sius was | is nom|e : on crist | ne lev|ede he noutt|
He lev|ede on | the fal|se god|es : that wer|en wid hond|en wroutt|
Tho | that child scul|de chris|tine ben| : it com | him wel | in thoutt|
E bed | wen it wer|e ibor|e : to deth|e it wer|e ibroutt| &c.

This rhythm is more clearly traced in another poem, which Hickes has published. It appears to have been

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[1] Most of his refinements may be traced to the Fathers. His curious conceit, with respect to Adam's name, originated, I believe, with Lactantius. He supposes, that the name of *Adam* was formed from the initial letters of the four quarters of the world—*Anatolia* or the east, *Dosis* or the west, *Arktos* or the north, *Mesembria* or the south.

zeal, he sometime strain a text of scripture, or lose himself in the subtleties,[1] with which man had encumbered the plain truths of Revelation. The Church, that could rank *him* in the number of its ministers, had not wholly lost its christianity.

The reader need hardly be told, that Ormin's rhythm is the "common metre," which is so often met with in our hymn-books. The only change is, that each verse is there divided into two.

The Psalm-metres seem, at a very early period, to have been influenced by our native rhythms; and their flow is sometimes so loose, that it is difficult to say which of the Latin "rhythmi," they were meant to imitate. Traces of the "common metre" may, I think, be found in the Life of Saint Margaret, an early metrical legend, which Hickes has published in his Thesaurus. It opens with the following staves:

Old and young I pray you : your follies for to leave;
Think on God who gave you wit : your sins to amend,
Here may I tell you : with words fair and sweet,
The life of a maiden : was called Maregrete.

Her father was a patrician : as I may tell to you,
In Antioch a wife he chose : in the false law;
Deaf gods and dumb : he served night and day,
So did many others : that sing—Welaway!

Theodosius was his name : on Christ believ'd he not,
He believed in the false gods : that were with hands ywrought!
Then, that the child would a Christian be : 'twas borne full into
his thought[3]—
He bade when it was born : to death it should be brought, &c.

written in the first half of the thirteenth century; and is found both in an Oxford, and in a Cambridge MS. The

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[2] The words *preit*, *folie*, *vie*, are a clear proof that this Legend was translated from the Romance.

[3] That is, "He had a supernatural presentiment."

latter has each verse written at length, in one line; but the other MS. divides each verse into two. The following is the opening of the poem, according to my own copy of

Ic | am el|der than|ne ic wes| : a win|tre and ec | a lor|e
Ic eal|di mor|e than|ne ic ded|e : mi wit | oghte to | be mor|e

Wel long|e ic hab|be chil|d | ibien| : on word|e and | on ded|e
Thegh | ic bi | on win|tru[3] eald| : to giung | ic am | on red|e

Un|net lif | ic hab|be iled| : and giet | me thinch | ic led|e
Than|ne ic me | bithench|e wel| : wel sor|e ic me | adred|e &c.

The Cambridge MS. though on the whole less accurate than the Oxford, seems to have preserved the two first verses more correctly.

Ic am | nu el|der than|ne ic wæs| : a wintre and a lore
Ic weal|de mor|e than | idud|e : mi wit | oh to | be mor|e

If we restore the *ec*, which seems to have dropped, by accident, from the first line, we shall have the rhythm of these two verses, as perfect as any in the Ormulum, except that the second verse lengthens its first section—a license which is very commonly taken in all the early imitations of the Latin "rhythmi."

Besides several detached lives of Saints, in our Old-English dialect, there was also a *collection* of these metrical legends, which may possibly date soon after the year 1200. The lives appear to have been the work of different writers, and their number is not always the same in different MSS.[4] They are mostly written in a tumbling rhythm, which is seemingly an imitation of the Catalectic Iambic Tetrameter. Copious extracts may be found in Warton.

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[1] Digby, 4.

[2] That is, "I have more power and influence," &c.

[3] This word is written in my copy *wint'u*, but the last letter may possibly be an *n*. In such case, we should read *wintren*.

the Oxford MS.[1] save only that the verses are here written at length.

I am older than I was : in winters and eke in lore,
I wield[2] more than I did : my wit ought to be more.

Full long I have a child y-been : in word and in deed,
Though I be in winters old : too young I be in judgment.

A useless life I have y-led : and yet methinks I lead,
When I well bethink me : full sore am I afear'd, &c.

The rhythm, which Robert of Gloucester uses in his Chronicle, is of the same kind. Specimens of it have been already given, in the first volume.[5]

It is sometimes hard to say, whether this species of tumbling verse be the rhythm originally designed by the author, or merely the coarse caricature to which it has been reduced by accumulated blunders of transcription. It is probable, that when the psalm-metres first came into fashion, the rhythm of the Latin original was strictly followed, and that, when it was corrupted, by passing through the hands of the copyist, it was still looked up to as authority, and gradually gave currency to the tumbling rhythm, which was common in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. I think, however, that many poems must have been written, during that period, with a more correct versification; for several kinds of *staves*, formed from these psalm-metres, have come down to us, which admit of a very definite scansion.

During the sixteenth century, the rhythm of our poetry, generally, was tied to greater strictness; and in the year 1589, Abraham Fleming translated the Bucolics and

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[4] The life of St. Margaret, already quoted, is seldom absent.
[5] Vol. I. pp. 279, 280, 285.

Georgics into the same kind of unrhimed metre as is found in the Ormulum, but the lengthening syllable was only used occasionally.

O mu|ses of | Sicil|ia ile| : lets great|er matt|ers sing|
Shrubs, groves | and bush|es lowe | delight| : and please | not ev|ery man|
If we | do sing | of woodes | the woods| : be worth|y of | a con|sul
Now is the last age come whereof : &c. *Ecl.* 4.

His versification is as wretched as his poetry.

This metre (more or less modified) was indeed generally used for the purposes of translation, during the sixteenth, and early part of the seventeenth century. In it Phaer translated the Eneid, Golding the Metamorphoses, and Chapman the Iliad.

Phaer sometimes transposes, as it were, his sections—giving three accents to the first, and four to the second; and occasionally leaves a verse unfinished. The following is his version of a well-known passage:

Anon through all the cities great : of Affrike Fame is gone,
The blasing Fame, a mischief such : as swifter is there none;
By moving more she bredes : and, as she ronnes, her might doth rise;
By lowe for fear she lurkith first : then straight aloft in skyes;
With pride on ground she goth : and percith cloudes with head on hight.
Dame Erth her mother brooded furth : (men say) that child in spite
Against the Gods, when Giantes first : of serpent feeted line,
Enceladus and Teus wrought : hie heaven to undermine.
Than for disdaine (for on themselfs : their own worke Jove did fling)
Their sister crawlyd furth : both swift of feete and wight of wing,
A monster gastly great : for every plume her carcas bares,
Like number leering eyes she hath : like number harckning eares,
Like number tongues and mouths she wagges : a wondrous thing to speke!
At midnight fourth she flies : and under shade her sound doth squeke.

All night she wakes, nor slomber sweete : doth take nor never slepes;
By daies on houses tops she sittes : or gates of townes she kepes;
On watching toures she clymes : and cities great she makes agast;
Both truth and falshed furth she tells : and lies abrode doth cast.
She than the peoples mouthes about : with babling broad did fill,
And things onwrought, and wrought she told : and blew both good and ill.

Golding, though he divides his verse at the eighth syllable, takes great liberties with the stops; and occasionally uses the double rhime. Ovid's description of Envy's house, in the second book, is thus rendered:

It standeth in a hollow dale : where neither light of sunne,
Nor blast of any winde or ayr : may for the depenesse come,
A dreyrie sad and doleful den : aye full of sloughfull colde,
As which, aye dimd with smoldring smoke : doth never fire beholde.
When Pallas, that same manly mayde : approched nere this plot,
She stayd without, for to the house : in enter might she not.
And with her javelin point did give : a push against the doore.
The doore flue open by and by : and fell me in the floore.
There saw she Envie sit within : fast gnawing on the flesh
Of snakes and todes, the filthy foode : that keepes her vices fresh.
It lothde her to beholde the sight : Anon the elf arose,
And left the gnawed adders flesh : and slouthfully she goes,
With lumpish leasure like a snayle : and when she saw the face
Of Pallas and her faire attyre : adornde with heavenly grace,
She gave a sigh, a sorie sigh : from bottom of her hart.
Her lippes were pale, her cheeks were wan : and all her face was swart,
Her body lene as any rake : she looked eke askew;
Her teeth were furde with filth and drosse : her gums were waryish blew;
The working of her festered gall had made her stomake green;
And all bevenimd was her tongue : No sleep her eyes had seene,
Continued cark and cancred care : did keepe her waking still.
Of laughter (save at others' harms) : the hel-hound can no skill;

It is against her will that men : have any good successe ;
And if they have, she frets and fumes : within her minde no lesse
Than if herselfe had taken harme : In seeking to annoy,
And work distresse to other folke : herself she doth destroy.

Chapman, like Phaer, sometimes gives only three accents to his first section; and, like Golding, takes great liberties in the arrangement of his stops. He also allows his rhythm a more varied flow than either of his predecessors; occasionally bringing two accents together, or beginning his second section with the *tenth* syllable.

Then | from the sta|ble their | bright horse| : Autom|edon | withdrawes|
And Al|cymus ; | put poi|trils on| : and cast | upon | their jawes|
Their brid|les, hur|ling back | the raines| : and hung | them on | the seate| .
The faire | scourge then | Autom|edon| : takes up, | and up | doth get|
To guide | the horse| . The fights | seate last| : Achil|les took | behind|,
Who lookt | so arm'd | as if | the sunne| : there falne | from heaven | had shin'd| ;
And ter|ribly | thus charg'd | his steeds| : "Xan|thus and Ba|lius|
Seed | of the Har|pye in | the charge| : ye un|dertake | of us|,
Discharge | it not | as when| : Patro|clus ye | left dead | in field|,
But when | with bloud|, for this | dayes fast| : observ'd | Revenge| shall yield|
Our hearts | sacie|ty, bring | us off| " : Thus since | Achil|les spake|,
As if | his aw'd | steeds un|derstood| : 'twas Ju|noes will | to make|
Vo|cal the pal|lat of | the one| : who shak|ing his | faire head|,
Which | in his mane|, let fall | to earth| : he al|most bur|ied|,

and elsewhere, in the same MS. we have the following

Lol|lai lol|lai [2] lit|il child| [3] : whi wep|istou | so sor|e .
Ned|is mos|tou wep|e : hit was | iȝark|ed the ȝor|e .

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[1] This word is to be read, *sp'rits*. See vol. I. p. 61.
[2] In the MS. we have merely the initial *l*.

Thus Xan|thus spake|, " Ab|lest Achil|les : now | at least | our care|
Shall bring | thee off, | but not | farre hence| : the fa|tal min|utes are|
Of thy | grave ru|ine. Nor | shall we| : be then | to be | reprov'd|,
But might|iest Fate|, and | the great God| : Nor was | thy best | belov'd|
Spoil'd | so of armes | by our | slow pace| : or cour|ages | impaire,|
The best | of Gods|, Lato|nas sone| : that weares | the gold|en haire|,
Gave | him his deathes | wound, though | the grace| : he gave | to Hec|tor's hand| .
We | like the spir|it of | the West| : that all | spirits ' can | command|
For powre | of wing|, could runne | him off| : but thou | thyself | must go|
So Fate | ordains | , God | and a man | : must give | thee o|verthrow|.

It will be seen, that these later metres—even those which depart most widely from their original—all agree in retaining the seven accents and fourteen syllables of the Catalectic Iambic Tetrameter.

That others of the longer rhythmi were imitated by our English poets, cannot, I think, admit of much doubt. In the Harl. MS. 913, there is the fragment of a Latin song, written in the rhythmus so often used by Walter Mapes :

Lol|la Lol|la par|vul|e : cur | fles tam | amare ?
Op|ortet | te plan|gere| ! : nec | non sus|pira|re !
Te | dole|re grav|iter| ! : de|cet veg|eta|re,
Ut | paren|tes ex|ules| : vex|erant | igna|re .
Lol|la Lol|la par|vule| : na|tus mun|do trist|i .
I|grotum | cum max|imo| : dol|ore | venis|ti .

English version. It was probably written before the year 1300.

Lollai lollai little child, why weepest thou so sorely ?
Needs must thou weep—'twas fated thee of yore

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[3] The middle pause is always marked.

Eu|er to lib | in sor|ow : and sich | and mourn|e eu|ere .
As | thin el|dren did | er this| : whil | hi aliv|es wer|e .
Lol|lai[1] lit|il child| : child | lolai | lullow| .
In | to un|cuth world| : icom|men so | ertow| .

Bes|tis and | thos foul|es : the fis|ses in | the flod|e
And | euch schef | aliu|es : imak|ed of bon|e and blod|e .
Whan | hi com|ith to | the world| : hi doth | ham silf|sum god|e .
Al bot the wrech brol : that is | of ad|am is blod|e .
Lol|lai lol lai lit|il child| : to kar | ertou | be met|te .
Thou nost | noʒt this world | is wild| : bi for | the is | iset|te .

Child | if | be tid|eth : that thou | ssalt thriu|e and the| .
Thench | thou wer | ifos|tred : up | thi mo|der kne| .
Eu|er hab | mund in | thi hert| : of | thos thing|es thre| .
Whan|[2] thou com|mist, whar | thou art|, : and what | ssal com | of the| .
Lol|lai lol|lai lit|il child| : child | lollai | lollai| .
With sor|ow thou | com in | to this world| : with sor|ow ssalt wend | awai| &c.

It is fair to conclude, that these tumbling verses were intended as a free imitation of the Latin rhythmus.

In the same MS. is another song, which might be called *the Child of Earth.* After each stave follows a Latin version, in the same kind of rhythm, as the Latin stave last quoted, and which rhythm I presume the English

Erth | gette on erth| : ger|som and gold|
Erth | is the mo|der : in erth | is the mold|
Erth | uppon erth| : be | thi soul|e hold|
Er erth|e go | to erth|e : bild | the long bold|
Erth | bild cas|tles : and erth | bilt tour|es
Whan erth | is on erth|e : blak | beth the bour|es.

In the sixteenth century, was used another kind of long metre, containing sixteen syllables and eight accents. A specimen of it was given in the first volume.[3] Whether

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[1] Here the word *lollai* ought certainly to have been repeated.

[2] Should not this be *whane.*

Ever to live in sorrow, and sigh and ever mourn,
As thy fore-elders did ere this, while they were alive.
Lollai, litil child, child, lollai, lullow,
Into a strange world now art thou y-come !

The beasts and the fowls, the fishes in the flood,
And each thing alive, y-made of bone and blood,
When they come into the world, they do themselves some good,
All but the wretched creature, that is of Adam's blood.
Lollai, lollai, little child, to care art thou consigned ;
Thou wotst not this world is a wild one, that is before thee set.

Child if thee betideth, that thou shalt thrive and prosper,
Think how thou wert y-fostred upon thy mother's knee.
Ever have thought, in thy heart, of these things three,
Whence thou comest, where thou art, and what shall come of thee.
Lollai, lollai, little child, child, lollai, lollai,
With sorrow thou camest into this world, with sorrow shalt wend away, &c.

verses were meant to imitate. This song appears at one time to have been popular, for detached staves are found in different MSS. and a corrupt copy of one of them was discovered by Sir W. Scott, on a tombstone at Melrose. A single stave will show the character both of the rhythm and of the sentiment.

> Earth gets it on earth, treasure and gold ;
> Earth is thy mother, in earth is thine earth-bed !
> Earth, while on earth, be to thy soul faithful—
> Ere earth go to earth, build thy lasting dwelling ;
> Earth buildeth castles, and earth buildeth tow'rs ;
> When earth is in earth, black are its mansions !

it originated in the rhythmus of the *full* Iambic tetrameter,[4] or was formed from some of the tumbling psalm-metres, by introducing that precision of rhythm, which

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[3] Vol. I. p. 283.

[4] See p. 183.

characterised the period, I do not pretend to determine. In our hymn-books, its verse is divided, and it is called "the long metre," to distinguish it from the "common metre," of which we have spoken, and the "short metre," of which we shall have to speak shortly.

The Alexandrine, or verse of six accents, is of very common occurrence in the tumbling metres, which came into fashion during the thirteenth century; and possibly some of them may have been intended as loose imitations of the Alexandrine metre. We have however few specimens of this metre, with anything like a correct versification, before the sixteenth century.

The classical metre, which gave rise to the Alexandrine, is by no means an obvious one. That it was *not* the Iambic Trimeter (which has been suggested by some critics) is clear from the position of the pause. The trimeter, moreover, had its own peculiar rhythmus, which differed widely from the Alexandrine, as may be seen in the song of the Modonese Sentinel, written in the year 924.

O tu | qui ser|vas : ar|mis is|ta mæ|nia|
Noli | dormi|re : mon|eo | sed vig|ila|
Dum Hec|tor vi|gil : ex|titit | in Tro|ia|
Non e|am ce|pit : fraud|ulen|ta Græ|cia| . &c.

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[1] As the subject of these "rhythmi" is a curious one, it may be worth while observing, that the lines which Alcwin wrote on the Canons of Eusebius, furnish us with another species of the longer rhythmus. By dividing each line into two verses, and adding a pause after the fourth syllable of each verse, we get what appears to be the rhythmus of the Catalectic Trochaic Trimeter.

Quam | impri|mis : spe|cio|sa quad|riga|
Ho|mo le|o : vit|ulus | et aq|uila|
Quad|ragin|ta : u|num per | capit|ula|
Col|loquun|tur : de | domin|o pa|ria| &c.

By attending to this simple law, we may easily restore the true reading in many places, where it has been corrupted; for the lines are very incorrectly printed.

The Asclepiad seems to have a better claim. This verse is found among the church-hymns, in various combinations. Sometimes we have three Asclepiads followed by the Glyconic—a combination much favoured by Horace; and sometimes we have a stave formed by joining four Asclepiads together. Both these "metra" had their corresponding "rhythmi." The hymn on the Sacrament, generally ascribed to Thomas Aquinas, may serve as an example of the first kind.

Dedit fragilibus : corporis ferculum,
Dedit et tristibus : sanguinis poculum,
Dicens accipite : quod trado vasculum,
        Omnes ex eo bibite, &c.

A specimen of the other rhythmus is furnished us by the *Apocalypsis Goliæ*, supposed to have been written by Walter Mapes, in the latter half of the twelfth century. A short extract, from one of Prudentius' hymns, may perhaps show more clearly its connexion with its "metrum."

Inventor rutili, dux bone, luminis,
Qui certis vicibus tempora dividis,
Merso sole Chaos ingruit horridum,
Lumen redde tuis, Christe fidelibus! &c.

There will, I think, be little difficulty in considering this stave as the classical metre, on which our English satirist has modelled his accentual verses. It need hardly be observed, that they are perfect Alexandrines.

Deca|nus ca|nis est| : qui se|quens præ|via|
Nare | cupid|inis| : lucri | vestig|ia|,
Indu|cit cal|lide| : cleri | marsu|pia|,
Qua pri|us fix|erat| : magis|tri re|tia| .

Spondet | auxil|ium| : si quid | contul|eris|,
Sed cum | chirag|ricæ| : ferven|tem un|xeris|
Palmæ | prurig|inem| : unguen|to mun|eris|,
Ibit | podag|rice| : ad o|pem op|eris| . &c.

There is little doubt that the rhythm, into which these verses seem, at last, to have settled, was mainly owing to the final rhime. Whatever cadence may have been given to the *earlier* rhythmus, it is clear that, as soon as its verse took the final rhime, the last syllable must have been accented. The twelfth and sixth would then be the two syllables on which the whole verse rested; and the simplest rhythm, that could secure them their accents, would be the one adopted—that is, the rhythm of the Alexandrine.

A metre, formed of Alexandrines, was used by our countrymen, in their *Romance* poems,[1] at the beginning of the twelfth century; but it seems not to have gained a footing in *English* poetry, until a much later period. Brunne's translation of Langtoft's chronicle is the first specimen of English rhythm, which we can *positively* say was intended as an imitation of it; though it is probable that much of the tumbling rhythm, which prevailed during the thirteenth century, was influenced by, or even originated in this metre.

Robert of Brunne most certainly intended to follow the rhythm of Langtoft's Alexandrines. In the latter part of his translation, he generally *interweaves* a second rhime in each couplet; and as the middle pause is thus marked out, without possibility of mistake, I have taken the following specimen, from that portion of his work. He thus laughs at the easy and the simple Baliol:

Priu|e prid|e in pes|[2] : es net|tille in | herbere|
The ros|e is | myghtles| : ther net|tille spredis | ouer fer|
The Bal|iol | so ferd| : with | the duz|e pers|
His ream|e as | ȝe herd| : he lost | thorgh con|seilers|
First | he was | a kyng| : now is | he soud|ioure|
And is | at oth|er spend|yng : bon|den in | the toure| .

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[1] It may be observed, that the Alexandrine of our Romance poems freely admitted a lengthening syllable in either section.

[2] Qu. *pres.*

Privy pride in peace is like nettle in the arbour,
The rose is without pow'r where nettle spreads o'er far.
The Baliol so fared with the *douze peers*—[1]
His realm, as ye have heard, he lost through his counsellors.
First, was he a king, now is he mercenary!
And is, at other's cost, fetter'd in the Tow'r!

The metre was used, with a much narrower rhythm, by the poets of the sixteenth century—the verse being restricted not only to a given number of accents, but also to a certain number of syllables. It is truly wonderful the noble use which Drayton has made of a metre, so tied and fettered, as barely to escape the charge of monotony. What a picture of the woodland is contained in the following passage! Shakespeare himself, though (like Drayton) born on the skirts of Arden, and though his fancy never revelled with more delight than amid the green leaves of the forest, could hardly have surpassed it.

With solitude what sorts : that here 's not wondrous rife,
Whereas the hermit leads : a most retired life
From villages replete : with ragg'd and sweeting clowns,
And from the loathsome airs : of smoky-citied towns ?
Suppose twixt noon and night : the sun his half way wrought,
The shadows to be large : by his descending brought,
Who with a fervent eye : looks through the twiring glades,
And his dispersed rays : commixeth with the shades.
Exhaling the milch-dew : which there had tarried long,
And on the ranker grass : till past the noonsted hung ;
When as the hermit comes : out of his homely cell,
Where from all rude resort : he happily doth dwell ;
Who in the strength of youth : a man at arms hath been,
Or one, who of this world : the vileness having seen,
Retires him from it quite : and with a constant mind
Man's beastliness so loaths : that flying human kind

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[1] That is—*the high aristocracy;* the romances, on the subject of Charlemagne, spread the phrase over Europe.

The black and darksome nights : the bright and gladsome days
Indifferent are to him : his hope on God that stays ;
Each little village yields : his short and homely fare, &c.
Poly Olbion, 13.

In the same century, attempts were made to support this metre without the aid of final rhime. Blennerhasset, a kind of grumbling half-pay officer, thus vents his spleen against the Clergy, in the Mirror for Magistrates : [1]

And this I there did finde : they of the cleargie be
Of all the men that live : the leste in misery.
For all men live in care : *they* carelesse do remaine ;
Like buzzing drones they eate : the hony of the be,
They only doo excel : for fine felicitee.
The king must wage his warres : he hath no quiet day ;
The nobleman must rule : with care the common weale ;
The countryman must toyle : to tyll the barren soyle ;
With care the marchant man : the surging seas must sayle ;
With trickling droppes of sweat : the handcraftes man doth thrive ;
With hand as hard as bourde : the woorkeman eates his bread ;
The souldiour in the fielde : with paine doth get his pay ;
The serving man must serve : and crouch with cap and knee ;
The lawier he must pleade : and trudge from bentch to barre ;
Who phisicke doth professe ; he is not void of care !
But Churchmen, *they* be blest : they turne a leaf or two,
They sometime sing a psalme : and for the people pray ;
For which they honour have : and sit in highest place—
What *can* they wishe or seek : that is not hard at hand ?

It will be seen, the writer affects alliteration, and never refuses either middle or final rhime, if it readily presents itself.

There is a metre of six accents, used by Tuberville and others his contemporaries, in which the accents are often *unequally* divided between the two sections. A specimen of it may be found in the first volume.[2]

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[1] Vide his Cadwallader.

[2] Vol. I. p. 275.

There was yet another kind of psalm-metre, which seems to have come into fashion soon after the year 1500. It consisted of the fourteen-syllabled verse of the "common metre," preceded by the Alexandrine. In our hymn-books, its verses are divided, and it is called the "short metre." The following lines of Surrey may furnish us with an example:

When somer took in hand : the winter to assaile,
With force of might and vertue great : his stormy blasts to quail,
And when he clothed fair : the earth about with grene,
And every tree new garmented : that pleasure was to sene,
Mine hart gan new revive : and changed blood did stur,
Me to withdraw my winter-woes : that kept within the dore.
"Abrode," quod my desire : "essay to set thy fote,
"Where thou shalt find the savour sweet : for sprong is every rote.
"And to thy health, if thou : were sick in any case,
"Nothing more good than in the spring : the aire to fele a space,
"There shalt thou heare and see : al kindes of birds y-wrought
"Wel tune their voice, with warble small : as nature hath them tought," &c.

The metre, thus written at length, is but rarely met with, except during the sixteenth century; when it was commonly known by the name of *poulter's measure*, because the poulterer, as Gaskoyne tells us, "giveth twelve for one dozen, and fourteen for another."

CHAPTER VII.

THE METRES OF FIVE ACCENTS seem to have been first used in English poems during the fourteenth century, though we have specimens of them in our Romance poetry, which were probably written before the close of the twelfth. The Troubadour had anticipated even this early date, and there is one poem in the Romance of Oc,* which Raynouard would fix even before the year 1000. In these older poems, the verse generally consists of ten syllables, with a pause after the fourth; but as the first section is often lengthened, the number of syllables is, in many verses, increased to eleven.

The mystery of the Foolish Virgins, which was written, during the twelfth century, partly in Latin, and partly in the Romance of Oc, contains the following staves. They seem to furnish us with the "rhythmus," which gave rise to this metre.

FATUÆ.

Nos vir|gines| : que ad | vos ven|imus|
Negli|genter| : ole|um fun|dimus|
Ad vos | ora|re : soro|res, cu|pimus|,
Ut in | illas | : quibus | nos cred|imus|.

PRUDENTES.

Nos pre|cari | : preca|mur, am|plius|
Desin|ite | : soro|res o|tius| ;
Vobis | enim | : nil e|rit me|lius|
Dare | preces | : pro hoc | ulter|ius|.

---

* Choix des Poesies des Troubadours.

It is by no means easy to connect this rhythmus with its metrum. Possibly, the Alcaic verse of eleven syllables * may have been the classical model. If the six syllables, furnished by the two dactyles, be read with three accents, like the latter section of the Asclepiad,† we shall have the cadence of those verses, which lengthen the first section.

> Ad vos | ora|re : soro|res cu|pimus|.

As the last and important accent of the first section falls on the fourth syllable, the fifth *may* have been looked upon as a merely lengthening syllable, and gradually dropt from the verse, as unessential to the rhythm.

If it be said, such fifth syllable is of the same nature as that which is so often found lengthening the first section of the Alexandrine,‡ I would distinguish the cases thus. The Alexandrine lengthens *both* sections indifferently; while the verse of five accents never lengthens the second, but very frequently the first—the proportion being generally one verse in seven. Again, I do not remember any instance of either section being lengthened in the "rhythmus" of the Alexandrine; whereas we have just quoted a Latin verse of five accents, which lengthens the first section. I incline therefore to think, that the lengthening syllables of the Alexandrine are mere foreign additions, grafted on the "rhythmus;" and that the supernumerary syllable, in the verse of five accents, is, on the contrary, a remnant of its earlier and more perfect structure.

I have met with no specimen of this metre, among our English rhythms, before the fourteenth century. In the early half of this century lived Richard of Hampole, who, according to Lydgate, turned into English the Prick of Conscience,

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* This verse was used by the later Latin poets, not only in alcaic staves, but sometimes through entire poems.

† See p. 229.

‡ See p. 230, n. (1).

Richard hermite, contemplative of sentence,
Drough in Englishe the Prick of Conscience.
Fall of Princes.

Now we have two translations of the Stimulus Conscientiæ,—one in the metre of four accents, and another in a loose metre, which seems to have been meant for that of five accents. If this be Hampole's version, it is one of the oldest specimens of the metre now extant. As Richard died in 1348, and Chaucer did not write his great work till 1388, it may have preceded the Canterbury Tales by some forty or fifty years. The following description of the joy, that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard," is taken from one of Warton's extracts.

The good|e soule | : schal hav|e in his | heryng|e
Gret joy|e in hev|ene: and grete | lykyng|e
For | hi schul|leth yher|e : the aung|eles song|,
And with|hem hi schul|leth : synge ev|er among|,
With de|lita|ble voys| : and swyth|e cler|e;
And al|so with that| : hi schul|len hav|e ther|e
All oth|er man|er: of ech | a mel|odye
Off | wel lyk|yng noys|e: and men|stralsy|e,
And | of al man|er ten|es : of | musik|e
The whuch|e to man|nes her|te: mig|te lik|e,
Without|e en|i man|er : of | travayle,
The wuch|e schal nev|er : ces|se ne fayl|e.
And | so schil| :[1] schal that noys|e bi | and so swet|e
And | so de|lita|ble: to smal|e and to gre|te,
That al | the mel|ody|e: of this | worlde heer|
That ev|er was | yhur|yd :[2] fer|re or neer|
Wer|e therto | : bot|e as sor|we and car|e,
To | the blis|se that is | : in hev|ene wel zare [3]

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[1] *Schil,* loud. [2] *Yhuryd,* y-heard. [3] *Zare,* provided, ready.

Loose as is the rhythm of these verses, I have seen few *manuscripts* of the Canterbury Tales, which admit of a more definite scansion. The best copies indeed I have *not* seen; and I think it probable that Chaucer; at least confined his metre to the verse of five accents; but any more particular definition I dare not venture upon. Before we can understand the nature of his versification—before we can render Chaucer that justice, which his genius so loudly calls for—we have to settle questions, that require for their solution the most searching and, at the same time, the most delicate investigations. Unfortunately the difficulties of the inquiry are doubled by the blunders of our MSS. Those who turn to them as authority, may feel half disposed to join in the humorous malediction, which the poet himself invokes upon Adam, his "scrivener." At a time when our language was in a state of transition, and when, consequently, correct transcription was so necessary, the greater demand requiring a quicker supply of MSS. gave rise to the professional copyist—the needy and the ignorant scrivener. In him our literature found but a poor substitute for the educated monk; and Chaucer must be acquitted of all undue sensitiveness, notwithstanding his many allusions to the ignorance and carelessness of his transcribers. If Waller thought himself entitled to complain of our "ever-changing tongue," what must such a man have felt, when he saw in how frail a bottom he had consigned name and fame to posterity!

That Chaucer was a *master* of English versification no one, that reads him with due care and attention, can well doubt. There are many passages in his works, which, from the agreement of MSS. and the absence of all those peculiarities of structure that leave matter for doubt, have, in all probability, come down to us as Chaucer wrote them—and in *these* the versification is as exquisite as the poetry. It needs not the somewhat suspicious apology of Dryden.* I am not one of those who assert, that Chaucer has always "ten syllables in a verse, where we find but nine;" but I am as far from believing, that "he lived in the infancy of our poetry," because the scheme of his metre somewhat differs from our own. As far as we have the means of judging, it was not only "auribus istius temporis accommodata," but fulfilled every requisite that modern criticism has laid down, as either essential to the science, or conducive to the beauty of a versification.

The metre of five accents, with couplet-rhyme, may have got its earliest name of "riding rhyme" from the *mounted* pilgrims of the Canterbury Tales. It was long used for light and trifling subjects; and by the critics of the sixteenth century was very unfavourably contrasted with the stately ballet-stave. Gaskoyne, in the list of his metres, had almost "forgotten a notable kinde of rime, called ryding rime, and that is such as our Master and Father Chaucer used in his Canterbury Tales, and in divers other delectable and light enterprises, &c. As this ryding rime servith most aptly to write a merie tale, so rhythme royall† is fittest for a grave discourse, &c." According to Puttenham, Chaucer's "metre heroicall of Troilus and Cressid is very grave and stately, keping up the staffe of seven,‡ and the verse of ten; his other verses of the Canterbury Tales be *but riding rhime*, &c." Harrison,§ in like manner, draws an unfavourable comparison between his "riding rhimes" and the favourite rhythm,

> When as the vers is plac'd between the meeter,

while King James || considers this metre fit only for "long histories," and would deny it even the name of "verse."

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* Preface to the Fables.

† That is the ballet-stave of eight verses, see b. iv. c. .

‡ The ballet-stave of seven, see b. iv. c. 5.

§ Epigrams 3. 44.

|| See his Reulis and Cantelis.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, this metre seems to have gained somewhat more of dignity. According to Drummond of Hawthornden,* Jonson had the design of writing an epic poem in *couplets,* as " he detested all other rhymes." It also appears, he wrote a discourse to prove " couplets the best sort of verses, especially when they are broke like Hexameters; and that cross rhymes and stanzas, because the purpose would lead beyond eight lines, were all forced." But, in the next generation, Davenant wrote his Gondibert in the " interwoven stanza of four," or, as we now term it, the elegiac stave; and defended his choice of a metre in a laboured criticism.† He thinks his stave best adapted to " a plain and stately composing of musick;" and believes it to be more pleasant to the reader, to give him a " respite or pause between every stanza, than to run him out of breath with continued *couplets.*" The influence of Davenant is traced in the early poems of Dryden; but this poet soon gave his preference to the metre, which, chiefly under his sanction, has now established itself as our " Heroic verse."

The unrhimed metre of five accents, or as it is generally termed *blank verse,* we certainly owe to Surrey. English verse without rhime was no novelty; and the " cadence" of Chaucer comes full as near to the blank verse of five accents, as the loose rhythms of some of our dramatists; but I have seen no specimen of any definite unrhimed metre of five accents, which can date earlier than Surrey's translation of the fourth Eneid. His verse was certainly considered, at the time, as something new, for the second edition of his translation is entitled, " The foorth boke of Virgill, &c. translated into English, and drawn into a *straunge metre* by Henry, Earle of Surrey." As Surrey was well acquainted with Italy and its literature, and as the Italians were already making efforts to banish rhyme from their poetry, it is possible he may have taken the hint from them; but, in fact, the subject of unrhymed verse had for some time fixed the attention of *scholars*, very generally, throughout Europe.

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* See Heads of a Conversation, &c.

† See Preface to the Gondibert.

It is difficult to suppose, that such a work as Surrey's was unknown to Milton. Yet in his preface to the second edition of his Paradise Lost, he will have his "negleet of rhime" to be "an example set, *the first in English*, of ancient liberty recovered to heroic poem." Perhaps he might refuse this lofty title to a mere translation; but, however this be, the only predecessors he will acknowledge, in breaking the "bondage of rhiming," are the English Tragedians, and "some Italian and Spanish poets of prime note." It will not be easy to acquit Milton, altogether, of injustice towards his countryman; but if he disdained to mention Surrey, he also disdained to copy from him—both the merits and the faults of Milton's versification are *his own*.

I have hitherto deferred any general inquiry into the laws by which these poets regulated their *rhythm*, as such inquiry, embracing alike the two great divisions—couplets and blank verse—seemed to render a previous acquaintance with the properties of both, in some degree necessary. All the early specimens of this metre, in our native language, exhibit a very loose copy of the rhythm, which is found in our romance poems. The number of syllables varies widely in different verses; and instead of the first section being confined to two accents, and four or five syllables, it often contains three of the former, and six, seven, or eight of the latter. I believe Chaucer strictly confined his verse to five accents; but his successors, and, if we may trust our MSS. even his contemporaries, sometimes tolerated a verse of four. In the MSS. indeed of the fifteenth century, we find a tumbling metre allotted even to Chaucer; but this may, I think, be owing to the change which had, in the meanwhile, taken place in our language. The poets who used this metre in the sixteenth century were, for the most part, very precise in their rhythm. There are still extant poems of Churchyarde, Gaskoyne and Surrey, in which the verse has regularly ten syllables, and the pause almost invariably follows the fourth.

The general scheme of Milton's rhythm is clearly that of five accents and ten syllables to the verse; but as he never counted the lengthening syllable of the second section, and not always the lengthening syllable of the first, his verse has often eleven, and sometimes even twelve syllables. An abrupt section was furnished with a foot of three syllables—the first section *always*, the second in all cases but those, in which the first section had a lengthening syllable, which was counted in the verse. The pausing section 7 p. was sometimes admitted as the first section, and is sometimes found lengthened.

The rhythm of Pope and Dryden differed from Milton's in three particulars. It always counted the lengthening syllable of the first section; it admitted three syllables only in the *second* foot of the abrupt section; and it rejected the sectional pause.

The writers of our couplet-metre occasionally vary their rhythm by one or other of the following *licenses.* They sometimes rhyme their verses by triplets—a change of plan, which is pointed out to the reader by the vulgar expedient of a marginal bracket; sometimes they substitute an Alexandrine, or even a verse of seven accents,* in place of one of five; and sometimes they interpolate a broken verse, as in the following passage,—

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* See Vol. i. p. 283.

> An aweful fear his ardent wish withstood,
> Nor durst disturb the goddess of the wood,
> For such she seem'd.
> So checking his desire, with trembling heart,
> Gazing he stood, nor would nor could depart.
>
> *Cymon and Iphegenia.*

The triplet and the Alexandrine may be found in Hall, and were profusely used by Dryden; the other license seems to have originated in the broken rhythm, which came into fashion about the end of the sixteenth century. In regular blank verse we meet neither with Alexandrine nor broken rhythm; but in our dramatists they are common.

The licenses, which are taken in blank verse, relate chiefly to the position of the stops and pauses. As they are usually defended by the example of Milton, it may be well to examine the principles on which this great Master regulated his versification; and I would hope to escape the charge of presumption, even though I venture, in *some* particulars, to question their soundness. With reverence should we approach the shade of Milton; but criticism would lose half its usefulness and all its dignity, if we yielded an unqualified assent to the doctrine, that its canons are nothing more than the practice of our great poets, reduced to rule.

"True musical delight," says Milton, "consists in apt numbers, fit quantities of syllables, and the sense variously drawn out from one verse into another."

By "apt numbers" I understand that accommodation of the sound to the sense, which Pope's hackneyed line has made familiar, as one of the rules of criticism. Perhaps no man ever paid the same attention to the quality of his rhythm as Milton. What other poets effect, as it were, by chance, Milton achieved by the aid of science and of art; he *studied* the aptness of his numbers, and diligently tutored an ear, which nature had gifted with the most delicate sensibility. In the flow of his rhythm, in the quality of his letter-sounds, in the disposition of his pauses, his verse almost ever *fits* the subject; and so insensibly does poetry blend with this—the last beauty of exquisite versification, that the reader may sometimes doubt whether it be the thought itself, or merely the happiness of its expression, which is the source of a gratification so deeply felt.

In recommending " fit quantities of syllables," I believe Milton wished to discourage any *strain* upon the natural rhythm of the language—he would have it adapted, and not wrested to the purposes of metre. Those, who are acquainted with the state of our poetry during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, will readily acknowledge the necessity of this rule; but they will be disappointed if they look to Milton for its observance. Not only is the flow of his sentence made to yield to the necessities of his metre, but the verbal accent is often disregarded, and the same word variously accented, even within the compass of a few lines. His contemporaries took the same liberties, though not, I think, to the same extent. The fluctuations of our language may be urged in his excuse; but, when every allowance is made for the unsettled accentuation of that period, he must still lie, in many cases, open to the animadversions of criticism.

The last rule of Milton—or rather the manner in which he reduced it to practice—has had a great, and certainly not a favourable, influence upon English versification. I do not question the advantage which may sometimes be gained, from running the verses one into the other. But Milton's passion for variety too often endangers his metre. Not only do his pauses divide portions of the sentence, most intimately connected together, but frequently we have periods ending in the midst of a section, and sometimes immediately after the first, or before the last syllable of the verse. Severe as is the judgment of Johnson, it is not an unjust one, that such a mode of procuring variety "changes the measures of a poet to the periods of a declaimer." Few readers are to be met with, who can make the beginning or the ending of Milton's lines perceptible to their audience.

If it be said, that such sudden and abrupt termination of the sentence often suits the subject,* and is strikingly beautiful—the beauty will be acknowledged, but it is a beauty beyond the reach of Milton's metre, a beauty therefore, which he had no right to meddle with. Versification ceases to be a science, if its laws may be thus lightly broken.

It may perhaps be said, that Milton's metre is *sui generis,* and not to be judged by the ordinary rules of English versification. There *are* critics who consider these sectional stops as *pauses,* and sometimes assign three or even four of these pauses to a verse! as there are others who sometimes allow six accents to a verse; or thirteen, fourteen, or even fifteen syllables! others again who consider a tribrach, or foot of three unaccented syllables, admissible! and a fifth party, who look with scorn upon any accentual division of Milton's rhythm, and divide each verse into six cadences! Some of these theories I have vainly tried to comprehend, and others I have found wholly inapplicable.

There are certainly few English poets whose versification has been so often imitated as Milton's, or so seldom imitated well. The workings of his genius, like those of nature, are complicated; and to trace a particular *effect* to its causes, often requires the most delicate analysis. His faults lie on the surface, and may be copied by a schoolboy. They are forgotten, or at any rate forgiven, when accompanied with all the matchless graces of his versification; but in the pages of an imitator we too often see only a mimicry of his deformities—Alexander's high shoulder on the back of his courtier.

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* See the fifth example in p. 159. Vol. i.

Though the descent be somewhat startling, we ought not to close this chapter without noticing an attempt, made by Drummond of Hawthornden, to originate a new variety of the couplet-metre. Its novelty consisted in alternating the double with the single rhyme. The hint was, doubtless, borrowed from the French, who in the preceding century had established, as a law of their heroic verse, that the *feminine* rhyme should always alternate with the *masculine*.

> It was the time, when to our northern pole
> The brightest lamp of heav'n begins to roll,
> When earth more wanton in her new robes appeareth ;
> And scorning skies, her flow'rs in rainbows beareth,
> On which the air moist diamonds doth bequeath,
> Which quake to feel the kissing zephyrs breath ;
> When birds from shady groves their love forth warble,
> And sea-like heaven looks like smoothest marble, &c.

The reader will hardly wish for a longer extract.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TUMBLING-METRES.

King James in his "Reulis and Cautelis" gives us the following definition of tumbling verse. "Ze man observe that thir tumbling verse flowis not on that fassoun, as the otheris dois. For all utheris keipis the reule, quilk I gave before, to wit, the first fute short, the second lang and so furth. Quhairas thir hes twa short and one 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.*" He applies the name, specially, to a stave, which he recommends for "flyting," or invective; but it may be used with much convenience, in all cases, where the rhythm falls within the definition just quoted. I shall, however, in the present chapter, apply it more particularly to those verses which enter into foreign and artificial combinations, at the same time they retain that irregularity of flow, which our native rhythms were supposed to sanction.

We have already seen, at how early a period the tumbling verse intruded into our psalm-metres, and have noticed some of the causes which may have led to this result.* Another kind of tumbling-metre was founded on the verse of five accents. It prevailed chiefly during the fifteenth century; and seems to have originated in the unsettled state of our language at that period. While some writers wholly omitted the *e* final, and others more or less generally pronounced it, we may readily understand how soon the rhythm of any poet (Chaucer for example) must have become matter of doubt and speculation; and how easily the most careful versification might be degraded into a loose and slovenly specimen of the tumbling-metre. When once this kind of rhythm was looked upon as sanctioned, its facility would be quite sufficient to account for its popularity.

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* See pp. 219, 221.

Lidgate has left us one of the earliest specimens of this metre in the adventures of his "London Lickpenny,"* —a gentleman who indulges the hope of extracting law from an unfeed lawyer! After a vain attempt on the King's Bench, he tries the Common Pleas and the Rolls.

> Un|to the Com|mon Place: I | yode tho|,
> Where sat | one wyth| : a syl|ken hoode|,
> I did | him rev|erence : for | I ought | to do so|,
> I told | my case there| : as well | as I coude|,
> Howe | my goodes | were defrau|ded me: by | falshod| ;
> I gat | not a moue| : of his mouthe | for my mede|,
> And | for lacke | of mon|y : I myght | not spede|.
>
> Un|to the Rolls| : I gat | me from thence|
> Before | the clarkes| : of the Chan|cerye|,
> Where man|y I found| : earn|ing of pense|,
> But none | at all| : once regard|ed me| ;
> I gave | them my playnt| : uppon | my knee| ;
> They lik|ed it well| : when they | had it read|,
> But lack|ing of mon|y : I could | not spede|.
>
> Within | the Halle| : ney|ther ryche | nor yet pore|
> Would do | for me oughte| : altho | I shoulde die|,
> Which se|ing I gat| me : oute | of the dore|,
> Where Flem|ynge began| : on me | for to crye|,
> "Mas|ter what| : will you cop|en or by| ?
> "Fine | felt hattes| : or spec|tacles | to rede|,
> "Lay | down your syl|ver : and here | you may spede|.

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* Harl. 367. It is also found in Strutt's Manners and Customs, &c., vol. iii.

Then | to West|mynster gate| : I pres|ently went|,
When | the soun| : it was | at hygh pryme|,
And cokes | to me| : they tooke | good entent|
And prof|ered me bread| : with ale | and wynne|,
Rybbs | of befe| : both fat | and ful fyne| ;
A fay|re cloth| : they gan | for to sprede|,
But wan|ting mon|y : I myght | not be spede| &c.

This was the favourite metre of the contributors to the Mirrour for Magistrates. Their *rhythm*, however, varies greatly. In some places it approaches the common, in others the triple measure; and generally inclines to the latter, when the subject (as in the passage just quoted) relates to ordinary life, or admits of familiar application.

There is another kind of tumbling verse, which is founded on the metre of four accents. At what time the tumbling and the regular metres were first distinguished, is by no means easy to say, as the origin of the latter is involved in much obscurity; but, in the fifteenth century, the two were certainly looked upon as distinct and separate metres. The tumbling verses have generally four accents, and a very loose rhythm; but they sometimes take three or five accents, and the rhythm shifts, accordingly, to the triple or to the common measure.

The use which Spenser made of this metre, in some of his Eclogues, seems to me a happy one; and to impart a feeling of country freshness and of yeomanly sincerity, which is singularly pleasing. I would instance the beautiful fable in the February-eclogue.

There grew | an ag|ed : Trée | on the gréene|,
A good|ly Oake| : sometime | had it béene|,
With armes | ful strong| : and lerge|lie displayde|,
But | of their leaues| : they were dis|araide|.
The bod|ie bigge| : and might|ilie pight|,
Through|lie root|ed : and | of won|derous hight| ;
Whil|ome had bene| : the king | of the field|,
And moch|el mast| : to the hus|band did yield|

And with | his nuts lar|ded : man|ie swine| ;
But now | the graie | mosse : mar|red his rine|,
His bar|ed boughes| : were beat|en with stormes|,
His top | was bald| : and was|ted with wormes|,
His hon|or decai|ed : his braunch|es sere|.

Hard | by his side| : grew a brag|ging brere|, &c.

Again, when the "proud weed" had worked upon the passions of his too credulous master, how happily flow the verses, which describe the "waste oak's" overthrow !

The Ax|es edge| : did oft | turne againe|,
As half | unwil|ling : to cut | the graine| ;
Séem|ed the sense|lesse : yr|on did feare|,
Or | to wrong ho|ly : eld | did forbeare| ;
For it | had bene| : an aun|cient trée|,
Sa|cred with man|y : a mis|terée|,
And of|ten crost| : with | the priests crewe|,
And of|ten hal|lowed : with ho|ly-wa|ter dew| !
But sike | fancies wer|en : fool|erie|,
And brough|ten this Oake| : to this mis|erie|, &c.

The distinction between this metre and that of Christabel is slight indeed. Yet, in his preface, Coleridge will not have his metre to be "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." No one will suppose that Coleridge claimed any thing but what he *believed* to be his due. He merely laboured under a delusion, of which all of us must, at some time or other, have been conscious, and mistook the gradual awakenings of memory for the slow and tedious process of invention.

Perhaps the same excuse may be made for Byron. He has somewhere stated, that he wrote the Siege of Corinth before he knew anything of the Christabel. Yet so many are the analogies between the two poems, so similar are the ends proposed, and the means taken to effect them, so nearly identical are the metres, and even some of the images, that no critic but must feel doubts as to the correctness of this statement. The difficulty, however, may admit of another solution. Byron may have had his genius turned in this particular channel by the perusal of the Christabel; and, afterwards, when his mind had been diverted to other subjects, and his memory distracted by his multifarious and desultory reading, he may have confounded a *second* perusal with the first. Those who have often had occasion to test the accuracy of memory, will remember cases, in which it has proved equally treacherous.

The origin of such English metres as belong to the *triple measure*, is no less a subject of difficulty than of interest. King James,* it appears, considered them as mere varieties of the tumbling verse; and there are early specimens of these tumbling metres, which approach the triple measure so nearly, as to render the transition from the one to the other at least probable. I have seen no English poem written throughout in the triple measure which could date earlier than the fifteenth century. The following song is mentioned by Gawin Douglas, in the year 1512, as then popular among the vulgar. It was probably written in the latter half of the fifteenth century, but has been referred to an earlier period.

1.

Hay! now | the day daw|is,
The jol|ie cok craw|is,
Now shroud|is the shau|is
Throw na|ture anone| ;

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* See p. 246.

The thriss|el cok cry|is
On lov|ers wha ly|is,
Now skail|is the sky|is,
The night | is near gone|.

2.

The fields | ourflow|is[1]
With gouans that grou|is,
Quhair lil|ies lyk lou|is
Als rid | as the rone|
The tur|till that treu | is
With nots | that reneu|is
His hair|tie perseu|is,
The night | is neir gone|. &c. &c.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century the triple measure must have been familiar to the ears of the people, or Tusser, who wrote for the yeomanry, would not have selected it, as the chief medium for conveying to them his husbandly lessons. He uses it in various combinations; sometimes in a short stanza, with alternate rhyme,

Ill hus|bandry brag|geth
To go | with the best|,
Good hus|bandry bag|geth
Up gold | in his chest|.

Ill hus|bandry los|eth
For lacke | of good fence|,
Good hus|bandry clos|eth
And gain|eth the pence|. &c.

sometimes in a longer stanza, each line containing three accents,

What lookest thou herein to have?
Fine verses thy fancy to please?

---

[1] This word was probably pronounced with four syllables *owerflow|is*, though here spelt with three.

Of man|y my bet|ters *that* crave| ;
Look noth|ing but rude|ness in these|.

What look | ye, I pray | you shew what| ?
Terms pain|ted with rhet|oric fine| ?
Good hus|bandry seek|eth not that|,
Nor is't | any mean|ing of mine|.

What look|est thou, speak | at the last ?
Good les|sons for thee | and thy wife| ?
Then keep | them in mem|ory fast|,
To help | as a com|fort to life|.

He has also used the stave, of which a specimen was given in p. 250; but the great staple of his work is a stave composed of two rhyming couplets.

To Hun|ters and Hawk|ers : take heed | what ye say|,
Mild an|swer with cour|tesy : drives | them away| ;
So where | a man's bet|ters : *will* o|pen a gap|,
Resist | not with rude|ness, for fear | of mishap|.

A man | in this world| : for a churl | that is known|,
Shall hard|ly in qui|et : keep that | is his own| ;
Where low|ly, and such| : as of cour|tesy smells|,
Finds fa|vour and friend|ship : wherev|er he dwells|.

The second of these specimens, it will be seen, is the stave used by Rowe,

Despairing beside a clear stream
A shepherd forsaken was laid, &c.

and which was afterwards adopted by Shenstone in his Pastorals.

During the last two centuries we have had almost every kind of stave written in this measure. It must be useless to quote examples.

CHAPTER VIII.

LOOSE RHYTHMS.

Measured prose seems to have been known to our language from the earliest period. Even in the simple narrative of our venerable Chronicle, we often find traces of a rhythmical structure, much too marked to be the result of accident. Many of the writers certainly paid attention to the flow of their sentences, and when their thoughts kindled with a subject of stirring interest, they naturally clothed them in the rhythm, to which poetry had given high and dignified associations.

We have seen Wulfstan* employing final rhyme, to strengthen his rhythm, and thereby throw his figures into more marked relief. At an earlier period, alliteration was called in aid; and sometimes we find all the conditions of an alliterative couplet completely satisfied. The following passage is taken from the Chronicle, under the date 979. It contains the reflections of the writer on the murder of the martyred Edward.†

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* See p. 151. A yet earlier specimen of this rhyming prose (if we may so call it) may be found in the passage of the Chronicle, which describes the cruelties practised on the young Etheling Alfred, A. D. 1036.

† As the inaccurate Worcester copy Tib. B. IV. is the only one, within reach, that contains the passage, I have taken the extract in the text from Dr. Ingram's Edition.

—Ne wearth Angel-cynne nan wærsa dæd gedon thonne theos wæs . syththon hi ærest. Bryton-land gesohton. Men hin|e ofmyr|throdon . ac God | hine mær|sode . he | wæs on lif|e earth|lic cing|. he | is nu | æfter death|e heof|onlic sanct|. Hin|e nol|don his earth|lican mag|as wrec|an . ac hin|e haf|ath his heof|onlic|a fæ|der swith|e gewrec|en. Tha eorth|lican ban|an wol|don his | gemynd | on eorth|an adil|gian . ac | se up|lica wrec|end haf|ath his | gemynd | on heof|enum and | on eorth|an tobræd|. Fortham[1] tha | the nol|don ær | to his lib|bendum lich|aman | onbug|an tha | nu ead|modlic|e on cneow|um abug|ath to | his dæd|um ban|um. Nu we magon ongytan . thæt manna wisdom . and heora smægunga . and heora rædas . syndon nahtlice ongean Godes getheaht.

Coleridge[*] characterises the style of Junius as " a sort of metre, the law of which is a balance of thesis and antithesis." If we might use the word metre, in the sense here given to it—as a measure of *thought*—we could hardly find a more happy definition of the passage just quoted. The rhythmical portion contains no less than five " antithetic parallels," (to use the language of Bishop Lowth), and every point of contrast is enforced and pressed upon the reader's notice by the rhythm. This balance of thesis and antithesis is often met with in our epitaphs, but we seldom find that attention paid to the flow of the sentence, which is necessary to give it its full effect.

The word *prose* seems to have been formerly used with great laxity of meaning. In our missals we find it applied to the Hexameters, and to the longer rhythms, which we have called the Psalm-metres; and when Jonson[†] denounced the verse of seven accents as " prose," he was merely giving it a title, which it had borne for centuries. *Cadence* seems to have been the term used to denote the

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[1] This word is omitted in some of the MS. and seems to be superfluous.

[*] Table Talk, ii. 213.

[†] See " Heads of Conversations," &c. by Drummond of Hawthornden.

—Nor was there any worse deed done by the Engle-kin (than this was) sithen they first sought the land of Britain. Men murder'd him; but God exalted him! he was in life an earthly king; he is now after death a heavenly saint! Him would not his earthly kinsmen avenge; but him hath his heavenly Father strongly avenged! His earthly murderers would on earth have destroyed his memory; but his Avenger on high hath spread his memory over heaven and over earth! They, that would not erst to his living body bend them, these now humbly on their knees bow to his dead bones! Now may we learn, that men's wisdom, and their machinations, and their counsels, are naught against God's will.

kind of measured prose, of which we are now speaking; and if, in any composition, much attention was paid to the flow of the rhythm, it was said (at least in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries) to be "prosed in faire cadence."

In the House of Fame, Chaucer represents himself as thus addressed,

Thou ——— has set thy wit,
(Although in thy head full little is)
To maken bookes, songes and dities
In ryme, *or els in cadence,*
As thou best canst, in reverence
Of love—

and Tyrwhitt conjectured, with his usual sagacity, that he had written in a "species of poetical composition, distinct from rhyming verses." The Tale of Melibeus has been considered, by some persons, as "blank verse;" but though its claim to such a title may questioned, it is certainly a specimen of cadence. The model, which Chaucer had floating before him, was clearly his favourite metre of five accents; and it must be confessed, there is but little difference between this measured prose and the loose rhythm, wavering between prose and metre, in which so many of our dramatists have written. The following extract I have endeavoured to arrange according to its metrical structure. It is taken from Tyrwhitt's Edition, and is probably not very correctly written; but, as each line is scanned, the reader will see in what cases the final *e* is supposed to be pronounced, and in what cases superfluous; while at the same time he is furnished with the means of forming an independent judgment.

A yonge | man cal|led : Mel|ibe|us
Migh|ty and rich|e : begate | upon | his wif|
That cal|led was | Pruden|ce
A dough|ter which | : that cal|led was | Sophi|e.

Upon | a day | befell|,
That he | for his | disport| : is went | into|
The fel|des him | to pley|e : his wif| and eke|
His dough|ter hath | he laft | : within | his hous|
Of which | the dor|es : wer|en fast | yshet|te.
Foure | of his ol|de foos | : han it | espi|ed
And set|ten lad|ders | : to | the wal|les
Of | his hous | : and | by the win|dowes
Ben en|tred, and bet|en his wif| : and wound|ed his dough|ter
With | five mor|tal woun|des : in | five son|dry pla|ces;
This | is to say|,
In | here feet, in | here hand|es : in | hire er|es
In | here nose | : and in | here mouth |
And lef|ten here | for dede | : and wen|ten away|

When Mel|ibe|us
Retor|ned was | : in|to the hous | and sey |
Al this | meschief | : he | like a mad|man,
Ren|ding his cloth|es : gan | to wep|e and cri|e.
Pruden|ce his wif | : as fer | forth as | she dors|te
Besought | him of | his we|ping : for | to stint[1]
But not | for thy | : he gan | to cri|e and wep|e
Ev|er leng|er the more.

---

[1] Qu. *stinte.*

This no|ble wif|, Pruden|ce : remem|bred hire|
Upon | the senten|ce of Ov|ide : in | his book|
That clep|ed is | : the Rem|edi|e of Lov|e,
Wheras | he saith| ;
"He | is a fool | : that | distour|beth the mod|er
"To wep|e in the deth | of hire childe | : till | she hav|e
"Wept| hire fil|le : as | for a cer|tain spac|e
"And than | shal a man | : don | his dil|igen|ce
"With a|miable wor|des : hire | to re|confor|te
"And prey|e hire of | hire we|ping : for | to stin|te."
For whiche | reson | : this no|ble wif| Pruden|ce
Suf|fred hire hous|bond : for | to wep|e and cri|e
As | for a cer|tain spac|e : and whan | she saw|
Hire tim|e, she say|de to | him : in | this wis|e
Alas | my Lord | quod she | : why mak|e ye|
Yourself | for to | be like | a fool| ? forsoth|e
It ap|pertain|eth not | : to | a wise man|
To ma|ken swiche | a sor|we ;
Youre dough|ter with | the grac|e of God| : shal war|ish and escap|e.
And al | were it so | : that she | right now | were dede|
Ye | ne ought not| : as | for hire deth|
Youreself | to destroy|e : Sen|ek saith|

"The wise man shal not take to gret discomfort, for the deth of his children, but certes he shulde suffren it in patience, as well as he abideth the deth of his owen proper persone."

This Mel|ibe|us ; an|swered anon | and said|e
What man|, quod he| : shul|de of his wep|ing stin|te
That hath | so gret | a caus|e : for | to we|pe ?
Je|su Crist| : our Lord | himself|
Wepte | for the deth| : of Laz|arus | his frend|.
Pruden|ce an|swered : cer|tes wel | I wote|
Attem|pre we|ping is| : noth|ing defen|ded
To him | that sor|weful is| : among folk| in sor|we
But | it is ra|ther : graun|ted him | to we|pe.
The Apos|tle Poule| : un|to the Rom|aines wri|teth
"Man | shall rejoyc|e : with hem | that mak|en joy|e
"And wep|en with| : swiche folk | as we|pen."

But though | attem|pre we|ping : be | ygran|ted
Outrage|ous we|ping : cer|tes is | defen|ded .
Mes|ure of we|ping : shul|de be | consid|ered,
Af|ter the lore| : that tech|eth us | Senek|,
"Whan | that thy frend| : is dede | quod he|
"Let | not thin ey|en : to mois|te ben | of ter|es
"Ne | to muche dri|e ;
"Although | the ter|es : com|en to | thin ey|en
"Let | hem not fal|le
"And when | thou hast| : forgon | thy frend|
"Do dil|igen|ce
"To get | again| : anoth|er frend|
"This | is more wis|dom
"Than | for to we|pe : for | thy frend|
"Which that | thou hast lorne| : for | ther|ein is | no bote|.

As the tale proceeds, the rhythmical structure gradually disappears.

This measured prose, or cadence, seems to have been long considered, as peculiarly suitable for sermons. It was used alike in the homilies of the tenth century, and in the expositions of the seventeenth; and was probably recited in a kind of drawling chaunt, not very unlike the delivery of some dissenting ministers. It appears to have been loosely modelled on the favourite rhythms of the day, for as new forms of metre grew familiar to the popular ear, we find its character affected, and slowly varying with each successive change.

There are portions of Chaucer's cadence, which *might* have given Milton the hint, on which he fashioned his choral rhythms in the Samson Agonistes. But I incline to think, he borrowed them from the Italian dramas of the preceding century. In these poems, he would find not only broken verse, but also final rhime, irregularly introduced, as he afterwards used it in his choruses. He tells us, indeed, that the measure of his verse "is of all sorts, called by the Greeks monostrophic, or rather apolelymenon;" but I take it, we are not to infer that he borrowed his rhythms from the Greek, but merely that he used such, as he thought would best correspond with the classical models he was ambitious of emulating. Johnson considered the versification of these choruses "so harsh and dissonant, as scarce to preserve (whether the lines end with or without rhime) any appearance of metrical regularity;" and it must be confessed there are lines which almost seem to merit a censure thus severe. But modern pronunciation is *not* the pronunciation of Milton. Many verses, as they are now read by some of Milton's admirers, would disgust the poet, full as much as his critic.

The rhythm of the following chorus is incumbered with few difficulties. It has been highly praised, but surely not beyond its merits. Who can read it without admiration?

God | of our Fa|thers : what | is man| !
That thou | towards him| : with hand | so var|ious,
Or might | I say | contra|rious,
Tem|per'st thy prov|idence| : through his | short course|,
Not ev|enly, as | thou rul'st|
The Angel|ic [1] or|ders : and | infe|rior crea|tures mute|,
Irrat|ional | and brute|.
Nor | do I name| : of men | the com|mon rout|,
That wan|dering loose | about|
Grow up | and per|ish : as | the sum|mer flie|,
Heads | without name| : no more | remem|ber'd——
But such | as thou | hast :[2] solemnly | elec|ted
With gifts | and gra|ces : em|inently| adorn'd|,
To some | great work|, thy glo|ry,

---

[1] Here we must read *Th'angelic.*

It should be observed, that verses of six accents, with the accents unequally divided, were common in the latter half of the sixteenth, and the beginning of the seventeeth century. Milton has used several of them in the present chorus. The rhythm was familiar at the time, but is now obsolete; and if the reader be not on his guard, may take him by surprise.

[2] This and the following verse afford us beautiful instances of the use of the middle pause, as an emphatic stop. See Vol. i. p. 173.

And peo|ple's safe|ty : which | in part | they 'effect| ;
Yet | toward these| : thus dig|nified|, thou oft|
Amidst | their highth | of noon|,
Chang|est thy count|enance[2] and | thy hand| : with no | regard|
Of high|est fa|vours past|
From thee | to them| : or them | to thee | of ser|vice.

Not on|ly dost | degrade | them : or | remit|
To life | obscur'd| : which | were a fair | dismis|sion,
But throw'st | them low|er : than | thou didst | exalt | them high|,
Unseem|ly falls| : in hu|man eie|,
Too grie|vous for the tres|pass : or | omis|sion ;
Oft leav'st | them to| : the hos|tile sword|
Of hea|then and prophane| : their car|kasses|
To dogs | and fowls | a prey| : or else | captiv'd|,
Or | to the unjust|[3] tribu|nals : un|der change | of times|,
And con|demna|tion : of | the ingrate|ful[4] mul|titude.
If these | they scape| : perhaps | in pov|erty|
With sick|ness and | disease| : thou bow'st | them down|,
Pain|ful diseas|es and | deform'd|,
In crude | old age|,
Though not | disord|inate| : yet caus|less suf|fring,
The pun|ishment| : of dis|solute days|—in fine|,
Just | or injust| : alike | seem mis|era|ble
For oft | alike| : both come | to evil end|.

So deal | not with | this : once[5] | thy glo|rious cham|pion,
The im|age of | thy strength| : and migh|ty min|ister,
What | do I beg| ? : how | hast thou dealt | alread|y ?
Behold | him in | this state| : calam|itous|,[6] and turn|
His la|bours, for | thou canst,| : to peace|ful end|.

But who | is this| : what thing | of sea | or land| ?
Fe|male of sex | it seems|
That so | bedeckt : ornate | and gay|

---

[3] Here the vowels coalesce, *they 'ffect.*

[2] *count'nance.* See Vol. i. p. 52.

[3] *th'unjust.*

[4] *th'ingrateful.*

[5] See vol. i. p. 173.

[6] As to Milton's use of the secondary accent, see Vol. i. p. 173.

Comes this | way sail|ing
Like | a state|ly ship|
Of Tar|sus, bound | for th' isles|
Of Ja|van or | Gadier|
With all | her brav|ery on| : and tack|le trim|,
Sails fill'd | and stream|ers wav|ing,
Court|ed by all | the winds| : that hold | them play|,
An am|ber scent| : of od|orous | perfume|
Her har|binger| : a dam|sel train | behind| ? &c.

The first line of this noble chorus stands by itself—a passionate burst of feeling; then comes a couplet, consisting of a verse of two sections, followed by a verse of three accents. A couplet of this kind (forming, as it were, the governing rhythm) may be traced through all the first part of the Chorus—re-appearing at intervals, like the melody of a song, with slight variations. To give it greater relief, final rhime is often added. The change of rhythm, which accompanies the appearance of Dalila, is effected by an accumulation of the shorter verses, assisted by a very artificial management of the final rhimes. We have no less than four *vowel*-rhimes, ranged in an inverse order;

isles	Gad*ier*
ship	*trim*
sailing	*waving*
gay	*play*

This novel arrangement of an unusual rhime excites the attention without satisfying the ear—particularly when contrasted with the marked character of the couplet-rhime—and produces, in the mind of the hearer, a feeling of *partial recognition*, which is beautifully adapted to the sentiments conveyed.

The unrhimed metres, which Campion invented in the sixteenth century, are of a widely different character from these choral rhythms of Milton. Instead of relying on the fitness—the *curiosa felicitas*—of his members, Campion trusted to the precision of his rhythm. His attempts are not, I think, such failures, as to merit the almost total oblivion, into which they have now fallen; but the examination of them belongs more properly to the next chapter. I shall, at present, call the reader's attention to an experiment by Coleridge, which is more in Milton's manner, and in which he seems to have had the same object* in view as Campion—namely the invention of a lyrical metre, which could support itself without the aid of rhime.

The following lines are addressed "To a cataract from a cavern, near the summit of a mountain precipice."

STROPHE.

Unper|ishing youth|,
Thou leap|est from forth|
The cell | of thy hid|den nativ|ity!
Nev|er mor|tal saw|
The cra|dle of | the strong | one,
Nev|er mor|tal heard|
The gath|ering of | his voic|es——
The deep|-murmur'd charm | of the son | of the rock|,
Which is lisp'd | evermore|, at his slum|berless foun|tain.
There's a cloud | at the por|tal, a spray|-woven veil|,
At the shrine | of his cease|less renew|ing;
It embos|oms the ros|es of dawn|,
It entang|les the shafts | of the noon|,
And in|to the bed | of its stil|lness
The moon|light sinks down|, as in slum|ber——
That the son | of the rock|, that the nurse|ling of heav|en
May be born | in a ho|ly twi|light.

ANTISTROPHE.

The wild | goat in awe|
Looks up | and beholds|

---

[1] See Quart. Rev. 110. art 24.

Above | thee the cliff | inaccess|ible !
Thou | at once | full-born|
Mad|d'nest in thy joy|ance,
Whirl|est, shat|ter'st, splitt'st|,
Life | invul|nera|ble ! [1]

Here Coleridge attempts what Milton carefully avoided, a division into Strophe and Antistrophe. His failure, which he seems to have acknowledged by leaving the Antistrophe unfinished, shews the wisdom of Milton's forbearance. When the rhythm is left, almost without metrical restraint, to follow each change of sentiment or of feeling, we look for exquisite felicity of cadence. But, when the same rhythm is applied to different subjects, or to different divisions of the same subject, we can hardly hope it will adapt itself, with equal happiness, to *both*. The accommodation of the subject to the rhythm in the Antistrophe, is a matter of infinitely greater difficulty than the accommodation of the rhythm to the subject in the Strophe. Coleridge's rhythm in the three first lines of his Antistrophe, agrees so ill with his subject, as barely to escape the charge of burlesque.

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[1] I have an indistinct recollection of having seen this ode elsewhere. Is it not copied, or at least imitated from the German ?

CHAPTER X.

METRICAL EXPERIMENTS.

Few of our metres have been *invented* by the men who used them. The poet adopted, it may be with slight modifications, the rhythms which he found established in popular favour; and variety was obtained, either by the gradual working of such slight but continued changes, or by the introduction of foreign novelties (the church-hymns, or songs of the Troubadour, for example,) which, by fixing popular attention, at length obtained an influence over our native rhythms.

But, during the last three centuries, various attempts have been made to *originate* new forms of English metre; and the sixteenth century was particularly fruitful in these experiments. One of the most remarkable was the attempt made to imitate, in accentual verse, the temporal rhythms of the classical poets.

The "rhythmus" of the middle ages seems to have succeeded to the "metrum," by a very simple and natural process. The ancient Goth and Celt were probably as unconscious as ourselves of any metrical harmony, resulting from the disposition of long and short syllables. The only property of the classical verse they could appreciate, must have been the arrangement of the syllables, on which fell the sharp tone and the *ictus*. The laws, which regulated the position of these syllables, were sufficiently definite (at least among the later Latin poets) to give very clear notions of rhythmical proportion. The monk, therefore, though in his rhythmus he neglected the quantity of his syllables, gave to his verse all the properties, which his *ear* had been taught to recognise in the classical metrum.

But in the experiments, which have been made during the last three centuries, a very different course has been followed. Instead of the accent representing the sharp tone, or the ictus, it has been considered as a substitute for the *long quantity*. The vague notions which prevailed as to the nature of *accent*, long kept out of sight the difficulties, that necessarily flowed from such a condition. Accentual *spondees* were talked of, without the least suspicion of absurdity, and though there was much difference of opinion as to many of the examples quoted, yet all seem to have admitted that such a combination of accents was possible. When at last it was discovered, that accented syllables could not come together without the intervention of a pause, it was holden, that a "spondee" might in all cases be represented by a "trochee." In this way, much of the difficulty that stood in the way of these experiments was got rid of; and certainly by aid of such substitution all the most serious obstacles were removed. Still, however, the experiments did not succeed, and it may be well to notice some of the causes, which probably led to this result.

In the Latin "rhythmus," the *middle pause* was the pivot on which the whole verse turned; in the later imitations it was almost wholly neglected. The omission was more particularly felt in the longer verses, such as the Hexameter. According to analogy, the English hexameter should have adopted the favourite pause of the classical, and have divided after the first (or, in case of the *trochaic cæsura*, the second) syllable of the third metre.

Again, in our English hexameters (which were the most common, and by far the most important of these classical imitations) the rhythm was, for the most part, much too loose. It followed the triple rather than the common measure, and, as there was seldom any pause to rest upon, the reader was hurried forward by the " breathless dactyles," as Hall sneeringly calls them. When this galloping rhythm was checked by the " drawling spondees," the flow of the verse too often resembled that of the tumbling metres, and was open to a criticism, which has been attributed to Wordsworth ; it was " too little metrical at the beginning of a line, and too much so at the close."

If it be urged, that *German* hexameters but seldom take the pause, and generally incline to the triple measure, it might be answered, that we are not arguing against the *possibility* of writing English hexameters with loose rhythm, and without any settled pause, but merely pointing out some of the causes which have contributed to their failure. I will, however, confess I have seen few German hexameters which, to my ear, were satisfactory ; and though it is hard to say whither association may not lead us, I think it must be difficult, even for a German, to connect any notions of dignity with a rhythm, so loose and tumbling.

But the great objection to our English hexameters is one, that rarely attaches to the German—I mean *false accentuation.* A false accent is always objectionable, however precise the rhythm may be, and however familiar to the reader ; but if this kind of " license " be taken, when the rhythm is loose and *new* to the reader, what means has he of following the writer ? The only clue, which can guide him through the labyrinth, is then broken.

Now in few kinds of metre have we more of false accentuation than in these " classical imitations." Spenser and his contemporaries were led to it, by confounding the rules of Latin and English prosody. In one of his letters he gives it as his opinion, that such words as *carpenter,* in which the middle syllable was "used short in speech when it should be read long in verse," might be "won with custom;" and simply asks, "why (a' God's name) may not we, as the Greeks, have the kingdom of our own language, and measure our accents by the sound, reserving the quantity to the verse?" Later writers have been misled by the fatal example of Milton. Indeed, so little have our accents of *construction* been studied, that Harris was guilty of no less than two blunders, in scanning the very line which he quotes, as a "perfect hexameter."

> Why | do the hea|then rage|, and the peo|ple imag|ine a vain |
> thing?

Here the accent on the conjunction is slurr'd over, and the adjective accented more strongly than its substantive. Properly read, the line would read thus,

> Why | do the hea|then rage|, and | the peo|ple imag|ine a vain
> thing| ?

By adopting the favourite pause of the Latin hexameter, we should obtain an accentual verse, which might be thus defined. It would open with an abrupt section of three accents, admitting of a lengthening syllable; and would close with a lengthened section of three accents, beginning with one unaccented syllable,* and having two such syllables before the last accent.† A verse like this would differ from the Latin "rhythmus," first, as to the property of the classical metre, represented by its accent; and, secondly, in the *variable* number of its syllables. I think, however, it might be turned to good account, especially in translation. The rhythm would, probably, be sufficiently precise, at the same time it would admit of considerable variety; and if it were kept *well in hand*, the writer never suffering the "dactyles" to run away with him, it might perhaps possess somewhat of that dignity, which is so seldom to be met with in our tumbling hexameters.

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* One kind of verse has been purposely omitted. A section beginning with *two* unaccented syllables is for several reasons so inconvenient, that it is better to get rid of it altogether.

† This metre is pretty closely followed in the first twenty lines of Southey's Vision of Judgment; and who can read that splendid opening without pleasure?

The following *exercise* may help to make my meaning clearer. It claims no other merit than that of being a line-for-line translation; but may serve, in some measure, to test an instrument, which, in more skilful hands, might possibly give out no indifferent music.

Sing the wrath, O Goddess : Achilles' wrath the Pelides !
Deadly it was, and whelm'd : with many a woe the Achaians,
Many a soul it sent : of hero brave into Hades,
Ere his time, and left : his limbs to the dog and the vulture,
Mangled and torn a prey : E'en thus Zeus' will was accomplisht,
From the day when first : they strove and parted in anger—
He, the king of men : Atrides, and godlike Achilles.

Which of the Gods impell'd : these two to the fatal encounter ?
Zeus and Leto's son : He, wrath with the king, in his anger,
Plague through the army sent : and thick and fast fell the soldiers ;
For that Atreus' son : had Chryses evil entreated,
When to the ships the priest : came laden with ransom, and offer'd
Gifts of untold price : to rescue his daughter from bondage,
And the God's fillet bare : in hand—far-shooting Apollo's—
High on the golden staff : Full humbly he sued the Achaians,
But the two sons of Atreus : most sued, as chiefs of the people.

" Sons of Atreus, and all : ye other grieve-arm'd Achaians,
" May the Gods speed your wish : (that dwell in abodes of Olympus)
" Priam's towns to raze : and win your way happily homeward !
" But to me my child : my lov'd one release, and the ransom
" Take to yourselves, and fear : Zeus' son, far-shooting Apollo.

Then, on all sides, their wish : out spake the other Achaians
Him the priest to honour : and take the bounteous ransom,
But ill pleas'd at heart : was Atreus' son Agamemnon—
He the priest dismiss'd : with insult and bitterest menace.

" Let me not, old man, : beside these hollow-ribb'd gallies
" Find thee ling'ring now : or hither henceforth returning,
" Lest the God's staff and fillet : perchance may little avail thee.
" Her will I not release : before old age overtake her,
" In our distant home : at Argos, far from her country,
" Driving along the shuttle : and mounting my bed to partake it.
" Hence ! and anger me not : that safe may be thy departure."

Thus he spake ; the old man : sore trembled, and straightway obey'd him.
Silent he paced the shore : far beat by the billowy ocean,
All alone he went : then pray'd full oft to Apollo,
Pray'd to his King and God : the son of Leto the fair-haired.

" Thou of the silver bow : who Chryses ever encirclest,
" And thrice holy Killa : who Tenedos sway'st at thy pleasure,
" Hear me, Smintheus ! if ere : I crown'd thy beauteous temple,
" If to thee I burnt : fat off'ring entire on thine altar,
" Haunch of bull or goat : this one request do thou grant me—
" May the Achaians rue : my tears, avenged by thine arrows !"

Thus he spake ; his pray'r : was heard by Phœbus Apollo.
Wrath at heart he left : the topmost heights of Olympus,
Down from his shoulders hung : the fatal bow, and the quiver
Closed all around : and, as he came in his anger,
Rattled the arrows of death : and black as night was his coming.

Our poets did not confine their attention to the "Heroic verse" of classical Literature. Sidney has left us specimens of the "Elegiac metre;" but though he succeeded somewhat better in the pentameter (owing to the very marked character of its pause) than in the accompanying hexameter, his imitations of neither are worthy of his reputation. The happiest attempt which has been made to follow the Ovidian metre is a version of two German lines by Coleridge. He describes and exemplifies it in the following couplet ;

In | the hexam|eter ris|es : the foun|tain's sil|very col|umn,
In | the pentam|eter aye| : fal|ling in mel|ody back| :

Spenser's hexameters have perished; and if we may judge from his "trimetra," without much loss to his reputation. It would have been as well if the latter had followed them. We have seen* what kind of "rhythmus" belonged to the Iambic *Senarius*—the following staves are part of Spencer's imitation.

Now doe I nightly waste, wanting my kindely reste,
Now doe I daily starve, wanting my lively foode,
Now doe I alwayes dye, wanting my timely mirth.

And if I waste, who will bewaile my heavy chaunce ?
And if I starve, who will recorde my cursed end ?
And if I dye, who will saye, "this was Immerito ?"

Well might his friend Harvey doubt, if the lines were "so precisely perfect for the feete," as the poet "over partially weened, and over confidently avouched!"

"English Sapphics," were probably written in the sixteenth century, certainly not long after the year 1600. A specimen of their rhythm may be found in the first volume.† The following imitation of the "Catullian Hendecasyllables" we owe to Coleridge.

Hear | my belov|ed ; an old | Ovid|ian sto|ry !
High | and embos|om'd : in con|grega|ted lau|rels
Glim|mer'd a tem|ple : upon | a breez|y head|land ;
In | the dim dis|tance ; amid | the sky|ey bil|lows
Rose | a fair is|land ; the God | of flocks | had plac'd it.
From | the far shores| : of the bleak | resounding is|land,
Oft | by the moon|light : a lit|tle boat | came float|ing,
Came | to the sea|-cave : beneath | the breez|y head|land,
Where | amid myr|tles : a path|way stole | in maz|es,
Up | to the groves| : of the high | embos|om'd tem|ple.

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* See p. 228.

† Vol. i. p. 112.

There | in a thic|ket : of ded|icated ros|es,
Oft | did a pries|tess : as love|ly as | a vis|ion,
Pouring her soul| : to the son | of Cyth|ere|a
Pray | him to hov|er : around | the | light | canoe-boat,
And | with invis|ible : pi|lotage | to guide | it, &c.

Coleridge, it is seen, substitutes a *dactyle* for the two-syllabled foot, which begins the verse of his classical model; and so converts the "hendecasyllable" into a verse of twelve syllables. This he doubtless did with the view of accommodating his verse to the fashionable rhythms of the day. But, in experiments of this kind, the reader *looks for* novelty; and the ear would soon familiarize itself with a metre, which should consist of the verses 1 *l.* 5 *l.* and 1 *ll.* 1 *l.*, the first section of course taking the two accents. If such a rhythm were thought monotonous, it might be varied by occasionally using 2 *l.* or 2 *ll.*, as the first section. Would some of Coleridge's lines be *very much* injured by thus lopping them of a syllable? With such curtailment they would certainly come nearer to the rhythm of the "hendecasyllable."

Hear, my lov'd one : an old Ovidian story!
High, and bosom'd : in congregated laurels,
Glimmer'd a temple : upon a breezy headland,
Far in Ocean : amid the skyey billows,
Rose an island : the God of flocks had placed it, &c.

These imitations of the classical metres were not the only means taken, in the sixteenth century, to introduce novelty into English versification. The necessity of rhime was not only questioned, but its *utility* denied. Campion, who led the attack against it, has left us a treatise, wherein, amid much vague and inconsequential reasoning, we sometimes catch glimpses of the real principles on which English verse depends. The result of his criticism was the recommendation of certain metres, which he thought especially suited to certain subjects, and at the same time sufficiently rhythmical to support themselves without the aid of rhime. His "Iambics," or the metre selected for "triumphs of princes and stern tragedies," are nothing more than our modern blank verse.

> Goe numbers, boldly passe, stay not for ayde,
> Of shifting rime, that easie flatterer,
> Whose witchcraft can the ruder cares beguile;
> Let your smooth feete, enured to purer arte
> *True* measures tread, &c.

His "Dimeters," as he calls them, were recommended for the "Chorus in a tragedy."

> Raving warre, begot
> In the thirstye sands
> Of the Lybian iles,
> Wastes our emptye fields, &c.

His "Trochaic,"* "Anacreontic,"† and "Elegiac"‡ metres have been already noticed. The rhythm of the last is peculiar, and might, perhaps, in some few cases, be used to advantage.

Campion sometimes aimed at novelty by *breaking his verses*. As the broken stave (of which we shall have to speak hereafter) had been already introduced into our poetry, there was little *originality* in the attempt; but it may be well to notice one or two of the results. His "Sapphic" verses have for their subject "a triumph at Whitehall."

> Loe they sound, the knights in order armed
> Entring threat the lists, addrest in combat,
> For their courtly loves; he—*he's* the wonder,
> Whom Eliza graceth.

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[*] Vol. i. p. 239. [†] Ibid. p. 186. [‡] Ibid. p. 258.

Their plum'd pomp the vulgar heaps detaineth,
And rough steeds—let us the still devices
Close observe, the speeches and the music,
Peaceful arms adorning, &c.

The following song is written in numbers "fit to expresse any amorous conceite." It appears to me extremely beautiful.

Rose-cheek't Lawra come!
Sing thou smoothly with thy beauties
Silent musick, either other
Sweetely gracing.

Lovely forms do flowe
From concent deuinely framed,
Heau'n is musick, and thy beawties
Burth is heauenly.

These dull notes we sing
Discords neede for helps to grace them;
Only beawtie purely loving
Knowes no discorde;

But still moue's delight,
Like cleare springs renu'd by flowing,
Euer perfet, euer in them-
selves eternal.

Of all the experiments, made in our versification during the sixteenth century, those depending on the sectional pause now strike the ear as most singular. Some of these have been already noticed in the first volume. In the song* written by Sir Philip Sidney, every verse takes the pause, but the situation of the pause is not regulated by any well-defined law. In Shakespeare's song,† its place is *fixed*. This appears to have been the more usual mode of introducing it, and is certainly the safest. When the reader is thus forewarned and prepared for its occurrence, the pause may sometimes be made to answer very valuable purposes. The peculiar character which it imparts to the rhythm, may often be used advantageously, to mark the divisions of a stave; and this was one of the chief uses to which it was formerly put. The old Scotch song "aganis the Ladyes," may serve for an example.

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* Vol. i. p. 155.

† Ibid. p. 156.

Sen Adam, our progenitour,
  (First creat be the Lord)
Believ'd his wickit paramour,
  Quha counsal'd him discord,
Persuading him for to accord
  Unto the deils report,
Dull | dull| : dreis | the man
  That trests into that sort.

Thair belts, thair broches, and thair rings,
  Mak biggings bair at hame,
Thair hudes, their chymours, thair garnyshings
  For to augment thair fame.
Scho sall thairfoir be calt Madame,
  Botand the laird maid knycht,
Grit | grit| : is | thair grace|,
  Howbeit thair rents be slicht, &c.

Later writers have seldom ventured on these experiments. It is true, they sometimes give a marked character to their rhythm, but one, in the language of Bede, "non artifici moderatione servatam, sed sono et ipsâ modulatione ducente." Thus, in his melodies, Moore sometimes makes his rhythm oscillate round the verse 6 *l* : 6 . of five accents.

They slander thee sorely : who say thy vows are frail,
Hadst thou been a false one : thy cheek had been less pale,

They say too so long ; thou hast worn these ling'ring chains,
That deep in thy heart : they have planted their servile stains.
Oh ! do not believe them : no chain could that soul subdue
Where shineth thy spirit : there liberty shineth too.

Before we close the chapter, it may be well to notice an opinion that has prevailed on the subject of our heroic verse, the investigation of which may open views of the *general capabilities* of English metre. Many of our poets have considered our heroic verse as subjected to stricter laws, and as imposing greater difficulties on those who wrote it, than the heroic verse of classical literature. As the latter admitted a dactyle or foot of three syllables in five places, and our heroic verse only in two, the greater facility of the former was looked upon as settled. At the present day it will hardly be necessary to combat this notion, or to show how much more rhythmical is the verse, which has not only all its feet equivalent in respect to quantity, but has even its accented or sharp-toned syllables regulated by rule. As, however, opinions seldom last long, unless they contain some truth, it may be worth while inquiring how much of it has sufficed to give currency to notions, certainly on the whole erroneous.

Verse is distinguished from prose by its metre, or in other words by the *selection* of its rhythms. The law, which limits the selection, may be more or less comprehensive, but when once adopted should be scrupulously observed. If the poem be short, and contain little change of feeling or of sentiment, a confined rhythm is not always a disadvantage ; if it contain variety of sentiment, there should be corresponding variety in the rhythm. In all cases, however, the law of the metre should be *clear* and *definite*.

Now the excellence of the hexameter consisted in the union of two very different qualities—its metre was at once definite and comprehensive. Though governed by laws most strictly scientific, its cadence was allowed a variety of flow, that easily adapted itself to every change of subject. *Our* heroic verse was fashioned on that of five accents and ten syllables. A metre so confined, that even Gaskoyne felt the thraldom, was ill-suited to the genius or the temper of Milton; and he struggled hard for freedom. He varied the flow of the rhythm, and lengthened the sections, *these* were legitimate alterations; he split the sections, and overlaid the pauses, and the law of his metre was broken, the *science* of his versification gone. The giant put on the habiliments of the dwarf—could he do otherwise than rend them?

The inferiority of our heroic verse, as a means of poetical expression, must be acknowledged; but its facility, in point of versification, is no less clear. Its rhythm is so obvious, that we often use it when writing prose; and one author, who makes the same remark, illustrates it (all unconsciously it would seem) by his own example, "such verse | we make | when | we are writ|ing prose|—we make | such verse | in com|mon con|versa|tion."

It may be asked, has our language no metre which may satisfy the demands alike of science and of genius? Can it furnish no *well-defined* system of rhythm, fit to embody the conceptions of a man like Milton? Is accentual rhythm (for the question ultimately resolves itself into this) so inferior to the temporal, that, to be definite, it must be crippled and confined; to be comprehensive, it must be vague and desultory?

Whether any of our poets have used such a metre, is a question that may raise a doubt; that our language could have furnished it, admits of none. Suppose a metre to consist of verses of five accents, rejecting the sectional pause; here we have a very simple and definite law, admitting of a varied rhythm, which might satisfy even a Milton's passion for variety. It would allow of no less than 1296 verses,* each possessing its peculiar cadence. Of these some classes might possibly have a rhythm ill-suited to the author's subject; but if two-thirds were rejected, surely no one could complain that his genius had been cramped by the narrow range of his metre?

Of all the metres known to our poetry, that which has best succeeded in reconciling the poet's freedom with the demands of science, is the alliterative system of our Anglo-Saxon ancestors. If the compound and pausing sections be rejected, the *scheme* of its rhythm (or rather that to which it tended to approximate) may be thus defined. Its verses admitted from four to six accents, and each verse contained two, and the longer verses three alliterative syllables. A metre thus definite might be made to include almost every rhythm that has been used in our poetry. The writer might pass from the common measure to the triple, from the epic rhythm to the lyrical; he might raise his style to a level with the highest, or lower it to that of the humblest theme; he might, in short, make his rhythm ever answer to the subject, and adapt itself to every change of feeling and of sentiment. But where shall we find the men, that would use these opportunities without abusing them?—where mental vigour to resist the temptations, which extreme facility holds out, and at the same time capacity large enough, to fill up an outline thus varied and extensive?

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* Vol. i. p. 166.

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER I.

STAVES.

A STAVE is a portion of a song or poem, containing a given number of verses, arranged according to some given law, and ending with a period, or at least with some important division of a sentence. When two or more staves are knit together into one, the compound stave thence resulting may be called a stanza—a name that seems to have been first applied to the compound Italian staves, which came into fashion during the sixteenth century.

The peculiarity of Gothic verse, to which we have so often alluded under the name of *parallelism*, would, doubtless, have led the way in our own language (as it certainly did in the Icelandic) to the invention of the stave. Some critics have even discovered imperfect staves in the lyrical portions of our Anglo-Saxon poems, and (though I do not agree with them) so symmetrical are the forms, in which the periods sometimes arrange themselves, that no one can feel surprise at the conclusions they have drawn.

The great obstacle to the introduction of regular staves seems to have been the mode in which the stops were regulated in Anglo-Saxon verse. As most sentences ended in the middle of a couplet, the stave must have closed with an odd section, and broken alliteration, or the popular ear been accustomed to a new termination of the period. The Icelanders *had* staves that included this kind of solitary section, but they appear to have been of later date than the simpler staves, and, notwithstanding a change in the rhiming letters, I rather suspect they originated in the use of the *compound* section, and were, in fact, nothing more than the sequel of the section or verse preceding.

When, in the eleventh century, the middle stop became subordinate to the final, this difficulty vanished; and many contemporary English poems are found divided into periods, which have little to distinguish them from the simpler kind of Icelandic staves. The Icelandic stave was sometimes expanded from four to six, or even more, verses; in these English staves the same liberty was more largely and also more frequently taken; but there are poems in which the staves are of the same length throughout, and the rhythmical structure is not very unlike that which is found in the Icelandic. The following version of the 130th Psalm was made late in the eleventh, or early in the twelfth century. If the MS. be correctly published,* each section was written as a distinct verse.

Nis|min heor|te with | the	Mine heart is not 'gainst thee
Ahaf|en Drih|ten	Uplifted, Lord !
Ne | mine eag|an with | the	Nor mine eyes 'gainst thee,
On o|ferhyg|de	In pride of soul.
Ne | ic on mæg|ene	Nor do I walk
Mic|lum gang|e	In grandeur of Power;
Ne wun|dur o|fer me|	Nor doth any wondrous thing
Wun|iath æn|ig	Around me dwell.
Ac ic | mid eath|medum	But I with the lowly-minded,
Eall | gethaf|ige	In all, consent—
Is | min sawl | on thon|	My soul therewith
Swy|the gefeon|de	Is right joyful !

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* Libri Psalmorum, Oxford 1835, published at the expense of the University from an Anglo-Saxon MS., now in the *Bibliotheque du Roi*.

Swa man | æt med|er bith
Mic|lum fed|ed
Swa | thu min|re sawl|e
Sym|ble gyl|dest

As by his mother man
Is richly nourish'd,
So thou my soul
Wilt ever bless.

Is|rael|as on Drih|ten
A | getreow|igen
Of | thissum nu|
A|wa to wor|ulde

Let men of Israel in the Lord
Aye put their trust,
From this present—
Ever, for ages !

It seems, indeed, that, during the eleventh and early half of the twelfth century, our versification was gradually taking a form, in all essential particulars, the same as the Icelandic. Had it continued free from foreign influences but one century longer, it might have exhibited all those peculiarities of structure, which were afterwards adopted by the Icelandic, and which render the prosody of that language so complicated and difficult; and it is even probable, that some of these peculiarities may yet be discovered in the MSS., which a more careful search will doubtless bring to light. The developement of our rhythms in this direction appears to have been checked by the foreign novelties, which first began to exercise an influence over our rhythms in the twelfth century. To such of these as have contributed to the formation of our staves, I must now call the attention of the reader.

The classical staves which admitted variety of verse (the Sapphic and Alcaic for instance), though some of them were well-known during the middle ages, seem to have had but little influence on the modern versification of Europe. The later Latin poets generally preferred those staves, which contained only one description of verse. In the church-hymns, the Iambic Dimeter is always found in staves of four verses; the imperfect Trochaic Tetrameter almost always in staves of three; the Asclepiad in staves of four; and the Iambic Trimeter in staves of five. All these staves were used in "rhythmus;" and it is probable that the stave of four verses, with eight syllables to the verse, now so common throughout Europe, may represent the *first*;* and some of our tumbling staves of four verses, with continuous rhime, the *third* of these classical combinations. Speculations, however, of this kind require extreme caution, and will be more largely entered into hereafter. It may suffice, for the present, to point out to the reader *one* of the sources, whence our modern staves derive their origin.

The staves, fashioned on these classical models, rhimed for the most part *continuously*. It may, however, be questioned, whether the continuous rhime, instead of being thus a mere unessential accident, were not, in some cases, the governing principle, on which the stave was formed. Continuous rhime is found in the earliest Celtic and Romance poems, running through an indeterminate number of verses. Were the number once *fixed*, and the prevalence of the classical staves would have a tendency to bring irregularity within bounds, we might readily account for many of the early staves, thus furnished with continuous rhime. Perhaps, when their history is more clearly traced, *some* of them may be found to have originated in this manner.

But of all the agents, used in the formation of our staves, that which appears to have been most active is certainly the *mixed rhime*. Mixed rhime was used in Latin verse at a very early period—perhaps as early as the fourth century. Whence they got it, it would be difficult to say. It seems to have been unknown to the early poetry of the Welsh and Irish; and also, as far as we can judge from extant MSS., to *every* modern language before the twelfth century. At the beginning of this century we find it familiarly used by the Troubadour; and, at the end of the century, it was used by our countrymen in their Romance poems. The earliest *English* poem with mixed rhime, is, I believe, in the Layamon MS., and *may* have been written before the year 1200, though I would rather fix it a few years after that date. The mixed rhime spread gradually, but slowly, over Europe, and seems to have reached Iceland with the hymns, that ushered in the Reformation.

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* Whether our English stave, when it takes the *interwoven* rhime, represents the Iambic rhythmus, may perhaps be doubted. See p. 227.

Some of our early English specimens of the mixed rhime are of complicated structure; and were, probably, borrowed from the Troubadour. But the far greater number had the rhime regulated according to a few very simple principles, which, though neither invented

Als thai haf wrytenn and sayd
Haf I alle in myn Ingles layd
In symple speche as I couthe
That is lightest in mannes mouthe.

I mad nought for no disours
Ne for no seggers no harpours
Bot for the luf of symple menn
That strange Inglis cann not kenn
For many it ere that strange Inglis
In ryme wate neuer what it is
And bot thai wist what it mente
Ellis we thoght it were alle shente.

I made it not for to be praysed
Bot at the lewed menn were aysed
If it were made in ryme couwee
Or in strangere or enterlace
That rede Inglis it ere inowe
That couthe not haf coppled a kowe
That outhere in couwee or in baston
Sum suld haf ben fordon
So that fele men that it herde
Suld not witte how that ferde.

nor exclusively used by our poets, seem to have had a greater influence on the formation of our English staves than can be traced in the versification of any other people. Before, however, we discuss the nature of these principles, it may be necessary to take some notice of a passage which is found in the Prologue to Robert Brunne's Chronicle, and which has, more than once, been the subject of unsuccessful criticism. For the sake of the mere English reader it will be accompanied with a literal translation—a precaution which I cannot think useless, as I have hitherto seen no attempt at translation, in which the sense or construction has not been, more or less, mistaken. The passage indeed (if it be rightly transcribed) contains difficulties, which may make indulgence as necessary for the present attempt, as for any which have preceded it.

As *they* have written and said,
I have in my English laid down all,
In simple speech, such as I was acquainted with—
Such as is easiest in men's mouth.

I wrote not for any *disours*,
Nor for reciters, nor harpers,
But for the love of simple men
That *strange* English do not know.
For many are there who, as to *strange* English
In rhime, know never what it means.
And unless they knew what was meant,
Methought it would be all lost.

I wrote it not, to be praised,
But that the unschool'd men might be eased.
If it were made in *ryme cowee*
Or in *strangere*, or *enterlacee*—
Of those, that read English, there would be enow
That could not have coupled a *kowe*.
So that either in *cowee* or in *baston*
Some would have been confounded,
So that many men, that heard it,
Should not know how it went.

I see in song in sedgeyng tale
Of Erceldoun and of Kendale
Non tham says as thair tham wroght
And in ther sayng it semes noght.
That may thou here in Sir Tristrem
Ouer gestes it has the steem
Ouer alle that is or was
If menn it sayd as made Thomas
Bot I here it no mann so say
That of som copple som is away
So thare fayre saying here beforne
Is thare trauayle nere forlorne.

Thai sayd it for pride and nobleye
That non were suylk as thei
And alle that thai wild ouerwhere
Alle that ilk wille now forfare
Thai sayd it in so quainte Inglis
That many one wate not what it is
Therfore heuyed wele the more
In strange ryme to trauayle sore
And my witte was oure thynne
So *strange* speche to trauayle in
And forsoth I couth noght
So strange Inglis as thai wroght
And menn besoght me many a tyme
To turn it bot in light ryme.

Thai sayd if I in strange it turne
To here it manyon suld skurne
For it ere names fulle selcouthe
That ere not used now in mouthe
And therfore for the comonalte
That blythely wild listen to me
On light lang I it begann
For luf of the lewed mann.

We will not stop to discuss the meaning of "baston," "strangere," and "strange Inglis," as these phrases are

I see, in songs and in recited tales
Of Erceldoun and Kendale,
That no one repeats them, as *they* made them;
And in such recital all seems nought.
That mayst thou hear in Sir Tristrem—
Before all *gests* it has the preference,
Before every one that is or was,
If men would repeat it, as Thomas made it.
But I hear no man *so* repeat it;
For that of some *couple* some part is always away.
So their fair recital (heretofore)
And their labour is nigh lost.

They repeated it from a feeling of pride and of display,
That none might be such as they were;
And all that they would——— (?),
All that will now be lost.
They repeated it in such quaint English,
That many one knows not what it means.
Therefore was I the more loath
In *strange* rhime to labour hard;
And my wit was too thin
Such *strange* speech to labour in.
And in truth I knew not
Such *strange English* as they composed.
And men besought me, many a time,
To turn it only into easy rhime.

They said, if I in *strange* should turn it,
Many one would scorn to hear it,
For there are names full strange,
That are not used now in speech;
And therefore, for the commonalty,
That blithely would listen to me,
In easy language, I it began,
For love of the unschool'd man.

not only obscure, but have no immediate relevancy to the subject now before us. We will confine ourselves to an investigation of the terms, "couple," "kowe," "ryme cowee," and "ryme enterlacee." I cannot think we need go quite so far in search of their meaning, as some of the critics who have preceded us.

Tyrwhitt first pointed out the connection between the "ryme cowee" and "ryme enterlacee," and the versus *candati* and *interlaqueati* of the Latinist. Robert of Brunne,

For Ed|ward god|e ded|e }
The Bal|iol did | him med|e } a wikked bounte|

Turn | we ageyn | to red|e }
And on | our ges|te to sped|e } a Mad|dok ther | left we

Now is Morgan ȝolden : and Maddok he bendes
The Kyng comen to London : by counsail of his frendes
Two Cardenalles of Rome : the Pape heder sent
To Paris bothe thei come : to the parlement, &c.

Mostly, however, Robert of Brunne puts fewer accents into his "cowee" verse, and writes it in one line, as

Armes now gow alle : that non him withdrawe
How it may best falle : I haf gow said the sawe
Cowe ¶ When ȝe haf | the *pris* | of ȝour | en*mys*| : non | salle ȝe sav|e
Smyt|e with suerd | in *hand* | alle | Northum|ber*land* : with right | salle ȝe have
And Ing|land ȝit *alle* | for wer|re *salle* | : be tint | fòr this dred|e
Scotte neu|er bi*gan* | unto Ing|lis *man*| : to do | so douh|ty dead|e.

The original, on which these latter verses seem to be loosely modelled, was, no doubt, the alexandrine, or rather its substitute, (for the verse, in such case, loses all the essential properties of the alexandrine,) divided into two sections of four and two accents—of which the former takes the sectional rhime. The verses in the first example notwithstanding his protest against these kinds of verse, has left us specimens of both, for some of his rhythms are indexed in the margin as "cowee," and others as "enterlacee." Generally, his "cowee" verse is written like his alexandrines; but occasionally we find it written in a form, which may, I think, afford us a clue to the real meaning of the phrase.

For Edward's good deed
The Baliol gave him, as his meed, } a wicked return!

Turn we again to our tale,
And on our *Gest* to speed— } where we a Maddok left.

Now is Morgan taken, and Maddok he bends under;
The King is come to London, by counsel of his friends.
Two Cardinals of Rome hither the Pope sent;
To Paris they came both, to the parliament, &c.

in the following example.

"Arm ye now all, that no one him withdraw—
"How it may best fall out, I have you told the way.
"When ye have the vantage of your en'mies, none shall ye save;
"Smite with sword in hand! all Northumberland with right shall
ye have!
"And all England, moreover, shall for the war be lost—for dread
of this!
"Scot never began on Englishman such doughty deed to do!

may also have been formed from the alexandrine by a duplication of the first section. When the rhiming sections, or (in the other case) the sectional rhimes were included within brackets, the remainder of the verse was written as a *kowe*—that is, as a tail or pendant; and verse, which admitted of such arrangement, seems to have been called "ryme cowee," or tail-verse. In some kinds of verse, several rhimes were included within the bracket; and hence we may understand the difficulty, which rude and unskilful rhimesters felt in "coppling a kowe,"—that is, I take it, in rhiming the tail or "kowe" with a verse, from which it was separated by so wide an interval.

If this interpretation be the true one, the term "copple" does not (as Walter Scott conjectured) mean a rhiming couplet, nor (as Price conjectured) an alliterative couplet, but merely the correspondence which exists between two rhiming lines, whether immediately connected, or widely separated from each other.

In "ryme enterlacee," or interwoven verse, Robert of Brunne has written nearly all the latter part of his Chronicle. Several specimens of it have already been laid before the reader, one of which may be found at p. 230.

Both these kinds of mixed rhime were known to the Latinist, and at a very early period. In one of the Cotton MSS.* there is a letter, written in rhiming hexameters, which is ascribed to Pope Damasus, who lived in the fourth century. The five first couplets have the interwoven rhime.

> Cartula nostra *tibi* portat, Rainolde, salutes;
> Pauca videbis *ibi*, sed non mea dona refutes;
> Dulcia sunt *animæ* solatia quæ tibi mando,
> Sed prosunt *minime* nisi serves hæc operando.
> Quod mea verba *monent*, tu noli tradere vento,
> Cordis in aure *sonent*, et sic retinere memento, &c.

Other examples may be found at somewhat later periods, and in the tenth and eleventh centuries this rhime was spread over Europe.

The "cowee," or tail-verse, was quite as much in favour with the monks as the interwoven. The following *versus*

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* Titus, D. XXII. f. 91.

caudati are taken from the work of Theodatus, "De contemptu Mundi," and are of the tenth century.

> Pauper *amabilis* et vene*rabilis* est benedictus,
> Dives in*utilis* insati*abilis* est maledictus,
> Qui bona *negligit,* et mala *diligit,* intrat abyssum,
> Nulla pe*cunia,* nulla po*tentia* liberat ipsum,
> Irreme*abilis,* insati*abilis* illa vorago,
> Hic ubi *mergitur,* horrida *cernitur* omnisi mago, &c.

There is yet a third kind of mixed rhime, which, though it has had less influence on our English than on certain foreign rhythms, deserves some notice. It may be called the *close* rhime, inasmuch as one "copple" or pair of rhimes is, as it were, shut up within the other. This, like the interwoven and tail-rhime, seems to have been first used by the Latinist. We have an example of it in the "preludium" to the Life of St. Malchus,* written soon after the year 1100 by Reginald, a monk of Canterbury. It begins thus—

> Prælia ges*turus* pelago navalia *miles*
> Dat pugnæ si*miles* ludos prius, et quasi *durus*
> Hostis cer*natur,* belli simulachra fig*urat,*
> Currit, ma*turat,* secum pugnando jo*catur,* &c.

The staves which resulted from the application of the mixed rhime, were varied by two very simple expedients. Sometimes two or more of these staves were combined together, so as to form a compound-stave; and occasionally some portion of the stave was *repeated.* This kind of repetition was used by the monk to vary even the classical metres. Thus he obtained a new kind of elegiac metre, by repeating the hexameter—each pentameter being preceded by *two* instead of the single hexameter required by the classical model.

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* Laud. 40.

Besides the staves which originated in mixed and continuous rhime, there are others, which have sprung from the use of the Wheel and Burthen. By the latter of these terms I would understand the return of the same words at the close of each stave, and by the former the return of some marked and peculiar rhythm.

It would seem when a wheel or burthen once became familiar to the popular ear, it was often used in other staves with a view to recommend them to popular notice. The advantages of classing such compound-staves, according to their wheel or burthen, must be obvious, when we remember such appendage was mostly selected for its *fitness*—whether the fitness consisted in the sentiment conveyed, in the metrical properties of the wheel or burthen, or merely in the associations therewith connected. Sometimes, however, a burthen has entered into so many different combinations, and has been kept so long afloat in popular favour, that its original meaning has been lost, and it has become little more than a string of articulate sounds, tacked to the end of a stave. Still it possessed a certain convenience, inasmuch as it enabled a mixed company to join readily in a chorus.

The *bob* is a very short and abrupt wheel or burthen, and it seems to have been borrowed from the Troubadour. The name has been used by some of our classical writers, and—to quiet the fastidious reader—has been sanctioned by Johnson.

With riche dayntes on des : thi drotes are dight
And I in danger and doel : in dongon I dwelle
Naxte and nedeful : naked on night
Ther folo me a ferde : of fendes of helle.
They hurle me unhendely : thai harme me in hight;
In bras and in brymston : I bren as a belle,
Was never wrought in this world : a wofuller wight.
Hit were ful tore any tonge : my torment to telle.

The latest expedient, had recourse to for obtaining variety, was to take some well-known stave, and alter the number of accents in certain of its verses. If the number be lessened, a phrase might be borrowed from King James, and the stave, with much convenience, called a *broken* one. When the stave is varied by lengthening one of its verses, it is almost invariably fashioned on the model which Spenser has left us, and therefore may be termed a Spenser-stave. Both broken and Spenser-staves were invented during the latter half of the sixteenth century, and some of their varieties still keep a place, among the favourite combinations of English poetry.

Having said thus much as to the principles which governed the formation of our staves, we may now shortly notice a peculiarity belonging to many of the older ones. In some poems the leading thought or expression with which a stave concludes, is taken up and repeated in the stave succeeding; in others, the staves are independent of each other, but the different portions of each are knit together by a like artifice. Both these kinds of *Iteration* are found in the old poems which Pinkerton published under the titles of Sir Gawane and Sir Galuron, and Gawane and Gologras. The stanzas which follow relate part of the interview between Queen Waynour, the gay lady that called King Arthur husband, and the ghost of her mother—who, by the by, seems to have been everyway worthy of the daughter. The ghost is spokeswoman.

With rich dainties, on dais, thy nobles are furnished,
And I in danger and sorrow—in danger *I* dwell—
Filthy and hard-driven !—naked !—in night !
There follow me a host of fiends from hell !
They dash me down cruelly, they torture me toth' height !
In gledĕs and in brimston I burn, like a flame !
Was never made, in this world, a more woful wight !
It were full hard, for any tongue, my torment to tell—

Now wil I of my torment : tell or I go
Thenk hertly on this
Fonde to wende thi mys
Thou art warned I wys
Bewar be my wo

Wo is we forthi wo : quod Waynour I wys
But one thing wold I wite : if thi wil were.
If anyes matens or mas : might mende thi mys.
Or any meble on mold : my merthe were the mare.
If bedis of bishoppis : might bring the to blisse
Or corentes in cloistre : might keen the of care.
If thou be my moder : grete wunder hit is
That at thi burly body : is brought to be so bare,
I bare thee of my body : what bote is hit I layn ?
I brak a solempne vow
And no man wist hit but thowe
By that token thou trow
That sothly I sayn

Say sothely what may ye saven I wys, &c.

The chief use of Iteration was to bind together the different parts of a compound-stave. Generally, this intertexture of parts was effected by a communion of rhime; but, in certain cases, and especially when the elementary staves rhimed continuously, the tye which linked them together was this species of Iteration. At the present day we have many compound-staves, the parts of which are (as regards their metre) wholly unconnected; but in earlier times, when the science of versification was better understood, staves, thus loosely put together, were seldom met with. It seems to have been considered, as essential to their construction, that every part should be *dependent,* so that if one portion of the stave were remembered, it might easily call to mind the rest. The stanzas just quoted have their eight first lines bound together by an *interwoven* rhime, and the five last by a *close* rhime; but these two divisions of the stave have no other connection between them than is furnished by the Iteration. When

Now will I of my torment tell, ere I go,
Think, in heart, of this—
Essay to mend thy fault;
Thou art warned in sooth;
Beware by my woe!

Woe is me for thy woe, quoth Waynour, in sooth;
But one thing would I know (if it were thy will)
If once matins or mass could mend thy fault,
Or any thing on earth—my joy would be the greater—
If pray'rs of bishops might bring thee to bliss,—
Or convents, with cloyster, might drive from thee thy sorrow.
If thou be my mother, great wonder is it,
That all thy portly body is brought to be so bare!
I bare thee of my body—what boots it I lye?
I brake a solemn vow,
And no one wist it but thou,
By that token, thou know'st
That truely I speak.

Say, truely, what may save thee, &c.

the Iteration passed over to the next stave, it served in like manner to aid recitation, and carried the recollection with it a step further in the poem.

The next chapter will be devoted to the staves, which are distinguished by the use of the continuous rhime, and the third chapter to the Psalm-staves, or such as have been formed from the Psalm-metres, by the introduction of the mixed rhime. The fourth chapter will treat of the Wheel and Burthen; and the fifth of the Ballet-staves, or of those metrical combinations which were introduced into English poetry with the ballets, the roundles, and other similar inventions of the foreigner. The Spenser-stave will furnish materials for the sixth chapter; and the broken stave for the seventh; and, in the last, we will briefly review the whole subject, and throw a rapid glance over the changes, through which our language and our literature have passed.

CHAPTER II.

STAVES WITH CONTINUOUS RHIME are to be found in all the older poems of the Welsh and Irish, and were, doubtless, familiar to all the other branches of the great Celtic family. The length of the stave seems to have been chiefly regulated by that of the period; and in some of the Welsh poems (probably written in the sixth century) it varies from three or four to as many as twelve or even fifteen verses.

The earlier Romance poems have, in like manner, a continuous rhime, varying at uncertain intervals. For the most part each period has its own peculiar rhime; but, in some poems, the rhime overrides several sentences, and even changes in the midst of a period. These staves of uncertain length were well known to the Romance dialect, which was spoken at the English court during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In some cases, the same rhime is repeated as many as twenty or thirty times—the common endings *on, ence, ent,* &c. affording great facilities, in heaping together these rhiming terminations. The poems, in which *we* claim an interest, always, I believe, consist of alexandrines; but the poem on Boethius—the oldest poem in the Romance of Oc, which has come down to us—is written in verses of five accents.

Final rhime, when first introduced into English poetry, was sparingly used in detached couplets—the correspondence being confined to the final syllables of the two sections. Occasionally we have four or five of these rhiming couplets occurring together; and, in Conybeare's rhiming poem,* they are often furnished with the *same* rhime. In some poems, also, written in the metre of four accents (as in the Biblical history, quoted by Warton†) we have the verses rhiming sometimes two, sometimes three, four, five, or even six together. But neither in this, nor in the Anglo-Saxon poem, does the rhime exercise that control over the stops, which is essential to the construction of a well-defined stave.

In some of our loose and tumbling Psalm-metres, I think I have met with instances where the rhime was continued through an uncertain number of verses, and, at the same time, governed the punctuation. I have, however, lost my references, and cannot readily call to mind any instance of such a combination.

When final rhime was first applied to the Latin "rhythmus," staves both of a simple and of a complicated structure had long been familiar. In some of the shorter poems the same rhime was continued from the beginning to the end; but, for the most part, the correspondence between the final syllables varied in each stave. Hence were obtained staves of a definite length, that rhimed continuously, and exercised the requisite control over the punctuation. Many of these staves have been imitated in the modern versification of Europe.

The favourite combination of the Iambic Dimeter was the stave of four verses; and its "rhythmus" was often furnished with the continuous rhime. The following hymn, which was probably written at the close of the thirteenth century, was, no doubt, intended as an imitation of such rhiming rhythmus. Its cadence seems to have been a good deal influenced by that of our native rhythms.

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* See p. 97.

† Hist. of Engl. Poetry, vol. i. p. 19. See also Bennet MS. R. 11.

Suet|e ie|su : kyng | of blys|se
Myn her|te lov|e : min her|te lis|se
Thou | art suet|e : myd | ywis|se
Wo | is him| : that the | shal mis|se

Suet|e ie|su : min huer|te lyht|
Thou | art day| : without|e nyht|
Thou ȝev|e me stren|the : and | ek myht|
For|te lou|ien : the | aryht, &c.

Swet|e ie|su : lou|erd myn|
My lyf | myn her|te : al | is thin|
Undo | myn her|te : and liht | ther yn|
And wit|e me| : from fen|des engyn, | &c.[1]

Among our tumbling Psalm-metres we often find staves of four verses rhiming continuously. Staves of a like kind were used in several of the Latin "rhythmi;" and, as the flow of our English verses is generally too loose to afford any safe test, it is hard to say on which of these Latin forms the English staves were modelled. The writers of the songs noticed in Chapter VI.,[2] seem to have had in their view the rhythmus of Walter Mapes;[3] and I suspect this favourite combination was floating before many of our poets, in cases where the looseness of the rhythm does not enable us to trace the imitation.

Towards the close of the sixteenth century a stave came into fashion, which consisted of three verses, each of five accents. It kept its popularity nearly a century, but I cannot satisfactorily trace its origin. Ben Jonson has used it more than once.

Though you sometimes proclaim me too severe,
Rigid and harsh, which is a drug austere
In friendship, I confess, yet dear friend hear.

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[1] Harl. 2253. There are fifteen stanzas in all.

[2] See p. 226.

[3] See p. 184.

Sweet Jesu! king of bliss
Mine heart's love, mine heart's joy,
Thou art sweet, in very sooth
Wo is him, that shall miss thee!

Sweet Jesu! mine heart's light,
Thou art day, all without night!
Give thou me strength, and eke might
Thee for to love aright! &c.

Sweet Jesu! my Lord!
My life; mine heart all is thine,
Change mine heart, and light therein—
And loose me from the Devil's snare.

Little know they, that professe amitie
And seeke to scant her comely libertie,
How much they lame her in her propertie.

And lesse they know, who being free to use
That friendship, which no change but love did chuse
Will unto license that fair leave abuse, &c.

The affecting elegy, written by Charles, and preserved by Burnet, may furnish us with another specimen.

Nature and law by thy divine decree
(The only root of righteous royaltie)
With this dim diadem invested me;

With it the sacred sceptre, purple robe,
The holy unction and the royale globe——
Yet am I levell'd with the life of Job!

The fiercest furies, that do daily tread
Upon my grief, my grey discrowned head,
Are those that owe my bountie for their bread, &c.

But, sacred Saviour, with thy words I woo
Thee to forgive, and not be bitter to
Such as, thou knowst, do not know what they do!

Augment my patience, nullify my hate,
Preserve my issue, and inspire my mate,
Yet, though we perish, bless this church and state!

The *compound* staves which rhimed continuously were, for the most part, formed on a very simple plan. Certain verses, varying in number from four to eight, took the same final rhime, and a couplet furnished with a different rhime shut in the stave——*iteration* being em-

Chot aburde in a bour : ase beryl so bryht
Ase saphyr in selver : semly on syht
Ase iaspe the gentil : that lemith with lyht
Ase gernet in golde : and ruby wel ryht
Ase onycle he ys on : yholden on hyht
Ase diamaund the dere : in day when he ys dyht
He y is coral ———? : with cayser and kniht
Ase emeraude amorwen : this may haveth myht
The myht of the margerite : haveth this mai mere
Ffor charbocle ich here ches : be chyn and be chere.

Hire rode is ase rose : that red is on rys
With lilye white leres : lossom he is
The primerole he passeth : the pereuenke of pris
With alisaundre thareto : ache and anys
Coynte ase columbine : such hire cunde ys
Glad under gore : in gro and in grys
He is blosme opon bleo : brihtest under bis
With celedoyne and sauge : ase thou thiself sys
That syht upon that semly : to blis he is broht
He is solsecle : to sunne ys forsoht.

He is papeiai in pin : that beteth me mi bale
To trewe tortle in atour : ytelle the mi tale
He is thrustle thyuen in thro : that singeth in sale
The wilde laveroc aut wole : the wode wale
He is faucoun in friht : dernest in dale
Ant with euerich a gome : gladest in gale

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[1] "Under gore," "in gro and in gris," and "under bize," are common phrases in our old English poems, used for the purposes of generalization—just as the Anglo-Saxon used the phrases, *under the heaven, under the welkin, on mold* (that is, on earth), and others of the same kind. They show a more artificial state of society, inasmuch as they all refer to articles of

ployed to bind the two parts together. The following song was written about the year 1300. It is curious as a store-house of amatory compliment, from which many a gallant seems afterwards to have drawn his common-place.

I wot a bride in a bower, as the beryl bright;
As saphire in silver, seemly to sight;
As the gentle jasper, that gleameth with light;
As garnet in gold, and ruby so rightful;
She's one like the onyx, holden on high;
As the precious diamond (in the day when she's dight)
She's coral with Kaiser and knight;
As emerald in the morn this maiden hath might;
The might of the margerite (pearl) hath this maid also;
For carbuncle I selected her for her chin and her complexion.

Her hew is as rose, that red is on branch;
With lily-white skin, lovesome is she;
The primrose she passeth, the pink of price,
With alisaunder also, the ache, and the aniseed;
Skilful as the columbine, such her nature is;
Gladsome under wede, *in gro and in gris*[1]
She's a blossom in colour, the brightest under baize[1],
With celedony and sage, as thou thyself seest;
He that looks upon that seemly one, to bless is he brought,
He is the sunflow'r, that to the sun is drawn.

She's popinjay that in pain : assuageth my sorrow,
To trew turtle, in a tower,———— ?
She is throstle, that singeth in hall;
The wild lark and———? the wood-wele;
She is falcon, in frith, most secret in the dale,
And with every man most gladsome in song;

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dress. The word *gore* is still well-known to the seamstress, and means the triangular piece of cloth, or linen, which is wanted to complete the *fork*, or interior angles of a vestment; *gro* and *gris* are different kinds of fur; and *bize* is a kind of cloth, I believe no other than our common baize.

From weye he is wisest : into Wyrhale
Hire nome is in a note : of the nyhtengale
In annote is hire nome : mempneth hit non
Whose ryht redeth : ronne to Johon.

The next stave likens the favourite lady to the various delicacies of the table; and the last to different heroes of romance, the song ending with the line,

Gentle as Jonas, she joyeth with Jon.

Hence it is clear the poet's name was *John;* and his lady's is just as clearly *Annot,* and not Joan, as Warton strangely surmises. It may also be well to inform the reader that all this alliterative jingle was not manufactured for the occasion, but consists, for the most part, of favourite correspondences, which long kept their place in our liter-

Skottes out of Berwik : and of Abirdene
At the Banokburn : war ze to kene
Thare slogh ze many sakles : als it was sene
And now has king Edward : wroken it i wene
It is wroken i wene : wele wurth the while
War zit with the Skottes : for thai er full of gile.

Rughfute riveling : now kindels thi care.
Bere bag with thi boste : thi biging is bare,
Fals wretche and forsworn : whider wilton fare
Busk the unto brig : and abide thare
Thare wretche salton won : and wery the while
Thi dwelling in Donde : is done for thy gile.

Sometimes Minot gives *eight* verses to the stave—the six first, of course, taking the same rhime. In the song from which we have quoted, the second rhime remains unchanged throughout. As the strain upon the memory

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[1] That is wisest from *Wey-hill* in Wiltshire to *Wirral* in Cheshire.

[2] The *riveling* was a brogue of untanned leather worn in Scotland during the fourteenth century. The term was given as a nick name to the Scotch

From Wey she is wisest unto Wyrhale;[1]
Her name is in *a note* of the nightingale,
In *a note* is her name—let no one name it—
Whoso readeth rightly, let him run to Johan.

ature. The "rightfulnesse of the rubie," "the might of the marguerite," &c. were common alliterations, and probably owed their rise to the superstitions of our ancestors. Both Anglo-Saxon and old English MSS. are still extant, which treat of the virtues of herbs, precious stones, &c.

Minot, the northern poet, who sang the triumphs of our third Edward, often used these compound staves; but the transcriber of the MS. has, in some cases, written the sections as distinct verses. The following staves are part of one of his songs against the Scotch.

Scots out of Berwick and of Aberdeen
At Bannockburn were ye too fierce,
There slew ye many, without guilt, as t'was seen,
And now has King Edward aveng'd it I ween.
It is avenged I ween, well worth the while!
Yet be ye ware of the Scots, for they are full of guile.

Roughfoot Riveling,[2] now kindles thy sorrow!
Bear-bag,[3] with thy boast, thy dwelling is bare!
False wretch and forsworn, whither wilt thou fare?
Get ye unto the bridge, and abide ye there—
There wretch shalt thou won, and curse the while,
Thy dwelling in Dundee is lost through thy guile, &c.

is thus lessened, there is less necessity for the *iteration* to bind together the two portions of the stave; and, in the fifteenth century, it was generally omitted. Dunbar's expostulation with his patron, the fair-spoken and heart-

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by the well-dressed Englishman, and afterwards (as civilization advanced) was applied by the "tame Scots" to the wild Highlander.

[3] The Scotchman, in a foray, always carried with him a bag of oatmeal.

less profligate James the Fourth, may afford us an example.

The wav|erand warl|dis : wretch|idnes|,
The fail|yand and fruit|les : bis|sines|,
The mis|pent tyme| : the ser|vice vaine|,
For | to consid|er : is | ane pane|.

The slyd|ant joy| : the glaid|nes schal|,
The fen|yeid luif| : the fals | confort|,
The sweet| abaid| : the slicht|ful train|,
For | to consid|er : is | ane pane|.

The sug|urit mouth|is : with mynd|is thairfra|
The fig|urit speiche| : with face|is tua
The ples|and toung|is : with harts | unplane|
For | to consid|er : is | ane pane|, &c.

At later periods staves were often made up of couplets, which were (as regarded their metre) wholly unconnected with each other. The only property of a stave, these slovenly combinations could boast of, was the control they exercised over the punctuation, and even this was sometimes denied them. Waller closes his Panegyric "to my Lord Protector," with the following lines—I cannot call them staves.

Illustrious acts high raptures do infuse
And ev'ry conqueror creates a muse.
Here in low strains your milder deeds we sing ;
But there, my Lord, we'll bays and olives bring

To crown your head ; while you in triumph ride
O'er vanquish'd nations, and the sea beside ;
While all your neighbour-princes unto you,
Like Joseph's sheaves pay reverence and bow.

CHAPTER III.

THE PSALM-STAVES

are those combinations of verses, which resulted from the application of the mixed rhime to the Psalm-metres. Many of these staves are become familiar to us, from the use which has been made of them in our different versions of the Psalms, but their origin is not of modern date—in our own language they may be traced up to the thirteenth century, and in the Latin to a much higher antiquity.

The hymn on the Epiphany, said to have been written in the ninth century by the German monk Hartman, consists of staves, formed from the rhiming couplet of the imperfect Trochaic Tetrameter by introducing a sectional rhime into each verse.

   Tribus signis
   Deo dignis
Dies ista colitur;
   Tria signa
   Laude digna
Cœtus hic persequitur.

   Stella magos
   Duxit vagos
Ad præsepe Domini;
   Congaudentes
   Omnes gentes
Ejus psallunt nomini, &c.

This, it will be seen, is only a particular kind of the *ryme cowee*, or tail-verse, of which we have already spoken.* Another kind was obtained by applying the sectional rhime to the imperfect *Iambic* tetrameter. It was used in the Romance song, made by one of Leicester's partizans, after the battle of Evesham, A. D. 1265.

Chaunter mes*toit* mon cuer le *voit* : eu un dure language
Tut en plo*raunt* fuet fet le *chaunt* : de nostre duȝ baronage
Qe pur la *pees* si' loin a*pres* : se lesserent detrere—
Lor cors tren*cher* et demen*brer* : pur salver Engleterre
Ore est o*cys* la flur de *pris* : qe tant savoit de guere
Ly quens Mount*fort* sa dure *mort* : molt enplorra la terre.[1]

The tail-stave, fashioned on the imperfect Iambic Tetrameter,† has been adopted into almost all the languages of Europe. It must have been common in English poetry during the fifteenth century, and, it may be, even at an earlier period. The following stave was taken from one of Wyat's songs, written about the year 1520.

Consent, at last,
Since that thou hast
My heart in thie demayne,
For service trew,
On me to rue,
And reach me love agayne.

The stave here swelled out into six verses is nothing more than two rhiming Iambic Tetrameters, each of them furnished with a sectional rhime. By a similar device other combinations were formed from the stave of four, or even from that of six Tetrameters.

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* See p. 288.

[1] We have here one of the few instances afforded by our early literature, of an ill-constructed stanza. It will be seen there is no metrical connection between the first and the second couplets; the third couplet is repeated in every stave, and may, therefore, be independent of the others.

† See p. 184. The *lengthening* syllable of the "rhythmus," is generally omitted in our slovenly imitations of this metre.

By keeping in mind this origin of the stave we see the reason why, in most cases, the tail-rhime remains unchanged. But, as in the original stave the last couplet sometimes takes its own peculiar rhime, so, in these staves, the last tail-rhime is sometimes *given*, and varies from the others. The celebrated drinking song, for example, in Gammer Gurton's needle, ends every stave with the word *old.*

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 stuffe my skin so full within
With joly goode ale and old.

CHORUS.

Backe and side, go bare, go bare,
Both foot and hand, go colde!
But, belly, God send thee good ale inoughe,
Whether it be new or olde.

I love no roast but a nut-brown toast,
And a crab laid in the fire;
A little bread shall do me stead,
Moche bread I noght desire;
No frost, no snowe, no winde I trow
Can hurte me if I wolde,
I am so wrapt, and throwly lapt
Of joly good ale and old.

CHORUS.

Backe and side, &c.

So, in the Not-browne Maid, both the expostulations of the Gentleman, and the answers of the Lady have their peculiar endings, with which, of course, the last tail-rhime must correspond.

HE.

Yet take good heed, for ever I drede
  That ye could nat sustayne
The thornie wayes, the depe valeis,
  The snows, the frost, the rayne,
The cold, the hete ; for dry, or wet,
  We must lodge on the playne,
And us abofe no other rofe
  But a brake bush or twayne ;
Which sone wolde greve you I believe,
  And ye wolde gladly than,
That I had to the grene wode go
  Alone a banyshed man.

SHE.

Syth I have here been partinere
  With you of joy and blisse,
I must also part of your wo
  Endure, as reson is ;
Yet am I sure of one plesure
  And shortly it is this—
That where ye be, me semeth, perde,
  I coude not fare amysse—
Without more speche, I you beseche,
  That ye were sone agone,
For in my mynde, of all mankynde
  I love but you alone, &c.

In this poem, which probably dates about the close of the fifteenth century, the first section of the Tetrameter is written as *one* verse. Archbishop Parker, in his version of the Psalms, treats the first section in the same way ; but marks its middle pause with a colon, as also the final pause of the original Tetrameter.

> To feede my neede :[1] he will me leade
> To pastures grene and fat :
> He forth brought me : in libertie
> To waters delicate : &c.

We sometimes find the same sectional rhime applied to both Tetrameters; but to dance in these fetters required no common dexterity, and such cases are but rare.

There is a species of tail-stave, which seems to be formed by a duplication of the first section—such duplicated section rhiming, and occupying the place of the rhiming section in the stave, whose properties have been discussed. The following staves are taken from the "Complaint" of the Westphalian monk Bernard. They are based, it will be seen, on the rhiming couplet of the imperfect Tetrameter.

> Canonici, cum cœteris
> Collegiorum sociis,
> Mundaniter imbuti,
> In variis et serico
> Vestiti vadunt Jericho
> Mollissimis induti.
>
> Ne quid eorum corpora
> Sustineant, vel aspera
> Tenerrimos offendant,
> De pretiosis pellibus
> Subtilibus et mollibus
> Camisias emendant, &c.

---

[1] Here we have a rhime in the first section—to *feede* my *neede;* but this correspondence is merely accidental, and not to be found in the other staves.

This stave was a favourite one with our poets during the thirteenth century; at the close of which was pro-

Len|ten is com|e with lov|e to toun|e
With blos|men ant | with brid|des roun|e
  That al | this blis|se bring|eth
Day|esey|es on | this dal|es
Not|es suet|e of nyht|egal|es
  Uch|[1] foul | song sing|eth.

The ros|e rayl|eth hir|e rod|e
The lev|es on | the lyht|e wod|e
  Wax|en al | with wil|le
The mon|e man|deth hir|e bleo|
The lil|ie is | los|sum to seo|
  The fen|yl ant | the fil|le, &c.

In this song, besides a loose rhythm, we often find the duplicated sections *lengthened;* but in the next century the structure of the Latin original was still further departed from, and the lengthening syllable of the tail-verse is often wanting. Chaucer's Rime of Sir Thopas affords us many examples of this slovenly versification.

A variety of this stave, fashioned on the common stave of four Tetrameters rhiming continuously, was well known in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Though it does

Whon he was brouht uppon his stede
He sprong as sparkle doth of glede
  For wrathe and for envye
Alle that he hutte he made hem blede
He ferde as he wolde a wede
  Mahoun help he gan crye

---

[1] *Uch* should certainly have been written *uche.*

bably written the song that furnishes us with the following extract,—

> Spring is come with love to town,[2]
> With blossoms and with song of birds,
> That all this bliss bringeth—
> Daisies in the dales !
> Sweet notes of nightengales !
> Each bird singeth song.
>
> The rose she putteth on her colour,
> The leaves in the ———? wood
> Spring forth all with good-will !
> The moon recovereth her look !
> The lily it is lovesome to see,
> The fennel and the fille.

not possess facility, it appears to have been a great favourite with the writers of our English romances, many of whom have left us specimens of their skill in the management of this somewhat unwieldly stanza. The extract which follows is taken from a tale of the fourteenth century, called the King of Tars. The terrible "Soudan," it should be prefaced, has been unhorsed by the Christian king, and rescued by his "Sarazins."

> When he was brought unto his steed,
> He sprung forth as spark doth from glede,
> For wrath and for disdain ;
> All that he hit, he made them bleed,
> He fared as if he would go mad ;
> "Help Mahoun," gan he cry

---

[2] *In town, to town*, &c. were well-known poetical phrases, and might be rendered "in or to habitations of men," &c. The original meaning of the word *town* was homestead.

Mony an helm ther was unweved
And mony a bacinet toclevea
   And sadeles mony emptye
Men mihte se uppon the feld
Moni a kniht ded under scheld
   Of the cristen compagnie.

This stave, it will be seen, has only four rhiming terminations, the fourth and fifth verses taking the same rhime as the first and second, but most staves, belonging to this class, have *five*. Staves of a similar kind were fashioned on the imperfect *Trochaic* Tetrameter. They were used by Lawrence, Prior of Durham, in the first half of the twelfth century, and afterwards by Walter Mapes, to whom the following are ascribed in an Oxford MS.*

Ita dicunt Cardinales,
Ita solent dii carnales
In primis allicere;
Sic instillant fel draconis,
Et in fine lectionis
Cogunt bursam vomere

Cardinales, ut prædixi,
Novo jure crucifixi
Vendunt patrimonium;
Petrus foris, intus Nero,
Intus lupi, foris vero
Sicut agni ovium.

Tales regunt Petri navem!
Habent tales ejus clavem,
Ligandi potentiam!
Hi nos docent, sed indocti,
Hi nos docent, et nox nocti,
Indicat scientiam! &c.

---

* Bodl. MS. Digby 4.

Many a helm was there unlaced,
And many a *basinet* was cleft,
And saddles many empty'd ;
Men might see, upon the field,
Many a knight dead under shield,
Of the Christian company.

This was, doubtless, the model which Shakspeare had in view when he wrote the song,

Or|pheus with | his lute | made trees|
And | the moun|taine-tops, | that freeze|,
Bow | themselves|, when he | did sing| ;
To | his mu|sicke plants | and flow|ers
Ev|er sprung|, as sunne | and show|ers
There | had made| a las|ting spring|.

Every thing that heard him play,
Ev'n the billows of the sea,
Hung their heads, and then lay by ;
In sweet musicke is such art,
Killing care and griefe of heart,
Fall asleepe, or hearing dye !

Staves of a similar construction were formed on the verse of six accents. They were used in the elegy, written A.D. 1308, upon Sir Piers of Brimingham, " a noble champion against the Irish."

Another thing also	——Another thing also
To Yrismen he was fo	To Irishmen he was foe,
That wel wide whare	That were full widely spread,
Ever he rode aboute	Ever he rode about
With streinth to hunt ham ute	With strength to hunt them out,
As hunter doth the hare.	As hunter doth the hare.

For whan hi wend best,	For when they ween'd best,
In wildernis hav rest,	In the wild to have rest,
That no man ssold ham see	That no man should them see,
Than he wold drive a quest	Then would he drive a *quest*
Anon to har nest	Anon to their nest,
In stid ther hi wold be.	In the place where they'd be.

Of slep he wold ham wak	From sleep he would them wake,
For ferdnis he wold quak	For terror would they quake,
Aut fond to sculk awai	And try to skulk away,
For the hire of har bedde	For the hire of their bed
He tok har hevid to wedde	He took their heads in pledge,
And so he taght ham plai, &c.	And so he taught them play! &c.

In some few cases we find the first section repeated *three* times,

Ye men of Galile
Wherfor mervelle ye?
Hevyn behold, and se
How Jesus up can weynde,
Unto his fader fre;
Wher he sittes in majeste,
Wyth him ay for to be,
In blys withouten ende!
Townley Myst. Ascencio.

The general form of this stave had been anticipated in the tail-stave of the *lay* and the *verelay*. One of these little poems has been attributed to Chaucer, and by Islip is termed a "ballade."

Alone | walking.|
In thought | plaining| } all des|olate|,
And sore | sighing|
Me re|membring|
Of my | living|, } both ear|ly and late|,
My death | wishing|

Unfortunate
So is my fate, } out of measure.
That wote ye what?
My life I hate, &c.

It will be seen that the tail-rhime of one stave becomes the sectional rhime of the following one. This peculiarity seems to be the chief characteristic of the English virelay.

Another set of staves were formed from the Psalm-metres by means of the interwoven rhime. One of the oldest of these appears to have been based on the stave of four imperfect Iambic Tetrameters rhiming continuously. It was used in one of those satires against the Romish clergy, preserved by Flacius.

Hones|ta mun|di domina|
Frangen|do leg|is ju|ra
Virtu|tum per|dit om|nia|
Tribu|ta sol|vens du|ra ;
Fit or|bis vel|ut fæm|ina|
Et mer|etrix | impu|ra
Ex hoc | viles|cit gem|ina|
Eccle|siæ | censu|ra.

This stave appears to have been a great favourite with our countrymen during the fifteenth century, at the close of which was written the old song, beginning—

Robene sat in gud grene hill	Robin sat on the good green hill,
Keipand a flok of fie	Keeping a flock of sheep,
Merry Makyne said him till	Merry Makyn said to him,
Robene thow rew on me,	" Robin rue on me,
I haif the luvit lowd and still	I have lov'd thee, in speech and silence,
Ther yeiris two or thre	These years two or three,
My dule in dern bot gif thow dell	My secret sorrow unless thou 'suage
Doubtles bot dreid I de.	Doubtless in sooth I die."

In the same stanza there is reason to believe was originally written the well-known ballad of Chevy Chase ; and, amid all the additions and blunders of transcribers, we may still, in many parts, very clearly trace this metrical

The dryv|ers thor|owe the wood|es went|
For | to reas | the dear| ;
Bo|men byck|arte uppone | the bent|,
With ther | browd ar|as cleare|
Then | the wyld thor|owe the wood|es went|
On ev|ery syde|[1] shear|
Grea|hondes thor|owe the grev|es glent|
For | to kyll | thear dear|.

At the laste | a squyar of Northom|berlonde|
Lokyde at | his hand | full ny|
He was war | ath the dough|etie Dog|las comynge|
With him | a mygh|te meany|
Both | with spear | byll |[2] and brande|
Yt was a mygh|ti sight | to se|
Hard|yar men | both of hart | nar hande|
Wear not | in chris|tiante|

The Dog|glas per|tyd his ost | in thre|
Lyk a cheffe | cheften | off pryde|
With su|ar speares | of mygh|tte tre|
The cum in | on ev|ery syde|.
Thrughe | our Yng|glishe arch|ery|
Gave man|y a wunde | full wyde|
Man|y a dough|ete the garde | to dy|
Whych gan|yde them | no pryde|.

The Yng|lyshe men | let thear bow|ys be|
And pulde | owt brandes | that wer bright|
It | was a heav|y syght | to se|
Bryght swordes | on bas|nites lyght|
Thor|owe ryche male | and myn|e ye ple|
Many sterne| the stroke | downe streght|
Man|y a freyke | that was | ful fre|
Ther un|dar foot | dyd lyght|.

---

[1] When the ballad was written *syde* was in all probability a dyssyllable.

[2] In Hearne's copy it is *brylly*—should it not be *burnie ?*

arrangement. The ballad was in all probability composed early in the fifteenth century.

The drivers through the wood went
For to rouse the deer,
Bowmen hover'd upon the bent (upland)
With their broad arrows clear,
Then the wild deer through the woods went
On every side full many—
Greyhounds through the groves glanced
For to kill these deer.

At the last, a squire of Northumberland
Looked under his hand full nigh,
He was ware of the doughty Douglas coming,
With him a mighty meiny (following),
Both with spear, bill, and brand,
'Twas a mighty sight to see!
Hardier men both of heart or hand
Were not in Christendom.

The Douglas parted his host in three,
Like a great chieftain of pride;
With sure spears of mighty tree
They came in on ev'ry side;
Through our English archery
They gave many a wound full wide,
Many a doughty one they made to die—
Which gained them no pride.

The Englishmen let their bowes be,
And pull'd out brands that were bright,
It was a heavy sight to see
Bright swords on bas'nets[3] light!
Through rich mail and manoply
Many a stern one they struck down straight,
Many a freck,[4] that was full free,
There under foot did fall.

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[3] A *basinet* was a light kind of helmet.

[4] A *frek* was a common word in our northern dialect, and meant a gallant daring fellow.

At last | the Dug|las and the Per|se met|
Lyk to cap|tayns of myght | and mayne|
The swapte | togeth|er tyll the | both swat|
With swordes | that were [1] | of fyn | myllan|
Thes worth|e freck|ys for | to fyght|
Therto | the wear | full fayne|
Tyll | the bloode owte | off thear bas|netes sprente|
As ev|er dyd heal | or rayne|

There is another interwoven stave of eight verses, in which every verse takes four accents. Whether it be founded on one of the Psalm-metres however may admit of doubt. In some cases the rhythm is very precise, and agrees with that of the full Iambic Tetrameter; but is it certain this rhythmus* was known in the middle ages,

When Alexander our king was dead
That Scotland led in love and lee
Away was sons of ale and brede
Of wyn and wax of gamyn and gle
Oure gold wes changed into lead
Crist born into verginitie
Succour Scotland and remede
That stad is in perplexitie.

As Alexander died in 1285, this stave cannot be of much later date. About the same period too, an interwoven stave of *four* verses was common, each verse being provided with four accents as in the stave just quoted. But it may be questioned whether such a combination be anything but the stave of four Iambic Dimiters, furnished with the interwoven instead of the continuous rhime, and I shall therefore not stop to give examples.

The common interwoven staves of four, which were founded on the Psalm-metres, were certainly of later

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[1] The words *that were* are probably an addition by the transcriber. Our present copy of the poem is certainly a very corrupt one.

At last the Douglas and the Percy met,
  Like to Captains of might and main;
They swapt together, till they both sweat,
  With swords that were of fine Milan.
These worthy champions for to fight—
  Thereto were they full fain!
Till the blood out of their bas'nets burst
  As ever did hail or rain, &c.

and have we any English metre that corresponds with it?† These questions must be answered in the affirmative, before we can pronounce the following to be one of the Psalm-staves. It is part of an elegy on Alexander the Third, which has been preserved by Wynton.

When Alexander our king was dead,
That Scotland led in love and law,
Away went luck of ale and bread,
Of wine, and wax, of game, and glee;
Our gold was changed into lead;
Christ! born in virginity,
Succour Scotland, and restore,
That fix'd is in perplexity!

growth than the interwoven staves of eight verses. The former, however, must have been well known, and familiar, during the fifteenth century, to which period, indeed, we can trace many of our common ballads; and, during the last three centuries, they have been by far the most popular staves in our language.

One of their varieties, founded on the "short metre,"‡ must, I think, have originated in the last century, for, though in the sixteenth this metre sometimes split its verses, I do not remember any case where it took the interwoven rhime.

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* See p. 183.

† See pp. 227, 228.

‡ See p. 233.

To keep the lamp alive,
With oil we fill the bowl;
'Tis water makes the willow thrive,
And grace that feeds the soul.

The Lord's unsparing hand
Supplies the living stream,
It is not at our own command,
But still deriv'd from Him.

Cowper.

Among the many varieties, to which the hacknied device of *repetition* gave birth, some of the earliest were obtained by repeating the first verse. The following stave, which may date soon after the year 1200, is quoted in one

---

The following English stave which was written in the

As y me rod this ender day
By grene wode to seche play
Mid harte y thohte al on a may
Swetest of alle thinge
Lythe and ich ou telle mai
Al of that suete thinge.

By means of a similar device Michael of Kildare—the oldest *English* poet that Ireland can boast of—obtained a

Swet | ie|su hend | and fre|
That was | i strwȝt | on rod|e tre|
Nowth|e and ev|er mid | us be|
And | us schild | fram sin|ne
Let | thou noȝt | to hel|le te|
Thai | that bith | her in|ne
So briȝt|e of ble | thou her|e me|
Hop|pe of al|le man kyn|ne
Do | us i se | the trin|ite|
And hev|ene rich|e to win|ne.

This world|-is lov|e is gon | awai|
So dew | on gras|se in som|eres dai|
Few | ther beth | weil|awai|

of Archbishop Langton's sermons, and applied to the mystical perfections of the virgin!

Bel|e Aliȝ | matin | leva|
Sun | cors ves|ti et | para|
Enȝ | un ver|ger sen | entra|
Cink | fluret|tes y|truva|
Un | chapel|et fet | en a|
De | rose | fluri|e
Pur | deu tra|heȝ vus | en la|
Vus | ki ne am|eȝ mi|e.

---

same century, has fewer repetitions.

As I rode, the bygone day,
By green wood to seek me play,
In heart I thought all on a maid,
Sweetest of all things,
Listen, and I may tell to you
All of that sweet creature.

new variety from the common interwoven stave of eight verses.

Sweet Jesu, fair and free,
That wast y-stretch'd on the rood-tree,
Now and ever with us be,
And save us from sin!
Let thou not to hell depart
Those, that be herein;
Thou—so bright of look!—hear me,
Hope of all mankind!
Make us to see the Trinity,
And heaven's realm to win.

This world's love is gone away,
Like dew on grass in summer-day;
Few there be—welaway!—

That lou|ith god|dis lor|e
Al | we beth | iclung | to clai|
We | schold rew | that sor|e ;
Prince | and king | what wen|ith thai|
To lib|be eu|er mor|e
Lev|eth ȝur plai | and cri|eth ai|
Je|su crist | thin or|e, &c.

This sang wroȝt a frere
Jesu crist be his soceure
Louerd bring him to the toure
Frere Michel Kildare
Shild him fram helle boure
Whan he sal hen fare
Levedi flur of al honur
Cast a wei is care
Fram the schoure of pinis sure
Thou sild her and thare.
Amen.

The rhythm of Michael's verse was certainly meant to be the same as that of the Romance-stave, last-quoted—that is, as the favourite cadence of Walter Mapes;* the rhythm of the other stave was just as clearly meant for that of the imperfect Iambic Tetrameter. It will be seen, Michael introduces two sectional rhimes into his four last verses. This may possibly entitle his stave to rank with a class, whose properties we have yet to consider, and which I would call the *mixed* staves.

The mixed staves result from the introduction into the same combination of verses, of both interwoven and tail-rhime, or from the *partial* application of one of them. They were once extremely numerous, and even at the present day are far from uncommon.

In the well-known song, called Robin Goodfellow, which has been attributed to Jonson, the first four verses take the interwoven rhime, and the remainder of the stave the

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* See p. 184.

That love God's lore ;
We be all y-bound to earth,
We must rue that sorely ;
Prince and king—what ween they ?
To live for evermore ?
Leave ye your play, and cry ye ay,
" Jesu Christ, thy mercy ! " &c.

This song a Friar made,
Jesu Christ be his succour !
Lord bring him to thy tow'r !
Friar Michael of Kildare—
Save him from Hell's abode,
When he shall fare hence ;
Lady ! flow'r of all honour,
Cast away his care ;
From the show'r of pains so bitter,
Save thou him, here and there.

tail-rhime. The rhythm may possibly be based on that of the imperfect Trochaic Tetrameter ;† but, if so, is a very loose imitation of it.

Sometimes I meet them like a man,
Sometimes an ox, sometimes a hound,
And to a horse I turn me can,
To trip and trot about them round.
But if to ride
My backe they stride,
More swift than wind away I go—
Ore hedge and lands,
Thro pool and ponds,
I whirry laughing ho ! ho ! ho !

In the middle of the seventeenth century they generally assigned two *couplets* to the first four lines, as in the famous cavalier song,

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† See p. 185.

Full forty years, this royal crown
Has been his father's and his own, &c.

Staves on these models are to be found in almost the languages of Europe.

Betuen|e Mersh | ant Av|eril|
When spray | bigin|neth to spring|e
The lut|el foul | hath hir|e wyl|
On hir|e lud | to syn|ge
Ich libbe on love longinge *
For sem|lokest | of al|le thing|e
He may me blisse bringe*
Icham | in hir|e bandoun|
An hen|dy hap | ichab|be yhent|
Ichot | from hev|ene it is | me sent|
From al|le wym|men mi lov|e is lent|
Ant lyht | on Al|ysoun|.

In this stanza the final rhime of the interwoven stave is used as the sectional rhime of the tail-stave; and as the four last lines are the same throughout the song, there is that metrical connection of parts, which is necessary to the construction of a well-formed stanza. In the stanzas which follow, this connection is effected by means of the final rhime; the interwoven rhime being only applied *partially*. They were written by the old Scotch poet Montgomery, " on the unkindness of his friends when he was in prison."

When men or women visites me
My dolour I disguise,
By outward signs, that nane may see
Where inward languor lyes.
Als patient as my pairt appeirs
With hevy hairt, quhen no man heirs,
For bail then burst I out in teirs,
Alane, with cairful cryis, &c.

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* These verses have three, instead of four accents, but the omission is no doubt owing to the blunders of the MS.

The following stanza forms part of a love song which may date about the year 1300. It affords us another specimen of a mixed stave.

Between March and April
  When the spray beginneth to spring,
The little birds have their good will
  With their notes to sing.
I live in yearnings of love
For the seemliest of all creatures;
She may bring me bliss,
  I am at her command.
A happy chance I have secured,
I wot from heaven it is me sent;
From all women my love is gone
  And lighted on Alison.

Remembering me quhen I haif bene
  Baith lykit and belov't,
And now sen syne quhat I haif sene
  My mind may be commov't;
If any of my dolour dout,
Let ilcane sey thair time about,
Perhaps quhose stomok is most stout
  Its patience may be prov't, &c.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BURTHEN, WHEEL, &c.

The burthen we have already defined* as a return of the same words, and the wheel as a return of some peculiar rhythm at the end of each stave. Shakspeare and his contemporaries used the words indifferently; but the distinction here taken may be justified, in some measure, by the collateral meanings which are respectively attached to these terms, and will, probably, be excused from its great convenience.

The repetition of some leading thought or expression, at certain intervals, carries with it, in many cases, advantages so obvious, that we might expect to find the burthen a device well-known and familiarly used in the rhythmical system of every language. I know, however, but of one instance where it is met with in Anglo-Saxon, and as this cannot date earlier than the eleventh century, it may possibly have been suggested by the ecclesiastical chants, in which such repetition was common.

One of the oldest Latin specimens is found in the baptismal hymn, attributed to Fortunatus, bishop of Poictiers, in the sixth century.

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* See p. 290.

Tibi laus perennis auctor
Baptismatis sacrator,
Hic fonte passionis
Das præmium salutis;

Nox clara plus et alma
Quam luna, sol, et astra,
Quæ luminum coronâ
Reddis diem per umbram;
Tibi laus!

Dulcis, sacrata, blanda
Electa, pura, pulchra,
Sudans honore mella,
Rigans odore chrisma,
Tibi laus! &c.

In the Anglo-Saxon song which follows, the burthen consists of an alliterative couplet; and the sentiment, as it always should do, gives a colouring to the whole poem. The writer would fain lighten the sense of his own misery by the reflection, that time and endurance have put an end to the misery of others. If the following translation may be trusted, he was the household-bard of the *High Denings*, that is, I take it, of the Danish princes who succeeded Knut; and seems to have lost his place at court, when the Confessor mounted the throne of England.

As is usual with the Exeter MS. the rhythmical dot is very rarely inserted; but each division, ending with the burthen, is written separately. This is, for several reasons, worthy of notice. Most Anglo-Saxon poems run on continuously, page after page, sometimes even to the end, without a break.

We|lund him | bewur|man : wræc|es cun|nade
An|hydig man| : ear|fotha dreag|
Hæf|de him | toge-sith|the : sor|ge and long|ath
Win|ter cal|de wræc|e : we|an oft | onfond|
Sith|than hin|e nith|-had : on ned|e leg|de
Swonc|re[3] seon|o bend|e : onsyl|lan monn|
Thæs | ofer eod|e : this|ses swa mæg|.

Bead|o-hil|de ne wæs| : hir|e broth|ra death|
Onsef|an swa sár| : swa hir|e sylf|re thing|
Thæt | heo gear|o-lic|e : ongiet|en hæf|de
Thæt | heo eac|en wæs| : æf|re nemeah|te
Thris|te ge-thenc|an : hu | ymb thæt | sceolde
Thæs | ofer eod|e : this|ses swa mæg|.

We | thæt mæth | hilde : mon|ge gefrug|on[4]
Wur|don grund | lease : geat|es frig|e
Thæi hi | seo sorg|-lufu : slæp | al|le binom|.
Thæs | ofer eod|e : this|ses swa mæg|.

Theod|ric ah|te : thrit|ig win|tra
Mær|inga burg| : thæt | wæs mon|egum cuth|.
Thæs | ofer eod|e : this|ses swa mæg|.

We|ge-as|codan : eorm|an-ric|es
Wylf|enne | gethoht| : ah|te wid|e.
Folc | got|ena ric|es : thæt | wæs grim | cyning
Sæt | secg | monig : sorg|um gebund|en
We|an onwen|an : wysc|te geneah|he
Thæt | thæs cyn|e- ric|es : o|fer com|en wær|e.
Thæs | ofer-eod|e : this|ses swa mæg|.

---

[1] Welund, the famous smith, was beset in his dwelling by Nithad and his followers, and carried off captive, having been first hamstrung to prevent escape. To revenge himself he entices Nithad's sons to his workshop, and murders them; and having given their sister Beadohild a sleeping-draught, violates her person; he then makes himself wings, and flies from his oppressor. The whole story may be found in the Edda.

[2] See p. 18.

[3] I have never seen this adjective elsewhere.

Welund[1]———— ? tasted of exile ;
The firm-hearted man hardships bore ;
He had for comrades sorrow and yearnings—
Cold winter-exile ![2] woe did he oft endure,
Since Nithad him of force laid low,
With failing sinew-tye—hapless man !
That he o'ercame—*this* too may I !

Nor to Beadohild was her brothers' death
At heart so sore, as her own woe,
For that she quickly had perceived
That she was pregnant ; nor ever might she
With all her power think, how that should be !
That she o'ercame—*this* too may I !

We, many of us, have heard, that for Mæthhild [4]
The Geats passion was without limit—
So that griefs yearning sleep from it wholly took.
That he o'ercame—*this* too may I !

Theodric [5] held for thirty winters
The Mærings' burg—that was to many known.
That he o'ercame—*this* too may I !

We have heard tell of Eormanric's
Wolfish council.[6] Widely he ruled
The people of the Gotens realm—grim king was he !
Many a soldier sat, wrapt in sorrows,
In expectation of woe ; strongly wish'd he
That the kingdom's woe were over past.
That he o'ercame—*this* too may I !

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[4] I know nothing of the story here referred to.

[5] This passage probably alludes to the fable of Theodric's thirty years' exile with the Huns ; though such a supposition will not remove every difficulty. In explaining this and other historical or mythical allusions in our Anglo-Saxon poems, we must not pay too much attention to the *later myths* of the Icelander and the German. Fable overlaid History, and changed her shape, with wonderful facility in those days.

[6] See p. 80, n. 2.

Sit|eth sorg|-cearig : sæ|lum bidæl|ed
Onsef|an sweorc|eth : sylf|um thinc|eth
Thæt|sy end|eleas : earf|otha dæl|
Mæg thonn | gethenc|an : thæt | geond thas wor|uld
Wit|ig dryh|ten : wend|eth geneah|he
Eorl|e mon|egum : ar|e gesceaw|ath.
Wis|licne blæd| : sum|um we|ana dál|
Thæt ic|bime syl|fum : sec|gan wil|le
Thæt | ic hwil|e wæs| : heo|-dening|a scop|
Dryht|ne dyr|e : me|wæs deor | noma
Ah|te ic fel|a win|tra : folg|ath til|ne
Hold|ne hlaf|ord : oth | thæt heor|renda|[1]
Nú leoth|-cræftig mon| : lond|-ryht gethah|
Thæt | me eor|la hleo| : gr | ge-seal|de
Thæs | ofer eod|e : this|ses swa mæg|.

This song is divided by the burthen into unequal portions; but these, as has been observed, are written separately in the MS. In the next specimen the burthen seems to have been introduced at regular intervals; but the whole is written continuously. It is taken from the Layamon MS., and forms part of a "lutel sermun," which

Alle bac biteres : wendet to helle.
Roberes and reveres : and the monquelle.
Lechurs and horlinges : thider sculen vende.
And ther heo sculen wunien : evere buten ende.
Alle theos false chepmen : the feond heom vule habbe.
Bachares and brueres : for alle men heo gabbe.
Loȝe he holdet hore galun : midberme heo hire fulleth.
And *ai?* of the purse : that selver heo tulleth.
Bothe heo maketh feble : heore bred and heore alle.
Habben heo the selver : ne tellet heo never tale.
Godemen for godes luue : beleueth suche sunne.
For atten ende hit bi nimeth : heueriche wunne.

---

[1] I can only construe this line by supposing *da* a mistake for *ðah.* If this correction be admitted, we may, I think, infer that *Heorren* was *Poet Laureate* to the Confessor. But many a hero has been manufactured by our Anglo-Saxon scholars out of an innocent adverb or adjective, and possibly I may be fashioning a poet of no better materials.

He[3] sitteth sorrow-laden, joy-bereaved,
In heart he's darken'd—to himself he thinketh
That endless must be his portion of hardships.
One then may think, that o'er this world
The all-wise Lord worketh full diversely;
To many a man honour he showeth,
A well-order'd prosperity—to some a woe-portion.
That I of myself will say;
For that I whilom was the High-Dening's bard,
Dear to my Lord! My name was *Deor;*
Many winters had I a noble following,
A faithful Lord—till, that Heorren prevailed.
Now the song-skill'd man the land[2] hath gotten
Which erst on me bestow'd the earl's protector!
That he[3] o'ercame—*this* too may I!

was probably written soon after the year 1200. In this sermon there are two or three changes of metre; and, after several couplets in the verse of four accents, the preacher, all at once, changes his subject, and dashes off in the following measure.

All backbiters wend to hell;
Robbers and reivers, and the manslayer;
Lechours and whoremongers thither shall wend,
And there shall they won, ever without end!
All these false chapmen, the fiend shall have them,
Bakers and brewers—for all men they cheat;
Low they hold their gallon, with froth they fill it;
And aye from the purse the silver they toll;
Both make they weak—their bread and their ale,
Get they but the silver, never tell they tale.[4]
Goodmen, for God's love, leave ye such sin!
For at the end it taketh away the joy of heaven-ric.

---

[2] The *lond-ryht* or land-right was, I have little doubt, the fief granted to the court-bard for his professional services. The high rank and dignified station of these officers during the *twelfth* century admit of no dispute, and that the bard was a "King's Thane" during the earliest period of Anglo-Saxon antiquity, we learn from Beowulf.

[3] That is, Eormanric's soldier.

[4] That is, "never do they give right measure."

Alle prestes vifes : ich wot heo beoth for lore .
Thes prestes sones ich vene : ne beoth heo noʒt for bore .
Ne theos prude ʒungemen : that luuieth malekin .
And theos prude maidenes : that luuieth janekin .
At churche . and at cheping : hwanne heo to gader come .
Heo runeth to gaderes : and speketh of derne luue .
Hvenne heo to churche cometh : to the haliday .
Euerich vile his leof iseon : ther ʒef he may .
Heo beholdeth vadekin : mid swithe gled eye .
Atorn his hire primur : biloken in hire teye .[2]

Masses and matines : ne kepeth heo nouht .
Robin vuolc Gilot : leden to then ale .
And sitten ther to gederes : and tellen heore tale .
He mai qitten hire ale : and so then to that gome .
And eve to go mid him : ne thuchet hire no schome .
Hire sire and hire dame : threateth hire to bete .
Nule heo for go robin : for al heore threte .
Euer heo will hire schere : ne com hire no mon neh .
Fort that hire vombe : up arise on heh .
Godemen for godes luue : beleueth eoure sunne.
For aten ende hit benimeth : heueriche wunne .

Bidde ye seinte Marie : for hire milde mode .
For the teres that heo wep : for hire sone blode .
Also wis so he god his : for hire erueling .
To the blisse of hevene : he us alle bringe .

---

[1] That politic device, the celibacy of the clergy, seems ever to have jarred with the good sense and manly feeling of the Englishman. Cardinal after cardinal was sent over to enforce obedience to this regulation of the church. The story, which Matthew Paris tells us of one of these cardinals, and the long list of vices which were, at the same time, imported from Italy—vices which are alluded to in Episcopal Visitations, and provided against, with disgusting particularity, in the charters of many Ecclesiastical Foundations—afford us a terrible commentary on the system.

All priests' wives,[1] I wot they be forlorn (lost)!
These priests' sons, I ween, they will not be let off!
Nor these proud youngmen, that love Malekin,
And these proud maidens, that love Janekin;
At church and at market, when they together come
They run together, and speak of secret love;
When to church they come—to the holiday—
Ev'ry one will his love see, there, if he may;
She beholdeth Wadekin, with right glad eye—
Run away from is her primer—lock'd up in her scrip!
Good men for God's love, leave ye such sin—
For, at the end, it taketh away the joy of heaven-ric.

Masses and matins they do not keep!
Robin's[3] folk Gillot to the ale-house lead,
And there they sit together, and they tell their tale;
She may quit her ale, and so then to that man,
And ever to go with him seemeth to her no shame!
Her sire and her dame threaten her to beat—
She'll not forego Robin, for all their threat!
Ever will she proffer herself, nor cometh any man her nigh,
But that straightway, &c.
Good men, for God's love, leave ye your sin!
For, at the end, it taketh away the joy of heaven-ric.

Pray ye Saint Mary, by her gentle heart—
By the tears that she wept—by her son's blood—
(As wise as she is good!) by her burial-cheer—
To the bliss of heaven may she bring us all!

---

[2] There is here no break in the MS., but the failure of the rhime clearly shows there is some omission. If we suppose the burthen of the second stave, and the first verse of the third, to have been passed over in transcription, we shall make each stave consist of twelve verses.

[3] If we might infer that the good monk is here inveighing against the Morris-dancers and Robin-hood, this would be by far the most ancient mention of that redoubtable personage. *Gillot* was long given as a nickname to any coarse, vulgar, masculine woman.

In this song the burthen slightly varies its form. Such shifting appendage was common in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; and the variations tolerated were, in some cases, so great, as hardly to preserve the essential properties of a burthen.

Our modern songs occasionally shut in their staves with some lines in *prose*. These are generally more or less *shifting;* and sometimes no repetition whatever can be found either of phrase or sentiment. It might, perhaps, in such case, be termed a *wheel*—the absence of all defi-

Mon that wol of wysdam heren
At wyse hendyng he may lernen
  That wes marcolues sone
Gode thonkes and monie thewes
Fforte teche fele shrewes
  For that was euer his wone.

Jhu crist al folkes red
That for us alle tholede ded
  Upon the rode tre
Lene us alle to ben wys
Ant to ende in his seruys
  Amen ant charite
God beginning maketh god endyng
            quoth Hendyng.

Betere were a riche mon
Forte spouse a god womon
  Thath hue be sumdel pore
Then to brynge into his hous
A proud quene ant daungerous
  That is sumdel hore
Moni mon for londe wyneth to shonde
            quoth Hendyng, &c.

nite rhythm being considered as a substitute for some particular selection.

Such wheels, however, are not of modern date. There is a song* written in the thirteenth century (and probably in the early half of it) which has each of its staves followed by a proverb, connected with and illustrating the subject. The song consisted originally of thirty-eight staves, and is now provided with two others (without prose accompaniment however), which seem to have been added by some copyist, or, as we might term him, editor. He thus introduces his author to the reader.

The man, that would of wisdom hear,
From wise Hending may he learn,
  (That was Marcolf's son,)
Good principles and fair manners,
Them to teach to many a shreward—
  For such was ever *his* wont.

Jesu Christ, all men's succour,
That for us all suffer'd death,
  Upon the rood-tree,
Grant us all to be wise,
And to end in his service—
  Amen, and Charity!
Good beginning maketh good ending,
quoth Hending, &c.

Better were a rich man
To spouse a good woman,
  Though she be somewhat poor—
Than to bring into his house
A proud quean and dangerous
  That is somewhat hoar (aged)—
Many a man for sake of land winneth his way to shame,
quoth Hending, &c.

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* Harl. MS. 2253.

The glotoun ther he fint god ale
He put so muche in ys male
   Ne leteth he for non eye
So longe he doth uch mon rytht
That he wendeth hom by nytht
   Ant lyth ded by the weye
Drynk eft lasse ant go by lyhte hom
                              quoth Hending, &c.

Hendyng seith soth of mony thyng
Ihu crist heuene kyng
   Us to blisse brynge.
For his swete moder loue
That sit in heuene us aboue
   ȝeve us god endynge.

A very common kind of wheel originated in the use of the middle rhime instead of the final—the last verse of the stave being thus converted into two short ones. It was

Me dere sones where ye fare : by frith or by fell
Take good hede in his tyme : how Tristrem woll tell
How many maner bestes : of venery there were
Listenes now to our Dame : and ye shulen here
Ffowre maner bestes : of venery there are
The first of hem is a hart : the second is an hare
                The boar is one of tho
                The wolf and no mo.
And where so ye comen : in play or in place
Now shal I tel you : which ben bestes of chace
One of them a buck : another a doo,
The ffox and the marteryn : and the wilde roo
And ye shal my dere sones : other bestes all
Where so ye hem finde : rascall hem call
                In frith or in fell
                Or in fforest y yow tell.

---

[1] A *frith* was a woodland, not afforested.

[2] One of Tristrem's chief accomplishments was his skill in hunting.

The glutton where he finds good ale
He putteth so much in his hide,
He ceaseth for no fear—
So long he doth every man " right,"
That he goeth home by night,
And ly'th dead by the way.
Drink less hereafter, and go by daylight home,
quoth Hending, &c.

Hending saith truth of many things;
Jesu Christ, king of heaven,
May he bring us to bliss;
For his sweet mother's love,
That sitteth in heaven, us above,
May he give us good ending!

adopted by Dame Juliana Berners, in her Treatise on Hunting, written in the year 1481.

My dear sons, wheresoe'er ye fare, by frith[1] or on hill,
Take good heed, how in his time Tristrem[2] would tell,
How many kinds of Beasts of *Venery* there were;
Listen now to our Dame, and ye shall hear—
Four kinds of Beasts of Venery there are,
The first of them is a hart, the second is a hare,
The boar is one of them,
The wolf—and no more.
And wheresoe'er ye come, in pageant, or in hall,
Now will I tell you, which are Beasts of *Chace*—
One of them a buck, another a doe,
The fox, and the martern, and the wild roe;
And ye shall, my dear sons, all other beasts,
Wheresoever ye find them, *rascal* call them—
In frith, or on hill,
Or in forest—I tell you.

In the middle ages he was looked upon as the great patron of the sportsman.

The same wheel occurs in a curious satire, which is found immediately preceding the hymn ascribed to Michael of Kildare,* and is probably a work of the same author. This satire is full of local allusions, which, to an Irishman, might be intelligible.† Its range is a wide one, for, after glancing at the saints, Christopher, Benedict, Francis,

Hail seint michel : with the lange sper
Fair beth thi winges : up thi sholder
Thou hast a rede kirtil : a non to thi fote
Thou ert best angle : that ever god makid
This vers is ful well a wroȝt
Hit is of wel furre y broȝt

Hail ȝe holi monkes : with ȝur corrin
Late and rathe ifillid : of ale and win
Depe cun ȝe bouse : that is al ȝure care
With seint benet is scurge : lome ȝe disciplineth
Taketh hed al to me
That this is sleche ȝe wel mow se.

Hail be ȝe marchans : with ȝur gret packes
Of draperie avoir de peise : an ȝur wol sacks
Gold silver stones : riche markes and eke poundes
Litil giue ȝe ther of : to the wrech power
Sleey he was an ful of witte
That this lore put in writte, &c.

Hail be ye pochers : with ȝur bole ax
Fair beth ȝur barm hatres : yolow beth ȝur fax
Ze stondith at the shamil : brod ferlich bernes
Fleiis ȝow folowith : ȝe swolowith y now
The best clerk of al this tun
Craft fullich makid this bastun, &c.

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* See p. 319.

† It seems there was near the town a piece of water called the *lake*, with a visit to which he threatens the fraudulent "brewster." The place must also have been one of considerable traffic, and a staple for wool. It seems to

&c., and the friars, monks, &c. who followed their rules, it attacks the trader. As the white friar is twitted with his vagabond life, and the black friar with his costly habit, so the merchant is accused of covetousness, the butcher of gluttony, and the baker of fraud. It opens with an address to the poet's patron saint, the Archangel Michael.

Hail, Saint Michael, with the long spear!
Fair are thy wings, upon thy shoulder,
Thou hast a red kirtle down to thy foot—
Thou art the best of angels, that ever God made!
This verse is full well y-wrought,
It is from far y-brought! &c.

Hail, ye holy monks, with your *black jack?*
Late and early y-filled with ale and wine!
Deep can ye bouse, and that is all your care—
With Saint Bennet's scourge poorly ye take to discipline!
Take heed all ye to me—
That this is *sly*, ye well may see! &c.

Hail be ye merchants, with your great packs
Of drapery *avoir-du-pois*, and your wool sacks,
Gold, silver, stones, rich marks, and eke pounds—
Little thereof ye give to the poor wretch!
Sly was he and full of wit,
That this *lore* hath put in writ!

Hail be ye butchers, with your poll-ax,
Fair be your aprons, yellow is your hair,
Ye stand at the shambles, broad and awful fellows—
Flies follow you! ye swallow enough!
The best clerk of all this town,
Skilfully made he this *baston!*

---

have boasted a Benedictine monastery, a nunnery, a house of Dominicans within the walls, and one of Franciscans without. The white Friar is only mentioned as a stroller from Drogheda. What town in Ireland answers these conditions?

Makith glad my frendis : ȝe sitteth to long stille
Spekith now an gladieth : an drinketh al ȝur fille
Ze habbith iherd of men lif : that wonith in lond
Drinkith dep an makith glade : ne hab ȝe non other nede
This song is y seid of me
Euer iblessid mot ȝe be.

It will be seen there is no rhime between the third and fourth verses of Michael's stave. The omission, however, was not without its object. Seconded, for the most part, by some change in the rhythm, it gives a very marked and peculiar character to the *fourth* line—that is, to the verse, in which lies the sting of the satire.

There is none so styf on stede
Ne none so prowde in prese
Ne none so dughty in his dede
Ne none so dere in deese
No kyng no knyght no wight in wede
From dede have maide hym seese
Ne * fleshe he was wont to fede
It shall be wormes mese
Youre dede is wormes coke
Youre myrroure here ye loke
And let me be youre boke
Youre sampille take by me
Fro dede you cleke in cloke
Siche shalle ye alle be.

Ilkon in siche aray : with dede thai shalle be dighte †
And closid cold in clay : wheder he be kyng or knyght
For alle his garmentes gay : that semely were in sight
His fleshe shall frete away, with many a wofulle wight
When wofully sich wyghtys
Shalle gnawe thise gay knyghtys
Thare lunges and thare lightys
Thare harte shall frete in sonder
Thise masters most of myghtys
Thus shalle thay be broght under.

---

* Is not *ne* a mistake for *the?*

† These four verses, it will be seen, answer to the eight verses of the first stave.

Make you glad, my friends, ye sit too long still,
Speak now, and be merry, and drink ye all your fill,
Ye have heard of men's life—of such as dwell in land—
Drink ye deep, and make you glad—ye have no other business!
This song has now been sung by me,
Ever y-blessed mote ye be!

Another kind of wheel seems to have been formed, by the converting of two rhiming tetrameters into an interwoven stave of four verses. In the example which follows,* the first section is tripled. Lazarus, who hast just been raised from the dead, is the speaker.

There is none so stiff on steed,
And none so proud in press,
And none so doughty in deed,
And none so lov'd in hall,
(No king, no knight, no man in weeds,)
That from death hath made him rise!
The flesh he † was wont to feed—
It must be food for worms!
Your ‡ death is cook to th' worms;
On your mirrour here you may look;
And let me be your book,
Your sample take by me!
To 'scape from death you may grasp with a clutch—
But such shall ye all be.

Each one in such array—with death shall they be dight,
And closed cold in clay, whether he be king or knight,
For all his garments gay, that seemly were to sight,
His flesh shall be eaten away with many a woeful creature;
When woefully such creatures
Shall gnaw these gay knights,
Their lungs and their lights—
Their heart shall part asunder!
These *seignours*, high of power,
Thus shall they be brought under.

---

* Towneley Mysteries. Lazarus.

† That is, the king, knight, warrior, &c.

‡ Here Lazarus more directly addresses himself to the spectators.

There then follow four staves, similar in structure to the last. It will be seen that the wheel is always knit to its stave by means of *iteration*, as well as each stave to the one preceding by a like artifice.

I have quoted from this Mystery (with some risk of offending the fastidious reader) *two* staves, because I think the peculiar form, given to the first of them, goes far to prove, that the common stave of eight verses, with alternate rhime,* is nothing more than the stave of four tetrameters, with a rhime interwoven— or rather, I would say, it is an *imitation* of such stave.

Thu | art hel|e and lif | and liȝt|.
And hel|pest al | mon kun|ne.
Thu | us hau|est ful well | idiȝt.
Thu ȝev|e us weol|e and wun|ne.
Thu broht|est dai | and ev|e niȝt|.
Heo broȝ|te woht | thu broȝt|est riȝt|.
Thu al|messe and | heo sun|ne.
Bisih | to me | lau|edi briȝt|.
Hwen|ne ich schal wen|de heon|ne.
So wel | thu miht|.

This is clearly the stave of four imperfect Iambic tetrameters, with an interwoven rhime, and the first section of the third tetrameters *repeated*. It is generally to a Psalm-stave of four long verses, or, at least, to some one of the derivative staves, that the *bob* is found attached in our older poetry; but in the sixteenth century it was used

Whii war and wrake in londe : and manslaught is icome
Whii hunger and derthe on eorthe : the pore hath undernome
Whii bestes ben thus storve : and corn hath ben so dere
Ye that wolen abide : listeneth and ye muwen here.
The skile
I nelle lyen for no man : herkne whoso wile.

---

* See p. 313.

But of all the wheels known to our language, the most important are those fashioned on the *bob*—that is, on the short and abrupt wheel, which came into fashion during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

As to the origin of this singular appendage—whether the *bob* came from the Latin or the Celtic—I shall not stop to make inquiry. It seems to have been familiar to the Romance dialects before it was adopted by the English. The earliest native specimen I have met with is in a hymn to the Virgin, which is found in the Layamon MS., and may date about the year 1200.

Thou art health, and life, and light,
   And helpest all mankind!
Thou hast us full well y-dight,
   O give us weal and joy!
Thou broughtest day, and Eva night,
She brought wrong, and thou brought'st right,
   Thou alms and she sin—
Look on me, Lady bright,
   When I hence shall wend—
            As well thou may'st!

with other staves almost as freely as at the present day.

The simplest kind of bob-wheel consists of the bob, and a long verse following, and rhiming with it. It is used in a satire called *Simonia,* which is found in the Auchinleck MS., and which appears from the historical allusions to have been written in the reign of Edward the Second. It opens with the stave,

Why war and ruin on land and manslaughter have come,
Why hunger and dearth on earth, have overta'en the poor,
Why beasts have thus died, and corn hath been so dear,
Ye that will abide, listen and ye may hear
                    The reason—
I will lie for no man—hearken whoso will!

If we suppose the four first verses to rhime *continuously*, instead of by couplets, a rhime to be interwoven throughout the stave, and each section to be written as a distinct verse, we shall get the curious stanza in which Tristrem was written,* and which, in one of his songs, is also used by Minot. To make this complicated stanza still more

So wylle a wight as I
In warld was never man
Howsehold and husbandry
Fulle sore I may it ban
That bargain dere I by
Yong men bewar red I
Wedyng makys me alle wan
Take me thi brydylle Mary
Tent thou to that page grathly
With alle the craft thou can
And may
He that this warld began
Wyshe us the way

The stanza of Christ's Kirk on the Green is nothing more than the stave of four imperfect Iambic tetrameters, with interwoven rhime and this bob-wheel; the inter-

Was nevir in Scotland hard nor sene
Sic dansing nor deray
Neither at Falkland on the Grene
Nor Peebelis at the play
As was of wowaris as I wene
At Christis kirk on ane day
Thir came our kitties waschen clene
In thair new kertillis of gray
Full gay
At Christis Kirk of the Green that day.

---

* See p. 173. † Towneley Mysteries.

[1] In James the Fifth's reign there was a royal palace at Falkland, and

difficult, the monks doubled the first section of the third and fourth verses; and so got the stanza which is used in the *Fugacio in Egyptum*.† Joseph is the speaker—but in these Mysteries, the most awful events are coloured with the humours of low life.

So distracted a creature as I,
In the world was never man!
Household and husbandry—
Full sore may I them ban;
That bargain dear I abye!
Young men, beware—I counsel you—
Wedding makes me all wan!
Take thy bridle, Mary,
Look thou to that child quickly,
With all the skill thou canst
And may'st—
He that this world began,
May *He* show us the way!

woven rhime not reaching to the last verse, and the rhime between such verse and the bob being only preserved in the first stave.

Was never in Scotland heard or seen
Such dancing, or such fun,
Neither at Falkland [1] on the Green,
Nor Peebles at the play,
As was of woers, as I ween,
At Christ's Kirk on a day—
There came our wenches washen clean,
In their new kirtles of gray
Full gay!
At Christ's Kirk of the Green that day.

Peebles was famous for its archery-play. The fairs, at both places, were celebrated.

To dans thir damsellis them dicht
Thir lasses licht of laitis
Thair gluvis war of the raffel rycht
Thair shune wer of the straitis
Thair kertillis wer of Lyncome lycht
Well prest with mony plaitis
Thay wer sa nyss qhen men thame nycht
Thay squelit lyke ony gaitis
Sa lout
At Christis Kirk of the Green that day, &c.

One can hardly suppose those critics serious, who attribute this song to the moral and sententious James the First; every line in it smacks of the royal profligate, who wrote the Gabelunzie man.

Another kind of bob-wheel originated in the use of a sectional rhime in the last verse. One of the earliest ex-

Sit|teth al|le stil|le : ant herk|neth to me|
The kyn | of al|emaig|ne : bi mi le|aute|
Thrit|ti thus|ent pound| : as|kede he|
Ffor|te mak|e the pees| : in the | countre|
Ant so | he did|e mor|e.
Rich*ard* | thah thou | be eu|er trich*ard*|
Tric|then shalt | thou nev|er mor|e.

Instead of the sectional rhime, the first section of the last verse was sometimes *repeated*. The song against the

Listneth lordinges : a newe song ichulle beginne
Of the traytours of Scotland : that take beth with ginne
Mon that loveth falsenesse : and null never blynne
Sore may him adrede : the lyf that he is inne
Ich understande
Selde wes he glad
That never nes asade
Of nythe ant of onde

---

* Harl. 2253. Also printed by Ritson.

To dance these damsels made them ready,
These lasses light of manner;
Their gloves were of roe-leather good,
Their shoon were from the straits (Morocco)
Their kirtles were of Lincoln fine,
Well prest with many plaits—
They were so silly, when men came near them—
They squeel'd like any goats
So loud!
At Christ's Kirk of the green that day, &c.

amples is found in the song made by the rebel barons, after their victory at Lewes, A. D. 1264. The barons had attempted to bribe the king's brother, Richard, Earl of Cornwall and King of the Romans, a circumstance which is thus turned against him in the first stanza.

Sit ye all still, and herken to me!
The king of *Allemaigne*, by my lealty,
Thirty thousand pounds asked he,
For to make the peace in the country!
And so did he more—
Richard, though thou be ever a trickster,
Trick us shalt thou never more!

Scots,* written in the year 1306, begins as follows,—

Listen, Lordings, a new song will I begin
Of the traitors of Scotland, that are taken with a snare;
The man that loveth falseness, and will never cease,
Sorely may he drede the life that he is in,
As I understand—[1]
Seldom was he glad,
That never was satisfied
With hate and with malice.

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[1] This is only one of those expletives, which occur so frequently, and to modern ears so impertinently, in our older poetry.

Generally, however, the first section was *tripled.* In the following example we have a rhime interwoven in the

Thus shalle I teche knavys : ensample to take
In thare wittys that ravys : sich mastre to make
Alle wantones wafys : no language ye crak
No sufferan you savys : youre nekkys shalle I shak
In sonder
No king ye on calle
Bot on Herode the ryalle
Or els many oone shalle
Apon youre bodys wonder.

From the interwoven stave of four verses may possibly have arisen* the common stave of eight verses, with alternate rhime. If this be so, we have here the original of the important stave, which we have already had occasion more than once to notice.† It was used alike for the satire, the romance, and the mystery; and seems to have

Alas | for doylle | my la|dy dere|
Alle | for-chang|yd is | thy chere|
To see | this prince | without|en pere|
Thus lap|pyd alle | in *wo*|
He was | thy foode|, thi far|yst foine|
Thi luf|, thi lake|, thi luff|sum son|
That high | on tre | thus hynges | alone|
With bod|y black | and *blo*|
Alas|
To me | and man|y *mo*| : a good | master | he was|

Here the long verses were clearly meant for Iambic tetrameters. When these verses are made use of, we rarely find the long verse of the bob-wheel corresponding; it is almost always, as in the present case, an alexandrine.

Sometimes the wheel contains *two* long verses, both of which rhime with the bob. By interweaving a rhime, four first verses. It may teach us the meaning of the phrase " out-Heroding Herod," for this redoubtable personage is the speaker.

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* See pp. 313. 340.

† See p. 170.

> Thus shall I teach knaves to take example,
> Them that rave in their wits, to make such mastery;
> All wantons, and vagabonds, crack ye no boasts—
> No sovereign shall save you, your necks will I break
> Asunder—
> On no king do ye call,
> Save on Herod the Royal—
> Or else many a one shall
> On your dead bodies wonder!

retained its popularity undiminished for nearly three centuries.

In some cases the first section of the last verse takes the *final* rhime instead of the interwoven. The following stave consists of only *two* long verses and the bob-wheel; but the first sections of both are *tripled.*

> Alas for dole! my lady dear,
> All changed is thy chear,
> To see this prince—one without peer—
> Thus wrapped all in woe!
> He was thy child, thy fairest *fondling?*
> Thy love, thy sport, thy lovesome son,
> That, high on the cross, thus hangs alone
> With body black and blue,
> Alas!
> To me and many more a good master was he!

we get the wheel, that was used by Hugh of the Palace, in his romance of Sir Gawaine.‡

It will be seen, that the bob-wheel was generally connected with the main body of the stave by a community of rhime. When there was no such bond of union—as when the wheel contained a close rhime §—the necessary connection of parts depended entirely on the *punctuation.* In such cases, the bob was intimately connected with the verses preceding it, and always followed by an important stop; and thus it formed the link, which tied the wheel to the rest of the stave. But in the fifteenth century the bob was sometimes converted into a long verse, which was often separated from the body of the stave by a full stop. In such case, _iteration_* was employed to bind the two parts together—though in the later poems, when a more

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‡ See p. 168.

§ See pp. 345, 346.

Hou | shal that | lef|ly syng|
That thus | is mar|red in | mourning|
Heo | me wol | to deth|e bring|
Longe er | my day|
Gret hir|e wel | that swet|e thing|
With e|ȝenen gray|

Hire heȝ|e haveth wound|ed me | ywis|se
Hire ben|de brow|en that bring|eth blis|se
Hire come|ly mouth | that mihte kiss|e
In muche murthe he were
Y wol|de chaung|e myn | for his|
That is | here fere|

Wolde hir|e fer|e beo | so freo|
Ant wurthes were that so | mihte beo|
Al for on | y wol|de yev|e three|
Without|e chep|
From hel|le to hev|ene and son|ne to se|
Nys non | so geep|
Ne half' | so freo
Wose wol|e of lov|e be | acwe|
Do list|ne me|.

In this stave was written the Legend of Celestyn, perhaps as early as the thirteenth century; and, about a century afterwards, the romance of Octavian. It was at the slovenly versification prevailed, it was very generally neglected.

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* See p. 291.

Another kind of bob-wheel, essentially different, as it would appear, from those we have considered, was borrowed from the Troubadour. It was freely used during the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries; and, in later times, has been immortalised by the genius of Burns. The following extract, from a love-song of the thirteenth century, is particularly curious, inasmuch as in one of the staves the wheel is *repeated.*

How shall *he* with good will sing,
That thus is spoiled with mourning ?
She will me bring to death
          Long ere my day—
Greet her well, that sweet thing
          With eyes so grey !

Her eye hath wounded me in sooth,
And her bent brows that bring bliss—
Her comely mouth, whoso may kiss,
          In great joy were he !
I would exchange mine for his,
          That is her fere (companion).

Would her fere be so bounteous,
And ———? were, that so 't might be—
All for one I would give three
          Without bargaining ;
From hell to look to the heav'n and sun,
          There's none so *lively ?*
          Nor half so free ;
Whoso would of love be *quit ?*
          Make him list to me.

same period often used in the mysteries, though soon afterwards it disappeared from our literature, and was merely lingering in the songs of a remote district, when

Burns again made its rhythm familiar to every lover of English poetry.

In some few cases the wheel was preceded by *two,* in-

Now me to spulyie sum not spairis
To tak my geir na captane cairis
Thai ar sa bald
Yit tyme may cum, may mend my sairis
Thoch I be ald, &c.

Thoch I be sweir to ryd or gang
Thair is sum thing I've wantit lang
Fain have I wald
Thame punysit that did me wrang
Thoch I be ald.

Sometimes the wheel followed an interwoven stave of

Almighty God Iesu Iesu
That borne was of a madyn free
Thow was a lord and prophete trew
Whyls thou had lyfe on lyfe to be
Emanges these men
Yll was thou ded, so wo is me
That I it ken.

I ken it well, &c.

In the old Scotch song against the Mass an additional

Knawing there is na Christ but ane
Quhilk rent was on the rude with roddis
Quhy give ye glore to stock and stane
In worschipping of uthir goddis
Thir idolis that on alteris standes
Ar fenyeitness
Ye gar not God amang your handis
Mumling your mes, &c.

In the last song, the rhime of the short verses continues unchanged throughout. This is also the case with the earliest Romance specimen, which was written by the celebrated Earl of Poitou—the first troubadour, and grand-stead of three verses, as in Maitland's song against "The Thievis of Liddisdale."

Now me to spoil there are who spare not,
To take my geer no captain fears,
They are so bold!
Yet the time may come may mend my sorrows,
Though I be old, &c.

Though I be slow to ride or walk,
There is one thing I 've wanted long,
Fain have I would—
Them punished, that did me wrong,
Though I be old.

four verses.

Almighty God, Iesu! Iesu!
That born wast of a maiden free,
Thou wast a lord and prophet true,
Whilst thou hadst life, alive to be,
Among these men;
Ill wast thou dead, so woe is me
That I it know.

I know it well, &c.

verse is introduced into the stave.

Knowing there is no Christ but one,
Who torn was on the rood with rods,
Why give ye glory to stock and stone
In worshipping of other Gods?
These idols, that on altars stand,
Are feigned things!
Ye make no God between your hands,
Mumbling your mass, &c.

father to Eleanor, Queen of England. It should also be noticed, before we dismiss the subject, that *iteration* was very often employed to bind together those staves which took the bob-wheel of the Troubadour. Two examples have been already given.

Another kind of wheel was formed by introducing a peculiar rhythm into some well-known combination—the sectional pause, for instance, into the common interwoven verse of four accents. Of this wheel we gave an example in a preceding chapter.[1] Another variety originated in the use of the rhiming section 2 l,[2] the wheel consisting of two rhiming verses, one or both of which began with this section.

The simplest, though probably not the most ancient combination into which this wheel enters, is found in one of the songs written by Suckling, early in the seventeenth century.

That none beguiled be by Time's quick flowing,
Lovers have in their hearts a clock still going;
For though Time be nimble, his motions
Are quicker[3]
And thicker
Where Love hath his notions.

Hope is the mainspring on which moves desire,
And these do the less wheels, fear, joy, inspire;
The balance is thought evermore—
Clicking
And striking,
And ne'er giving o'er, &c.

A more complicated stave is found in the Miscellany called "The Handful of Pleasant Delites," published A.D. 1584. The sportsman, we are told, chases the hare to see her wiliness,

More than to win or get the game
To beare away,
He is not greadie of the same
(Thus hunters saie)
So some men hunt by hote desire
To Venus' dames, and do require
With favor to have her : or else they will die
They love her and prove her : and wot ye why?
For sooth to see her subtilnesse, &c.

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[1] See p. 274. [2] See vol. i. p. 127.

[3] These three lines would be more correctly written as one verse.

But the most important of these staves is that which was used in the " Cherry and the Slae," and which was so popular in the north, towards the close of the sixteenth century. The reader is instructed to sing it to " the air of *the bankis of Helicon.*" An old song, with this title, is still extant. It seems to have been written about the year 1550, and was probably the earliest specimen of this singular stanza.

Declair ye bankis of Helicon,
Parnassus hills, and daills ilkone,
    And fontaine Caballein,
Gif ony of your musis all
Or nymphis may be peregal
    Unto my ladye schein ?
Or if the ladyis, that did lave
    Their bodyis by your brim,
So seemlie war, or yit sa suave (sweet),
    So bewtiful or trim ?
        Contempill, exempill
        Tak be hir proper port,
        Gif onye sa bonye
        Amang you did resort, &c.

We need hardly remind the reader of " The Jolly Beggars," or the poems, on Despondency, on Ruin, &c., by which Burns has given to this stanza an enduring place in our poetry. Whatever rhythmical form *his* genius has consecrated must now be considered classical.

CHAPTER V.

BALLET-STAVES.

Under this head I would arrange all the staves borrowed from the Romance languages, which admit only verses of equal length. I shall, however, whenever it may be expedient, follow them through their various changes, though, in the result, they may possibly get beyond reach of the definition just given.

The term *ballet*, which is preferred, as being less likely to mislead than *ballad*,* has been used in our language with great vagueness of meaning. Generally, however, the poems, to which I would apply the term, have a very distinctive character, as well in the nature of their poetry, as in the structure of their rhythm. The genius of the people, among whom they originated, was long and deeply impressed upon them. Subtlety, but little depth of thought, cold conceits, and an absence of all genuine feeling, long distinguished the English ballet, no less than the foreign models, from which it was imitated. By degrees it worked itself clear of affectation, but almost in the same proportion its original structure was altered.

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* Both these terms were used by our poets, though the former prevailed chiefly in the north. The necessity for the distinction here taken will appear from the fact, that Ritson actually waded through an Oxford MS. entitled "The Abstract Breviare, compyled of divers *balades*, roundels, virelays, tragedies, &c." in search of some counterpart to Chevy-Chase or Johnny Armstrong!

In its most characteristic—perhaps I might have said its most *perfect*—form, the ballet consisted of certain staves, each of them ending with the same verse, and the whole shut in with a short stave, called by the French an *envoi*, and by the Spaniards a *tornada*. But neither the burthen at the end of each stave, nor the envoi seems ever to have been an *essential* characteristic of the ballet. We have many (and some very ancient) specimens, both in French and English, which have neither of these peculiarities; and several metrical forms, which will *here* be classed as ballet-staves, certainly never tolerated either the one or the other. As regards our own literature, I would say the envoi prevailed most in the fourteenth, and the burthen in the fifteenth century. In the latter century, too, the verse of five accents was, I think, more commonly used, than it had been in the century preceding.

There are three staves, which, from their prevalence in our literature, might well be called the *common* ballet-staves. They consist respectively of 8, 7, and 6 verses; and the disposition of their rhimes will at once appear from the following scheme:

Ballet-stave of 8.	Ballet-stave of 7.	Ballet-stave of 6.
1	1	1
2	2	2
1	1	1
2	2	2
2	2	3
3	3	3
2	3	
3		

The ballet-stave of eight, like so many others of our metrical forms, seems to have originated with the Latinist. The German monk Ernfrid wrote a poem in the ninth century, from which is taken the following extract.

Felic|ita|tis reg|ula|
Hac fi|ne sem|per con|stitit|,
Ad punc|ta cum | venit | sua|,
In se | volu|ta cor|ruit|,
Quæcumque vita protulit,
Ambigua læta tristia,
Quocumque se spes extulit,
Infida dura credula, &c.

This is really our ballet-stave of eight, with two rhimes

Al|le that beoth | of huer|te trew|e
A stoun|de herk|neth to | my song|
Of duel | that deth | hath diht | us new|e
That mak|eth me syk|e ant sor|ewe among|
Of | a knyht|, that wes | so strong|
Of | wham God | hath don | ys wil|le
Me thun|cheth that deth | hath don | us wrong|
That he | so son|e shall lig|ge stil|le

Al Eng|lond ah|te for | te know|e
Of wham | that song | is, that | y syng|e
Of Ed|ward kyng|, that lith | so low|e
ȝent al | this world | is nom|e con spring|e
Trew|est mon | of al|le thing|e
Ant | in wer|re war | ant wys|
For him | we ah|te oure hon|den to wryn|ge
Of Chris|tendome | he ber | the prys|, &c.

There are some staves, consisting of verses of equal length, the origin of which is involved in doubt.* But I think no one will hesitate to class *this* English stave with the Latin stave, used by Ernfrid; and when we have once fair hold on a Latin rhythmus, many difficulties vanish. There can be little doubt, that Ernfrid's stanza was formed from two of the common staves, consisting of four Iambic dimiters; and that the artificial disposition of the rhiming syllables must be traced to the same spirit of invention, that gave birth to the close

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* See p. 316.

—a variety we shall notice shortly. In English poetry, the ballet-stave of eight with three rhimes was much more common than the ballet-stave with two, and seems also to have been in use at a much earlier period. It is found in the elegy which laments the loss of our first Edward, and which, from internal evidence, cannot have been written long after the death of that monarch.

All, that be true of heart,
Awhile hearken to my song—
Of sorrow, that death hath wrought us newly,
That maketh me sigh, and sorrow the while—
Of a knyght, that was so strong,
On whom God hath done his will;
Methinks that death hath done us wrong
That he thus early should lie still!

All England hath reason for to know
Of whom the song is, that I sing—
'T is of Edward king * that lieth so low;
Over all this world his name gan spring;
Trewest man of all the earth,
And, in war, wary and wise;
For him we've *cause* our hands to wring—
Of Christendom he bare the prize! &c.

and interwoven rhimes. This arrangement of the final rhimes may now appear a very unimportant matter, accustomed as we are to almost infinite diversity of metrical structure; but in the eighth and ninth centuries it was a startling novelty, and the influences it exerted have been deep and permanent.

I believe Chaucer to be the first English poet that wrote this stanza, with the verse of five accents; but Gower had most probably preceded him with his French "ballades," in which, by-the-bye, he always introduces an *envoi*, and makes the last line of each stave a burthen. Besides some smaller poems, Chaucer has written in this stanza the whole of the Monk's Tale, from which I take my example.

---

* See p. 61. n. 8.

> His wif | his lord|es : and | his con|cubin|es
> Ay dronk|en, whil|e : her[1] ap|petit|es last|
> Out | of thise no|ble ves|sels : son|dry win|es ;
> And | on a wall| : this king | his ey|en cast|,—
> And saw | an hand|—arm|les :[2] that wrote | ful fast|
> For fere | of whiche | he quoke| : and sik|ed[3] sor|e.
> This hand | that Bal|thasar| : so sor|e agast,|
> Wrote *Man|e tech|el phar|es* : and | no mor|e.

It will be seen, that in most kinds of ballet-stave there is some one or more portions, consisting of four verses, knit together by the interwoven rhime. The interwoven is occasionally superseded by the *close* rhime; and the ballet-stave of eight is sometimes formed according to the following scheme :

1
2
2
1
2
3
3
2

These ballet-staves with close rhime, though they occasionally appear in English poetry, were much more generally used by foreigners; and particularly by those, who modelled their versification on that of the Provencals, as the Italians and the Spaniards. I shall only notice such of them, as have played an important part in our literature —no good end would be answered by calling the reader's attention to every variety, that has from time to time been taken up by affectation or caprice.

---

[1] Their.
[2] This is a beautiful example of the section 5 l. p. See Vol. I. p. 303.
[3] Sighed.

The common ballet-stave of seven is perhaps the stanza in which has been written the greatest quantity of English poetry. It was the favourite stave of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries; and though most of the poets, who used it, are now only known by name, it still lives in the pages of Chaucer, of Spenser, and of Shakespeare. The first of these has written in this stanza four of his Canterbury Tales; the second has used it in his "hymns" on Love, Beauty, &c., and in his Ruins of Time; and Shakespeare has selected it for his Rape of Lucrece and his Lover's Complaint.

The following elegant tribute, intended for a man every way unworthy of it, the celebrated Earl of Leicester, is found in the Ruins of Time.

It is not long since these two eyes beheld
A mightie prince of most renowned name,
Whom England high in count of honour held
And greatest ones did sue to gaine his grace—
Of greatest ones he greatest in that place
Sate in the bosom of his Sovereigne,
And *Right and Loyal* did his word maintain.

I saw him die, I saw him die as one
Of the meane people, and brought forth on beare,
I saw him die, and no man left to mone
His doleful fate, that late him loved deare,
Scarce anie left to close his eyelids neare,
Scarce anie left upon his lips to lay
The sacred sod, or requiem to say, &c.

Gascoigne calls this stanza *rhythme-royal*, "and certainly it is a royall kynde of verse, serving best for grave discourses." King James gives a somewhat similar name to the ballet-stave of eight, which he calls the *ballat-royal*. The epithet *royal* seems to be derived from the *chant-royal* of the French, a short poem in ballet-stave, written in honour of God or the Virgin Mary; and by which, according to French critics, the abilities of "the king" were tested in the poetical contests at Rouen. There are in our own literature many traces of the use, to which these stanzas were originally put; thus, in his Confessio Amantis, Gower changes his couplet metre of four accents to the ballet-stave of seven, immediately he begins his supplication to Venus.

King James terms the ballet-stave of six, *common verse;* and the frequent use, which was made of it during the whole of the sixteenth and the latter half of the fifteenth century, in some measure justifies the title. He thinks it well-fitted for "materis of love;" but the range of its application was by no means limited. The following staves are taken from Spenser's Tears of the Muses. One would almost wish to retain the old delusion, that the compliment was meant for Shakespeare, but modern criticism says Sir Philip Sydney.

Where be the sweete delights of Learnings treasure,
That wont with comick sock to beautifie
The painted Theaters, and fill with pleasure
The list'ner's eyes, and eares with melodie,
In which I[1] late was wont to reign as Queene,
And maske in mirth with Graces well beseene?

O all is gone, and all that goodly glee,
Which wont to be the glorie of gay wits,
Is layd abed, and no where now to see,
And in her roome unseemly sorrow sits,
With hollow brows. and griesly countenaunce,
Marring my joyous gentle dalliaunce, &c.

And he the man, whom nature self had made
To mock herself, and truth to imitate,
With kindly counter, under mimick shade,
Our pleasant *Willy*. ah! is dead of late;
With whom all joy and jolly merriment,
Is also deaded, and in dolour drent.

---

[1] *Thalia* is the speaker.

In stead thereof, scoffing scurrilitie
And scorning folly with contempt is crept,
Rolling in rimes of shameless ribaudrie,
Without regard, or due decorum kept;
Each idle wit, at will, presumes to make,[1]
And doth the learned's task upon him take.

But that same gentle spirit, from whose pen
Large streams of honnie and sweet nectar flow,
Scorning the boldness of such base-born men,
Which dare their follies forth so rashly throw,
Doth rather choose to sit in idle cell
Than so himself to mockery to sell, &c.

The ballet-stave of five is of very rare occurrence in our poetry. It seems naturally to range with the ballet-stave of six, as it most nearly approaches it in the peculiarities of its structure. It is written in verses both of four and of five accents; and was chiefly used at the end of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth century. Its rhimes were ranged in the following order.

1
2
1
2
2

The couplets which shut in the ballet-staves of 6 and 7, have no metrical connection with the rest of the stanza; and I believe it was the metrical union that is found in the ballet-stave of 8, which induced Puttingham to prefer it to the latter of these combinations. His reason for the preference was, in his own language, "because it receiveth *better band*." This *band* could be given to the ballet-stave of 7, by making the last "couple" inclose a rhiming termination, belonging either to the first or to the second set of rhimes;

---

[1] That is, to write poetry.

1	1
2	2
1	1
2	2
3	3
1	2
3	3

and both these combinations were occasionally made use of. Spenser has used the second of them in his *Daphnaida*—an elegy upon the death of Lady Douglas Gorges.

> Yet fell she not as one enforc'd to die,
> Ne died with dread, and grudging discontent,
> But as one toil'd with travel down doth lie,
> So lay she down, as if to sleep she went,
> And clos'd her eyes with careless[1] quietness,
> The whiles soft death away her spirit hent,
> And soul assoyl'd from sinful fleshliness.

In like manner the ballet-stave of 6 was sometimes written with banded rhime; but, in such case, they were obliged to reduce the number of rhimes to *two*. The stave in which Spenser wrote his October-Eclogue may be called the banded ballet-stave of 6, with close rhime.

> O peerless Poesie, where is then thy place,
> If not in Prince's palace thou dost sit
> (And yet in Prince's palace the most fit)
> Ne breast of baser birth doth thee embrace?
> Then make thee wings of thine aspiring wit,
> And, whence thou cam'st, fly back to heav'n apace.

The other ballet-staves were also occasionally written with only two rhimes—the first rhime being substituted for the third. In such case, the stave, of course, possessed all necessary *band*, and the expedients we have mentioned were unnecessary; but nevertheless we sometimes find the two rhimes even in the banded ballet-stave of 7. The June-Eclogue is written in the ballet-stave of *eight*.

---

[1] Void of care, that is *anxiety*.

Lo! Colin, here the place, whose pleasant sight
From other shades hath wean'd my wand'ring mind,
Tell me what wants me here, to work delight?
The simple air, the gentle warbling wind
So calm, so cool, as no where else I find;
The grassy ground with dainty daisies dight,
The bramble-bush, where birds of every kind
To th' water's fall their tunes attemper right, &c.

Then, if by me thou list advised be,
Forsake the soil that so doth thee bewitch,
Leave me those hills, &c.

King James, when he gives an example of "Troilus verse," quotes a stave with two rhimes.

1
2
1
2
2
1
1

This is not quite correct, as Chaucer wrote his Troilus and Cresseide in staves of three rhimes; but it shows that, in the opinion of the critic, the common ballet-stave of 7 was preferably written with only two.

The usual expedients for obtaining variety were applied to the ballet-stave. By *repeating* the last verse of the common ballet-stave of 7, we get the stanza which was used in Britain's Ida—a poem that has been ascribed to Spenser. In like manner, by tripling the odd verses in the ballet-stave of 8, with two rhimes, we obtain a stanza of 16 verses, which may be found in the romance of Annelida and

Arcite;[*] and by doubling the first and third verses in the banded ballet-stave of 7,[†] with two rhimes, there results another stave, which is also to be met with in that poem.

This *latter* is an important stanza. King James recommends it for the "description of heroique actis and martial and knictly faittis of armis," &c. It was used by Dunbar in his Golden Targe, and also by Gawin Douglas in his Palice of Honour.

O reverend Chaucere, rose of Rethoris all,
As in oure tong ane flour imperial,
That raise in Britane evir, quha reidis richt,
Thou beris of makaris the tryumph ryall;
Thy freche annamallit termes celicall
This mater coud illumynit have full brycht;
Was thou noucht of our inglisch all the lycht,
Surmounting every tong terrestriall
Als fer as Mayis morrow dois midnycht?

O morale Gower, and Lydgait laureat,
Your sugarit lippis, and tongis aureat,
Bene to our eiris cause of grit delyte;
Your angel mouthis most mellifluate
Our rude language hes cleir illuminat,
And fair ourgilt our speche, that imperfyte
Stude or your goldin pennis schup to wryte;
This yle befoir wes bair, and dissolate
Of rethorik, or lusty fresche indyte.

Golden Targe.

Douglas, when his dreamer is once fairly started on his journey, changes his metre to one which is modelled on another variety of the ballet-stave of seven.

Ouir mony gudlie plane we raid bidene,
Ouir waters wan, throw worthie woddis grene,
And swa, at last, on lifting up our ene,

---

[*] Univ. Lib. A. B. 8. 48.

[†] See p. 362.

> We se the final end of our travail,
> Amid ane plane a plesand roche to waill;
> And everie wicht fra we that sicht had sene
> Thankand greit God their hedis law devaill;
> With singing, lauching, merines and play
> Unto this roche we rydand furth the way.
>
> *Palice of Honour.*

We now come to two metrical forms, once famous in our poetry, to wit the *roundle* and the *virelay*. These are always coupled with the ballet by our older poets;

> And many an hympne for your holy daies,
> That highten *balades, roundels, virelaies.*
>
> Prol. to the Legend of Goode Women.

The former of these metrical contrivances is claimed by Boileau as a countryman born, *né Gaulois*. It is as thoroughly French in spirit as in origin; one of those ingenious trifles, which only a Frenchman could have hit upon, and which no one but a Frenchman would have sought for.

The roundle is a short poem of not more than three staves. It admits only two rhimes; and repeats the whole or part of the opening couplet as a burthen. From these repetitions it takes its name.

In the earlier roundles the burthen consisted of the first couplet, or at least of the first verse; but it gradually dwindled to the opening hemistich, and at last shrunk to the two first words. It was repeated at the end both of the second and third staves, but was often incorporated, as it were, into the second, especially in the older roundles.

Marot, who has been called King of the Roundelay, chiefly used the roundle of thirteen verses. This quickly superseded the others; and seems to be the only kind of roundle, which has survived in the recollection of our neighbours. The following, which was made on the meeting of Henry and Francis in the *Champ d'Or*, may serve as an example.

De deux grans rois[*] : la noblesse et puissance
Veue en ce lieu : nous donne connoissance,
Qu' amitié prend : courage de lyon,
Pour ruer jus : vielle rebellion
Et mettre sus : de paix l'esjouissance.

Soit en beauté : scavoir et countenance
Les anciens : n'ont point de souvenance,
D'avoir onc veu : si grand' perfection
De deux grans roys ;
Et la festin : la pompe, et l'assistance,
Surpasse en bien : le triumphe et prestance,
Qui fut jadis : sur le mont Pelyon ;
Car dela vint : la guerre d'Ilyon,
Et de ceci : vient paix et alliance
De deux grans roys.

There are not many English roundles written on this model. Cotton has left us a very ungallant one in verses of four accents; which, however, somewhat varies the order of the rhimes.[†]

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 woes 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 !

The roundle of ten verses was used both by Chartier and by Marot. The latter wrote the following against Mathieu de Vaucelles, who had assumed the title of "poete champestre." The burthen, it will be seen, is incorporated into the second stave.

---

[*] I mark the middle pause as an illustration of the rule in p. 234.

[†] He gives the couplet, in the second stave, to the second rhime instead of the first; and makes the rhimes change places in the third stave.

Qu'on mene aux champs ce coquardeau,
Lequel gaste, quand il compose,
Raison, mesure, texte et glose,
Soit en balade soit en rondeau.

Il n'a cerveille ne cerveau,
C'est pourquoi si haut crier j'ose,
Qu'on mene aux champs ce coquardeau.

S'il veut rien faire de nouveau,
Qu'il œuvre hardiment en prose;
(J'entens s'il en scait quelque chose)
Car en rithme ce n'est qu'un veau,[1]
Qu'on mene aux champs.

On *this* model were written several English roundles; two of a very early date are given by Ritson. One of them was made by Lidgate on the coronation of Henry the Sixth. The burthen, which clearly consisted of the first verse, seems to have been omitted by the blundering transcriber.

Rejoice ye reames of England and of Fraunce!
A braunche that sprang oute of the floure de lys,
Blode of seint Edward and seint Lowys,
God hath this day sent in governaunce.

God of nature hath yoven him suffisaunce
Likly to atteyne to grete honure and pris.

O hevenly blossome, o budde of all plesaunce
God graunt the grace for to ben als wise,
As was thi fader, by circumspect advise,
Stable in vertue withoute variaunce.

Three roundles of another form were published by Bishop Percy from a Pepysian MS. which ascribed them to Chaucer. One of them is the following.

---

[1] A pun on the name of *Vau*celles.

Youre two eyn will sle me sodenly
I may the beaute of them not sustene,
So wendeth it thorowout my herte kene.

And but your words will helen hastely
My hertes wound, while that it is grene,
Youre two eyn will sle me sodenly.

Upon my trouth I say yow feithfully,
That ye ben of my liffe and deth the quene,
For with my deth the trouth shall be sene.
Youre two eyn, &c.

Douglas, in his Prologue to the Eneid, mentions the name of "roundalis;" and Ruddiman, like a true Scotchman, will have the "roundal" to be something different from the English roundle or French rondeau. He tells us it was used for raillery, and consisted of eight verses, whereof the two last corresponded with the two first, and also the fourth with the first. He had, probably, never read Le Jardin de Plaisance—the French *Ars Poetica* of the fifteenth century.

Ainsi se font *communs* rondeaulx,
Ne plus ne moins que cestuy ci,
Tant de vont que de vont deaux,
Ainsi se font communs rondeaulx.

Plusieurs gentils et mains bourdeaux
Faillent silz ne font par tel cy,
Ainsi se font communs rondeaulx
Ne plus ne moins que cestuy ci.

We have seen that the application of this trifle to the purposes of raillery is not peculiar to the Scotch.

The virelay takes its name from the peculiarities of its formation—the *veering lay*. In French virelay never contained more than two rhimes, one of which was made to lead at the beginning, and the other at the end of the poem. In the English virelay, one, at least, of the rhimes always changed its place, but the number of rhimes was generally more than two.*

Gascoyne tells us he never saw but one song, that was "by authoritie called *verlay*, and that was a long discourse in verses," such as he had himself used in one of his poems—The Voyage into Holland.

> The winde waxt calme, as I have said before,
> O mightie God, so didst thou swage our woes!
> The silly ship was sowst and smitten sore
> Wyth counter buffets, blowes, and double blowes;
> At last the keele, which might endure no more,
>
> Gan rend in twaine, and let the water in—
> Then might you see pale looks, and woful cheare,
> Then might you heare loud cryes, and deadly dinne!
> Well! noble minds in peril best appear,
> And boldest harts in bale will never blinne!
>
> For there were some (of whom I will not say
> That I was one) that nevyr changed hue, &c.

The critic most probably overlooked the change in the rhimes.

Cotton has left us "a virelay," in which he uses a stave similar to Gascoyne's, save only that he *breaks* two of the verses.

> Thou cruel fair, I go,
> To seek out any fate but thee;
> Since there is none can wound me so,
> Nor that has half thy cruelty,
> Thou cruel fair, I go.
>
> For ever then farewell!
> 'Tis a long leave I take; but oh!
> To tarry with thee here is hell,
> And twenty thousand hells to go—
> For ever then farewell!

---

* I suspect the ballet in p. 312 was meant for a Virelay.

Here the governing rhime of the one stave becomes the intermediate rhime of the other; and in a French virelay the secondary rhime would in like manner have been changed into the primary. I incline to think that even in the English song, the change of the secondary rhime into the primary would have been more correct.

This favourite combination of the virelay may take its name from the poem—the *virelay-stave.*

In like manner I would give the title of *roundle-stave* to the combination,

1
1
2
2
1

inasmuch as it twice appears in the common roundle* of thirteen verses. Dunbar not unfrequently uses it, and, among other instances, in his Winter-Meditation,

I am assayit on every side,
Dispair sayis ay, " In tyme provyde
" And get sum thyng quhairon to leif.
" Or with gret tronble and mischeif
" Thow sall into this court abyde. &c.

And than sayis Age, " My friend cum neir
" And be not strange, I the requeir,
" Cum brudir, by the hand me tak,
" Remember thow hes compt to mak
" Of all the tyme thow spendit heir.

Syne Deid casts up his yettis wyd,
Saying, " Thir oppin sall ye byd,
" Albeid that yow wer never so stout,
" Undir this lyntall sall thow lout;
" Thair is nane uthir way besyd, &c.

The final verse in this stave is never found repeated as a burthen, the *three* rhimes throwing difficulties in the way of such an arrangement; but in the roundle-stave with *interwoven* rhime the burthen was almost universal.

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* See p. 366.

This variety of the roundle-stave was chiefly patronized by Dunbar, who wrote in it nearly one-third of his poems. The following staves are taken from one of the many "complaints" which, in his old age, he addressed to his sovereign:

Schir, yit remembir as of befoir,
How that my growth is done forloir,
In your service with pane and greif,
Gud consciens cryis, *reward* thairfoir;
Excess of thocht[1] dois me mischeif, &c.

May nane remeid my malady,
Sa weill as ye, Schir, veraly;
For with a *benefice* ye may preif;
Gif that I mend nocht hestely;
Excess of thocht dois me mischeif.

I wes on yowth, on nureis kne,[2]
Call'd "dandely, *Bishop*, dandily!"
And quhen that ege[3] now dois me greif,
Ane semple *vicar* I can nocht be;
Excess of thocht dois me mischeif, &c.

I do not profess to give every variety of ballet-stave, that may be found in our poetry, for the number would rather confuse the reader than enlighten him; but when a particular combination has been adopted by any poet of *name*, I shall always notice it, though at the risk of some inconvenience. A certain class of staves were formed by prefixing a *couplet* to some of the ballet stanzas; and one of these, fashioned on the interwoven roundle-stave, was often used by the Scotch poet, whom we have so often quoted, as in his Tydings fra the Session.

---

[1] Anxiety.
[2] Nurse's knee.
[3] Age.

Ane muirlandis man of uplandis mak
At hame thus to his nychbour spak,
Quhat tydings, Gossep ? peax or weir ?
Tha tother rounit in his eir,
I tell yow this under confessioun,
But laitly lichtit of my meir,
I come of Edinburgh fra the Sessioun.

Quhat tydingis hard ye thair, I pray you ?
The tother answerit, I shall say yow ;
Keep this all secreit, gentill brother,
Is na man thair that trestis ane uther ;
Ane common doer of transgressioun,
Of innocent folkis prevenis a futher.[1]
Sic tydingis hard I at the Sessioun, &c.

Religious men of divers placis
Cum thair to wow, and se fair facis,
Baith Carmelites and Cordelleris, &c.

There is also a curious stave, which should be noticed, if it were only for the celebrity it once possessed throughout Europe—I mean the *Sestino-stave,* invented by Arnaud Daniel, the Troubadour eulogised by Dante and Petrarch. The stave consisted of six verses, which had no rhime, but the same final syllables were used in all the staves; and the order was so regulated, that each of the final syllables, in its turn, closed the stanza. Spenser has left us an example.

Ye wasteful woods bear witnesse of my woe,
Wherein my plaints did oftentimes resound :
Ye careless birds are privy to my cryes,
Which, in your songs, were wont to make a part ;
Thou pleasant spring hast lull'd me oft asleep,
Whose streames my trickling tears did oft augment.

---

[1] A *fother,* a cart-load, a great number.

Resort of people doth my grief augment,
The walled towns do work me greater woe,
The forest wide is fitter to resound
The hollow echo of my careful cryes;
I hate the house, since thence my love did part,
Whose wailful want debars my eyes of sleep. &c.

Of course these changes would be exhausted with the sixth stave, and then came the *Envoi* of these verses, containing all the six syllables.

And you that feel no *woe*, when as the *sound*
Of these my nightly *cryes*, ye hear a*part*,
Let break your sounder *sleep*, and pity 'aug*ment*.

Celebrity was cheaply purchased, when an invention such as this could ensure it!

The ballet-staves sometimes took, over and above their regular consonances, a quantity of jingle, in the shape of middle rhime, sectional rhime, interwoven rhime, &c. The following interwoven roundle-stave was written by Sir James English, secretary to Queen Margaret, about the year 1513:

Sic pryd with *prellatis*, so few till preiche and pray,
Sic hant of *harlottis* with thame bayth nicht and day,
That sowld have *ay* thair God afore thair ene,
So nice arr*ay*, so strange to thair abbay,
Within this land was nevir hard nor sene.

Douglas, in like manner, deluges with sectional rhime the three last stanzas of his "Palice of Honour,* containing the poet's address to that Divinity.

O hie Hon*our*, sweet hevinlie *flour*, digest!
Gem verteu*ous*, maist preci*ous*, gudliest
For hie ren*oun*, thou art guerd*oun*, &c.

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* See p. 365.

This impertinence, however, was not confined to the north of the Tweed. We had already set them the example; for stanzas, precisely similar to the one last quoted, were used in the romance of Annelida and Arcite.

The Italian staves were first brought into the country by the young Englishmen, who visited Italy in the first half of the sixteenth century. Surrey attempted to naturalize the banded three-lined staves of Dante; but, though he had several imitators, these foreign combinations hardly survived him.

The sunne hath twise brought forth his tender greene,
Twise clad the earth in lively lustinesse,
Ones have the windes the trees despoiled clene,

And ones again begins their cruelnesse—
Sins I have had under my breast the harm,
That neuer shall recover healthfulnesse.

The winters hurt recouers with the warme,
The parched greene restored is with shade,
What warmth alas! may serve for to disarm

A frozen hart, &c.?

The Italian stave of eight (the celebrated *ottava rima*) had better fortune. From the days of Surrey to those of Byron it has flourished in our poetry. Spenser wrote in it two of his poems, the Muiopotmos and Virgil's Gnat. From the former of these are taken the following stanzas:

The woods, the rivers, and the meadows green,
With his air-cutting wings he measur'd wide,
Ne did he leave the mountains bare unseen,
Nor the rank grassie fens delights untryde;
But none of these, however sweet they been,
Mote please his fancy, or him cause t' abide,
His choiceful sense with ev'ry change doth flit,
No common things can please a wav'ring wit. &c.

What more felicity can fall to creature
Than to enjoy delight with liberty;
And to be Lord of all the works of Nature,
To reign in th' air from earth to highest sky,
To feed on flow'rs and weeds of glorious feature,
To take whatever thing doth please the eye,
Who rests not pleased with such happiness,
Well worthy he to taste of wretchedness.

But of all the importations from Italy the most important was certainly the Sonnet. This celebrated stanza is said to have been invented by the Sicilians; but to Petrarch it owes its celebrity, and to his works should we look for its peculiarities of structure.

"The Petrarchian stanza,"—to use the language of Milton—may be considered as made up of the ballet-stave of eight with close rhime,* and of two triplets. The ballet-stave has never more than two rhimes, and the triplets generally the same number, but sometimes they have three. In the ballet-stave the poet opens and illustrates his subject, which is wound up in the triplets with some striking thought or expression. All *conceit,* however, should be avoided, for one of the chief beauties of the sonnet lies in its repose and dignity.

These rules agree in substance with those which Boileau has given us, both as to the management of the metre and of the subject. He required,

qu'en deux quatrains de mesure pareille
La rime avec deux sons frappât huit fois l'oreille,
Et qu'ensuite six vers artistement rangés
Fussent en deux tercets par le sens partagés.

In the triplets the rhime was variously managed. Sometimes Petrarch uses two of Dante's staves, as in Milton's sonnet:

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* See p. 358.

When faith and love which parted from thee never,
Had ripen'd thy just soul, to dwell with God,
Meekly thou did'st resign this earthly load
Of death call'd life, which us from life doth sever.
Thy works and alms, and all thy good endeavour
Staid not behind, nor in the grave were trod;
But, as Faith pointed with her golden rod,
Follow'd thee up to bliss and joy for ever.
Love led them on, and Faith, who knew them best,
Thy handmaids, clad them o'er with purple beams,
And azure wings, that up they flew so drest,
And spake the truth of thee on glorious themes
Before the Judge; who thenceforth bade thee rest,
And drink thy fill of pure immortal streams.

Sometimes he uses the same terminations in the second as in the first triplet. The Sonnet to Cyriack Skinner is written upon this model.

Occasionally Milton makes of the two triplets a ballet-stave of six; and in one sonnet he disposes of the rhimes in a way which defies my powers of classification.

Lawrence! of virtuous father virtuous son,
Now that the fields are dank, and ways are mire,
Where shall we sometimes meet, and by the fire
Help waste a sullen day, that may be won
From the hard season gaining? Time will run
On smoother, till Favonius re-inspire
The frozen earth, and clothe in fresh attire
The lilly' and rose, that neither sow'd nor spun.
What neat repast shall feast us, light and choice,
Of Attic taste, with wine, whence we may rise
To hear the lute well touch'd, or artful voice
Warble in mortal notes, and Tuscan air?
He who of those delights can judge, and spare
To interpose them oft, is not unwise.

In the sixteenth century, many of the Italians ventured to alter the structure of the sonnet, and were of course followed by their imitators in this country. The object of all these changes was greater facility. Some of these new sonnets were divided into four parts—to wit, three interwoven staves of four verses, and a couplet—no two of which had any metrical connexion between them. It was in this loose stanza that Spenser wrote his Visions of Bellay, and Shakespeare his singular, and, till lately, almost incomprehensible* sonnets. When the structure of the Sonnet had been thus trifled with, further change was to be expected. "The Sonnet" increased in length; its interwoven staves became four, five, and at last six; and in one of these poems, written by Surrey, during his imprisonment at Windsor, we have no less than *twelve* such staves—the whole, however, carefully shut in with the final couplet! He thus passes in review the pleasures of his happier days:

——The gravel-ground[1] wyth sleves tied on the helme
On foming horse, with swordes and frendly hartes:
Wyth chere as though one should another whelme,
Where we have fought, and chased oft with dartes, &c.

The wylde forest, the clothed holts with grene,
With raynes avayled,[2] and swift ybreathed horse,
With crye of houndes, and many blastes betwene,
Where we did chase the fearful hart of force, &c.

Eccho, alas! that doth my sorrow rewe,
Returns thereto a hollow sounde of playnt;
Thus I alone, where all my freedom grewe,
In pryson pine, with bondage and restraint.
And with remembrance of the greater greefe
To banish th' lesse, I find my chief reliefe.

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* Mr. Boaden has shown very convincingly, I think, that the W. H., to whom the sonnets are addressed, was William Herbert, afterwards Earl of Pembroke, the gifted son of a most gifted mother. It is only when addressed to a man like this—the most accomplished and high-minded nobleman of his day—that we can tolerate some of the expressions found in these sonnets, coming as they do from Shakespeare.

[1] The tilt-yard.

[2] Lower'd, loosened.

In these interwoven staves the reader has doubtless already recognised one of the most important of our metrical forms—I mean the Elegiac stave. The final couplet was quickly lost; and the Sonnet, at the same time that, chiefly by Milton's aid, it recovered its original form, had the honour of giving to our poetry one of its most useful and elegant stanzas. Simplicity is not always a proof of antiquity. The Elegiac stave, and that in which our common ballads are written,* though the simplest of their respective classes, were also the last invented. They, both of them, rose out of the ruins of older and more intricate combinations.

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* See p. 316.

CHAPTER VI.

BROKEN STAVES.

The royal critic, whom we have so often quoted, seems to have given the name of "cuttit or broken verse" to all such staves, as contained verses of unequal length. The name is not an ill-chosen one; but, if applied thus comprehensively, it will bring together staves of different origin, which have been used for very different purposes, and are, consequently, connected with very different associations. I would restrict it to a class of staves, which made their first appearance in our poetry about the middle of the sixteenth century, and had no small influence in giving that lyrical turn to our poetry, which soon afterwards began to show itself.

As the sixteenth century advanced, Frenchman, Italian, and Spaniard, were all alike aiming at novelty of metre, and anxious to relieve themselves from the monotony of their *chansons* and *ballades*. The new-found freedom was obtained by the shortening of certain verses, which was effected by lessening the number of their accents. The staves, that resulted from the application of this principle to the older combinations, I would call the *broken staves*.

This class of staves was probably first brought to England with the Psalms of Marot; and some of the varieties seem to have passed, with the sanction of the great Genevese reformer, from the pages of the French poet, into every corner of Europe, whither Calvinism penetrated.

But the broken stave was not applied solely to devotional exercises; our poets, imitating the Italians, used it for general purposes, and we find it at the same time embodying the quaint conceits and elaborate piety of our "metaphysical poets," and the light and airy lyrics of our dramatists.

The broken staves may be divided into two classes, accordingly as the broken verses have, or have not, the same number of accents. To the former of these classes I shall confine myself, as the latter branches out into such infinite variety, as almost to baffle any attempt at arrangement. The broken verse has generally two accents; but sometimes has three, when the original verse has five, and, in a few cases, even when the original verse has four accents. We have already observed that simplicity of structure is not always a proof of antiquity; some of the oldest broken staves are also the most complicated.

It may, I think, be convenient to range these staves according to the original staves, on which they were modelled, beginning with such as rhime continuously.

The following "madrigal" made its first appearance in the Miscellany, called England's Helicon. Robert Greene is said to have been the author.

It was a vallie gawdie greene,
Where Dian at the fount was seene;
    Greene it was,
    And did surpass
All other of Dianaes bowers,
In the pride of Floraes flowers.

A fount it was, that no man sees,
Cirkled in with cipres trees,
    Set so nie,
    That Phœbus' eye
Could not do the virgins scathe,
To see them naked, when they bathe.

Hard by her, upon the ground,
Sate her virgins in a round,
        Bathing their
        Golden hair,
And sing|ing all | in not|es hie|
Fie on Venus' flattering eye, &c.

The song of "Amphion" was written by Sherburne at the time when Charles was struggling with his Parliament.

Foreign customs from your land,
Thebans, by fair laws command,
And your good old rites make known
                Unto your own.

Banish vice, walls guard not crimes,
Vengeance o'er tall bulwarks climbs,
O'er each sin a Nemesis
                Still waking is.

Truth-resembling craft, prophane
Thirst of empire, and of gain,
Luxury and idle ease,
                Banish all these.

War or peace do you approve—
With *united* forces move;
Courts which many columns rear
                Their fall less fear.

Safer course those pilots run
Who observe more stars than one,
Ships with double anchor ti'd
                Securer ride.

Strength *united* firm doth stand,
Knit in an eternal band;
But proud subjects' private hate
                Ruins a state!

Even the three-lined stave, in verses of five accents, was occasionally broken; as in the complimentary letter sent to "old Ben" by the friendly painter, Sir William Burlase.

To paint thy worth, if rightly I did know it,
And were but painter halfe like thee a poet,
Ben, I would show it.

But, in this skill, my unskilful pen will tire,
Thou and thy worth will still be found farre higher,
And I a lier, &c.

The Psalm-staves were broken almost as freely as those with continuous rhime. Ben Jonson's Epitaph on one of the boys of Queen Elizabeth's chapel, may serve as a specimen:

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

'Twas a child, that so did thrive,
In grace and feature,
As Heaven and Nature seem'd to strive,
Which own'd the creature, &c.

His verses against Rhime may furnish another example:

Rime, the rack of finest wits,
That expresseth but by fits
True conceits,
Spoiling senses of their treasure,
Cosening judgment with a measure,
But false weight,

Wresting words from their true calling,
Propping verse for fear of falling
To the ground,
Jointing syllabes, drowning letters,
Fasting vowels, as with fetters
They were bound, &c.

He, that first invented thee,
May his joints tormented be,
Cramp'd for ever!
Still may syllabes jarre with time,
Still may reason warre with rime
Resting never, &c.

The next specimen is taken from Donne's version of the 137th Psalm:

And thou Babel, when the tide
Of thy pride,
Now a flowing, grows to turning,
Victor now shall then be thrall,
And shall fall
To as low an ebb of mourning.

This stave was used by Marot, and may be found in the songs of every Protestant people in Europe. Gysbert Japicx, for example, thus sings his country's triumph over the Jesuit and Spaniard:

Lit| uwʒ nu | reys fro|lick sjong|e
Ad' | in jong|e
Oer | de wol|faert fen | uwʒ lân|
Hulst | mey schans|sen buwt|te-wirc|ken
Huwʒ|en, tjerck|en
Falt | siin Heag|heit ijn|ne hân|.

Let us now right cher'ly sing,
Old and young,
O'er the wel-fare of our land!
Hulst, with bulwarks! and with out-works!
Houses! churches!
Fall'n is in his Highness'[*] hand, &c.

I quote from this old Friesish poet, to show the *real* rhythm of the stanza, which, as usual, is slurred over in the slovenly versification of our countryman. In every language but our own, it always lengthens the first, second, fourth, and fifth verses, and closes the third and sixth with an accented syllable. Hence the origin of this somewhat complicated stave is obvious. Its original stave was clearly formed from two rhiming trochaic tetrameters,* by interweaving a rhime and *repeating* the first sections. By *breaking* the repeated sections we have the stave before us.

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[*] Prince Henry, the first member of the House of Orange, that took the title of Highness.

The broken staves, fashioned on the different combinations of the ballet-stave, were perhaps more popular with the foreigner than with our countrymen; but the number of their varieties, to be found in English literature, is singularly great. The interwoven stave of four had generally its last verse shortened, as in the following example from Herbert—" the *good* George Herbert," as he is still fondly called by many of our countrymen:

Sweet day! so calm, so cool, so bright,
The bridal of the earth and sky,
The dew shall weep thy fall to night,
For thou must die.

In this stave Pope made his first essay in versification, (the Ode to Solitude,) and poor Byron his last,

'Tis time this heart should be unmov'd
Since others it has ceas'd to love, &c.

It was, perhaps, the most popular of our broken staves, but owed its popularity to a rather singular influence. The beautiful song, from which I first quoted, was inserted and eulogised in Isaac Walton's Angler!

The ballet-stave of five was broken in different ways—sometimes in the first and third verses:

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.

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* See p. 182.

Tell her that 's young
And shuns to have her graces spied,
That, Had'st thou sprung
In deserts, where no men abide,
Thou must have uncommended died, &c.
Waller.

Sometimes we have only the first verse shortened;

The great decree of God
Makes every path of mortals lead
To this dark common period,
For what by-ways so-ere we tread
We end our journey 'mong the dead.
Habington.

The poet, from whom I last quoted, generally prefers the ballet-stave with *close* rhime. Many of his songs display an elegance fully equal to their piety.

Domine labia mea aperies.

Noe monument of me remaine,
My memorie rust,
In the same marble with my dust,
Ere I the spreading laurel gaine
By writing wanton or prophane, &c.

Open my lippes great God! and then
Ile soare above
The humble flight of carnal love—
Upward to thee I'le force my pen,
And trace no path of vulgar men! &c.

Vias tuas Domine demonstra mihi.

My God! if thou shalt not exclude
Thy comfort thence,
What place can seem to troubled sense
So melancholy, dark, and rude,
To be esteem'd a solitude?

Cast me upon some naked shore,
Where I may tracke
Onely the print of some sad wracke,
If thou be there—though the seas roare,
I shall no gentler calme implore, &c.

Shakespeare, in the following song, seems to have had in view the virelay-stave,*

Who is Sylvia ? what is she
That all our swains commend her ?
Holy, fair, and wise is she,
The Heav'ns such grace did lend her,
That she might admired be.

Is she kind as she is fair,
For beauty lives with kindness ?
Love doth to her eyes repair,
To help him of his blindness,
And being help'd inhabits there, &c.
Two Gent. of Verona, s. 2.

Many broken staves have been fashioned on the common elegiac stave. One variety was used by Sir William Jones ;

What constitutes a state ?
Not high-rais'd battlement or labour'd mound,
Thick wall or moated gate,
Not cities proud with spire and turret crown'd—
No—men, high-minded men, &c.

Another variety has been used by Briant, the American poet. His "Address to a Water-fowl," opens with the following staves,

Whither mid'st falling dew,
While glow the heav'ns with the last steps of day,
Far through their rosy depth dost thou pursue
Thy solitary way ?

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* See p. 370.

Vainly the fowler's eye
Might mark thy distant flight to do thee wrong,
As darkly painted on the crimson sky
Thy figure floats along.

Seek'st thou the plashy brink
Of weedy lake, or marge of river wide,
Or where the rocking billows rise and sink
On the chaf'd ocean's side? &c.

This is a very sweet and, at the same time, a truly American picture.

The original of the following stave, which is taken from one of Herbert's poems, was probably the elegiac stave, with the first and third verses doubled.

I made a nosegay, as the day ran by—
Here will I smell my remnant out and tye
My life within this band—
But time did beckon to the flowers, and they
By noon most cunningly did steal away,
And wither'd in my hand, &c.

In the original of the next stave, the first and third verses must have been *tripled.*

All gracious God, the sinner's sacrifice
A broken heart thou wert not wont despise,
But 'bove the fat of rammes or goats to prize
An offring meet.
For thy acceptance, O behold me right,
And take compassion on my grievous plight,
What odour can be, than a heart contrite
To thee more sweet, &c.
Ben Jonson.

The same fondness for jingle, which frittered our ballet-staves into shapeless heaps of rhime, also affected our broken staves, though not to the same degree. The original of the following stave seems to belong to that class of ballet-staves, which were formed by adding a couplet to some one of the ordinary combinations. In the present case, the couplet is *subjoined* to the ballet-stave of six. Its first verse is not only broken, but also takes internal rhime.

> If thou beest born to see strange sights,
> Things invisible to see,
> Ride ten thousand daies and nights,
> Till age snow white hairs on thee—
> Thou, when thou return'st, wilt tell me
> All strange wonders that befell thee ;
> And sweare,
> No where
> Lives a woman true and fair.
> *Beaumont.*

In the following stave, from Turberville, the fifth and sixth verses are broken, and the first section of the seventh verse rhimes with them.

> If she had dained my good will,
> And recompenst me with her love,
> I would have been her vassal still
> And never once my heart remove ;
> I did pretend, pretend,
> To be her friend,
> Unto the *end*, but she refusde
> My loving heart, and me abusde.

The repetition in the fifth line is a peculiarity often found in the broken verse of the sixteenth century.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SPENSER-STAVES.

The noble stanza which we owe to Spenser, is formed by adding an alexandrine to the ballet-stave of eight—such alexandrine rhiming with the last verse of the ballet-stave. By this *banding* of the rhime, Spenser's stanza has all that connexion of parts which science demands, and which is so seldom to be met with in our later combinations. The sweeping length of the alexandrine furnishes also an imposing compass of sound, that to many ears is singularly delightful, and must, I think, convey to every one an impression of grandeur and of dignity.

When to these advantages of structure are added the associations, which Spenser's genius conferred upon it, we may understand the enthusiasm, that sees so many excellencies in Spenser's stanza, and pronounces it to be the most beautiful, as well as the most perfect of English combinations. Warton's notice of this stanza is almost the only exception to the eulogies of our critics; and *his* unfavourable judgment will the less surprise us, when we remember the loose notions he entertained on the subject of versification,* and that he has, in this very criticism, confounded our common ballet-stave of eight with the *ottava rima* of the Italians. His objection to the multiplicity of rhimes—because our language does not "easily fall into a frequent repetition of the same termination"—may be met by the criticism of Beattie, who maintains that our language, "from its irregularity of inflexion, and number of monosyllables, abounds in diversified terminations, and consequently renders our poetry susceptible of an endless variety of legitimate rhimes." The advantages of *variety* may be best estimated, by considering at what cost they have, in many cases, been purchased; and when we call to mind how many poets have used this stanza, that it has embodied the happiest inventions of Shenstone and Thomson, of Beattie and of Byron, we may well doubt, if the difficulties of its construction be quite so formidable, as Warton apprehended.

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* He, more than once, runs the verses of our older poets one into the other, and sometimes makes the fragment of a line stand for the whole. In other cases, he writes a long passage *continuously*—apparently unaware that it divides itself into beautiful and scientific stanzas. Many of these oversights Price has *not* corrected.

The popularity of this stanza soon gave rise to numerous imitations. All of them were formed on one or other of two principles; either, as in Spenser's stanza, by *adding* an alexandrine to some well-known combination (generally to one of the ballet-staves), or by the *substitution* of such alexandrine for the last verse of the stanza. Such imitations I would class (together with Spenser's own stanza) under the general title of *Spenser-staves*—thus giving to these peculiarly English combinations the name of the great English poet, who first brought the principle into notice, on which they have been constructed.

The first class of Spenser-staves may best open with the stanza, which gave rise to all the others—the magnificent stanza, which the Faery Queen has immortalized. It is hard to choose, where choice is distracted by such varied excellence; but the following well-known imitation of the Italian has claims upon our notice, as affording the means, not only of comparing the two languages in a point wherein our own is generally thought deficient—I mean in point of harmony—but also of comparing the capabilities of the two favourite stanzas.

> Eftsoons they heard a most delicious sound
> Of all that mote delight a dainty ear,
> Such as at once might not on living ground
> (Save in this Paradise) be heard elsewhere;
> Right hard it was for wight that did it hear
> To rede what manner music that mote be,
> For all, that pleasing is to living ear,
> Was there consorted in one harmony—
> Birds, voices, instruments, winds, waters all agree.
>
> The joyous birds, shrouded in chearful shade,
> Their notes unto the voice attemper'd sweet;
> Th' angelical, soft trembling voices made
> Toth' instruments divine respondence meet;
> The silver-sounding instruments did meet
> With the hoarse murmur of the waters' fall,
> The waters' fall, with difference discreet,
> Now soft, now loud, unto the wind did call—
> The gentle, warbling wind low answered to all.

Phineas Fletcher, in his very singular poem, entitled The Purple Island, has used a Spenser-stave, fashioned on the ballet-stave of six verses.

> The cheerful lark, mounting from early bed,
> With sweet salutes awakes the drowsy night.
> The earth she left and up to heav'n is fled,
> There chants her Maker's praises out of sight—
> Earth seems a mole-hill, men but ants to be,
> Teaching proud men, that soar to high degree,
> The further up they climb, the less they seem and see.
>
> *Canto IX.*

Giles Fletcher, " the Spenser of his age," as Quarles termed him, has left us another kind of Spenser-stave in the poem which celebrates Christ's Triumph upon Earth.

Her tent with sunny clouds was ceil'd aloft,
And so exceeding shone with a false light,
That Heav'n itself to her it seemed oft—
Heav'n without clouds to her deluded sight;
But clouds withouten heav'n it was aright,
And as her house was built, so did her brain
Build castles in the air, with idle pain,
But heart she never had in all her body vain.

Like as a ship, in which no ballance[1] lies,
Without a pilot on the sleeping waves
Fairly along with wind and water flies,
And painted masts with silken sails embraves,
That Neptune's self the bragging vessel saves
To laugh awhile at her so proud array,
Her waving streamers loosely she lets play,
And flagging colours shine, as bright as smiling day;

——Right so *Presumption* did herself behave, &c.

In this stave (and the remark applies also to the one preceding it) the final rhime runs continuously through the three last verses. This jingling was avoided, and another more convenient stave formed on the ballet-stave of seven, by substituting an alexandrine for the last verse of the stanza. Milton has used this Spenser-stave.

Yet can I not persuade me thou art dead,
Or that thy corse corrupts in earth's dark womb,
Or that thy beauties lie in wormy bed,
Hid from the world in a low delved tomb—
Could Heav'n for pity thee so strictly doom?
Oh no! for something in thy face did shine
Above mortality, that show'd thou wast divine.

Phineas Fletcher had preceded Milton in the use of this stanza some thirty years;[2] and in his Letter to his

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[1] Ballast.

[2] In his "Lamentacyon" for the death of Henry the Seventh's Queen, written in 1503, Sir Thomas More uses the ballet-stave of seven, and often

Cousin W. R., the same poet has given us another kind of Spenser-stave, similarly formed in the ballet-stave of *five* verses. Prior, in his Poem on the Campaign of 1706, has used a Spenser-stave, consisting of two elegiac staves and a couplet. The ballet-stave, which answers to this arrangement, had been used by Churchyard.

> When bright Eliza rul'd Britannia's state,
> Widely distributing her high commands,
> And boldly wise, and fortunately great,
> Freed the glad nation from tyrannic bands,
> An equal genius was in Spenser found,
> To the high theme he match'd his noble lays,
> He travell'd England o'er on fairy ground,
> In mystic notes to sing his monarch's praise—
> Reciting wondrous truths in pleasing dreams,
> He deck'd Eliza's head with Gloriana's beams.
>
> But greatest Anna! while thy arms pursue
> Paths of renown, and climb ascents of fame,
> Which nor Augustus, nor Eliza knew,
> What poet shall be found to sing thy praise?
> What numbers shall record, what tongue shall say
> Thy wars on land, thy triumphs on the main?
> O fairest model of imperial sway!
> What equal pen shall write thy wondrous reign?
> Who shall attempts, and feats of arms rehearse,
> Nor yet by story told, nor chronicled in verse?

Prior professed to follow Spenser "in the manner of his expression and turn of his number, having only added

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gives six accents to the last verse of the stanza. This verse always ends with the words "and lo now here she lies." It must have been often *convenient* to wedge this section into a verse of six accents; and as the poet's rhythm is in other respects loose, I consider the resemblance to the Spenser-stave owing rather to the tumbling rhythm of the period, than to any design of introducing novelty into English versification one verse to his stanza," which he thought "made the number more *harmonious*." Had he stated *facility* to be his aim, he had shown more honesty. He has escaped the difficulties of Spenser's stanza, but at the same time has sacrificed all its *science* and not a little of its beauty.

Prior's name gave to this stanza a certain degree of popularity. Among others, it was used by Lowth in his Choice of Hercules, and by Denton in his poem on the Immortality of the Soul.

We have a few instances, in which the Spenser-stave was fashioned on combinations other than the ballet-stave, as in Rochester's poem on *Nothing.*

Nothing, that dwell'st with fools in grave disguise,
For whom they rev'rend shapes and forms devise,
Lawn sleeves, and furs, and gowns, when they like thee look wise,
French truth, Dutch prowess, British policy,
Hibernian learning, Scotch civility,
Spaniards' dispatch, Danes' wit are mainly seen in thee! &c.

Occasionally we have even the Psalm-staves ending with an alexandrine, as in Warton's verses on the Suicide's Grave.

Beneath the beech, whose branches bare
Smit with the lightnings vivid glare
O'erhang the craggy road,
And whistle hollow, as they wave,
Within a solitary grave
A wretched suicide holds his accurs'd abode.

The *broken* stave was closed with an alexandrine at a very early period. The following intricate specimen was used by Spenser in his Epithalamion, written on the marriage of the two Ladies Somerset, daughters of Lord Worcester. It may be considered as compounded of a ballet-stave of 6, a peculiar ballet-stave of 5 with three terminations, another ballet-stave of 6, and a final couplet

—the first and second staves receiving *band* from the rhime. Each of the three staves breaks its last verse.

Open the Temple-gates unto my love !
Open them wide, that she may enter in,
And all the posts adorn, as doth behove,
And all the pillars deck with garlands trim,
For to receive this Saint with honour due,
That cometh in to you ;
With trembling steps and humble reverence
She cometh in before the Almighty's view—
Of her ye Virgins learn obedience,
When so ye come into these holy places,
To humble your proud faces.
Bring her up to th' High Altar, that she may
The varied ceremonies there partake
The which do endless matrimony make,
And let the roaring organs loudly play
The praises of the Lord with lively notes ;
The whiles with hollow throats
The Choristers the joyous anthem sing,
That all the woods may answer, and their echo ring, &c.

The stave which Cowley uses in his Ode to Light is of the same kind, but of greater simplicity. The original was doubtless Waller's stave, consisting of two rhiming couplets.* I quote the ode at some length, as it is one of the few cases, in which poetry has succeeded in throwing grace and beauty over the stern truths of science.

——All the world's brav'ry that delights our eyes
Is but thy sev'ral liveries,
Thou the rich dye on them bestow'st,
Thy nimble pencil paints this landscape as thou go'st.

A crimson garment in the rose thou wear'st,
A crown of studded gold thou bear'st—
The virgin lilies in their white
Are clad but in the lawn of almost naked light.

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* See p. 302.

The violet, Spring's little infant, stands
Girt in thy purple swaddling bands ;
On the fair tulip thou dost doat,
Thou cloth'st them in a gay, and party-colour'd coat, &c. &c.

Through the soft ways of heav'n and earth and sea,
Which open all their pores to thee,
Like a clear river thou dost glide,
And with thy living stream, through the close channels slide ;

But the vast ocean of unbounded day
In th' empyrean heav'n does stay ;
Thy rivers, lakes, and springs below,
From thence took first their rise, thither at last must flow.

It may be observed, before we close the chapter, that Chatterton has used the Spenser-staves, in the poems which he ascribed to Rowley. This anachronism would, of itself, be sufficient to prove the forgery, even though it had baffled every other test, which modern criticism has applied to it.

CHAPTER VIII.

In the present chapter it is intended briefly to review the history of our rhythms. But, instead of treating each rhythm separately, as heretofore, we shall more particularly endeavour to show the relation, which the several varieties bear to each other, as regards time and place. Perhaps this may be best done, and the dates and localities brought most satisfactorily before the reader, by laying before him a list of our early poets, accompanied with such slight sketches of their works, whether English, Latin, or Romance, as our very limited space will admit of. We shall thus be enabled to bring together those notices of our early literature, which have been scattered through the preceding pages, as they chanced to be suggested in the course of other inquiries.

English poetry, which naturally first claims our attention, may be traced to

THE FIFTH CENTURY.

The Gleeman was born of decent (perhaps noble) parentage among the Myrgings,—a Gothic race, dwelling on the marches, which separated the Engle from the Swefe during the fourth and fifth centuries. In early life he accompanied Ealhild, daughter of Eadwine Lord of the Myrgings, to the court of Eormanric, the celebrated King of the East-Goten. Here his skill on the harp appears to have gained him favour, and we find him rewarded with a costly *beigh* or armlet. He afterwards visited the great Lords of the East-Goten, and such of the Slavish and Finnish tribes to the eastward, as were subject to their rule.

It was probably after the death of Eormanric in 375, that the Gleeman returned to his native tribe, and obtained from Eadgils, successor and perhaps son of Eadwine, the land which had been holden by his father. We then find him in Italy with Ealfwine, another son of Eadwine, and probably one of the chiefs that followed Alaric in his inroad, A. D. 401; for the Gleeman's praises dwell chiefly on those suspicious virtues—his valour and liberality. From this period Gothic tribes, one after the other, gained a footing in the empire; and the Gleeman seems to have availed himself of the opportunity to wander through its provinces. Unless his story be interpolated, he reached, in his eastward progress, not only the Meads, but even the Hindoos.

The song,* which records these wanderings, must have been written in the poet's old age, for Ætla is mentioned as King of the Huns, and his accession dates only in 433.

Our claim to rank the Gleeman as an English poet, may be told in few words. The Myrgings, though not Engle in the fourth century, were a bordering tribe; the Gleeman's song is English, or, as we *now* choose to call it, Anglo-Saxon; and the introduction is written by an Englishman, who had not yet left the continent. Here, then, we have a poem written in English, prefaced by an Englishman, and preserved in an English MS.—the writer living on the borders of the continental Ongle, and his descendants probably joining in the invasion and settlement of this island—if the poem be not English, to what Gothic dialect, extinct or living, may we refer it?

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* See p. 78.

Besides the Gleeman's song, there are two others, which must date as early as the fifth century, I mean the Tale of Beowulf and the Fall of Finsburgh. The rhythms in these two poems are much shorter than those which are found in the Gleeman's song, and indeed have all those qualities, which, it has been elsewhere* conjectured, must have characterised the earliest rhythms of our language. But the lengthened and varied cadences of the Gleeman's song show a very matured system of versification, and will, perhaps, justify us in referring these short and abrupt rhythms, rather to the nature of the subject than to the earliness of the period. The sectional rhime† is found in all the three poems, and there are also traces of the unaccented rhime‡—a clear proof of the antiquity of these appendages; for the poems were, in all fair probability, written before the Engle left the continent. They are the most venerable relics of our early literature—the oldest original compositions, extant in any of the European languages which survived or superseded the Greek and Latin.

During the sixth century, our forefathers were probably too busy with the Welshman to think much of poetry; at least, no poem has come down to us which can, with any show of reason, be assigned to this period. But if their poetical genius were awhile controlled by the sterner energies which the times called into action, it soon after broke forth with redoubled lustre, for the brightest name of Anglo-Saxon poetry is to be met with in

THE SEVENTH CENTURY.

Cædmon was neat-herd to the monastery of Whitby, then lately founded by Hild, kinswoman to Edwin, King of Northumberland. One day, as he was seated at table, the harp approached him; when, conscious of his deficiencies, he stole from the company, and took refuge in the neat-house. Here, as he slept, some one, he thought, approached him, and bade him sing. Encouraged by the stranger he made the attempt, and sung a hymn, which was next day repeated in the monastery, to the admiration of all who heard it. By the advice of the Abbess he was shorn; and as the Scriptures were expounded to him, he turned them into the beautiful verse, which has immortalised his memory. The talent, which our ancestors attributed to the inspiration of heaven, will now rather be ascribed to the poetical temperament, which is so often found united to a sensitive and retiring nature. His honoured and peaceful end is related by Bede; and his body, we are told by Malmsbury, was found enshrined at Whitby, in the beginning of the twelfth century.*

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* See p. 70, and Vol. I. p. 175.

† See Vol. I. p. 125.

‡ See Vol. I. p. 144.

Only six of Cædmon's poems have reached us. The subject of the first is the Creation; that of the second, the Fall of Man, to which is tacked, rather inartificially, a narrative of the events recorded in Genesis to the offering of Isaac; the third—the most sublime, but at the same time the most difficult of his works—relates the flight from Egypt and the destruction of Pharaoh; the fourth contains the story of Daniel; and the Torments of the Damned, and Christ's Harrowing of Hell, followed by his Ascension and Glory, are the subjects of the other two. Others of his works we must have lost, for we are told by Bede, that he also wrote on our Lord's Incarnation and his Passion; as also on the Advent of the Holy Ghost, and the teaching of the Apostles. What remains, is equal in length to about one half of the Paradise Lost.

The eighth century produced no English poet, whose name has reached us, unless we may refer Aldhelm to this period. *Aldhelm,* nephew of Ina, King of the West-Sexe, was taught Latin at Malmesbury by Maildulf the Scot, and Greek Dialectics and Rhetoric at Canterbury, by Archbishop Theodore, and the celebrated Adrian, abbot of St. Austin's. He was shorn in Maildulf's monastery, of which he became the second abbot; and when the diocese of Winchester was divided A.D. 705, he was made first bishop of Shireburn. His abbot's robe, his psalter, and his silver altar, were long kept as relics at Malmesbury, and were shown to Leland, when he visited that monastery. He is said to have written many English songs, interspersed with notices of Scripture. One of these was still sung by the people, in the days of Malmsbury; and many of them are probably extant in the vast mass of devotional poetry, which lies unowned, and we may add unread, in our Anglo-Saxon MSS.

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* In p. 23, it is erroneously stated, that the body was found in the reign of John.

THE NINTH CENTURY

gave birth to one, who, though better known as a statesman and a warrior, must not be forgotten as a poet—for in *Alfred* these three splendid characters were united. This great man was born at the royal manor of Wantage, in Berkshire, A.D. 848. He was his father's darling child, but in youth received no other instruction than could be gleaned from the popular songs, of which so many specimens have been laid before the reader. His after-life made amends for the deficiency; but the difficulties he struggled with and surmounted, are too well known to be here repeated. He succeeded his brother Ethelbald in 872, and died in the year 900.

Of Alfred's English poetry the only relic Time has left us is the version* of Boethius' metres. In the twelfth century was extant a collection of Proverbs, and another of Fables, both of which were ascribed to him; but neither of these productions is mentioned in any list of Alfred's works, and they were probably only some of the many compilations, which were made by his order. The Cotton MS. of the proverbs perished* in the fire, which destroyed so many of our manuscript treasures; but from the introduction, which had been transcribed by Wanley, it appears to have been written in the same kind of verse as Layamon's History, and must therefore have been an Old English version of the original work. Of the fables we possess a translation, which was made by Marie, a Norman poetess, about the year 1200. No English copy of them has yet been discovered.

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* See p. 51.

THE TENTH CENTURY

produced the Brunanburgh War-song;† Edgar's Coronation-song; the two songs which commemorate the death of this monarch; and the splendid fragment which relates the defeat of the gallant Byrthnoth at Maldon, A. D. 993. To this century, too, I would refer the Tale of Judith, or, rather I should say, the *remains* of this magnificent poem. But no poet has left a name behind him, unless the somewhat doubtful case of Archbishop Wulfstan be an exception.

Wulfstan, better known by his Latin name of Lupus, was translated from Worcester ‡ to York in the year 1002, and died Archbishop in 1023; but as more than two-thirds of his life were spent before the year 1000, I have placed him in the tenth century. Upwards of fifty English homilies have been assigned to this prelate, and mixed up with these homilies in certain MSS. are found poetical paraphrases of the Lord's Prayer and the Doxology, which Wanley would ascribe to the same author. If this criticism be trustworthy, Wulfstan may claim to be considered as an English poet.

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* There is, I believe, a copy of this work still extant at Cambridge, in the University library.

† See p. 60.

‡ The reader will be careful not to confound this Bishop of Worcester with the *St.* Wulfstan, to whom we probably owe that portion of the Chronicle quoted in p. 149.

In these paraphrases the poet took some small portion of his original (the words *pater noster* for example), and amplified the sense in a certain number of alliterative couplets. Each of these divisions was considered complete in itself, and was always closed with a full couplet. As they sometimes contained only two or three couplets, we may readily understand the influence they exercised over the rhythm, and how much they contributed to make the middle pause subordinate to the final. Indeed to these paraphrases, and to the translation of such portions of Scripture as were divided into verses,* and perhaps, in some slight degree, to the introduction of final rhime, I would attribute the change in the relative importance of these two pauses, which led to the first great revolution in English versification.

The importance of this change can hardly be overrated. Not only did it enable our native rhythms to accommodate themselves to the flow of the different Latin "rhythmi," but it contained within itself the germ of almost every other change, which has since occurred in English versification. Had there been *no* foreign models to imitate, it must still have led the way to the invention of the stave, the rhiming couplet, and other similar novelties, no less surely in our own language than in the Icelandic.† The subordination of the middle pause first began to show itself a little before the year 1000, and at the close of the eleventh century, we find it very generally prevalent in English poetry.

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* See the quotation from the Paris Psalter, p. 279.

† See p. 279.

To this century also we probably owe the first introduction of final rhime. But the influence it exercised over our rhythms was by no means so great as might have been expected. If we may judge from such poems as have come down to us, it only occasionally controlled the punctuation.*

THE ELEVENTH CENTURY

seems to have been prolific of English poetry; and not a few of the poems, written during this period, are still extant. But though the works survive, the names and circumstances of the writers have rarely been so fortunate.

Elfric, raised to the Archbishopric of York by the favour of Knut, was one of the scholars of the celebrated Ethelwald, Bishop of Winchester. In early life he was sent, at the entreaty of a Thane named Ethelmær, to " a minster, which is called Cirnel;" and here he formed the design of turning the Lives of the Saints from Latin into English. The first set of Lives was, after a few years, followed by a second; and, at the urgent request of his friend Ethelmær, and of an Alderman Ethelward, he was induced (apparently with some misgivings) to add a third. The two first of these works were dedicated to Archbishop Sigeric.

The Lives of the Saints have been called prose, but, as far as I have read, they are written in regular alliterative couplets. Elfric, indeed, professes to avoid those stately amplifications, so dear to the Anglo-Saxons; his object, as he tells us, being the profit of his reader, and not the vain display of his own learning.

The works of this prelate, whether Latin or English, well deserve publication. It would be curious to see how far a man, whose good sense revolted from the dangerous novelty of Transubstantiation, was content to tolerate errors, which education had made familiar. His Lives of the Saints, too, would throw light on the manners and customs of the period, and in some cases possess considerable historical interest.

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* See p. 295.

At the end of St. Martin's Life (which it seems he had twice written) are found the following Latin verses. They are the earliest specimen I have seen of the Alexandrine rhythmus.*

Olim | hæc trans|tuli| : sicut|i val|ui|
Sed mo|do prec|ibus| : obstric|tus ple|nius|
O Mar|tine | sancte| : meri|tis præ|clare|
Juva | me mis|erum| : meri|tis mod|icum|
Care|am quo | nevis| : mihi|met noc|uis|
Casti|usque | vivam| : nactus | jam ve|niam|.

Deor has recorded his name in a poem,† from which it may perhaps be gathered, that he was *scop*, or household poet, to the two Danish princes, Harold Harefoot and Hardy-Knut. Like the court-minstrels of the twelfth century, he seems to have holden a fief from the crown, the loss of which (if my translation may be trusted) gave rise to the song in question. He appears to have been succeeded by a poet named *Heorren*, who was probably patronised by the Confessor.

Wulfwin Cada. The Psalter, lately published at Oxford,‡ is translated partly in prose and partly in verse. At the end of the metrical portion is the following note,

> "This poem of the noble King David's Psalter Wulfwin, surnamed Cada, the Lord's priest, wrote with his own hand (manu suâ conscripsit). Whoso readeth this writing, let him send up a prayer for his soul."

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* See p. 229. † See p. 326. ‡ See p. 279.

and, on the strength of this, Wulfwin has been represented as the *transcriber* of the MS.

Now first it may be questioned, whether the phrase *carmen conscribere* ever signified *mere* transcription; but though it did, Wulfwin may still put in a claim as author, for there are instances of Anglo-Saxon copyists translating or glossing their text, and yet only mentioning themselves as transcribers. That Wulfwin *was* the author of the metrical version is probable for the following, among other reasons.

The prose version prefaces each psalm with some account of its history, general scope, and tendency; and often paraphrases the Latin, so as to show more clearly its doctrinal or prophetical meaning. The metrical version has no prefaces, and, though generally literal, exhibits some cases of glaring misconstruction.* I would infer, therefore, that the prose-version was made by a man of reading, and the other by one who was a much better poet than scholar. I think it probable, that Wulfwin copied from some MS. the prose version as far as it went, and when it failed him, drew upon his own resources. Some of the psalms are rendered with singular terseness and elegance.

There is one other poet of this period whose *name* has been lately recovered, though his works unfortunately are not yet forthcoming. Some two or three years ago was found a Latin MS., treating of the exploits of Hereward, the hero who braved the power of William when that power was at its strongest. The writer quotes, as his chief authority, the English work of *Leofric*, Hereward's chaplain. He appears to have lived with his patron at Bourne in Lincolnshire, and to have written, among other subjects, on the warriors of our early history, and also, it would seem, on the Ettyns and Giants of our old Mythology.

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* See Psalm 8. v. 1. Psalm 77. v. 43. Psalm 103. v. 1., &c. &c.

The songs relating to Hereward, which (as a contemporary historian informs us) were sung in the streets, and at the ale-stake, were, in all probability, the productions of this poetical chaplain. The Latin MS. will, I believe, be shortly published at Rouen, under the patronage of the French government.*

THE TWELFTH CENTURY

was distinguished throughout Europe by an extraordinary display of mental energy. In England, unfortunately, but little of this energy was directed to our native literature. Norman Romance was the language of the court; and Latin the only medium through which our scholars condescended to instruct their readers. Still, however, English poetry was not wholly neglected, and we may yet muster the names of some half dozen poets, whose labours have come down to us.

Godric, the sainted hermit of Durham, has left behind him three short hymns, two of which have been already laid before the reader.† He was born at Walpole in Norfolk, and died aged in 1170. His life may be found in the Acta Sanctorum.

Layamon, son of Levenath (or, according to the Otho MS. of Luke), lived as priest with " the good knight" of Ernley, near Radestone on the banks of Severn. Here, it appears, he read a book, which inspired the happy thought of writing a British History. He travelled in search of MSS., and took for his authorities, 1st, the English book which Bede wrote, 2dly, the Latin book of St. Albin (Alcwin), and, 3rdly, the book of our English apostle St. Austin. In the Caligula MS. the list is somewhat different.—1st, Bede's English book, 2ndly, the Latin book of St. Albin and St. Austin, and, 3rdly, the book of the Frankish clerk Wace. The "English book" is probably Alfred's translation of the Ecclesiastical History, but I do not know what work of St. Austin is here referred to. When the two MSS. are published, as they shortly will be, we may perhaps learn how far the author was indebted to Wace's History.

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* Edited, I am told, by Mr. Wright, the gentleman who discovered the MS. and to whose politeness I have been indebted, while this sheet was passing through the press, for a perusal of this very curious, and as yet unpublished, work.

† See p. 151.

In my first notice of Layamon's poem,* I was in doubt as to the locality of Ernley, but on further search, there was found a Redstone Ferry close to Areley Regis in North Worcestershire. On turning to Nash, it appeared that the similarity of names had already led him to claim Layamon as a Worcestershire poet, and doubtless with good reason, as Areley was formerly written *Armleag*.

It may now perhaps be a question, what kind of dialect was originally spoken in Worcestershire. Layamon *may* have brought his peculiarities of speech from Gloucestershire; but if he were a native of Ernley, or its neighbourhood, the Southern Dialect probably reached to the line of watershed between the Trent and Severn, and one of the most distinguished of the Mercian tribes, the Wicware, must have been *Sexe* † in origin.

Of Layamon's patron, we still only know, that

The good knight is dust,
And his sword is rust.

The proprietors of Ernley are not recorded, till years after poet and patron were sleeping in the churchyard.

Pope Adrian is said to have written a metrical version of the Lord's Prayer, which is quoted by Strutt in his "Manners and Customs, &c." It is added, "this, together with the Crede also in rhime, was at that time used in all churches in England with universal approbation."

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* See p. 113.

† See p. 190.

As Strutt was a man of research, he doubtless had *some* authority for this statement. The poem is written in the same kind of verse as the Hule and Niȝtengale, and is, if genuine, the earliest specimen of such metre in our language. Adrian's original name was Breakspear.

Ormin was a Regular Canon, and (it would seem from his dialect) a member of some priory in the East of England. At the request of his brother Walter, who was a Canon in the same House, he undertook to turn into English "nigh all the Gospels, that are in the Mass-book, through all the year at Mass," each of them accompanied by an exposition of its meaning.

After an affectionate address* to his brother, there followed in the MS. a list of the "Gospels" which had been versified. This list is now imperfect, two leaves having been torn out, but it still contains the titles of no less than 242. The whole number was probably 365, that is, one for every day in the year.

The MS. has written in it the name of some Dutchman, dated Breda 1656, and was probably carried over to Holland by one of the fugitive loyalists. It afterwards came into the hands of Junius, by whom it was given to the Bodleian library. It seems to have been the first volume of Ormin's work, and contains only thirty-one of his "Gospels."

The Ormulum (for so Ormin named the work from his abbreviated name *Orm*) is the most valuable specimen left us of our Old English dialect. It is curious, also, as being the first imitation in our language of the Middle-Age "rhythmi"; and deserves notice also as a storehouse of popular divinity. It seems to have been intended for a Harmony of the New Testament, the volume now extant bringing us to the imprisonment of John. It was certainly meant for public reading, and (probably on this account) was looked upon with some degree of jealousy by his brother-churchmen.

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* See p. 209.

The MS. may have been written at the close of the twelfth century.

Arreck is the name of a poet, which occurs in Capgrave's Life of St. Catharine,* referred to by Park, in one of his annotations to Warton. Capgrave tells us, that in the days of Peter King of Cyprus, and Pope Urban the Fifth, an Austin of Lynn named Arreck, found in Cyprus a life of the Saint, written in Greek. This life he translated first into Latin, and afterwards into English verse. The English version (which Arreck left unfinished) Capgrave professes to have " shown more openly,"—that is, accommodated to the language of his day.

Now in the Auchinleck MS. there is a modernised copy of St. Margaret's Life,† and then follows, in the same kind of metre and dialect, an imperfect Life of St. Catharine, which I take to be Capgrave's original. If so, Capgrave must be mistaken in his dates, for the Auchinleck MS. is older than the papacy of Urban the Fifth. If, as seems probable, the lives of the two saints are of equal antiquity, we may, I think, refer the life of St. Catharine to the twelfth century; and Arreck may, in such case, be author of both. It is possible that Urban the Fifth may be a mistake for Urban the Third; but a reference to the MSS. would best clear up the difficulty.

THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY,

though it produced much English poetry, has left us, in most cases, ignorant of the names and circumstances of the writers. The poems, too, lose much of their importance, as regards our present inquiry, inasmuch as the MSS. are generally of the fourteenth century, and therefore little to be trusted (owing to the disuse of the final *e*) in any question relating to the rhythm. In such MSS., however, as were really written in this century, we find the flow of the Latin "rhythmi" modified by our native rhythms, much in the same manner as at the present day. Specimens of the tumbling metres, which afterwards became so common, are rarely met with; and lines with defective or supernumerary accents are only to be found in poems which were written at the close of the century. No alliterative poem has yet been discovered which can be referred to this period.

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* MS. Coll. Gresh. 315, and Rawlinson MS. 118.

† For the older copy of this work, see p. 218.

John of Guildford is mentioned in an Oxford MS.* as the author of an English poem, entitled *Le passyun de Jesus Crist;* and there is little doubt that he also wrote the Hule and Niȝtengale.† He seems to have lived in the reigns of John and Henry the Third, for in the last-mentioned poem there is a prayer for a "King Henri," and the MS. was written early in the thirteenth century.

In the Hule and Niȝtengale, reference is made to one *Nichol of Guildford,*‡ who appears to have been an English poet. I have not met with the name elsewhere.

Hending, son of Marcolf, was author of the song quoted in p. 333. The MS. from which it was taken is of the fourteenth century, but all the poems, whose date can be ascertained, belong to the thirteenth; perhaps then we may infer that Hending's song, as it now appears with introductory and concluding stanzas, belongs to the same period. If so, Hending probably lived in the first half of the thirteenth century, for fifty or sixty years at least must have elapsed, before the poet would require to be formally introduced to the reader, as we find him in the MS.

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* Jes. MS. 76.

† See p. 135.

‡ See p. 137.

Hending is quoted by Wynton, but the quotation is not found in the song, as now extant;

> Al the láw gud, and suá gud fine
> Makes al the soum gud, said Endyne.
> *Book* ix.

Robert of Gloucester was probably a monk of Gloucester Abbey, and, in the wars waged by the barons against Henry the Third, appears, like most of his fellow-townsmen, to have been a strong partisan of the former. The latest fact mentioned in his Chronicle occurred in 1278, when it was probably written.

The MS. from which Hearne published his edition was, I suspect, a very corrupt copy of the original; but, with all its faults, it tells our national story with a simplicity, and occasionally with a dramatic power, that have been much undervalued. In sketching the character of our kings this chronicler is sometimes singularly happy.

Kendale appears from his name to have been born in Westmerland. In the opening of his Tristrem,* he tells us that he visited Thomas of Ercyldon, from whom he learnt the facts of the story, which it would seem he afterwards versified. Robert of Brunne, however, gives Kendale and Ercyldon a joint-interest in the *execution* of the work, that is to say, in the choice of stanza and of language;† and our northern brethren, improving on the hint, boldly claim the poem as Scotch property. But the internal evidence is almost decisive against such a claim. The passage in Brunne is irreconcilable with the poem, on *any* hypothesis; and was, most probably, written from a vague recollection of the opening stanza.

Michael of Kildare has recorded himself as author of the hymn quoted in p. 319. The satire, too, in p. 337, was, no doubt, written by him; and, probably also, the well known satire called *The Land of Cockaigne*, which immediately precedes these two poems in the MS. The opening lines of the last-mentioned satire,

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* See p. 173.

† See p. 285.

> Fur in see by West Spaigne
> Is a land ihote Cockaigne,

point clearly to Ireland as the locality of the poem; and the same peculiar humour, and the same hatred of the monks, may be traced in this as in the other satire.

Michael's allusion to the White-Friar, I once thought * excluded Drogheda from any chance of being his residence. But the meaning was probably mistaken; for in the next stave is the line

> Minor *without!* and Preacher *within!*

and at Drogheda there was a house of Dominicans or Preachers within the walls, and a house of Minors or Franciscans without. If the line just quoted express indignation at the preference shown the Preacher, Michael may have been a Minorite. He certainly was neither Dominican nor Carmelite, for both black and white friar are lashed unsparingly. As, however, the Crutched Friars had a house at Drogheda, he may have been a Cross-bearer.

In wit and caustic humour, Ireland has produced few poets superior to Michael, that is, supposing "The Land of Cockaigne" to have been really written by him.

THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

furnishes us with a very copious list of English poets. With many of them the reader must be too well acquainted to require any other notice, than the mere mention of their names. This century is also distinguished by the introduction of certain foreign rhythms, as the couplet metre of five accents and the ballet-staves, and by the reappearance of our old alliterative metre, or, to speak more correctly, by a certain modification of it. The first name, that appears on the list, is

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* See p. 336, n. †.

Robert Manning of Brunne (now Bourne) in Lincolnshire, a Gilbertine Canon of Sempringham, in his native county. He had already been in this House fifteen years, under the Priors John of Camelton and John of Clinton, when, under their successor Prior Philip, he began his translation of Wadington's Manuel,* A. D. 1303. He dedicates this translation to all Christian men, and specially to the "good men" of Bourne and the "fellowship" of Sempringham. The dedication is dated from Brymwake in Kestevan, which was probably some dependency of his monastery, and where he seems to have finished his work.

He afterwards removed to the Gilbertine priory of Sixhille, also in Lincolnshire; and here, at the instance of Prior Robert of Malton, began his rhiming Chronicle of England. The first part, in verses of four accents, is a translation of Wace; the second, in Alexandrines, is a version of Langtoft's Chronicle. It seems to have been finished in the year 1338.

Adam Davie, marshal of Stratford-le-bow, announces himself as the author of certain visions, which are found in the Bodleian MS. Laud 72, and appear to be, for the most part, complimentary of Edward the Second. In the same MS. is a version of the romance entitled the Siege of Jerusalem, and other poems, which have also been ascribed to Davie, but I know not on what authority. The romance is written in verses of four accents, and the visions in a very loose rhythm, which may, perhaps, be considered as the corresponding tumbling metre.

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* See p. 424.

John appears to be the name of the poet who wrote, in praise of his lady-love Annot, the song quoted in p. 299.

William of Shoreham is said to have written English poetry in the early half of this century. Sir F. Madden informs us,* that the MS. is now at Edinburgh, in private hands.

Randal Higgenet. The MS.† of the Chester plays contains a copy of a proclamation, dated 24 H. 8, which states them to have been written in the mayoralty of Sir John Arnwaie, by a monk of Chester, named Henry Frauncis; and the same monk is also said to have obtained from Pope Clement forty days of pardon for all who heard them. But a note in a later hand informs us, that Arnwaie was mayor in the year 1327, and that Randal Higgenet was the author. Consistently with this latter account, we find in a MS. list ‡ of the Chester mayors the following notice appended to Arnwaie's mayoralty in 1327:

> The Witson playes made by one Don Randal *Higgenet,* a monk of Chester abbey, *who was thrise at Rome before he could obtayne leave of the pope to have them in the English tongue.*

the words in italics being additions in a later hand.

It is probable that the plays were written in 1327 by Higgenet; and that the objections made to their representation were overcome in the papacy of Clement the Fifth, by the joint exertions of Higgenet and Frauncis. Hignet, it may be observed, is still a common name at Chester.

Richard Rolle of Hampole was an Augustine monk and hermit, and lived near Doncaster. Lydgate tells us, that he made a translation of the Stimulus Conscientiæ, probably the one noticed in p. 236.* It is very doubtful if he wrote any other English poem, though many have been ascribed to him. He died in 1349.

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* See the Preface to William and the Werwolf.

† Harl. 2013.

‡ Harl. 2025.

Gilbert Pilkington. Wilhelm Bedwel, rector of Tottenham, and one of the translators of the Bible, published the Turnament of Tottenham in 1631; and stated it to have been "written long since by Mr. Gilbert Pilkington, *at that time, as some have thought, parson of the parish.*" An English song in the same MS., entitled *Passio Domini nostri Jesu Christi* was subscribed *quod dominus Gilbertus Pilkington,* and this, joined to the tradition, amply warranted the conclusion Bedwel came to.

The MS. † which is now at Cambridge has been ascribed ‡ to the early part of the fourteenth century. But whether this criticism be allowed or not, I agree with Bedwel in thinking, that the *song* could not have been written later than the reign of our third Edward, when the dangerous pastime, which it celebrates, was forbidden by statute. Warton, indeed, will have it to have been written in the reign of Henry the Eighth! He ridicules Bedwel's notion that it was meant for a burlesque description of a real country jousting, and considers it to be a satire on the knightly tournay; but Bedwel's supposition is, I think, far more consistent with the character both of the poem and of the age.

William Herbert paraphrased a collection of hymns and antiphones; and the MS., we are told by Warton, was in his day to be found in the library of Mr. Farmer, at Tusmore, in Oxfordshire.

Leland mentions a divine and schoolman of this name; and a Herbert is also recorded as having sung the Song of Colbrand and the Gest of Queen Emma before Bishop

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* The *other* translation I would ascribe to Ascheburne. See p. 418.

† Univ. Lib. Ff. 5. 48.

‡ See Pref. to the Turnament of Tottenham. Pickering, 1836.

Orleton in the Prior's Hall at Winchester, A.D. 1338. This latter may possibly have been Warton's poet.

Thomas Vicary, of Wimburne, Dorsetshire, wrote the romance of Apollonius of Tyre, a fragment of which came, by a singular accident, into the possession of Dr. Farmer. Steevens, in his annotations to Pericles, quotes a few verses, which appear to have eight accents each, and to rhime by couplets—at the same time taking the interwoven rhime. If such were really the law of the metre, it well deserves the reader's notice.*

William was the name of the poet, who translated the romance of William and the Werwolf. He was patronized by Humphrey Bohun, Earl of Hereford, and must have written the poem between the years 1335 and 1360.†

Lawrence Minot was the author of certain songs, commemorating the triumphs of our third Edward.‡ He appears from his dialect to have been a Lincolnshire man. His songs were edited by Ritson.

Robert Langland, born at Mortimer's Cleybury in Shropshire, was a priest, and fellow of Oriel college, and afterwards a Benedictine at Worcester.§ When he entered the monastery he seems to have taken the name of John Malvern.‖ His visions were written in 1362.¶

John Gower is generally considered as Chaucer's senior. He died in 1402. His only English poem is the Confessio Amantis.

Jeffrey Chaucer was born in London about the year 1340, and died in the year 1400.

John Barbour, archdeacon of Aberdeen, had a passport to visit Oxford in 1357, and a second passport in 1365 to pass through England on his way to St. Denis. In 1375 he wrote the Bruce, and died aged, in 1396.

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* See pp. 183, 316.

† See p. 156.

‡ See p. 301.

§ See p. 163.

‖ If Langland *did* assume this name, he must have written the continuation of Higden's Polychronicon in the Bennet MS. 14, for it is ascribed in the manuscript to a Worcester monk, called John Malvern.

¶ See p. 165.

Sir Hugh of Eglynton, otherwise Hugh of the Palace, wrote the Gest of Arthur, the Aunter of Gawaine, and the Epistle of Susan. Since my notice of this last poem,* I have found it printed in Laing's Early Poetry of Scotland. This critic, it appears, and his friend Mr. Chalmers consider the old poems,† printed by Pilkington, to be part of the Aunter of Gawaine, but no doubt erroneously.‡ Mr. Chalmers adds, "He (Sir Hugh) flourished under David the Second; he is supposed to have died about the year 1381. As he was a busy knight in his day, so there are many notices respecting him."

Thomas Ascheburne, a Carmelite of Northampton, has been considered as author of a poem, "De contemptu mundi," § on the strength of the following note:—

Script. a frē Tho. de Acheb^{r}ne ord. ftūm b^{e} m^{ie} genitr. dei de mo|
Carm̄. conventus Northampton A^{o} 1384 congest ex......... |

the perpendicular line showing where the page has been cut by the binder.

In the blank leaf we have another note written in pencil as follows,

> This MS. is merely a copy of *Hampole's* Stimulus Conscientiæ. At fol. 100. is the passage on the pains of Hell, quoted by Hearne, &c. *F. M.* (*Sir F. Madden?*)

I do not, however, see any reason for degrading Ashburn into a mere transcriber. There were *two* English versions of the Stimulus Conscientiæ; and if the one alluded to in p. 236. be Hampole's, the present, which is written in verses of four accents, may very well be Ashburn's. Hampole could hardly have written both.

Hilton the Hermit has a long mystical poem ascribed to him, in the Cotton MS. Faustina, B. vi. It is written in verses of four accents, and in a northern dialect.

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* See p. 171.

† See p. 291.

‡ See p. 166.

§ Cott. MS. Ap. VII.

Tanner mentions a Walter Hylton, who was monk of Shene in Surrey, and afterwards D. D. and Canon of Thurgarton. He died A. D. 1395. But I cannot identify him with the poet.

These are the only writers of English verse, previous to the year 1400, whose names I have found recorded.* Were, indeed, our MSS. examined with care, I have little doubt that the number might be tripled. The present scanty list must form a very small proportion of those, who contributed to fill the many collections, still extant, of early English poetry.

We must now turn our attention to the works of our Latin poets, which have been much too generally neglected, in inquiries connected with the history of our literature. Writers of Latin "rhythmi" have influenced, in a very marked manner, both the sentiments and the versification of English poetry. Many of the rhythmical models, which our critics have perversely sought for, in some one or other of the Romance dialects, were familiar to our Latinists, long before any of these languages possessed a literature.

Aldhelm is generally considered as the first Englishman that wrote in Latin. Besides poems of some length in hexameter verse, he has left us specimens of two different kinds of "rhythmus"—the Iambic Colophon † and the Dimiter Iambic, both rhyming by couplets. Other examples of the latter rhythmus have come down to us from his pupil Ethelwald, and also from his friend Winfrid, better known as St. Boniface,* the apostle of Germany. Bede occasionally rhimes his hexameters in the middle, or by couplets; and writes the imperfect Trochaic Tetrameter in rhythmus,† sometimes with rhime, sometimes without. Alcwin, the tutor and friend of Charlemagne, commonly wrote in heroic or elegiac verse, but he has also left us a specimen of adonics, and another of the curious rhythmus noticed in p. 228. apparently that of the imperfect Trochaic Trimeter.

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* Two or three other names have been mentioned by our critics, which, however, would not bear the test of inquiry. For example, we are told, by Tanner and Ritson, that one *Taystek* wrote a poem on the decalogue. On turning to the MS. (Harl. 1022) we find "a sermon" in prose upon this subject. A short poem precedes the "sermon," though wholly unconnected with it, and hence the blunder.

By the aid of false spelling this worthy monk stands sponsor to no less than *three* poets, to wit, *Taystek*, *Gaystek*, and *Gatrike*.

† See p. 132.

This, though a very imperfect, list contains the names of the more distinguished English scholars of the seventh and eighth centuries. Their accentual rhythms have a peculiarity which deserves notice, as being directly opposed to the great law of Anglo-Saxon versification. Whenever they alliterate the rhythmus, the alliteration is always subordinate to the rhime, and often rests on unaccented syllables. Perhaps we may best account for this practice, by considering the sources, from which our ancestors got their first knowledge of the classical languages.

The southern school, or that of Canterbury, owed its existence chiefly to Archbishop Theodore, and Adrian, the venerable head of St. Austin's abbey. To these two foreigners—the one an African, the other an Asiatic Greek—our country was mainly indebted for the scholarship, which, during four centuries, took precedency in Europe. The northern or rival school was founded by the Irish ecclesiastics, who, chiefly from Iona, evangelized the north of England. Some of their teachers were settled in the southern counties; and we have seen that Aldhelm's earliest tutor was Maildulf the Scot, first abbot of Malmsbury.‡ Now, final rhime has ever been the great characteristic of Celtic verse; and, whenever it admitted alliteration, it always kept it subordinate. It is probable, therefore, that the alliteration, introduced into the accentual verse of our early Latinists, was borrowed from their Celtic teachers, and differed no less in origin than in kind from that which was used in their vernacular poetry. When the Irish system gave way before the increasing influence of the southern school, this subordinate alliteration seems to have fallen gradually into disuse.

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* See p. 132.

† See p. 183.

‡ See p. 401. It may be observed, that *Malmsbury* is merely a corruption of *Maildulfs bury*.

Our scholars of the ninth and tenth centuries were every way inferior to the men who preceded them. Bricstan, præcentor of Croyland, wrote an elegy on the ruins of his burnt and desolated monastery; Fridegode of Canterbury wrote in hexameters the Life of St. Wilfrid; and Wulfstan, præcentor of Winchester, the Lives of Bishop Ethelwald and St. Swithin. The cold classicality of these and of other contemporary poems (which still survive, either entire or in extract,) was doubtless the chief reason, why they have come down to us. We might have profited more by the preservation of some of the many "rhythmi," which Leland met with when ransacking the Monkish libraries, and whose merit he is often obliged to admit, notwithstanding his scholar-like prejudice against any but classical versification. Serlo's caustic satire against the monks of Canterbury *may* perhaps be still extant, in some of our neglected MSS. It could hardly fail to be interesting.

In the eleventh century, John the Grammarian wrote a poem in praise of Paris, where he had been studying; Reginald, of Canterbury, wrote the Life of St. Malchus in hexameters, which occasionally take the mixed rhime; and both Osbern and Eadmer—Canterbury monks, whom the Italians, Lanfranc and Anselm, had the good sense to appreciate—distinguished themselves by the same accomplishment. But it was the twelfth century, which was the golden æra of English scholarship. Perhaps not even the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries produced men of deeper reading—scholars, to whom the Latin language and literature was more habitually familiar—than an age, which many of our countrymen consider as one of almost unmitigated barbarism.

It is not, however, with the classical poems of this period we have now to do. We may pass by the Life of St. Alban by Robert of Dunstable, the elegies and songs of Henry of Huntingdon, the Architremion of Hanville—half prose, half metre—and even the epics of Joseph of Exeter; but the "carmina rhythmica" have more immediate reference to the subject before us. Two writers, neither of them undistinguished, and one of them, if we may trust the impression made on his contemporaries, *the* man of his century—I mean Lawrence, Prior of Durham, and Walter Mapes, Archdeacon of Oxford—have left us numerous specimens of this "sibilant" versification. In their songs we find not only specimens of our psalm-staves, but also other specimens of mixed rhime fully as complicated, and apparently as anomalous, as any that was used by the Troubadour. The hymns of the poetical Prior are for the most part in MS. They are much inferior to the jovial songs and biting satires of the Archdeacon. The latter, indeed, manages both rhythm and rhime with admirable skill; his numbers seem almost to reel beneath his merriment and sarcasm.

Our MSS. of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries are filled with Latin rhythmi, written in an endless variety of stave and metre. But as the chief peculiarities both of our English and of our Romance versification were by this time fully developed, it will be the less necessary to enter upon an investigation of this neglected and much despised portion of our literature. We will rather hasten to take such a view, as our scanty limits will allow, of our Romance poetry and its versification.

The earliest writer of Norman verse, whose works have survived him, is *Philippe de Than.* One of his poems, entitled De Creaturis,[1] is dedicated to his uncle Humphrey de Than, chaplain of Hugh,[2] the King's Seneschal; and his other, the Bestiaire, to the Queen of the same monarch —our Henry the First. *Samson de Nanteuil* soon afterwards translated Solomon's Proverbs[3] for "his lady" Adelaide, the wife of a Lincolnshire gentleman; and about the middle of the century *Geoffroi Gaimar* wrote his History of the Anglo-Saxon kings[4] from English, Norman, and Latin MSS. He mentions, among others, the Book of Wassingburch, a History of Winchester, and a translation from the Welsh, which was procured from the Earl of Gloucester by the kind offices of a Yorkshire Baron, named Walter Espec—in all probability Geoffrey of Monmouth's History. In 1153 *Wace* wrote the Brut;[5] in 1160 his Roman de Rou; and sometime after his Chronicles of the Norman Dukes. The King's glory was, he tells us, his only object; but the poet's zeal, or his patron's favour, seems at one time to have cooled, for we also learn, that Henry ordered *Benoit de Seinte More* to translate the History of the Norman Dukes. Wace, however, contrived to anticipate his rival; and Benoit followed him as Chronicler of Normandy[6] about the year 1172. Benoit, also, appears to have written a poem on the Trojan war.[7] *Michael of Bury*, who, it has been elsewhere[8] conjectured, wrote one of the British Histories, and *Thomas of Kent*,[9] who assisted in compiling the Roman d'Alexandre, must be assigned to a somewhat later period.

At the beginning of the thirteenth century flourished *Stephen Langton*, Archbishop of Canterbury, to whom La Rue ascribes a Canticle[10] on our Saviour's Passion, written in staves of five verses with mixed rhime. Soon afterwards *Denys Pyramus* wrote the Life[1] and also the "Miracles" of St. Edmund; and *Godfrey of Waterford* translated[2] Dares Phrygius, thus giving us a second Anglo-Norman version of "The Tale of Troy Divine." About the middle of the century *Helis de Guincestre* wrote his version of "Cato;"[3] *Hue de Roteland,* his story of Ippomydon;[4] *Chardri,* his Lives of St. Josophat and of the Seven Sleepers;[5] *Robert Bikez,* his Lai du Corn;[6] and *William de Wadington,* his "Manuel."[7] *Peter Langtoft's* Chronicle is of later date. It adds another to the long list of poems on that subject of untiring interest, the British History.

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[1] Nero, A. v.

[2] Hugh Bigod, afterwards Earl of Norfolk.

[3] Harl. 4388.

[4] Bib. Reg. 13 A. 21.

[5] Bib. Reg. 3 A. 21-3. and 4 C. 11.

[6] Harl. 1717.

[7] Harl. 4482.

[8] Harl. 1605. See p. 178.

[9] See p. 177.

[10] Norf. MS. 292.

Two poets, connected with this country by their writings, have been omitted, as being natives of the Continent. *Guernes,* a monk of Picardy, came hither to collect facts for his Life of Becket, which he afterwards wrote,[8] and recited publicly at Canterbury; and *Marie* translated Alfred's fables,[9] and also certain Breton "lais."[10] She seems to have been patronised by William Longsword, Earl of Salisbury;[11] and was, probably, the daughter of some Norman (or, perhaps, of some Englishman, resident in Normandy), who came to England, when the French overrun the Duchy in the year 1204. I have also omitted the name of *Maurice Regan,* interpreter to Dermot, King of Leinster. He wrote a poem on the English conquest of Ireland, but was, probably, both by descent and birth an Irishman.[12]

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[1] Dom. A. xi.

[2] Bibl. du Roi.

[3] Bennet MS. 405, 24.

[4] Vespasian, A. vii.

[5] Cal. A. ix.

[6] Digby MS. 86.

[7] Bib. Reg. 20 B. 14.

[8] Harl. 270.

[9] Harl. 4333. and Vesp. B. xiv.

[10] Harl. 978.

[11] Son of Henry II. by Fair Rosamond.

[12] Robert Grosse-teste, John Hoveden, and a few others, not mentioned in the text, have had Romance poems ascribed to them; but I believe it will be found, on investigation, that they merely furnished the Latin originals, from which the Romance poems were translated.

Most of these authors wrote in verses of twelve or eight syllables, that is, in Alexandrines or in the common rhythmus of four accents. There are, however, instances in which verses of five accents were made use of. Perhaps the earliest is an Ode upon the Crusades, found in the same MS. as Benoit's Chronicle of the Norman Dukes, and ascribed to that author by La Rue. It is written in the ballet-stave of seven,* and seems to be the earliest specimen in our Romance poetry not only of the verse of five accents, but also of the mixed rhime.

In the far greater number of these poems the rhime is continuous, running through a definite or indefinite number of verses, as the case may be; but Humfrey de Than, the first Norman writer of Alexandrine verse, rhimes his *sections*—thus copying, in every particular, the Latin rhythmus used by Elfric.† Perhaps we may infer, that this favourite Norman metre was only the copy of a rhythmus, at that time popular among our English Latinists.

I believe it will be found that the versification of these "rhythmi" was introduced into no modern language much before the year 1000. That it should be adopted in our Romance poetry before it made its appearance in English verse was to be expected. With the language of his ancestors, the Norman had also lost their versification, and the only cadences his ear had been taught to follow were those of the Latin rhythmi. But the writer of English poetry had a versification made to his hand—one familiar to the people, and admirably suited to the language. The intrusion, therefore, of a foreign rhythm was both unnecessary and unwelcome; and the result was a *mixture* of the two systems, which will hardly be considered an improvement on the earlier one.

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* See p. 359.

† See p. 405.

In this short sketch of our Romance poetry, the *names* of the writers have generally been accommodated to the Norman dialect. This has been done, that we may not be thought unfairly to prejudice the question—are these writers French or English? Under other circumstances, such a disguise of the plain English names, Bennet Seymour, Robert Greathead, Hugh of Rutland, &c. would be every whit as miserable pedantry, as the use of the Latin synonymes, Benedictus de Sancto Mauro, Robertus Capito, &c., and only less absurd than the practice of certain critics, who carefully translate these names into modern French!

Of late years, French critics have distinguished between Norman and Anglo-Norman poems. M. Guizot, with very creditable patriotism, used the influence and resources at his command, in narrowly searching our libraries for *Norman* works, but I believe entirely without success. Every poem, as yet published under his sanction, is confessedly Anglo-Norman. Indeed most of these Romance poems leave little room for doubt or cavil. The MSS. are English; the circumstances of the writer, as far as they are disclosed, relate solely to this country; and the works themselves abound in English phrases, and allusions to English peculiarities of life and manners. Some of them show a marked dislike of all foreigners, not excepting the Norman; and in others we have an apology for defects of language, on the ground of its not being the native language of the writer. The authors were sometimes no doubt of Norman descent, but in several of these cases we can trace their families in the island, both before and for ages after these poems were written. Wace,* Seymour, and Gymer or Gimber, are names still to be met with in the streets of London.

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* Wace was a native of Jersey, the grandson of a Norman who fought at Hastings.

An opinion, somewhat inconsistent with the one just controverted, has been advanced by La Rue, namely, that in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the Norman language was familiar to *all* classes in this country, and that England ran the greatest risk of losing her native language! Now, in the first place, our language during the period in question, though it had taken a form very different from the Anglo-Saxon, shows but little mixture of Romance, a fact difficult to explain, if the latter were familiar to the great bulk of the people; and, secondly, the Romance of England remained almost unchanged, while, on the continent, the same dialect was losing its final consonants, and gradually melting into the *patois*, which is at present spoken in Lower Normandy and Jersey. Must we not conclude, that in this country it was a dead language, learnt only from books, and therefore secure from those changes to which, as a living language, it was subject on the continent? We know that the schoolboy translated his Latin into Romance (as his successor turns Greek into Latin) in the vain hope of learning two languages by a process, which little promises to teach either. The Romance dialect, therefore, must have been more or less familiar to the scholar as to well as to the courtier, but that it did not reach to the great body of the people, is clear from the many versions of Romance poems, made "for the lewed man," a phrase, be it observed, which includes both "lord" and yeoman. "Uplandish men," indeed, such as the franklin or the country gentleman, sometimes aped the accomplishment, much for the same reason that the *gentillatres* of the little German courts affect French—not that they admired the foreigner, his language, or his literature, but because it marked a *class*, and distinguished them from the burgher.

It is important, on several accounts, to ascertain how far and in what manner our native language has been affected, by admixture with this foreign dialect. Many mistakes have prevailed on the subject; and some of our critics have even confounded the Norman phrases of the twelfth century with the French* importations of the seventeenth. The latter, however, might be easily dispensed with, while the former have rooted themselves deeply in the language. There are some hundreds of words, which it would require the nicest skill in philology to say, whether they were originally Norman or Anglo-Saxon.†

The little attention that is paid to the critical study of our language, and the slight regard which attempts to investigate its history have met with, reflect no less discredit on our patriotism than on our scholarship. While Frenchmen are sending agents over Europe to scrutinize every manuscript, which may shed light on their early literature, Englishmen are satisfied‡ with knowing, that Anglo-Saxon MSS. may be found in France, in Holland, and in Sweden. The German publishes the most insignificant fragment connected with the antiquities of his language, while *our* manuscripts lie mouldering in our libraries, and our critics—some of them of no mean reputation—content themselves with the vague and scanty notices of a Hickes and a Wanley. Yet the early literature, which is thus neglected, may be traced to the fifth century, and far surpasses the contemporary literature of every other nation in works of interest and of genius. In the first rank of those gifted men who have shed glory on our country, by the side of Shakespeare, of Milton, and of Spenser, we may place the two patriarchs of English song—Cædmon and Chaucer.

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* There are reasons for believing that "the French," which was brought into the country by Edward and his Norman favourites, was almost as much a foreign language at Paris as at London.

† For an example take the word *number*. If we were to ask whence did we get it? the triumphant answer would be, *from* the Latin, *through* the French. Now I have never met with the word in Anglo-Saxon, yet that it is native to our language may be shown almost to a certainty. There is an English law of composition, by reference to which we may resolve *number* into certain elements, which are found to have once existed in our language as *independent words*. There is one other language, widely differing in character from our own, in which, however, the same law prevails, and a like analysis may be effected. Will the French enable us to resolve *nombre?* or the Latin to resolve *numerus?*

The word was, in all probability, used both in Anglo-Saxon and in Norman Romance.

‡ There is *one* exception to this remark in the publication of the Paris Psalter by the University of Oxford. See p. 279.

If, instead of looking to the past, we speculate on the future, our language will hardly sink in our estimate of its importance. Before another century has gone by, it will, at the present rate of increase, be spoken by hundreds of millions! Of the five great temperate regions, *three*—North America, South Africa, and Australia—are fast peopling with our race; and some, now living, will see them overspread with a population, claiming in our language the same interest as ourselves. That language, too, is rapidly becoming the great medium of civilisation, the language of law and literature to the Hindoo, of commerce to the African, of religion to the scattered islanders of the Pacific. The range of its influence, even at the present day, is greater than ever was that of the Greek, the Latin, or the Arabic; and the circle widens yearly. Though it were not our mother tongue, it would still, of all living languages, be the one most worthy of our study and our cultivation, as bearing most directly on the happiness of mankind.

NOTES TO THE SECOND VOLUME.

(F). ACCENTUATION, &c. OF OUR MSS.

AFTER the note in p. 10. was written, there appeared an article in the Gentleman's Magazine, explaining the system of accentuation, which was followed in the last edition of Beowulf. The writer dissents, and I think with much reason, from the principles on which Mr. Thorpe remodelled the accentuation of Cædmon, and then advances arguments in favour of his own system. These we will not examine, as it is a matter of minor importance what theory an editor may adopt, if he distinguish (and in Beowulf the distinction has been made) between his own notions and the contents of his MS. But there is one passage, very candidly quoted from an old grammarian, which deserves the reader's notice—I say candidly quoted, because it affords a very strong argument, in a case where, as it seems to me, strong arguments were not wanting, against the theory which the writer himself espouses. From this passage, which makes mention of "the short é," it is very properly inferred, that the accent was sometimes used for the same purpose as our modern italics. It must, I think, convince every one, who has not committed himself in controversy, how little we yet know of a subject, on which so much speculation has been hazarded.

I would take this opportunity of again pressing on the reader the importance of copying our MSS. *faithfully*—I mean not only to the letter, but so as to show their peculiarities as regards punctuation, composition, &c. It is astonishing how much light may thus be thrown upon the structure of our language. For example, many Anglo-Saxon MSS. join the preposition to its substantive, and thus point to the origin of a numerous class of adverbs, *aloft*, *asleep*, *aground*, *&c.* *underfoot*, *underhand*, *underneath*, *&c.* *today*, *tonight*, *tomorrow*, *&c.* Again, in some MSS. several of the common prefixes are carefully separated from their compounds—the adverb *gewisse*, for example, being written *ge wisse*, or in Old English *y wisse;* and it is from these scattered elements of an adverb that modern scholarship has manufactured a verb and pronoun *I wiss!* Again, in many Old English MSS. the genitival ending is separated from its noun, thus *Seint Benet is scurge*, Saint Bennet's scourge, see p. 336.—a practice, which shows us the origin of those phrases to be met with in our Liturgy and other works of the same date, *Christ his sake, God his love,* &c. Other instances of the advantages, likely to accrue from a more careful editing of our manuscripts, might easily be collected.

It has been said elsewhere (p. 29. n. *) that the scrupulous exactness of an editor would not be expected in a work like the present; but certainly the extracts quoted might, without additional trouble, have been laid before the reader in some respects more satisfactorily. Had all the rhythmical points been inserted, and the *colon* only used when the middle point was not marked in the MS. much needless reference to the notes might have been avoided. The capitals, also, at the beginning of a line or sentence might well have been spared; and lastly the *breaks*, which correspond with those in the MS. should have been more carefully distinguished from such as have been made only for the convenience of the reader.

(G). THE ALEXANDRINE.

The metrum, which may best dispute with the Asclepiad (see p. 229.) the honour of giving rise to the Alexandrine rhythmus, is the Trochaic Dimeter wanting half a metre. This metrum seems to have been well known during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The following rhythmus was certainly modelled upon it;

The Annunciation.

1.

Ave | Maris | stella|
Dei | mater | alma|
Atque | semper | virgo|
Felix | cæli | porta|.

2.

Sumens | illud | ave|
Gabri|elis | ore|
Funda | nos in | pace|
Mutans | nomen | Euæ|.

3.

Salve | vincla | reis|
Profer | lumen | cæcis|
Mala | nostra | pelle|
Bona | cuncta | posce|, &c.

where we may observe that such is the influence of the final rhime (see p. 230), as to throw all the accents of the rhythmus on the *short* syllables of the metrum.

The rhythmus just quoted seems to differ from that noticed in p. 405.

only in the circumstance of its being divided into staves. Elfric's rhythmus might well have been written, as if each of the sections had been a distinct verse, for in the MS. they are all written continuously; and it is possible that this latter may have been modelled on the Trochaic metrum, and the Alexandrine rhythmus of Walter Mapes (see p. 229) based on the Asclepiad. But the Norman rhythmus of Humphrey de Than (see p. 425), which so closely agrees with Elfric's Latin rhythmus, has two sections in each verse, which certainly favours the notion of its being founded on the metrum of the Asclepiad. On the whole, I incline to think that the verse of six accents and twelve syllables, dividing after the sixth, represents the same metrum, whether it takes the middle or the final rhime; and that its classical model was in both cases the Asclepiad.

The Alexandrine was probably first known to the French at the close of the twelfth century, when the French, or, rather we should say, the Norman tale was written (see Vol. i. p. 256), to which it owes its name. Originally, there is no doubt, it had six accents; but the modern French alexandrine is a tumbling verse of twelve syllables, dividing at the sixth, and the number of accents may be six, five, or four. So loose are the laws of French accentuation, that the rhythm of their heroic poetry is left almost at the mercy of the reader. If he satisfy the *metre*, by accenting the sixth and twelfth syllables, he may change from the common to the triple measure, or, if he choose, may adopt some intermediate cadence. When this licence was first tolerated, I cannot say, but I suspect at a comparatively recent period.

THE END.

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