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THE MAKING OF VERSE

By the same Authors :

THE MAKING OF PROSE

(Sidgwick & Jackson, Ltd.)

By Robert Swann :

Common Sense Tests in English.

Simple Tests in English.

(Methuen & Co., Ltd.)

The Making of Verse :

a Guide to English Metres

BY

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English Master,
Cheltenham College

AND

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P R E F A C E

" Our naturall tung cummeth on us by huddle, and therefore heedlesse. . . . And to saie the truth, what reson is it, to be acquainted abrode, and a stranger at home? to know foren tungs by rule, and our own but by rote? "

MULCASTER : *Elementaris* (1582)

The genesis of this book, molecularly speaking, was a " fortuitous concourse " of two quite independent atoms. In the one case the necessary stimulus was supplied by a reviewer in the *Times Literary Supplement* (January 27th, 1921), who wrote : " Even a bare technical instruction in the patterns of English verse would help to give boys an interest in poetry, if it were not too dully imparted " ; in the other case it was the question of an unknown hero : " Please, sir, how does one write blank verse? " Discovering by accident that we had each written much the same book, we pooled the results and have rewritten it in collaboration.¹

Our purpose and method are also twofold. First, by analysis, we have sought to survey (in Parts I-III) the patterns upon which English poets have built English poetry, hinting, incidentally, at some of the historical forces which have gone to the moulding of

¹ We have avoided calling it a " Primer " for the happily appropriate reason that one of us pronounces that word with a short i and the other with a long ; but, as we agree in stressing it on the first syllable, this is only one more proof that what matters in English is stress, not quantity.

the evolution of those patterns, and seizing as many opportunities as possible of emphasising the cardinal fact of English prosody—that our poets have always taken general and particular liberties in the process of wedding their (and our) native speech-rhythms to the various standard metrical frameworks.

In the second place—analysis leading to synthesis, which is only the Greek for “composition”—we intentionally commend to the beginner, whether school pupil or aspiring amateur, the practice of verse composition as a means of education in expression. Hence Part IV consists of a small museum, a small stadium, and a few hints on training; where, in the exercise ground, we hope the student will try his paces, running “in strings” in accordance with the rules which English verse has made for itself.

We shall nevertheless be disappointed if it proves that our labours have produced only what the late Amy Lowell called “one of those rare organic books which start the creative faculty of the reader, and, fecundate him to new achievement,” because our secret aim is to stimulate better appreciation rather than increased output of verse. To attempt composition under rules, however elastic, though it may bring personal disillusionment upon the practitioner, will assuredly breed respect for, and interest in, those who have managed to do the trick.

We are greatly indebted to several contemporary poets who, by kindly answering direct questions, have fortified us in the opinion that the use of classical terms in English metrics is a necessary evil. “The terms are used,” Mr. John Masefield wrote, “because we have no native terms ready to hand.” Mr. Walter

de la Mare said : “ I think the classical terms tend to be a disadvantage. The moment any experimenter gets beyond the rudiments, he can hardly help realising that the so-called feet are at best clumsy units.” And Mr. Edmund Blunden wrote : “ I can’t find a readier system of roughly describing the metres of our poets than that used to describe those of the ancient classics ; but . . . I should only use the classical terminology as a thing to throw away at the earliest moment.”

We are especially grateful also to Sir Henry Newbolt for allowing us to quote (§ 157) his account of his own method of adapting classical metres to English verse ; to Lady Gilbert and Messrs. Macmillan & Co., Ltd., for permission to quote from Sir W. S. Gilbert’s works ; to Mrs. Watts-Dunton for permission to quote Theodore Watts-Dunton’s sonnet in § 117 ; and to Messrs. William Heinemann, Ltd., for the use of Swinburne’s *A Singing Lesson* in § 161. Finally, we acknowledge a great debt to a number of friendly counsellors who have read the proofs and contributed valuable suggestions.

R. S.

F. S.

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PRELIMINARY WARNINGS AND DEFINITIONS

This book attempts to deal with English *verse* ; it is not to be regarded as a guide to English *poetry*.

Two Definitions :

POETRY

and

VERSE

Absolute poetry is the concrete and artistic expression of the human mind in emotional and rhythmic language.

THEODORE WATTS-
DUNTON : article on
Poetry in *Encyclopædia
Britannica*

VERSE : a succession of words arranged according to natural or recognised rules of prosody and forming a complete metrical line.

*Oxford English
Dictionary*

Two Comments :

It is only Poetry can make us be thought living men when we lie among the dead.

GILES FLETCHER

Now swarme many versifiers that neede never aunswere to the name of Poets.

PHILIP SIDNEY

 Not all Verse is Poetry.

I can see how verse is done, but I cannot see how poetry is done. How is a startling of the soul produced by the collocation of a few simple sounds? What essence is it in their sound and their order which opens the blinding doors of vision?

HILAIRE BELLOC

Let no one imagine that the most perfect knowledge of the laws of these forms of verse is enough to start him in writing poetry; for such rules are but what the fundamental rules of arithmetic are to astronomers—all-important as the basis, but powerless, without genius and science, to discover new worlds.

GLEESON WHITE

 Nor is Poetry to be found only in Verse.

Poetical prose, or “prose-poetry,” is not a contradiction in terms: for example, many passages of the English Bible are poetry in prose. The *Psalms*, the *Song of Solomon*, etc., may be said to contain “verses,” but they are not verse in the sense in which we use the term in this book.

Thirty days hath September,
April, June, and November, etc.

—that is a sample of what we mean by verse: it is not what we mean by poetry.

Learn to read Verse with Your Ears !

Many people, although they make a genuine effort to "read poetry," find a difficulty in appreciating it. This happens often because they do not know how to read verse. They try to read it in the same way as they read prose, "to themselves"—because you can extract the sense of prose in silence. But verse is meant to be *heard*; its essence is sound, and the reader must search for the sound as well as for the sense.

When in doubt about verse, whether your own or another's, *read it aloud* (with due regard to the convenience of your neighbours), and give the "inward ear" free scope.

An ancient writer has said :

In English, by the grace of God and the Muses, the poetry makes the rules, not the rules the poetry.

There are no rules for writing poetry :
but there are rules for the structure of verse.

The art of poetry cannot be taught :

"I know nothing in the world but poetry that is not to be acquired by application and care," says Lord Chesterfield in his *Letters*.

yet the craft of versification can be learned.

IN THIS BOOK

the larger type exhibits the main stream of our argument ;

the smaller type indicates either illustrations of the point under discussion, or side-issues interesting but subordinate.

“Consider.”—Where we use this word, we mean to stimulate the reader to exercise thought. The matter adduced for his consideration may be suggestive by way of *either* comparison *or* contrast.

OBEV is our abbreviation for the *Oxford Book of English Verse*.

PTD. I. or II. means *Poems of To-Day*, First or Second Series.

Where necessary we refer the reader direct to these books. In general we assume that he possesses or has access to the works of the chief poets and to anthologies.

The Glossary (pp. 151-157) gives the meaning of certain useful terms not mentioned, or not fully explained, in the text.

In the **Index** the numbers refer to the *sections* (§ 1, etc.) of the book.

PART I

SCANSION

CHAPTER I

RHYTHM AND STRESS

§ 1. Verse has been aptly called “patterned writing,” the patterns being not like roses on a wallpaper or spots on a tie—things which the eye can take in—but things for the ear : sounds. And the sound-patterns are of two kinds : rhythms and rhymes.

We will deal first with rhythm, and the means by which it is achieved.

§ 2. Rhythm.—We talk of a dance band “keeping a good rhythm,” or of the rhythmical lilt of an express travelling at full speed. What do we mean?

In the dance band a drum or banjo beats out a regular time. The wheels of the express beat upon the slight gaps where rail succeeds rail, and because the gaps occur at regular intervals the beats are also regular.

Regularity—that is the key to rhythm. There is something in the rhythmical sound-patterns of verse which recurs regularly. Just as in the pictorial wallpaper patterns the eye of the observer readily takes in the bunch of roses or the windmill or whatever composes the *unit* of the pattern, so when one is attempting to scan a line of verse, the ear should be

ready to detect the unit of sound which gives that particular line its characteristic rhythm.

Rhythm plays its part in countless human activities. Consider particularly the instinctive association of action with voice-sounds—the well-known tendency of groups of people, engaged in a common task, to sing or chant : obvious examples are soldiers marching, savages canoeing, women spinning or carding wool, and the Volga boatmen. Machinery in motion is essentially rhythmical. It is said that the engine of a steamer suggested to Browning the rhythm of *How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix* :

I sprang to the stirrup, and Joris, and he ;
I galloped, Dirck galloped, we galloped all three.

§ 3. If you recite verse while walking, as soldiers on the march sing, you will find your footfalls corresponding to the beat of the “ units ” of the verse. But try walking in time to a sentence of prose, such as—

PASSENGERS ARE FORBIDDEN TO CROSS THE LINE
EXCEPT BY THE FOOTBRIDGE.

and the impossibility of the task will bring out clearly the rhythmical nature of verse as against prose.

§ 4. **Stress.**—Considering the above sentence further, you will find that, reading it naturally, you lay more force on certain syllables than you do on others. This force we call “ stress.” Thus :

Pássengers are forbídden to cróss the líne excépt
by the fóotbridge.

The syllables here marked with an acute accent are the syllables one naturally stresses. This acute accent, placed on the vowel (or on the first vowel of a diphthong), is the usual way of signifying a stressed syllable.

The syllables which are not marked as stressed may

for convenience be called “unstressed”; but it will be well to recollect that this does not mean that they have no stress-value at all; only that they have less stress than the others. Unstressed syllables are usually (and in this book always) left unmarked.

WARNING.—Other terms, such as “accent,” and “emphasis,” have been and are frequently used in the sense of stress; but as these terms have other specialised uses, they should be carefully avoided when “stress” is meant.

So also you may find stressed syllables called “accented,” “long,” “strong,” or “heavy,” and unstressed syllables called “unaccented,” “short,” “weak,” or “light.” But all these terms also have other specific meanings, and should be carefully avoided when “stress” is meant.

§ 5. The customary stresses placed on certain English words vary (a) from age to age; (b) between one dialect and another; (c) to distinguish meanings (e.g. noun from verb), or (d) to alter the meaning of a sentence. Examples:

(a) Many words in Shakespeare are pronounced with stresses different from ours: in one scene he uses a word in two stressings—‘révénué’ and ‘révenue,’ (M.N.D., i, i). Shelley uses ‘víbrates’; Tennyson ‘balústér’ (in *The Princess*) and ‘contémplate’ (in *Memoriam*, lxxxiv). Rogers, author of *Italy* (1822), once protested “Cóntemplate is bad enough, but bálcóny makes me sick.” In contemporary speech certain words have variable stresses; e.g. ‘ábyss/abýss,’ ‘réalise/realise,’ ‘éxquisite/exquisite.’

Listen also to the ways in which people pronounce ‘hóspitable,’ ‘fórmidable,’ ‘applicable,’ ‘inexplicable.’

(b) Dialectal variations appear in

‘háráss’ (English) / ‘haráss’ (Scotch);

‘pólíce’ (English) / ‘pólis’ (Irish);

‘addréss’ (English) / ‘áddress’ (American);

‘fináncier’ (English) / ‘financıér’ (American).

Scotsmen and Irishmen also tend to vary English usage by saying 'postcárd,' 'post-óffice.'

(c) Certain words which, although spelt and pronounced identically, are in use both as verbs and as substantives, are stressed differently to show the use. Examples :

'produce' ; 'exploit' ; 'suspect' ; 'perfume' ;
'subject' ; 'entrance' ; 'invalid.'

Consider also : 'cónjure/conjûre' ; 'réfuse/refûse' ;
'invént/inventory' ; 'prócess/procissão.'

(d) Alice in Wonderland found herself repeating the sentence "Do cats eat bats?" If you repeat this sentence four times, stressing each word in turn at the expense of the other three, you can give it four different meanings. But in a sentence of monosyllables, stress becomes equivalent to "emphasis," being applied to the more vital words.

There are curiosities, too, in the way in which we shift stresses in colloquial speech according to the position of the word in the sentence. Consider :

(i) This is an unbound book.

(ii) This book has come unbound.

And the "-teen" numbers, *e.g.*

(i) Romance brought up the nine-fifteen.

KIPLING

(ii) Fifteen men on a dead man's chest.

STEVENSON

§ 6. In a number of our longer words we are not always generous with our stresses. In certain words of five syllables we try to stress the first syllable, with the result that the remaining syllables tend to become telescoped. Consider :

'Deuteronomy' ; 'necessarily' ; 'veterinary' ;
'peremptorily' ; 'customarily' ; 'temporarily' ;
'voluntarily.'

Americans as a rule, and some Englishmen, stress most

of these words on the middle syllable. And there are daily arguments as to the proper stressing of 'laboratory.'

The stress-position in these long words is singularly vacillating : "a feature to be related to the dislike of the English mind to enter on a long argument with any degree of precision."—DE MADARIAGA : *Englishmen, Frenchmen, Spaniards*.

Consider also the stresses in—

'soluble' ; 'dissoluble' ; 'indissoluble' ; 'indissolubility.'

§ 7. Prose and Verse.—Speech, which may be either prose or verse, thus consists of a series of syllables of varying stress-value, and we classify these syllables as "stressed" or "unstressed."

In order to grasp the difference between prose and verse, let us study the fall of the stresses on the syllables of two sentences. The following, observed in public conveyances, will serve the purpose :

A.—ALL CASES OF INCIVILITY AND IRREGULARITY
SHOULD BE REPORTED IMMEDIATELY TO THE TRAFFIC
SUPERINTENDENT.

B.—DO NOT PASS BEHIND THIS CAR UNTIL YOU KNOW
THE ROAD IS CLEAR.

As soon as the stressed syllables have been marked in these two sentences, it will be clear that in **A** there is no regular recurrence of any group of stressed and unstressed syllables ; but in **B** a regular alternation strikes the ear. We find in **B** eight stressed syllables regularly divided from each other by single unstressed syllables, so that we can make a regular stress-system out of it :

either Dó not páss behind this cár
 Úntíl you knów the róad is cléar
 (i.e., two lines each containing four stresses)

or Dó not páss ..
 Behínd this cár
 Úntíl you knów
 The róad is cléar.

(i.e. four lines each containing two stresses).

On the other hand, the sentence A does not allow itself to be arranged in any regular pattern of stresses ; while B has a pattern, B is rhythmic. In other words, A is prose and B verse (of a sort).

This stress-system of B is no novelty ; it has long had a wide vogue. The rhythm to which it gives rise may be found in Greek choruses, in the famous refrain of the Latin poem *Pervigilium Veneris* :

Cras amet qui nunquam amavit, quique amavit cras amet ;
 and in many mediaeval Latin poems. Compare it also with :

Téll me whére is Fáncy bréd,
Or ín the héart or ín the héad.

SHAKESPEARE

Fóolish práter, whát dost thóu
Só éarly át my wíndow dó ?

COWLEY : *The Swallow*

Cúrsed bé the sócial wánts that sín agáinst the stréngth of
yóuth !

Cúrsed bé the sócial lîes that wárp us fróm the líving trúth !

TENNYSON : *Locksley Hall*

§ 8. Now, the terms “prose” and “verse” are derived from two Latin words meaning respectively “straight onwards” or “continuous” and “turned back.” They came into use to describe the different ways of *writing* (i.e. representing or recording) the two different forms

of speech ; but the representation is only the symbol of the utterance, and we use " prose " and " verse " of the kinds of speech as well as of the records of speech. *Verse, then, is the form of speech in which the utterance " turns back "—that is, the utterance stops, turns back, and begins again.*

§ 9. Taking the arrangement of **B** in four lines as above, we observe that each of the last three lines is made up in the same way of two groups of syllables, the first stressed, the second unstressed. But the first line lacks an unstressed syllable at the beginning : apart from this, all four lines are uniform and regular. Let us supply the wanted syllable thus :

O dó not páss
Behínd this cár
Untíl you knów
The ród is cléar.

It is now obvious that the unit (two to each line) of this kind of verse is the group of two syllables, which we may call—

NON-STRESS + STRESS

and the regular recurrence of this unit, giving a continuous regularity of stress, is the basis of the rhythm which marks the sentence as verse.

§ 10. This unit, of a non-stressed syllable followed by a stressed one, is by far the commonest of the stress-units of English verse. It has supplied the basis upon which the great mass of our English poetry has been built ; we may say that with very few exceptions the following poems have sprung from this root :

1. All Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (in verse).
2. Almost all the *Old Ballads*.

3. All *Blank Verse*, whether dramatic (as Shakespeare's) or epic (*e.g.* Milton's *Paradise Lost*).
4. All the *Heroic Couplet* verse of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.
5. All the great *Sonnets*.
6. The vast majority of *Lyrics* in all ages of English poetry.

§ II. But with so much material for study before us, it is clear that we cannot constantly use so awkward a term as 'non-stress + stress'; and in order to find a more convenient name, we must consider terminology. To do so, we have to look backwards through the history of verse.

CHAPTER II

TERMINOLOGY: METRICAL NOTATIONS

"When he comes forth with dimeters, and trimeters, tetrameters, pentameters, hexameters, catalectics . . . what is all this but canting?"

BEN JONSON

"There is a very wide Difference between the Latin and English Prosody. And it's in vain to think of introducing the Rules of the former into the latter; since the English Language is not so formed as to admit of it."

JOHN MASON (1749)

"I use the technical terms, without prejudice, merely as labels to denote what everyone recognises."

W. P. KER

§ 12. The study of English verse (no less than the study of English grammar) has always been affected by the enormous influence of the classical languages, Greek and Latin, which through the centuries have been the accepted basis of European scholarship. The result is that the terms usually employed to denote the various units which make up English verse are classical names, mostly derived direct from Greek or Latin words.

We began, for instance, with "rhythm"—a Greek word meaning "beat" or "stroke"—as a term for the regularity of stress that is the feature of verse; and we saw that "prose" and "verse" were Latin words. Further, the unit or group of syllables, the regular recurrence of which creates rhythm, is traditionally called the foot.

This term, like "rhythm," suggests the *movement* which underlies all verse: see above (§ 2) for the connection

between bodily action and mental feeling. Verse, so to speak, marches, while prose meanders. (Poetry, to complete the metaphor, has wings.)

§ 13. Verse, then, consists of feet, so many to a line, which we can measure by "scanning" and adding them up. Hence the word *metre* (again simply a Greek word meaning "measure," and more familiar to us spelt "meter" in 'gas-meter,' 'thermometer,' etc.) by which we signify the kind of foot and the number of feet in a line.

In the same way we speak of verse as "measures" or "numbers":

I lisped in numbers, for the numbers came.

POPE

Tell me not in mournful numbers.

LONGFELLOW

There was an Elizabethan writer on verse (1589) who described rhythm as "a certaine musicall numerositie in utterance."

§ 14. When English scholars began to analyse English verse, they thus had, ready to hand, a set of simple and convenient terms derived from the study of classical poetry; and finding in English "feet" corresponding in sound to classical feet, they naturally gave them names already familiar. Ever since, these classical names have been used by students of English metres.

§ 15. *But it must be clearly understood that there is a fundamental difference between classical verse and English verse, which is due to different conceptions of the value of a syllable.* In classical prosody the value—the relative force—of a syllable is determined by tradition, by rule, or by certain conventions /like those which

govern our games, from cricket to bridge, only much simpler). This value was called "quantity": there were only two kinds of quantity, almost every syllable being by nature definitely either "long" or "short."

There were certain syllables of which the quantity was ambiguous, or varied (like English stresses) from one age to another.

§ 16. The chief convention was that a vowel naturally short, when followed by two consonants or a double consonant, was thereby lengthened and said to be "long by position." But apart from such artificial alterations, the quantity of a classical syllable was a matter not of chance but of rule. To utter a "false quantity" was a sign of illiteracy.

Thus a Greek or a Roman, or a scholar in those languages, knowing the quantities of the syllables in any word, knows its metrical value, and can thus determine what metres it will fit, and where he may place the word in a line of verse.

§ 17. In classical verse the method of notation is to place a straight stroke (called a "macron") over a long vowel (ā, ō, etc.), and a semicircle (called a "brevis") over a short (ă, ȏ, etc.).

§ 18. In English verse, on the stress system, the length or shortness of a syllable has nothing to do with its metrical value.

"Long" or "short" are terms used of English syllables, but in another connection. We say, for example, that the *i* is short in 'kin' and long in 'kind.' But in a line of verse either word might be stressed or unstressed, as required. Compare, too, 'Polish' (of Poland) with 'polish' (for boots, etc.): in the former the *o* is long, in the latter short; but in both it is *stressed*.

In the word 'indivisibility' we find seven syllables equally short, but the word is pronounced with at least three stresses.

§ 19. As the classical poet worked by the lengths of his syllables, so the English poet works by stresses. But our language is inconsistent ; in words of exactly similar derivation, a syllable may be stressed in one case and unstressed in another, e.g. :

tríumph—triúmphant
fráternise—fratérnal
supérieur—insúperable

The stresses on these words are fixed for us by custom. The words are all derived from Latin ; but whereas a Roman poet, using e.g. 'frater,' would know that the *a* is long both in the word itself and in any of its compounds or derivatives, in English the stresses do not follow suit.

Many English words derived from Greek or Latin are stressed in a way that has no reference to the quantities of their classical ancestors. Consider :

Greek mēlānchōlia : *English* mélanchóly
Latin ēxpēřimentum : *English* expériment.

§ 20. As short syllables are given "length by position" in the classics, so certain monosyllables in English verse appear to be occasionally "stressed by position": that is, the stress is imposed by the metre. This is most easily seen where the same monosyllable is repeated. Consider :

Sound, sound the clarion, fill the fife !
Hark, hark ! the lark at heaven's gate sings.
Few, few shall part where many meet !

In each case here the normal requirement of the metre is that the first foot should be "non-stress + stress," although the two syllables are identical. (We return to this point later, §§ 59, 60.)

§ 21. Classical verse is called "quantitative" verse. English verse, based on stress (which, as we noted in § 4, has also been called "accent"), is called "accentual" verse. This is not to say either that there is no quantity in English syllables (see § 18), or that there were no stresses irrespective of quantities in classical verse. But what *made* verse in the classic tongues was quantity : what *makes* English verse is stress.

§ 22. In the absence of any simple well-known native equivalents, then, we may adopt, thus warned, the classical names for English metres and "feet."

§ 23. The Four Main Feet.—The following four simple combinations of "stress" and "non-stress" will suffice for all the common metres of English verse.

English "foot" consisting of these syllables	Classical term and adjective	Quantitatively represented by
NON-STRESS + STRESS ..	IAMB(US), iambic	— —
STRESS + NON-STRESS ..	TROCHEE, trochaic	— —
STRESS + 2 NON-STRESSES	DACTYL, dactylic	— — —
2 NON-STRESSES + STRESS	ANAPAEEST, anapaestic	— — —

§ 24. SPECIMENS of accentual equivalents in English :

IAMBUS (or IAMB) : 'abáse' ; 'sevére' ; 'quínine' ; 'promóte' ; 'usúrp.'

TROCHEE (pronounced to rhyme very nearly with "poky") : 'brándy' ; 'dágger' ; 'móurnful' ; 'stúpid.'

DACTYL (*from the Greek for finger, which consists of one long joint followed by two short ones*): ‘área,’ ‘cóokery,’ ‘músical.’

ANAPAEST (*classically an ānāpāest itself: two shorts followed by a long*):

It is to be doubted whether any *single* word in English can be regarded as equivalent to an anapaest: words like ‘volunteer,’ ‘serenade,’ etc., may have more stress on the last syllable than on the first, but the first also has more than the second. Better anapaests are shown in the colloquial pronunciation of phrases such as ‘very good!’ ‘not at all,’ ‘never mind,’ or the military command ‘As you were!’ (when this is not monosyllabic).

§ 25. Coleridge’s little nursery rhyme may help to impress these feet on the memory:

Trochee trips from long to short.
From long to long in solemn sort
Slow Spondee stalks; strong foot! yea, ill able
Ever to come up to Dactyl trisyllable.
Iambics march from short to long;
With a leap and a bound the swift Anapaests throng.

Coleridge here includes another foot: SPONDEE. There are other simple combinations of two or more syllables with recognised names to which allusion is sometimes made:

SPONDEE (2 STRESSES: *adjective* spondaic): — —

Only words compounded of two monosyllables in English can be held to bear two equal stresses: ‘náil-brúsh,’ ‘íóg-trót,’ ‘fire-síde,’ ‘gréat-cóat,’ ‘dáb-chíck,’ ‘pláy-ground,’ but all tend to become either trochaic or iambic in common parlance. ‘Rolls-Rovce’ is

generally a perfect spondee. It has been pointed out that ‘Amen’ as used in the English Church service is a spondee: perhaps owing to the word being frequently intoned it tends to have the stress equally distributed between the two syllables. But *cp.* Shakespeare :

But wherefore could I not pronounce Amen?
I had most need of blessing, and Amen
Stuck in my throat.

(*Macbeth*, ii, 2.)

PYRRHIC (2 NON-STRESSES) : — —

The first half of an anapaest—see comment above under Anapaest. In ‘very good,’ as colloquially spoken, ‘very’ may be a pyrrhic; but ‘very’ by itself is clearly trochaic.

CHORIAMBUS (trochee + iambus) : — — — —

‘Róbin Adáir,’ ‘Líttle Bo-péep,’ ‘húllabalóo,’
‘cód-liver ófl.’

§ 26. The more carefully we consider the words given above as specimens, the more obvious becomes the difficulty and danger of employing the quantitative terms for the facts of accentual verse. We repeat that in using the quantitative terms “long” and “short” in relation to the metrical values of English syllables, one risks confusion and misunderstanding.

§ 27. Terms for metres (i.e. combinations of feet) are also derived from classic usage—and here matters are even worse. The terms are complicated and ambiguous, and we record them with doubt and dislike. The root of the trouble is that the unit of

metre is sometimes regarded as *one* foot and sometimes as a *pair of feet*. Thus :

dimeter	has been used to mean both 2 and 4 feet per line
trimeter	„ „ „ 3 and 6 „ „
tetrameter	„ „ „ 4 and 8 „ „

But “pentameter” and “hexameter” are classical terms for lines of five and six feet respectively.

The only good thing that may be said of these terms is that most of them are dying out.

§ 28. Metres which leave off, as many do, in the middle of a foot are called *catalectic* (=having a syllable short). If they end on the final syllable of a foot they are called *acatalectic* (=not a syllable short).

Thus the description in quantitative terms of our accentual line : *Do not pass behind this car until you know the road is clear* would be “trochaic tetrameter catalectic”—that is, eight (four couples of) trochees *less* the final syllable.

§ 29. Sometimes verse lines “jump” the first syllable (in anapaestic and dactylic measures the first two syllables) of a regular metre. Such lines are said to be *acephalous* (headless) or, as acrostic writers would put it, “beheaded.” The term for the addition of an unstressed syllable to the front of the metrical line is *anacrusis*.

It is useful to know all these terms, because they frequently occur when verse is being described and analysed. For ordinary purposes such terms as *curtailed* (catalectic), *complete* (acatalectic) and *beheaded* (acephalous) should do quite as well.

OTHER METRICAL NOTATIONS

I.—THE DUPE-TRIPLE SYSTEM

§ 30. English metrists have evolved at one time or another several alternative methods of classifying feet and metres. Of these we give first place to one which is home-made¹ and discards altogether the classical terms. Its main principles are quite easy to grasp.

§ 31. The reader will see that what we have called the "four main feet" can be arranged in two pairs in two ways: (a) according to the number of syllables they contain, and (b) according to the position of the stress. Thus:

- (a) iambus and trochee are of two syllables each; dactyl and anapaest " three " "
- (b) iambus and anapaest are stressed at the end; trochee and dactyl are stressed at the beginning.

The new method, which prefers to call the foot a "period," calls the two two-syllabled movements "dupe- (or double-) time" and the two three-syllabled ones "triple-time."

The time-period is said to "rise" to the stress, or to "fall" from it.

§ 32. Thus the four main movements are:

iambic	..	..	..	dupe-rising
trochaic	..	..	..	dupe-falling
dactylic	..	..	..	triple-falling
anapaestic	..	..	..	triple-rising

¹ Its originator and chief exponent is T. S. Omond (*A Study of Metre*, 1920).

By this method, blank verse, which in classical terminology has to be called “iambic pentameters” or “iambic decasyllables,” becomes the “duple-rising metre in five periods” (which can be easily abbreviated, say, to “2-rise 5”).

§ 33. Though at first appearance this may strike the reader as at least as cumbrous as the classical method, he is urged to familiarise himself with it. In the subsequent chapters, while retaining the classical terms (iambus, trochee, etc.) for our analyses of metre, we use the duple-triple system also, especially for the separation of the various metres into two main categories. We hope the advantages of this compromise will become more and more obvious as we proceed.

II.—ALGEBRAICAL

§ 34. Invented by Latham (1841) and sponsored by David Masson in his analysis of Milton’s versification, this method calls an accented (stressed) syllable *a*, an unstressed syllable *x*, and gives the number of feet to the line by prefixing the appropriate numeral. Thus an iambic foot will be *xa*, a trochaic *ax*, an anapaest *xxa*, and a dactyl *axx*. The iambic decasyllabic line will be *5xa*, the *Hiawatha* metre (four trochaic feet) *4ax*, and so on. Additional syllables at the beginning or end of the line are indicated by a plus sign before or after the symbols ; lines beheaded or curtailed by a minus sign. This system has the merit of compactness, but is perhaps too cryptic for the casual reader.

III.—MUSICAL

§ 35. Some metrists have employed systems of musical notes, together with bars and “rests,” for indicating scansion. As the six notes, semibreve, minim, crotchet, quaver, semiquaver, and demisemiquaver, may be used

either plain or "dotted" (the dot lengthening each note by half its own length), this method supplies twelve notations of time-length. There are also half a dozen lengths of "rest" to indicate pauses. Up to a point, such systems are useful and exact; but the fact that in music the first note in the bar (in *any* time) carries the "accent" tends to confusion. Moreover, as Omond says, "The perfection of music lies in absolute accordance with time; that of verse in continual slight departures from time."¹

§ 36. There are other methods, involving systems of figures and signs, which need not be described here. The student should remember that all these methods aim primarily at defining the pattern-making process of verse—the instrument upon which a poet can play a thousand tunes.

¹ T. S. Omond, *A Study of Metre*, Chapter IV.

CHAPTER III

EXAMPLES OF THE FOUR MAIN FEET

§ 37. In order to accustom the reader's ear (note that *ear*, though we have to appeal to it through the reader's eye) to the elementary feet, we give here a few samples of each of the "four main feet" used in simple metres, drawn from well-known poems, hymns, and songs.

The first example under each heading is analysed into "feet" and marked with stresses. The reader is invited to look for places where he disagrees with our stressing, and may divide up and mark the other examples. Variations will be discussed later.

§ 38. 1.—IAMBIC (or DUPLÉ-RISING) FEET

- (A.) And ín | that tówn | a dóg | was fóund,
As mán | -y dóg | there bé,
Both móg | -rel, púpp | -y, whélp | and hóund,
And cúrs | of lów | degréé.

GOLDSMITH : *Elegy on a Mad Dog*

- (B.) Know then thyself, presume not God to scan ;
The proper study of mankind is man.

POPE : *Essay on Man*

- (C.) A king sate on the rocky brow
Which looks o'er sea-born Salamis ;
And ships, by thousands, lay below,
And men in nations ;—all were his !
He counted them at break of day—
And when the sun set where were they ?

BYRON : *The Isles of Greece*

- (D.) Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to min' ?
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet
For auld lang syne.

BURNS : *Auld Lang Syne*

§ 39. II.—TROCHAIC (or DUPLÉ-FALLING) FEET

- (A.) Lórd, Thy | wórd a | -bídeth,
And our | fóotsteps | gúideth ;
Whó its | trúth be | -liéveth
Light and | jóy re | -ceíveth.

SIR H. W. BAKER : *Hymns A. & M.*, 243

- (B.) Ye who love a nation's legends,
Love the ballads of a people,
That like voices from afar off
Call to us to pause and listen,
Speak in tones so plain and childlike,
Scarcely can the ear distinguish
Whether they are sung or spoken ;
Listen to this Indian legend,
To this Song of Hiawatha.

LONGFELLOW : *Hiawatha*

- (C.) Charlotte, having seen his body
Borne before her on a shutter,
Like a well-conducted person
Went on cutting bread-and-butter.

THACKERAY : *Sorrows of Werther*

§ 40. III.—ANAPAESTIC (or TRIPLE-RISING) FEET

- (A.) 'Tis the vóice | of the slúg | -gard ; I héar | him
compláin,
You have wák'd | me too sóon, | I must slúm | -ber
agáin.

DR. ISAAC WATTS : *Divine Songs for Children*

- (B.) He had forty-two bóxes all cárefully pácked,
With his name painted clearly on each ;
But since he omitted to mention the fact,
They were all left behind on the beach.

LEWIS CARROLL : *Hunting of the Snark*

- (C.) For the breath of thy lips is freedom, and freedom's the sense of thy spirit, the sound of thy song.

SWINBURNE : *March, an Ode*

- (D.) The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,

When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

BYRON : *Sennacherib*

§ 41. IV.—DACTYLIC (or TRIPLE-FALLING) FEET

- (A.) Táke of these | élements | áll that is | fúsible,
Mélt them all | dówn in a | pípkin or | crúcible. . . .
W. S. GILBERT : *Patience* (The Heavy Dragoon)

- (B.) Fell like a cannon-shot,
Burst like a thunderbolt,
Crash'd like a hurricane. . . .

TENNYSON : *Charge of the Heavy Brigade*

- (C.) Brightest and best of the sons of the morning,
Dawn on our darkness and lend us thine aid.

BISHOP HEBER

- (D.) Forty years on, when afar and asunder
Parted are those who are singing to-day.

E. E. BOWEN : *Harrow School Song*

CHAPTER IV

THE TROUBLE BEGINS

“To scan by syllables alone is like trying to read a page of music, taking account exclusively of notes, and paying no attention to pauses or ‘rests.’”
T. S. OMOND : *Study of Metre*

“In metrical poetry the accents fall more or less regularly, that is, we are conscious that the poet has composed his verses with some definite underlying plan for these accents, though often, to avoid monotony, he may miss out an accent, or displace one from its expected position.”

H. E. PIGGOTT : *An Introduction to Music*

“I dare say you never even spoke to Time !”

“Perhaps not,” Alice cautiously replied : “but I know I have to beat time when I learn music.”

“Ah ! that accounts for it,” said the Hatter. “He won’t stand beating.”
LEWIS CARROLL : *Alice in Wonderland*

§ 42. If the attentive reader is already troubled with doubts and perplexities, he can hardly be blamed. “The Greeks and Romans,” he may say, “seem to have been lucky in their languages : every word was known to contain so many syllables, and when they required to use them in verse, they knew the definite value of each syllable. But in English, though I can see that ‘brandy’ is a trochee and ‘area’ a dactyl, I can think of many words that might be either, such as ‘soldier’ or ‘carriage’ or ‘idiot.’ How does one count syllables in English ? You said blank verse was iambic decasyllables—ten syllables to the line. What about Shakespeare’s

O Romeo, Romeo ! wherefore art thou Romeo ?

in which I find a dactyl 'Romeo' three times, and fourteen syllables in all?"

Let us deal with that difficulty first; it will clear a lot of ground.

§ 43. It is true that in English there must frequently be doubts about the number of syllables in certain words. Long ago the Frenchman Voltaire said: "The English gain two hours a day more than we do by eating their syllables." We do; in 'soldier,' 'carriage,' etc., we "eat," swallow, submerge, or partially suppress the *i*. So we do, too, in hundreds of words where the *i* is what is called a "consonantal *y*": e.g. 'opinion,' 'familiar,' 'immediate,' 'obedience,' etc.¹ Consider all the words ending in "-tion" or "-sion," which we now pronounce as one syllable, though Shakespearean usage often requires two. And besides these half-drowned *i*'s we habitually skip any poor weak timid vowel in innumerable other words ('innumerable' is one of them). The most obvious example is 'heaven,' which in verse is more often one syllable than two.

§ 44. This, then, is what happens to the *e* in 'Romeo.' When we name the play, we more or less submerge both the *e* in 'Romeo' and the *i* in 'Juliet.'² In the quoted line, then, 'Romeo' may be counted as two syllables. That brings the total down to eleven, the extra syllable being the "-meo" at the end of the line. This common feature we must now explain.

¹ Consider why the common expression 'Honest Injun' is usually spelt in that way. What does the *j* represent?

² Both Calverley and Gilbert rhyme her to 'school yet.'

§ 45. Feminine ending is the term for an extra unstressed syllable after the final stressed syllable of the normal foot. This gives, as it were, a trochaic ending to a line of iambic or anapaestic feet. (A "feminine rhyme," in the same way, is a trochaic rhyme, as we shall see later (§ 62).)

It is common in blank verse, sometimes for several lines consecutively :

To be, or not to be : that is the question :
 Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
 The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
 Or to take arms against a sea of troubles.

SHAKESPEARE

After my death I wish no other herald,
 No other speaker of my living actions,
 To keep mine honour from corruption,
 But such an honest chronicler as Griffith.

SHAKESPEARE

(Take care of the third line here ; 'corruption' is four syllables, and does *not* give a feminine ending.)

§ 46. Nevertheless it is true that the use of the trisyllable 'Romeo' has an effect of its own. (Substitute a trochaic name and listen :—

O Hamlet, Hamlet ! wherefore art thou Hamlet ?)

If we feel that we do not completely suppress the extra syllable, it is possible to say that in lines of this kind the poet has put three syllables (an anapaest) in place of two (the iambus) :—

Deliberate valour breathed, firm and unmoved.

MILTON

Whose influence hath allotted death and hell.

MILTON

A strange invisible perfume hits the sense.

SHAKESPEARE

(Observe in each case the weakness or brevity of the syllable that gets lost.)

This is called anapaestic substitution.

NOTE.—The habit of printing words with an apostrophe in place of the vowel of a submerged syllable (*e.g.*, ‘deliberate/delib’rate’) appears to have begun about 1600; and it is still comparatively common. This practice was greatly developed by Dryden, Pope, and their like, as it helped to lend colour to the current belief that *metre* depends strictly on the number of syllables; that the blank verse or “Heroic” line consists of exactly ten syllables, and so on; hence there were occasions when words like ‘deliberate’ had in some way or other to be shorn of a syllable in order that poetic usage might be made to conform to the theory. The apostrophe was a neat and easy device. Unfortunately it was overworked. One can say that ‘heav’n’ satisfactorily records the normal pronunciation of ‘heaven,’ but words like ‘visible’ and ‘delicate’ and ‘impetuous’ do not respond at all happily to the same treatment. In fact, the only way in which *all* these supernumerary submerged syllables can properly be explained is, as above, on the principle of trisyllabic substitution.

See also ELISION (in Glossary).

§ 47. In iambic verse of all kinds, another very common variation is the *inversion* of a foot; that is, the substitution of a trochee for the normal iambus. This inversion is most frequently seen in the first foot; *e.g.* :

Swéet are the úses of adversity.

SHAKESPEARE

Drínk to me ónly with thine eyes.

JONSON

Húnger and thirst, right ádjuncts of the war.

MILTON

But it may occur in any foot except the last,¹ and is sometimes found twice in a line :

Whó with her héad, nímble in thréats, appróachéd.

SHAKESPEARE

This is called trochaic substitution.

Note, however, that in pure trochaic verse you cannot apply the converse rule and substitute an iambus for a trochee. For instance, in a line of *Hiawatha* :

O the long and dreary Winter

it would be impossible to say

O the long and severe Winter.

§ 48. In the same way, when a line (blank verse or other iambic) begins with one of these submerged-syllable words, e.g.—

Myriads of mingling dyes from these result.

THOMSON : *Newton*

Liberal, and suiting gentleman's array.

WORDSWORTH : *Prelude*

it is possible to regard the first foot of each line as being a dactyl in place of the normal iambus. This can happen, of course, in other feet ; it is called dactylic substitution.

NOTE.—There are instances of a single consonant doing duty for a syllable and taking its place as such in a metrical line. Thus words of Greek derivation ending in ' -m ' :

¹ The famous exception which proves this rule is where Shakespeare, at the height of his powers and in a passage of intense tragic emotion, gives King Lear, with Cordelia dead in his arms, the daringly simple line :

Never, never, never, never, never !

(five consecutive inversions). But those whose genius is less than Shakespeare's should avoid inverting the last foot of a blank verse line.

'chasm,' 'sarcasm,' 'prism,' 'phantasm,' 'cataclysm,' 'rhythm'; and many longer words ending in '-ism.' like 'Socialism.'

Nerves on edge and lacking rhythm ?
Bovril is the stuff to give 'em !

Adv't. (1925)

And more authoritatively :

The great Italian made his statues wear
 The rhythm of his mind as absolute
 As though he poured the metal of an air
 Along the cool obedience of a flute.

HUMBERT WOLFE : *Requiem* (1927)

You can't get high aesthetic tastes, like trousers, ready made ;

True views on Mediaevalism Time alone will bring.

W. S. GILBERT : *Patience* (1881)

Consider also :

Off to C-nossus !
 You're a colossus—
 We shall be prostrated :
 Off to C-nossus !
 Come back and boss us
 When you've expiated.

A. P. HERBERT : *Helen* (1932)

As may be surmised from our examples, the feature is more frequently found in light verse. Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch has gently derided the trick :

The Tyrolese make famous cheese
 And hunt the chamois o'er the chazzums ;
 I'd choose the former, if you please,
 For precipices give me spazzums.

§ 49. It is not only in iambic metres, of course, that syllables are submerged. Notice in the anapaestic examples (§ 40, D.)—

The Assy | -rian came down | . . .

that ‘-rian’ is equivalent to the first syllable of the anapaest. Again in the *Burial of Sir John Moore* (OBEV, No. 603) :

Not a sol | -dier discharged | his farewell shot.
the ‘-dier’ is sounded as one syllable, and an unstressed one at that.

§ 50. “But,” says the attentive reader, “now that you have mentioned that poem, I should like to know how you would classify it. It begins :

Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note . . .
That is to say, it leads off with an anapaest, and the next foot is an iambus—or is it a spondee? How do you describe the poem?”

§ 51. This introduces a very important point. It is quite clear that the line quoted *looks* like a series of anapaests, with a failure of some kind in the second foot. If it ran ‘Not a bugle was heard,’ all would be well for the anapaests. If it were—

No drum was heard, nor mournful note
we should guess we were in for an iambic poem.

And the other line quoted above—

Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot
certainly *looks* like two anapaests followed by two iambic feet.

It follows that we cannot give this metre any name which states the number of syllables in the line. Can we regard it as an iambic metre with anapaestic substitutions? If we do, a count shows at once that there are more substitutions than normal feet! Is it then an anapaestic metre with something missing? Is it in duplé or triple time?

§ 52. "Why do you say 'something missing'?" asks the attentive reader. "It's perfectly easy to read. 'Not a drum was heard'—you make the 'was' two syllables, I think . . . or the 'heard' . . . or you just linger a bit before you say them . . . or linger over them. . . ."

§ 53. The reader is quite right. The *ear* is satisfied, but the *eye* looks for a missing syllable; we see that 'Not a drum' is three, and 'was heard' two, but we hear the two feet or periods as equal.

In other words, *all the syllables that the metre requires are not there, not printed, not visible.* The voice reading the line does not mind; it makes the necessary pause. This pause takes the place of the missing syllable; and its duration is regulated by the length of the normal foot of the poem, the time of which is constant. Subtract the time of 'was heard' from the time of 'Not a drum' and you get the time of the pause.

A pause may be indicated by the sign $\wedge$.

This is called the "caret" mark; it is peculiarly appropriate, because we commonly use it to insert something omitted in writing—which is exactly what has happened here!

§ 54. But the reader was quite right in hesitating to say whether his voice lingered or "dwelt" *on or before or over* the visible syllables. The truth is simply—it does not matter. "You says the line, and you takes your choice!"

In this particular instance, it is very interesting to notice that the word 'drum' happens to be one that (owing to the final *m*) you can prolong at pleasure. If you feel that this prolongation of the sound helps you to fill the pause, observe that it makes it very difficult to mark definitely

where the first "foot" ends. You are, so to speak, on the way towards making the monosyllable 'drum' into a metrical trochee! Again, 'heard' is a naturally long syllable: substitute 'hit' for it—and *listen*.

§ 55. The reader, no doubt familiar with singing *Auld Lang Syne* (see § 38, D.), may now look back at the last lines :

We'll tak' a cup o' kindness yet
For auld $\wedge$ lang $\wedge$ syne.

We print the pauses *between* the words ; but it is rather a case for dwelling *on* the words themselves, because every singer knows that the words 'auld' and 'lang,' as sung, are lengthened out as if they were two syllables each. As they appear in print, the three words 'auld lang syne' are three consecutive stressed syllables.

§ 56. Quite clearly, then, we cannot find the metre of a line by counting the syllables. But if we count the number of *stresses* in any given line, we shall have the number of feet (none of our four main feet containing more than one stress).

Analysing *The Burial of Sir John Moore* in this way, we find it consists of alternate lines of four and three feet, the latter with a "feminine ending." The two lines in a later verse—

But we steadfastly gazed on the face that was dead,
And we bitterly thought of the morrow

require no pause-mark, and thus provide the only couplet in the poem in which the full form of the four and three feet is *visible as well as audible*.

In this way we get the poem's **basic metre** :—

It is in triple-rising metre (anapaests), of alternate lines of four periods (or feet) and three, the latter with

the additional syllable at the end of the line, which we have learnt to call "feminine ending."

§ 57. Similarly we may say that the basic metre of blank verse is five duple-rising periods or iambic feet. But that description of the elements of blank verse is about as useful as saying that the human face consists of two eyes, a nose and a mouth, in that order, reading from top to bottom. This may describe the "basic metre" of all human faces, but it takes no account of the infinite number of variations possible within those limits.

It is quite easy to find hundreds of blank verse lines that are justly describable as "five iambic feet." But even twenty consecutive lines strictly following that basic metre would be monotonous (as *Hiawatha* is monotonous): they would be like Maud's face in Tennyson's poem:—

Faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null.

§ 58. Monotony is avoided by **variations**—by the poet taking licences with the metres—such as the dactylic and anapaestic substitutions described above, which are due to what we called "submerged syllables"; also by the use of the pause. These variations from the normal occur in all kinds of verse with extreme frequency.

§ 59. "I am still a little uncertain," the attentive reader may say, "about how one knows when a syllable is stressed or not. Some time ago you spoke (§ 20) of syllables 'stressed by position,' and quoted

Sound, sound the clarion, fill the fife .

and other examples. You said the first foot was non-

stress + stress—what we now call ‘iambic’ or ‘duple-rising.’ How do you know which of the two exactly similar words is stressed? Might it not be ‘trochaic substitution’?”

The answer to this is that your ear must tell you. Is it more natural to say ‘Sound, sound’ as duple-rising (iambus) or duple-falling (trochee)? Or do you hear it as a spondee?

§ 60. Grammatical stress—the stress used in normal speech-rhythm—must sometimes give way to the requirements of metre. Observe in the passage from *Hiawatha* (§ 39, B.) the different stresses on the word ‘to’ in different lines—

Cáll to ús to páuse and listen . . .
Listen tó this Indian legend,
Tó this song of Hiawatha.

and watch—or rather listen—for other instances.

Consider also :

Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens, and shades of death.
MILTON : *Paradise Lost*

This much-discussed line of blank verse can only be scanned if some of the monosyllables are stressed at the expense of others. But the stresses imposed will have no other justification than metrical expediency. Rearrange the first six words in any order, and the line remains *metrically* the same.

§ 61. The attentive reader being silenced—possibly through despair or exhaustion—we may now divert ourselves.

Verse, we have seen, is presented to us by the poet in lines, in order that the repetitive character of his

metrical patterns may be emphasised ; and we have learnt something about the ways in which these patterns may be measured and recorded.

We now turn to rhyme, which helps us to realise the metrical pattern by emphasising or ornamenting the points where it “ turns back ”—that is, the ends of the lines.

PART II

RHYME

CHAPTER V

THE ELEMENTS OF RHYME

"Rime being no necessary Adjunct or true Ornament of Poems or good Verse, in longer Works especially, but the Invention of a barbarous Age, to set off wretched Matter and lame Meeter."

JOHN MILTON : Preface to *Paradise Lost*

"Milton's curious heresies about rhyme."

GEORGE SAINTSBURY

§ 62. We have seen that rhythm is one of the methods by which "pattern" is achieved in verse. The other method is rhyme, or, as the Elizabethans put it, "like-endings."

The only two kinds of rhyme of normal occurrence in serious English poetry are *single rhyme*, in which the final syllables of all the rhyming words are similar in sound, and *double rhyme*, in which the *two* final syllables of all the rhyming words are similar in sound. Single rhyme is sometimes called "*masculine*," double rhyme "*feminine*." (See "*Feminine Ending*," § 45.)

Jack and Jill
Went up the hill

is an instance of single or masculine rhyme.

Hey diddle diddle
The cat and the fiddle

is an instance of double or feminine (and therefore trochaic) rhyme.

A feminine (disyllabic) rhyme should be a full rhyme, not merely two rhymes to the two syllables separately : e.g. 'hayrake' is not a full rhyme to 'daybreak,' but 'may break' is.

§ 63. Triple, "tumbling" or three-syllabled rhyme is also sometimes employed in English verse, more often than not for the sake of the humour to be derived from the ingenuity of the versifier and the incongruity of idea afforded by his rhymes.

Year after year we've been waiting and tarrying
Without ever dreaming of loving and marrying ;
Though we've been hitherto deaf, dumb and blind to it,
It's pleasant enough when you've made up your mind to it.

GILBERT : *The Sorcerer*

Of these four lines the first two are in pure triple rhyme ; the last two, where more than one word is required for the rhyme, in what is called "broken" rhyme.

§ 64. As the vast majority of English verse lines end on a stressed syllable, it is obvious that the monosyllabic rhyme is far the commonest. But the next most common, the disyllabic or "feminine" rhyme, has been widely used from the beginnings of English poetry.

In poems where the poet may use either one- or two-syllabled rhymes, the proportion of feminine to monosyllabic rhymes seldom exceeds on the average one in twenty. Shakespeare's sonnets have about one "feminine" rhyme in every sonnet (*i.e.* one in fourteen lines), though sometimes a whole sonnet shows feminine rhymes (*e.g.* No. 20). The proportion in such poems as Keats's *Odes* and Wordsworth's *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality* is about one feminine rhyme in every twenty lines.

§ 65. **Other Types of Rhyme.**—(Instances are given in § 69.)

Identical Rhyme.—When the same word or syllable is used more than once, so that the word or syllable rhymes with itself. This is not properly rhyme at all, but poets use it occasionally when they are in difficulties. It should be avoided: ‘vest’ rhymes to ‘chest,’ but should not be rhymed to ‘invest’; ‘multiplication’ rhymes to ‘vexation’ but should not be rhymed to words ending in ‘-cation.’

In the same way it is better to avoid rhyming syllables identically pronounced but differently spelt: e.g. ‘right/write/wright’; or ‘lead (the metal)/led.’

Sectional or Internal Rhyme.—An intricate system of cross-rhymes. (See examples § 69 (viii) and (xi), and § 143 (c).)

Leonine or Bisecting Rhyme.—The first half of a line rhyming with the second half; called “Leonine” after a certain poet Leo (A.D. 1150), who wrote Latin hexameters rhyming in the middle and at the end.

“O frabjous day! Calloo, callay!”

He chortled in his joy.

LEWIS CARROLL

Eye (or Printers’) Rhyme.—Where the words rhyme “on paper,” but not as pronounced: ‘own/crown,’ ‘though/plough,’ ‘door/moor.’ This is a licence generally conceded to the poet. In Pope’s day ‘join’ rhymed with ‘fine’ and ‘spoil’ with ‘tile’;¹ and Spenser, living at a time when every district had its

¹ One also finds in Pope:

‘steer/here/character/refer’; ‘sphere/bear’; ‘long/tongue’
(cf. ‘tongs’); ‘own/town’; ‘adores/pow’rs’; ‘tea/obey’

In Addison: ‘east/west’; and in Dryden: ‘sea/they.’

different dialect, made things easier for himself by carefully selecting the pronunciations which would suit him best. In his day ‘door,’ for instance, rhymed in some dialects with ‘moor,’ in others, as now, with ‘more.’ There was therefore justification for Spenser’s using each rhyme as occasion demanded. Obviously, “eye-rhymes” could not exist before a standard spelling was adopted, and so what we now call “eye-rhymes” have not necessarily been eye-rhymes always. The type therefore tends to overlap with conventional and “bad” rhymes.

§ 66. Because they are dependent on pronunciation, rhymes (like stresses) must vary as pronunciation varies, from age to age, from one dialect to another. What seems a perfect rhyme to one man’s ear may not be a rhyme to his descendants, nor even to a number of his contemporaries.

There is, however, a recognised correctness of pronunciation of English, called “Standard (or Received Standard) Spoken English”; it is derived—with the alterations natural to a living language—from the standard speech of the Court and cultured society in the fifteenth century. It is recorded in dictionaries, and represents the pronunciation of educated people. But even in this there are numerous doubtful or disputed pronunciations and admitted variations: the differences, for example, between north and south English, originally broad, have not yet narrowed to the point of extinction.

§ 67. Assonance.—On the way to achieving consonance (full similarity in sound), rhyme may be said to pass through a stage of partial similarity.

Just as poets have resorted occasionally to eye-rhyme, so they have at times used, intentionally or for want of a true rhyme, not a similar vowel *and consonant* ending ('bat/cat') which is rhyme proper, but simply a similar vowel ('bat/man'), which is *assonance*.

The following are examples of single-syllable assonance :

'bite/nice' ; 'war/fall' ; 'late/cape' ; 'feel/deed' ;
'faith/safe' ;

and 'batten/ladder' ; 'penitent/reticence,' of assonance in two and three syllables respectively.

Assonance produces the so-called "popular" rhymes which satisfy the primitive ear, ancient or modern :

Half owre, half owre to Aberdour,
It's fifty fathom deep ;
And there lies guid Sir Patrick Spens,
Wi' the Scots Lords at his feet.

Old Ballad

('deep/feet')

Nineteen, twenty,
My plate's empty.

Nursery Rhyme

('twenty/empty')

Little Tommy Tucker
Sang for his supper.
What shall he have for it ?
White bread and butter.

Nursery Rhyme

('Tucker/supper/butter')

Consider also :

It seemed that out of battle I escaped
Down some profound long tunnel, long since scooped
Through granites which Titanic wars had groined.

Yet also there encumbered sleepers groaned
Too fast in thought or death to be bestirred.
Then as I probed them, one sprang up and stared. . . .
WILFRED OWEN : *Strange Meeting* (1920)

Here the principle is not, properly speaking, assonance at all, but the intentional perversion of rhyme. Owen was one of the poets of the Great War, and since his day this device has claimed much attention from the younger school of writers. It is an instance of the tendency on the part of practitioners in all the arts of to-day to emphasise in their work the distinction between beauty and an easy complacent prettiness, such as inevitable rhyme obviously assists.

Beckon, O beacon, and O sun be soon !
Hollo, bells, over a melting earth !
Let man be many and his sons all sane,
Fearless with fellows, handsome by the hearth.
C. DAY LEWIS : *The Magnetic Mountain* (1933)

See ALLITERATIVE VERSE (in Glossary).

CHAPTER VI

RHYME : EXAMPLES

§ 68. Notation of Rhyme-schemes.—The usual method of *recording* the rhyme-scheme of a poem is to indicate each group of rhyming words by a letter of the alphabet, the first rhyme-word being called **A** and starting series **A**, the second **B**, and so on for as many series of rhymes as the poem contains. For instance :

Rarely, rarely, comest thou	A
Spirit of Delight !	B
Wherefore hast thou left me now	A
Many a day and night ?	B
Many a weary night and day	C
'Tis since thou art fled away.	C

SHELLEY : *Song*

The rhyme-scheme here is written **ABABCC**.

§ 69. In the following instances each example is followed by the rhyme-scheme and notes on the type of rhyme, the numerical references being to the lines of each quotation.

- (i) Ever let the Fancy roam,
Pleasure never is at home ;
At a touch sweet Pleasure melteth,
Like to bubbles when rain pelteth.
Then let winged Fancy wander
Through the thought still spread beyond her.

KEATS : *Fancy*

AABBCC. 1, 2, single rhyme. 3, 4, double (or feminine). 5, 6, double, broken.

- (ii) Holy, holy, holy ! Lord God Almighty !
 Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee :
 Holy, holy, holy ! Merciful and Mighty !
 God in Three Persons, Blessèd Trinity !

BISHOP HEBER : *Hymns A. & M.*, 160

ABAB. 1, 3, double, identical. 2, 4, single.

- (iii) So lively and so like in all men's sight,
 That weaker sense it could have ravisht quight :
 The maker selfe, for all his wondrous witt,
 Was nigh beguiled with so goodly sight.

SPENSER : *Faerie Queene*

AABA. (Part of a Spenserian stanza.) 1, 4,
 identical.

- (iv) The hand of the reaper
 Takes the ears that are hoary,
 But the voice of the weeper
 Wails manhood in glory.

SCOTT : *Coronach*

ABAB. Double rhyme.

- (v) The world's great age begins anew,
 The golden years return,
 The earth doth like a snake renew
 Her winter weeds outworn.

SHELLEY : *Astraea Redux*

ABAB. 1, 3, identical (the single syllable on which the rhyme depends being common to both 'anew' and 'renew'). 2, 4, not true assonance, but approximate rhyme.

- (vi) The wind in the reeds and the rushes,
 The bees on the bells of thyme,
 The birds on the myrtle bushes—

SHELLEY : *Song of Pan*

1, 3, eye-rhyme.

- (vii) This seraph-band, each waved his hand,
 No voice did they impart—
 No voice ; but O, the silence sank
 Like music on my heart.

COLERIDGE : *Ancient Mariner*

aAB—B. 1, Leonine (bisecting) rhyme. 2, 4, single.
 1, 3, assonance.

- (viii) Then up with your cup : till you stagger in speech,
 And match me this catch : though you swagger and
 screech,
 And drink till you wink : my merry men each.

SCOTT : *Kenilworth*

Sectional or internal rhyme : 1, 'up/cup' ; 2,
 'match/catch' ; 3, 'drink/wink.' Also 1, 2,
 'stagger/swagger.' End-rhymes, single.

- (ix) 'Tis pity learned virgins ever wed
 With persons of no sort of education,
 Or gentlemen who, though well-born and bred,
 Grow tired of scientific conversation :
 I don't choose to say much upon this head ;
 I'm a plain man, and in a single station,
 But—oh, ye lords of ladies intellectual,
 Inform us truly, have they not hen-pecked you all ?

BYRON : *Don Juan*

ABABABCC. 1, 3, 5, single rhyme. 2, 4, 6, double.
 7–8, triple rhyme (8, broken, and perhaps forced).

- (x) Touch her not scornfully ;
 Think of her mournfully,
 Gently and humanly ;
 Not of the stains of her,
 All that remains of her
 Now is pure womanly.

THOMAS HOOD : *Bridge of Sighs*

AABCCB. Triple rhyme (3, 6, conventional : see
 § 79 (i)).

(xi) You gave in—you, the proud of heart, unbowed of heart!

Was this, friend, the end of all that we could do?
And have you found the best for you, the rest for you?
Did you learn so suddenly (and I not by!)
Some whispered story, that stole the glory from the sky,
And ended all the splendid dream, and made you go
So dully from the fight we know, the light we know?

RUPERT BROOKE: *Desertion*

1-7, elaborate sectional or internal rhyme, single, double, and triple.

§ 70. Examples (ix), (x), and (xi) show triple (or trisyllabic) rhyme. This must obey the same rule as the "feminine" or disyllabic (see § 62), and be a full rhyme, the second and third syllables being identical in sound in each rhyme. Thus: 'titivate/mitigate,' or 'elevate/celebrate' are not full triple rhymes: 'tenderly/slenderly' is.

Hood's *Bridge of Sighs* (OBEV, No. 654) from which (x) is taken, is one of the very few serious poems in which the majority of the rhymes are triple. The poem should be analysed for single, double, and triple rhymes, assonances and bad rhymes.

§ 71. Triple rhymes usually produce a comic effect: compare Byron's 'intellectual/henpecked you all' in (ix). Two of the best-known practitioners are R. H. Barham in the *Ingoldsby Legends* and W. S. Gilbert in the libretti of the Savoy operas.

One or two traditional *tours de force* in this craft are attributed to Sydney Smith, a witty writer contemporary with Barham, or W. M. Thackeray:

If I were a cassowary
On the plains of Timbuctoo,
I would eat a missionary,
Coat, and hat, and hymn-book too.

The mighty king Sennacherib
Declared that he could track a rib
On all except Jehoshaphat—
But not on him, he was so fat.

§ 72. *Forced Rhymes*.—It will be seen that we have marked Byron's triple rhyme in (ix) as "perhaps forced." The rhymes in § 71 certainly are.

A forced rhyme is always grotesque and striking, and may verge on either the brilliant or the bad rhyme. Samuel Butler employed a number in his satirical poem *Hudibras* (1663). The stately and formal poetry of the eighteenth century naturally avoided such rhymes; later, Byron reintroduced the fashion: *Don Juan*, not to mention *A Vision of Judgment*, sparkles with brilliant forced rhymes.

. . . And ghost is written "ghoest"—
When exigence of rhyme compels,
Orthography forgoes her spells,
And ghost is written "ghoest."

Chorus. With what an emphasis he dwells
Upon "orthography" and "spells"—
That kind of fun's the lowest.

W. S. GILBERT: *The Grand Duke*!

§ 73. The use of forced rhymes in serious poetry is best seen in the Brownings. Elizabeth Barrett Browning, having theories of her own about rhyme, frequently contented herself with approximate rhymes: 'measured/desert'; 'treading/Eden'; 'terrace/heiress'; 'nature/satire'; 'poems/flowings.'

Robert Browning, in light or serious poetry, invented a number of brilliant if far-fetched rhymes, much more accurate in consonance than those quoted above from

his wife's poetry. The popular *Pied Piper of Hamelin* contains characteristic Browning rhymes, such as 'silence/mile hence' and 'óbese/robe ease.' (Note also that this poem contains a (forced) example of the very rare four-syllabled rhyme: 'bý psaltery/drysaltery': Browning having printed an accent on 'by' to show that he meant it.) But even in his serious poems fantastic rhymes are frequent:

'fabric/dab brick'; 'stir-up/syrup'; 'syntax/tin-tacks'; 'failure/pale lure'; 'San Spirito/weary toe.'

§ 74. **Indentation of Rhyming Lines.**—It is an almost universal practice in printing poetry to guide the reader's eye to lines that rhyme together by indenting them equally. "Indenting" is a printers' term which means starting the line at a certain distance inwards, or towards the right, from the left-hand margin.

This is not done when the rhymes run in couplets or triplets.

Instances of each kind will be seen in the examples above (§ 69). A-rhymed lines begin perpendicularly under one another; B-rhymed lines begin at a uniform distance to the right of the A perpendicular. But a C rhyme often goes back under A, to save over-running the line. (See the first example in § 68, and elsewhere.)

CHAPTER VII

RHYME: CERTAIN DIFFICULTIES

§ 75. Rhymelessness.

What is more gentle than a wind in summer?
What is more soothing than the pretty hummer
That stays one moment in an open flower?

KEATS : *Sleep and Poetry*

‘The pretty hummer’!—in other words ‘a bee’: and an instance of the lamentable straits to which English poets may be reduced in an endeavour to find rhymes for even the commonest and most essential words. Our vocabulary is vast enough; but the endings to our words, unlike those of inflexional languages, show too much variability. We have no rhymes in English for ‘warmth,’ ‘month,’ ‘wolf,’ ‘gulf,’ ‘sylph,’ ‘breadth,’ ‘width,’ ‘depth,’ ‘scarce,’ ‘wasp,’ ‘pint,’ ‘rhythm,’ ‘bilge,’ ‘film’; nor for the ordinal numerals from ‘fifth’ upwards. Many other words are hardly better off in the possession of only one full rhyme. Thus ‘length’ has to rely entirely on ‘strength,’ while for ‘courage’ there is only ‘demurrage’ (*i.e.* charge on overdue railway truck). Shakespeare rhymes ‘babe’ to ‘drab’: the only full rhyme to the former is ‘astrolabe,’ and the association of the two presents difficulties. (Lewis Carroll’s ‘wabe’ and ‘outgrabe’ are ‘nonce-words.’)

* And, in one pronunciation, ‘borage,’ a blue flower traditionally used as a semi-decorative ingredient of cider-cup.

'Self' ('him-', 'her-' etc.) has to drag in 'elf,' 'delf,' or 'pelf,' or (with more than poetic justice) get put on the 'shelf.'

§ 76. Cockney Rhyme.—The commonest example, perhaps, is the 'dawn/morn' rhyme. It is a little unfair to attribute the failing exclusively to those born within the sound of Bow Bells. The dispute is really between north English and south English: the north-countryman actually pronounces, more or less audibly, the *r* in 'morn,' etc., while in southern speech the *r* is silent.

(But many south-English speakers, knowing that the *r* is there, and thinking that they ought to pronounce it even if they do not do so, avoid Cockney rhymes.)

The first four lines of the eighteenth-century hunting song *Old Towler* provide a good exercise :

Bright Chanticleer proclaims the dawn,
And spangles deck the thorn,
The lowing herds now quit the lawn,
The lark springs from the corn.

Rhyme-scheme : ABAB. (Cockney rhyme-scheme : AAAA !)

Many quite good poets have been guilty at one time or another of Cockney rhyme :

Through the long twilight they pray for the dawn
Round the lone house in the midst of the corn.

W. MORRIS : *Summer Dawn*

Hark ! our ears have caught
Sound of breath and snort.

"MICHAEL FIELD "

And the ships shall go abroad
To the glory of the Lord.

RUDYARD KIPLING

'Broad' and 'abroad' have always presented difficulties. Byron, who never did believe in caution, rhymes 'broad' with 'fraud'; Tennyson, generally punctilious, 'abroad' with 'Maud'; R. L. Stevenson 'abroad' with 'trod,' and D. H. Lawrence follows Byron with 'broad/applaud.' Other poets have solved the puzzle by adopting the eye-rhyme 'road' (but they would perhaps hesitate to rhyme 'broadside' with 'roadside').

§ 77. If the term "Cockney rhyme" be extended to cover rhymes indicative of careless or degenerate pronunciation, its category will overlap with what can only be called bad rhymes: *e.g.*

'stars/ours'; 'scores/yours'; 'dahlia/failure';
'self/health'; 'pæan/green.'

§ 78. The following lines, from a provision merchant's advertisement in a parish magazine (1919) contain several lessons in what to avoid:

A year ago, the topic then,
Our warmest welcome to the men
From sternest fight for freedom's laws
Returned once more to Britain's shores.

We've still our chance to make you feel
Our gratitude is good and real;
That you shall pay, not more, but less
Than Control, I'll do my best.

Rhyme-scheme: AA, BB (Cockney), CC (bad), DD (assonance).

The "bad" rhyme CC is in fact a rhyme between the monosyllabic 'feel,' and the disyllabic 'real.' In the lines:

Euphelia serves to grace my measure
But Chloë is my real flame.

MATTHEW PRIOR: *Song* (OBEV, No. 424)

'real' is no more a monosyllable than Chloë.

Compare also :

Life is real, life is earnest.

LONGFELLOW : *Psalm of Life*

Similarly, 'ideal' is three syllables, not as in—

Jolly and instructive toys,
Just ideal for clever boys.

Harrods' *Christmas Catalogue*, 1923

On the other hand, 'ordeal' is properly two syllables. Those who wish to argue the point are referred to the *New English Dictionary*: both pronunciations are given, but the etymology makes it clear that the disyllabic pronunciation is correct.

§ 79. We subjoin a few notes on the various ways in which certain common English words have been rhymed by our poets. This book is not a history of English pronunciation: readers are referred to the warnings in § 66.

(a) 'Love' and 'home,' two words suggesting ideas exceptionally stimulative of verse, are peculiarly deficient in rhymes.

'Love/dove/glove/the Heaven above' are fairly obvious. Meredith has boldly used 'shove.' The conventional rhymes (once full, but now eye-rhymes) are 'prove,' 'move' and their compounds. The "Pre-Raphaelites" (Rossetti and his friends) frequently rhymed 'love' with 'of,' 'thereof,' etc.

'Home.'—The favourite full rhyme is 'roam'; 'come' is the conventional rhyme. William Blake rhymes 'home' with 'hum.'

(b) 'Again' has two pronunciations, rhyming with 'pen' or 'pain.' Authority can be quoted for each

alternative. Shakespeare favours the 'pain' rhyme. W. E. Henley revived the old (but not original) spelling 'agen' and rhymed to that sound; Mr. John Masefield, adopting the same practice, has influenced others. But an analysis of the *London Mercury* poets (1919-1930) shows that the 'pain' rhyme is now preferred.

(c) Many educated people pronounce 'ear' and 'year' exactly alike. (Consider the pun: 'I haven't seen him for donkey's years.') Certain poets refuse to rhyme the two words together, apparently regarding them as identical in pronunciation. Others rhyme 'year' with 'her,' 'prefer,' etc.; but 'ear' only with such words as 'dear,' 'fear,' etc.

The confusion does not extend to 'earn' and 'yearn.'

(d) 'Girl.'—The word 'girl,' sometimes required for poetic use, is pronounced by many good speakers in such a way as to make it unrhymable: 'gairl' may represent the sound (approximating to the sound in the French 'merle'). Tennyson, Browning, and Meredith (among others) rhyme 'girls' with 'curls,' 'churls,' etc., and this should be sufficient authority for any one. 'Whirl' and 'twirl' are full rhymes. 'Pearl' is an obvious and popular rhyme—'earl,' too—but has been criticised. Yet no one objects to poets rhyming 'earth' and 'birth.'

(e) 'Fire.'—Pronunciation turns 'fire' almost inevitably into a disyllable, and we have the authority of Shakespeare for its use as such in a metrical line:

O who can hold a fire in his hand
By thinking on the frosty Caucasus?

Richard II

Consider :

Music that gentlier on the spirit lies
Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes.

TENNYSON : *The Lotos Eaters*

Mrs. Browning (not a good exemplar of purity in rhyming) rhymes 'fire' with 'higher'; and in less sublime verse we find :

And when Matilda shouted " Fire ! "
They only answered " Little liar ! "

H. BELLOC : *Cautionary Tales*

but the modern tendency is to disregard the habitual pronunciation and adhere to the monosyllable.

(f) 'Due/Dew,' etc.—Certain critical ears disapprove of rhyming a word like 'due' with a word like 'blue,' on account of the *y*-sound after the *d* (dyoo) that Standard English makes—and Americans do not. There would appear to be no general agreement amongst poets on this point. Consider—

blue, blew, due, dew, few, view, ewe, yew, you, shoe.

The better contemporary poets appear to agree that it is safer to rhyme only the similarly spelled words ; but in this case, as in others, excellent authority can be found for breaking the rule.

When Rupert Brooke wrote—

Temperamentvoll German Jews
Drink beer around ; and *there* the dews . . .

Grantchester

more than one critic thought it necessary to point to the pun on 'Jews' and 'dews.'

(g) 'Prayer' is a word that has lost its disyllabic nature. In Shakespeare both syllables are respected :

Whiles you chid me, I did love ;
How then might your prayers move !

As You Like It, iv, 3

But by the nineteenth century it had shortened, and we find it regularly rhymed to 'air,' 'spare,' etc., by Landor, Matthew Arnold, Hartley Coleridge, Emily Brontë and many others. Thus it helps to constitute one of the commonest rhymes in English, exemplified by 'hare,' 'hair,' 'heir,' 'there,' 'wear.'

Consider

Few and short were the prayers we said,

in *The Burial of Sir John Moore* (see §§ 50-54).

(h) 'World' is another hard-worked poetic word sadly lacking rhymes in English. As C. S. Calverley wrote of his Victorian contemporaries :

Mists, bones, the singer himself, love-stories,
And all least furlable things got "furled,"
Not with any design to conceal their glories,
But simply and solely to rhyme with "world."

Lovers, and a Reflection

Alternatively, of course, the things can be 'hurled,' 'curled,' 'whirled,' or in exceptional circumstances 'pearled' (or 'purled').

(i) Certain rhymes have become conventional, owing to scarcity or absence of fully consonant sounds :

'woman/common/human'; 'ever/river'; 'heaven
given' 'creature/nature'; 'bosom/blossom.'

In 'wind' the pronunciation with a long *i* (so as to

rhyme with 'mind') has survived in poetry while the *i* has shortened in colloquial speech.

(j) It is also allowed by convention, in certain words and terminations, to facilitate rhyming by the use of an artificial stress, final syllables normally unstressed being given the necessary prominence. *E.g.* words ending in '-y,' like 'lady' or 'country.' Consider:

'A fair (faire, fayre) ladie (ladye).'

'The North Countrie (Countree).'

'The Golden Vanitie.'

Words ending in '-able,' '-ible,' etc., are often forced to rhyme with (*e.g.*) 'bell.' Consider also Rossetti's and Swinburne's trick exemplified in the rhyme 'harp-player/her.'

(k) 'War' in modern times is generally treated with eye-rhymes:

And mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
Ancestral voices prophesying war.

COLERIDGE: *Kubla Khan*

But good poets such as William Morris have rhymed it to 'roar,' etc.

In 1899-1902 the two words 'Boer War' were pronounced exactly alike by thousands of English people (not in "Received Standard" circles).

Between 1914 and 1918 the word was rhymed to every conceivable sound.

On April 22, 1933, *The Times* published a poem, celebrating its thousandth cross-word, containing the rhyme 'yours/wars.' (See § 77.)

The reader will find it interesting to keep a notebook for rhymes good, bad, and indifferent.

METRE

§ 80. **Preliminary Warnings.**—We have now to describe and illustrate a number of the metres most commonly employed in English verse. We shall deal first with duple-time metres¹—based on iambics (rising) and trochaics (falling) ; then with those which move to triple time—based on anapaests (rising) and dactyls (falling). These, and the hybrids between them, are treated either as *continuous* (e.g. blank verse), or as *stanzaic*, *i.e.* where the metrical lines are arranged in various repeated patterns or groups known as stanzas (often called “verses”). Incidentally, we shall investigate a quite common metre which introduces two values of stress ; and we shall describe the way in which classical and French metres and stanzas have been adapted to English use.

§ 81. But, before we begin, it will be well to look back to where we left the subject of metre in Chapter IV, “The Trouble Begins.” The reader will have understood that the “trouble” lies in the fact that a poet,

¹ A hint of the supremacy of duple time in English may be obtained by counting the poems of each kind in an anthology. Accurate enumeration is difficult for various reasons ; but an analysis of the *Oxford Book of English Verse* shows that barely thirty poems can be certainly classified as triple time in the first 800 poems, *i.e.* down to William Morris (1834–1896). From Swinburne onwards the proportion of triple time becomes a little higher.

having chosen a metre, appears in practice to be constantly breaking its rules. We saw, for example, that he can introduce into an iambic metre feet apparently trochaic, dactylic, or anapaestic; that syllables are sometimes "invisible," and sometimes, though visible, are "submerged" or "swallowed," and do not count in the foot; that the more a poem obeys the rules of its metre, the more monotonous it becomes; and that there are a number of puzzles about stress.

§ 82. Yet behind all these exceptions stands the rule : underneath the poet's decorations we can detect the framework. This framework, on which he builds, is the metre—what we have emphasised as the *basic metre* : a system of regular stresses, so many to the line. This, to the poet, is what the warp is to a weaver; for into this warp the poet weaves what he has to say, in its conventional speech rhythms, and his craft is shown by the way in which he fits the ordinary or grammatical stresses to the metrical stress-system, thus producing his own pattern or individual rhythm.¹ In doing so, he has freedom to choose his words, to take certain "poetical licences," such as altering the natural (or prose) order of the words; and he is also at liberty, as we have seen, to shift some of the metrical stresses or to allow them to over-ride the normal grammatical stressing. The test of his success or failure in this task is whether he pleases our ears with

¹ "The poet's art was to vary the expected rhythm as much as he could without disagreeably baulking the expectation. This expectancy appears in the critical attitude of the hearer towards the more irregular verses of a poem."—Robert Bridges, *Humdrum and Harum-Scarum*.

his rhythms or not. The "trouble," in short, is the glorious *variability* of an English metre.

§ 83. The variation between the ordinary grammatical stressing and the metrical stressing can be readily tested by the student if he will read aloud to himself—say, a passage of blank verse *twice*: first heavily stressing the syllables stressed according to the rule of the metre; the second time stressing according to the meaning only, as if the passage were prose. In some lines the two ways of stressing will coincide; in others it will be obvious that strict metrical stressing overshadows the meaning. What pleases us is the "golden mean" that the poet discovers for us between the two.

§ 84. But it is outside the scope of this book to investigate the different characteristics which contribute to the individual rhythms of particular poets: it is only the metres, the basic metres, and the stanzas into which they are usually grouped, that we can here describe: the various patterns, as it were, of standardised scaffoldings on which different poets build different structures. For instance, confronted with three passages of blank verse, one each by Shakespeare, Milton, and Wordsworth, we aim at describing only the underlying metre that is common to all three samples; we make no attempt to analyse the favourite variations and other artifices of each poet which enable the trained ear to recognise the Shakespearean or the Miltonic or the Wordsworthian style.

CHAPTER VIII

DUPLE TIME

IAMBIC METRES: SHORT (TO FOUR FEET): HYMNS

"Nine-tenths of our whole verse, at a rough guess, moves to duple time."

T. S. OMOND : *Study of Metre*

"I used once to be sadly plagued with a man who wrote verses, but who literally had no other notion of a verse, but that it consisted of ten syllables. 'Lay your knife and your fork across your plate' was to him a verse : 'Lay yóur knife ánd your fórk acróss your pláte.' As he wrote a great number of verses, he sometimes by chance made good ones, though he did not know it."

BOSWELL : *Johnson* (1768)

§ 85. Iambic metre consists of a series of iambs, of stressed syllables following, and alternating with, unstressed syllables. Our poetry affords instances of a number of simple combinations of one to four iambic feet, in various arrangements and with various rhyme-schemes. Thus :

(a) Thus I
Pass by.
And die.
As one
Unknown
And gone.

HERRICK

(b) I've jést and jóke
And quíp and cránk,
For lówly fólk
And men of ránk.
I ply my craft.
And knów no fear ;
I áim my shaft
At prínce or péér.

GILBERT

- (c) The glories of our blood and state,
 Are shadows, not substantial things ;
 There is no armour against fate ;
 Death lays his icy hand on kings :
 Sceptre and Crown
 Must tumble down,
 And in the dust be equal made
 With the poor crookèd scythe and spade.

SHIRLEY

Any anthology will provide plenty of other variations.

§ 86. Many of our hymns, too, are written in short iambic metres. In fact, English hymnology gives special native names to the commoner of them, and defines them for us by a system of its own : by giving in figures the number of syllables in the consecutive lines. *E.g. :*

O God, our help in ages past,
 Our hope for years to come,
 Our shelter from the stormy blast,
 And our eternal home.

This is defined as " 8.6.8.6."

The obvious disadvantage of this system is that it does not show whether the line is iambic or trochaic : thus—

- ' Fling open wide the golden gates ' is an iambic " 8 " :
 ' Art thou weary, art thou languid ' is a trochaic " 8 "

Yet the majority of the older English hymns are iambic in metre, with simple monosyllabic rhymes.

In Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Act iii, Sc. 1), Quince wants the Prologue to be " written in eight and six " ; to which Bottom objects, " No, make it two more ; let it be written in eight and eight." As a matter of fact, the Prologue in Act v is written in " tens " (decasyllables).

§ 87. The terms of English hymnology are as follows :

(i) COMMON METRE (8.6.8.6.).

O Gód, our help in áges past,
Our hópe for yéars to cóme,
Our shéltér fróm the stórmý blást,
And óur etérnal hóme.

ISAAC WATTS : *Hymns A. & M.*, 165

(ii) LONG METRE (8.8.8.8., or four 8's).

All people that on earth do dwell,
Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice ;
Him serve with fear, His praise forth tell ;
Come ye before Him, and rejoice.

W. KETHE : *Hymns A. & M.*, 166 (*The Old Hundredth*)

(iii) SHORT METRE (6.6.8.6. Note : not four 6's).

A few more years shall roll,
A few more seasons come,
And we shall be with those that rest
Asleep within the tomb.

H. BONAR : *Hymns A. & M.*, 288

NOTE.—This hymn, as set to its familiar tune, has eight lines to the stanza, and is therefore properly described as “double short metre” (or D.S.M.).

§ 88. I.—The first of these hymn-metres is rightly called “common.” Apart from its use in hymns, it may be said to be the standard English form for *narrative* (other than *epic*) verse, whether written as four lines (8.6.8.6.) or as two (each of fourteen syllables). The former is Ballad Metre. The arrangement of the metre as a couplet of “fourteeners” suggests why ballad metre proper is often rhymed only in the 6's (*i.e.* after each fourteenth syllable).

§ 89. Examples.—COMMON METRE, OR**Ballad Metre**

- (a) But wha' will ba'ke my brīdal bread,
 Or brew my brīdal ale?
 And wha will welcome my bright brīde,
 That I bring owre the dale?
 Fair Annie (Old Ballad)

- (b) The rock shone bright, the kirk no less
 That stands upon the rock:
 The moonlight steep'd in silentness,
 The steady weathercock.
 S. T. COLERIDGE: *The Ancient Mariner*

NOTE.—In the course of *The Ancient Mariner*, Coleridge makes extensive use of variations upon strict ballad metre. (See § 105.)

§ 90.

“Fourteeners”

- (a) The name of him was Pyramus, and Thisbe call'd was
 she;
 So fair a man in all the East was none alive as he.
 GOLDING: transl. Ovid's *Metamorphoses*
- (b) Attend all ye who list to hear our noble England's praise.
 MACAULAY: *The Armada*
- (c) Predestination in the stride o' yon connectin'-rod.
 KIPLING: *McAndrew's Hymn*

§ 91. II.—LONG METRE (stanzas of four lines of iambic octosyllables).

Less common than Ballad metre, but many examples are found:

- (a) And see ye not that bonny road
Which winds about the fernie bræ?
That is the road to fair Elf-land,
Where you and I this night maun gae.
Thomas the Rhymer (Old Ballad)

- (b) How happy is he born and taught
That serveth not another's will;
Whose armour is his honest thought,
And simple truth his utmost skill!
SIR H. WOTTON: *Character of a Happy Life*

§ 92. Strictly the rhyme-scheme is, as in the (b) specimen, alternate: ABAB. With the rhyme-scheme ABBA it provides a metre sometimes called the *In Memoriam* metre, after the well-known poem of Tennyson:

I held it truth, with him who sings
To one clear harp in divers tones,
That men may rise on stepping-stones
Of their dead selves to higher things.

TENNYSON: *In Memoriam*

The whole poem consists of 131 sections, comprising over 700 quatrains. "I believed myself the originator of the metre," Tennyson himself records, "until after *In Memoriam* came out, when some one told me that Ben Jonson and Sir Philip Sidney had used it."

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

BEN JONSON: *An Elegy* (OBEV, No. 189)

We can trace no poem of Sidney's in this metre (though he uses the rhyme-scheme ABBA in another metre), but Lord Herbert of Cherbury used it in a *Ditty*.

§ 93. III.—SHORT METRE is not commonly used. The poem attributed to Queen Elizabeth is in this metre :

The Daughter of debate
That eke discórd doth sow
Shall reáp no gain where former rule
Hath taught still peace to grow.

There are other examples by Dyer, Southwell, and Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke—all Elizabethan poets. A later instance is *England's Dead*, by Mrs. Hemans.

§ 94. THE OCTOSYLLABIC COUPLET.—Lines of four iambic feet, rhymed in couplets, have been used very frequently, particularly for long narrative poems, by English poets from Chaucer to Masfield. For all its simplicity, it is capable of grand effects :

- (a) But at my back I always hear
Time's wingèd chariot hurrying near ;
And yonder all before us lie
Deserts of vast eternity.

ANDREW MARVELL : *To his Coy Mistress*

- (b) But Grantchester ! ah, Grantchester !
There's peace and holy quiet there,
Great clouds along pacific skies,
And men and women with straight eyes,
Lithe children lovelier than a dream,
A bosky wood, a slumbrous stream,
And little kindly winds that creep
Round twilight corners, half asleep.

RUPERT BROOKE : *The Old Vicarage, Grantchester*

CHAPTER IX

DUPLE TIME

IAMBIC METRES : LONGER (DECASYLLABICS AND THE ALEXANDRINE)

The verse of ten syllables, which we call the English Heroic
JOHN DRYDEN (1693)

Next, Muse, take out thy lyre and sing the song,
Short-long, short-long, short-long, short-long, short-long.
A. A. MILNE : *Our Coronation Ode*

§ 95. So far we have dealt with iambic lines of four or fewer feet. Incomparably more important is the line of five feet : decasyllabics.

This is the staple line of English verse ; the line one finds, as the essential structural unit, in Blank Verse, in the Heroic Couplet, the Sonnet, the Elegiac stanza, the Spenserian stanza, and in a wide variety of other stanzaic forms. It also dominates a number of our greatest Odes.

Its prevalence is well shown by the number of proverbs and famous sayings to which it has given form.

For instance :

Unkindness has no remedy at law.

None are so blind as those who will not see.

ANON.

Uneasy lies the head that wears the crown.

One touch of nature makes the whole world kin.

I dare do all that may become a man.

SHAKESPEARE

'Tis not in mortals to command success.

ADDISON

Great wits are sure to madness near allied.

DRYDEN

Music has charms to soothe a savage breast.

CONGREVE

A little learning is a dangerous thing.

To err is human, to forgive divine.

POPE

The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

GRAY

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever.

KEATS

Also, in (distinctly) common parlance :

You pays your money and you takes your choice.

Others will come readily to the mind of the reader.

§ 96. Blank verse, although it originally meant unrhymed verse of any metrical length, now signifies unrhymed lines of five iambic feet.

Similarly "heroics" or "heroic verse" was once applied to dactylic hexameters (after the model of the classics) ; but now this term, too, is confined to iambic decasyllabics : see the quotation from Dryden at the head of this chapter.

In current terminology it is customary to use blank verse for the unrhymed form : when decasyllabics are rhymed in pairs (couplets—with occasional triplets, especially at the conclusion of a passage (see § 102)), we usually call this form rhymed (or rhyming) heroics or heroic couplets.

Examples (BLANK VERSE) :

- (a) This royal throne of kings, this sceptred isle,
 This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
 This other Eden, demi-paradise,
 This fortress built by Nature for herself
 Against infection and the hand of war, . . .

SHAKESPEARE : *Richard II*

- (b) Was this the face that launch'd a thousand ships,
 And burnt the topless towers of Ilium ?

MARLOWE : *Doctor Faustus*

- (c) All in a moment through the gloom were seen
 Ten thousand banners rise into the air,
 With orient colours waving : with them rose
 A forest huge of spears ; and thronging helms
 Appeared, and serried shields in thick array
 Of depth immeasurable.

MILTON : *Paradise Lost*

- (d) I was the Dreamer, they the Dream ; I roamed
 Delighted through the motley spectacle ;
 Gowns grave, or gaudy, doctors, students, streets,
 Courts, cloisters, flocks of churches, gateways, towers :
 Migration strange for a stripling of the hills.

WORDSWORTH : *The Prelude*

- (e) "Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain
 height :

What pleasure lives in height?" the shepherd sang.

TENNYSON : *The Princess*

§ 97. Shakespeare's blank verse is a study to itself ; shelves-full of books have been written about it. No English poet has produced so many variations on a single theme ; his control of the metre grew steadily, from the simple verse of the earlier plays to the endless modulations audible in the verse of the great tragedies at the end of his career. (See footnote to § 47.)

Here it is only possible to warn the reader that many of the apparent licences in his blank verse are in fact licences of pronunciation current in his day.

For example : owing to the “slurring” (*i.e.* softening or eliding sounds) of r, l, v, th in the middle of words many apparent disyllables are metrically equal to one syllable :

‘warrant, flourish, barren ; gentle, people ; having,
travel ; whether, hither, either ;’

and the same happens with words like—

‘doing, going, power, jewel.’

Conversely, many words that we should call one-syllabled, but contain long vowels or diphthongs, Shakespeare uses as metrically two :

‘fear, fire, hour, your, four, fare(well), hard, mark,
word ; fail, speak, sweet, sleep, good, room, wives’

and frequently exclamations like—

‘O, ay, nay, yea, what, hail’

become metrically two syllables.

This is only a hint at the *linguistic* freedoms of Shakespeare’s blank verse.

§ 98. Besides the plays of Shakespeare, many of our longer poems are written in blank verse ; and of the more famous the following may be mentioned as affording particularly striking instances of the range and variety of the metre :

JOHN MILTON : *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*.

JAMES THOMSON : *The Seasons*.

WILLIAM COWPER : *The Task*.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH : *The Prelude* and *The Excursion*

ALFRED TENNYSON : *The Idylls of the King*.

THOMAS HARDY : *The Dynasts*.

§ 99. HEROIC COUPLETS (or RHYMED HEROICS).—In Elizabethan times the heroic couplet was known as “riding rime”—perhaps because it was the “rime” (*i.e.* metre) of the tales which Chaucer’s pilgrims tell as they ride to Canterbury. It is famous as the main and practically the only metre of the eighteenth-century Alexander Pope school: Addison, Johnson, Goldsmith, etc. In their hands the metre took on a particularly precise form: the couplet was the unit, and every sentence of the verse was shaped so as to fit exactly into a couplet, completing in itself either the line or the pair of lines. This form is generally called the closed couplet:

- (i) Behold in awful march and dread array
The long-extended squadrons shape their way!
Death, in approaching, terrible, imparts
An anxious horror to the bravest hearts;
Yet do their beating breasts demand the strife,
And thirst of glory quells the love of life.

ADDISON: *The Campaign*

- (ii) Full well they laughed with counterfeited glee
At all his jokes, for many a joke had he;
Full well the busy whisper, circling round,
Conveyed the dismal tidings when he frowned.

GOLDSMITH: *The Deserted Village*

§ 100. This metre was for long the standard form for prize poems, and several famous couplets are assigned by tradition to university poets:

Inoculation, Heav’n-instructed Maid,
She woo’d from Turkey’s shores to Britain’s aid.

W. LIPSCOMB (1772)

Nebuchadnezzar, when “turned out to grass”:

Spake, as he champ’d the unaccustomed food,
“This may be wholesome, but it is not good.”

ANON. (1852)

And an unsuccessful exercise on *The Recovery of the Prince of Wales* :

Then from the bed th' électric message came—
 "He is no better, hé is much the same."

ANON. (1873)

No one can burlesque this style better than Mr. Belloc :

Some random Touch—a hand's imprudent slip—
 The Terminals—a flash—a sound like "Zip!"
 A smell of burning fills the startled Air—
 The Electrician is no longer there !

Lambkin's Remains

§ 101. The above examples of "closed couplets" should be compared with the later *un-coupled* or continuous lines, called the "enjambé" form :

The visions all are fled—the car is fled
 Into the light of heaven, and in their stead
 A sense of real things comes doubly strong,
 And, like a muddy stream, would bear along
 My soul to nothingness : but I will strive
 Against all doubtings, and will keep alive
 The thought of that same chariot, and the strange
 Journey it went.

KEATS : *Sleep and Poetry*

§ 102. In the heyday of the closed-couplet style, a triplet was occasionally employed, most often at the close of a passage :

This is your portion, this your native store ;
 Heav'n, that but once was prodigal before,
 To Shakespéare gave as much : she could not give him more.

DRYDEN

It was usual to signify the triplet by a 'brace' in the right-hand margin, as shown above.

§ 103. It will be seen that the third line of this triplet (like many of those inserted in this way) is a foot longer than the other two. It is a line of six iambic feet—in other words, an alexandrine. (See § 108, The Spenserian Stanza.)

Dryden employed the device frequently, but Pope was inclined to sneer at it. Witness his famous definition, which will be a help to the memory :

A needless alexandrine ends the song,
Which, like a wounded snake, drags its slow length along.

The alexandrine gets its name from an old French epic on Alexander of Macedon. A continuous succession of alexandrines is rather more than the English ear can bear, but Michael Drayton used the metre for his portentous *Polyolbion*, a kind of poetical guide to England (1613) :

But, noble Muse, proceed immediately to tell
How Evesham's fertile vale at first in liking fell
With Cotswold, that great king of shepherds : whose
proud site
When that fair vale first saw, so nourished her delight,
That him she only loved : for wisely she beheld
The beauties clean throughout that on his surface dwelled.

Robert Bridges, the late Poet Laureate, when over eighty years of age wrote *The Testament of Beauty* (1929) in a metre which he himself calls "loose alexandrines." His alexandrines are "loose" in the sense that they display the variations of trochaic inversion and trisyllabic substitution which are evident in the more vital forms of blank verse.

§ 104. Various combinations of iambic lines of

varying lengths constitute the type of poem usually called an *ode* (see further examples in Glossary) :

There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight

To me did seem

Apparell'd in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.

It is not now as it hath been of yore ;—

Turn wheresoe'er I may,

By night or day,

The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

WORDSWORTH : *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality from
Recollections of Early Childhood*

This is no more than one (the opening) section of Wordsworth's famous Ode. But the following, though an extract from what Shelley named his *Ode to Liberty*, is in fact an elaborate *stanza*, as a reading of the rest of the poem will show :

The Sun and the serenest Moon sprang forth :

The burning stars of the abyss were hurled
Into the depths of Heaven. The daedal earth,

That island in the ocean of the world,
Hung in its cloud of all-sustaining air :

But this divinest universe

Was yet a chaos and a curse,

For thou wert not ; but, power from worst producing
worse,

The spirit of the beasts was kindled there,

And of the birds, and of the watery forms,

And there was war among them, and despair

Within them, raging without truce or terms :

The bosom of their violated nurse

Groaned, for beasts warred on beasts, and worms on
worms,

And men on men ; each heart was as a hell of storms.

CHAPTER X

DUPLE TIME

IAMBIC STANZAIC FORMS

§ 105. The Ballad Stanza.—It has already been shown in § 88 that the ballad metre is strictly composed of four lines of alternate four and three iambic feet :

I put my hat upon my head
And walked into the Strand,
And there I met another man
With his hat in his hand.

This stanza (composed derisively by Samuel Johnson) ¹ is in the simplest form, with regular lines and the minimum of two rhymes (ABCB).

But from this basic metre, the standard of the ancient style, it is easy to develop—as Coleridge showed in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*—many varieties of stanza, some of which we note here.

Bisecting rhyme (in the third line) :

And now there came both mist and snow,
And it grew wondrous cold :
And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
As green as emerald.

Trebling of the first line :

With sloping masts and dipping prow,
As who pursued with yell and blow
Still treads the shadow of his foe,

¹ Recorded in Cradock's *Memoirs* (1828). It was a parody of a stanza in T. Percy's *Hermit of Warkworth*, a pseudo-antique ballad.

And forward bends his head,
The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast
And southward aye we fled.

NOTE.—Observe that an extension of this system—multiplying the four-foot lines, and only now and then dropping in a three-foot line—provided Scott with the narrative metre used so successfully in *Marmion* and other poems.

In the same way the third line may be doubled or trebled, and an extra two lines added as a kind of echo :—

Nor dim nor red, like God's own head,
The glorious sun uprist :
Then all averred, I had killed the bird
That brought the fog and mist.
'Twas right, said they, such birds to slay,
That bring the fog and mist.

Rhyme-scheme : aABCCBdDB. —

In fact, the stanza can be extended to a marked degree by inserting extra lines of four-foot length, or extra couplets. One finds, for instance, a *nine-line* stanza, rhyming AABCCBDDDB.

We listened and looked sideways up—
Fear at my heart, as at a cup
My life-blood seemed to sip !
The stars were dim, and thick the night,
The steersman's face by his lamp gleamed white ;
From the sails the dew did drip—
Till clomb above the eastern bar
The hornéd Moon, with one bright star
Within the nether tip.

Here there is anapaestic substitution in the fifth and sixth lines. This is a common feature of ballads ancient and modern.

Three months and a day were gane and past,
 Fair Annie she gat word
 That her love's ship was come at last,
 Wi' his bright young bride aboard.
Fair Annie (Old Ballad)

§ 106. The Elegiac Stanza.—A five-foot iambic quatrain, rhyming ABAB.

This stanza, which is also called the *heroic quatrain*, was used by Thomas Gray for what is often regarded as the greatest of our elegies :

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day ;
 The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea ;
 The plowman homeward plods his weary way,
 And leaves the world to darkness, and to me.
Elegy written in a Country Churchyard (1750)

Its inevitable stateliness renders it chiefly suitable for ceremonial and reflective verse. It forms the metre of Sir William Davenant's epic *Gondibert* (1652). John Dryden thought highly of it, and used it in his *Annus Mirabilis*, a long poem dealing with the events of the year 1666, particularly with the Fire of London :

Methinks already from this chemic flame,
 I see a city of more precious mould ;
 Rich as the town which gives the Indies name,
 With silver paved, and all divine with gold.

§ 107. The same metre, but with the rhyme-scheme AABA, provided Edward FitzGerald with the form now well-known as "the Omar Khayyám" stanza for his translation of the Persian poet's *Rubaiyat* :

The moving Finger writes, and, having writ,
 Moves on ; nor all your Piety nor Wit
 Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,
 Nor all your Tears wash out a Word of it.

Professor J. W. Mackail adopted this stanza for his translation of Homer's *Odyssey*.

§ 108. The Spenserian Stanza.—So called in honour of its inventor, Edmund Spenser, who employed it for *The Faerie Queene*. It consists of eight decasyllabic lines followed by an alexandrine. The rhyme scheme ABABBCBCC locks the whole stanza together in a manner which seems to have fascinated Spenser, for a similar interlocking is to be found in his sonnet form (see § 123).

As when a weary traveller, that strays
By muddy shore of broad seven-mouthed Nile,
Unwitting of the perilous wandering ways,
Doth meet a cruel crafty crocodile,
Which in false grief hiding his harmful guile,
Doth weep full sore, and sheddeth tender tears ;
The foolish man, that pities all this while .
His mournful plight, is swallowed up unwares,
Forgetful of his own, that minds another's cares.
The Faerie Queene, Book i, Canto v.

“It is one of the crowning achievements of poetical inspiration in form,” writes Professor George Saintsbury. “It stands alone in the combination of individual beauty and faculty, with suitableness to a long connected form.”

The final alexandrine is the making of the stanza. There were innumerable other experiments with iambic decasyllables in Spenser's day ; but none were to prove in practice as glorious as his for sustained and elevated poetic narrative. All honour to Spenser. To no other single person in the history of English literature can the creation of any one of our established metres be definitely ascribed.

§ 109. The most notable instances of the later use of the Spenserian stanza are :

The Castle of Indolence (Thomson).

The Schoolmistress (Shenstone).

The Cotter's Saturday Night (Burns).

Childe Harold's Pilgrimage (Byron).

The Revolt of Islam and Adonais (Shelley).

Then farewell, Horace—whom I hated so,
 Not for thy faults, but mine : it is a curse
 To understand, not feel thy lyric flow,
 To comprehend, but never love thy verse :
 Although no deeper Moralist rehearse
 Our little life, nor Bard prescribe his art,
 Nor livelier Satirist the conscience pierce,
 Awakening without wounding the touched heart,
 Yet fare thee well—upon Soracte's ridge we part.

BYRON : *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*

§ 110. Careful comparison of Shelley's practice with Spenser's will show that Shelley regularly maintained a *caesura* (break between words) in the middle of the final alexandrine :

Calm as a cradled child : in dreamless slumber bound.

What Adonais is : why fear we to become ?

Spenser, however, made no such rule for himself :

Upon his foe, a Dragon horrible and stern.

and Byron also tends to ignore the *caesura*.

§ 111. Rhyme Royal.—Stanza of seven five-foot iambic lines rhyming ABABBC.

Chaucer wrote *Troilus and Criseyde* in Rhyme Royal, importing the metre from France. Shakespeare used it for his *Lucrece*, and it has since been used by William

Morris for parts of the *Earthly Paradise* (1870), and by John Masfield in *The Widow in the Bye Street*, Dauber, etc.

O lady myn, that callèd art Cleò,
 Thou be my speed fro this forth, and my muse,
 To rimè wel this book til I have do !
 Me nedeth here noon other art to use ;
 For-why to every lover I me excuse,
 That of no sentement I this endite,
 But out of Latin in my tonge it write.

CHAUCER : *Troilus and Criseyde*

Fresh was the summer morn, a soft wind stole
 Down from the sheep-browsed slopes the cliffs that
 crowned,
 And ruffled lightly the long gleaming roll
 Of the peaceful sea, and bore along the sound
 Of shepherd-folk and sheep and questing hound ;
 For in the first dip of the hillside there
 Lay bosomed 'mid its trees a homestead fair.

WILLIAM MORRIS : *The Earthly Paradise* (The
 Golden Apples)

§ 112. **The Octave Stanza.**—Stanza of eight iambic decasyllables, rhyming ABABABCC.

The octave stanza is an Italian metre, and one of the most notable instances of its use in English poetry is Edward Fairfax's translation of Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered* (1600). More familiar is its use by Byron (in *Don Juan* (see § 69, Ex. ix.), *The Vision of Judgment*, etc.), who gives to the final couplet a satirical sting like the crack of a whip ; and with extreme felicity by Shelley and Keats.

Specimen :

Oh that I had the art of easy writing
 What should be easy reading !—could I scale
 Parnassus, where the Muses sit inditing
 Those pretty poems never known to fail,

How quickly would I print (the world delighting)
 A Grecian, Syrian, or Assyrian tale ;
 And sell you, mix'd with Western sentimentalism,
 Some samples of the finest Orientalism !

BYRON : *Beppo*, *A Venetian Story*

(In the final couplet of this particular stanza Byron uses, for the fun of the thing, not merely, as in lines 1, 3, 5, a feminine ending and rhyme, a device of perfectly normal occurrence, but a three-syllabled ending and rhyme.)

§ 113. **The Sicilian Octave.**—A stanza of eight lines with a rhyme scheme of AB four times repeated. Sidney's sonnet *Sleep* (OBEV, No. 94) begins with one, but the term is properly used only of the complete eight-line stanza. The stanza is very rarely used, owing to the difficulty of rhyming.

§ 114. **The Burns Stanza.**—A stanza of six line., the first three and the fifth being octosyllabic, the fourth and sixth composed of four syllables (or, in the case of feminine endings, five). The two short lines rhyme together, and the four longer lines, *i.e.* AAABABs

It is called after Burns, not because he invented it—it appears amongst the many elaborate stanzaic forms of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries—but because of the frequency with which he used it.

Reader, attend !—whether thy soul
 Soars fancy's flights beyond the póle,
 Or darkling grubs this earthly hóle,
 In lów pursúit ;
 Know prýdent cautious self-control
 Is wisdom's root.

A Bard's Epitaph

§ 115. The Sonnet is a poem of fourteen lines in the iambic decasyllabic metre of blank verse and the heroic couplet. These two conditions, of metre and length, govern the whole range of English sonnet writing, which means a large proportion of the finest poetry in the language.

The exceptions are insignificant. Shakespeare wrote one of his sonnets (No. 145) in octosyllabics, and one (No. 20) in which he uses feminine rhyme throughout, giving a series of hendecasyllabic lines. Sidney was in the habit of introducing an occasional alexandrine into the normal fourteen-line structure, and the first sonnet in his *Astropheu and Stella* is in alexandrines throughout; but that was in the very early days of sonnet writing.

§ 116. There are two main sonnet forms: the original Italian (or Petrarchan) type and the English variety. Petrarch, the father of the Italian sonnet, died in 1374; and sonnets were written by Dante (1265-1321) and Tasso in Italy, by Camoens in Portugal and by Du Bellay and Ronsard in France, before the verse-form found its way into England. It is only right, therefore, that we should consider the Petrarchan form first.

SONNET FORM I:

THE ITALIAN (OR PETRARCHAN)

§ 117. The essential feature is that the fourteen lines are divided up into two groups with a break between them: the first consisting of eight lines, called the *octave*, and the second of six, the *sestet*.

Rhyme-scheme.—In the octave, the strict form is unalterably ABBA ABBA (two quatrains with the same rhyme-

scheme repeated). In the sestet there is no standard rhyme-scheme ; the older and severer forms consist of two *tercets* (groups of three lines) with repeated rhyme-schemes, such as CDE|CDE ; or of three pairs, CD|CD|CD.

Yon silvery billows breaking on the beach Fall back in foam beneath the star-shine clear, The while my rhymes are murmuring in your ear A restless lore like that the billows teach ; For on these sonnet-waves my soul would reach From its own depths, and rest within you, dear, As through the billowy voices yearning here Great nature strives to find a human speech.	}	OCTAVE
---	---	--------

A sonnet is a wave of melody : From heaving waters of the impassioned soul A billow of tidal music one and whole Flows in the "Octave" ; then returning free, Its ebbing surges in the "Sestet" roll Back to the deeps of Life's tumultuous sea.	}	SESTET
---	---	--------

THEODORE WATTS-DUNTON

This is the true pattern, with an octave composed of the two regular quatrains, and CDDCDC for the rhyme-scheme of the sestet—four rhymes only in the whole sonnet.

§ 118. But many of even the finest English sonnets, while maintaining the Italian form so far as the division into octave and sestet is concerned, transgress the rules of the standard rhyme-scheme and admit of three or four rhymes in the octave. For splendid examples of these irregular or hybrid forms, see Shelley's *Ozymandias* and Wordsworth's *Scorn not the Sonnet* (OBEV, No. 534).

Clearly, the admission of a variety of octave rhyme-schemes, taken in conjunction with the great number of possible variants in the sestet, multiplies immensely the total number of Italianate sonnet-forms.

Rupert Brooke's 1914 exhibits in five sonnets four different rhyme-schemes, all irregular (*i.e.* in octave as well as in sestet), and all on seven rhymes.

§ 119. The division of the whole sonnet in the Italian form into octave and sestet *usually* implies a definite pause at the end of the octave : it is customary to print such a sonnet in two unequal stanzas with a space between them. The sonnet by Watts-Dunton quoted above is a good example of the way in which this convention can be made to contribute to the poet's theme : *e.g.* by the octave propounding a metaphor, which the sestet interprets, or *vice versâ*.

§ 120. As to the rhyme-schemes of the sestet, the following table shows the variations which occur in a number of our most famous Italianate sonnets :

ITALIAN FORM OF THE SONNET :

SESTET RHYME-SCHEMES AND EXAMPLES

- I. CDCDCD. Milton : *On his Deceased Wife* (OBEV, No. 321), and several others.
Wordsworth : "The world is too much with us" (OBEV, No. 535) ; *Upon Westminster Bridge* (OBEV, No. 520), and others.
Keats : *On First Looking into Chapman's Homer* (OBEV, No. 634).
- II. CDECDE. Milton : *On his Blindness* (OBEV, No. 318 ; see § 121).
E. B. Browning : *Sonnets from the Portuguese*.
- III. CDCEED. Milton : *To Mr. Lawrence* (OBEV, No. 319).
- IV. CDDECE. Wordsworth : *Milton* (OBEV, No. 524) ;
and *King's College, Cambridge*.
Matthew Arnold : *Worldly Place*.
- V. CDEEDC. Keats : "Happy is England."
Matthew Arnold : *West London*.
- VI. CDCEDE. Matthew Arnold : *East London*.

VII. CDCDEE. Sidney : " With how sad steps, O Moon " (OBEV, No. 93).

Blanco White : *Mysterious Night*.

All the above sonnets are built of five rhymes (A-E), except Group I, which manages the sestet on two rhymes and therefore the whole sonnet on four.

The above list can be easily extended. D. G. Rossetti's sonnet sequence, *The House of Life*, shows a wide range of variations.

SONNET FORM II :

THE MODIFIED ITALIAN

§ 121. There is something austere about the true Petrarchan pattern of sonnet which does not make it readily acceptable to all English poets. The Shakespearean type is structurally far less intricate, but there was also a greater licence introduced into the Italian type by a number of those who preferred to keep to that traditional form.

Thus Milton :

When I consider how my light is spent
 Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,
 And that one talent which is death to hide
 Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent
 To serve therewith my Maker, and present
 My true account, lest He returning chide,—
 Doth God exact day-labour, light denied ?
 I fondly ask : But Patience, to prevent
 That murmur, soon replies ; God doth not need
 Either man's work, or His own gifts : who best
 Bear His mild yoke, they serve Him best : His state
 Is kingly ; thousands at His bidding speed
 And post o'er land and ocean without rest :
 They also serve who only stand and wait.

MILTON : *On his Blindness*

Here the rhyme-scheme is correct enough, but there is no break between the octave and the sestet. The fourteen lines are all of one piece, and the whole significance of octave and sestet in their contrasting rôles is lost. On the other hand, sonnets of this modified Italian type—and there are many of them—have a vigour often lacking in the strict Petrarchan kind.

SONNET FORM III :

THE ENGLISH

(a) *Shakespearean*

§ 122. The third type of sonnet, the least intricate, and for that reason probably the most English, is that invented by Surrey and made popular by Shakespeare :

No longer mourn for me when I am dead
 Than you shall hear the surly sullen bell
 Give warning to the world that I am fled
 From this vile world, with vilest worms to dwell :
 Nay, if you read this line, remember not
 The hand that writ it ; for I love you so,
 That I in your sweet thoughts would be forgot,
 If thinking on me then should make you woe.
 O, if, I say, you look upon this verse
 When I perhaps compounded am with clay,
 Do not so much as my poor name rehearse,
 But let your love even with my life decay ;
 Lest the wise world should look into your moan,
 And mock you with me after I am gone.

SHAKESPEARE : *Sonnet 71*

The chief feature is that the fourteen lines are divided (by the rhymes only : the sonnet usually is written and printed without a break) into three quatrains followed by a couplet :

ABAB|CDCD|EFEF|GG

The final couplet is often used as a kind of summary to the sonnet, to "point the moral," as it were ; and its use in this rôle may be compared to the couplets which so often bring Shakespeare's scenes to a close :

The time is out of joint : O cursèd spite,
That ever I was born to set it right !

Hamlet, i, 5.

In the sonnet the concluding couplet is usually printed with an indentation (see § 74), no doubt in order to suggest this epigrammatic function which it exerts.

(b) *Spenserian*

§ 123. An offshoot of the English variety of sonnet is the **Spenserian**. In this the rhyme-scheme is—

ABAB|BCBC|CDCD|EE.

In other words, as in the Shakespearean variety, there are three quatrains followed by a concluding couplet. But Spenser, who was a great metrist, employs the ingenious linking device in his scheme of rhyme : so that there are only five rhymes in all, instead of the seven of Surrey and Shakespeare.

IRREGULAR SONNET FORMS

§ 124. In the English forms, as in the Italian, there can be found sonnets which do not conform to the traditional rules. We classify as English those sonnets which are constructed on the *three quatrains and a couplet model* ; but some are exceptions, as in the case of the Italian, because their rhyme-schemes are unorthodox.

One of the best-known English irregular forms is Sir Philip Sidney's *Sleep* (see § 113), which is rhymed—

ABAB|ABAB|CDCD|EE.

§ 125. We can set down the main sonnet forms in a table :

SONNET FORMS AND RHYME-SCHEMES

I. ITALIAN.		II. MODIFIED ITALIAN.		III. ENGLISH.	
<i>Petrarch</i>		<i>Milton</i>		<i>Shakespeare</i>	<i>Spenser</i>
OCTAVE	Quatrain { A	OCTAVE	Quatrain { A	Quatrain 1 {	A
	B		B		B
	B		B		A
	A		A		B
	Quatrain { A		Quatrain { A	Quatrain 2 {	C
	B		B		B
	B		B		C
	A		A		C
(BREAK)		(NO BREAK)			
SESTET	Tercet { C		C { C	Quatrain 3 {	C
	D		D { D		D
	E		E		C
					D
	Tercet { C		C { C	Couplet {	E
	D		D { D		E
	E		E		
TOTAL RHYMES } 5		4	5	7	5

NOTE.—Sonnets in the English form, despite their *metrical* structure, often exhibit a break in sense or in syntax after the eighth line.

CHAPTER XI

DUPLE TIME

TROCHAIC METRES AND HYBRIDS

§ 126. *Pure* trochaic verse is not at all common. The reader will already have realised, from the superabundance of iambic verse in English, that as a nation we prefer a rising to a falling metre. To end a line on a stressed syllable offers two advantages : (i) it facilitates rhyming in a language fertile chiefly in monosyllabic rhyme-words ; and (ii) it makes terminations more clear-cut and definite. The “feminine ending” resulting from purely trochaic feet leaves the final unstressed syllable hanging, as it were, in the air.

§ 127. The most striking example of pure trochaic verse is the epic *Hiawatha*, a passage from which we quoted in § 39 (B.). It is written very regularly in four duple-falling or trochaic feet to the line ; despite its length, Longfellow took very few licences, *e.g.*,

Bur(y) your war-clubs and your weapons

or—

While the Mast(er) of Life, ascending,

where either superfluous syllable is easily “submerged.”

But its very regularity makes for monotony in the long run ; and while it has been parodied perhaps as often as any poem in the world, no one has repeated Longfellow’s experiment. We are, it may be, fortunate in that he did not rhyme it throughout.

§ 128. Other poets have written poems in pure trochaic verse, but only briefly :

- (a) For her gait, if she be walking ;
 Be she sitting, I desire her
 For her state's sake, and admire her
 For her wit, if she be talking ;
 Gait and state and wit approve her ;
 For which all and each I love her.

W. BROWNE : *Song*

- (b) There they are, my fifty men and women
 Naming me the fifty poems finished !

ROBERT BROWNING : *One Word More*

The latter example—in trochaic decasyllabics, or what may be called “falling blank verse”—is from a fairly long poem. It is a dedication to the poet's wife, and his choice of what is for him a unique metre is in itself a tribute :

Take these lines, look lovingly and nearly,
 Lines I write the first time and the last time.

Ibid.

Duple-Time Hybrids

§ 129. English poets in all ages have sung freely and easily to a falling metre, and still preserved the advantages of the “masculine ending” mentioned above, by the simple process of curtailing the last foot. We saw in Chapter I (§ 9) how widespread is the metre of Tennyson's *Locksley Hall*, for which the classical or quantitative name is “trochaic tetrameter catalectic” (§ 28). A shortened form, consisting of four trochees *minus* the last syllable (which might, *pace* the classics, be called “*Hiawatha* catalectic”), has always been

a favourite metre, especially for lyrics. Almost the earliest English song is the well-known—

“ Sumer is i-comen in ”¹

and many of Shakespeare's songs open in the same metre :

Where the bee sucks, there suck I ;
In a cowslip's bell I lie.

Tempest

Take, O take those lips away,
That so sweetly were forsworn.

Measure for Measure

Fear no more the heat o' the sun,
Nor the furious winter's rages.

Cymbeline

§ 130. No sooner, however, does a poet launch out on this metre than he begins to take freedoms with it. When he wants a “feminine ending” he employs it (as Shakespeare does in the last example above). But with equal readiness he adds an unstressed syllable at the beginning of the line :

Tell me where is fancy bred,
Or in the heart or in the head?²

Merchant of Venice.

Lines like the latter one of this couplet, *apparently* iambic, are mingled with lines beginning on the stress.

Such a metre in classical terminology could only be called “a hybrid between iambic and trochaic.” But

¹ This means “Summer *has come in*,” and not, as too often interpreted, “is a-coming in.”

² This couplet, as was pointed out in Chapter I (§ 7), is equivalent to the *Locksley Hall* metre.

the essential fact is much better expressed by saying that it is *in duple time, with four periods (marked by four stresses) to the line*.

§ 131. Take Milton's well-known pair of poems, *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* (OBEV, Nos. 310, 311). Each begins with a stately prelude, plainly iambic; but after ten lines of this the poem breaks into a more tripping measure, and swings easily to and fro between lines beginning with an iambic and lines with an initial stress :

Come and trip it as ye go,
On the light fantastic toe,
And in thy right hand lead with thee
The mountain nymph, sweet Liberty.

L'Allegro

The latter pair of lines can be classified, if the student prefers, as plain iambic octosyllabics; and if this is assumed to be the basis of the metre, the first pair of lines may be analysed as being "headless." This line of argument thus makes the basic metre a rising one—the national favourite.

§ 132. But the reader will find some poems in this (mainly seven-syllabled) metre which he will feel to be truly "falling," and readily analysable by the use of the "pause" at the end of the line. Consider—

Bards of Passion and of Mirth,
Ye have left your souls on earth !
Have ye souls in heaven too,
Double-lived in regions new ?
Yes, and those of heaven commune
With the spheres of sun and moon ;
With the noise of fountains wondrous,
And the parle of voices thund'rous.

KEATS : *Bards of Passion*

In this poem and the same poet's *Fancy* (OBEV, No. 631), the initial stress is the rule, and no more than a few lines begin with an unobtrusive stressless 'And' or 'Of.'

§ 133. This duple-time four-period metre, which will be seen to have a range of from seven to nine syllables, clearly provides a free, light movement, adaptable to changing feelings and signalling changing emotions. It has never presented any difficulties to English poets, nor to their readers. The only sufferers have been the classically nurtured critics who have tried to force it into either the iambic or the trochaic schedule. But in spite of all temptations to belong to other nations, it remains an English metre, demanding an English liberty of movement.

The Double Trochaic Metre

§ 134. A variant of duple time, familiar to our ears since nursery days, deserves analysis, because it affords (a) a new principle in stress-values, and (b) a further illustration of what we have just discussed—the ease with which iambic and trochaic metres slide into one another.

We call it "double trochaic" for simplicity, and because the most easily recognisable unit appears to be a *pair of trochees*. (But the reader, warned by recent experience, will realise how readily the basis may be shifted to a pair of iambs.) This double period is subject to the new principle that *not all stressed syllables are equally stressed*. A brief study of the following examples will show that in the pair of feet a *major* stress is audible in one of them and a *minor* stress in the other.

§ 135. Consider carefully the following, to which we subjoin notes :

- (a) John Gilpin was a citizen
 Of credit and renown.

W. COWPER

- (b) God pardon us, nor harden us ; we did not see so
 clear
 The night we went to Bannockburn by way of
 Brighton Pier.

G. K. CHESTERTON

- (c) Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the
 Lord ;

- (d) He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes
 of wrath are stored.

(c) and (d) are the first and second lines of the *Battle Hymn of the Republic* by JULIA WARD HOWE ; all the rest of the poem, except the refrain, consists of lines like (d).

- (e) And the thoughts of Man are widened by the process
 of the suns.

TENNYSON

- (f) By the old Moulmein pagoda, lookin' eastwards to
 the sea,
 There's a Burma gal a-settin', an' I know she thinks
 of me.

KIPLING

- (g) Will you walk into my parlour, said the spider to
 the fly.

Nursery Rhyme

- (h) Drake he's in his hammock, an' a thousand mile
 away.

NEWBOLT

- (i) John Brown's body lies a-mould'ring in the grave.

ANON.

- (j) And I said "O gentle pieman, why so very, very merry?
Is it purity of conscience, or your one-and-seven sherry?"

GILBERT : *Bab Ballads*

- (k) This particularly rapid unintelligible patter
Isn't generally heard, and if it is it doesn't matter.

GILBERT : *Ruddigore*

And many other Gilbertian "patter" songs.

The "double trochee" may be exemplified by the words in (a) 'Gilpin was a,' with the major stress on 'Gil-' and the minor on 'was.' (For those who prefer a double iambus, 'God pardon us' (b) shows the major stress in the first foot, and the minor in the second.) But the distinguishing *basis* lies in this : *In every instance four major stresses may be heard, separated from each other by three syllables,¹ of which the middle one bears a minor stress.* How far this basic rhythm is audible in each instance is a matter for the reader's ear to determine.

NOTES.—Examples (a), (b) and (c) are ballad metre or its equivalent, "fourteeners." Add in front of this an extra (usually unstressed) syllable, and we have the basis of (d), (e), (f) and (g). (But note that (e), taken from *Locksley Hall*, comes from a poem where the first syllable is *regularly* a stressed one.) Example (h) begins on the major stress. And (i) which has pauses after (or on) each of the first two words, is the equivalent of (h) ; the major stress on 'John,' the minor on 'Brown.' Examples (j) and (k), owing to feminine endings, show continuous movement, with no final pause at the end of the line.

¹ Except in (i), where there are equivalent pauses. [See §§ 50-53.]

There is much matter for the student to investigate in the foregoing examples. When bored, he may try singing them all (inaudibly) to the tune of *John Brown's Body*.

NOTE.—As it has been distinguished by a comment from T. S. Omond, and as it further illustrates the above metre, we add a note on one of Gilbert's best-known songs: Bunthorne's "If you're anxious for to shine" in *Patience*. Take, for example, the first line of the third verse—

Then a séntimental pássion of a végetable fáshion
must excíte your lánguid spléen

exhibiting seven major stresses, separated in the first part of the line by three syllables, and in the latter part by one. So in the final line of the chorus—

Why, whát a most particularly púre young mán this
púre young mán must bé,

the intervals between the major stresses are furnished at first with a full, and later with a partial, complement of syllables.

Omond regards it as an instance of four syllables taking the time of two: that is, the normal line is a "fourteener" and might have been written—

Why, sùrely quíte a púre young mán this púre young
mán must bé,

only that the writer has resolved the second and third stresses each into a major and a minor stress; in other words

'sure-' is broken up into 'what a most.'

'quite' is broken up into '-ticular-.'

It makes no metrical difference *where* the resolutions occur: Gilbert might have written—

Why, sùrely quíte a púre young mán this júvenile
phenóménon must bé;

and it seems to matter little whether one follows Omond or takes the resolved foot of four syllables as normal, and regards the later feet as contracted or syncopated. The vital point is that the *time* of ' -ticularly ' equals the *time* of ' pure young.'

A fully resolved form of the line is represented by :

What a veritable miracle of human ingenuity a
metrical analysis can be.

CHAPTER XII

TRIPLE TIME

DACTYLIC—ANAPAESTIC—HYBRIDS—STANZAIC FORMS—LIMERICKS

§ 136. Triple-time verse is that in which the stresses are separated by two unstressed syllables (or the equivalent thereof). If the stress is on the first of the three syllables representing the period or foot, we call the metre falling or dactylic : if on the last, we call it rising or anapaestic.

§ 137. What we stated of duple-time verse (§ 126) is even more true of triple-time verse : feet, lines and verse ending on the stress (rising or anapaestic) are much more common than the converse (falling or dactylic). Whereas the “feminine ending” (as we saw) is against the pure trochaic line, the two unstressed syllables at the end of a dactyl make *pure* dactylic verse harder to write and more difficult to rhyme.

§ 138. Again, there are plenty of poems in triple time which may be classified as either dactylic or anapaestic ; English poets have seldom troubled themselves to stick to the classical last. And, as we saw in the analysis of *The Burial of Sir John Moore* (§§ 50–54), our poets get over the difficulties of triple-time metres with the use of *pauses*, making certain feet *appear* to be duple time.

Dactylic Verse

§ 139. A sample of continuous **dactylic verse**, and rhymed at that, may be studied in the following :

Oh ! he can prophesy
 With a wink of his eye,
 Peep with security
 Into futurity,
 Sum up your history,
 Clear up a mystery,
 Humour proclivity
 For a nativity, *etc.*

W. S. GILBERT : *The Sorcerer*

This, of course, is a *tour de force*—an operatic lyric, and only a part of a song that begins and ends in anapaestic verse (limericks). Even so, it may be noted, at the end of the series of brilliantly rhymed dactyls—twice the length quoted above—Gilbert has to introduce an “Oh !” for the singer to pause upon.

§ 140. In serious poetry, lines basically dactylic are only found interspersed with pauses at the end of the lines, reducing the final foot to a monosyllable or a trochee. In § 69 our rhyme-example (x) is from Thomas Hood’s *Bridge of Sighs*, one of the few real poems in dactylic metre. Consider also Browning’s *The Lost Leader* :

Just for a|handful of|silver he|left us $\wedge$,
 Just for a|riband to|stick in his|coat $\wedge \wedge$.

The rest of the poem should be studied for other pauses and irregularities (apart from roughnesses typical of Browning).

§ 141. Sheridan's drinking-song (from *The School for Scandal*) is a further instance :

Here's to the maiden of bashful fifteen $\wedge \wedge$,
 Here's to the widow of fifty $\wedge$;
 Here's to the flaunting, extravagant quean $\wedge$,
 And here's to the housewife that's thrifty $\wedge$.

The reader's ear should by now be skilled enough to detect the " dwell " or pause on ' fifty ' and its rhyme-word, and to analyse the cause ; also to note that the single pause at the end of line 3 is made up to the requisite length by the ' And ' beginning line 4.

§ 142. Matthew Arnold (classical scholar as well as English poet) employed an unrhymed metre basically dactylic for *Heine's Grave* and *Rugby Chapel*. Both poems are full of metrical equivalents and other irregularities, but the following extract is free from them, and exhibits the standard line as the accentual equivalent of *half* a classical elegiac pentameter :

— — — — —

Charm is the glory which makes
 Song of the poet divine,
 Love is the fountain of charm.
 How without charm wilt thou draw,
 Poet ! the world to thy way ?
 Not by the lightnings of wit—
 Not by the thunder of scorn !
 These to the world, too, are given ;
 Wit it possesses, and scorn—
 Charm is the poet's alone.

MATTHEW ARNOLD : *Heine's Grave*

Other dactyls were given in § 41. Several

favourite nursery rhymes afford studies in dactylic movement. Consider :

- (i) Hey diddle diddle, the cat and the fiddle.
- (ii) Ride a cock-horse to Banbury Cross.
- (iii) Old Mother Hubbard.
- (iv) Humpty-Dumpty.

Anapaestic Verse

§ 143. In anapaestic verse, naturally enough, it is the *initial* unstressed syllables which are often lacking ; but in a great many instances (see those quoted as examples in § 40) the reader is left in no doubt about the metre.

- (a) I sprang to the stirrup, and Joris, and he ;
 I galloped, Dirck galloped, we galloped all three ;
 “ Good speed ! ” cried the watch, as the gate-bolts
 undrew ;
 “ Speed ! ” echoed the wall to us galloping through.

BROWNING : *How they Brought the Good News*

- (b) I have lain in the sun,
 I have toiled as I might,
 I have thought as I would,
 And now it is night.

BRIDGES : *Fortunatus Nimium* (PTD, II, No. 99)

- (c) And the Spear was a Desert Physician who cured not
 a few of ambition,
 And drave not a few to perdition with medicine bitter
 and strong ;
 And the shield was a grief to the fool and as bright
 as a desolate pool,
 And as straight as the rock of Stamboul when their
 cavalry thundered along :

For the coward was drowned with the brave when our
 battle sheered up like a wave,
 And the dead to the desert we gave, and the glory to
 God in our song.

J. E. FLECKER : *The War Song of the Saracens*
 (PTD, II, No. 119)

Triple-Time Hybrids

§ 144. We subjoin also a selection of extracts in triple time, which the reader may classify as dactylic or anapaestic as he pleases.

- (a) Over the mountains
 And over the waves ;
 Under the fountains
 And under the graves ;
 Under floods that are deepest
 Which Neptune obey,
 Over rocks that are steepest,
 Love will find out the way.
 ANON. (OBEV, No. 391)
- (b) Glory of warrior, glory of orator, glory of song,
 Paid with a voice flying by to be lost on an endless sea ;
 Glory of Virtue, to fight, to struggle, to right the
 wrong—
 Nay, but she aimed not at glory, no lover of glory she :
 Give her the glory of going on, and still to be.
 TENNYSON : *Wages*
- (c) And the lonely stream, hiding
 Shy birds, grew more lonely,
 And with us was only
 The noise of our gliding.
 In cloud of gray weather
 The evening o'erdarkened,
 In the stillness we hearkened ;
 Our hearts sang together.
 LAURENCE BINYON : *Bablock-hythe* (PTD, I, No. 57)

- (d) When the voices of children are heard on the green,
 And laughing is heard on the hill,
 My heart is at rest within my breast,
 And everything else is still.

WILLIAM BLAKE : *Nurse's Song*

- (e) In a climate so very unsettled as ours
 It's as well to be cautious and guard against showers,
 For though, about One,
 You've a fine brilliant sun,
 When your walk or your ride is but barely begun,
 Yet long ere the hour hand approaches the Two,
 There is not in the whole sky one atom of blue,
 But it "rains cats and dogs" and you're fairly wet
 through

Ere you know where to turn, what to say, or to do.
 BARHAM (*Ingoldsby Legends*) : *The Blasphemer's Warning*

Triple-Time Stanzaic Forms

§ 145. So much English invention of stanzaic forms has been devoted to duple-time metres that there are very few fixed stanzas for triple time. Clearly, lines in triple time may be grouped and rhymed in various combinations, *e.g.*—

The walls of this town
 Are full of renown,
 And strangers delight to walk round 'em ;
 But as for the dwellers,
 Both buyers and sellers—
 For me, you may hang 'em, or drown 'em.

SWIFT : *Chester*

and the examples already given provide other simple forms.

§ 146. Probably the most striking triple-time stanza is that invented by Swinburne ; it may be called the

Dolores stanza after the best-known (and most often parodied) poem of the type, but we give an example from another :

The songs of dead seasons, that wander
On wings of articulate words ;
Lost leaves that the shore-wind may squander,
Light flocks of untameable birds ;
Some sang to me dreaming in class-time
And truant in hand as in tongue ;
For the youngest were born of boy's pastime,
The eldest are young.

Dedication, *Poems and Ballads*

Swinburne's poems are, indeed, a happy hunting-ground for the researcher into triple-time poetry.

§ 147. Far the most widely known anapaestic stanza in English is what is called the "limerick." This national curiosity—perhaps the only verse-stanza familiar to the public at large—has a dim history, a very small place in literature, and an immense vogue in current oral tradition. The form lends itself easily to topical impromptu or epigram or sheer nonsense.

On analysis, it turns out to be no more than a triple-time version (with a slightly different rhyme-scheme) of what is "short metre" in hymnology (see §§ 87, 93) ; *i.e.* first two lines of three feet each, then a line of four feet (divided in the limerick into two lines each of two), closing with another line of three feet ; *e.g.* :

There was a young lady of Riga
Who went for a ride on a tiger ;
They returned from the ride
With the lady inside,
And a smile on the face of the tiger.

Rhyme-scheme : AABBA. The above specimen¹ is technically a bad one, inasmuch as it repeats an A-rhyme. In Lear's earlier and unsophisticated rhymes, the final line is often a repetition in whole or in part of the first line. In the best limericks it is a point of honour to have three separate A-rhymes.

It is alleged that at some unspecified date, apparently nineteenth century, there was a song in this metre with a chorus of "Will you come up to Limerick?" (or "Won't you come up," etc. ; see Kipling's "Stalky" story, *The Propagation of Knowledge*). The air of this song was one to which the members of any convivial party contributed extemporised verses in turn, the rest bearing the burden. This legend supplies the title "limerick," which is not recorded in print until 1898, when a discussion of the subject broke out in *Notes and Queries*. But if Mr. Kipling's stories of school life are historically correct, the name was in use about 1880.

In literature, the "onlie begetter" of the stanza is certainly Edward Lear,² whose *Book of Nonsense* appeared in 1846 ; most (but not all) of his verses repeat the first line, with adaptations, in the last. There is no evidence that Lear ever knew the name "limerick."

The metre is just audible in a snatch of the fifteenth century :

The lion is wonderly strong,
And ful of wilès of wo ;
And whether he playe
Or take his preye,
He can not do but slo (slay).

(from *MS. Harl.* 7322)

¹ Alleged to have been composed by Lewis Carroll as a dinner-table impromptu. Naturally, a number of versions are in existence.

² But there are anonymous booklets of children's nonsense-verses in the metre, 1814, 1820, etc.

And the following early version of the well-known nursery rhyme—

Dickery, dickery, dock,
The mouse ran up the clock ;
The clock struck one,
The mouse ran down,
Dickery, dickery, dock.

is found in *Mother Goose's Melody* in 1791.

A series of limerick stanzas has been employed by Gilbert in more than one of his operatic lyrics, *e.g.* :

A man who would woo a fair maid,
Should 'prentice himself to the trade ;
And study all day,
In a methodical way,
How to flatter, cajole, and persuade.
He should 'prentice himself at fourteen
And practise from morning till e'en
And when he's of age,
If he will, I'll engage,
He may capture the heart of a queen !

And so on, in two more double limerick stanzas and a refrain of a single limerick :

It is purely a matter of skill
Which all may attain if they will :
But every Jack,
He must study the knack
If he wants to make sure of his Jill !

The Yeoman of the Guard

CHAPTER XIII

FOREIGN FORMS

(a) CLASSICAL METRES

(b) FRENCH METRICAL FORMS

(a) Classical Metres

§ 148. The history of the imitation of classical metres in English illustrates the powerful influence of scholastic tradition on our “native woodnotes wild.” No sooner had English writers begun, in Elizabeth’s reign, to investigate the structure of their own verse, than there followed an outbreak of classical “versifying” (as they called it) which deluded even the best—Spenser and Sidney and Campion—into extraordinary maltreatment of their own language. They attempted to reproduce classical (“quantitative” (see §§ 15–21)) metres in terms of “*quantity*” in *English*, ignoring for the most part the natural English stresses, and fastening upon English syllables “quantities” which they do not possess.

For instance, in attempting to reproduce classical “elegiacs”—couplets of dactylic hexameter and pentameter—of which the quantitative scheme is—

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} = & \sim & | & = & \sim & | & = & \vdots & \sim & | & = & \sim & | & - & \sim & \sim & | & - & \sim \\ & & & & & & & & & & & & & & & & & & & \\ & = & \sim & | & = & \sim & | & = & || & - & \sim & \sim & | & - & \sim & \sim & | & - & \end{array}$$

they produced verse of this kind :

See ye the|blindfold|-ed ∷ pretie|God, that|feathered|archer,
Of lov|ers’ miser|ies||which maketh|his bloodie|game?

Wot ye why his mother with a veil hath covered his face ?
Trust me, lest he my love happily chance to behold.

SPENSER : *Elegiacs*

We analyse the first couplet, and leave the reader to puzzle out the second for himself ; but even one familiar with Ovid may well be excused if he fails to see immediately the intended scansion.

Kingsley's *Westward Ho !* introduces (Chapter IX) an imaginary dialogue discussing the subject, an argument between Spenser and Walter Raleigh, with quotations, including the above.

§ 149. That "quantity" of a kind exists in English, no one whose ears are open to our vowel-sounds can dispute ; but quantitative versification in English fails inevitably, because—

- (i) we speak habitually by stress ;
- (ii) we have no *system* of quantities ; still less have we any rule, like the classics, making syllables either long or short, and the long equivalent to two of the short ;
- (iii) we cannot adopt the classical rule of "length by position" (see § 16) in a language spelt as English is spelt. Consider the word 'pretty' in the first line of Spenser's *Elegiacs*: the *sound* of the first vowel is short ; but it is stressed ; therefore the word is "trochaic" (a) by English stress-rule, and (b) by the classical "length by position" rule—IF you spell it with two *t*'s, which Spenser did *not* !

Imitations of classical metres other than elegiacs were tried, especially by Sidney. The curious craze soon died down ; but it has never died out.

§ 150. A second outbreak occurred some two hundred years later, again at a critical point in the history of English metrics, when Coleridge was involved with Southey and others in further endeavours to graft classical metres on English poetry. Coleridge produced an apt couplet in English elegiacs—

In the hexámeter rises the fountáin's sílvery cólumn,
In the pentámeter áye fálling in mélody bák,

obviously based upon stress, and shocking to any classically quantitative ear. In 1797 Canning and Hookham Frere burlesqued the sapphic stanza in the well-known—

Needy knife-grinder, whither are you going ?
Rough is the road, your wheel is out of order—
Bleak blows the blast ; your hat has got a hole in 't,
So have your breeches !

But the fact that Southey wrote *A Vision of Judgement* (1821) in *accentual* hexameters is an indication that the truth had dawned.

¹ In 1795 Robert Southey composed a poem, *The Soldier's Wife*, in what he was pleased to call "dactyls." Coleridge, who of all the poets of his generation was the most interested in metrical novelties, contributed one stanza. The poem begins :

Weary way-wanderer, languid and sick at heart,
Travelling painfully over the rugged road,
Wild-visaged wanderer ! God help thee, wretched one !

Coleridge's contribution was :

Woe-begone mother, half anger, half agony,
As over thy shoulder thou lookest to hush the babe,
Bleakly the blinding snow beats in thy hagged face.

The experiment was derided at the time, particularly in a parody by Hookham Frere, and has met with few supporters since.

§ 151. If an English poet wishes to reproduce in his own speech the metres which, *reading by quantity*, he hears in classical verse, he can do so by substituting stressed syllables where the classical scheme has long ones, unstressed where it has short. (This is what Coleridge's couplet quoted above attempts to do ; but the reader who recollects § 25 at once protests that 'fountain's' is not an English spondee.) Many poets since Coleridge have exploited this method and achieved various degrees of success ; some of them have tried to combine the stress principle with their own ideas of quantities.

§ 152. The *hexameter*, used continuously (the classical epic metre of Homer and Vergil), has been the favourite. A number of accidental "stress" hexameters are audible in the Bible : ¹

How art thou fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning.

Isaiah xiv, 12

But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.

Psalms lxxxii, 7

God is gone up with a shout : the Lord with the sound of a trumpet.

Psalms xlvii, 5

Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.

Colossians iii, 19

The most familiar English poems in this metre are

¹ Note that in these instances, too, and, in fact, in almost all English "stress" hexameters, the final spondee is in reality a trochee. This is because in the English language there are no true single-word spondees (see § 25).

Longfellow's *Evangeline*,¹ Kingsley's *Andromeda*, and *The Bothie of Tober-na-vuolich*, by A. H. Clough (1819-1861).

Over the mountain aloft ran a rush and a roll and a
 roaring ;
 Downward the breeze came indignant, and leapt with a
 howl to the water,
 Roaring in cranny and crag, till the pillars and clefts of the
 basalt
 Rang like a god-swept lyre, and her brain grew mad with
 the noises. . . .

CHARLES KINGSLEY : *Andromeda*

§ 153. Other favourite metres for such experiments are the stanzaic or "lyric" metres familiar from Horace's *Odes*, particularly the *alcaic* and the *sapphic*. Of the latter we have given a sample above (§ 150). The *alcaic* hardly exists in English apart from Tennyson's *Milton* :

O mighty-mouth'd inventor of harmonies,
 O skilled to sing of Time or Eternity,
 God-gifted organ-voice of England,
 Milton, a name to resound for ages.

Under the title of *Experiments in Quantity*, Tennyson included with the above a six-line attempt at *elegiacs* :

These lame hexameters the strong-wing'd music of
 Homer ?
 No—but a most burlesque barbarous experiment, *etc.*

¹ He used it also in *The Courtship of Miles Standish*, etc. The well-known lines beginning—

Ships that pass in the night and speak each other in passing
 occur in one of his *Tales of a Wayside Inn* (The Theologian's Tale, Part IV).

and some twenty lines of *Hendecasyllabics* :

O you chorus of indolent reviewers,
Irresponsible, indolent reviewers,
Look, I come to the test, a tiny poem
All composed in a metre of Catullus, *etc*

On Tennyson's fifty lines of *Experiments* a "chorus of irresponsible" and other "reviewers" have written many reams of comment. Here we can only say that what Tennyson was trying to do (and others have since done better) was to write English verses using only such words as fitted the classical metres *in stress and/or in quantity according to classical rules*. Thus in *Milton*, 'of' in the first line is short before the *h*, in the second line long before the *t* (*ft* lengthening the *o*) ; the first syllable of 'inventor,' unstressed in English, though the classical metre requires a long syllable there, is defensible on the same "length by position" principle ; and in a later verse of *Milton* as well as in the *Hendecasyllabics*, he uses the classical licence of lengthening an unstressed 'the' before *st* and *sk*.

But he failed to carry out his principles in every detail—and every detail has been eagerly scanned by critics. Lastly, many classical scholars, having made allowance for his failures in detail, deny that the English lines reproduce the metrical sound of their classical originals.

§ 154. Quite reasonably, several poets—notably Swinburne—have further Anglicised classical metres by taking the quantitative basis, shifting it into its corresponding stress system, and *then* taking the usual English liberties with it, *e.g.* of beginning lines with unstressed syllables before the point at which the classical stress starts, and elsewhere in the line making the stress predominant over easily "submerged" or "swallowed" syllables. Thus Swinburne can write

an English "hexameter" (in English "triple-falling metre in six periods") as follows :

But the héart that impéls them is éven as a cónqueror's
insátiably cráving,

where the classicist would count twenty-one (or twenty-two) syllables, and protest that the hexameter's maximum is seventeen !

Students who wish to pursue the classical imitations further will find excellent commentary and summaries in T. S. Omond's *Study of Metre* (1920), Appendix ; and in his *English Metrists* (1921) there is an elaborate bibliography of the whole subject.

§ 155. Echoes of classical metres may often be heard in English poems by those familiar with quantitative schemes—possibly in many places where the English poet had no knowledge of the classics. In particular, the **choriambus** (trochee followed by iambus), alone or in combination with other simple feet, seems well established. Thackeray's *Mahogany Tree* uses it "neat" :

Here let us sport,
Boys, as we sit ;
Laughter and wit
Flashing so free.
Life is but short—
When we are gone
Let them sing on
Round the old tree.

It can easily be seen (see § 47) how the simple substitution of a trochaic for an iambic foot, in blank or other iambic verse, gives a choriambic effect.

Consider, for example, Lionel Johnson's *By the Statue of King Charles at Charing Cross* :

Sombre and rich the skies,
Great glooms and starry plains.
Gently the night wind sighs ;
Else a vast silence reigns.

The whole poem (PTD, I, No. 9) is worth study from this point of view ; and many similar can be found.

Imitation is sometimes more deliberate ; consider Ruskin's—

Trust thou thy Love : if she be proud, is she not sweet ?
Trust thou thy Love : if she be mute, is she not pure ? *etc.*
(OBEV, No. 744.)

and occasionally the Horatian choriambic metres are taken as models, especially the one called “ the Greater Asclepiad ”—

— — | — — — — | — — — — | — — — — | — —

imitated in two poems by Rupert Brooke :

Ah, not now, when desire burns, and the wind calls, and
the suns of spring
Light-foot dance in the woods, whisper of life, woo me to
wayfaring, *etc.*

On the other hand, Browning's *Cavalier Lyric*, beginning apparently with two choriambics, is shown by its second line to be really dactylic :

Kentish Sir Byng [_^ _^] stood for his king
Bidding the crop-headed Parliament swing

the *pause* after ‘ Byng ’ being equal to ‘ headed ’ in the next line.

§ 156. A very interesting example of mixed choriambics and iambics in the Horatian manner will be found in Sir Henry Newbolt's *Minora Sidera* (PTD, I, No. 13) :

Sitting at times over a hearth that burns
With dull domestic glow,
My thought, leaving the book, gratefully turns
To you who planned it so.

The whole poem should be carefully studied, if only for the sake of the delicate irregularities which would be impossible to the strict classic. Sir Henry Newbolt explains his intentions as follows :

Whether with full consciousness or not, I did apply the classical metrical ideas to English verse: *e.g.* *Minora Sidera* taught me to write something like a choriambic.

O fons Bandusiae splendidior vitro

may have suggested—

Sitting at times over a hearth, *etc.*

but it may just as likely have come from Campion's—

Love me or not, love her I must or die ;
Leave me or not, follow her needs must I.

Minora Sidera is “a choriambic,” but that doesn't mean that it is on all fours with Horatian choriambics ; only that I have used choriambic feet here and there to get a certain effect, without keeping the rule of quantity, but always keeping the natural speech-stress of the words.

(b) French Metrical Forms

§ 157. There are a number of verse-patterns, the origins of which belong to the dawn of French literary history, which have become acclimatised in England,

and, though still called by their French names, they cannot be overlooked by the student of English verse. Some of the patterns can be found in the songs of the Provençal troubadours of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries ; in later times a fine art was built upon them by a succession of poets, notably Charles d'Orléans and François Villon in the fifteenth century and Voiture in the seventeenth.

In this country, although some of our early poets, such as Chaucer and Gower, experimented with these forms, it was only towards the end of the nineteenth century that they gained a wide vogue. About 1870 the example set by Swinburne and Andrew Lang was followed by " a nest of singing birds " and in the next ten years the brilliant work of Austin Dobson, W. E. Henley, Edmund Gosse and others stimulated a great output of verse in these forms, both in England and America.

Their intricate structure, elaborate rhyme-schemes, and use of the " refrain " (or repeated line), provide the versifier with models which will challenge his ingenuity—the more so because English is less fertile than French in easy rhymes. For these reasons they are frequently used as tests in literary competitions.

§ 158. There are two general rules which verse-writers employing these French forms should strictly observe :

- (i) Despite scarcity of rhymes in English, throughout the poem no rhyming syllable should either
(a) repeat the sense or (b) echo the *full* sound of any other rhyming syllable.

This means that rhymes like (a) ' test/protest ';

'gain/regain' ; 'prepare/compare,' and (b) 'tail/tale' ; 'great/grate' ; 'pain/pane,' should be avoided. (See § 65.)

- (ii) The "refrain" line, which, wholly or in part, recurs from time to time in fixed positions, should be repeated without alteration of sound.

The *meaning* of the refrain may be (and in practice often is) altered, *e.g.* by a change in punctuation, or by italicising a word to alter the emphasis, or by punning.

Although the original French forms were usually strictly controlled by rules regulating the metre and length of line, in English practice any metre and any length of line may be used.

The French writers of the Ballade, for example, were restricted to eight-syllabled lines for the eight-line verse, or to ten-syllabled lines for the ten-line model.

THE BALLADE

§ 159. The most generally used of all the French forms is the **ballade**, under which heading we may conveniently treat five varieties :

THE BALLADE (Standard Form).

Structure : 3 verses of 8 lines each, followed by an "envoy" of 4 lines : total, 28 lines.

The *refrain* is the last line of each stanza, *i.e.* lines 8, 16, 24, and 28.

Rhyme-scheme : in each 8-line stanza, ABABBCBC : in the envoy, BCBC.

(Thus 14 B-rhymes are required, which constitutes one of the chief difficulties in English Ballades.)

SPECIMEN BALLADE (STANDARD FORM)

"Write a ballade"? Dear Lady Disdain,
 That last service I won't forswear :
 First I must fashion a tart refrain
 (Excellent principle, "Catch your hare"!) :
 Then, with a deeply respectful air, 5
 While you prink on your promenade,
 Veil after veil away I'll tear—
 That is the end of this ballade.

Hard on you, eh? to entertain
 A cynical angel unaware : 10
 You nursed a viper—and here's its bane
 Stinging a bosom that . . . does not care.
 Yes, you shall have a posy to wear :
 But posies have thorns in embuscade,
 And you, my Lady, shall have your share— 15
 That is the end of this ballade !

Shall I pretend it gives me pain?
 No! I am glad to be free of your snare ;
 Shattered your shrine, and with words profane
 I this Parthian shaft prepare : 20
 What's revealed when your heart lies bare?
 Nothing but shoddy behind the façade!
 Is the account between us square?—
 That is the end of this ballade.

Envoy

Madam, I leave you in Vanity Fair 25
 Mincing away *en habit de parade* ;
 But *respice finem*, you flirt!—And there!
 That is the end of this ballade.

THE BALLADE (Ten-line Form).

Structure : 3 verses of 10 lines each, envoy of 5 :
 total, 35 lines.

The *refrain* as lines 10, 20, 30 and 35.

Rhyme-scheme : in each 10-line verse, ABABBCCD CD :
in the envoy, CCD CD.

(Thus 12 c-rhymes are required.)

THE BALLADE with Double Refrain.

Distinguished from the standard form by having a second refrain at the fourth line of each of the first three stanzas and the second of the envoy. This alters the rhyme-scheme of the envoy to BBCC.

N.B.—In all the above forms, as well as in the *Chant Royal* below, the conventional fashion for the envoy is that its first word should be an address in the vocative to some person. (It was originally an invocation to the poet's patron.) Thus 'Prince,' 'Princes' or 'Princess' begin the envoys to many English ballades, or some proper name is used ; the fashion, however, is frequently disregarded.

THE DOUBLE BALLADE consists of 6 stanzas of 8 (or 10) lines, without an envoy, and often without a refrain. If a refrain is used, it is in the usual position, closing each stanza.

§ 160. *The Chant Royal* is little more than a longer form of the ballade. It consists of 5 stanzas each of 11 lines, with an envoy of 5 lines : total 60 lines.

Rhyme-scheme : each stanza, ABABCCDDEDE ; envoy, DDEDE.

(This requires 18 D-rhymes, for which only a few English syllable sounds are sufficiently fertile.)

§ 161. THE RONDEL GROUP

THE RONDEL (Charles d'Orleans' type, the modern standard).

Structure : 14 lines of any length, usually written as 2 verses of 4 lines followed by 1 of 6.

Refrain is of 2 lines, appearing as lines 1-2, 7-8, and 13-14.

Rhyme-scheme : ABBA : ABAB : ABBAAB.

In some cases the *final* refrain is confined to the A-line, the rhyme-scheme of the last verse being ABBA.

THE RONDEAU (Voiture's model).

Structure : 13 full lines, now usually of eight syllables, *plus a refrain* (the first half of line 1, *i.e.* four syllables) twice repeated. Total : 15 lines, usually written in 3 verses of 5, 4, and 6 lines, the refrain occurring at lines 9 and 15.

Rhyme-scheme : AABBA : AAB refrain : AABBA refrain.

SPECIMEN RONDEAU (VOITURE'S MODEL)

No single man on earth, you say,
Should pun unpunished?—Get away !
True, my dear ass, " the sexton tol(le)d
The bell " may leave a highbrow cold :
But are we all downhearted ? Nay !

5

This noon I join a host, whose sway
Extends o'er Europe and Cathay—
And yet, so far, it has enrolled
No single man. . .

You penetrate the verbal play ?	10
No ?—Then your wits are all astray,	
And in plain speech you must be told :	
Ere night you shall in me behold,	
Because it is my wedding-day,	
No single man !	15

THE ROUNDEL is merely a variant of the rondeau. Since Swinburne wrote a hundred (*A Century of Roundels*), his model is now usually followed.

Structure : 9 full lines of any length, *plus a refrain* (first half of the first line) twice repeated. Total : 11 lines, usually written as 3 verses of 4, 3, and 4 lines, the refrain occurring at lines 4 and 11.

Rhyme-scheme : ABA refrain : BAB : ABA refrain.

SPECIMEN ROUNDEL (SWINBURNE'S MODEL)

Far-fetched and dear-bought, as the proverb rehearses,
Is good, or was held so, for ladies : but nought
In a song can be good if the turn of the verse is
 Far-fetched and dear-bought.

As the turn of a wave should it sound, and the thought
Ring smooth, and as light as the spray that disperses
Be the gleam of the words for the garb thereof wrought.

Let the soul in it shine through the sound as it pierces
Men's hearts with possession of music unsought ;
For the bounties of song are no jealous god's mercies,
 Far-fetched and dear-bought.

A. C. SWINBURNE : *A Century of Roundels*,
 " A Singing Lesson " (No. 67)

§ 162. THE VILLANELLE

Structure : 5 verses of 3 lines, followed by 1 of 4.

Total : 19 lines, which may be of any length ;
but of these 8 are the—

Refrain, which is of 2 lines each repeated in full four times : line 1 reoccurs as lines 6, 12, and 18 ;
line 3 reoccurs as lines 9, 15, and 19.

In other words, the two refrain lines, after the first verse, form *alternately* the last lines of the middle 4 verses, and *together* end the poem.

Rhyme-scheme : on two rhymes only : first 5 verses each

ABA : final verse, ABAA.

SPECIMEN VILLANELLE

I hope you clearly understand	
I don't expect to do this well—	
This is the work of a 'prentice hand.	
O Muse ! whose inspiration bland	
My predecessors did impel,	5
I hope you clearly understand	
The skill they could so well command	
I cannot hope to parallel :	
This is the work of a 'prentice hand.	
And makes a strenuous demand	10
On every cerebellar cell	
(I hope you clearly understand) ;	
And rhymes, so intricately planned,	
Ring little more than Fancy's knell.	
(This is the work of a 'prentice hand !)	15
Critic, with scorn you will not brand	
My one and only villanelle ?	
I hope you clearly understand	
This is the work of a 'prentice hand ?	

§ 163. THE SESTINA. (Originally unrhymed, but now two or even three rhymes are allowed if required.)

Structure : 6 verses each of 6 lines, followed by a verse of 3. Total : 39 lines, all of the same length (which may be any length).

Feature : the 6 end-words of the lines are repeated as end-words throughout, in a different order in each of the first 6 verses : in the final 3-line verse the 6 words are used 3 at the ends and 3 in the middles of the lines.

The order of repetition of the 6 words proceeds on a regular system, on the principle that the succeeding verse takes from its predecessor the end-words of its lines, thus : “bottom ; top ; bottom but one ; top but one ; bottom but two ; top but two.” Thus, numbering the end-words of the first verse 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6—

the second verse ends on	6, 1, 5, 2, 4, 3,
the third	„ „ 3, 6, 4, 1, 2, 5,
the fourth	„ „ 5, 3, 2, 6, 1, 4,
and so on.	

In the final 3-line verse the lines *end* with the *even*-numbered words, 2, 4, 6 ; while the *odd*-numbered words, 1, 3, 5, come at the end of (or somewhere in) the first half of each of the three lines.

Rhyme-scheme : when rhymes are used, they naturally follow the order of lines given above.

§ 164. THE TRIOLET

Structure : 8 lines of any length.

Feature : lines 1 and 2 are repeated as lines 7 and 8,
and line 1 is also repeated as line 4.

Rhyme-scheme is thus ABAAABAB.

SPECIMEN TRIOLET

As they gave me the choice
Of a car for my marriage,
I asked for a Royce
(As they gave me the choice)
And I didn't rejoice 5
When they sent a horse-carriage—
As they gave me the choice
Of a *car* for my marriage.

“Usually,” Sir Edmund Gosse wrote (*Encyclopædia Britannica*, Eleventh Edition), “the triolet has laboured under a suspicion of frivolity.” One can hardly free these other French metres from the same charge.

§ 165. THE PANTOUM

Structure : any number of quatrains in any metre, with the alternate lines rhyming.

Feature : “enjambment by repetition”—the whole poem is chained together by the repetition of every line, the second and fourth line of each verse forming the first and third of the next verse. Thus to complete the cycle, the second and fourth lines of the final verse must be the first and third of the first verse.

Rhyme-scheme is therefore ABAB : BCBC : CDCD and so on for x verses, ending XAXA.

CHAPTER XIV

METHODS OF ANALYSIS

§ 166. In a book for beginners such as this, we cannot profess to deal with every possible variety of metre and stanza. Our survey of the realm of English verse has now outlined the main roads sufficiently, we hope, to encourage the student to explore the by-ways for himself. In this concluding chapter we suggest, by means of "worked examples," some methods of analysis which he may find useful. The first investigates the metrical structure of a continuous (or non-stanzaic) poem ; the others examine both the metre and the stanzaic structure of selected lyrics.

When the student has familiarised himself with these examples, he will understand that no more can be claimed for these methods of analysis than that they are, so to speak, the apparatus and chemicals of the metrist's laboratory ; but, using these tools of research, he may become the analyst himself.

§ 167. On account of the poem's importance in the history of English metres, we give first an analysis of two extracts from Coleridge's *Christabel*. The First Part (from which both passages are taken), written in 1797, was for many years circulated in manuscript among Coleridge's friends and fellow-poets, and had in this way exerted a wide influence before it was published, together with the Second Part, in 1816.

When it finally appeared, Coleridge added a Preface, in the course of which he says :

"The metre of the *Christabel* is not, properly speaking, irregular, though it may seem so from its being founded on a new principle—namely, that of counting in each line the accents, not the syllables. Though the latter may vary from seven to twelve, yet in each line the accents will be found to be only four."

§ 168. Metrical analysis of S. T. Coleridge's *Christabel* (Part I, 1797):

(a) *Lines 1-5.*

Stresses	1.	2.	3.	4.	
'Tis the mid	-dle of night	by the cas	-tle clock,		
And the owls	have awak	-ened the crow	-ing cock ;		
Tu	whit !	Tu	whoo !		
And hark !	again !	the crow	-ing cock,		
How	drows	-ily	it crew.	5	

(b) *Lines 154-165.*

Stresses	1.	2.	3.	4.	
They passed	the hall	that ech	-oes still,		
Pass	as light	-ly as	you will !	155	
The brands	were flat,	the brands	were dying		
Amid	their own	white ash	-es lying ;		
But when	the lad	-y passed,	there came		
A tongue	of light,	a fit	of flame ;		
And Christ	-abel saw	the lad	-y's eye	160	
And no	-thing else	saw she	thereby,		
Save the boss	of the shield	of Sir Le	-oline tall,		
Which hung	in a murk	-y old niche	in the wall		
O soft	-ly tread,	said Christ	-abel,		
My fath	-er sel	-dom sleep	-eth well.	165	

§ 169. Notes on the analysis :

Lines 3 and 5.—The Preface quoted above states that the syllables in a line "may vary from seven to twelve" (line 155 contains seven, line 162 contains twelve) ; but Coleridge says nothing of the half-dozen lines (the

whole poem runs to 677 lines) that exhibit less than seven syllables, such as—

	What sees she there ?	(line 57)
or	Ah wel-a-day !	(line 264)

which obviously contain only two stresses instead of four.

Thus it may be wrong to analyse lines 3 and 5 as containing more than two stresses ; certainly, when the owl reappears later (in lines 309–310), his ‘ tu-who’ is clearly single-stressed. But the student may be recommended to consider the *effect* gained in line 3 by the suggested lengthening out of the four syllables so as to give them a stress each ; and in line 5 the *effect* of the dwell on ‘ How ’ and its consonance with ‘ drow- ’ in the following word.

Line 160. Possibly this line should be stressed—

And Chríst| abél| saw the lád| -y’s éye.

as the name ‘ Christabel ’ everywhere carries two stresses, except in line 214—

Then Chríst| abel knélt| by the lád| -y’s side,
where it cannot have more than one.

§ 170. MIXED METRES.—In studying the metre of *The Burial of Sir John Moore* (see §§ 49–56), we found that the basic metre was triple-rising or anapaestic, although many feet appear to be in duple time. The reason why *Christabel* caused such a discussion was that this mixture of duple and triple feet, with lines passing rapidly from anapaestic movement to iambic movement (see lines 160–165), was then a novelty. But the universal acceptance of this “mixed metre,” since

Coleridge introduced it, and Scott popularised it, is a proof of its appeal to English ears.

Nevertheless, it obviously makes a definite classification difficult. *Christabel*, read as a whole, seems to us to be a duple-time poem with frequent anapaestic substitutions ; *The Burial of Sir John Moore* seems to us to be the opposite.

Consider Swinburne's famous first chorus in *Atalanta* (OBEV, No. 808), where there are consecutive lines—

Follows with dancing and fills with delight
The Maenad and the Bassarid

—an obviously “dactylic” line followed by an obviously “iambic” one. The student should look for further examples, and after studying them determine whether he feels them to be mainly duple or triple.

§ 171. An interesting example of mixed metre which repays study and analysis is Sir William Watson's *Ode in May* (OBEV, No. 853 ; PTD, I, No. 66). The poem consists of seven verses of eight lines each, and each line contains three feet or periods, except the seventh, which contains four. The first verse runs as follows :

Let me go forth and share
The overflowing Sun
With one wise friend, or one
Better than wise, being fair,
Where the pewit wheels and dips
On heights of bracken and ling,
And Earth, unto her leaflet tips,
Tingles with the Spring.

Judging from that verse alone, the student might classify the poem as iambic or duple-rising. In this

verse he notes two inversions (lines 1 and 4), two anapaestic substitutions (in lines 5 and 6), and a pause before 'Tingles' in the last line. But if he reads further, he will find the anapaests becoming more frequent, until he is tempted to classify the last verse as triple-rising with only a few pauses.

§ 172. Remembering "numbers," let him apply arithmetic. Each verse, *if in pure iambics*, should contain 50 syllables, made up of 7 lines of 6 syllables, and 1 of 8. If the verse were written *in pure anapaests*, it could contain a maximum of 75 syllables (7 lines of 9 each, plus 1 of 12).

Now let him count the syllables in each verse in turn : making due allowances for doubtful words like 'being,' 'nuptial,' 'ceremonial,' etc.), he will find that the totals are approximately as follows :

51 : 60 : 54 : 59 : 64 : 65 : 70.

The effect of these varying numbers of syllables to the verse will be clear on reading the poem straight through. Obviously, if the time-length of each verse is constant, the more syllables there are packed into it, the more quickly they must be spoken. Thus the movement accelerates (almost regularly) throughout the poem ; and the above figures provide a kind of temperature chart of the poem's rising emotion.

§ 173. For our final example of analysis, we take a much-debated but universally admired poem.

TENNYSON : *Break, break, break*

Break, break, break,

On thy cold grey stones, O Sea !

And I would that my tongue could utter

The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,
 That he shouts with his sister at play !
 O well for the sailor lad,
 That he sings in his boat on the bay !

And the stately ships go on
 To their haven under the hill ;
 But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,
 And the sound of a voice that is still !

Break, break, break,
 At the foot of thy crags, O Sea !
 But the tender grace of a day that is dead
 Will never come back to me.

A first reading will suggest, it may well be, that the four verses are not uniform in structure. In all except verse 2 the third line seems to be longer than the others by one foot.

For this reason, we adopt a form of analysis which groups together in turn each of the four lines from each of the four verses, at the same time breaking them up into feet or periods. (Punctuation omitted.)

§ 174. Metrical analysis of *Break, break, break*.

	1st Foot.	2nd Foot.	3rd Foot.	4th Foot (3rd line only).
<i>The First Line of each Verse :</i>				
1.	Break	break	break	
2.	O well	for the fish	-erman's boy	
3.	And the state	-ly ships	go on	
4.	Break	break	break	

The Second Line of each Verse :

1.	On thy cold	grey stones	O sea
2.	That he shouts	with his sis	-ter at play
3.	To their ha	-ven un	der the hill
4.	At the foot	of thy crags	O sea

The Third Line of each Verse :

1.	And I would	that my tongue	could utt	-er	△
2.	O well	for the sail	-or lad	△	△
3.	But O	for the touch	of a van	-ish'd	hand
4.	But the ten	-der grace	of a day		that is dead

The Fourth Line of each Verse :

1.	The thoughts	that arise	in me
2.	That he sings	in his boat	on the bay
3.	And the sound	of a voice	that is still
4.	Will ne	-ver come back	to me

§ 175. This arrangement makes it possible to state the following deductions :

- (i) The basic metre is triple-rising or anapaestic.
- (ii) The first, second and fourth lines of each verse consist of three feet or periods each ; and
- (iii) The third line of at least three of the verses consists of four feet or periods.

(NOTE.—These first three deductions prove that the basic metre is equivalent to that of a Limerick.)

- (iv) The three three-period lines in the four verses exhibit visibly a number of syllables varying between the maximum possible (nine) and the minimum (three)—the time, of course, being compensated for by pauses.
- (v) The four-period lines vary between one syllable short of the maximum (in verse 4) and seven syllables (in verse 2).
- (vi) The four-period line, the third in each verse, is most fully exhibited in the fourth verse, where it is one syllable short of the maximum ; in the second verse it is so shortened as to *appear* to be a three-period line of seven syllables.

From the above deductions we must conclude one of two things : *either*

- (a) the second verse is not uniform with the others ; *or*
- (b) at the end of its third line a pause or pauses must compensate for the *invisible period*.

Further, if alternative (b) is admitted, it follows that Tennyson, *without altering his basic metre*, might have written—

(in verse 1)

And I would that my tongue could utter *the thoughts*,
The thoughts that arise in me.

(and in verse 2)

O well for the sailor lad, *brave lad* (or *merry lad*)
That he sings in his boat on the bay.

The reasons why he did not do so are poetical or literary, not metrical.

§ 176. A study of these analyses should suggest two things in particular. First, the necessity for studying the whole of a poem before attacking the problem of analysing it. Second, the paramount importance of the pause.

In §§ 52–55 we showed how the pauses or “dwells” in a line of verse represent invisible syllables, and suggested that whether the voice pauses or dwells or lingers over or between the visible syllables is largely a matter for the individual reader’s taste. The fact that such pauses within the visible limits of a line are part of the metre should be easily grasped; but the analysis of *Break, break, break* suggests the possibility of pauses occurring *after* the apparent ends of the visible lines.

§ 177. This introduces the need for a final warning. The pauses of which we are speaking are actually part of the time-scheme of the metre, and must be clearly distinguished from the pauses which the reader arbitrarily makes for the sake of the *sense* in a line—most

commonly, the pauses at the ends of lines, which are often punctuated. But such pauses are *grammatical* (as indeed the punctuation is) : they are *not metrical pauses*, and they do not affect the time inherent in the metre. To employ an excellent simile of Omond's, the time-scheme of a metre is no more affected by the grammatical pauses, which a reader makes at his own discretion for the sake of the sense of the line, than the time of a piece of music is affected by the musician stopping to turn over the page. The poet is, of course, at liberty to make the two kinds of pause coincide, and frequently does so.

PART IV

PRACTICE

CHAPTER XV

MODELS OF SIMPLE METRES

The following specimens have been chosen, not for their excellence as poetry, but merely as instances of what can be done in the simpler metres of our language. And it is upon such as these, as Coleridge once said in criticising the early work of Tennyson, that people should concentrate when they start writing verse.

1. BALLAD METRE. (See §§, 88, 89, 105)

Good people all, of every sort,
Give ear unto my song ;
And if you find it wondrous short,—
It cannot hold you long.

In Islington there was a man, 5
Of whom the world might say,
That still a godly race he ran,—
Whene'er he went to pray.

A kind and gentle heart he had,
To comfort friends and foes ; 10
The naked every day he clad,—
When he put on his clothes.

And in that town a dog was found,
As many dogs there be,
Both mongrel, puppy, whelp and hound, 15
And curs of low degree.

This dog and man at first were friends ;
 But when a pique began,
 The dog, to gain some private ends,
 Went mad, and bit the man. 20

Around from all the neighbouring streets,
 The wondering neighbours ran,
 And swore the dog had lost his wits,
 To bite so good a man.

The wound it seemed both sore and sad, 25
 To every Christian eye ;
 And while they swore the dog was mad,
 They swore the man would die.

But soon a wonder came to light,
 That showed the rogues they lied ; 30
 The man recovered of the bite,
 The dog it was that died.

GOLDSMITH : *Elegy on the Death of a Mad Dog*

2. LONG METRE. (See §§ 87, 91)

Whether on Ida's shady brow,
 Or in the chambers of the east,
 The chambers of the sun, that now
 From ancient melody have ceased ;

Whether in Heaven ye wander fair, 5
 Or the green corners of the earth,
 Or the blue regions of the air
 Where the melodious winds have birth ;

Whether on crystal rocks ye rove,
 Beneath the bosom of the sea, 10
 Wandering in many a coral grove ;
 Fair Nine, forsaking poetry ;

How have you left the ancient love
 That bards of old enjoyed in you !
 The languid strings do scarcely move, 15
 The sound is forced, the notes are few !

W. BLAKE : *To the Muses*

3. THE OCTOSYLLABIC COUPLET (IAMBIC FORM).

(See § 94)

The thirsty earth soaks up the rain,
 And drinks, and gapes for drink again ;
 The plants suck in the earth, and are
 With constant drinking fresh and fair ;
 The sea itself (which one would think 5
 Should have but little need of drink)
 Drinks twice ten thousand rivers up,
 So filled that they o'erflow the cup.
 The busy sun (and one would guess
 By 's drunken fiery face no less) 10
 Drinks up the sea, and, when he's done,
 The Moon and Stars drink up the Sun :
 They drink and dance by their own light ;
 They drink and revel all the night.
 Nothing in Nature's sober found, 15
 But an eternal health goes round.
 Fill up the bowl, then, fill it high,
 Fill all the glasses there ; for why
 Should every creature drink but I ?
 Why, man of morals, tell me why ? 20

ABRAHAM COWLEY (1618-1667) : *A Drinking Song*

4. THE OCTOSYLLABIC COUPLET (TROCHAIC FORM).

(See §§ 129-133)

Here lies one who never drew
 Blood himself, yet many slew ;
 Gave the gun its aim, and figure
 Made in field, yet ne'er pull'd trigger ;
 Armèd men have gladly made 5
 Him their guide, and him obeyed ;
 At his signified desire
 Would advance, present and fire.
 Stout he was, and large of limb—
 Scores have fled at sight of him ; 10
 And to all this fame he rose
 Only following his nose.

Neptune was he called—not he
 Who controls the boisterous sea,
 But of happier command, 15
 Neptune of the furrowed land ;
 And, your wonder vain to shorten,
Pointer to Sir John Throckmorton.
 WILLIAM COWPER (1731–1800) : *An Epitaph*

5. IAMBIC OCTOSYLLABLES, RHYMING ABABCG.

(See § 85)

I wandered lonely as a cloud
 That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
 When all at once I saw a crowd,
 A host of golden daffodils ;
 Beside the lake, beneath the trees, 5
 Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
 And twinkle on the Milky Way,
 They stretched in never-ending line
 Along the margin of a bay : 10
 Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
 Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced ; but they
 Out-did the sparkling waves in glee :
 A poet could not but be gay, 15
 In such a jocund company :
 I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
 What wealth the show to me had brought :

For oft, when on my couch I lie
 In vacant or in pensive mood, 20
 They flash upon that inward eye
 Which is the bliss of solitude ;
 And then my heart with pleasure fills,
 And dances with the daffodils.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH : *Daffodils*

6. FOUR ANAPAESTIC FEET, RHYMING IN COUPLETS.

(See § 143)

The poplars are fell'd ; farewell to the shade
And the whispering sound of the cool colonnade ;
The winds play no longer and sing in the leaves,
Nor Ouse on his bosom their image receives.

Twelve years have elapsed since I first took a view 5
Of my favourite field, and the bank where they grew :
And now in the grass behold they are laid,
And the tree is my seat that once lent me a shade.

The blackbird has fled to another retreat
Where the hazels afford him a screen from the heat ; 10
And the scene where his melody charm'd me before
Resounds with his sweet-flowing ditty no more.

My fugitive years are all hasting away,
And I must ere long lie as lowly as they,
With a turf on my breast and a stone at my head, 15
Ere another such grove shall arise in its stead.

'Tis a sight to engage me, if anything can,
To muse on the perishing pleasures of man ;
Short-lived as we are, our enjoyments, I see,
Have a still shorter date, and die sooner than we. 20

WILLIAM COWPER : *The Poplar Field*

7. BLANK VERSE. (See §§ 96-98)

There was a Boy : ye knew him well, ye cliffs
And islands of Winander !—many a time
At evening, when the earliest stars began
To move along the edges of the hills,
Rising or setting, would he stand alone 5
Beneath the trees or by the glimmering lake,
And there, with fingers interwoven, both hands
Pressed closely palm to palm, and to his mouth
Uplifted, he, as through an instrument,
Blew mimic hootings to the silent owls, 10

That they might answer him ; and they would shout
 Across the watery vale, and shout again,
 Responsive to his call, with quivering peals,
 And loud halloos and screams, and echoes loud,
 Redoubled and redoubled, concourse wild 15
 Of jocund din : and, when a lengthened pause
 Of silence came and baffled his best skill,
 Then sometimes, in that silence while he hung
 Listening, a gentle shock of mild surprise
 Has carried far into his heart the voice 20
 Of mountain torrents ; or the visible scene
 Would enter unawares into his mind,
 With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,
 Its woods, and that uncertain heaven, received
 Into the bosom of the steady lake. 25

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH (1770-1850) : *The Prelude*, Book V

8. THE HEROIC COUPLET ('CLOSED COUPLETS').

(See § 99)

Survey the warlike horse ! did'st thou invest
 With thunder his robust distended chest ?
 No sense of fear his dauntless soul allays ;
 'Tis dreadful to behold his nostrils blaze ;
 To paw the vale he proudly takes delight, 5
 And triumphs in the fullness of his might ;
 High raised he snuffs the battle from afar,
 And burns to plunge amid the raging war ;
 And mocks at death, and throws his foam around,
 And in a storm of fury shakes the ground. 10
 How does his firm, his rising heart advance
 Full on the brandished sword, and shaken lance :
 While his fixed eye-balls meet the dazzling shield,
 Gaze, and return the lightning of the field !
 He sinks the sense of pain in generous pride, 15
 Nor feels the shaft that trembles in his side ;
 But neighs to the shrill trumpet's dreadful blast
 Till death ; and when he groans, he groans his last.

EDWARD YOUNG (1683-1765) :

A Paraphrase on the Book of Job

9. THE HEROIC COUPLET (ENJAMBED FORM)

(See § 101)

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever :
 Its loveliness increases ; it will never
 Pass into nothingness ; but still will keep
 A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
 Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing. 5
 Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing
 A flowery band to bind us to the earth,
 Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth
 Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,
 Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darkened ways 10
 Made for our searching : yes, in spite of all,
 Some shape of beauty moves away the pall
 From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the moon,
 Trees old and young, sprouting a shady boon
 For simple sheep ; and such are daffodils 15
 With the green world they live in ; and clear rills
 That for themselves a cooling covert make
 'Gainst the hot season ; the mid-forest brake,
 Rich with a sprinkling of fair musk-rose blooms ;
 And such too is the grandeur of the dooms 20
 We have imagined for the mighty dead ;
 All lovely tales that we have heard or read :
 An endless fountain of immortal drink,
 Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink.

JOHN KEATS (1795-1821) : *Endymion*, Book I

CHAPTER XVI

EXERCISES

1. Mark the stress or stresses on the following words :

(1) international	(11) cylinder	(21) rotary
(2) comparative	(12) present	(22) rotation
(3) caravan	(13) resentment	(23) irritation
(4) adjustable	(14) reserve	(24) automatic
(5) exaggerated	(15) reservoir	(25) automaton
(6) interested	(16) electric	(26) capitalist
(7) mobile	(17) electricity	(27) paralytic
(8) automobile	(18) penal	(28) paralysis
(9) pedestrian	(19) penalty	(29) parasol
(10) gearbox	(20) speedometer	(30) recitative

2. Look through any one of the twelve books of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and count the number of times the word 'heaven' occurs, noting how many are metrically one syllable and how many two.

3. In the *Models of Simple Metres* given in Chapter XV scan the following lines, marking feet and stresses :

Model No. 1, l. 21.

„ „ 2, l. 5.

„ „ 3, l. 10.

„ „ 5, l. 6.

„ „ 6, l. 14.

„ „ 7, l. 7 and ll. 16-25.

„ „ 9, l. 10.

In *Model* No. 6, there are two lines that have metrical pauses in the middle. Which lines are they? Consider the effect of the pause in each place.

4. Read a passage from Scott's *Marmion* or *The Lady of the Lake*; then rewrite the following in the same metre, altering only the order of the words:

The freshening western blast at length cast aside the shroud of battle: and first appears the ridge of mingled spears above the brightening cloud; and the pennons flew in the smoke as the white seamew in the storm. Then they marked the broken billows of the war dashing broad and far, and plumed crests of brave chieftains floating like foam upon the wave; but they see naught distinct. The battle on the plain raged wide; spears shook, and falchions flashed amain; England's arrow-flight fell like rain; crests rose and stooped and again rose, wild and disorderly.

5. Analyse the following lines, showing where stresses normally occur, and define the metre of those which you consider to be verse.

1. What will your income be when you retire?
2. To buy British is to exploit home produce.
3. An exquisite perfume of clematis entrances the visitor at the entrance to the horticultural exhibits.
4. And the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low.
5. The police arrested a Russian subject as a suspect, in order to subject him to cross-examination.
6. Gilt-edged stocks suddenly came into favour yesterday afternoon.
7. Can any dental cream do more than that?
8. They would have repudiated the plan as fantastic in happier and more normal times.
9. Far below us in the valley lay a village half-hidden from view.
10. Plus a little something that the others haven't got.

6. Discover and write down :

- (i) Five familiar English words which are perfect
(a) iambs, (b) trochees.
- (ii) Five familiar English words or phrases which are
perfect (a) dactyls, (b) anapaests.

7. Invent sentences, of not less than six words each,
in—

- (a) iambic or duple-rising metre ;
- (b) trochaic or duple-falling metre ;
- (c) anapaestic or triple-rising metre ;
- (d) dactylic or triple-falling metre.

8. Invent as many iambic decasyllabic lines as you
can consisting of a phrase or title of two words only
(e.g. ' Ecclesiastical Commissioners ').9. To each of the following add one line to rhyme
and agree in metre with the line given. The couplet
so formed should make a complete sentence.

- 1. The house was built of brick and stone . . .
- 2. There was a young fellow with only one shirt . . .
- 3. Dashing into Euston Station . . .
- 4. Bull-terriers, I've heard it said, are unrelenting
folk . . .
- 5. Eustace put up his umbrella when he heard the
thunderclap . . .
- 6. Bread without butter . . .
- 7. Unreasonably the orange peel . . .
- 8. Glorious are the stars in Hollywood . . .
- 9. Out of the moth-eaten curtain a ghost with tremulous
shanks . . .
- 10. Breakfasting alone at half-past ten . . .

10. Write three couplets in any metre, rhyming the
word ' vase ' in three different ways.

11. Write a poem, the longer the better, depending for rhymes upon the three words (*a*) squint, (*b*) walk, (*c*) cove.

12. Write five rhymed couplets (*i.e.* ten lines) of any metrical length, choosing for the rhyme-words the best pairs of rhymes you can find among the following words :

stars, dawn, wait, cart, fraud, food, corn, road,
thought, yours, mourn, good, thwart, freight, yearn,
gnawed, wars, gone, height, endures, broad, turn,
court, might.

13. Investigate and criticise the rhymes in the *four* verses of the National Anthem.

14. Name the metres and make out the rhyme-schemes of the following, noting pauses or other variations :

1. In his chamber, weak and dying,
Was the Norman baron lying ;
Loud, without, the tempest thundered,
And the castle-turret shook.
In this fight was Death the gainer,
Spite of vassal and retainer,
And the lands his sires had plundered,
Written in the Doomsday Book.

LONGFELLOW

2. Gaily the Troubadour
Touched his guitar,
As he was hastening
Home from the war.

T. H. BAYLY

3. A servant with this clause
Makes drudgery divine ;
Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws
Makes that and the action fine.

GEORGE HERBERT

4. Trusty, dusky, vivid, true,
With eyes of gold and bramble-dew,
Steel-true and blade-straight
The great Artificer made my mate.

R. L. STEVENSON

5. The stanza from Shelley's *Ode to Liberty* given in § 104.

15. Samuel Rogers' poem, *A Wish*, begins as follows :

Mine be a cot beside the hill ;
A beehive's hum shall soothe my ear ;
A willowy brook that turns a mill,
With many a fall, shall linger near.

Reconstruct the remaining three verses from the following material, without changing the words given :

2. The swallow shall twitter oft from her clay-built nest beneath my thatch ; the pilgrim shall oft lift the latch, and, a welcome guest, share my meal.
3. Each fragrant flower that drinks the dew shall spring around my ivied porch ; and Lucy, in russet gown and blue apron, shall sing at her wheel.
4. The village church among the trees, where our marriage vows were first given, shall swell the breeze with merry peals and point to heaven with taper spire.

16. Analyse and define the metres exhibited in the successive sentences of the following passage :

Strolling at dusk down to the sea, Mr. Traherne tripped on a stone, hurting his knee. "Why don't they light the place up?" he exclaimed. "This cliff-walk—it's a death-trap after dark. Shall I try the local paper—would they put a letter in? 'Sir, the Urban District Council should be urged to make improvements in the lighting of the highways under their administration.' Or possibly a more familiar style? 'Dear Mr. Editor,—Will you allow me the space to remark that the local authorities ought to consider

the needs of their visitors, seeing that holiday-makers (of whom I am only a single example) enrich the community. . . . I'd put half a dozen lamp-posts on this flight of steps alone. And all along the front some hundreds more. Costly? Be hanged to the cost! It's the stingy resort that is lost. If people complain that it's cash down the drain—well, a murky place *must* be a frost!" Thus, as he sat nursing his knee, Mr. Traherne mused on the best way to improve Stale-super-Mare. And sombre night enwrapped the Esplanade.

17. Test the following passage for the metrical variations which normally occur in blank verse, and explain line by line the nature of each variation :

He looked, and saw the ark hull on the flood,
Which now abated ; for the clouds were fled,
Driven by a keen North wind, that, blowing dry,
Wrinkled the face of deluge, as decayed ;
And the clear sun on his wide watery glass
Gazed hot, and of the fresh wave largely drew,
As after thirst ; which made their flowing shrink
From standing lake to tripping ebb, that stole
With soft foot towards the deep, who now had stopt
His sluices, as the heaven his windows shut.
The ark no more now floats, but seems on ground,
Fast on the top of some high mountain fixed.

MILTON : *Paradise Lost*, Bk. XI

18. Copy out, in the order in which they occur, any complete lines of blank verse you can discover in the following passage, and then turn the whole passage into blank verse, keeping as close to the original as possible :

Near the waterfall the grassy bank sloped down toward the stream, and there, on palm-leaves strewed upon the turf, beneath the shadow of the crags, lay the two men whom Amyas sought, and whom, now he had found them, he had hardly heart to wake from their delicious dream.

For what a nest it was which they had found ! The air was heavy with the scent of flowers, and quivering with the murmur of the stream, the humming of the colibris and insects, the cheerful song of birds, the gentle cooing of a hundred doves ; while now and then, from far away, the musical wail of the sloth, or the deep toll of the bell-bird, came softly to the ear. What was not there which eye or ear could need ? And what which palate could need either ? For on the rock above, some strange tree, leaning forward, dropped every now and then a luscious apple upon the grass below, and huge wild plantains burst beneath their load of fruit.

CHARLES KINGSLEY : *Westward Ho !*

19. Analyse the following passage for stress-variation and pauses :

Just as the bobbing enemy bow
Closer and ever closer showed,
Jones deliberately slowed.
For twenty seconds they drew yet nearer :
But then I felt the burden lightening,
And every moment, clearer and clearer,
The catch of the stroke behind me tightening.
The heavy-weights ceased to flurry and jerk
And settled steady again to their work.
Still at the same stroke, grim and slow,
We began to hold the foe.
“ Keep it long,” came a shout from the shore,
And we drained each stroke to its utmost dregs ;
While the mingling voices, more and more,
Gathered and rose in a single roar—
“ Legs ! Legs ! Legs ! Legs ! ”

A. H. SIDGWICK : *Jones's Wedding*

20. Compress the following quatrains each into a single heroic couplet, trying to include as much of the sense of the originals as you can, and if possible using fresh rhymes :

-
1. Charge once more, then, and be dumb !
Let the victors, when they come,
When the forts of folly fall,
Find thy body by the wall !
MATTHEW ARNOLD
2. Stand close around, ye Stygian set,
With Dirce in one boat conveyed,
Or Charon, seeing, may forget
That he is old, and she a shade.
W. S. LANDOR
3. Here lies our sovereign Lord the King,
Whose word no man relies on,
Who never said a foolish thing
Nor ever did a wise one.
LORD ROCHESTER

CHAPTER XVII

COUNSEL ON ORIGINAL VERSE COMPOSITION

WHEN you have learnt the elements
of the technique of versification,
and practised exercises,
and imitated established poets,
it may occur to you
to compose some original verse of your own.

THERE is no actual harm in this.
The same idea has occurred to thousands
who have never learnt anything about verse-writing.
To compose verse is a capital exercise
for the ear, for the brain, and for the feelings.
The ingenuity required to construct a set of verses
is often as great as that required
to solve an acrostic
or a crossword puzzle :
and this is particularly true
when you set yourself to fit your General Idea
(that is, What-you-have-to-say)
into a Set Form
(that is, How-you-have-got-to-say-it),
such as a sonnet, or a limerick,
or one of the French forms, ballades and so on,
with definite patterns and rules and rhyme-schemes.

THERE was a time
(" a time for ever gone—Ah, woe is me ! ")
when it was expected of any educated gentleman
that he should be able to turn out at a moment's notice
a verse for a lady's album.
To-day more people write better verse
than you would guess by inspecting
the Visitors' Book at a country inn.

So,
if you feel the urge to write original verse,
do.
Only mind it really is original.
Be modest : be humble :
make up your mind at an early stage
that you are writing only for your own benefit or relief,
and *not* with any hope of publication or fame.
Think of your output as verse,
not as poetry.
Do not be in a hurry :
realise that you are an apprentice,
surrounded by 100,000 competing apprentices,
all in the same line of business,
all " working for a rise,"
and all engaged in noticing the same marvels
about Dawn and Larks and Violets
as yourself.

NEVER think that you can write a poem
without the Compulsion of Inspiration :
never—except for practice-work—
" sit down to write."
The man who says, " I write poetry
for two hours every Tuesday evening,"
is lost.

EXERCISE your wits in versification
as much as you like,
but set no value on the visible results.
Look you : when you exercise your body,
you flex and strengthen your muscles,
and incidentally perspire ;
but, my dear athlete,
you do not preserve the exudation.
So with the products of mental exercise—
destroy them. . . .
(The metaphor is perhaps Not Quite Nice :
but it is the more forcible expressions
that we tend to remember. Excuse me.)

Yes, I said, "Destroy them,"
but not necessarily at once.
At any rate do not think that the first draft
is the best or the final one.

Suppose an inspiration has come :
you have drafted the poem
(that is to say, the set of verses) ;
you have, for the time being,
satisfied or exhausted the Urge-to-Write.

Very good.

Lay aside the product and try to forget it,
if possible (prepare for a shock) for six months,
or at least until you can come back to it
critically, with fresh eyes (and, don't forget, fresh ears),
almost as if it were the work
of one of your countless competitors.

Judge it : is it worth further labour ? *Is it ? IS it ?*
Or . . . better burn it ?

Ask yourself

" Why did I write this as a poem
and not in prose ? "

A searching question !

And then, if you get a convincing answer, ask again,

" Is it as *short* as I can make it
without sacrificing any *essential* part ? "

Remember that the finest poetry is economical,
getting infinite effects

from the least possible verbiage.

Study great lyrics, their sparseness—

trained down to the last ounce like a prize-fighter :
try to compress Wordsworth's *Daffodils* into less compass ;
notice the improvement

in Yeats's *Lake Isle of Innisfree*

made by omitting the last stanza.

If you go on thinking your draft pretty decent,
try further experiments.

Read it aloud to yourself, listening to yourself
with both ears cocked.

Write it out again as *prose*,

not

in

lines,

and study it yet again.

Test every word, change every epithet,
until you are sure you have the only right ones.

If it is a lyric forty lines long,
try to cut it down to thirty-two,

or twenty-four,

ceteris paribus, of course.

But don't cut down a sonnet to less than fourteen lines
(I have known it done).

AVOID epics.

Your five-act tragedy (doubtless about Joan of Arc)
need not be written in blank verse.

Really it need *not*.

Remember that Bernard Shaw said that he wrote

The Admirable Bashville

in Elizabethan blank verse

because he hadn't time to write it in prose.

(One of those remarks that sound silly,
but aren't.)

If you still go on being pleased with your work,
the desire for publicity (a very natural instinct)
will begin, possibly, to rout your innate modesty.

But, if you do decide to consult others about it,
remember that the more they love you
the less is the value of their criticism.

A mother's opinion, for instance,
is totally untrustworthy ;

and any decent pal will encourage you—

“Jolly good, old man ; ought to get them published. . . .”

PUBLISHED !

Alas ! there are those who neither love nor hate you,
worldly folk, who apply laws of economics to Art—
they will point out to you a horrible concatenation

of cold bald undeniable facts : *e.g.*

Imprimis : Much more "poetry" is written
than ever gets into print
(even in the local paper),
because the supply is greater than the demand.

Item : Much more "poetry" gets into periodicals
than can ever be published in book-form,
because the supply is greater than the demand.

Item : Much more "poetry" achieves book-publication
than can be absorbed by purchase in the mart,
because the supply is greater than the demand.

(*Chorus* : "Because the supply," etc.)

NEVER MIND ! Carry on. None but the brave.

After all, what else could one expect
of an Imperial People ?

Cheer up. More power to your elbow. I wish you well.

(But Oh, I nearly forgot :

Whatever you do, *whatever* you do,

DON'T write free verse

Like this.)

F. S.

"But for me, you would now be doing
worse than writing poetry. You would be
writing *vers libre*."—P. G. WODEHOUSE.

GLOSSARY

[We explain and illustrate here a few terms which may be useful to the student, but which have not been mentioned, or not been fully explained, in the book. For other terms reference should be made to the "Technical Terms" section of Fowler's *Modern English Usage*, a book which every reader of English should consult constantly.]

Alliteration.—The use of a series of words or syllables beginning with the same letter, for the sake of the consonance.

An Austrian army, awfully arrayed,
Boldly by battery besieged Belgrade, *etc.*,

is a deliberate *tour de force* exhibiting complete alliteration. Carried to excess, alliteration has the effect of burlesque, *e.g.* Shakespeare's "tedious brief scene of young Pyramus" :

Whereat, with blade, with bloody blameful blade,
He bravely broached his boiling bloody breast.

But, even by such a notorious addict as Swinburne, the device can be gracefully employed :

A dream, and more than a dream, and dimmer
At once and brighter than dreams that flee,
The moment's joy of the seaward swimmer
Abides, remembered as truth may be.

A Swimmer's Dream

Alliterative Verse.—Alliteration (*q.v.*) was employed in the earliest English verse to point to and

embellish the stresses, in much the same way as rhyme has been used since. A few lines from the fourteenth-century poem *Piers Plowman* will show the principle :

Thanne waked I of my winking · and wo was withal
 That I ne hadde sleped sadder · and iseen more
 Ac er I hadde faren a furlong · feintise me hente
 That I ne mighte ferther afoot · for defaute of sleping.

It will be seen that in alliterative verse the consonance is not confined always to *initial* letters ; and thus in later verse the term sometimes covers the mere repetition of melodious sounds, and becomes confused with “ onomatopœia ” (*q.v.*) in its second sense.

But that alliterative verse in the mediæval sense is still attractive can be seen in the quotation at the end of § 67.

Burden.—The refrain or repeated “ chorus ” of a ballad or song.

Doggerel.—Irregular lines of verse of a trivial kind, linked together by (often outlandish) rhyme :

There once was a lad and the name that he had was
 either Johnny or Jimmy and at any rate his regular
 state was a chronic condition of “ gimme ” very
 seldom he wrote his father a note but whenever he did
 good gracious old King Cole that merry old soul who
 asked for his pipe and asked for his bowl had nothing
 on John in the asking role don’t fancy my tale fal-
 lacious . . . (*and so on*).

Thus William Randolph Hearst in a three-page telegram to his son, John. Doggerel is usually printed as verse, in successive lines according with the rhymes ; but it may be noted that Wilhelmina Stitch, a great

writer of doggerel, sometimes adopts the prose form used by Hearst for telegraphic purposes.

Elegy.—A poem of lament for the dead, generally for some one whom the poet has loved and revered, and therefore more intimate in tone than the ode. Tradition has not assigned any special metre to the elegy, and the so-called Elegiac Quatrain of Gray's *Elegy written in a Country Churchyard* has, in fact, been seldom employed. Milton's *Lycidas*, Shelley's *Adonais*, Matthew Arnold's *Thyrsis* and *Rugby Chapel* and Tennyson's *In Memoriam* should, in particular, be studied for the varieties of metre judged suitable by great poets.

Elision.—The suppression of a vowel or a syllable ; the fact that it is dropped in speech is recorded in writing and printing by the use of an apostrophe ; frequent in everyday speech, *e.g.* (see also § 46, Note) :

'I'm,' 'I'll,' 'I'd' (or 'I'd,' as some writers prefer),
'I've' ; 'you're,' 'you've' ; 'he's' (= 'he is' and
'he has') ; 'can't,' 'don't' ; 'How d'you do' ;
'Who's Who' ; 'fo'c'sle' ; *etc.*

Poetry conventionally uses many other elisions, *e.g.* :

'th',' 'o' th' ; ' 'tis,' ' 'twas' ; 'e'er,' 'ne'er,'
'whene'er,' 'whoe'er' ; 'e'en,' 'o'er' ; 'mid,'
'gainst,' 'fore' ; *etc.*

Sometimes a poet seeks to lessen the stress on words like 'though' and 'through' by printing *tho'* and *thro'*. Common elisions may be seen in Chapter XV, *Models of Simple Metres* : No. 3, ll. 10, 11 ; No. 4, l. 4 ; No. 6, l. 17 ; No. 8, ll. 1, 4 ; No. 9, ll. 10, 18.

There is a tendency among modern poets, in printing

their work, to omit the apostrophes, leaving the reader to make the necessary elisions by ear, *e.g.* :

Now God be praised, Who has matched us with His hour.

RUPERT BROOKE

Free Verse (or *Vers Libre*) is popularly derided as a form of literature, though it has a vogue in certain quarters. It is difficult to define anything so essentially indefinite ; but one may say that Free Verse is verse in which there is no regular system of rhyme or rhythm, though words and phrases are chosen to give a more formal and less continuous effect than is desirable in prose. If a piece of Free Verse, when rewritten or reprinted as prose, *is* prose, then it may be held to be not verse (see Chapter XVII).

It was Walt Whitman, the American poet and prophet, who by his remarkable *Leaves of Grass* (1855) first showed that it was possible for a modern writer to accomplish in this form of literature what could hardly be accomplished anyhow else. Whitman's outbursts are halfway between the ode and the epigram, having the intensity of the one and the resonance of the other. A specimen follows :

When I heard the learn'd astronomer,
 When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns
 before me,
 When I was shown the charts and diagrams, to add, divide,
 and measure them,
 When I sitting heard the astronomer where he lectured
 with much applause in the lecture-room,
 How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick,
 Till rising and gliding out I wandered off by myself,
 In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time,
 Looked up in perfect silence at the stars.

WALT WHITMAN : *By the Roadside*

Ode (see § 104).—The various interpretations of what constitutes an ode may be gathered best by studying a number of types :

SPENSER : <i>Prothalamion</i>	OBEV, No. 81
MILTON : <i>Hymn on the Morning of Christ's Nativity</i>	„ „ 307
<i>Lycidas</i>	„ „ 317
DRYDEN : <i>Ode in Memory of Mrs. Anne Killigrew</i>	„ „ 398
GRAY : <i>The Progress of Poesy</i>	„ „ 455
COLERIDGE : <i>Kubla Khan</i>	„ „ 550
KEATS : <i>Odes</i>	„ „ 624-629
MATTHEW ARNOLD : <i>The Scholar- Gipsy</i>	„ „ 751

Some of the odes which commemorate the dead (such as *Lycidas*) can be also classed as elegies.

Onomatopœia (*Name-making*)—Originally, the making of a word or name for a thing by imitating the sound associated with the thing. The bird we call a “cuckoo” has, in many other languages, a very similar onomatopœic name. Consider :

‘bow-wow,’ ‘puff-puff,’ ‘bang,’ ‘sniff,’ *etc.*

Secondly, the word is used especially of poetry to signify the use of words or phrases of which the sound—either verbal or metrical—suggests or reinforces the meaning. Tennyson brought this craft to a high pitch, *e.g.* where Sir Bedivere, fully armed, carries the dying King Arthur down the rocky cliff path to the lake :

Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves
 And barren chasms, and all to left and right
 The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as he based
 His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang
 Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels—
 And on a sudden, lo ! the level lake
 And the long glories of the winter moon.

Morte d'Arthur

Consider also how onomatopœia influences the poet's choice of metre ; *e.g.* Browning, *How they Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix* (see § 2).

Parody.—May be prose or verse ; in verse, parody is verse which criticises a specific poem, or the whole style of a particular poet, by means of echoing or burlesquing the most significant features. Example :

ORIGINAL

Sumer is icumen in,
 Lhude sing cuccu !
 Groweth sed and bloweth med
 And springth the wude nu.
 Sing cuccu ! *etc.*

ANON (c. 1250) (OBEV, No. 1)

PARODY

Wynter is icumen in
 Lhouldly syng *tish-u* !
 Wyndës blo and snoeth sno,
 And al ys icë nu.
 Syng *tish-u* ! *etc.*

“The best parodies are often those that amuse the fewest readers, and *vice versa*. In any case, they are criticisms of literature, not of life.”—E. V. KNOX

Pindaric Ode.—A form of ode (*q.v.*) exhibiting the usual features of arbitrary rhyme-scheme and varying

line lengths, but more regular in being written in three, or sets of three, stanzas, of which the first, called the *strophe*, and the second, called the *antistrophe*, are identical in rhyme-scheme and arrangement of line lengths, while the *epode* is independent and generally of greater length. When the poem consists of more than one set of strophe, antistrophe and epode, there is exact correspondence between (a) the strophes and the antistrophes, and (b) the epodes.

The term was applied loosely by Abraham Cowley to his own irregular "imitations of the odes of Pindar" (the Greek poet of the Olympian Games), but the principles here set forth were more strictly observed by Ben Jonson, Congreve and Gray.

Prosody.—The science of versification ; the study of metrical forms.

Stanza.—Often called a "verse" : a group of two or more lines forming the unit which, repeated, makes up a poem.

Terza Rima.—The metre of Dante's *Divina Commedia*, used by Byron, Shelley, Browning and others, sometimes with modifications : lines of five iambic feet with a rhyme-scheme, |ABA | BCB | CDC | *etc.*, to the concluding group of three lines (or *tercet*), which is rounded off by the addition of one line, rhyming with the central, otherwise unrhymed, line, |DEDE|. Thus the series of lines ends with the heroic quatrain, and there is a succession of three interlacing rhymes throughout, except for the first two and the last two rhymes.

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OBEV=*Oxford Book of English
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