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John Walker, whose name is familiar to every student of the orthoepy of the English language, published his Rhyming Dictionary in 1775, twenty years after the publication of Johnson's Dictionary of the English Language, and sixteen before the appearance of his own Critical Pronouncing Dictionary. A second edition, however, was not required till 1806, and, as Walker had been an Actor before he became a Teacher of Elocution in London, he naturally dedicated his work to David Garrick, to whose pronunciation on the stage, and frequent advice in the prosecution of his inquiries, he gratefully acknowledges his obligations for no small measure of whatever merit his work might possess. We have not had an opportunity of ascertaining the dates of all the subsequent editions; but we believe the last was printed in 1851.

Walker certainly had the merit of first producing a work of this sort in the English language on such an extensive scale; for the work of Bysshe to which he refers, and of which the fourth edition was printed in 1710, extends to only thirty-six pages, on each of which are four columns of words without accent or explanation, which amount to a number between six and seven thousand, whereas the present work may claim the title of a sufficient dictionary of the language.

A Rhyming Dictionary, properly so called, ought to bring together all those words that have the same terminal sound, although they may not end in the same letters; but such a collocation would have complicated the difficulty of finding a particular word and excluded some of the other advantages which the present arrangement affords. Hence words that are brought together on account of the similarity of their spelling, such as
bread and lead, refuse to rhyme with one another; whilst words that are closely connected both by rhyme and reason, as lamb and slam, are, on account of their final letters, put far asunder; but, to compensate this slight inconvenience, an Appendix has been constructed, in which terminations similar in sound, although not in orthography, have been brought into one view, and numerous examples given of the practice of many of our classical poets.

In superintending the present edition in its passage through the press, we have omitted the repetition of those words that, in our Author's day, were beginning to drop the final k when preceded by c; we have altered the place of the accent in some words in conformity to present usage, but in others, concerning which there is a diversity of opinion, we have left the accent untouched, as indicating Walker's decision; and in many instances we have improved the definitions of words and increased the number of synonymous terms, as far as the limits of a line would allow. After the lapse of so many years, it would readily occur to any one, that not a few words would require to be added, in order to keep pace with the progress of our language; nearly eighteen hundred words have accordingly been incorporated with the work. It is interesting to note the progress of scientific pursuits in the additions that have been made under the termination ology; while the fact that the number of words ending in u has been doubled shows the increase of our commercial intercourse with foreign lands. With regard to the ingenious Appendix, exhibiting Perfect, nearly perfect, and allowable rhymes,—had we been producing a new work instead of a new edition of a work of the former century, all that refers to allowable rhymes would certainly have been cancelled, as no longer tolerable to a poetic ear; and it is certainly somewhat remarkable that our Author has taken no notice of the circumstance, that these imperfect rhymes generally result from the erroneous pronunciation which, in the Introduction to his Critical Dictionary, he had indicated as peculiar to Ireland, and that most of his examples of these allowable rhymes have accordingly been derived from the poems of Parnell.
In his Introduction, our Author has ingeniously pointed out the various uses to which this Dictionary might be applied; the information, as to the structure of our language, that might be derived from the juxtaposition of words of similar terminations, and the correct pronunciation of one word as rhyming with another; but singularly enough he appears to have been somewhat ashamed of the use to which the very title of the work would naturally suggest its application. Whether the *Rhyming Dictionary* forms an indispensable part of the apparatus of the writing desk of the English poet, we have no means of ascertaining; but, if any good effect is produced by the composition of "nonsense verses" in our Latin seminaries, we are persuaded that no small benefit would result from the practice of composing *sense verses* in our English schools; an ear for the pleasing *rhythm* of the language would be cultivated, if not produced; the proper *accentuation* of the words would be fixed in the memory; the correct sound of the *vowels* in the rhymes would be learned; the *discernment* of nearly synonymous words would be forced on the attention, and the pupil's vocabulary would necessarily be greatly increased from the obligation that the measure of the verse would lay upon him to try several words before he could find one that would suit its place; not to speak of the due cultivation of the imagination, the elevation of the mind, and the refinement of the heart.

Under the impression that the present work is admirably calculated to afford assistance in promoting these important ends, we shall offer a few facts and observations on *verse*, *alliteration*, *assonance*, and *rhyme*, premising that the limits to which we are restricted prevent our doing justice to a very interesting investigation.

The subject to which these remarks will be confined does not impose on us the necessity of attempting to define either genius or poetry. Both the Greek and Scottish designation of a poet implies the belief that he is a creator, in contradistinction to the man of science, who is an investigator, and to the historian, who is a recorder. *Verse* is the form or habit in which a poem is generally, although not necessarily, presented to the
bearer or reader; and it is to the peculiarities and ornaments of this outward habit we would briefly invite attention.

A little consideration will lead to the conclusion, that verse, in most languages, differs from prose in the return of a certain number of syllables that have a peculiar relation to one another as accented and unaccented, or as long and short. It is universally felt that a degree of pleasure arises from this definite arrangement, and the origin of that pleasure is to be traced back to the sense of time with which men are generally endowed. It is this principle that regulates the step of a man, or the stroke of an oar; and hence the pleasure we experience in beholding the regular step of a company of soldiers in their march, and the simultaneous sweep of the oars of a well-manned boat. The time of music, apart from tune, is evidently related to the movement to which we have now referred, and can accordingly be regulated by the properly measured, though monotonous, sound of the drum. The tendency to beat time with the "light fantastic toe" in the "giddy dance," is universally felt, and is found to be irresistible, even in the mere spectators. The next process was to bring language into conformity with the music thus produced, and the result was verse—a measured or metrical line. As these results, therefore, flow from innate principles of our constitution, so, in looking as far back along the history of man as our materials enable us, we find him accompanied with music and verse; for the rude cadence of his song or the movement of his dance is ever accompanied by the tap of the drum.

In the Bible, the most ancient of records, we find man, at a very early period, forming both wind and stringed instruments, modulating his speech into verse, and exhibiting in the very earliest instance on record that peculiar parallelism that characterised the Hebrew poetry of all subsequent ages.

When we look to language, we shall find that the words suggestive of persons, animals, things, and actions are the most important; other words do little more than connect these principal words or point out their qualities and relations. These words, therefore, especially in
public speaking, would either be pronounced with greater force, or lengthened in the pronunciation, that the meaning of the speaker might be more clearly apprehended, or understood at a greater distance. This naturally suggests the words in a sentence on which the emphasis would be placed, and the obvious reason for employing such emphasis. What was thus true of a sentence would in process of time become true of a single word; for the noun would have modifying syllables united to it, in order to shew its gender, number, and relation to other words; and the verb would have modifications made on it to indicate the persons acting and the time of the action; but it would naturally occur, that the primary word on which these modifications had been made, especially if a monosyllable, would be indicated by pronouncing it with greater force or length than the modifying syllables, and hence the natural origin and place of the accent of a word. In such a collocation of words as forms a sentence, it would rarely happen that the emphatical words or accented syllables would unintentionally succeed one another in such a regular order as would arrest the attention, and gratify the ear by the perception of uniformity in their recurrence. But, as already observed, it had been early discovered that there were some, who, through a peculiarly keen perception of such measured sentences and the possession of a copious vocabulary from which to draw their materials, could produce those measured sentences more readily and pleasantly than others; and such persons, partly from the pleasure they afforded their hearers, and partly from the belief that they had received this peculiar gift directly from a supernatural source, would be highly esteemed and distinguished among their fellow-men.

Syllables thus resolve themselves into emphatical or strong, and unemphatical or weak; or long and short, as they have otherwise been named. Referring once more to marching, or beating time with the foot, we may suppose an important word to be uttered at the putting down of each foot; hence two accented or long syllables for a measure; or the first syllable may be strong and the next weak, and so on alternately; or the first syllable may be weak and the second strong, and
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this order may be preserved throughout; but other modifications may yet be made, by pronouncing two feeble syllables at one step and one emphatical syllable at the next step; or we may pronounce an emphatical syllable at the first step and this may be followed by two feeble ones; and hence the pleasure the ear derives from such a regularly-returning combination of syllables.

VERSIFICATION.

That a large portion of the Holy Scriptures is poetical cannot be doubted, although the principles of Hebrew versification have not been fully ascertained. Many parts are expressly called songs, while the nature of the composition and the elevation of style clearly indicate the poetical construction of others. Josephus, who ought to be a competent judge, affirms that the "songs of Moses" were in heroic verse, while the psalms of David exhibited various kinds of verse, some of which were composed in trimeters and others in pentameters. The nature and genius of Hebrew poetry, however, have been warmly contested, and have been most successfully illustrated by Bishops Lowth and Jebb. The poetry of the Hebrews originated in the service of religion, and, together with music, was evidently cultivated by their prophets, and brought to the greatest excellence in the time of David, who was himself not only a poet, but an inventor of musical instruments. Lowth has endeavoured to prove that the Hebrew poetry exhibits a characteristic dialect; that it abounds in highly figurative and truly sublime expressions; and that it possesses a peculiarity to which he has applied the term parallelism. Striking instances of this peculiarity may be found in any of the psalms in which the two members of a sentence are so adjusted that words answer to words and thoughts to thoughts. It is this characteristic that, even in a prose translation, indicates the poetic structure of the originals, and fits these songs of praise at once for chanting.

Thus, for example, in the ninety-fifth psalm—

"In His hand are the deep places of the earth,
The strength of the hills is His also."
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The sea is His, and He made it,
And His hands formed the dry land."

Here we cannot fail to see how "the depths of the earth"
are contrasted with "the height of the hills;" and both
are represented as His possessions; while "the sea" is
contrasted with "the land," and both assigned to His
creative power. The following example from the forty-
fourth chapter of Isaiah will also forcibly illustrate this
peculiarity:—

"For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty
And floods upon the dry ground;
I will pour my spirit upon thy seed,
And my blessing upon thine offspring."

Here the parallelism between water and floods, thirsty
and dry, in the first distich, and spirit and blessing, seed
and offspring in the second, is at once apparent; and the
knowledge of this principle is not without its use in as-
certaining the meaning of certain expressions, as it is
evident that the parallel words in the above quotation
are also synonymous, and thus, when the Saviour is said
to have poured His blessing upon the infants that were
brought to Him for that purpose, His action was tant-
amount to pouring His spirit upon their souls.

Some have endeavoured to shew that such metrical
construction as we find in the poetry of the Greeks and
Romans, may be detected also in that of the Hebrews;
but this has been strenuously controverted by others.
In passing, therefore, from the sacred to the profane, we
not only enter a new field of thought, but we also per-
ceive a new mode of cultivation; and the Christian,
whilst he has derived the seeds of truth from the Jew,
has chosen to cultivate them after the manner of
the Gentile. Hence the necessity of our making a few
remarks on the principle of the construction of Greek
and Latin verse. Those who have treated this subject
have been led to point out the distinction between quantity
and accent, affirming that the former regulated the versi-
fication of ancient, and the latter that of modern times.
We humbly conceive that quantity and accent are found
in the compositions of both periods; but that the former
were more distinguished by the quantity of syllables, not
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neglecting the accent, and that the latter are more dependent on accent, not however, neglecting quantity. Syllables among the ancients were considered as either long or short, according to the length of time with which they were respectively pronounced; among the moderns, as accented or unaccented, according to the force with which they are respectively pronounced. Two syllables, accordingly, in sequence, may either be both long or both short; or the one may be long and the other short, or the one may be short and the other long; or to express the same ideas by signs; two syllables may be thus arranged, — —, or spondee; — —, or dibrach; — —, or trochee; and — —, or iamb; and all these arrangements occur in English poetry; but we shall only represent the two arrangements of three syllables that occur in our verse, — — —, or anapest, and — — —, or dactyl. Each of these arrangements is called a foot, metre, or measure, and the verse derives its peculiar name from the foot that most abounds in it. Among both the Greeks and the Romans the noblest combination of these metres is called the heroic, from its being generally employed to celebrate the deeds of their gods and heroes, as in the celebrated works of Homer and Virgil. We shall briefly direct attention to this species of verse, on account of the influence that it has so long exerted on the productions of subsequent bards. It consisted of six of these feet, and hence was called hexameter. Generally speaking, the last foot must be a spondee, and the preceding a dactyl; each of the other four might be indiscriminately either a dactyl or a spondee. Hence the number of syllables might vary from thirteen to seventeen; but much taste and ingenuity might be displayed in the choice of the optional or arbitrary feet in order to render the "sound an echo to the sense," as the spondee was suited to a slow and solemn movement, and the dactyl to a quick and lively one. In elegiac verse, an hexameter line alternated with a pentameter, and it is probably from this that we have derived an heroic verse which is pentameter, and, as the iamb is the prevailing foot, it is specifically termed iambic. As the verse is therefore pentameter and iambic, it necessarily consists of ten syllables. Like the hexameter, its last foot is
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fixed, and must be a true iamb, but any of the other places may be occupied either with a sponde, dibrach, or trochee.

- For heroic, narrative, and didactic subjects, this verse has long been employed. It is allowed to be of native origin, and Chaucer, the father of English poetry, has generally been accorded the honour of its invention. In its loftiest forms, it is written as blank verse, as in Milton's *Paradise Lost* and *Regained* and Young's *Night Thoughts*; or as rhyming couplets, as in the works of Chaucer, Dryden, Pope, Campbell, Crabbe, Montgomery, and many others. In Chaucer, it is comparatively harsh to our ear; but it acquired strength in Denham; sweetness in Waller, a combination of these in Dryden, and, perhaps, perfection in Pope.

Let us read the following example from the *Canterbury Tales*:

"A good man was ther of religioun,
And was a pore Persoun of a toun;
But riche he was of holy thought and werk
He was also a lerned man, a clerk
That Cristes gospel gladly wolde preche;
His parischons devoutly wolde he teche.
Wyd was his parisch, and houses for asondur,
But he no lalfè not for reyne no tondur,
In siknesse ne in meschief to visite
The foreste in his parishe, moche and lice,
Uppon his foot, and in his hond a staf.
This noble example unto his sheep he gaf,
But first he wroughte, and after that he taughte," &c.

Here will immediately be felt, the want of the stately march and harmonious roll of the heroic verse of the present day. On examining the passage, this will be found to arise from an apparent defect or superfluity of syllables; thus two syllables are apparently wanting in the fifth line, but by making "Christes" and "wolde" disyllables, we shall find the verse complete; on the other hand, the twelfth line seems to have two superfluous syllables; but by eliding the final e of "noble" and "ensample," or making the termination of these words glide into the beginning of those that follow, we shall get rid of those redundant syllables, and reduce the line to its proper dimensions. Let it be remembered, however,
that Chaucer was not so fastidious as his successors became, and Dryden had consequently reason to say:—

"It were an easy matter to produce some thousands of his verses, which are lame for want of half a foot, and sometimes a whole one, and which no pronunciation can make otherwise. We can only say that he lived in the infancy of our poetry, and that nothing is brought to perfection at first." It is difficult, from the very abundance, to select a passage that might prove the harmony and strength of this verse in modern times; for the exact prosody and pure rhymes of the Pleasures of Memory or of Hope, present such examples on every page. We shall submit the following:—

"Unfading Hope! when life's last embers burn,
Then soul to soul, and dust to dust return!
Heaven to thy charge resigns the awful hour!
Oh! then, thy kingdom comes! Immortal Power!
What though each spark of earth-born rapture fly
The quivering lip, pale cheek, and closing eye!
Bright to the soul thy seraph hands convey
The morning dream of life's eternal day—
Then, then, the triumph and the trance begin,
And all the phoenix spirit burns within."

The noblest and most difficult species of this verse is that which has been called blank, on account of its wanting rhyme. To elevate it, therefore, above prose, into which it is apt to run in unskillful or careless hands, great attention must be given to its rhythm and pauses, apart from the elevation of those sentiments of which it may be considered the appropriate vehicle. Marlowe, the greatest of Shakspeare's predecessors, found the drama shackled by rhyming couplets. Some were then beginning to throw off this restraint, but the sense as formerly still terminated with the line, which led Nash to characterise it as "the spacious volubility of a drumming decasyllabon." It was therefore reserved for the genius of Marlowe to break up this monotonous uniformity, and to introduce into his blank verse those various pauses that were afterwards to be managed with such consummate art in the harmonious and varied construction of the great Epic of Milton, that will ever afford the proper school for the study of the perfection of the English heroic. A critic, in condemning the opinion that the pause..."
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may occur after any syllable in the line, asserts that this is equivalent to saying that there is no place at all for the pause. Now, had he examined Milton's lines, he would have found instances of the pause after each syllable; but he would have found that its occurrence after the first and ninth was rare, and that its place occurred more frequently and agreeably after the fourth, sixth, and eighth syllables—the places which the ear had before assigned to them in our lyric poems. When the pause occurs after the odd syllables, which are unaccented, the effect is not unpleasant, but the close is deficient in power. In such passages as the following, we mark in the first line the pause near the beginning, then receding farther in the next, till the full close is found at the end of the sixth line.

"To nourish, | and superfluous moist consumes;
But I will haste, | and from each bough and brake,
Each plant and juiciest gourd, | will pluck such choice
To entertain our angel guest, | as he
Beholding shall confess, that here, on Earth,
God hath dispensed his bounties as in Heaven."

Other examples could be given in which the pause is near the end of the first line, more remote in the next, and so on till it approaches the beginning and then begins again to retire farther into the line; but our space forbids.

The heroic verse is sometimes formed into a quatrains with alternate rhymes; which, from its employment, has been called the elegiac stanza. Dryden considered this the noblest species of versification that our language possesses, but few have been of his opinion. It affords greater variety than the couplet, and has a more sonorous melody and stately gait. It was in this measure that he wrote his *Annum Mirabilis*; Shenstone wrote many elegies in it that are scarcely remembered, and Gray has written one that will never be forgotten. We give the following specimen as embodying sentiments that the Christian sadly misses in the *Country Churchyard*:

"THE GRAVE.

"One place alone had ceased to hold its prey,
A form had pressed it, and was there no more,
The garments of the grave beside it lay,
Where once they wound Him on the rocky floor."
"He only with returning footsteps broke
The eternal calm wherewith the tomb was bound;
Among the sleeping dead alone he woke,
And bless'd with outstretch'd hands the host around.

"Well is it that such blessing hovers here
To soothe each sad survivor of the throng,
Who haunt the portals of the solemn sphere,
And pour their woe the loaded air along.

"They to the verge have follow'd what they love,
And on the insuperable threshold stand;
With cherish'd names its speechless calm reproves,
And stretch in the abyss their ungrasped hand."

It has been supposed that we are indebted for our line of twelve syllables, commonly called Alexandrine verse, to the French, as that is the measure of their heroic poetry. After the Restoration, this verse was used in dramatic compositions, to gratify the taste of the king, whose ear had become familiarised to it during his sojourn in France. Dryden also frequently concluded a triplet with an Alexandrine in his heroic verse; but as this suggests that the poet was either unable to pack the idea it contains into the previous couplet, or was unable to find another idea to occupy another line, it has thus, either as an indication of negligence or barrenness, been generally rejected. The most considerable poem in English that has been composed in this measure is Drayton’s Polyolbion, of which the following lines will afford a specimen:—

"Then from her burnished gate the goodly glittering East
Gilds every mountain-top, which late the humourous night
Bespangled had with pearl, to please the morning’s sight;
On which the mirthfulquires, with their clear open throats,
Unto the joyful morn so strain their warbling notes,
That hills and valleys ring, and even the echoing air
Seems all composed of songs about them every where."

The verse of fourteen syllables has also been employed in no less considerable a work than Chapman’s translation of Homer—a work into which he has happily transfused not a little of the spirit of the original. After a long interval, the suitableness of this measure to express heroic actions has been justified by its adoption by Lord Macaulay, in his Lays of Ancient Rome, although he has occasionally contracted or expanded the
line by a syllable. We illustrate by a few lines from
Tory:—

"Right graciously he smiled on us, as rolled from wing to wing,
Down all our line a deafening shout, 'God save our Lord the King,'
'And if my standard-bearer fall, as fall full well he may—
For never saw I promise yet of such a bloody fray—
Press where ye see my white plume shine, amidst the ranks of war,
And be your oriflamme to-day, the helmet of Navarre.'"

This is the greatest length to which our lines have been
carried, and, in this respect, they bear a close resemblance to the hexameter of the ancients. As the pause
is uniformly at the end of the eighth syllable, it became
convenient in printing to break the line into portions,
and this forms the well-known stanza of our psalms and
hymns, familiarly known as common measure. After the
verse had been thus divided, a farther improvement was
made upon it by considering each portion as a distinct
line, and then making the four lines rhyme alternately.
This form may be seen in the following stanza:—

"Hope, like the glimmering taper's light,
Adorns and cheers the way;
And still, as darker grows the night,
Knavs a brighter ray."

On this point, Montgomery has thus expressed his
opinion:—"It is a great temptation to the indolence of
hymn-writers, that the quatrain measures have been so
often used by Dr. Watts without rhyme in the first and
third lines. He himself confessed that this was a de-
fect; and, though some of the most beautiful hymns are
upon this model, if the thing itself be not a fault, it is
the cause of half the faults that may be found in in-
erior compositions,—negligence, feebleness, and pros-
ing." Notwithstanding the justice of this remark, we
observe that most of the Hymns in the Dean of Can-
terbury's Poetical Works are in this faulty measure, and,
still worse, some of them exhibit both styles inter-
mixed.

Another form is produced by bringing the two long
and the two short lines together; thus:—

"Far o'er the glowing western main
His wistful brow was upward rais'd,
Where like an angel's train,
The burnish'd water blush'd."
Another modification in this quatrain was formed by making all the verses octo-syllabic, which form is known as long measure; thus:

"Thy precious things whatsoever they be,
That haunt and vex thee, head, and brain,
Look to the Cross, and thou shalt see
How thou mayst turn them all to gain."

Another form of this stanza makes the four lines rhyme in couplets; thus:

"Abide with me from morn till eve,
For without thee I cannot live;
Abide with me when night is nigh,
For without Thee I dare not die."

Again, an alternate rhyming quatrain may be conjoined to one rhyming in couplets, when a stanza of the following form is produced:

"Thus in the dew of youth she shone,
Thus in the morn of beauty fell;
Even while we gazed, the form was gone,
Too late became invisible;
The last best birth, with her last breath,
Came in the dark disguise of death;
Grief fill'd her parent's home of love,
But joy her Father's house above."

When the first and fourth, and second and third rhyme together, that form of verse is produced which Tennyson has rendered so familiar in his affecting In Memoriam:

"Sphere all your lights around, above;
Sleep, gentle heavens, before the morn;
Sleep, gentle winds as he sleeps now;
My friend, the brother of my love;

"My Arthur, whom I shall not see
Till all my widowed race be run;
Dear as the mother to the son,
More than my brothers are to me."

There is another form of stanza produced by doubling the first and third lines; thus:

"When sorrow all our heart would ask,
We need not shun our daily task,
And hide ourselves for calm;
The herbs we seek to heal our woe
Familiar by our pathway grow,
Our common air is balm."
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Or by trebling them:—

"Well might you guess what vision bright
Was present to his raptur'd sight,
Even as reflected streams of light
Their solar source betray.

The glory which our God surrounds,
The son of Man, the atoning wounds—
He sees them all; and earth's dull bourns
Are melting fast away."

When the common measure stanza has the first line diminished by two syllables, it is then called short measure; thus:

"The fountain in its source
No draught of summer fear;
The farther it pursues its course,
The nobler it appears."

Another form of stanza is produced by adding a rhyming couplet to this quatrain; thus:

"Night is the time to pray;
Our Saviour oft withdrew
To desert mountains far away;
So will his followers do,
Steal from the throng to haunts untrod,
And commune there alone with God."

Or thus:

"But like a white swan down a troubled stream,
Whose ruffling pinion hath the power to sling
Aside the turbid drops which darkly gleam,
And mar the freshness of her snowy wing,—
So thou, with queenly grace and gentle pride,
Along the world's dark waves in purity dost glide."

We find also, in the search for variety, that a measure of five syllables has not been rejected:—

"Go not, happy day,
From the shining fields,
Go not, happy day,
Till the maiden yields.

"Rosy is the West,
Rosy is the South,
Roses are her cheeks
And a rose her mouth."

The descent from five to four syllables, or two LAMBIC feet, brings us to the shortest measure in English poetry.
One could scarcely believe that so much could be packed into such narrow bounds as he will find in the following lines:

"But I'll come in
Before my legs
My farther steps,
As sure to win
Under His cross.

"Sin, Death, and Hell,
His glorious name
Quite overcame,
Yet I rebel,
And slight the same."

We seem to have borrowed the tercet or triplet from the Italians, but in a less artificial style, as each tercet is independent of the other instead of having the rhymes of the adjoining stanzas interwoven. Milton seems to have imitated this measure in his rendering of the vii. Psalm:

"Let th' enemy pursue my soul,
And overtake it, let him tread
My life down to the earth, and roll

"In the dust my glory dead,
In the dust and there outspread,
Lodge it with dishonour foul."

James Montgomery has written an account of a Voyage round the world in triplets, which he thus patriotically concludes:

"I have seen them one by one,
Every shore beneath the sun,
And my voyage now is done.

"While I bid them all be blest,
Britain is my home, my rest;
Mine own land! I love thee best."

But the most considerable poem in this stanza is the remarkable Two Voices of the Poet Laureate, of which the concluding stanzas may be given as a specimen:

"And forth into the fields I went,
And Nature's living motion lent
The pulse of hope to discontent.

"I wondered at the Beauteous hours,
The slow result of winter showers;
You scarce could see the grass for flowers."

"Let him pursue my soul,
And overtake it, let him tread
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I wondered while I paced along:
The woods were full'd so full of song,
There seem'd no room for sense of wrong.

"So variously seem'd all things wrought,
I marvel'd how the mind was brought,
To anchor by one gloomy thought;

"And wherefore rather I made choice,
To commune with that barren voice;
Than him that said, "Rejoice! rejoice!"

The Sonnet, as its name indicates, is also of Italian origin. It is composed in ten-syllable verse, and is confined to fourteen lines. The first eight lines have but two rhymes, which, with the exception of the first and eighth, rhyme in pairs; the last six have likewise but two rhymes, but they rhyme alternately. This description will be better understood by the following example, in which Milton has strictly adhered to the Italian model:

"ON THE RELIGIOUS MEMORY OF MRS. CATHERINE THOMSON.

"When faith and love, which parted from thee never,
Had ripen'd thy just soul to dwell with God,
Meekly thou didst resign this earthly load
Of death, called life, which us from life doth sever.

"Thy works and alms, and all thy good endeavour
Stay'd not behind, nor in the grave were trod;
But as faith pointed with her golden rod,
Follow'd thee up to joy and bliss for ever.

"Love led them on, and faith who knew them best
Thy handmaids, clad them o'er with purple beams
And azure wings, that up they flew so drest,
And spake the truth of thee in glorious themes
Before the Judge, who thenceforth gave thee rest
And drink thy fill of pure immortal streams."

Bowles revived the sonnet in modern times; Wordsworth still farther rendered it familiar, and no inconsiderable portion of the recently published volume of Dean Alford consists of sonnets. All these, however, have deviated considerably from the model we have presented, in the arrangement of the rhymes. Perhaps the greatest departure consists in arranging the first twelve lines in three independent stanzas, in each of which the lines rhyme alternately, and concluding the whole by the last two lines in the form of a rhyming
couplet, in which a farther liberty has been taken, but rarely, in making the last line an Alexandrine. The following example is taken from the volume to which we have last alluded:---

"To Winter.

Welcome, stern Winter, though thy brows are bend
With no fresh flowers, and ditties none thou hast
But the wild music of the sweeping blast;
Welcome this chilly wind, that snatches round
The brown leaves in quaint eddies; we have long
Panted in wearying heat; skies always bright,
And dull return of never-clouded light.
Sort not with hearts that gather food for song.
Rather, dear Winter, I would fain with thee,
Watching thee disattire the earth: and roam
On the bleak heaths that stretch about my home,
Till round the flat horizon I can see
The purple frost-belt; then to fireside-chair,
And sweetest labour of poetic care."

The Ollava rima, or, as it is called, in our prosody, the Spenserian stanza, is also of Italian growth, only modified by Spenser's concluding it with an Alexandrine line, which gives it a broader basis, or a more majestic sweep. It is in this stanza that the bewitching Faerie Queen is described; Beattie revived it in his pensive Minstrel; Thomson employed it in his Castles of Indolence; Southey in his Tales of Paraguay; Campbell in his Gertrude of Wyoming; Smillie in his Highlands; and its full powers were exhibited in the wanderings of the sublime and bitter Childe Harold.

This stanza in its structure bears a close resemblance to the sonnet. It consists, however, of only nine lines; the first four rhyme alternately, the fifth uniformly takes up the rhyme of the fourth, and the concluding line rhymes with the preceding. An extract from the last of these works will illustrate the structure of this noble stanza:---

"The sky is changed!—and such a change! O night,
And storm, and darkness, ye are wondrous strong,
Yet lovely in your strength, as is the light
Of a dark eye in woman! Far along,
From peak to peak, the rattling crags among
Leaps the live thunder! Not from one lone cloud,
But every mountain now hath found a tongue,
And Jura answers, through her misty shroud,
Back to the joyous Alps, who call to her aloud!"
THE EDITOR'S PREFACE.

The true *Ottava rima*, however, as used by Ariosto, presents six lines rhyming alternately, and two of the same length rhyming together at the close.

The following stanza, from Rose's translation, exhibits this structure:

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"Let him make haste his feet to disengage,
Nor limo his wings whom love hath made a prize,
For love, in fine, is nought but frenzied rage,
By universal suffrage of the wise:
And albeit some may shew themselves more sage
Than Roland, they but sin in other guise.
For what proves folly more than on this shelf,
Thus for another to destroy one's self?"
```

Octosyllabic verse, in which the lines rhyme in couplets, has been much used in narrative poetry from the time of Chaucer, who composed in it his *House of Fame*, which Pope, in heroic verse, has rendered so famous as the *Temple of Fame*. It requires great attention to counteract its "fatal facility" of leading to diffusion and weakness. Much of the narrative portions of Sir Walter Scott’s poetical romances is written in this style:

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"At length the freshening western blast
Aside the shroud of battle cast;
And, first, the ridge of mingled spears
Above the brightening cloud appears;
And in the smoke the pennons flew,
As in the storm the white sea-mow,
Then marked they, dashing broad and far,
The broken billows of the war,
And plumed crests of chivalry brave
Floating like foam upon the wave."
```

These may be considered the principal, they are by no means all the forms, in which the ingenuity of our poets has presented what may be considered our lyric iambic quatrain.

We shall now briefly illustrate our other kinds of versification. As the iamb consists of a short and a long syllable, so the Trochee consists of a long and a short. Verses characterised by this foot are commonly of the lyric kind, and the accent on the first syllable gives the verse an abrupt and rapid manner.

*Locksley Hall* is a poem of considerable length in the trochaic measure:
"Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, forward, let us range.
Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing grooves of change.
Through the shadow of the globe we sweep into the younger day;
Better fifty years in Europe than a cycle in Cathay."

Poe’s remarkable poem, *The Raven*, is also composed in this measure, and in its structure shows a wonderful command of language regulated by a delicate sense of harmony:

"Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt and flutter,
In there stepped a stately Raven of the saintly days of yore.
Not the least obeisance made he; not a minute stopped or stayed he;
But, with mien of lord or lady, perched upon my chamber door—
Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my chamber door—
Perched, and sat, and nothing more."

Neither has it been considered unworthy of a place in our hymnology:

"Pilgrim, burden’d with thy sin,
Come the way to Zion’s gate,
There, till mercy let thee in,
Knock and weep, and watch and wait.
"Knock!—He knows the sinner’s cry:
Weep!—He loves the mourner’s tears:
Watch!—for saving grace is nigh:
Wait!—till heavenly light appears."

Montgomery’s *Wanderer of Switzerland* is also composed in this measure:

"Long before thy sun descend,
May thy woes and wanderings cease;
Late and lovely be thine end;
Hope and triumph, joy and peace!
"As our lakes, at day’s decline,
Brighten thro’ the gathering gloom,
May thy latest moments shine
’Thro’ the nightfall of the tomb."

Various combinations of this verse, with the addition of two or more lines occur; but it is unnecessary to multiply examples; let the following suffice:

"Onward, onward may we press
Through the path of duty;
Virtue is true happiness,
Excellence, true beauty,
Minds are of celestial birth;
Make we then a heaven of earth."
This verse is not unfrequently employed in those lyrical poems, called Anacreontic:—

"Little inmate, full of truth,
Chirping on my kitchen hearth,
Where'er he thin be abode,
Always harbinger of good,
Pay me for thy warm retreat
With a song more soft and sweet,
In return thou shalt receive
Such a strain as I can give."

Let us now close this form of line with a feminine syllable, or double ending; that is, let the last word have the accent on the penult syllable, and we produce the measure in which Longfellow composed his Song of Hiawatha:—

"She was thinking of a hunter,
From another tribe and country,
Young and tall, and very handsome,
Who one morning, in the Spring time
Came to buy her father's arrows,
Sat and rested in the wigwam,
Lingered long about the door-way,
Looking back as he departed."

This verse may be compared to the seventh note in music, which has been characteristically called the seeking note, as if the ear sought another note on which to rest, as a more satisfactory close. It has accordingly been alternated with a line ending in a male syllable, and thus is formed a quatrains which is frequently employed in the minor poems of the German poets, as in Schiller's Pilgrim, Longing, &c.; and in which Longfellow composed his sweet, but defective Psalm of Life:—

"Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime:
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time;

Footprints, that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwreck'd brother,
Sailing, shall take heart again."

There yet remains to be considered our Anapestic verse, in which the characteristic feet are composed of two short syllables and one long. One of the short syllables may be wanting, in which case the line begins
with an lamb. The lines are not confined to certain number of feet, but lines either of three or four feet are the most common. From its general use, we might infer that it is best calculated for the expression of pensive subjects, as in Shenstone's Pastoral Ballad:

"I have found out a gift! for my fair;
I have found where the wood-pigeons bre'd;
But let me the plunder forbear;
She will say 'twas a barbarous deed."

Or in Beattie's Hermit:

"At the close of the day, when the hamlet is still,
And murmurs the sweets of largeness prove,
Where nought but the torrent is heard on the hill,
And nought but the nightingale's song in the grove."

And yet, as if to shew the versatility of our metres, this very verse, in couplets, has been employed by Goldsmith in his Revival, by Anstey in his New Bath Guide, and by numerous imitators, in light satirical and humorous compositions:

"If our landlord supplies us with beef, and with fish, let each guest bring himself, and he brings the best dish."

IMITATION OF CLASSICAL METRES.

Frequent attempts have been made to introduce some of the classical metres into English poetry, but the popular ear seems incapable of relishing them. To some of these attempts we shall briefly advert. The hexameter, which has been considered the noblest of the Greek and Roman measures, and which has been introduced into German versification, has been attempted by Southey, Longfellow, Alford, &c. When this verse is purely dactylic, with the necessary exception of the last foot, it has too much of the cadence of a horse at the canter, as in the hackneyed illustration—

"Quadrupedante per rem somu quattuor gloria campum;"

This is the measure in which Longfellow has composed, and, as some think, spoiled his tales of Evangeline and the Courtship of Miles Standish; from the latter we give the following illustration:
"Dinly the shadowy form of May-Flower riding at anchor.

Rocked on the rising tide, and ready to sail on the morrow;
Heard the voices of men through the mist, the rattle of cordage.
Thrown on the deck, the shouts of the mate, and the sailors' 'Ay, ay, Sir!' Clear and distinct, but not loud, in the dripping air of the twilight. Still for a moment he stood, and listened and stared at the vessel," &c.

When a greater variety of feet is introduced and the peculiar dactylic cadence is lost, the verse seems so closely to resemble English prose, that the poetical rhythm is scarcely perceived, as in the following lines:

"Still, one cannot believe that, if North and South were to sever,
Slavery could endure ten years in its present condition."

Were these lines written without break, one would not readily perceive that they were intended to be poetical; for they could be easily matched by quotations from the prose translation of the psalms; thus:

Why do the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing?
God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet.

Several excellent specimens of hexameters, with an occasional slight alteration, might be found in Lord Macaulay's Essay on Dryden:

"Who in a sea fight
Thought of the price of the china which beat out the brains of a sailor?"

Dr Watts imitated the well-known Sapphic verse; but, as it nearly agrees with the rhythm of some of our secular songs, this association is certainly not calculated to fit it for serious poetry:

"When the fierce north wind with his airy forces,
Rears up the Baltic to a foaming fury;
And the red lightning, with a storm of hail comes
Rushing a main down;
How the poor sailors stand amaz'd and tremble,
While the hoarse thunder, like a bloody trumpet,
Rears a loud onset to the gaping waters,
Quick to devour them."
The rhythm of these verses will readily suggest to the reader *The Widow* of Southey, and the *Needy Knife-Grinder* of Canning.

Tennyson, in his recent volume, has given a few specimens of "experiments" in other classical metres. The first, called *Boadicea*, is in Trochaic Tetrameter, which properly consists of eight trochees, but considerable variations are admitted, of which our Laureate has availed himself, by frequently introducing a dactyl in the sixth foot, and occasionally closing his line with a catalectic syllable:—

"Rour'd as when the rolling breakers boom and blanch on the *precipices*,
Yell'd as when the winds of winter tear an oak on a promontory,
So the silent colony hearing her tumultuous adversaries."

The second of his experiments is entitled *Milton*, and is composed in Horatian verse. The first two lines are greater Alcaic; the third line is Archilochian, and the fourth, less Alcaic. The nature of the feet will be perceived by the scansion signs which we have placed over one of the stanzas:—

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

The last of these "experiments" is in *Phalæcan*, or *hendecasyllabic* verse, forming a line of eleven syllables, disposed in the following feet, chiefly trochaic, although Catullus, to whom the Laureate refers, took certain liberties with the first and second:—

"Look, I come to the test, a tiny poem,
All composed in a metre of Catullus."

As the anapest consists of two short and one long syllable, so the dactyl consists of one long and two short. Of *Dactylic* Tetrameter or *Alemanic* verse, the following specimen is from Southey's *Soldier's Wife*:—

"Weary way!-wanderer, languid and sick at heart,
Travelling painfully over the rugged road,
Wild-visaged Wanderer, ah, for thy heavy chance!"
THE EDITOR'S PREFACE.

• "Sorely thy little one drags by thee bare-footed,  
  Cold is the baby that hangs by thy bending back,  
  Meagre and livid and screaming its wretchedness."

• These stanzas, even from the pen of Southey, prove  
  the difficulty of writing in English dactyls; for of these  
  six lines, only two end with true dactyls; besides, as  
  Robert Hall said on substituting pierce for penetrate, "no  
  man who considered the force of the English language  
  would use a word of three syllables" at the close of a  
  sentence, "but from absolute necessity." This must  
  have been felt by the ancients, who concluded the true  
  dactylic tetrameter with a spondee and not a dactyl, and  
  the following may therefore be considered a better illus-  
  tration:—

  "What though you | tell me each | gay little | rover  
  Shrieks from the breath of the first autumn day;  
  Surely 'tis better, when summer is over,  
  To die when all fair things are fading away."

Some prosodians, however, have considered our ana-  
pestic verse as strictly a dactylic measure; but we dis-  
sent from this decision.

Upon the publication of Coleridge's Chris'abel, he  
stated that it had been constructed upon a new prin-  
ciple; that the number of syllables was not to be re-  
garded, but those syllables on which the emphasis fell.  
As these were four, so the number of syllables in a line  
might be but four; but as two or three feeble syllables  
might be added to each of them, the number of syllables  
might extend to twelve, and yet the melody of the verse  
be preserved. It was astonishing that Coleridge should  
have called such a principle as this new, seeing that, to  
a considerable extent, it was the very principle on which  
the classical hexameter had been constructed, of which  
he himself had given a description and illustration, and  
that which is so conspicuous in our ancient ballads.  
This rhythmical, as opposed to numerous verse, has  
been extensively employed by many of our poets, as im-  
posing upon them less restraint than a more correct  
prosody would have required.

ALLITERATION.

Next to the harmonious arrangement of syllables in
vers; we may consider alliteration as a species of poetical ornament. It is produced by a succession of words beginning with the same letter. It must have been introduced at a very early period, as we find it characterising no fewer than twelve poems in the Holy Scriptures. The number of the Hebrew letters, which is twenty-two, determined the length of these alliterative poems, of which each stanza begins with each letter in its alphabetical order. It is not necessary that we should describe the metrical structure of all these poems; and, as the alliterative composition of the eix. Psalm must be familiar to all, from the names of the letters being prefixed to each division of eight verses, we shall advert to the peculiarities that occur in the structure of the third chapter of the book of Lamentations. This poem consists of twenty-two stanzas; each stanza contains three lines, and the initial letter of every stanza is also the initial letter of each line of that stanza. Any one who consults a Paragraph Bible will readily perceive not only that the lines resemble one another in length, and, probably, if we could read the original aright, in the number of syllables; but also that each stanza exhibits a remarkable congruity in sense as well as in structure. The following stanzas will illustrate all these statements, with the exception of the alliteration:—

"Mine enemies chased me sore, like a bird without cause.
They have cut off my life in the dungeon, and cast a stone upon me.
Waters flowed over my head; then I said, 'I am cut off!'

"I called upon thy name, O Lord, out of the low dungeon.
Thou hast heard my voice; hide not thy face at my breathing, my cry.
Thou drewest near in the day that I called upon thee; thou saidst, 'Fear not!'

To what extent this alliterative ornament prevailed in the poetry of the Greeks and Romans, it is not easy to determine, as poems constructed by them on such a principle may not have come down to us; or there may be, as was the case for a time in the Welsh poetry, a subtile alliteration in those that we possess, that has not yet been discovered.

When, however, the more palpable alliteration of
several adjacent words occurred, it is evident that the poet did not avoid it, if he did not court such a succession of similar letters. As the Latin exercised a far greater influence in modifying our language than the Greek, we shall draw our illustrations only from the former. No sooner do we open the works of Virgil than we meet with numerous illustrations of the principle that regulated the construction of the Anglo-Saxon poetry, in the very first Eclogue. We shall only quote a few of them:

"Tityre, tu patula recubans sub tegmine fagi
Silvestrem tenes Musam meditant avena.

"Fortunate senex, hic inter flammam notae
Et fontes sacros frigus captatis opacum.

"Carmine nulla canam; non, me pascunt, capellæ,
Florentem cysisum et salices arpestis amaran.".

If we take but a cursory look through the Odes of Horace, we shall meet with abundant illustrations:

"Sunt, quos curriculo pulverem Olympicum
Collegisse juvat.

"Pestemque a populo et princepe Cæsare in
Versus.

"Quis non Latino sanguine pinguior
Campus sepulcris impia prælia.

"Quo graves Persae melius perirent,
Audiat pugnas vitio parentum.

"Finus aut impulsa cupressus Eura,
Procidit late posuitque collum in
Pulvere Tenecro."

The following lines are too remarkable to be omitted, and, although there is no alliterative word in the second line, yet poscat occurs in the line immediately preceding:

"Pallida Mors sequo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas
Regumque turres."

As Lucretius is at hand, we shall allow him to furnish his quota of evidence on this point, and so dismiss our Latin witnesses:

"Inde fere pecudes persulant pabula lenta,
Et rapidos tranant amneis."
THE EDITOR'S PREFACE.

"Suave, mari magno turbantibus aqua ventis,
E terram magnum alterius spectare laborum.

"Fixa pedum pono pressis vestigia signis,
Non ita certandi cupidus, quam propter amorem.

"Et nemora a monteis gemitum, xylasque replebat,
Vera videns sive sepeliri viscera busto.

"Aut ubi suspensor estrem, chartasve solantem
Verberibus vestri rorsant, placunquae per auras.

Seeing that alliteration prevailed so extensively, more especially in the poetic compositions of the Celtic and Gothic dialects, the assertion of Barry, in his Description of Wales, in the twelfth century, will be the more readily received. Both the English and Welsh, according to him, were so fond of this figure of speech, which he calls Annonimation, that they considered no composition elegant, but rather rude and barbarous, in which alliteration was not plentifully employed. They would miss what they had been accustomed to account a poetical elegance, and conclude that the poem had been carelessly composed or that the poet had but a paucity of words.

A few specimens may be extracted from one or two of our ancient poets, in order to show to what an extent composition of this kind could be carried.

The following specimen is from the Prologue to the Eighth Book of Douglas's Virgil, which consists of fourteen similar stanzas:

"Quhat wikitness, quhat wanthryft now in wauld walkis!
Bule has banist blythnes, boist grete brag blawis,
Prattis are reput im peryllis paukis,
Dygno is laido don, derth to the dur drawis;
Of truttillis and of tragedyes the text of al talkis;
Lordis are left landle be vnacle lawis,
Burges byngis hame the bothe to breid in the baulkis;
Knychtis are cowhubyis, and commouns plukkis drawis;
Colkis for vncunnandnes myskenwais ilk wyght:
    Wyllis wald haif al thare wyl,
    Ynemich is not half fyl,
    Is nowthir resoun nor skyl
    In erd haldin rycht."

Montgomerie in his Cherry and the Shloe, thus expresses himself:
"The cushat crowds, the corbie cries,
The cuckoo cucks, the pratling pyces
To geck her they begin;
The jargoun or the jangling jayes
The crackling craws, and keckling kayes
They deav'd me with their din:
The painted pawn with Argos eyes,
Can on his mayock call,
The turtle wails in wither'd trees,
And Echo answer'd all,
Repeating with greeting
How fair Narcissus fell,
By lying and spying
His shadow in a well.

Poems continued to be written in English, the verse of which was merely alliterative, down to the commencement of the sixteenth century, and in Scottish, to a still later period.

To such an extent had alliteration taken hold of the popular ear that we find it in the jingling titles of books, as Sect of Scotstarvit's Staggering State of Scots Statesmen; in many of our proverbs, as "far fowls have fair feathers," and even in sermons, especially in the propositions that constituted the several "heads" of discourse.

It is remarkable, however, that the taste that introduced rhyme began to reject alliteration; for we find the critics, and even some of the poets themselves, condemning this principle that had been so generally practised and greatly admired, so early as the time of Chaucer, who, although there are many graceful instances scattered through his works, yet rejected it in the amplitude which it had acquired, and may be considered as indirectly condemning it in the introduction to the Parson's Tale, who represents himself as a "southren man," in accordance with the prevailing idea that the minstrel or harper was specially of the "north country," and, therefore, acknowledges his ignorance of alliteration, which had been considered essential to poetry...

"I can not geste, rum, raf, ruf, by letter
No, [truly], rym hold I but litil better.
And, therefore, if you lust, I wol not close,
I wol you telle a mery tule in prose," &c.
So intimately, however, had it been interwoven with the texture of the poetical fabric, that, in 1575, when Gascoigne published his 
Nostes concerning the making of Verse or Rhyme in English he exhorts the student to avoid it. Shakspeare, in 1598, had still occasion to ridicule the practice; although his ridicule could have been pointed only at the excessive use of this ornament, as his own works exhibit many striking specimens of alliteration. The pedantic schoolmaster, Holofem, having obtained permission to read “an extemporal epitaph on the death of the deer;” which, to humour the ignorant, he had called a pricket, says, “I will something effect the letter; for it argues facility,” and then read the epitaph beginning—

“The praiseful princess pierce’d and prick’d
A pretty pleasing pricked;
Said my a sore; but not a sore,
Till now made sore by shooting,” &c.

“We have,” in the comedy which we have quoted, it has been said, “many of the forms in which cleverness is exhibited as opposed to wisdom, and false refinement as opposed to simplicity.”

This ornament appears in the most complicated form in the poetical compositions of the nations that inhabited the northern districts of Europe, and hence the extent to which we find it prevailing in the poetry of the Anglo-Saxons, and even pervading the works of our modern poets. Without describing and illustrating all the refinements in alliteration that the ingenuity of the bards of many generations had produced, we shall advert to that only which was most obvious and common. This consisted in making either all the principal words in a verse of some length begin with the same letter; or, in lines of less extent, making at least two of the principal words in one line and one word in the next line, begin with the same letter. Thus the fathers of our literature, to adopt the contemptuous language of Milton, put the jingling of like sounds at the beginnings, instead of the endings of words. A more refined species of alliteration has been pointed out in the Cymbric poetry, which placed corresponding vowel or diphthongal sounds in the middle of the words of the adjacent lines, and a
similar arrangement may frequently be perceived in the
verses of Anacon. The following specimen of the
celebrated poem of Caedmon, which was composed before
680, the year of his death, will illustrate these prin-
ciples:—

"Wera wulder fæder,
swa he wundra ge-hwas,
see dryhten,
enwul stælde.
Hæest ge-scop
ylda bearnum
heofon to hrofe
halig sceoppand!
frum foldan,
free Almhtig!"

This style has been very successfully imitated by
Kingsley in his tale of Hereward, the last of the English.
As his vessel, the Otter, sailed southwards from Kirk-
wall, he cheerily sung to his men:

"Lightly the long-snake
Leaps after tempests,
Gaily the sun-gleam
Gloves after rain,
In labour and daring
Lies luck for all mortals,
Foul winds and foul witch-wives
Fray women alone."

As it is not our intention to give an historical sketch
of the progress of the English language, but only a few
illustrations of the peculiarities of its poetry; so we now
proceed to give a specimen of a work of the fourteenth
century, of considerable length and no small merit,
which was carefully constructed on the alliterative prin-
ciple. We allude to Langland’s Piers Ploughman. The
following description of the Pardoner will remind the
reader of Lindsay’s description of the same character in
his day:—

"There preached a pardoner,
As he a priest were;
Brought forth a bull
With many bishops’ seals,
And said that himself might
Assilen hem all,
Of falschele of fasting,
Of avowes y-broken."
Loewd men loved it well
And likd his words;
Comen up knecling
To kisson his bulls;
He bound them with his brovet,
And beared his eyeen,
And taught with his nagman
Ringes and brooches."

There can be little doubt, that the affectation displayed in crowding every line with alliteration, by which inap-
propriate words must often have been employed, and the sense not unfrequently obscured, at last offended a more
refined taste and led to its disuse. That there is some-
thing, however, in alliteration that is gratifying to the
reader, and ornamental to poetic diction, is evident from
the practice of poets down to the present day. Upon a
careful inspection of their poems, however, it will appear
that it is so sparingly and unobtrusively introduced,
that we believe many readers of poetry, while they are
gratified through this graceful use of alliteration, are not
aware to what their gratification is owing, just as when
one is enjoying "the cheering but not inebriating" cup,
he does not pause to think of the due proportion in which
the several ingredients have been combined. That the
English language is not essentially or extensively, alliter-
ative, may be proved by the facts, that, when it is
spoken or written naturally or unalteredly, the attention
of the hearer or reader is not arrested by the allitative
nature of the sentences, and that it requires, therefore,
no inconsiderable effort, or even a gift that was considered
peculiar to the poet, in order to render his sentences
both comparatively natural and alliterative; and that,
when a speaker expresses himself happily even by an
allitative antithesis, the sentence not unfrequently ex-
cites such applause as would be commanded by a suc-
cessful witticism. This observation is farther confirmed
by the large amount of poetry—that we now possess
which is not alliterative, or in which the alliteration is
so sparingly and naturally introduced that it may elude
the observation even of those that are familiar with this
figure, and that it requires a special search to detect it
in its lurking places. Alliteration, however, may arise
from a principle involved in the very constitution of our
Language, and may not be regarded as the mere result of a ready selection of words from a copious vocabulary, because these words must be pertinent to the subject; unless, as Chaucer's Parson has expressed it, the composition is a piece of mere *rum, raff, raff*, for the purpose of amusing the ear with the jingle of alliteration, without regard to sense, and it is probable that there were compositions nearly approaching to this character, by which alliteration was brought into contempt. When, however, a subject is proposed for discussion or description, it is surely somewhat remarkable, that so many of the words, appropriate to the subject, should begin with the same letter. It is this consideration that probably would lead down to the roots of our language, and might discover the cause, why it is so difficult altogether to eradicate alliteration from our speech. Thus were we to take gold for an illustration, we should find that, under some aspects, it glows, and in others, gleams; all grasp at it, and many groan under it, when they have received it in cowpens; it gilds the saloon, it glitters on the brow of beauty, and excites the gaze of the multitude; it has been used as a gag to the loquacious; a goad to the indolent, a guerdon to the poet, and, rarely, a gift to the meritorious. This subject, however, belongs rather to the profound philologist than to the mere describer of the externals of our English poetry.

Those who are familiar with the contempt in which Milton held the tinklings of final syllables, or rhyme, will, perhaps, be surprised to find, on a close inspection, how much he imitated the Anglo-Saxons in the jingles of initial consonants, which, on the same principle, may be held, and by some were held, in equal contempt. The prevailing principle of the Saxon alliteration was that at least two important words—that is, generally substantives and verbs, to the exclusion of adverbs or prepositions, should begin with the same letter, and one such word in the next line. Now, in addition to many pairs of alliterative adjectives and nouns throughout the *Paradise Lost*, such as "dark destruction," "hazard huge," "fixed fate," "silent stream," "warring winds," "vast vacuity," "dark descent," "wearied wings," "nocturnal note," "fresh fountain," "fishy flame,"
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"craggy cliff," &c.; and many instances of alliterative words not in immediate conjunction, but yet occurring in the same line, as "to make them mirth used all his might," "to taste that only tree," "which declares his dignity—while they keep watch or nightly rounding walk," "the bars of hell an errand bad no doubt," "thou sitting where thou durst not soar," "single against thee wicked and thence weak," "for in his look defiance lours," "the fiend thus answered, frowning stern," "argues no leader but a liar traced," "leaning half raised with looks of cordial love;"—we find such instances of a still more complicated alliteration so frequently occurring in the course of this greatest of epics as to leave no reasonable doubt of the influence that the structure of the Anglo-Saxon poetry had exercised on the mind of Milton, and that, however much he may have condemned the like endings of rhyme, he did not reject the frequent use of the similar beginnings of alliteration. Thus it will generally, we do not say universally, be found, that, when two important words occur in any line of the Paradise Lost, beginning with the same letter, at least one important word or a syllable in such word, will be found either in the preceding or in the following line, beginning with the same letter, according to the very practice of him who first sung of Paradise Lost, and whose highest praise is, that the reader of his poem is reminded of his great successor.

This assertion is illustrated by the very first two lines of the work:

"Of Man’s first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, &c."

To quote the many instances in which this practice occurs would be to quote a large portion of the poem. We shall, therefore, present only a few, and leave the reader to discover others, which he will do in the course of every score of lines, as he peruses any portion of this immortal work:

"Beguiled by fair idolatresses fell
To idols’ soul.

"The Syrian Damsels to lament his fate
In amorous ditties all a summer’s day,"
"Tears such as Angels weep, burst forth; at last
Words intercove with sighs found out their way
"Precedence, none, whose portion is so small
Of present pain."

"Intermit no satch
Against a wakeful foe, while I abroad
Through all the coasts of dark destruction seek
Deliverance for us all: this enterprise
None shall partake with me. Thus saying rose
The Monarch and prevented all reply."

"Or in the emptier waste, resembling air,
Weighs his spread wings.
"To stoop with worried wings and willing feet
On the bare outside of this world.
"Fall circumvented thus by fraud, though join'd
With his own folly.
"And dying rise, and rising with him raise
His brethren ransomed.
"His back was turn'd, but not his brightness hid
Of beaming sunny rays."

Mark how the terminating words in nearly each of the following lines are all alliterative:

"Yet not rejoicing in his speed though bold
Far off and fearless, nor with cause to boast,
Begins his due attempt, which nigh the bath
Now rolling boils in his tumultuous breast,
And like a devilish engine back recoils."

But, obliged to omit passages equally pertinent in every page, we shall quote almost the last lines, as proving that this peculiarity of style which this inimitable poem exhibited at the beginning characterised it to the close:

"Waved over by that flaming brand, the gate
With dreadful faces thronged and fiery arms.
"They hand in hand, with wandering steps and slow
Through Eden took their solitary way."

Our space precludes us from giving specimens of alliteration from other poets; otherwise we should have found examples in every page of Rogers and Crabbe. We therefore omit all these, and content ourselves by stating that it was not despised by Byron, as a few
from numerous examples, taken from Childe Harold will amply prove:

'My mind may lose its force, my blood its fire
And my frame perish even in conquering pain.

'But here where murder breath'd her bloody steam,
And here where buzzing nations choked the ways.

"The bend
Of stirring branches, and the bud which brings
The swiftest thought of beauty.

"The field of freedom, fiction, fame and blood
Here a proud people's passions were exulted

"And I have loved thee, Ocean! and my joy
Of youthful sports was on thy breast to be
Borne, like thy bubbles, onward: from a boy
I wondrously with thy breakers."

We shall conclude these illustrations of alliteration with a few examples from the last production of our Poet Laureate, whose tuneful ear and careful study of his art have detected the graceful use of this Saxon ornament in the practice of his great Master in harmonious verse—"the mighty-mouthed inventor of harmonies":

"Paint as a figure seen in early dawn
Down at the far end of an avenue.

"Behold the dead flame of the fallen day
Pass from the Danish barrow overhead.

"Scarce-rocking her full-busted figure-head
Stared o'er the ripple feathering from her bows;
Then followed calms.

"The horse he drove, the boat he sold, the chill
November dawns and dewy-glooming downs.

"A latter but a loftier Annie Lee,
Fair-hair'd and tall, and from her lifted hand
Dangled a length of ribbon and a ring."

"Beat ng it in upon his weary brain,
As tho' it were the burden of a song."

Alliteration also abounds in the Voyage:

"Warm broke the breeze against the brow,
Dry sung the tackle, sang the sail;
The lady's head upon the prow,
Caught the shrill salt and shear'd the gale."
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In the *Idylls of the King*, we meet with frequent examples, and some of them afford instances of that alternate alliteration that occurs so often in the *Faerie Queen*; thus:—

"Death like a friend's voice from a distant field."

ASSONANCE.

As an intermediate ornament between alliteration and perfect rhyme, a few remarks may be made on *assonance*. This can scarcely be regarded as a characteristic of English poetry in past times, and is certainly not to be considered as such in the present day; but as it may be regarded as the principle on which those rhymes that Walker has called "allowable," but which in modern poetry would be called "intolerable," were introduced, it seems here to claim a passing notice. Assonance, therefore, is a peculiar correspondence in sound in the termination of verses, less complete than that of rhyme. We think it may be detected in the poetry of Greece; but it has been most carefully cultivated in the romantic and dramatic compositions of Spain. In assonance, while the vowels of the last accented syllable, and in all subsequent syllables are the same, the consonants must all be different, otherwise *consonance* or rhyme would be produced. "Thus bárbaro, which has the accent on the antepenultimate, is an assonant with cálmalo and plátnano. Báscos, which is accented on the penultima, is an assonant with cúren and sóya. So in English, hardy, manly, and carry would be assonants." Assonants are not, however, exhibited in pairs, but are continued throughout the whole poem, without any other change than that of blank verse with the assonants. Assonants are always used by the classical dramatists of Spain, but in the lyric poetry of that country rhyme is more frequently adopted. This principle, we conceive, may account for what would now be accounted imperfect rhymes in our ballad poetry, and thus may have familiarised its use in poems of higher pretensions. This imperfection would be less perceived in the song or the ballad, because, as these poems were produced rather to be sung than read, and as the voice
of the singer would dwell on the vowel sounds, it follows that, if these were perfect, the terminating consonants would glide off without producing an unpleasant effect on the ear of the listener. It is unnecessary to give examples of a practice so well known, especially as it is not now tolerated in poetical composition; we shall merely note that, in glancing over some productions of ancient minstrelsy, we find the following words associated with one another in the place of rhymes; stand with man; black with hat; sat with clap; town with round; ask with blast; past with glass; mark with fat; heels with fields; leek with sweet, &c., and the same principle may be seen in the following stanza of "the grand old ballad" of Sir Patrick Spence:

"O forty miles off Aberdeen,
It's fifty fathoms deep,
And there lies good Sir Patrick Spence,
Wi' the Scots Lord at his feet."

RHYME.

We have seen at what an early period the poets of Palestine began a certain number of lines or stanzas with the same letter; it was, therefore, but a mode of this fashion to terminate certain poetical lines with the same letters or sounds, which constituted what has been termed consonance or rhyme. It is perhaps impossible to trace this ornamental fringe, this purple band on the princely toga of the poet, to its origin; but, although it appears to have been despised by the Greeks and their followers, the Romans, yet there is ground of belief, that it was early exhibited and admired in the East. We have found that it was unknown to the Anglo-Saxon poet, whose distinguishing ornament, like a fillet on his priestly brow, was alliteration; and, as fashion in poetry as well as in other matters, has its times, so it may be safely presumed, that, as alliteration began to ebb, so rhyme began to flow; and, as in the case of two tides that run in opposite directions, there will be a middle space in which the direction of the current is doubtful, so we shall find a period in our literature when poems exhibited the double decoration of both alliteration and
rhyme. The first of these, in the order of time, was a translation by Layamon of Wace's *Le Brut d'Angleterre*; and, as the poem which he translated was in rhyme, it is probable that this circumstance suggested to him the propriety of endeavouring to imitate his copy in this respect. His work is supposed to belong to the latter part of the twelfth century. The following is a brief specimen:—

"Tha, at than worthe dawio,
The King gon to spekene,
And agaf his gole emuloten
All heere rihtun;
He gof scowler, he gof gold,
He gof hons, he gof bond,
Castles and clathes eke,
His monnem he iquende."

Such is a specimen of early rhyme, which henceforth began to hold divided sway with alliteration, till the time of Chaucer, when rhyme began to prevail, which henceforth maintained its sway, although, as we have seen, alliteration has by no means been banished from the fields of poesy. A few early specimens of the mixture of these poetical ornaments may not be unacceptable. Our first extract is from the *King of Tuns*, the composition of which has been referred to the beginning of the fourteenth century:—

"The Soudan sat at his deas,
Y-served of the first mess;
They comen into the hall
To-fare the prince proud in press,
Their talle they tolten withouten lees,
And on their kness gan fall

"And said: 'Sire, the King of Tuns
Of wicked words is not scare.
If heathen hound he dothe call;
And, ere his daughter he gave thee till,
Thine heart-blood he will spill,
And thy barons all.'"

As there were some that early despised alliteration, so we find that there were those who equally despised rhyme. Ben Jonson spoke of it as

"Wresting words from their true calling,
Propping verse for fear of falling
To the ground;
"Jointing syllables, drowning letters;  
Fastening vowels, as with fetters;  
They were bound."

Marvel, in addressing Milton, says:—
"Their fancies like our bushy-points appear,  
The poets tag them, we for fashion wear.

And even Dryden, himself so great a master of rhyme, says:—
"Till barbarous nations, and more barbarous times,  
Debased the majesty of verse to rhymes;  
Those rude at first, a kind of tinkling prose,  
That limped along and hobbled at the close."

Milton likewise despised these terminal jinglings or tags; yet his consistency is not very apparent in his frequent use of alliteration. Whilst rhyme may be dispensed with in the epic, which may be supposed to be sustained by the dignity of the subject and the grandeur of its style, yet, in spite of all that has been said against both alliteration and rhyme, it has been felt that the lower species of poetry require the adventitious aid of these ornaments, which, when the one is judiciously used, and the other employed in its purity, are so far from jarring on the ear that they afford it no inconsiderable pleasure. But when alliteration is crowded and rhymes are either impure, or occasion the inversion of the line, then the art of the rhymer, or rather his inability to manage his materials, becomes so palpable as to be offensive.

Rhyme is not, strictly speaking, "the correspondence of sounds in the terminating words or syllables of two verses;" for in true or pure rhymes there must be a dissimilarity connected with this correspondence of sounds; and that dissimilarity will be found in the consonants immediately preceding the terminal sounds. Thus the two words rain and reign, differing both in their orthography and meaning, have an exact "correspondence of sound," but yet they would not therefore form correct rhymes; and we find the reason in the sameness of the initial consonants: let us therefore change one of the consonants, and we shall immediately have words that constitute perfect rhymes; thus:—
"The school we name a world,—for vice and pain,  
Fraud and contention, there begin to reign;"
Or prefix another consonant that will coalesce with \( r \), and we shall have another word, brain, and a perfect rhyme; thus:

"But still, my friend, that ancient spirit reigns,  
The powers support the credit of his brains"—

Should the rhyming syllables, however, both have the same consonant, a syllable prefixed to one of the words will not fit the words for rhyming together. Thus, in the following example, the rhyming syllable in both lines is the same, although one of them is preceded by another syllable, and, therefore, the rhyme is improper:

"What wonder I was all unwise  
To shape the song for your delight,  
Like long-tailed birds of Paradise,  
That float thru' heaven and cannot light."

The rhymes in the following couplet, for a similar reason, are equally faulty:

"And then, that instant, there appeared the maid,  
By his sad looks in her approach dismay'd."

In the case of a female syllable, or double ending, the rhyme is in the accented syllables, and, therefore the differing consonants must precede them:

"Faint she grew and ever fainter,  
As she murmur'd 'Oh, that ho  
Were once more that village painter,  
Which did win my heart from me."

It may be further remarked, regarding double endings, that words ending in \( tion \) and \( ing \), perhaps from the facility of finding them, are avoided by our best poets; neither is it correct to say that double endings are peculiar to ludicrous composition, as is sufficiently evinced by the poem from which the preceding extract has been taken. No doubt double endings and compound words are used in ludicrous composition, but they are not essentially ludicrous.

Rhyme does not appear to have been admitted into the poetry of the Romans as a uniform ornament; but we frequently find the semisect of the pentameter constituting rhymes, which we can scarcely suppose occurred per incuriam; thus:

"Dum licet, in liquida nat tibi linter aequa."
Ovid's poem, called Fasti, is wholly written in Elegiac verse, and affords innumerable examples of this practice; but, instead of giving a number of unconnected lines, we shall rather present a brief passage, in which the frequency of rhyme in the pentameter lines will be readily perceived:—

"Quid tibi cum gaudio? dubiam regis, retur, pinuin.  
Non sunt haec digitis arma tenenda tuae.  
Hic nunc pavidius; Moneor, non deprecor, inquit:  
Sed licet suprema puca referre lyra.  
Dant veniam, idoneum moram. Capit ille coronam,  
Quae possit crines, Phoebi, decere tuos.  
Inducat Tyrio bis lineam munere pullam:  
Redde inita soli pollice chonda sonea;  
Protimus in medias ornatus desilut undas;  
Spargitur impulso carula puppis aqua.  
Inde—side major—tredo delphina recurvo  
Se membrant onere supposisse novo.  
Ille sedens eis variis locut, pretiumque vehendi  
Cantat, et aerereos carmine mullet aquas."'

Our own poets, in their minor productions, have apparently imitated this practice in such lines as do not rhyme with their corresponding lines, as in the other verses of the poem; thus Campbell, in Lord Ullin's Daughter:—

"But still as wilder blew the wind,  
And as the night grew darker,  
Adown the glen rode armed men.  
Their trampling sounded nearer."

Tennyson has uniformly adopted this construction in the fifth line of the stanza of Lady Clara Vere de Vere:—

"However it be, it seems to me,  
'Tis only noble to be good.  
Kind hearts are more than coronets,  
And simple faith than Norman blood."

As our remarks and examples, however, have far exceeded the bounds prescribed to us, we must now conclude with the hope that they may both interest the admirer of verse, and aid the youthful aspirant to poetic fame.

J. L.