There are many circumstances, which might lead us to expect a difference, between the dialects spoken north and south of Thames. The Gothic races are described, in the third and fourth centuries, as forming one people, and speaking one language; but a comparison between the Mæso-Gothic and the Anglo-Saxon will convince us, that even thus early there were dialects; which probably melted, the one into the other, and showed more marked peculiarities of structure, as the races, which spoke them, were more widely separated. These dialects have long since ranged themselves into four great classes—the Northern, the English, the Low-Dutch, and the High-Dutch. The English connects the Northern dialects with those spoken by the Low-Dutch or Netherlands; and the latter link in with the various dialects of the High-Dutch or Gorman. Now the Sexe ¹ came from the south-western corner of the ancient "Onglo," and were parted only by the Elbe from the Netherlands races; while the Engle, who landed at Bamborough, came from the north-eastern coast, and were neighbours to the Dane. We might therefore expect, that the dialects of the Engle would partake more of the northern character, and those of the Sexe of the Netherlands; and moreover, that the distinction would be the more marked, inasmuch as a whole century elapsed, before the kindred races again met each other, on the banks of Thames.

That the dialects spoken north of this river, did possess a common character, which long distinguished them from the southern dialects, may, I think, be shown even at this late

¹ There is reason to believe, that this word Sexe meant nothing more than Seamen, and that it was first given to such of the Engle, as made piracy their trade. But after these Sexe settled in Britain; though, as it would seem, they sometimes called their speech English, their new country Engeland, and themselves the Engle-kun, yet they were, for the most part, distinguished from the Engle of the North—the phrase Engle and Sexe being made use of, when the writer would include the entire English population of the island.

That the Sexe were a tribe of Engle, I think there can be little doubt. Everything tends to show, that at the beginning of the fifth century there were only five great Gothic races in the North of Europe—the Sweon, the Dene, the Geats, the Engle, and the Sweof. [In what language Sexe means seamen, I do not know.—W. W. S.]
period; but the changes they have undergone are so many, that it is now very difficult to point out the peculiarities, which once bound them together as one great dialect.

One of these peculiarities I take to be the conjugation of the verb. To what extent its inflexions differed from those of the southern verb, will be seen in the following table. The vowels are accommodated to that stage of our language, which has been called the Old English.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thou hop-est</td>
<td>Thou hop-es</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>He hop-eth</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>We</td>
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<td>Ye hop-eth</td>
<td>Ye hop-es</td>
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<tr>
<th>Indic. Perf.</th>
<th>Thou hoped-est</th>
<th>Thou hoped-es</th>
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<tr>
<td>Imper. Pres.</td>
<td>hop-eth ye</td>
<td>hop-es ye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infin. Pres.</td>
<td>to hop-en</td>
<td>to hop-e</td>
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In the Northern inflexions we may detect those of a conjugation, which is fully developed in the Swedish. They were used by Aldred, in his version of the Durham Bible, which Wanley assigns to the age of Alfred; at a later period by the author of Havelok, Robert of Brunne, and other men of Lincolnshire and the adjoining counties; by the men of the west, one of whom, I take it, turned William and the Werewolf into English; and generally by Scottish writers of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries. Churchyard, a Shrewsbury man and one of Elizabeth’s courtiers, often ends his third person plural in s; and the same form may be found in Shakespeare. The peasantry of the midland counties not unfrequently use this inflexion, in the first person singular and the third person plural; and the Quakers, who are not an uneducated body, use it in the second person singular both of the present and perfect tenses.¹

Other peculiarities of the Northern dialect seem to be, a less frequent use of the articles, the conjunctions, and the

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¹ They excuse it, as being less formal than the inflexion in est.
personal pronouns;¹ a dislike of the n declension; and the use of a very curious inflexion es² in the plural adjective or participle, as “the godes briddes,” the good birds, “the knychtis were tayys,” the knights were tay'en.

Our northern dialect also, not unfrequently, added er to the substantives of the south (in this particular again resembling the languages of northern Europe) as wulfer a wolf, hunker a haunch, heather heath, flitcher a fitch, teamer a team, plancher a plank, fresher a frog—in the dialect of Essex frosh.³

As to the changes of the letters—it is probable, that the vowels varied too capriciously to form any safe test, whereby to distinguish between the two dialects; but I have little doubt, that a preference of the vocal letters was, from the first, a marked feature of the southern English. It will, I think, explain some apparent inconsistencies of Anglo-Saxon orthography, and especially as regards the use of the ū and the ē. Again, the use of the t for th appears to have been far more common in the northern than the southern counties; and seems at last to have given rise, in the northern dialect, to two very curious laws of euphony.

In some MSS.⁴ t is substituted for th, whenever it follows, in the same verse or member of a sentence, a word that ends in d or t; and in other MSS.⁵ the same change takes place,

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¹ Why have they been so studiously inserted in those extracts from the Durham Bible, which appear in the Analecta?
² I have only seen this inflexion in MSS. which belonged to the Northern dialect.
³ Compare bunker, a bench (Jamieson); firster, first, asker, an ask or waternewt (Halliwell); buffer, a calf, in Batchelor's Dialect of Bedfordshire, p. 126.
⁴ See the Ormulum; the Chronicle from 1132 to 1140; and the Lives of St. Catharine, St. Margaret, and St. Julian. King's Lib. A. 27. The lives of the three saints seem to have been translated by one John Thayer.
⁵ See the Legend of St. Catharine, and the Institutio Monialium [Aeneren Riwle], Tit. D. 18. The Inst. Mon. is a very curious work, both as to subject and dialect. There is a later copy in the Southern dialect, in Nero, A. 10; and an ancient one in Cleop. C. vi. which I think must be written in the Midland dialect. The Latin original, I believe, is at Magd. Coll. Oxford.

This change of th into t was, in some few cases, to be met with in Southern MSS.; and in the modern dialect of Somerset we may still occasionally hear the East-of-England phrase, “now and tan.”
both when the preceding word ends with one of these two letters, and also when it ends with s. I incline to think, the first-mentioned MSS. must have been written in the eastern and midland counties, and the second set in Lincolnshire or north of Trent. Those, who know Lancashire or the rival county, will readily call to mind such phrases, as "does to," "houd teh tongue," and other illustrations of these two rules.

It is a curious fact, that both our universities are situated close to the boundary line, which separated the northern from the southern English; and I cannot help thinking, that the jealousies of these two races were consulted, in fixing upon the sites. The histories of Cambridge and Oxford are filled with their feuds; and more than once has the king's authority been interposed, to prevent the northern men retiring, and forming within their own limits a university, at Stamford or Northampton.

The union of these two races, at the university, must have favoured the growth of any intermediate dialect; and to such a dialect the circumstances of the country, during the ninth and tenth centuries, appear to have given birth. While the North was sinking beneath its own feuds, and the ravages of the Northman, the closest ties knit together the men of the midland and the southern counties; and this fellowship seems to have led, among the former, to a certain modification of the Northern dialect.

The change seems to have been brought about, not so much by adopting the peculiarities of southern speech, as by giving greater prominence to such parts of the native dialect, as were common to the south. The southern conjugations must, at all times, have been familiar (at least in dignified composition\(^1\)) to the natives of the northern counties, but other conjugations were popularly used, and in the gradual disuse of these, and other forms peculiar to the north, the change consisted. We have MSS. of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, in which the more marked features

\(^1\) If not, we must look on our copy of Caedmon, as only a Southern version of the poem. [It is certainly a Southern version.—W. W. S.]
of the northern dialect are studiously avoided; but generally
the intrusion of some verbal inflexion es, or of some other
popular idiom, shows the country of the writer as effectually,
as the misplacing of a single will betrays the unfortunate
Irishman.

These are some of the reasons, which, independently of
Higden's authority, would lead me to the conclusion, that
in the middle of the fourteenth century, there were three
great English dialects—the Northern, the Midland, and the
Southern; and, I think, that even amid the multiplied
varieties of the present day, these three divisions may yet
be traced. What in the fourteenth century were the limits
of the Midland English, is a question of difficulty. The
Trent seems to have been long a boundary. Surrounding
with a deep and rapid stream a thinly-peopled district—the
fells of Derbyshire and the wilds of Shirewood—this river
opposed physical obstacles, which were but very slowly sur-
mounted. The new dialect seems to have spread over the
plains of Staffordshire, and the rich flats of Lincoln, long
before it penetrated the sister-counties of Derby and Notting-
ham. Both these, I believe, would have been excluded by
Higden; and probably too, the adjacent counties of Stafford
and Lincoln.

As the northern dialect was retreating northwards, two
vigorour efforts were made to fix it as a literary language;
the first, in the thirteenth century, by the men of Lincoln-
shire— the same, whose taste and genius yet live in their
glorious churches; and a second, in the fifteenth century,
by the men of Lothian. But the convenience of a dialect,
especially the same as the northern, and far more widely
understood, its literary wealth, and latterly the patronage

1 Not that I think his authority of slight moment, in a case, like the present.
Whatever we may think of his philosophy, his testimony to a fact, directly
within his own knowledge, and connected with a subject which he had evidently
studied, is of great value.

2 The number of MSS. written about the year 1300, which (judging from
dialect, and other circumstances) must be referred to this county, or one of the
neighbouring shires, is singularly great. Its literary activity seems to have
been chiefly owing to its flourishing monasteries, Croyland, Sempringham, &c.
of the court, gave the Midland English an ascendancy, that gradually swept all rivalry before it.

The southern dialect kept its ground more firmly than the northern. Little more than two centuries have gone by, since it first began to give way before the midland dialect; and the extent to which it has yielded in different counties, is, even at this day, the best means we have of distinguishing its several varieties. The easternmost variety has now lost all the more marked features of the Southern English; and is chiefly remarkable for that confusion 1 of the v and the w, which is sometimes thought peculiar to the Londoners. As we go westward, we gradually fall in with the Wiltshire variety; with the zs and the vs, thick that, and ich I; with that curious form of the verb substantiv, he’m, we’m, you’m, they’m, 2 and the infinitive in y, to sowy, to reapy, to nursy, &c.; with dr, instead of the initial thr, as droo, drash, drony, drawt, drub, &c.; and with that singular, but very ancient misplacing of the r and the s, in in girt, pirty, hirch, hirn, bursh, hursh, &c. claps, haps, asp, &c. The Anglo-Saxon diphthong ea is changed into ya,

1 The laws, which regulate the use of the letters v, w, y, throughout the east of England, have been little studied, and are exceedingly puzzling. I have tried to bring these letters under rule, but without much success; and as the y and the w are not very readily distinguishable in our MSS. I fear I may sometimes have mistaken them, in such extracts as have been laid before the reader.

2 It may be observed, that the change of v into w or w, in the middle of words, as even even, evening evening, &c. over over, evil evil, &c. is common in most of our counties.

3 This verb is also found in Bedfordshire. I will venture to assert, that the whole range of the Gothic dialects does not contain a word, more instructive to the philologist—one, that promises to be a more important link in the history and philosophy of language.

4 This inflexion seems to be a relic of the i conjugation. In our older MSS. it is written ie.

5 That is, thro’, thrash, throng, throat, throb, &c. According to Forby, a like change of letters is met with in Norfolk, save that, instead of the a, its whisper-letter is used, as might be expected. He gives as examples, troat, tread, treaten, trough.

6 That is, great, pretty, rich, run, brush, rush, &c. Girt and pirty are common in other parts of the kingdom, but the transposition of the r before other letters than t, is rarely met with, but in the south.

7 Clasp, hasp, asp.
and the latter diphthongs oa and oi into wo and wi (i long),
as yarth, yarm, yaker, yal, yel, &c. woth, wock, what, dwont,
gwon, &c. spwile, bwile, puint, puison, bway, &c.; ay is re-
placed by ã, and the long o, by au, as pã, wã, stã, zã, &c.
zaw, paw, gawld, hawld, clawze, suppawse, &c. When we
cross the Parret, we find ourselves in the midst of the
Devonshire variety, which, beside possessing almost all the
peculiarities already noticed, retains yet stronger marks of
the parent language—for instance ees for I, and the verbal
inflexion th, he zeeth, &c.

The midland dialect (supposing it to reach the Humber)
may, I think, be conveniently divided into six varieties.
The easternmost is noted for a very general narrowing of its
vowels, as haewe, gaether, raedish, saeck, waek, &c. creddle,
cheen, dreen, keewe, &c. hiven, thrid, riddy, brist, frind, &c.
byle, syle, spyle, jyne, destrye, &c. fule, stule, mune, spune,
bute, smythe, &c.; for the omission of the definite article
after verbs implying motion to or from a place, as walk into
house, go up chamber, come out of barn, put them into basket,
&c.; for the use of ta instead of it, and the apparent want
of inflexion in the third person singular of its verb, as ta
dew, it does.1 It is found in Norfolk, Suffolk, and Cam-
bridgeshire; and, at no distant period, must have spread
over Huntingdonshire, and up the valley of the Ouse into
the heart of Bedfordshire. The Worcester variety2 spreads

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1 See Moor's "Suffolk Words and Phrases," and Forby's "Vocabulary of
East Anglia." Some notice of the Bedfordshire dialect may be found in Bat-
chelor's "Orthoepical Analysis of the English Language."

2 In Duncombe's History of Herefordshire, there is a scanty list of provin-
cial phrases used in that county; and I am told, that a work on the Shropshire
dialect, written by Mr. Hartshorne, is now in the press at Cambridge. It were
to be wished these dialects were more widely studied. Gloucestershire is full
of words and phrases, as yet unrecorded; and, when we learn that in some of
the Oxfordshire villages, the shepherd yet tells his tale, (that is, counts his flock)
every morning, we see, at once, the meaning of those much abused lines,

And ev'ry shepherd tells his tale,
Under the hawthorn, in the dale.

and, at the same time, the importance of these inquiries.

In one of the little volumes of Old English poetry, lately published by Pickering,
the ingenious editor "suspects," that the tales of "the Basyn," and "the
west from Oxfordshire, over the greater part of which it is spoken. Like the last, it has a marked peculiarity of tone, but, unlike the whining drawl of the eastern counties, its pronunciation is quick and decided. The intermediate variety,¹ which may perhaps be termed the Leicestershire, is remarkable for its want of tone. It has contributed, more than any of our living dialects, to the formation of our present standard English.

It may be worth while observing (though I do not lay any very great stress upon the fact) that these divisions agree, pretty accurately, with the limits assigned to three races, well known to our early history—the East-Engle, the Middle-Engle, and the Wic-ware.

Frere and the Boy,” were written in the Shropshire dialect. The frequent use of ye and wo (as in yessre, yether, yverychene, &c. wther, wone, wonly, &c.) and the use of f for th in affurat, are the reasons, which led him to this conclusion. But these diphthongs ye and wo are common, all over the West of England, from Cumberland to Somerset; and the use of f for the initial th is also very general. In Suffolk, Bedfordshire, and other counties, they still say fill-horse for thill-horse, fistle for thistle, freaten for threaten, &c.; and a like change of letters is found both in the northern and in the southern dialect.

I should have fixed on a more northern county. The use of oy for the long o, as boyt for both, soyt for soth, roys for rose, goys for goes, &c. points to the West Riding, or one of the neighbouring shires; and the western diphthongs (if we may so term them) ye and wo, direct us to the adjoining county of Lancashire. When, in addition to this, we find that, in later versions, the scene of both these tales is laid in Lancashire, I cannot hesitate in assigning the dialect to the southern part of that county.

¹ Few of our dialects have been more neglected than the present one, though (for several reasons) one of the most important. A slight notice of its peculiarities, as spoken in Leicestershire, may be found in Macaulay’s History of Claybrook; specimens of Northamptonshire speech occur in Clare’s poems; and I am told, that a book on the Warwickshire dialect may be shortly expected, from the pen of a gentleman, now living at Lichfield.

We have a minute examination of the Bedforshire dialect, in Batchelor’s “Orthoepical Analysis,” &c. but the greater part of this county may be fairly assigned to the eastern dialect.

In the preface to the Exmoor Scolding, published A.D. 1775, we have the following given us as a specimen of the “Buckinghamshire farmers” speech, “I ken a steg gobblin at our leer deer;” that is, “I see a gander feeding at our barn-door.” Steg a gander, ken see, ler and leath a barn, are words now only heard in the northern counties; and, if the whole be not a blunder on the part of the editor, (which I think most probable) the northern dialect must have left such traces behind it in the agricultural districts, as will render the classification of our present midland dialects, a work of great difficulty.
The Cheshire variety reaches from the Staffordshire collieries to the banks of the Ribble.\(^1\) It often uses \(ya\) and \(wo\), for the diphthongs \(ea\) and \(oa\); also \(oi\) for the long \(i\), \(ow\) for \(au\), and \(eaw\) for \(ou\), as \(oi\), \(droy\), \(woif\), \(loive\), \(foine\), \(moind\), \(noice\), \&c. \(bownt\), \(fowt\), \(browt\), \&c. \(theaw\), \(heaw\), \(heaw\), \(eaow\), \(eawl\), \&c.; and it inflects the present tense of its verb thus,

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Oi hope} \\
\text{Theaw hopes} \\
\text{He hopes} \\
\text{We} \\
\text{Ye} \\
\text{Tha} \\
\text{hop-cn}
\end{align*}
\]

In the West Riding, the long \(o\) is changed into \(oi\), and \(oo\) into \(ooi\), as \(coyal\), \(hoyl\), \(moite\), \(oits\), \(broich\), \(cloise\), \&c. \(sooin\), \(mooin\), \(fooil\), \(cooil\), \(mooid\), \(booich\), \&c.; the final \(k\) also (in place of \(ch\)) is very prevalent—as \(birk\), \(perk\), \(thack\), \(benk\), \(pick\), \(ick\), \&c.; and the old northern verb (singular and plural alike ending in \(s\)) is here more frequently met with, than elsewhere.\(^2\) The Lincolnshire variety has been almost wholly neglected. Its peculiarities, I think, well

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\(^1\) I make this river the boundary of the Cheshire dialect, in deference to Whitaker. In the History of Whalley, we have a list of words, used south of the Ribble, compared with the synonyms used to the north of it. The comparison shows us—not (as Whitaker supposes) that the Ribble parted Mercia from Northumberland, for many of the northern terms were, a few centuries ago, common throughout the midland counties, but—that this river is the obstacle which, of late years, has stopped the midland dialect in its progress northward.

The chief works illustrative of this dialect are Collier's Tim Bobbin, and Willbraham's Vocabulary of Cheshire Words and Phrases. In Knight's Quarterly Mag. for 1822, there is an account of the Staffordshire Colliers, and a short but excellent specimen of their dialect.

It should be observed, that in South Lancashire we found many of the peculiarities, which distinguish the speech of the West Riding, especially the use of \(oi\) for the long \(o\). In Macaulay's Hist. of Claybrook, we find \(oi\) for \(i\), as \(moire\), \(foire\).

\(^2\) See Hunter's Hallamshire dialect, Watson's dialect of Halifax, and the other vocabularies published in Mr. Hunter's work. In the Towneley Mysteries, we have an interesting specimen of this dialect, as spoken four hundred years ago. Mr. Douce considered these plays the property of South Lancashire; but the conclusion, at which the editor arrived, by tracing the local allusions, is fully borne out by an examination of the dialect. They were certainly written at Woodkirk, near Wakefield.
justify a separate classification; some of them will be noticed hereafter.¹

The Northern dialect may also, as it seems to me, be conveniently divided into six varieties. The Yorkshire spreads over the east and north ridings, over Westmoreland, and over North Lancashire. It uses the long a (as heard in father) for the long o, and eea for oo, as staan, alaan, haam, saa, maar, suar, &c. feeal, sheal, leeak, neeak, seean, neean, &c.² The Durham variety, which, with the addition of the bur, spreads over Northumberland, uses ae for the long o, aw for ow, a for short o, and ui for oo, as sae, tae, bane, stane, aith, baith, aik, maist, sere, &c. blaw, knaw, aun, sawl, &c. strang, sung, worse, warld, &c. luik, buik, cuil, fuil, &c.³ The Cumberland variety is chiefly distinguished from the latter, by the frequent use of the diphthong wo in the place of the long o, as cwoach, cwoal, cwoat, dwoated, fwoal, fwook, jwoke, rowse, whope, whole,⁴ &c. In both these dialects the diphthong ya is common, and owing to the narrowing of the vowels is sometimes used, where other dialects have the wo, as yak an oak, yaitis oats, byeth both, hyel whole, &c. It may be observed, that in these northern dialects not only has the k kept its ground very generally against the intruding ch, but also d is often used for th, as fadder, mudder, anudder, whedur, togedur, &c. The initial qu is moreover sometimes softened into wh, as whiet, white, whart, whaker, &c.

The varieties of the Northern dialect, spoken north of

¹ See p. 494. Ben Jonson, in his Sad Shepherd, has imitated the dialect spoken two centuries ago, in the vale of Belvoir. It was clearly a branch of the Lincolnshire.

² See Specimens of the Yorkshire Dialect, Knaresborough, 1808; and the Westmoreland Dialect, by A. W. (Ann Walker) Kendal, 1790. The Craven Dialect, of which the Rev. Mr. Carr has published a good vocabulary, seems to be intermediate, between the dialects of the North and West Ridings. The dialect found in Hayward's "Witches of Lancashire," though some of its peculiarities are those of North Lancashire, seems, on the whole, to belong to the southern part of that county. It was written in 1638.

³ See Brockett's Northern Dialect. There are also specimens of this dialect in Brome's "Northern Lass."

⁴ See Ballads in the Cumberland Dialect, by R. Anderson, Carlisle, 1808.
Tweed, may perhaps be ranged under the three heads—the Nithsdale, the Clydesdale, and the Lothian. Burns has made the first familiar, and the two latter may readily be called to mind, as forming (at least in great measure) the brogues of Glasgow and of Edinburgh. With respect to the dialects, which prevail beyond the Forth, I shall venture no opinion, either as to their origin or affinities—the subject is surrounded with too many difficulties.

Nothing has been said of the Danish elements of our language, for traces of them have been found neither in our MSS. nor in our dialects. No where have I met with those grammatical forms, which bind the Northern languages into one great family—the r inflexion of the verb, the passive voice, the definite affixes of the substantive, the neuter inflexion of the adjective—and as to certain words, which philologists assure us are the “shibboleth” of the “Dano-English,” such as gar to make, at that or to, &c. these may be found in districts, where the Northman never settled, and are missing from counties, where he certainly did. His language, from the first, must have been little more than an English dialect, and his descendants have now been mingled with a kindred race for nearly one thousand years—is it not

1 Doctor Jamieson discovered not only Danish dialects, but also traces of a Scandinavian language, which must have been introduced before the Northman invasions. The Doctor was resolved, at any cost, to make Picts of his Lowlanders; and to his theory was too often content to sacrifice his dictionary! Were it not for this hapless theory, we should now have had an excellent dictionary of our northern dialect.

The Reviewer, whom I have already quoted [p. 478, n. 1], considers the Romance of Havelok, “more strongly impregnated with Danish, than any known work of the same period,” which appears “not only in individual words, but in various grammatical inflexions, and, most remarkably, in the dropping of the final d after liquids—aedel, hel, hon, behel—which exactly accords with the present pronunciation of the Danes.” Quart. Rev. cx. 3. Now in all discussions, relating to language, it is most important, to illustrate rule by example. Of the “grammatical inflexions,” the reviewer has given us no specimen. I can find none. As to the dropping of the final d, I would merely ask, if this be a test of the Dano-English, where can we escape from that dialect? If we travel to the south, have we not, using the orthography of Jennings, the veel, will (Shakespeare’s wield), chile, &c. the hon, stan, row, grown, mine, behine, &c. of Somerset? If to the north, have we not the scawl, warl, chiel, &c. the han, stan, em, frien, min, kin, behin, &c. of Nithsdale?
likely that peculiarities of dialect have vanished, with all recollection of their origin? 1

Some parts, however, of the British islands were wholly peopled with Northmen—as the Orkneys, Caithness, and much of the eastern coast north of Forth. Harrison, writing in the year 1576, tells us, that in the Orkneys 3 "and such coasts of Britaine as do abbut upon the same, the Gottish or Danish speech is altogether in use," but afterwards 4 qualifies this, by talking of "some sparks yet remaining among them of that language." Perhaps, if the history of these dialects were traced out, and the process investigated by which they melted into English, we might by analogy discover, if our other dialects had been affected by the intrusion of the Northman.

In tracing the subdivisions of our three great dialects, I have made the vowels the test, rather than the consonants, as being, on the whole, less subject to derangement from external causes. A word, imported from the written language of the period, generally carried with it its own peculiar consonants; thus we have fader in the Coventry mysteries, though the provincial term is, and probably has been for the last thousand years, faether. But the vowel was generally accommodated to the pronunciation of the district; thus spite in Staffordshire became spoite, note in the West Riding became noite, and a little further north crown became crowne. The districts, however, in which these vowel sounds prevail, and the periods to which we may refer their origin, can only be marked out within limits that leave much room for uncertainty.

In ancient MSS. (as in provincial speech) we have the local dialect almost always more or less modified by the written language—as in Burns' poems, we find his native

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1 Settho hath Engclond y-be y-werred y-lome
Of the folc of Denemark, that beth noght yet wel y-some.
Rob. of Gloucester, p. 3, l. 10.

(The Arundel MS. has—that were nought welcome).

2 Deser. of Britaine, c. 6.
3 Of the Shetlanders he says, "their speach is Gothish," c. 10.
4 Ibid. c. 10.
Ayrshire combining, in almost every proportion, with our standard English. Now, many obsolete grammatical forms (the Southern conjugation for instance) were once well-known to our literature, and, therefore, will not enable us to fix the country of the writer; but the inflexions of the Northern conjugation, and the Southern will generally be decisive; and as (before the year 1350) one or other of these peculiarities was seldom absent from MSS. written elsewhere than in the midland counties, we have, in most cases, a ready method of distinguishing between a northern, a midland, and a southern MS.

Again, during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the subjunctive mood seems to have been very widely used, instead of the indicative; in some MSS. indeed, almost to its entire exclusion. The third person singular of the Eastern dialect, and the Staffordshire plural, may, very probably, be relics of this usage. They now strike the ear as marked peculiarities, but would not, I think, justify speculations as to radical, or even very ancient differences of dialect.

To separate the native growth of any dialect from these various importations, to define the time when, and the degree in which it has yielded to the written language, requires research at once extensive and minute. The great fault, however, of our modern philology is that common vice of theory—the arguing from too remote analogies. Our critics wander to the dialects of the Heptarchy, or to the "Scandinavian," or to the Greek and Latin, when they should be diving into our MSS. and seeking illustration in our dialects, as spoken some four or five centuries ago. Such research may be obscure labour, and the produce not

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1 "Forsuth I set my bissy pane,
As that I couth, to mak it braid and plane,
Kepand na sudron, bot our awyn langage,
And spekis as I lernyt quhen I was page.
Na yit as cleyng all sudron I refus,
Bot sum word I pronounce as nyghtbouris dois."

G. Douglas; Prol. to Virgil.

2 Such MSS. are found written both in the Southern and in the Northern dialect.
always very malleable to a theory; but it holds out good promise of leading to the truth,—which will hardly be reached by the vague speculations of the indolent and dreaming antiquary.

Our older critics and dramatists have left us occasional notices of our dialects, which have, I think, been too much neglected. Some of these have been already referred to; but there is one, which is more than usually instructive, and as it serves in some measure to illustrate the views already advanced, I shall lay it before the reader. It is found in the Logonomia Anglica of Gill, the well-known Master of St. Paul's;¹ and was written about the year 1619.

This scholar divided our language into six dialects. Of these, two were the Common and the Poetical. The remaining four were the Northern, to which he seems to have given nearly the same limits we have assigned to it; the Eastern, in which he seems to have included the Essex and the Middlesex; the Southern, which appears to have spread over the southern counties east of Wiltshire; and finally, the Western.

To the men of the midland counties he assigns no particular dialect, doubtless considering them as speaking that variety of English, which he designated as the Common dialect. He thus begins his notice of our Northern English.²

"Ai is used, in the north, for the long i, as faier for fier (fire); and au for ou, as gaun or even geaun for gown, and also for the sound of oo, as waund for wound. They also often use ea for the long e, as meat—(with the diphthong clearly pronounced); and for o, as beath for both. Even in my own county of Lincoln, you may hear toas and hoas, for toes and hose. They say also, kest or even kusen, instead of cast; fulla instead of follow; klôth with a long o, instead of cloth; and on the contrary, spokn with a short

¹ The master, too, who taught Milton!
² As we have to translate from a very peculiar orthography into our ordinary modes of spelling, I have been obliged to take occasional liberties with the Latin, to make the pronunciation of some words intelligible.
o, instead of spoken; doon for done; and toom for time; 1 rich 2 with a long i, instead of rich; thore instead of there; breeks instead of breeches, seln instead of self; hes 3 instead of hath; aus for also; sud for should; Il, Ist and even Ail and Aist for I will; and so in the other persons thoult or thoust, &c. In ay they throw away the i, as paa for pay; saa for say; and for said they use sed. 4 Some words they invent, 5 in place of the more common ones, as strunt and runt for rump, and sark for shirt. Gang in the place of go (whence gangrel a beggar), and yeel or yode for went, they got from their ancestors.

"The people of the south use oo for the long o, as hoo for he; also v for f, as vill for fill, vetch for fetch; 6 and on the contrary f for v, as finegar and feccur for vinegar and vicar. 7 They use also o for a, as ronk for rank; z for s, as zing for sing; and ich for I, cham for I am, chill for I will, chi voor ye for I warrant ye. They also resolve the diphthong ay, and most odiously lengthen the first vowel, as paa-y, thaa-y, for pay and they. 8

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1 I sal yow tel, if I have tome, Of the seven Sages of Rome.—The Senyn Sages, i. 4.

2 Weber supposes the word to have been altered "for the sake of the rime."

3 The truth is very different. The M. E. tome, Lincolnshire toom, meaning "leisure," is a totally different word from time. Moreover, toom is Scandinavian; time is English.—W. W. S.

4 This word in South Lancashire becomes roitch, according to the analogy which regulates the vowels of that district.

5 Long after the southern conjugation had generally yielded to the northern, it kept possession of the auxiliary verb to have. Even at the close of the eighteenth century, Fielding always puts hath into the mouth of his fine gentlemen and ladies; and, I believe, this word is still used in some parts of the South of England, even by the educated classes.

6 Here is another provincial term, which has now become licensed.

7 The reader will often see reason to dissent from the speculations of the author.

8 This use of v for f, z for s, and ich for I, clearly shows that, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the western dialect was spoken south of London.

9 In Bedfordshire, they still say femum and solvunte for venom and valentine. Other instances of this change should be collected.

10 It is to be regretted, that this dialect has been so much neglected. The Wealds of Kent and Sussex abound in peculiarities of idiom, which, if collected,
“On the other hand, the men of the eastern counties narrow their vowels, for they say feer instead of fier, (fire); kiver instead of cover; and use ea for the long a, as deans for dance; v for f, as vellow for fellow; z for s, as zai for say. Our Mopsæ πυγόστολοι particularly affect this ταχύρη, and narrow their letters to such a degree, that it would seem they hated an o or an a, as much as Appius Claudius a z. Thus our dames do not buy lawn and cambric, but leen and keembric; nor do they eat a capon, but a keepn; nor does their mouth water for butchers' meat, but bitches' meat. And as they are all gentlimmen (not gentlwinmen), they call their servants, not maids, but meeds. I must however retract what I have said of the a, for whenever a full-sounding o should be heard, they make it give place to this letter, and many a time do they come mincing to me, I pree ya gee yar skallers leev ta plee, that is, I pray you give your scholars leave to play.  

“But of all our dialects none equal the Western in barbarism, especially if you hear it spoken by the country people of Somerset; for one might well doubt, whether they spoke English, or some foreign idiom. They still use certain antiquated words, as sax a knife, and nem or nim to take. Others of their own they palm upon us for English, as law a part, toit a settle, and some others. But even genuine words they corrupt, either by giving them a false meaning, or by their mode of pronouncing them, as weezwai a bridle; weedpot a sausage; ha vang, throw here, or catch what is thrown; hee vang tu me at vant, he undertook for me at font (baptism); sit am, sit; sadrauth, essay thereof, that is,
taste; hea is gone avist, he is gone a fishing. So also they say thratteen for thirteen, narger for narrower, sorger for more sorrowful. They also prefix i to those participles, which begin with a consonant, as ifrore or iurere for frozen; hav ye idoo, have ye done; they also vary, in the plural, those nouns ending in se, which in the common dialect remain unchanged, as hozn, peezn, instead of hose and pease."

Lengthy as this digression has proved, it has been much too short for the full discussion of a question, so intricate and difficult, as that of our local dialects. The peculiarities, which characterize these dialects, are not easily confined, or preserved within bounds and limits. They spread occasionally to the neighbouring shires; and, in some cases, are only to be gleaned from such scattered and remote villages, as have not yet been reached by the ravages of the schoolmaster. It is however hoped, that some assistance has been rendered to the student; and that he will be enabled to form, at least, some loose notion of the dialect, in which a particular MS. has been written. But if he be wise, he will aid his judgment with all the helps that can be furnished by the history of such MS., the nature of its contents, and the notices which may have been taken of them by other writers.

In Ormin's dialect, we find none of those features which mark distinctively either the northern or the southern dialect. He changes the th into t, when it follows a word ending with d or t; but this seems to have been the only peculiarity in his pronunciation. His verb takes the southern inflexions, but eth is always used in the third person, never, I think, th; the i conjugation seems to have been unknown to him, and he drops the e of the second person singular in the past tense of the "complex" verb, as thu badd, thou bad'st, thu behett, thou promised'st. The declensions of his substantives are very simple. The

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1 The substantives in se, very commonly, form their plural in en, even in the midland counties; thus we hear, honsen, plasen, closen, and even horen.

2 See p. 483, n. 4.
masculines and neuters take es in the plural and genitive singular, and sometimes, it would seem, e in the dative singular; the neuters, however, sometimes have their plural without inflexion, as in the Anglo-Saxon. The feminine nouns take e, in the genitive, dative, and accusative of both numbers; but, in the genitive singular, have sometimes the es, as is also the case with the older dialect. The definite adjective ends in e, and occasionally, as it would appear, in en; the indefinite adjective forms its plural in e, but takes no other inflexion.

His nouns are sometimes formed with endings different from those which are found in the Anglo-Saxon. Thus the ending nes becomes a dissyllable nesse, whence our modern ness; and the adjectival ending lic, though sometimes represented by -ligg, seems more generally to take two syllables, -līce.

It may be observed, that the final e is always elided before a word beginning with a vowel or with h; and that to coalesces with its verb, as tunnderstanndenn, to understand.

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Nu bro| therr Wall | terr' bro| therr min | affer Th| ess kin| de .
And bro| therr min | i criss| tenndom | thurch ful | inht and | thurch

troww| the .
And bro| therr min | i god| ess hus| get o | the thrid| e wis| e .
Thurch thatt| witt haf| enn tak| enn ba| an regh| ell-boc | to fol|-ghenn .

Vnnderr | kanunn| kess had | . and lif| swa summ | sannt Awws| tin .
sette .
Icc haf|e don | swa summ | thu badd | and forth|eddte² | thin
wil|le .
Icc haf|e wennd | inntill | Ennglissh| godspell| ess hall| ghe lar| e .
Affterr | that lit|tle witt | tatt me | min drihh| tin haf| ethth len|edd .

It would seem, this plan was not much favoured by.

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1 This word I have spelt with two r's, but in the MS. it is written with the common contraction wallt; so also afft, and some others. I would here observe, there are certain marks in the MS. the use and object of which I do not fully understand. It ought to be published, and all its peculiarities investigated. [It has now been twice edited; once by Dr. White, in 1852; and recently by Mr. Holt. — W. W. S.]
If I were called upon to say, in what part of England a dialect such as Ormin's was ever spoken, I should fix upon some county north of Thames, and south of Lincolnshire. That portion of the Chronicle, which contains the same permutation of the th, as we find in the Ormulum, was, in all probability, written by one of the monks of Peterborough; and it is, by no means, unlikely, that Ormin lived in one of the neighbouring shires. The critics, who made him a native of the east of England, though they guessed in the dark, may not have guessed wrongly.

Ormin professes to have collected together in his Ormulum, "nigh all the Gospels, that are in the mass-book, through all the year, at mass," and to have accompanied each "Gospel," with an exposition of its meaning. His brother, who like himself appears to have been a Regular Canon, suggested to him this plan, as we learn from the following affectionate address [at the commencement]:

Now brother Walter, brother mine: after nature of the flesh,
And brother mine, in Christendom: by baptism and by faith,
And brother mine in God's house: yet in the third wise,
For that we two have taken both: one rule-book to follow,
In the Canon's rank and life: c'en as Saint Austin ruled—
I have done c'en as thou bad'st: and forwarded thy will;
I have turn'd into English: the gospel's holy lore,
After the little knowledge that: to me my Lord hath lent.

some of his brother churchmen; but Ormin's firmness was equal to his piety [ll. 73-90 of the Introduction].

I presume this is a compound, forshed te, that is, forwaded for thee. Mr. Thorpe, who has quoted this passage in his Analecta, supposes forshed te to represent the Anglo-Saxon forthode; but in this place we want not the perfect tense, but the participle. [The MS. has forshedd te, two separate words; see the fac-simile in Dr. White's edition.—W. W. S.]
Witt shul | enn tred | enn unn | derfott | and all | thwerrt ut | forrwerr
| penn 

The dom | off all | thatt lath | e flocc | that iss | thurrh nith | forrblen | dedd 

Thatt tæl | ethth thatt | to lof | enn iss | thurrh nith | full mod | igness | e 

Thegg shul | enn last | enn bæth | elig | off unn | ker swinnc | lef bro | therr 

And all | thegg shul | enn tak | enn itt | onn un | nitt and | onn idell 

Acc nohbt | thurrh skill | acc all | thurrh nith | and all | thurrh teegg | re sin | ne 

And unnc | birth bid | denn Godd | tatt he | forrgif | e hemm her | e sin | ne 

And unnc | birth bath | e lof | enn Godd | off thatt | itt wass | bigun | nenn 

And thannk | enn Godd | tatt itt | iss brohht | till en | de thurrh | hiss helpe | e 

The following are the reflections suggested by the miracle at Cana. They may afford us a fair sample of Ormin’s style; and, at the same time, a curious specimen 

This mid | dellær’d | ess ald | iss all | o sex | e dal | ess del | edd

Fra thatt | tatt ad | am sha | penn wass | anan | till noth | ess ti me ... 

All thatt | fresst off | thiss werrl | dess ald | wass all | the forr | me tim | e 

And all | thiss firs | te ti | mess fresst | wass o | pennlig | bitac | nedd 

I ca na gal | ile | thurrh an | off tha | stanen | e fet | less 

And all | thiss firs | te ti | me wass | thurrh hall | ghe wit | ess fill | edd 

Off staff | lig wit | eghunn | gess drinnch | thurrh writ | ess and | thurrh werr | kess 

Rihht swa | summ all | thatt ti | mess fresst | off wa | terr fil | ledd | we | re 

And itt | wass turr | nedd inn | till win | thurrh ic | su cris | tess com | e 

Thurrh thatt | het | gaff | hiss hall | ghe follo | gastlik | e tunn | derrstann | denn 

And her | iss o | thiss boc | off that | stafflik | e wit | eghunn | e 

That all | thatt forr | me ti | me wass | thurrh wit | ess fil | ledd off | e 

Swa summ | the first | e fet | less wass | brendfull | off wa | terr fil | edd 

And her | I se | summdel | off that | stafflik | e wit | eghunn | e 

And ict | itt wil | e shaw | enn guw | all forr | ure all | re ned | e 

1 I suspect, in this place, some error in my copy of the MS. [The MS. has ac, with two accents over the e; Dr. Guest printed hect in the former edition]
We two should tread under our foot: and out all from us cast
The notion of all that hateful crew: that is with malice blinded,
That blameth what deserveth praise: in their malicious pride.

They would hinder in their hate: our labour! brother dear,
And all they would look on it: as useless and as idle!
With reason not, but all in hate: and all through their sins!
And us befits to pray to God: that he forgive their sins;
And us befits both God to praise: for that it was begun,
And God to thank that it is brought: to end, all by his help.

of the manner in which Scripture was allegorized during the
twelfth century [ll. 14426-14507].

The age of this mid earth is all: into six parts divided.
From thence that Adam shapen was: right on to Noah's time,
All the course of this world's eld: was all the earliest period.
And all this first period's course: was openly betoken'd,
In Cana Galilee, by one: of the stonern vessels.
And all this first period was: by holy sages fill'd
With drink of letter'd prophecy: by writings and by works;
Right as if all that period's course: with water filled were,
And it was turned into wine: by Jesu Christ his coming,
For that [he gave it] his holy folk in spirit to understand it.

And here is somewhat (in this book): of that letter'd prophecy,
Whereof all that first period: by sages filled was,
Like as the first vessel was: brimful with water fill'd.
And here I see some portion: of that letter'd prophecy;
And I will shew it unto you: all for our common wants.

with the translation "it gave." The word means he it, two words being run
into one.—W. W. S.]
Caym | adam | es son | e toc | nith gen | abel | his bro | therr.
Off | that | he sall | that | he | wass god | and riht | wis man | and
clen | e.

Forr | def | less | thew | ess | haf | enn | agg | strang | nith | gen | cri | tess
thew | ess.
And | cri | tess | thew | ess | bid | denn | cri | st | that | he | theggn | thurrh | his | ar | e.
And | thurrh | his | mill | ce | gif | e | mahht | to | bet | enn | thegg | re | sin | ne.
And | Camb | toc | thurrh | he | tec | and | nith | abel | his | agh | enn | bro | therr.
And | led | de | himn | ut | upp | o | the | feld | and | sloh | himn | but | enn
gilt | e.
And | giff | to | thu | bis | ne | tak | enn | willt | off | this | e | twegg | enn
breth | re.
To | fell | ghen | god | ess | thew | abel | and | his | unskath | inesse.
And | to | forwr | penn | het | e | and | nith | and | all | caym | es | bis | ne.
Tha | tak | esst | tu | that | witt | tu | wel | vt | off | the | forr | me | ti | me.
Staffl | e | drinnc | ga | to | thin | lif | ga | to | thin | sawl | e | bath | e.
Thatt | mik | ell | magg | the | gegg | nenn | her | to | winn | enn | heff | ness
bliss
| e.
Alls | iff | thu | drunn | ke | wa | terr | drinnc | vt | off | the | firrs | te
fet | less.
Thatt | magg | the | slek | enn | wel | thin | thirst | giff | thatt | iss | thatt | te | thirs | teth.

And | giff | to | thu | thiss | thurrh | hal | ig | gast | deplik | err | unn | derr
stann | desst.
Thatt | sel | thatt | all | gill | teless | wass | slag | enn | thurrh | his | bro
therr.
Bitac | neth | u | re | laf | errl | cri | st | that | nagg | led | wass | o | rod | e.
Thurrh | thatt | iudiss | kenn | haf | edd | folle | that | he | was | bor | enn
of | fe.
And | wass | himn | onn | his | mo | derr | half | sibb | alls | itt | wae | re
his | bro | therr.
Tha | tak | esst | tu | gaslik | e | witt | off | staff | lig | wit | e | ghnng | e.
And | drinnc | esst | ta | that | win | thatt | iss | ut | off | the | waterr
wharf | edd.
That | win | that | turm | enn | magg | thin | thohht | thurrh | gast | lig
drunnnk | ennes | se.
Al | fra | the | werl | dess | luf | e | and | lust | and | fra | the | flash | ess
wille.
To | fell | ghen | agg | anwherr | fedlegge | to | win | nenn | heff | ness | bliss | e.
Fra | noth | ess | fiod | till | ab | raham | wass | all | thatt | o | therr | ti | me, &c.

1 This name was thus written with an m, even so late as the fifteenth century; see the Towneley Mysteries, Judicium, p. 317.
Ye cursid catyfs of Kames kyn.
C. VI.  THE ORMULUM.  503

Caźm ¹ Adam's son conceived: hate against his brother Abel,
For that he saw that he was good: and righteous man and pure;
(For the devil's ministers have aye: strong hate against Christ his
servants!)
And Christ his servants Christ beseech: that he them—through his
mercy,
And through his pity—may give strength: to amend their sins!)
And Caźm in his hate and malice: took Abel his own brother,
And led him out upon the field: and stlew him—without guilt!

And if thou wilt example take: by these brethren twain—
To follow God's own servant Abel: and his guiltlessness,
And far cast from thee hate and malice: and all Caźm's example—
Then takest thou (that wot thou well): from out of the first period,
Scripture-drink, both for thy life: and for thy soul both,
That much may gain thee here: tow'rd's winning heaven's bliss;
As if thou had'st drunk water-drink: from out of the first period,
That well for thee may slake thy thirst: if so be that thou thirstest.

And if thou this by the holy ghost: more deeply understandest—
That Abel, who all guiltless was: slain by his own brother,
Betokeneth our Lord Christ: that nail'd was on the rood,
By that Jewish tribe: whereof he was born,
And was to him on's mother's side: kin, as it were a brother,
Then takest thou the sp'ritual sense: of scripture prophecy,
And drinkest then the wine that is: from out the water changed—
The wine that may convert thy thought: through sp'ritual drunken-
ess,
All from this world's love and lust: and from the flesh's will,
To follow aye unchangingly: to win thee Heaven's bliss.
From Noah's flood to Abraham: was all the second period, &c.
As our limits are narrow, we will omit the story of the Deluge; and proceed, with Ormin, in search of the moral

Godd segg de thus | till ab raham | tac y saac | thin wenn chell.
And snith itt alls | itt wære rean shep | and legg | itt upp | onn all terr.
And brenn itt all | till ass kess thær | and of fore itt me | to lak e.
And ab raham | wass forth riht bun | to don | drihtin e wille.
And toc his sun e son e anan | and band | itt fet | and hand e.
And legg de itt upp | onn all terr swa | and droh | hissw swerd | off sheel e.
And hoff | the swerd upp withth hiss hand | to smit enn itt | to ded e.

Forrthat he wold de ben | till godd | herrsumm | onn all e wis e.

And godd sahh that | he wold de sleen | the child | withth swerd | ess egg e.
And segg de thus | till hab raham | thatt witt | tu wel | to soth e.
Hald ab raham | hald upp | thin hand | ne sla | thu nohht | tin wenn chell e.

Nu wat i thatt | tu dræd est godd | and luf essst godd | withth herr te.
Tacc thær | an shep | baffenn | thin bacc | and of re itt forr | the wenn chell e.

And ab raham | tha snath | thatt shep | and let | his sun e libb enn.
Forr thatt he wold e ben | till godd | herrsumm | onn al le wis e.

And giff thu nim est mi kel gon | till ab raham es ded e.
And giff thu tak essst bis ne att himm | to foll ghenn herr summness e.

To wurr themn herr summ till | drihtin | to theww tenn himm | to cwem e.

To lak enn himm | withth thatt | tatt himm | iss lef | essst off | thin ahht e.

To wurr then herr summ to | thin prest | and till | thin tun ess laf errd.

Till al le tha | that haf enn the | to ge menn and | to ster enn.

To ben herrsumm | till al le tha | inn al le god e thing e.

Forr niss | nan harr summness | ess sett | to for thenn if ell ded e.

Giff thatt | tu foll ghest tuss | the sloth | of a braham es bis ne.
Tha tak est tu | thatt witt | tu wel | vt off | the thridd e ti me.
Staflik e drinnch | god to | thin lif | and to | thin sawl e bathe.
That magg | the mik ell geng enn her & c.

And giff thu thiss thurrh ha lig gast | deplik err unn derrstan dest.

Thatt ab raham | onn hæf edd iss | the fa derr upp | off heff ne.

And tatt hiss wenn chel y saac | iss cris tess godd cunnness se.

And tatt hiss shep | thatt off | redd was | iss cris tess menn isness e.
and type furnished us by the events of the third period
[ll. 14664-14716, 14722-14740].

God said thus to Abraham: "take Isaac thy little one,
"And slay him, as he were a sheep: and lay him on an altar,
"And burn him all to ashes there: and off're him a gift to me."
And Abraham was straightway boon: to do the Lord his will,
And took his son quickly anon: and bound him feet and hands,
And laid him on an altar so: and drew his sword from sheath,
And rais'd the sword up with his hand: to smite him to the death—
For that he would be unto God: obedient in all wise!

And God saw that he would slay: the child with edge of sword,
And said thus to Abraham: (that wot thou well as sooth)
"Hold, Abraham, hold up thine hand: do not thou slay thy little one,
"Now wot I that thou darest God: and lov'st God with thine heart;
"Take there a sheep behind thy back: and off're it for thy child."
And Abraham then slew the sheep: and his son let live—
For that he would be unto God: obedient in all wise!

And if thou takest mickle heed: unto Abraham's act,
And tak'st example by him: obedience to follow,
To be obedient to the Lord: to serve and so to please him,
To offer him what to him is: dearest of all thy goods,
To be obedient to thy priest: and to thy household's master,
To all those, whoseo have thee: to care for, and to govern—
To be obedient to all these: in all righteous things,
For no obedience is enjoin'd: to further evil deeds—
If that thou followest thus the track: of Abraham's example,
Then takest thou (that wot thou well): from out of the third period,
Scripture-drink good for thy life: and for thy soul both
That much may gain thee here: tow'rs winning heaven's bliss,
As if thou hadst drunk water-drink, &c.

And if thou this, by the holy ghost: more deeply understandest,
That Abraham, in first place? is: the Father on high of Heaven,
And that his young child Isaac: is Christ's divinity,
And that his sheep that off'red was: is Christ's humanity,

[Lit. in chief, especially.—W. W. S.]
That off redd wass | forr all | maunkin | to tho | lenz deth | o rod | e.
Swa thatt | his | godd | cunndnes | e wass | all cwecc | and all umpin | edd.
Allswa | sumy | saac | att brasst | unwnwn | deddand | unwnwem | edd.
Tha tak | cest ta | gastlik | e witt | off staff | lig wit | eghunng | e
And drinn | keest ta | thatt win | thatt is | vt off | the watter wharr | edd.
Thatt win | thatt turr | nenn magg | thin tholht | &c.

If a judgment may be formed from such extracts as I have made, (and, though certainly a very small portion of the whole, they are nevertheless copious,) I would say that the doctrines of the Ormulum are singularly free from those fatal errors, which the policy of Rome had, at length, succeeded in forcing upon our Church. To appreciate this merit at its full value, we must remember that there are still extant the sermons of contemporary bishops, in which it is hard to say, whether folly or blasphemy most predominate. Lawrence, prior of Durham—a churchman neither mean in station nor in talents—had already clothed his favourite Saint with all the attributes of our Saviour; and Walter Mapes, while lashing with fearless hand the ignorance and the vices of the Romish clergy, seems nevertheless to have holden the worship of the Virgin as the first duty of a priest. Amid heathenism like this, we may forgive Ormin, if, in the honesty of his zeal, he sometime strain a text of scrip-

Ol | de ant yong | e i | preit ² ou | oure fol | ies for | to let | e
Thench | et on god | that yef | ou wit | oure sun | nes to bet | e
Her | e i | mai tel | len ou | wid word | es feir | e ant swet | e
The vi | e of on | e mei | dan : was hot | en Mar | egret | e
Hire bad | er was | a pat | riac | as ic | ou tel | len mai
In Aun | tiog | e wif | eches | i | the fals | e lay
Dev | e god | es ant doum | be : he ser | ved nitt | and day
So ded | en mon | y oth | ere | that sing | et wei | laway

¹ Most of his refinements may be traced to the Fathers. His curious conceit, with respect to Adam’s name, originated, I believe, with Lactantius. He supposes, that the name of Adam was formed from the initial letters of the four
That offered was for all mankind: on the cross to suffer death—
So that his godly nature was: all living and unpained,
E'en so as Isaac escaped: unwounded and uninjured;
Then takest thou the spiritual sense: of scripture-prophecy,
And drinkest then the wine that is: from out the water changed,
The wine that may convert thy thought; &c.

ture, or lose himself in the subtletics,\(^1\) with which man had
encumbered the plain truths of Revelation. The Church,
that could rank him in the number of its ministers, had not
wholly lost its christianity.

The reader need hardly be told, that Ormin's rhythm is
the "common metre," which is so often met with in our
hymn-books. The only change is, that each verse is there
divided into two.

The Psalm-metres seem, at a very early period, to have
been influenced by our native rhythms; and their flow is
sometimes so loose, that it is difficult to say which of the
Latin "rhythm" they were meant to imitate. Traces of
the "common metre" may, I think, be found in the Life of
Saint Margaret, an early metrical legend, which Hickes has
published in his Thesaurus [vol. i. p. 224]. It opens with
the following staves:

Old and young I pray you: your follies for to leave;
Think on God who gave you wit: your sins to amend,
Here may I tell you: with words fair and sweet,
The life of a maiden: was called Maregrete.

Her father was a patrician: as I may tell to you,
In Antioch a wife he chose: in the false law;
Deaf gods and dumb: he served night and day,
So did many others: that sing—Welaway!

\(^1\) The words *preit, folie, vie*, are a clear proof that this Legend was trans-
lated from the Romance. [Preit is obviously an error for preis.—W. W. S.]
This rhythm is more clearly traced in another poem, which Hickes has published. It appears to have been written in the first half of the thirteenth century; and is found both in an Oxford, and in a Cambridge MS. The latter has each verse written at length, in one line; but the

The Cambridge MS. though on the whole less accurate than the Oxford, seems to have preserved the two first verses more correctly.

If we restore the ec, which seems to have dropped, by accident, from the first line, we shall have the rhythm of these two verses, as perfect as any in the Ormulum, except that the second verse lengthens its first section—a license which is very commonly taken in all the early imitations of the Latin “rhythm.”

Besides several detached lives of Saints, in our Old-English dialect, there was also a collection of these metrical

1 That is, “He had a supernatural presentiment.”
2 [And in other MSS., viz. MS. Lambeth 487, MS. Egerton 613. See Old English Homilies, ed. Morris, i. 158, 288.—W. W. S.]
3 Digby, 4.
4 That is, “I have more power and influence,” &c. [The right reading is wealde or welle.—W. W. S.]
Theodosius was his name: on Christ believ'd he not,
He believed in the false gods: that were with hands ywrought!
Then, that the child would a Christian be: 'twas borne full into his thought—
He bade when it was born: to death it should be, brought, &c.

Other M.S. divides each verse into two. The following is
the opening of the poem, according to my own copy of the
Oxford M.S. save only that the verses are here written at
length.

I am older than I was: in winters and eke in lore,
I wield more than I did: my wit ought to be more.

'Full long I have a child y-been: in word and in deed,
Though I be in winters old: too young I be in judgment.

A useless life I have y-led: and yet methinks I lead,
When I well bethink me: full sore am I afeard, &c.

Legends, which may possibly date soon after the year 1200.
The lives appear to have been the work of different writers,
and their number is not always the same in different Mss. They are mostly written in a tumbling rhythm, which is
seemingly an imitation of the Catalectic Iambic Tetrameter.
Copious extracts may be found in Warton.
The rhythm, which Robert of Gloucester uses in his
Chronicle, is of the same kind. Specimens of it have been
already given, in book ii. ch. 7.

It is sometimes hard to say, whether this species of
tumbling verse be the rhythm originally designed by the
author, or merely the coarse caricature to which it has been
reduced by accumulated blunders of transcription. It is

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5 This word is written in my copy wint'z, but the last letter may possibly be an a. In such case, we should read wintren. [Read wintre, as in other MSS; see the first line of the quotation.—W. W. S.]
6 The life of St. Margaret, already quoted, is seldom absent.
probable, that when the psalm-metres first came into fashion, 
the rhythm of the Latin original was strictly followed, and 
that, when it was corrupted, by passing through the hands 
of the copyist, it was still looked up to as authority, and 
gradually gave currency to the tumbling rhythm, which was 
common in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. I think, 
however, that many poems must have been written, during 
that period, with a more correct versification; for several 
kinds of staves, formed from these psalm-metres, have come 
down to us, which admit of a very definite scansion.

During the sixteenth century, the rhythm of our poetry, 
generally, was tied to greater strictness; and in the year 
1589, Abraham Fleming translated the Bucolics and 
Georgics into the same kind of unrimed metre as is found 
in the Ormulum, but the lengthening syllable was only used 
occasionally.

O mus of Sicile let as great er matt ers sing
Shrubs, groves and bush es lowe delight: and please not ev ery
man
If we do sing of woodes, the woods: be worth y of a con sul
Now is the last age come whereof: &c. Ecl. 4.

His versification is as wretched as his poetry.

This metre (more or less modified) was indeed generally 
used for the purposes of translation, during the sixteenth, 
and early part of the seventeenth century. In it Phaer 
translated the Eneid, Golding the Metamorphoses, and 
Chapman the Iliad.

Phaer sometimes transposcs, as it were, his sections—
giving three accents to the first, and four to the second; 
and occasionally leaves a verse unfinished. The following 
is his version of a well-known passage:

Anon through all the cities great: of Affrike Fame is gone,
The blasing Fame, a mischief such: as swifter is there none;
By moving more she brodes: and, as she roines, her might doth rise;
By lowe for fear she lurkith first: then straight aloft in skies;
With pride on ground she goth: and percith cloudes with head on
hight.
Dame Erth her mother brooded furth: (men say) that child in spite.
Against the Gods, when Giantes first: of serpent feeted line,
Enceladus and Teus wrought: hie heaven to undermine.
Than for disdain (for on themselves; their own works Jove did fling)
Their sister crawly fed: both swift of feete and wight of wing,
A monster gaudly great: for every plume her carcass bares,
Like number leering eyes she hath: like number harckning eares,
Like number tongues and mouths she wagg'd: a wondrous thing to speake!
At midnight fourth she flies: and under shade her sound doth squeke.
All night she wakes, nor slomer sweete: doth take nor never slepes;
By daies on houses tops she sittes: or gates of townes she kepes;
On watching tourues she clymes: and cities great she makes agast;
Both truth and falsed furth she tells: and lies abrode doth cast.
She than the peoples mouthes about: with babling broad did fill,
And things onwrought, and wrought she told: and blew both good and ill.

Golding, though he divides his verse at the eighth syllable, takes great liberties with the stops; and occasionally uses the double rime. Ovid's description of Envy's house, in the second book, is thus rendered:

It standeth in a hollow dale: where neither light of snune,
Nor blast of any winde or ayr: may for the depenesse come,
A drearie sad and doleful den: aye full of sloughfull colde,
As which, aye dimd with smouldring smoke: doth never fire beholde.
When Pallas, that same manly mayde: approched were this plot,
She stayd without, for to the house: in enter might she not,
And with her javelin point did give: a push against the doore.
The doore finne open by and by: and fell me in the floore.
There saw she Envie sit within: fast gnawing on the flesh
Of snakes and todes, the filthy foode: that kepes her vices fresh.
It lothde her to beholde the sight: Anon the elf arose,
And left the gnawed adders flesh: and slouthfully she goes,
With lumpish leasure like a snayle: and when she saw the face
Of Pallas and her faire attyre: adornde with heavenly grace,
She gave a sigh, a soric sigh: from bottom of her hart.
Her lippes were pale, her cheeks were wan: and all her face was swart,
Her body lene as any rake: she looked eke askew;
Her teeth were furde with filth and drosse: her gums were waryish blew;
The working of her festered gall had made her stomake green;
And all bevenimd was her tongue: No sleep her eyes had scene,
Continued cark and canceled care: did keepe her waking still,
Of laughter (save at others' harms): the hel-bound can no skill;
It is against her will that men: have any good successse;
And if they have, she frets and fumes: within her minde no lesse
Than if herselfe had taken harme: In seeking to annoy,
And work distresse to other folke: herself she doth destroy.
Chapman, like Phaer, sometimes gives only three accents to his first section; and, like Golding, takes great liberties in the arrangement of his stops. He also allows his rhythm a more varied flow than either of his predecessors; occasionally bringing two accents together, or beginning his second section with the tenth syllable.

Then from the stable their bright horse: Automedon withdraws.

And Alcymus; put pois trils on: and cast upon their jaws.

Their bridles, hurrying back the raines; and hung them on the seat.

The faire scourge then: Automedon: takes up, and up doth get.

To guide the horse. The fights seate last: Achille les took behind.

Who lookt so arm'd as if the sunne: there false from heaven had shin'd!

And terribly thus charg'd his steeds: "Xan thus and Bassus, Seed of the Harpye, in the charge: ye unnertake of us,

Discharge it not as when: Patroclus ye left dead in field,

But when with bloud, for this dayes fast: observ'd, Revenge shall yield.

Our hearts satie ty, bring us off": Thus since Achille spake.

As if his aw'd steeds un derstood: 'twas Ju noes will to make

Vo cal the pal lat of the one: who shak ing his faire head,

Which in his mane, let fall to earth: he al most bur ied,

Thus Xan thus spake, "Ab Jest Achillea now: at least our care Shall bring thee off, but not farre hence: the fa tal min utes are

Of thy grave ru ine. Nor shall we: be then to be reprovd,

But might jest Fate, and the great God: Nor was thy best be lov'd

Lol lai lol lai: whi wep istou: so sor e.

Ned is mos tou wep e: hit was i zark ed the 3or e.

Euer to lib: in sor ow: and sich: and mour ne euer e.

As thin el dren did: er this: whil: hi alivi es wer e.


In to un cuth world: icom men so ertow.

Bertis and those soul es: the fis: ses in: the flod e

And euch schef: aliu: es: imak ed of bon e and blod e.

When fi com ith to the world: hi doth: ham silf sum god e.

Al bot the wrench bred: that is: of ad am is blod e.

1 This word is to be read, sp'rites. See p. 60.
2 In the MS. we have merely the initial l.
Sloop'd so of armes by our slow pace: or cour ages impaire,
The best of Gods, Lato has some: that weares the gold en hair,
Gave him his deathes wound, though: the grace: he gave to Hector's hand.
We like the spirit of the West: that all spirits can command.
For powre of wing, could runne him off: but thou thyself must go.
So Fate ordains, God and a man: must give thee overthrow.

Chapman, tr. of Homer's Iliad, bk. 19.

It will be seen, that these later metres—even those which depart most widely from their original—all agree in retaining the seventy accents and fourteen syllables of the Catalectic Iambic Tetrameter.

That others of the longer rhythmics were imitated by our English poets, cannot, I think, admit of much doubt. In the Harl. MS. 913, there is the fragment of a Latin song, written in the rhythmus so often used by Walter Mapes:

Lol la Lol la par vul c: cur: flees tam amare?
Op ortet te plan gere: nec non sus pira re!
Te dole re grav iter: de cet veg eta re,
Ut paren tes ex ules: vex erant igna re.
Lol la Lol la par vulc: na tus mun do trist i.
I gratum cum max imo: dol ore venis ti.

and elsewhere, in the same MS. we have the following English version. It was probably written before the year 1300.

Lollai lollai little child, why weep'st thou so sorely?
Needs must thou weep—'twas fated thee of yore
Ever to live in sorrow, and sigh and ever mourn,
As thy fore-elders did ere this, while they were alive.
Lollai, little child, child, lollai, lullow,
Into a strange world now art thou y-come!

The beasts and the fowls, the fishes in the flood,
And each thing alive, y-made of bone and blood,
When they come into the world, they do themselves some good,
All but the wretched creature, that is of Adam's blood.

3 The middle pause is always marked.
4 Here the word lollai ought certainly to have been repeated.
It is fair to conclude, that these tumbling verses were intended as a free imitation of the Latin rhythmus.

In the same MS. is another song, which might be called the Child of Earth. After each stave follows a Latin version, in the same kind of rhythm, as the Latin staves last quoted, and which rhythm I presume the English

Erth | gette on erth |: ger| som and gold |
Erth | is the mol| der : in erth | is the mold |
Erth | uppon erth |: be | thi soul | e hold |
Er erh | e go | to erth | e : bild | the long bold |
Erth | bild cas | tles : and erth | bilt tōur | es |
Whan erth | is on erth | e : blak | beth the bour | es.

In the sixteenth century, was used another kind of long metre, containing sixteen syllables and eight accents. A specimen of it was given in bk. ii. c. 7. Whether it originated in the rhythmus of the full Iambic tetrameter, or was formed from some of the tumbling psalm-metres, by introducing that precision of rhythm, which characterised the period, I do not pretend to determine. In our hymn-books, its verse is divided, and it is called "the long metre," to distinguish it from the "common metre," of which we have spoken, and the "short metre," of which we shall have to speak shortly.

The Alexandrine, or verse of six accents, is of very common occurrence in the tumbling metres, which came into fashion during the thirteenth century; and possibly some of them may have been intended as loose imitations

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1 Should not this be whane?
Lollai, lollai, little child, to care art thou consigned; 
Thou wost in not this world is a wild one, that is before thee set.

Child if thee betideth, that thou shalt thrive and prosper, 
Think how thou wert y-fostred upon thy mother's knee.
Ever have thought, in thy heart, of these things three,
Whence thou comest, where thou art, and what shall come of thee.
Lollai, lollai, little child, child, lollai, lollai,
With sorrow thou camest into this world, with sorrow shalt wend away,
&c.

verses were meant to imitate. This song appears at one time to have been popular, for detached staves are found in different MSS. and a corrupt copy of one of them was discovered by Sir W. Scott, on a tombstone at Melrose. A single stave will show the character both of the rhythm and of the sentiment.

Earth gets it on earth, treasure and gold;
Earth is thy mother, in earth is thine earth-bed!
Earth, while on earth, be to thy soul faithful—
Ere earth go to earth, build thy lasting dwelling;
Earth buildeth castles, and earth buildeth tow’rs;
When earth is in earth, black are its mansions!

of the Alexandrine metre. We have however few specimens of this metre, with anything like a correct versification, before the sixteenth century.

The classical metre, which gave rise to the Alexandrine, is by no means an obvious one. That it was not the Iambic Trimeter (which has been suggested by some critics) is clear from the position of the pause. The trimeter, moreover, had its own peculiar rhythmus, which differed widely from the Alexandrine, as may be seen in the song of the Modonese Sentinel, written in the year 924.

O tu | qui ser| vas : ar|m is|is|ta mæ|nia|
Noli | dormi|re : mon|eo | sed vig|ila|
Dum Hec|tor vi|gil : ex|titit | in Tro|ia|
Non e|am ce|pit ; fraud|ulen|ta Gra|cia | &c.

\footnote{2 See p. 274.} \footnote{3 See p. 474.}
Compare also:
Rosa jocunda: castitatis lilium,
Prole fecunda: gignis dei filium,
Virgoque munda: tu post puerperium.

MS. Arundel 248, fol. 153b.

See also the Romance version; ibid.

The Asclepiad seems to have a better claim. This verse is found among the church-hymns, in various combinations. Sometimes we have three Asclepiads followed by the Glyconic—a combination much favoured by Horace; and sometimes we have a stave formed by joining four Asclepiads together. Both these "metra" had their corresponding "rhythmi." The hymn on the Sacrament, generally ascribed to Thomas Aquinas, may serve as an example of the first kind.

Dedit fragilibus: corporis ferculum,
Dedit et tristibus: sanguinis poculum,
Dicens accipite: quod tradis vasculum,
Omnes ex eo bibite, &c.

A specimen of the other rhythmus is furnished us by the Apocalypsis Golias, supposed to have been written by Walter Mapes, in the latter half of the twelfth century. A short extract, from one of Prudentius’ hymns, may perhaps show more clearly its connexion with its "metrum."

Inventor rutili, dux bone, luminis,
Qui certis vicibus tempora dividis,
Merso solo Chaos ingravit horridum,
Lumen redde tuis, Christe, fidelibus! &c.

There will, I think, be little difficulty in considering this

1 As the subject of these "rhythmi" is a curious one, it may be worth while observing, that the lines which Alcuin wrote on the Canons of Eusebius, furnish us with another species of the longer rhythmus. By dividing each line into two verses, and adding a pause after the fourth syllable of each verse, we get what appears to be the rhythmus of the Catalectic Trochaic Trimeter.

Quam | impri| mis: spe|cio|sa quad|riga|
Hu|mo le|o: vit|ulus| et aq|ula|
Quad|ragin|ta: u|num per |capit|ula|
Col|loquum|tur: de |domin|o pa|ria|&c.

By attending to this simple law, we may easily restore the true reading in many places, where it has been corrupted; for the lines are very incorrectly printed.
stave as the classical metre, on which our English satirist has modelled his accentual verses. It need hardly be observed, that they are perfect Alexandrines.

Decan's catinis est: quies quæs præ via
Narc cupidinis: lucrum vestigia,
Indu cit calide: cleri marusu pia,
Qua prœ fix crat: magis tri re tia.
Spondet auxilium: si quid contuliferis,
Sed cum chirag rice: fervens tem uni xeris
Palmar prurig inem: unguen to mun eris,
Tbit podag rice: ad opem op eris. &c.

There is little doubt that the rhythm, into which these verses seem, at last, to have settled, was mainly owing to the final rime. Whatever cadence may have been given to the earlier rhythmus, it is clear that, as soon as its verse took the final rime, the last syllable must have been accented. The twelfth and sixth would then be the two syllables on which the whole verse rested; and the simplest rhythm, that could secure them their accents, would be the one adopted—that is, the rhythm of the Alexandrine.

The metrum, which may best dispute with the Asclepiad the honour of giving rise to the Alexandrine rhythmus, is the Trochaic Dimeter wanting half a metre. This metrum seems to have been well known during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The following rhythmus was certainly modelled upon it.

The Annunciation.

1.
AVE | Maris | stella|
Dei | mater | alma|
Atque | semper | virgo|
Felix | sæli | porta|

2.
S unus | illud | ave|
Gabri | elis | ore|
Funda | nos in | pace|
Mutans | nomen | Eius|

3.
Salve | vincla | reis|
Profer | lumen | cæcis|
Mala | nostra | pelle|
Bona | cuncta | posce, &c.
where we may observe that such is the influence of the final rime (see p. 517), as to throw all the accents of the rhythmus on the short syllables of the metrum.

The rhythmus just quoted seems to differ from that noticed in bk. iv. c. 8, only in the circumstance of its being divided into staves. Elfric's rhythmus might well have been written, as if each of the sections had been a distinct verse, for in the MS. they are all written continuously; and it is possible that this latter may have been modelled on the Trochaic metrum, and the Alexandrine rhythmus of Walter Mapes (see p. 516) based on the Asclepiad. But the Norman rhythmus of Humphrey de Than (see bk. iv. c. 8), which so closely agrees with Elfric's Latin rhythmus, has two sections in each verse, which certainly favours the notion of its being founded on the metrum of the Asclepiad. On the whole, I incline to think that the verse of six accents and twelve syllables, dividing after the sixth, represents the same metrum, whether it takes the middle or the final rime; and that its classical model was in both cases the Asclepiad.

The Alexandrine was probably first known to the French at the close of the twelfth century, when the French, or, rather we should say, the Norman tale was written (see p. 248), to which it owes its name. Originally, there is no doubt, it had six accents; but the modern French Alexandrine is a tumbling verse of twelve syllables, dividing at the sixth, and the number of accents may be six, five, or four. So loose are the laws of French accentuation, that the rhythm of their heroic poetry is left almost at the mercy of the reader. If he satisfy the metre, by accenting the sixth and twelfth syllables, he may change from the common to the triple measure, or, if he choose, may adopt some intermediate cadence. When this licence was first tolerated, I cannot say, but I suspect at a comparatively recent period.

A metre, formed of Alexandrines, was used by our countrymen, in their Romance poems, at the beginning of the twelfth century; but it seems not to have gained a

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1 It may be observed, that the Alexandrine of our Romance poems freely admitted a lengthening syllable in either section.
footing in English poetry, until a much later period. Brunne's translation of Langtoft's chronicle is the first specimen of English rhythm, which we can positively say was intended as an imitation of it; though it is probable that much of the tumbling rhythm, which prevailed during the thirteenth century, was influenced by, or even originated in this metre.

Robert of Brunne most certainly intended to follow the rhythm of Langtoft's Alexandrines. In the latter part of his translation, he generally interweaves a second rime in each couplet; and as the middle pause is thus marked out, without possibility of mistake, I have taken the following specimen, from that portion of his work. He thus laughs at the easy and the simple Baliol:

Priu[e prid[e in pes] : es net| tille in | herbere|
The ros|e is | myghtles | thur net| tille spredis | ouer fer|
The Bal|iol | so ferf] : with | the duz[e pers|
His ream|c, as | 3e herd| : he lost | thurgh con| seilers|
First | he was | a kyn| g : now is | he send| ioure|
And is | at oth| er spend| yng : bon| den in | the toure .
Rob. of Brunne, tr. of Langtoft, ed. Hearne, p. 280.

Privy pride in peace is like nettle in the arbour,
The rose is without pow'r where nettle spreads o'er far.
The Baliol so fared with the douze peers—
His realm, as ye have heard, he lost through his counsellors.
First, was he a king, now is he mercenary!
And is, at other's cost, fetter'd in the Tow'r!

The metre was used, with a much narrower rhythm, by the poets of the sixteenth century—the verse being restricted not only to a given number of accents, but also to a certain number of syllables. It is truly wonderful the noble use which Drayton has made of a metre, so tied and fettered, as barely to escape the charge of monotony. What a picture of the woodland is contained in the following passage! Shakespeare himself, though (like Drayton) born on the skirts of Arden, and though his fancy never revelled

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1 Qu. pres.
2 That is—the high aristocracy; the romances, on the subject of Charlemagne, spread the phrase over Europe.
with more delight than amid the green leaves of the forest, could hardly have surpassed it.

With solitude what sorts: that here's not wondrous rife,
Whereas the hermit leads: a sweet retired life
From villages replete: with ragg'd and sweating clowns,
And from the loathsome airs: of smoky-citied towns?
Suppose twixt noon and night: the sun his half way wrought,
The shadows to be large: by his descending brought,
Who with a fervent eye: looks through the twining glades,
And his dispersed rays: commixeth with the shades.
Exhaling the milch-dew: which there had tarried long,
And on the ranker grass: till past the noonsted hung;
When as the hermit comes: out of his homely cell,
Where from all rude resort: he happily doth dwell;
Who in the strength of youth: a man at arms hath been,
Or one, who of this world: the vilenesse having seen,
Retires him from it quite: and with a constant mind
Man's beastliness so loaths: that, flying human kind,
The black and darksome nights: the bright and gladsome days
Indifferent are to him: his hope on God that stays;
Each little village yields: his short and homely fare, &c.

Polyolbion, song 13.

In the same century, attempts were made to support this metre without the aid of final rime. Blennerhasset, a kind of grumbling half-pay officer, thus vents his spleen against the Clergy, in the Mirror for Magistrates: ¹

And this I there did finde: they of the cleargie be
Of all the men that live: the lest in misery.
For all men live in care: they carelesse do remaine;
Like buzzing drones they eate: the hony of the be,
They only doo excel: for fine felicitee.
The king must wage his warres: he hath no quiet day;
The nobleman must rule: with care the common weale;
The countryman must toyle: to tyll the barren soyle;
With care the merchant man: the surging seas must sayle;
With trickling droppes of sweat: the handcraftes man doth thrive;
With hand as hard as bourde: the woorkeman eates his bread;
The soultiour in the fielde: with paine doth get his pay;
The serving man must serve: and crouch with cap and knee;
The lawier he must pleade: and trudge from bentsch to barre;
Who phisicke doth professe: he is not void of care!
But Churchmen, they be blest: they tyme a leaf or two,
They sometime sing a psalme: and for the people pray;

¹ Vide his Cadwallader.
C. VI.

THE SHORT METRE;

For which they honour have: and sit in highest place—
What can they wishe or seek: that is not hard at hand?

It will be seen, the writer affects alliteration, and never refuses either middle or final rime, if it readily presents itself.

There is a metre of six accents, used by Turberville and others his contemporaries, in which the accents are often unequally divided between the two sections. A specimen of it may be found in bk. ii. c. 7, p. 265.¹

There was yet another kind of psalm-metre, which seems to have come into fashion soon after the year 1500. It consisted of the fourteen-syllabled verse of the "common metre," preceded by the Alexandrine. In our hymn-books, its verses are divided, and it is called the "short metre." The following lines of Surrey may furnish us with an example:

When sommer toke in hand: the winter to assail,
With force of might and vertue great: his stormy blasts to quail,
And when he clothed faire: the earth about with grene,
And every tree new garmented: that pleasure was to sene,
Mine hart gan now revive: and changed blood did stur,
Me to withdraw my winter-woes: that kept within the dore.
"Abrode," quod my desire: "assay to set thy fote,
"Where thou shalt finde the savour sweet: for sprong is every rote.
"And to thy health, if thou: were sick in any case,
"Nothing more good, than in the spring: the aire to fele a space.
"There shalt thou here and see: al kindes of birds y-wrought
"Well tune their voice, with warble smal: as nature hath them tought," &c.  

[Tottell's Miscellany, ed. Arber, p. 7.]

The metre, thus written at length, is but rarely met with, except during the sixteenth century; when it was commonly known by the name of poulters measure, because the poultorer, as Gaskoyne tells us, "giveth twelve for one dozen, and fourteen for another."

¹ Compare the following:
Whenas | the Lord | : again | his Si|on had | forth brought |
From bond|age great | : and al|so ser|vitude | extrem,
His work | was such | : as did | surmount | man's heart | and thought,
So that | we were | : much like | to them | that use | to dream.
Our mo|uths were | : with laugh|ter fil|led then |
And eke | our tongues | : did shew | us joy|ful men.

Cooté's English Schoolmaster, p. 46.
CHAPTER VII.

THE METRES OF FIVE ACCENTS.

seem to have been first used in English poems during the fourteenth century, though we have specimens of them in our Romance poetry, which were probably written before the close of the twelfth. The Troubadour had anticipated even this early date, and there is one poem in the Romance of Oc, which Raynouard would fix even before the year 1000. In these older poems, the verse generally consists of ten syllables, with a pause after the fourth; but as the first section is often lengthened, the number of syllables is, in many verses, increased to eleven.

The mystery of the Foolish Virgins, which was written, during the twelfth century, partly in Latin, and partly in the Romance of Oc, contains the following staves. They seem to furnish us with the "rhythmus," which gave rise to this metre.

PATUAE.

Nos vir|gines| : que ad | vos veu|imus|
Negli|genter| : ole|um fun|dimus|
Ad vos | ora| re : soro|res, cu|pinnus ,
Ut in| illas | : quibus | nos cred|imus |.

PRUDENTES.

Nos cre|cari| : prece|mur, am|plius |
Desin|ite | : soro|res o|tius ;
Vobis| enim | : nil c|rit me|lius |
Dare | preces | : pro hoc | ulter ius |

Compare the following:

1 Choix des Poesies des Troubadours.
THE METRES OF FIVE ACCENTS.

It is by no means easy to connect this rhythmus with its metrum. Possibly, the Alcaic verse of eleven syllables may have been the classical model. If the six syllables, furnished by the two dactyles, be read with three accents, like the latter section of the Asclepiad, we shall have the cadence of those verses, which lengthen the first section.

\[ \text{Ad vos orae : soro res cu pimus}. \]

As the last and important accent of the first section falls on the fourth syllable, the fifth may have been looked upon as a merely lengthening syllable, and gradually dropped from the verse, as unessential to the rhythm.

If it be said, such fifth syllable is of the same nature as that which is so often found lengthening the first section of the Alexandrine, I would distinguish the cases thus. The Alexandrine lengthens both sections indifferently; while the verse of five accents never lengthens the second, but very frequently the first—the proportion being generally one verse in seven. Again, I do not remember any instance of either section being lengthened in the "rhythmus" of the Alexandrine; whereas we have just quoted a Latin verse of five accents, which lengthens the first section. I incline therefore to think, that the lengthening syllables of the Alexandrine are mere foreign additions, grafted on the "rhythmus" and that the supernumerary syllable, in the verse of five accents, is, on the

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1. This verse was used by the later Latin poets, not only in Alcaic staves, but sometimes through entire poems.
2. See p. 516.
contrary, a remnant of its earlier and more perfect structure.

I have met with no specimen of this metre, among our English rhythms, before the fourteenth century. In the early half of this century lived Richard of Hampole, who, according to Lydgate, turned into English the Prick of Conscience,

Richard hermit, contemplative of sentence,
Drought in English the Prick of Conscience.

Fall of Princes.

Now we have two translations of the Stimulus Consciencie,—one in the metre of four accents, and another, in a loose metre, which seems to have been meant for that of five accents. If this be Hampole’s version, it is one of the oldest specimens of the metre now extant. As Richard died in 1348, and Chaucer did not write his great work till 1388, it may have preceded the Canterbury Tales by some forty or fifty years. The following description of the joy, that “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard,” is taken from one of Warton’s extracts. [See Warton, History of English Poetry, ed. Hazlitt, ii. 240.]

The good | e soule | : schal hav | e in his | heryng | e
Gret joy | e in hev | ene | and grete | lykyng | e
For | hi schul | leth yher | e : the aung | eles song |
And with | hem hi schul | leth : synge ev | er among |
With de | lita | ble voys | : and swyth | ce cler | c |
And al | so with that | : hi schul | len hav | e ther | c
All oth | or man | er : of ech | a mel | ody 
Off | wel lyk | yng noys | e : and men | stralsy | e,
And | of al man | er ten | es : of | musik | e
The whch | e to man | nes her | te : mig | te lik | e,
Without | e on | i man | er : of | travayl | e,
The whch | e schal nev | er : ces | se ne sayl | e.
And | so schil | schal that noys | e bi | and so swet | e
And | so de | lita | ble : to smal | e and to gre | te,
That al | the mcl | ody | e : of this | worlde heer |
That ev | er was | yhur | yd | fer | re or neer |

1 [But Warton must be mistaken. These lines are not by Hampole, who used a verse of four accents; so that the other version is his. See Hampole’s Prick of Conscience, edited by Morris.—W. W. S.]
2 Schil, loud, shrill.
3 Yhuryd, y-heard.
Loose as is the rhythm of these verses, I have seen few manuscripts of the Canterbury Tales, which admit of a more definite scansion. The best copies indeed I have not seen; and I think it probable that Chaucer at least confined his metre to the verse of five accents; but any more particular definition I dare not venture upon. Before we can understand the nature of his versification—before we can render Chaucer that justice, which his genius so loudly calls for—we have to settle questions, that require for their solution the most searching and, at the same time, the most delicate investigations. Unfortunately the difficulties of the inquiry are doubled by the blunders of our MSS. Those who turn to them as authority, may feel half disposed to join in the humorous malediction, which the poet himself invokes upon Adam, his "scrivener." At a time when our language was in a state of transition, and when, consequently, correct transcription was so necessary, the greater demand requiring a quicker supply of MSS. gave rise to the professional copyist—the needy and the ignorant scrivener. In him our literature found but a poor substitute for the educated monk; and Chaucer must be acquitted of all undue sensitiveness, notwithstanding his many allusions to the ignorance and carelessness of his transcribers. If Waller thought himself entitled to complain of our "ever-changing tongue," what must such a man have felt, when he saw in how frail a bottom he had consigned name and fame to posterity!

That Chaucer was a master of English versification no one, that reads him with due care and attention, can well doubt. There are many passages in his works, which, from the agreement of MSS. and the absence of all those peculiarities of structure that leave matter for doubt, have, in all probability, come down to us as Chaucer wrote them—and

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1 Yare, provided, ready.
in these the versification is as exquisite as the poetry. It needs not the somewhat suspicious apology of Dryden. I am not one of those who assert, that Chaucer has always "ten syllables in a verse, where we find but nine;" but I am as far from believing, that "he lived in the infancy of our poetry," because the scheme of his metre somewhat differs from our own. As far as we have the means of judging, it was not only "auribus istius temporis accommodata," but fulfilled every requisite that modern criticism has laid down, as either essential to the science, or conducive to the beauty of a versification.

The metre of five accents, with couplet-rime, may have got its earliest name of "riding rime" from the mounted pilgrims of the Canterbury Tales. It was long used for light and trifling subjects; and by the critics of the sixteenth century was very unfavourably contrasted with the stately ballet-stavo. Gaskoyne, in the list of his metres, had almost "forgotten a notable kinde of rime, called ryding rimo, and that is such as our Master and Faither Chaucer used in his Canterbury Tales, and in divers other delectable and light enterprises, &c. As this ryding rime servith most aptly to write a merie tale, so rhythmoe royall is fittest for a grave discourse, &c." According to Puttenham, Chaucer's "metre heroicall of Troilus and Cressid is very grave and stately, keeping up the staffe of seven, and the verso of ten; his other verses of the Canterbury Tales be but riding rime, &c." Harrison, in like manner, draws an unfavourable comparison between his "riding rimes" and the favourite rhythm,

When as the vers is plac'd between the meeter, while King James considers this metre fit only for

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1 Preface to the Fables.
2 That is, the ballet-stave of eight verses, see b. iv. c. 5.
3 The ballet-stave of seven, see b. iv. c. 5.
4 Epigrams, 3. 44.
5 See his Reulis and Cautelis.
"long histories," and would deny it even the name of verse."

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, this metre seems to have gained somewhat more of dignity. According to Drummond of Hawthornden,¹ Jonson had the design of writing an epic poem in couplets, as "he detested all other rimes." It also appears, he wrote a discourse to prove "couplets the best sort of verses, especially when they are broke like Hexameters; and that cross rimes and stanzas, because the purpose would lead beyond eight lines, were all forced." But, in the next generation, Davenant wrote his Gondibert in the "interwoven stanza of four," or, as we now term it, the elegiac stave; and defended his choice of a metre in a laboured criticism.² He thinks his stave best adapted to "a plain and stately composing of musick;" and believes it to be more pleasant to the reader, to give him a "respite or pause between every stanza, than to run him out of breath with continued couplets." The influence of Davenant is traced in the early poems of Dryden; but this poet soon gave his preference to the metre, which, chiefly under his sanction, has now established itself as our "Heroic verse."

The unrimed metre of five accents, or as it is generally termed blank verse, we certainly owe to Surrey. English verse without rime was no novelty; and the "cadence" of Chaucer comes full as near to the blank verse of five accents, as the loose rhythms of some of our dramatists; but I have seen no specimen of any definite unrimed metre of five accents, which can date earlier than Surrey’s translation of the fourth Eneid. His verse was certainly considered, at the time, as something new, for the second edition of his translation is entitled, "The foorth boko of Virgill, &c. translated into English, and drawn into a strange metre by Henry, Earle of Surrey." As Surrey was well acquainted with Italy and its literature, and as the Italians were already making efforts to banish rime from their poetry, it is

¹ See Heads of a Conversation, &c.
² See Preface to the Gondibert.
possible he may have taken the hint from them; but, in fact, the subject of unrimed verse had for some time fixed the attention of scholars, very generally, throughout Europe.

It is difficult to suppose, that such a work as Surrey's was unknown to Milton. Yet in his preface to the second edition of his Paradise Lost, he will have his "neglect of rime" to be "an example set, the first in English, of ancient liberty recovered to heroic poem." Perhaps he might refuse this lofty title to a mere translation; but, however this be, the only predecessors he will acknowledge, in breaking the "bondage of riming," are the English Tragedians, and "some Italian and Spanish poets of prime note." It will not be easy to acquit Milton, altogether, of injustice towards his countryman; but if he disdained to mention Surrey, he also disdained to copy from him—both the merits and the faults of Milton's versification are his own.

I have hitherto deferred any general inquiry into the laws by which these poets regulated their rhythm, as such inquiry, embracing alike the two great divisions—couplets and blank verse—seemed to render a previous acquaintance with the properties of both, in some degree necessary. All the early specimens of this metre, in our native language, exhibit a very loose copy of the rhythm, which is found in our romance poems. The number of syllables varies widely in different verses; and instead of the first section being confined to two accents, and four or five syllables, it often contains three of the former, and six, seven, or eight of the latter. I believe Chaucer strictly confined his verse to five accents; but his successors, and, if we may trust our MSS. even his contemporaries, sometimes tolerated a verse of four. In the MSS. indeed of the fifteenth century, we find a tumbling metre allotted even to Chaucer; but this may, I think, be owing to the change which had, in the meanwhile, taken place in our language. The poets who used this metre in the sixteenth century were, for the most part, very precise in their rhythm. There are still extant poems of Churchyarde, Gaskoyno, and Surrey, in which the
verse has regularly ten syllables, and the pause almost invariably follows the fourth.

The general scheme of Milton’s rhythm is clearly that of five accents and ten syllables to the verse; but as he never counted the lengthening syllable of the second section, and not always the lengthening syllable of the first, his verse has often eleven, and sometimes even twelve syllables. An abrupt section was furnished with a foot of three syllables—the first section always, the second in all cases but those, in which the first section had a lengthening syllable, which was counted in the verse. The pausing section 7 p. was sometimes admitted as the first section, and is sometimes found lengthened.

The rhythm of Pope and Dryden differed from Milton’s in three particulars. It always counted the lengthening syllable of the first section; it admitted three syllables only in the second foot of the abrupt section; and it rejected the sectional pause.

The writers of our couplet-metre occasionally vary their rhythm by one or other of the following licenses. They sometimes rhyme their verses by triplets—a change of plan, which is pointed out to the reader by the vulgar expedient of a marginal bracket; sometimes they substitute an Alexandrine, or even a verse of seven accents, in place of one of five; and sometimes they interpolate a broken verse, as in the following passage,—

An awful fear his ardent wish withstood,
Nor durst disturb the goddess of the wood,
For such she seem’d. 2
So checking his desire, with trembling heart,
Gazing he stood, nor would nor could depart.

Dryden, Cymon and Iphigenia.

The triplet and the Alexandrine may be found in Hall, and were profusely used by Dryden; the other license seems to have originated in the broken rhythm, which came into fashion about the end of the sixteenth century. In regular

1 See pp. 272, 273.
2 [This line is usually printed in a complete form.—W. W. S.]
blank verse we meet neither with Alexandrine nor broken rhythm; but in our dramatists they are common.

The licenses, which are taken in blank verse, relate chiefly to the position of the stops and pauses. As they are usually defended by the example of Milton, it may be well to examine the principles on which this great Master regulated his versification; and I would hope to escape the charge of presumption, even though I venture, in some particulars, to question their soundness. With reverence should we approach the shade of Milton; but criticism would lose half its usefulness and all its dignity, if we yielded an unqualified assent to the doctrine, that its canons are nothing more than the practice of our great poets, reduced to rule.

"True musical delight," says Milton, "consists in apt numbers, fit quantities of syllables, and the sense variously drawn out from one verse into another."

By "apt numbers" I understand that accommodation of the sound to the sense, which Pope's hackneyed line has made familiar, as one of the rules of criticism. Perhaps no man ever paid the same attention to the quality of his rhythm as Milton. What other poets effect, as it were, by chance, Milton achieved by the aid of science and of art; he studied the aptness of his numbers, and diligently tutored an ear, which nature had gifted with the most delicate sensibility. In the flow of his rhythm, in the quality of his letter-sounds, in the disposition of his pauses, his verse almost ever fits the subject; and so insensibly does poetry blend with this—the last beauty of exquisite versification, that the reader may sometimes doubt whether it be the thought itself, or merely the happiness of its expression, which is the source of a gratification so deeply felt.

In recommending "fit quantities of syllables," I believe Milton wished to discourage any strain upon the natural rhythm of the language—he would have it adapted, and not wrested to the purposes of metre. Those, who are acquainted with the state of our poetry during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, will readily acknowledge the necessity of this rule; but they will be disappointed if they
look to Milton for its observance. Not only is the flow of his sentence made to yield to the necessities of his metre, but the verbal accent is often disregarded, and the same word variously accented, even within the compass of a few lines. His contemporaries took the same liberties, though not, I think, to the same extent. The fluctuations of our language may be urged in his excuse; but, when every allowance is made for the unsettled accentuation of that period, he must still lie, in many cases, open to the animadversions of criticism.

The last rule of Milton—or rather the manner in which he reduced it to practice—has had a great, and certainly not a favourable, influence upon English versification. I do not question the advantage which may sometimes be gained, from running the verses one into the other. But Milton's passion for variety too often endangers his metre. Not only do his pauses divide portions of the sentence, most intimately connected together, but frequently we have periods ending in the midst of a section, and sometimes immediately after the first, or before the last syllable of the verse. Severe as is the judgment of Johnson, it is not an unjust one, that such a mode of procuring variety "changes the measures of a poet to the periods of a declaimer." Few readers are to be met with, who can make the beginning or the ending of Milton's lines perceptible to their audience.

If it be said, that such sudden and abrupt termination of the sentence often suits the subject,¹ and is strikingly beautiful—the beauty will be acknowledged, but it is a beauty beyond the reach of Milton's metre, a beauty therefore, which he had no right to meddle with. Versification ceases to be a science, if its laws may be thus lightly broken.

It may perhaps be said, that Milton's metre is *sui generis*, and not to be judged by the ordinary rules of English versification. There are critics who consider these sectional stops as *pauses*, and sometimes assign three or even four of these pauses to a verse! as there are others who sometimes allow six accents to a verse; or thirteen, fourteen, or even

¹ See the first example on p. 155.
fifteen syllables! others again who consider a tribrach, or foot of three unaccented syllables, admissible! and a fifth party, who look with scorn upon any accentual division of Milton's rhythm, and divide each verse into six cadences! Some of these theories I have vainly tried to comprehend, and others I have found wholly inapplicable.

There are certainly few English poets whose versification has been so often imitated as Milton's, or so seldom imitated well. The workings of his genius, like those of nature, are complicated; and to trace a particular effect to its causes, often requires the most delicate analysis. His faults lie on the surface, and may be copied by a schoolboy. They are forgotten, or at any rate forgiven, when accompanied with all the matchless graces of his versification; but in the pages of an imitator we too often see only a mimicry of his deformities—Alexander's high shoulder on the back of his courtier.

Though the descent be somewhat startling, we ought not to close this chapter without noticing an attempt, made by Drummond of Hawthornden, to originate a new variety of the couplet-metre. Its novelty consisted in alternating the double with the single rime. The hint was, doubtless, borrowed from the French, who in the preceding century had established, as a law of their heroic verse, that the feminine rime should always alternate with the masculine.

It was the time, when to our northern pole
The brightest lamp of heav'n begins to roll,
When earth more wanton in new robes appearceth;
And scorning skyes, her flow'rs in rainbows bareth,
On which the air moist diamonds doth bequeath,
Which quake to feel the kissing Zephyr's breath;
When birds from shady groves their love forth warble,
And sea-like heaven looks like smoothest marble, &c.

_Drummond's Sonnets; pt. i. song 13._

The reader will hardly wish for a longer extract.
CHAPTER VIII.

THE TUMBING-METRES.

King James in his "Reulis and Cautelis" gives us the following definition of tumbling verse. "Ye man observe that thir tumbling verse flowis not on that fassoun, as the otheris dois. For all utheris keipis the reule, quilk I gave before, to wit, the first fute short, the second lang and so furth. Quhaires thir hes twa short and one lang through all the lyne quhen they keip ordour; albeit the maist part of thame be out of ordour, and keipis na kynde nor reule of flowing, and for that cause are callit tumbling verse." He applies the namo, specially, to a stave, which he recommends for "flyting," or invective; but it may be used with much convenience, in all cases, where the rhythm falls within the definition just quoted. I shall, however, in the present chapter, apply it more particularly to those verses which enter into foreign and artificial combinations, [while] at the same time they retain that irregularity of flow, which our native rhythms were supposed to sanction.

We have already seen, at how early a period the tumbling verse intruded into our psalm-metres, and have noticed some of the causes which may have led to this result. Another kind of tumbling-metre was founded on the verse of five accents. It prevailed chiefly during the fifteenth century; and seems to have originated in the unsettled state of our language at that period. While some writers wholly omitted the e final, and others more or less generally pronounced it, we may readily understand how soon the rhythm of any poet (Chaucer for example) must have become matter of doubt and speculation; and how easily

1 See pp. 507, 509.
the most careful versification might be degraded into a
loose and slovenly specimen of the tumbling-metre. When
once this kind of rhythm was looked upon as sanctioned,
its facility would be quite sufficient to account for its
popularity.

Lidgate has left us one of the earliest specimens of this
metre in the adventures of his "London Lickpenny," —a
gentleman who indulges the hope of extracting law
from an unfeed lawyer! After a vain attempt on the
King's Bench, he tries the Common Pleas and the Rolls.

Un|to the Com|m|on Place : I | yode tho |
Where sat | one with | a syl|ken hood |
I dyd | hin rev|erence : for | I ought | to do so |
And told | my case | as well | as I coode |
How | my goodes | were defrau|ded me : by | falshood |
I gat | not a mum | of his mouth | for my mede |
And | for lack | of mon|y : I myght | not spede |

Un|to the Rolls : I gat | me from thence |
Before | the clarke | of the Chau|n|cery |
Where man|y I found | earn|ng of pence |
But none | at all | once regard|ed mee |
I gave | them my playnt | uppon | my knee |
They lyk|ed it well | when they | had it read |
But lack|yng mon|y | I could | not be sped |

Within | this Hall | ne|ther rich | nor yett poore |
Wold do | for me ought | although | I shold dye |
Which se|ing | I gat | me | out | of the doore |
Where Flem|ynges began | on me | for to cry |
" Mas|ter what | will you cop|en or by |
"Fine | felt hattes | or spec|tacles | to rede |
"Lay | down your syl|ver : and here | you may speede |

Then | to West|mynster gat | : I pres|ently went |
When | the som|n | was | at hygbe pryme |
Cooke|s | to me | they tooke | good entete |
And pro|fered me bread | with ale | and wyne |
Rybb|s | of befe | both fat | and ful fyne |
A say|r cloth | they gan | for to sprede |
But wan|tyng mon|y | I myght | not then spede |

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1 Harl. 367. It is also found in Strutt's Manners and Customs, &c.,
vols. iii. [I have carefully corrected the text by MS. Harl. 367, of which an
accurate copy is given in my Specimens of English from 1394-1579; p. 24.
Lickpenny, i.e. catch-money, is an epithet of London itself.—W. W. S.]
This was the favourite metre of the contributors to the Mirrour for Magistrates. Their rhythm, however, varies greatly. In some places it approaches the common, in others the triple measure; and generally inclines to the latter, when the subject (as in the passage just quoted) relates to ordinary life, or admits of familiar application.

There is another kind of tumbling verse, which is founded on the metre of four accents. At what time the tumbling and the regular metres were first distinguished, is by no means easy to say, as the origin of the latter is involved in much obscurity; but, in the fifteenth century, the two were certainly looked upon as distinct and separate metres. The tumbling verses have generally four accents, and a very loose rhythm; but they sometimes take three or five accents, and the rhythm shifts, accordingly, to the triple or to the common measure.

The use which Spenser made of this metre, in some of his Eclogues, seems to me a happy one; and to impart a feeling of country freshness and of yeomanly sincerity, which is singularly pleasing. I would instance the beautiful fable in the February-eclogue [ll. 102, &c.].

There grew an age: Treè on the grèene,
A good ly Oake: sometime had it bêene,
With armes ful strong: and large lie displayde,
But of their leaues: they were dis araide:
The bod ie bigre: and might ilie pight,
Through lie root ed: and of won derous hight;
Whil ome had bene: the king of the field,
And mouch el mast: to the hus band did yield.
And with his nuts lar ded : man ie swine;
But now the graie mosse: mar red his rine,
His bar ed boughes: were beat en with stormes,
His top was bald: and was ted with wormes,
His hon or decai ed: his braunch es sere.

Hard by his side: grew a brag ging brere, &c.

Again, when the "proud weed" had worked upon the passions of his too credulous master, how happily flow the verses, which describe the "waste oak's" overthrow!

The Ax es edge: did oft turne againe,
As half unwil ling: to cut the graine;
The distinction between this metre and that of Christabel is slight indeed. Yet, in his preface, Coleridge will not have his metre to be "properly speaking irregular, though it may seem so from its being founded on a new principle; namely, that of counting in each line the accents, not the syllables. Though the latter may vary from seven to twelve, yet in each line the accents will be found to be only four." No one will suppose that Coleridge claimed anything but what he believed to be his due. He merely laboured under a delusion, of which all of us must, at some time or other, have been conscious, and mistook the gradual awakenings of memory for the slow and tedious process of invention.

Perhaps the same excuse may be made for Byron. He has somewhere stated, that he wrote the Siege of Corinth before he knew anything of the Christabel. Yet so many are the analogies between the two poems, so similar are the ends proposed, and the means taken to effect them, so nearly identical are the metres, and even some of the images, that no critic but must feel doubts as to the correctness of this statement. The difficulty, however, may admit of another solution. Byron may have had his genius turned in this particular channel by the perusal of the Christabel; and, afterwards, when his mind had been diverted to other subjects, and his memory distracted by his multifarious and desultory reading, he may have confounded a second perusal with the first. Those who have often had occasion to test the accuracy of memory, will remember cases, in which it has proved equally treacherous.

The origin of such English metres as belong to the triple measure, is no less a subject of difficulty than of
interest. King James, it appears, considered them as mere varieties of the tumbling verse; and there are early specimens of these tumbling metres, which approach the triple measure so nearly, as to render the transition from the one to the other at least probable. I have seen no English poem written throughout in the triple measure which could date earlier than the fifteenth century. The following song is mentioned by Gawin Douglas, in the year 1512, as then popular among the vulgar. It was probably written in the latter half of the fifteenth century, but has been referred to an earlier period.

1.

Hay! now | the day daw|is,
The jo|ie cok craw|is,
Now shroud | is the shan|is
Throw na | ture anone | ;
The thriss | el cok cry|is
On lov|ers wha ly| is,
Now skail | is the sky | is,
The night | is neir gone |.

2.

The fields | ourflow | is
With goun|ans that grou | is,
Quhair lil | ies lyk lon| is
Als rid | as the rone |
The tur | till that treu | is
With nots | that reneu| is
Hir hair |tie perseu| is,
The night | is neir gone |. &c. &c.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century the triple measure must have been familiar to the ears of the people, or Tusser, who wrote for the yeomanry, would not have selected it, as the chief medium for conveying to them his husbandly lessons. He uses it in various combinations;

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1 See p. 533.
2 [See Sibbald, Scot. Poetry, iv., p. lx.]
3 This word was probably pronounced with four syllables overflow is, though spelt with three.
4 [See the edition of Tusser’s Husbandry, by Payne and Harriaga, published in 1878 for the English Dialect Society.—W. W. S.]
sometimes in a short stanza, with alternate rime [section 62],

Ill hus | bandry brag | geth
To go | with the best |
Good hus | bandry bag | geth
Up gold | in his chest |

Ill hus | bandry los | eth
For lacke | of good fence |
Good hus | bandry clos | eth
And gain | eth the pence | &c.

sometimes in a longer stanza [section 5], each line containing three accents,

What lookest thou herein to have?
Fine verse~ thy fancy to please?
Of man[ y my bet | ters that crave];
Look noth | ing but rude | ness in these |

What look | ye, I pray | you shew what |?
Terms | pawn | ted with rhet | oric fine |
Good hus | bandry seek | eth not that |
Nor is't | any mean | ing of mine |

What look | est thou | speak | at the last |?
Good les | sons for thee | and thy wife |?
Then keep | them in mem | ory fast |
To help | a- a com | fort to life |

He has also [in sect. 68] used the stave, of which a specimen was given in p. 537; but the great staple of his work is a stave composed of two rining couplets.

To Hun | ters and Hawk | ers | take heed | what ye say |,
Mild an | aver with cour | tesy | drives | them away |
So where | a man's bet | ter | wall | pen a gap |
Resist | not with rude | nes | , for fear | of mishap |

A man | in this world | : for a churl | that is known |
Shall hard | ly in qui | et | keep that | is his own |
Where low | ly, and such | : as of cour | tesy smells |
Finds fa | vour and friend | ship | wherever | er he dwells |

[Section 10, stanzas 49, 50.]

The second of these specimens, it will be seen, is the stave used by Rowe,

Despairing beside a clear stream
A shepherd forsaken was laid, &c.
and which was afterwards adopted by Shenstone in his Pastorals.¹

During the last two centuries we have had almost every kind of stave written in this measure. It must be useless to quote examples.

¹ [See Colin’s Complaint, A Song; by N. Rowe.—W. W. S.]
CHAPTER IX.

LOOSE RHYTHMS.

Measured prosa seems to have been known to our language from the earliest period. Even in the simple narrative of our venerable Chronical, we often find traces of a rhythmical structure, much too marked to be the result of

—Ne wearth Angel-cynne nan waersa dæd gedon thonne theos was. syththon hi ærest. Bryton-land gesohton. Men hin|e of-myre|throdon . ac God|e hine mar|sode . he| wæs on lif|e eorth|lic cing . he| is nu|æfter death|e heof|onlic sanct . Hin|e nol|don his eorth|lican mag|as wrec|an . ac hin|e haf|ath his heof|onlic|a fa|der swith|e gewrec|en. Tha eorth|lican ban|an woldon his|gemyn| on eorth|an adilgian . ac| se up|lica wrec|end haf|ath his|gemyn| on heof|enum and| on eorth|an tobroed . Fortham 3
tha| the nol|don ær| to his lib|bendum lich|aman| oubug|an tha|nu cad|modlic|e on cneow|um abug|ath to| his dæl|um ban|um.
Nu we magon ongtytan . thet manna wisdom . and [heora] smcagunga . and heore mædas . syndon nahtlice ongeon Gades getheahit.

Coleridge 4 characterises the style of Junius as "a sort of metre, the law of which is a balance of thesis and antithesis." If we might use the word metre, in the sense here given to it—as a measure of thought—we could hardly find a more happy definition of the passage just quoted. The rhythm-

1 See p. 440. A yet earlier specimen of this riming prose (if we may so call it) may be found in the passage of the Chronicle, which describes the cruelties practised on the young Etheling Alfred, A.D. 1036.
2 As the inaccurate Worcester copy, Tib. B. iv., is the only one, within reach, that contains the passage, I have taken the extract in the text from Dr. Ingram's Edition. [The extract is now from the Laud MS. 636; see Prof. Earle's edition, p. 129, which affords one or two trifling corrections.—W. W. S.]
3 This word is omitted in some of the MS. and seems to be superfluous. [It does not appear at all in Earle's edition.]
accident. Many of the writers certainly paid attention to the flow of their sentences, and when their thoughts kindled with a subject of stirring interest, they naturally clothed them in the rhythm, to which poetry had given high and dignified associations.

We have seen Wulfstan employing final rime, to strengthen his rhythm, and thereby throw his figures into more marked relief. At an earlier period, alliteration was called in aid; and sometimes we find all the conditions of an alliterative couplet completely satisfied. The following passage is taken from the Chronicle, under the date 979. It contains the reflections of the writer on the murder of the martyred Edward.

—Nor was there any worse deed done by the Engle-kin (than this was) sithen they first sought the land of Britain. Men murder'd him; but God exalted him! he was in life an earthly king; he is now after death a heavenly saint! Ifin would not his earthly kinsmen avenge; but him hath his heavenly Father strongly avenged! His earthly murderers would on earth have destroyed his memory; but his Avenger on high hath spread his memory over heaven and over earth! They, that would not erst to his living body bend them, these now humbly on their knees bow to his dead bones! Now may we learn, that men's wisdom, and their machinations, and their counsels, are naught against God's will.

The chemical portion contains no less than five "antithetic parallels," (to use the language of Bishop Lowth), and every point of contrast is enforced and pressed upon the reader's notice by the rhythm. This balance of thesis and antithesis is often met with in our epitaphs, but we seldom find that attention

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4 Table Talk, ii. 213.
5 Compare Dodsley's Epitaph on Queen Caroline:

"Here lie the remains of Caroline,
Queen consort of Great Britain.
Whose virtues
Her friends, when living, knew and enjoyed,
Now dead, her foes confess and admire;" &c.
paid to the flow of the sentence, which is necessary to give it its full effect.

The word *prose* seems to have been formerly used with great laxity of meaning. In our missals we find it applied to the Hexameters, and to the longer rhythms, which we have called the Psalm-metres; and when Jonson¹ denounced the verse of seven accents as "prose," he was merely giving it a title, which it had borne for centuries. *Cadence* seems to have been the term used to denote the kind of measured prose, of which we are now speaking; and if, in any composition, much attention was paid to the flow of the rhythm, it was said (at least in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries) to be "prosed in faire cadence."

In the House of Fame [b. ii. l. 112], Chaucer represents himself as thus addressed,

\[\text{Thou ——— has set thy wit,}\
\text{(Although in thy hee ful lyte is) }\
\text{To maken bookes, songes, and duties}\
\text{In ryme, or elles in cadence,}\
\text{A\& thou best canst, in reverence}\
\text{Of love——}\
\]

and Tyrwhitt conjectured, with his usual sagacity, that he had written in a "species of poetical composition, distinct from riming verses."² The Tale of Melibeus has been considered, by some persons, as "blank verse;" but though its claim to such a title may be questioned, it is certainly a specimen of cadence. The model, which Chaucer had floating before him, was clearly his favourite metre of five accents; and it must be confessed, there is but little difference between this measured prose and the loose rhythm, wavering between prose and metre, in which so many of our dramatists have written. The following extract I have endeavoured to arrange according to its metrical structure. It is taken from Tyrwhitt's Edition,

---

² "Amonges alle clerkys we bere the pryse\
  Of gramer, cadens, and of prosodye."

*Coventry Mysteres, 189.*
and is probably not very correctly written; but, as each line is scanned, the reader will see in what cases the final e is supposed to be pronounced, and in what cases superfluous; while at the same time he is furnished with the means of forming an independent judgment.

A yonge man cal|led: Mel|ibe|us
Migh|ty and rich|e: begate| upon| his wif|
That cal|led was| Pruden|ce
A dough|ter which|: that cal|led was| Sophi|e.

Upon | a day | befell|,
That he | for his | disport | is went | into|
The fel| des him | to play| e: his wif | and eke|
His dough| ter hath | he last|: within | his hous|
Of which | the dor| es: wer| en fast | yshet |te.
Foure | of his ol| de foos |: han it | espi|ed
And se| ten latt|ders |: to | the wal|les
Of | his hous |: and | by the win| dowes
Ben en| tred, and bet| en his wif |: and wound| ed his dough| ter
With | five mor| tal woun| des: in | five son| dry pla| ces;

This | is to say|,
In | here feets | in | here hond| es: in | hire er| es
In | here nose |: and in | here mouth |
And lef| ten hire | for dede |: and wen| ten away|

When Mel|ibe|us
Retor| ned was |: in | to his hous | and sey|
Al this | meschief |: he | like a mad| man,
Ren| ding his cloth| es: gan | to wep| e and cri| e.
Pruden| ce his wif |: as fer | forth as | she dors| te
Besought | him of | his we| ping : for | to stint ²
But not | forthy |: he gan | to cri| e and wep| en
Ev| er leng| er the mo| re.

This no| ble wif |, Pruden| ce: remem| bred hire|
Upon | the senten| ce of Ov| ide: in | his book| *
That clep| ed is |: the Rem| edie| of Lov| e,
Wheras | he saith |;

"He | is a fool |: that | distour| beth the mod| er
"To wep| e in the deth | of hire childe |: till | she hav| e
"Wept | hire fil| le : as | for a cer| tain tim| e
"And than | she| a man |: don | his dil| igen| ce
"With a mi| able wor| des: hire | to re| confor| te
"And prey| e hire of | hire we| ping : for | to stind| te."

¹ [I scan it by reading "fil ve" in both places.—W. W. S.]
² Qu. stinte. [Certainly; it is the gerund.—W. W. S.]
For whiche | reson : this no| ble wif | Prud| en| ce
Suf| fred hire hous| bond : for | to wep| e and cri| e
As | for a cer| tain spac| e : and whan | she saw|
Hire tim| e, she say| de to | him : in | this wis| e
Alas | my Lord | quod she| : why mak| e ye|
Your-self | for to | be like | a fool | forsoh| e
It ap| pertein| cth not : to | a wise man|
To ma| ken swiche | a sor| we;
Youre dough| ter with | the grac| e of God : shal war| ish and escap| e.
And al | were it so | that she | right now | were dede|
Ye | ne ought not: as | for hire deth|
Yourself | to destroy| e : Sen| ek saith|

"The wise man shall not take to gret discomfort for the deth of his children, but certes he shulde suffren it in patience, as well as he abideth the deth of his own proper persone."

This Mol| ibe us : an| swerd anon | and said| e
What man | quod he | shul| de of his wep| in| stin| te
That hath | so gret | a caus| e : for | to we| pe?
Joe| en Crist |: our Lord | himself |
Wepte | for the deth| of Laz| arus | his frend| .
Prud| en ce an| swered | cer | tes wel | I wote |
Attem| pre we| ping is |: noth| ing defen| ded
To him | that | or | weful is | among folk | in sor| we
But | it is ra| ther : graun| ted him | to we| pe.
The Apos| tle Poule |: un | to the Rom| aines wri| teth
"Man | shall rejoyc| e : with hem | that mak| en joy| e
"And wep| en with |: swiche folk | as we| pen"

But though | attem| pre we| ping | be | 3 gran| ted
Outrage| ons we| ping : cer| tes is | defen| ded .
Mes| ure of we| ping : shul| de be | consid| ered,
Af| ter the lore |: that tech | eth us | Senek |
"Whan | that thy frend | is dede | quod he |
"Let | not thin ey| en : to mois| te ben | of ter| es
"Ne | to muche dri| e ;
"Although | the ter| es : com| en to | thin ey| en,
"Let | hem not fal| le.
"And when | thou hast |: forgon | thy frend |
"Do dil| igen| ce
"To get | 3gein |: anoth| er frend |
"And this | is more wis| dom
"Than | for to we| pe : for | thy frend |
"Which that | thou hast lorne |: for there | in is | no bote | .

As the tale proceeds, the rhythmical structure gradually disappears.

This measured prose, or cadence, seems to have been
long considered, as peculiarly suitable for sermons. It was used alike in the homilies of the tenth century, and in the expositions of the seventeenth; and was probably recited in a kind of drawling chant, not very unlike the delivery of some dissenting ministers. It appears to have been loosely modelled on the favourite rhythms of the day, for as new forms of metre grew familiar to the popular ear, we find its character affected, and slowly varying with each successive change.

There are portions of Chaucer's cadence, which might have given Milton the hint, on which he fashioned his choral rhythms in the Samson Agonistes. But I incline to think, he borrowed them from the Italian dramas of the preceding century. In these poems, he would find not only broken verse, but also final rime, irregularly introduced, as he afterwards used it in his choruses. He tells us, indeed, that the measure of his verse "is of all sorts, called by the Greeks monostrophic, or rather apodelemymon;" but I take it, we are not to infer that he borrowed his rhythms from the Greek, but merely that he used such, as he thought would best correspond with the classical models he was ambitious of emulating. Johnson considered the versification of these choruses "so harsh and dissonant, as scarce to preserve (whether the lines end with or without rime) any appearance of metrical regularity;" and it must be confessed there are lines which almost seem to merit a censure thus severe. But modern pronunciation is not the pronunciation of Milton. Many verses, as they are now read by some of Milton's admirers, would disgust the poet, full as much as his critic.

The rhythm of the following chorus [in Samson Agonistes, 667] is incumbered with few difficulties. It has been highly praised, but surely not beyond its merits. Who can read it without admiration?

God | of our Fa|ther: what | is man |
That thou | towards him: | with hand | so var|ious,
Or might | I say | contra|rious,
Tem|per'st thy prov|idence: | through his | short course,|
Not ev|en only, as | thou rul'st.
The Angelic or ders: and inferior creatures mute,
Irregular and brute.
Nor do I name: of men the common rout,
That wan dering loose about.
Grow up and perish: as the summer fly,
Heads without name: no more remembrance.
But such as thou hast: solemnly elec ted
With gifts and graces: em inently adorn'd,
To some great work, thy glory,
And peculiarly: which in part they effect:
Yet toward these: thus dig nified, thou oft.
Amidst their height of noon,
Changed they countenance and thy hand: with no regard.
Of high estate: of them past,
From thee: or them: to thee: of ser vice.

Nor on thy dost: degrade: them: or remit.
To life obscure: which were a fair dismission.
But throw'st them low: than thou didst exalt: them high.
Unseen: in hunting man eie.
Too grievous for the trespasses: or omission.
Oft leave'st them to: the hostile sword.
Of hea then and profligate: their car kasses.
To dogs: and fowls: a prey: or else captivated.
Or: to the unjust: tribunals: under change: of times.
And condemn: the ingratitude: ful mul titude.
If these: they scape: perhaps: in poverty.
With sickness and disease: thou bow'st them down.
Painful diseases: and deform'd.
In cradle: old age.
Though not: disorder inate: yet cause: less suffering.
The punishment: of dissolute days: in fine.
Just: or unjust: alike: seem mis credible.
For oft: alike: both come: to evil end.

So deal: not with: this: once thy glorious champion.
The image of thy strength: and might: min ister.

1 Here we must read Th'angelic.
   It should be observed, that verses of six accents, with the accents unequally divided, were common in the latter half of the sixteenth, and the beginning of the seventeenth century. Milton has used several of them in the present chorus. The rhythm was familiar at the time, but is now obsolete; and if the reader be not on his guard, may take him by surprise.

2 Thus and the following verse afford us beautiful instances of the use of the middle pause, as an emphatic stop. See pp. 167, 168.

3 The vowels coalesce, they effect.

4 See p. 51.

5 Th'unjust.

6 Th'ingrateful.

7 See p. 167.
What do I beg? how hast thou dealt already?
Behold him in this state; calamitous, and turn
His la bourns, for thou canst: to peace ful end.

But who is this: what thing of sea or land?
Fe male of sex it seems
That so bedeckt: ornate and gay
Comes this way sail ing
Like a state ly ship
Of Tar sus, bound for th' isles
Of Ja van or Gadier
With all her brav'ry on: and tack le trim,
Sails fill'd and stream ers wav ing,
Court ed by all the winds: that hold them play,
An amber scent: of od orous perfume
Her har'inger: a dam sel train behind? &c.

The first line of this noble chorus stands by itself—a passionate burst of feeling; then comes a couplet, consisting of a verse of two sections, followed by a verse of three accents. A couplet of this kind (forming, as it were, the governing rhythm) may be traced through all the first part of the Chorus—re-appearing at intervals, like the melody of a song, with slight variations. To give it greater relief, final rime is often added. The change of rhythm, which accompanies the appearance of Dalila, is effected by an accumulation of the shorter verses, assisted by a very artificial management of the final rimes. We have no less than four vowel-rimes, ranged in an inverse order;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>isles</th>
<th>Gadier</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ship</td>
<td>trim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sailing</td>
<td>waving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gay</td>
<td>play</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This novel arrangement of an unusual rime excites the attention without satisfying the ear—particularly when contrasted with the marked character of the couplet-rime—and produces, in the mind of the hearer, a feeling of para-

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1 As to Milton's use of the secondary accent, see p. 167.
2 "Ground. An old musical term for an air or musical subject, on which variations and divisions were to be made; the variations being called the "Imitation."—Nares's Glossary; which see.
tial recognition, which is beautifully adapted to the sentiments conveyed.

The unrimed metres, which Campion invented in the sixteenth century, are of a widely different character from these choral rhythms of Milton. Instead of relying on the fitness—the curiosa felicitas—of his members, Campion trusted to the precision of his rhythm. His attempts are not, I think, such failures, as to merit the almost total oblivion, into which they have now fallen; but the examination of them belongs more properly to the next chapter. I shall, at present, call the reader's attention to an experiment by Coleridge, which is more in Milton's manner, and in which he seems to have had the same object in view as Campion—namely the invention of a lyrical metre, which could support itself without the aid of rime.

The following lines are addressed "To [On] a cataract from a cavern, near the summit of a mountain precipice."

STROPHE.

Unperishing youth,
Thou leap'est from forth;
The cell of thy hidden
Nev er mor tal saw.
The cra dle of the strong one,
Nev er mor tal heard.
The gath ering of his voice—
The deep murm ur'd charm
Which is lisp'd evermore, at his slum berless foun tain.
There's a cloud at the por tal, a spray -woven veil,
At the shrine of his cease less renew ing;
It embosoms the ros es of dawn,
It entangles the shafts of the noon,
And in to the bed of its still ness
The moon shine sinks down, as in slum ber—
That the son of the rock, that the nurse ling of heav en
May be born in a ho ly twi light.

ANTISTROPHE.

The wild goat in awe,
Looks up and beholds

1 [Head numbers.—W. W. S.] 2 See Quart. Rev. 110, art. 24.
Here Coleridge attempts what Milton carefully avoided, a division into Strophe and Antistrophe. His failure, which he seems to have acknowledged by leaving the Antistrophe unfinished, shews the wisdom of Milton's forbearance. When the rhythm is left, almost without metrical restraint, to follow each change of sentiment or of feeling, we look for exquisite felicity of cadence. But, when the same rhythm is applied to different subjects, or to different divisions of the same subject, we can hardly hope it will adapt itself, with equal happiness, to both. The accommodation of the subject to the rhythm in the Antistrophe, is a matter of infinitely greater difficulty than the accommodation of the rhythm to the subject in the Strophe. Coleridge's rhythm in the three first lines of his Antistrophe, agrees so ill with his subject, as barely to escape the charge of burlesque.

1 I have an indistinct recollection of having seen this ode elsewhere. Is it not copied, or at least imitated from the German? [Yes; in late editions, it is said to be “improved from Stolberg.”—W. W. S.]
CHAPTER X.

METRICAL EXPERIMENTS.

Few of our metres have been invented by the men who used them. The poet adopted, it may be with slight modifications, the rhythms which he found established in popular favour; and variety was obtained, either by the gradual working of such slight but continued changes, or by the introduction of foreign novelties (the church-hymns, or songs of the Troubadour, for example,) which, by fixing popular attention, at length obtained an influence over our native rhythms.

But, during the last three centuries, various attempts have been made to originate new forms of English metre; and the sixteenth century was particularly fruitful in these experiments. One of the most remarkable was the attempt made to imitate, in accentual verse, the temporal rhythms of the classical poets.

The "rhythmus" of the middle ages seems to have succeeded to the "metrum," by a very simple and natural process. The ancient Goth and Celt were probably as unconscious as ourselves of any metrical harmony, resulting from the disposition of long and short syllables. The only property of the classical verse they could appreciate, must have been the arrangement of the syllables, on which fell the sharp tone and the ictus. The laws, which regulated the position of these syllables, were sufficiently definite (at least among the later Latin poets) to give very clear notions of rhythmical proportion. The monk, therefore, though in his rhythmus he neglected the quantity of his syllables, gave to his verse all the properties, which his ear had been taught to recognise in the classical metrum.

But in the experiments, which have been made during the last three centuries, a very different course has been
followed. Instead of the accent representing the sharp tone, or the ictus, it has been considered as a substitute for the long quantity. The vague notions which prevailed as to the nature of accent, long kept out of sight the difficulties, that necessarily flowed from such a condition. Accen-
tual spondees were talked of, without the least suspicion of absurdity, and though there was much difference of opinion as to many of the examples quoted, yet all seem to have admitted that such a combination of accents was possible.

When at last it was discovered, that accented syllables could not come together without the intervention of a pause, it was holden, that a "spondee" might in all cases be repre-
sented by a "trochee." In this way, much of the difficulty that stood in the way of these experiments was got rid of; and certainly by aid of such substitution all the most serious obstacles were removed. Still, however, the experiments did not succeed, and it may be well to notice some of the causes, which probably led to this result.

In the Latin "rhythmus," the middle pause was the pivot on which the whole verse turned; in the later imita-
tions it was almost wholly neglected. The omission was more particularly felt in the longer verses, such as the Hexameter. According to analogy, the English hexameter should have adopted the favourite pause of the classical, and have divided after the first (or, in case of the trochaic cæsura, the second) syllable of the third metre.

Again, in our English hexameters (which were the most common, and by far the most important of these classical imitations) the rhythm was, for the most part, much too loose. It followed the triple rather than the common measure, and, as there was seldom any pause to rest upon, the reader was hurried forward by the "breathless dactyles," as Hall sneeringly calls them. When this galloping rhythm was checked by the "drawling spondees," the flow of the verse too often resembled that of the tumbling metres, and was open to a criticism, which has been attributed to Wordsworth; it was "too little metrical at the beginning of a line, and too much so at the close."

If it be urged, that German hexameters but seldom take
the pause, and generally incline to the triple measure, it
might be answered, that we are not arguing against the
possibility of writing English hexameters with loose rhythm,
and without any settled pause, but merely pointing out some
of the causes which have contributed to their failure. *I
will, however, confess I have seen few German hexameters
which, to my ear, were satisfactory; and though it is hard
to say whether association may not lead us, I think it must
be difficult, even for a German, to connect any notions of
dignity with a rhythm, so loose and tumbling.

But the great objection to our English hexameters is one,
that rarely attaches to the German—I mean false accentua-
tion. A false accent is always objectionable, however pre-
cise the rhythm may be, and however familiar to the reader;
but if this kind of "license" be taken, when the rhythm is
loose and new to the reader, what means has he of following
the writer? The only clue, which can guide him through
the labyrinth, is then broken.

Now in few kinds of metre have we more of false accen-
tuation than in those "classical imitations." Spenser and
his contemporaries were led to it, by confounding the rules
of Latin and English prosody. In one of his letters he gives
it as his opinion, that such words as carpenter, in which the
middle syllable was "used short in speech when it should
be read long in verse," might be "won with custom;" and
simply asks, "why (a' God's name) may not we, as the
Greeks, have the kingdom of our own language, and mea-
sure our accents by the sound, reserving the quantity to the
verse?" Later writers have been misled by the fatal ex-
ample of Milton. Indeed, so little have our accents of con-
struction been studied, that Harris was guilty of no less than
two blunders, in scanning the very line which he quotes, as
a "perfect hexameter."

Why | do the hea|then rage|, and the peo|ple imag|ine a vain |
thing?

Here the accent on the conjunction is slurr'd over, and the
adjective accented more strongly than its substantive. Pro-
perly read, the line would read thus,
Why do the hea then rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?

By adopting the favourite pause of the Latin hexameter, we should obtain an accentual verse, which might be thus defined. It would open with an abrupt section of three accents, admitting of a lengthening syllable; and would close with a lengthened section of three accents, beginning with one unaccented syllable,¹ and having two such syllables before the last accent.² A verse like this would differ from the Latin "rhythmus," first, as to the property of the classical metre, represented by its accent; and, secondly, in the variable number of its syllables. I think, however, it might be turned to good account, especially in translation. The rhythm would, probably, be sufficiently precise, at the same time it would admit of considerable variety; and if it were kept well in hand, the writer never suffering the "dactyles" to run away with him, it might perhaps possess somewhat of that dignity, which is so seldom to be met with in our tumbling hexameters.

The following exercise may help to make my meaning clearer. It claims no other merit than that of being a line-for-line translation; but may serve, in some measure, to test an instrument, which, in more skilful hands, might possibly give out no indifferent music.

Sing the wrath, O Goddess: Achilles' wrath the Pelides!
Deadly it was, and whelm'd: with many a woe the Achaians,
Many a soul it sent: of hero brave into Hades,
Ere his time, and left: his limbs to the dog and the vulture,
Mangled and torn a prey: E'en thus Zeus' will was accomplished,
From the day when first: they strove and parted in anger—
He, the king of men: Atrides, and godlike Achilles.

Which of the Gods impell'd: these two to the fatal encounter?
Zeus and Leto's son: He, wrath with the king, in his anger,
Plague through the army sent: and thick and fast fell the soldiers;

¹ One kind of verse has been purposely omitted. A section beginning with two unaccented syllables is for several reasons so inconvenient, that it is better to get rid of it altogether.
² This metre is pretty closely followed in the first twenty lines of Southey's Vision of Judgment; and who can read that splendid opening without pleasure?
For that Atreus' son: had Chryses evil entreated,
When to the ships the priest: came laden with ransom, and offer'd
Gifts of untold price: to rescue his daughter from bondage,
And the God's fillet bare: in hand—far-shooting Apollo's—
High on the golden staff: Full humbly he sued the Achaïans,
But the two sons of Atreus: most sued, as chiefs of the people.

"Sons of Atreus, and all: ye other grieve-arm'd Achaïans,
"May the Gods speed your wish: (that dwell in abodes of Olympus)
"Priam's towns to raze: and win your way happily homeward!
"But to me my child: my lov'd one release, and the ransom
"Take to yourselves, and fear: Zeus' son, far-shooting Apollo."

Then, on all sides, their wish: out spake the other Achaïans
Him the priest to honour: and take the bounteous ransom,
But ill pleas'd at heart: was Atreus' son Agamemnon—
He the priest dismiss'd: with insult and bitterest menace.

"Let me not, old man: beside these hollow ribb'd gallies
"Find thee ling'ring now: or hither henceforth returning,
"Lest the God's staff and fillet: perchance may little avail thee.
"Her will I not release: before old age overtake her,
"In our distant home: at Argos, far from her country,
"Driving along the shuttle: and mounting my bed to partake it.
"Hence! and anger me not: that safe may be thy departure."

Thus he spake; the old man: sore trembled, and straightway obey'd him.
Silent he paced the shore: far beat by the billowy ocean,
All alone he went: then pray'd full oft to Apollo,
Pray'd to his King and God: the son of Leto the fair-haired.

"Thou of the silver bow: who Chryses ever encirclest,
"And thrice holy Killi: who Tenedos sway'st at thy pleasure,
"Hear me, Smintheus! if ere: I crown'd thy beauteous temple,
"If to thee I burnt: fat off'ring entire on thine altar,
"Haunch of bull or goat: this one request do thou grant me—
"May the Achaïans rue: my tears, avenged by thine arrows!"

Thus he spake; his pray'r: was heard by Phæbus Apollo.
Wrath at heart he left: the topmost heights of Olympus,
Down from his shoulders hung: the fatal bow, and the quiver
Closed all around: and, as he came in his anger,
Rattled the arrows of death: and black as night was his coming.

Our poets did not confine their attention to the "Heroic verse" of classical Literature. Sidney has left us specimens of the "Elegiac metre;" but though he succeeded somewhat better in the pentameter (owing to the very marked charac-
ter of its pause) than in the accompanying hexameter, his
imitations of neither are worthy of his reputation. The
happiest attempt which has been made to follow the Ovidian
metre is a version of two German lines by Coleridge. He
describes and exemplifies it in the following couplet;

In | the hexameter ris es : the four tain's sil | very col umn,
In | the pentameter aye | falling in mel ody back :

Spenser's hexameters have perished; and if we may judge
from his "trimetra," without much loss to his reputation.
It would have been as well if the latter had followed them.
We have seen 1 what kind of "rhythmus" belonged to the
Iambic Senarius—the following staves are part of Spenser's
imitation.

Now doe I nightly waste, wanting my kindclie reste,
Now doe I dailye starve, wanting my daily foode,
Now doe I always dye, wanting my timely mirth.

And if I waste, who will bewaile my heavy chaunce ?
And if I starve, who will record my cursed end ?
And if I dye, who will saye, "this was Immerito ?"

Well might his friend Harvey doubt, if the lines were "so
precisely perfect for the feete," as the poet "over partially
weened, and over confidently avouched !"

"English Sapphics " were probably written in the six-
teenth century, certainly not long after the year 1600. A
specimen of their rhythm may be found in bk. i. c. 5. 2 The
following imitation of the "Catullian Hendecasyllables" we
owe to Coleridge.

Hear | my belov ed : an old | Miles ian sto ry !
High | and embos om'd : in con | grega ted lau rels,
Glim | mer'd a tem ple : upon | a bree z y head land ;
In | the dim dis tance : amid | the sky ey bil lows
Rose | a fair is land : the God | of flocks | had plac'd | it.
From | the far shores : of the bleak | resounding is land,
Oft | by the moon light : a lit tle boat | came float ing,
Came | to the sea cave : beneath | the bree z y head land,
Where | amid myrt les : a path way stole | in ma z es,
Up | to the gro ves : of the high | embos om'd tem ple.

1 See p. 515. 2 P. 109.
Coleridge, it is seen, substitutes a dactyle for the two-syllabled foot, which begins the verse of his classical model; and so converts the "hendecasyllable" into a verse of twelve syllables. This he doubtless did with the view of accommodating his verse to the fashionable rhythms of the day. But, in experiments of this kind, the reader looks for novelty; and the ear would soon familiarize itself with a metre, which should consist of the verses 1 l. 5 l. and 1 ll. 1 l., the first section of course taking the two accents. If such a rhythm were thought monotonous, it might be varied by occasionally using 2 l. or 2 ll., as the first section. Would some of Coleridge's lines be very much injured by thus lopping them of a syllable? With such curtailment they would certainly come nearer to the rhythm of the "hendecasyllable."

Hear, my lov'd one: an old Milesian story!
High, and bosom'd: in congregated laurels,
Glimmer'd a temple: upon a breezy headland,
Far in Ocean: amid the skyey billows,
Rose an island: the God of flocks had placed it, &c.

These imitations of the classical metres were not the only means taken, in the sixteenth century, to introduce novelty into English versification. The necessity of rime was not only questioned, but its utility denied. Campion, who led the attack against it, has left us a treatise, wherein, amid much vague and inconsequential reasoning, we sometimes catch glimpses of the real principles on which English verse depends. The result of his criticism was the recommendation of certain metres, which he thought especially suited to certain subjects, and at the same time sufficiently rhythmical to support themselves without the aid of rime. His "Iambics," or the metre selected for "triumphs of princes and stern tragedies," are nothing more than our modern blank verse.
Goe numbers, boldly passe, stay not for ayde,  
Of shifting rime, that easie flatterer,  
Whose witchcraft can the ruder eares beguile;  
Let your smooth feete, enured to purer arte,  
True measures tread, &c.

His "Dimeters," as he calls them, were recommended for the "Chorus in a tragedy."

Raving warre, begot  
In the thirstye sands  
Of the Lybian iles,  
Wastes our emptye fields, &c.

His "Trochaic," 1 "Anacreontic," 2 and "Elegiac" 3 metres have been already noticed. The rhythm of the last is peculiar, and might, perhaps, in some few cases, be used to advantage.

Campion sometimes aimed at novelty by breaking his verses. As the broken stave (of which we shall have to speak hereafter) had been already introduced into our poetry, there was little originality in the attempt; but it may be well to notice one or two of the results. His "Sapphic" verses have for their subject "a triumph at Whitehall."

Loe they sound, the knights in order armed  
Entring threat the lists, addrest in combat,  
For their courtly loves; he—he's the wonder,  
Whom Eliza graceth.

Their plum'd pomp the vulgar heaps detaineth,  
And rough steeds—let us the still devices  
Close observe, the speeches and the music,  
Peaceful arms adorning, &c.

The following song is written in numbers "fit to expresse any amorous conceite." It appears to me extremely beautiful.

Rose-cheek't Lawra, come!  
Sing thou smoothly with thy beauties  
Silent musick, either other  
Sweetely gracing.

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1 P. 232.  
2 P. 160.  
3 P. 249.
Lovely forms do flowe
From concen't deuinely framed,
Heau'n is musick, and thy beawties
Burth is heauenly.

These dull notes we sing
Discords neede for helps to grace them;
Only beawtie purely loving
Knowes no discorde;

But still mones delight,
Like cleare springs renu'd by flowing,
Euer perfet, euer in them-
selves eternal.

Of all the experiments, made in our versification during the sixteenth century, those depending on the sectional pause now strike the ear as most singular. Some of these have been already noticed in bk. i. c. 7. In the song¹ written by Sir Philip Sidney, every verse takes the pause, but the situation of the pause is not regulated by any well-defined law. In Shakespeare's song,² its place is fixed. This appears to have been the more usual mode of introducing it, and is certainly the safest. When the reader is thus forewarned and prepared for its occurrence, the pause may sometimes be made to answer very valuable purposes. The peculiar character which it imparts to the rhythm, may often be used advantageously, to mark the divisions of a stave; and this was one of the chief uses to which it was formerly put. The old Scotch song "aganis the Ladyes," may serve for an example. [See Ancient Scottish Poems, ed. Pinkerton.]

Sen Adam, our progenitour,
(First creat be the Lord)
Believ'd his wicket paramour,
Quha counsal'd him discord,
Persuading him for to accord
Unto the deils report,
Dull | dull | : dreis | the man
That trests into that sort.

Thair belts, thair broches, and thair rings
Mak biggings bair at hame.

¹ P. 151. ² P. 152.
Later writers have seldom ventured on these experiments. It is true, they sometimes give a marked character to their rhythm, but one, in the language of Bede, "non artifici moderatione servatam, sed sono et ipsa modulatione ducente." Thus, in his melodies, Moore sometimes makes his rhythm oscillate round the verse 6 l: 6. of five accents.

They slander thee sorely : who say thy vows are frail,
Hadst thou been a false one : thy cheek had been less pale,
They say, too, so long : thou hast worn those ling'ring chains,
That deep in thy heart : they have printed their servile stains.
Oh! do not believe them : no chain could that soul subdue
Where shineth thy spirit : there liberty shineth too.

[The Irish Peasant to his Mistress, st. 3.]

Before we close the chapter, it may be well to notice an opinion that has prevailed on the subject of our heroic verse, the investigation of which may open views of the general capabilities of English metre. Many of our poets have considered our heroic verse as subjected to stricter laws, and as imposing greater difficulties on those who wrote it, than the heroic verse of classical literature. As the latter admitted a dactyle or foot of three syllables in five places, and our heroic verse only in two, the greater facility of the former was looked upon as settled. At the present day it will hardly be necessary to combat this notion, or to show how much more rhythmical is the verse, which has not only all its feet equivalent in respect to quantity, but has even its accented or sharp-toned syllables regulated by rule. As, however, opinions seldom last long, unless they contain some truth, it may be worth while inquiring how much of it

1 [In some editions—"Oh! foul is the slander, no chain could that soul subdue."]
has sufficed to give currency to notions, certainly on the whole erroneous.

Verse is distinguished from prose by its metre, or in other words by the selection of its rhythms. The law, which limits the selection, may be more or less comprehensive, but when once adopted should be scrupulously observed. If the poem be short, and contain little change of feeling or of sentiment, a confined rhythm is not always a disadvantage; if it contain variety of sentiment, there should be corresponding variety in the rhythm. In all cases, however, the law of the metre should be clear and definite.

Now the excellence of the hexameter consisted in the union of two very different qualities—its metre was at once definite and comprehensive. Though governed by laws most strictly scientific, its cadence was allowed a variety of flow, that easily adapted itself to every change of subject. Our heroic verse was fashioned on that of five accents and ten syllables. A metre so confined, that even Gaskoyne felt the thraldom, was ill-suited to the genius or the temper of Milton; and he struggled hard for freedom. He varied the flow of the rhythm, and lengthened the sections, these were legitimate alterations; he split the sections, and overlaid the pauses, and the law of his metre was broken, the science of his versification gone. The giant put on the habiliments of the dwarf—could he do otherwise than rend them?

The inferiority of our heroic verse, as a means of poetical expression, must be acknowledged; but its facility, in point of versification, is no less clear. Its rhythm is so obvious, that we often use it when writing prose; and one author, who makes the same remark, illustrates it (all unconsciously it would seem) by his own example, “such verse | we make | when | we are writ|ing prose|—we make | such verse | in com|mon con|versa|tion.”

It may be asked, has our language no metre which may satisfy the demands alike of science and of genius? Can it furnish no well-defined system of rhythm, fit to embody the conceptions of a man like Milton? Is accentual rhythm (for the question ultimately resolves itself into this) so in-