ferior to the temporal, that, to be definite, it must be crippled and confined; to be comprehensive, it must be vague and desultory?

Whether any of our poets have used such a metre, is a question that may raise a doubt; that our language could have furnished it, admits of none. Suppose a metre to consist of verses of five accents, rejecting the sectional pause; here we have a very simple and definite law, admitting of a varied rhythm, which might satisfy even a Milton's passion for variety. It would allow of no less than 1296 verses,\(^1\) each possessing its peculiar cadence. Of these some classes might possibly have a rhythm ill-suited to the author's subject; but if two-thirds were rejected, surely no one could complain that his genius had been cramped by the narrow range of his metre?

Of all the metres known to our poetry, that which has best succeeded in reconciling the poet's freedom with the demands of science, is the alliterative system of our Anglo-Saxon ancestors. If the compound and pausing sections be rejected, the scheme of its rhythm (or rather that to which it tended to approximate) may be thus defined. Its verses admitted from four to six accents, and each verse contained two, and the longer verses three alliterative syllables. A metre thus definite might be made to include almost every rhythm that has been used in our poetry. The writer might pass from the common measure to the triple, from the epic rhythm to the lyrical; he might raise his style to a level with the highest, or lower it to that of the humblest theme; he might, in short, make his rhythm ever answer to the subject, and adapt itself to every change of feeling and of sentiment. But where shall we find the men, that would use these opportunities without abusing them?—where mental vigour to resist the temptations, which extreme facility holds out, and at the same time capacity large enough, to fill up an outline thus varied and extensive?

\(^1\) P. 160.
BOOK IV.

CHAPTER I.

STAVES.

A stave is a portion of a song or poem, containing a given number of verses, arranged according to some given law, and ending with a period, or at least with some important division of a sentence. When two or more staves are knit together into one, the compound stave thence resulting may be called a stanza—a name that seems to have been first applied to the compound Italian staves, which came into fashion during the sixteenth century.

The peculiarity of Gothic verse, to which we have so often alluded under the name of parallelism, would, doubtless, have led the way in our own language (as it certainly did in the Icelandic) to the invention of the stave. Some critics have even discovered imperfect staves in the lyrical portions of our Anglo-Saxon poems, and so symmetrical are the forms, in which the periods sometimes arrange themselves, that no one can feel surprise at the conclusions they have drawn.

The great obstacle to the introduction of regular staves seems to have been the mode in which the stops were regulated in Anglo-Saxon verse. As most sentences ended in the middle of a couplet, the stave must have closed with an odd section, and broken alliteration, or the popular ear been accustomed to a new termination of the period. The Icelanders had staves that included this kind of solitary section, but they appear to have been of later date than the simpler staves, and, notwithstanding a change in
the rime letters, I rather suspect they originated in the use of the compound section, and were, in fact, nothing more than the sequel of the section or verse preceding.

When, in the eleventh century, the middle stop became subordinate to the final, this difficulty vanished; and many contemporary English poems are found divided into periods, which have little to distinguish them from the simpler kind of Icelandic staves. The Icelandic stave was sometimes expanded from four to six, or even more, verses; in these English staves the same liberty was more largely and also more frequently taken; but there are poems in which the staves are of the same length throughout, and the rhythmical structure are not very unlike that which is found in the Icelandic. The following version of the 130th Psalm was made late in the eleventh, or early in the twelfth century. If the MS. be correctly published,¹ each section was written as a distinct verso.

Nis | min heor|te with | the
Ahaf|en Drih|ten
Ne | mine ealg|an with | the
On o|ferhyg|de
Ne | ic on maeg|ene
Mic|lun gang|e
Ne wun|dur o|fer me|
Wun |iath un|ig
Ac ic | mid eath | medum
Eall | getaft|ige
Is | min sawl | on thon|
Swy | the gefeon | de
Swa man | set med|er bith
Mic |lum fed|ed
Swa | thu min; re sawl|e
Sym|ble gyl|dest
Is rahel|as on Drih|ten
A | getrew|igen
Of | thissum nu!
A| wa to wor|ulde

Mine heart is not 'gainst thee
Uplifted, Lord!
Nor mine eyes 'gainst thee,
In pride of soul.
Nor do I walk
In grandeur of Power;
Nor doth any wondrous thing
Around me dwell.
But I with the lowly-minded,
In all, consent—
My soul therewith
Is right joyful!
As by his mother man
Is richly nourish'd,
So thou my soul
Wilt ever bless.
Let men of Israel in the Lord
Aye put their trust,
* From this present—
Ever, for ages!

¹ Libri Psalmorum, Oxford 1835 [edited by B. Thorpe], published at the expense of the University from an Anglo-Saxon MS., now in the Bibliothèque du Roi.
It seems, indeed, that, during the eleventh and early half of the twelfth century, our versification was gradually taking a form, in all essential particulars, the same as the Icelandic. Had it continued free from foreign influences but one century longer, it might have exhibited all those peculiarities of structure, which were afterwards adopted by the Icelandic, and which render the prosody of that language so complicated and difficult; and it is even probable, that some of these peculiarities may yet be discovered in the MSS., which a more careful search will doubtless bring to light. The development of our rhythms in this direction appears to have been checked by the foreign novelties, which first began to exercise an influence over our rhythms in the twelfth century. To such of these as have contributed to the formation of our staves, I must now call the attention of the reader.

The classical staves which admitted variety of verse (the Sapphic and Alcaic for instance), though some of them were well-known during the middle ages, seem to have had but little influence on the modern versification of Europe. The later Latin poets generally preferred those staves, which contained only one description of verse. In the church-hymns, the Iambic Dimeter is always found in staves of four verses; the imperfect Trochaic Tetrameter almost always in staves of three; the Asclepiad in staves of four; and the Iambic Trimeter in staves of five. All these staves were used in "rhythmus;" and it is probable that the stave of four verses, with eight syllables to the verse, now so common throughout Europe, may represent the first;¹ and some of our tumbling staves of four verses, with continuous rime, the third of these classical combinations. Speculations, however, of this kind require extreme caution, and will be more largely entered into hereafter. It may suffice, for the present, to point out to the reader one of the sources, whence our modern staves derive their origin.

The staves, fashioned on these classical models, rimed

¹ Whether our English stave, when it takes the interwoven rime, represents the Iambic rhythmus, may perhaps be doubted. See p. 514.
for the most part continuously. It may, however, be questioned, whether the continuous rime, instead of being thus a mere unessential accident, were not, in some cases, the governing principle, on which the stave was formed. Continuous rime is found in the earliest Celtic and Romance poems, running through an indeterminate number of verses. Were the number once fixed, and the prevalence of the classical staves would have a tendency to bring irregularity within bounds, we might readily account for many of the early staves, thus furnished with continuous rime. Perhaps, when their history is more clearly traced, some of them may be found to have originated in this manner.

But of all the agents, used in the formation of our staves, that which appears to have been most active is certainly the mixed rime. Mixed rime was used in Latin verse at a very early period—perhaps as early as the fourth century. Whence they got it, it would be difficult to say. It seems to have been unknown to the early poetry of the Welsh and Irish; and also, as far as we can judge from extant MSS., to every modern language before the twelfth century. At the beginning of this century we find it familiarly used by the Troubadour; and, at the end of the century, it was used by our countrymen in their Romance poems. The earliest English poem with mixed rime, is, I believe, in the Layamon MS., and may have been written before the year 1200, though I would rather fix it a few years after that date. The mixed rime spread gradually, but slowly, over Europe, and seems to have reached Iceland with the hymns, that ushered in the Reformation.

Some of our early English specimens of the mixed rime are of complicated structure; and were, probably, borrowed from the Troubadour. But the far greater number had the rime regulated according to a few very simple principles, which, though neither invented nor exclusively used by our poets, seem to have had a greater influence on the formation of our English staves than can be traced in the versification of any other people. Before, however, we discuss the nature of these principles, it may be necessary to take some notice of a passage which is
found in the Prologue to Robert Brunne's Chronicle, and which has, more than once, been the subject of unsuccessful criticism. For the sake of the mere English reader it will be accompanied with a literal translation—a precaution which I cannot think useless, as I have hitherto seen no

Als thai haf wrytenn and sayd
Haf I alle in myn Inglis layd
In symple speche as I couthe
That is lightest in mannes mouthe.

I mad nought for no disours
Ne for no seggers no harpours
Bot for the lutf of symple menn
That strange Inglis cann not kenn.
For many it ere that strange Inglis
In ryne wate neuer what it is
And bot thai wist what it mente
Ellis we thoght it were alle shente.

I made it not for to be praysed
Both at the lowed menn were aysed.
If it were made in ryme couwee
Or in strangere or enterlace
That rede Inglis it crrc inowe
That couthe not haf coppeld a kowc
That outhere in couwee or in baston
Suld sum haf ben fordon
So thai fele men that it herde
Suld not witte howe that it ferde.

I see in song in sedgeyng tale
Of Ercoldon and of Kendale
Non tham says as thai tham wroght
And in ther sayng it semes noght.
That may thou here in Sir Tristrem
Ouer gestes it has the stem
Ouer all that is or was
If menn it sayd as made Thomas.
Bot I here it no mann so say
That of som copple som is away
So² thare fayre sayng here beforne
Is thare trauayle nere forlorne.

¹ [See Rob. of Brunne's translation of Peter Langtoft, ed. Hearne, p. xcix.—W. W. S.] ² [Of (for So) would give better sense.—W. W. S.]
attempt at translation, in which the sense or construction has not been, more or less, mistaken. The passage indeed (if it be rightly transcribed) contains difficulties, which may make indulgence as necessary for the present attempt, as for any which have preceded it.

As they have written and said,  
I have in my English laid down all,  
In simple speech, such as I was acquainted with—  
Such is easiest in men's mouth.

I wrote not for any discourse,  
Not for reciters, nor harpers,  
But for the love of simple men  
That strange English do not know.  
For many are there who, as to strange English  
In rime, know never what it means.  
And unless they knew what was meant,  
Methought it would be all lost.

I wrote it, not to be praised,  
But that the unschool'd men might be eased.  
If it were made in rhyme cowee  
Or in strangere, or enterlace—  
Of those, that read English, there would be enow  
That could not have coupled a howe.  
So that either in cowee or in baston  
Some would have been confounded,  
So that many men, that heard it,  
Should not know how it went.

I see, in songs and in recited tales  
Of Erealdoun and Kendale,  
That no one repeats them, as they made them;  
And in such recital all seems nought.  
That mayest thou hear in Sir Tristrem—  
Before all gests it has the preference,  
Before every one that is or was,  
If men would repeat it, as Thomas made it.  
But I hear no man so repeat it;  
For that of some couple some part is always away.  
So their fair recital (heretofore)  
And their labour is nigh lost.
Thai sayd it for pride and nobleye
That non were suylk as thei
And alle that thai wild ouerwhere
Alle that ilk wille now surfare.
Thai sayd [it] in so quaintie Inglis
That manyone wate not what it is
Therefore heuyed [sic] wele the more
In strange ryme to trauayle sore
And my witte was oure thynne
So strange speche to trauayle in
And forsoth I couth noght
So strange Inglis as thai wroght
And menn besoght me many a tyne
To turn it bot in light ryme.

Thai sayd if I in strange it turne
To here it manyon suld skurne.
For it ere names fulle selcoute
That ere not used now in mouthe.
And therefore for the comonalte
That blythely wild listen to me
On light lange I it begann
For luf of the lewed manu.

We will not stop to discuss the meaning of "baston," "strangere," and "strange Inglis," as these phrases are not only obscure, but have no immediate relevancy to the subject now before us. We will confine ourselves to an investigation of the terms, "couple," "kowe," "ryme cowee," and "ryme enterlacee." I cannot think we need go quite so far in search of their meaning, as some of the critics who have preceded us.

Tyrwhitt first pointed out the connection between the

For Ed|ward god|e ded|e { a wik|ked bounte |
The Bal|iol did | hin med|e

Turne | we ageyn | to red|e { a Mad|dok ther | left we
And on | our ges|te to sped|e

Now is Morgan 3olden : and Maddok he bendes
The Kyng comen to London : by consail of his fremdes
Two Cardenalles of Rome : the Pape hider sent
To Paris bothe thei come : to the parlement, &c.
They repeated it from a feeling of pride and of display,
That none might be such as they were;
And all that they would [have everywhere known?]
All that will now be lost.
They repeated it in such quaint English,
That many one knows not what it means.
Therefore was I the more loath
In strange rime to labour hard;
And my wit was too thin
Such strange speech to labour in.
And in truth I knew not
Such strange English as they composed.
And men besought me, many a time,
To turn it only into easy rime.

They said, if I in strange should turn it,
Many one would scorn to hear it,
For there are names full strange,
That are not used now in speech;
And therefore, for the commonalty,
That blithely would listen to me,
In easy language, I it began,
For love of the unschool'd man.

"ryme cowee" and "ryme enterlacee," and the versus caudati and interlagueati of the Latinist. Robert of Brunne, notwithstanding his protest against these kinds of verse, has left us specimens of both, for some of his rhythms are indexed in the margin as "cowee," and others as "enterlacee." Generally, his "cowee" verse is written like his alexandrines; but occasionally we find it written in a form, which may, I think, afford us a clue to the real meaning of the phrase. [See Hearne's edition, p. 266.]

For Edward's good deed
The Baliol gave him, as his meed, \{ a wicked return!\}

Turn we again to our tale, \{ where we a Maddok left.\}
And on our Gest to speed—

Now is Morgan taken, and Maddok he bends under;
The King is come to London, by counsel of his friends.
Two Cardinals of Rome hither the Pope sent;
To Paris they came both, to the parliament, &c.
Mostly, however, Robert of Brunne puts fewer accents into his “cowee” verse, and writes it in one line, as in the

Armes now 3ow alle : that non him withdrawing

How it may best salle : I haf 3ow said the sawe

Courte 

When 3e haf the pris of 3our cnyms : non salle 3e

Smyt/e with suerd | in hand | alle | Northum/berland | : with

right | salle 3e have

And Ing/land 3it alle | for wer | re salle | : be tint | for this

dred/e

Scotte neun | er bigan | unto Ing | lis man | : to do | so douh | ty
ded/e.

The original, on which these latter verses seem to be loosely modelled, was, no doubt, the alexandrine, or rather its substitute, (for the verse, in such case, loses all the essential properties of the alexandrine,) divided into two sections of four and two accents—of which the former takes the sectional rime. The verses in the first example may also have been formed from the alexandrine by a duplication of the first section. When the riming sections, or (in the other case) the sectional rimes were included within brackets, the remainder of the verse was written as a kowe—that is, as a tail or pendant; and verse, which admitted of such arrangement, seems to have been called “ryme cowee,” or tail-verse. In some kinds of verse, several rimes were included within the bracket; and hence we may understand the difficulty, which rude and unskilful rimesters felt in “coppling a kowe,”—that is, I take it, in riming the tail or “kowe” with a verse, from which it was separated by so wide an interval.

If this interpretation be the true one, the term “copple” does not (as Walter Scott conjectured) mean a riming couplet, nor (as Price conjectured) an alliterative couplet, but merely the correspondence which exists between two riming lines, whether immediately connected, or widely separated from each other.

In “rymo enterlacee,” or interwoven verse, Robert of Brunne has written nearly all the latter part of his Chronicg.
"Arm ye now all, that no one him withdraw—
"How it may best fall out, I have you told the way.
"When ye have the vantage of your en'mies, none shall ye save;
"Smite with sword in hand! all Northumberland with right shall ye have!
"And all England, moreover, shall for the war be lost—for dread of this!
"Scot never began on Englishman such doughty deed to do!"

Several specimens of it have already been laid before the reader, one of which may be found at p. 519.

Both these kinds of mixed rime were known to the Latinist, and at a very early period. In one of the Cotton MSS.¹ there is a letter, written in riming hexameters, which is ascribed to Pope Damasus, who lived in the fourth century. The five first couplets have the interwoven rime.

Cartula nostra tibi portat, Rainolde, salutes;
Pauca videbis ibi, sed non mea dona refutes;
Dulcia sunt animae solatia quae tibi maule,
Sed prosunt minime nisi serves huc operando.
Quod mea verba moment, tu noli tradere vento,
Cordis in aure sonent, et sic retinere memento, &c.

Other examples may be found at somewhat later periods, and in the tenth and eleventh centuries this rime was spread over Europe.

The "cowee," or tail-verse, was quite as much in favour with the monks as the interwoven. The following versus caudati are taken from the work of Theodatus, "De contemtu Mundi," and are of the tenth century.

Pauper amabilis et venerabilis est benedictus,
Dives inutilis insatiabilis est maledictus,
Qui bona negligit, et mala diligit, intrat abyssum,
Nulla pecunia, nulla potentia liberat ipsum,

¹ Titus, D. xxii. f. 91.
Irremeabilis, insatiabilis illa vorago,
Hic ubi mergitur, horrida cernitur omnis imago, &c.

There is yet a third kind of mixed rime, which, though it has had less influence on our English than on certain foreign rhythms, deserves some notice. It may be called the close rime, inasmuch as one “cupple” or pair of rimes is, as it were, shut up within the other. This, like the interwoven and tail-rime, seems to have been first used by the Latinist. We have an example of it in the “preludium” to the Life of St. Malchus, written soon after the year 1100 by Reginald, a monk of Canterbury. It begins thus—

Praelia gesturus pelago navalia miles
Dat pugnae similes ludos prius, et quasi durus
Hostis cernatur, belii simulachra figurat,
Currit, maturat, secum pugnando jocatur, &c.

The staves which resulted from the application of the mixed rime, were varied by two very simple expedients. Sometimes two or more of these staves were combined together, so as to form a compound-stave; and occasionally some portion of the stave was repeated. This kind of repetition was used by the monk to vary even the classical metres. Thus he obtained a new kind of elegiac metre, by repeating the hexameter—each pentameter being preceded by two instead of the single hexameter required by the classical model.

Besides the staves which originated in mixed and continuous rime, there are others, which have sprung from the use of the Wheel and Burthen. By the latter of these terms I would understand the return of the same words at the close of each stave, and by the former the return of some marked and peculiar rhythm.

It would seem when a wheel or burthen once became familiar to the popular ear, it was often used in other staves with a view to recommend them to popular notice. The advantages of classing such compound-staves, according to their wheel or burthen, must be obvious, when we remember

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1 MS. Laud. 40.
such appendage was mostly selected for its fitness—whether the fitness consisted in the sentiment conveyed, in the metrical properties of the wheel or burthen, or merely in the associations therewith connected. Sometimes, however, a burthen has entered into so many different combinations, and has been kept so long afloat in popular favour, that its original meaning has been lost, and it has become little more than a string of articulate sounds, tacked to the end of a stave. Still it possessed a certain convenience, inasmuch as it enabled a mixed company to join readily in a chorus.

The bob is a very short and abrupt wheel or burthen, and it seems to have been borrowed from the Troubadour. The name has been used by some of our classical writers, and—to quiet the fastidious reader—has been sanctioned by Johnson.

The latest expedient, had recourse to for obtaining variety, was to take some well-known stave, and alter the number of accents in certain of its verses. If the number be lessened, a phrase might be borrowed from King James, and the stave, with much convenience, called a broken one. When the stave is varied by lengthening one of its verses, it is almost invariably fashioned on the model which Spenser has left us, and therefore may be termed a Spenser-stave. Both broken and Spenser-staves were invented during the latter half of the sixteenth century, and some of their varieties still keep a place, among the favourite combinations of English poetry.

Having said thus much as to the principles which governed the formation of our staves, we may now shortly notice a peculiarity belonging to many of the older ones. In some poems the leading thought or expression with which a stave concludes, is taken up and repeated in the stave succeeding; in others, the staves are independent of each other, but the different portions of each are knit together by a like artifice. Both these kinds of Iteration are found in the old poems which Pinkerton published under the titles of Sir Gawane and Sir Galaron, and Gawane and Gologras. The stanzas which follow relate part of the interview between
Queen Waynour, the gay lady that called King Arthur husband, and the ghost of her mother—who, by the by,

With riche dayntes on des: thi drotes are dight
And I in danger and doel: in dongon I dwelle
Naxte and nedeful: naked on night
Ther folo me a ferde: of fendes of helle.
They hurle me unhendely: thi harme me in hight;
In bras and in brymston: I bren as a belle,
Was never wrought in this world: a wofuller wight.
Hit were ful tore any tonge: my torment to telle.

Now wil I of my torment: tell or I go
Thenk hertly on this
Fonde to mende thi mys
Thou art warned I wys
Bewar be my wo

Wo is wee for thi wo: quod Waynour I wys
But one thing wold I wite: if thi wil were.
If anyes matens or mas: might mende thi mys.
Or any meble on mold: my merithe were the mare.
If bedis of bishoppis: might bring the to blisse
Or coventes in cloistre: might keem the of care.
If thou be my moder: grete wunder hit is
That al thi burly body: is brought to be so bare,

I bare thee of my body: what bote is hit I layn?
I brak a solempe vow
And no man wist hit but thowe
By that token thou trow
That sothly I sayn

Say sothely what may ye saven I wys, &c.

The chief use of Iteration was to bind together the different parts of a compound-stave. Generally, this intertexture of parts was effected by a communion of rime; but, in certain cases, and especially when the elementary staves rimed continuously, the tye which linked them together was

[1] [Pinkerton's text is very badly printed. The passage quoted is from stanzas 16 and 17 of the Aventures of Arthure, of which a much better text is to be found in Syr Gawayne, ed. Madden (Bannatyne Club), p. 103. Another text is printed in Three English Metrical Romances, ed. Robson, p. 7.—W. W. S.]

[2] [An absurd mistake for dietes, i. e. diets, meals.— W. W. S.]
seems to have been everyway worthy of the daughter. The ghost is spokeswoman.¹

With rich dainties, on dais, thy nobles are furnished,
And I in danger and sorrow—in dungeon I dwell—
Filthy and hard-driven!—naked!—in night!
There follow me a host of fiends from hell!
They dash me down cruelly, they torture me to thot' height!
In gledes ² and in brimston I burn, like a flame!
Was never made, in this world, a more woful wight!
It were full hard, for any tongue, my torment to tell—
Now will I of my torment tell, ere I go,
Think, in heart, of this—
Essay to mend thy fault:
Thou art warned in sooth:
Beware by my woe!

Woe is me for thy woe, quoth Waynour, in sooth;
But one thing would I know (if it were thy will)
If once [either] matins or mass could mend thy fault,
Or any thing on earth—my joy would be the greater—
If pray'rs of bishops might bring thee to bliss,—
Or convents, with cloyster, might drive from thee thy sorrow.
If thou be my mother, great wonder is it,
That all thy portly body is brought to be so bare!
I bare thee of my body—what boots it I lye?
I brake a solemn vow,
And no one wist it but thou,
By that token, thou know'st
That truely I speak.

Say, truely, what may save thee, &c.

this species of Iteration. At the present day we have many compound-staves, the parts of which are (as regards their metre) wholly unconnected; but in earlier times, when the science of versification was better understood, staves, thus loosely put together, were seldom met with. It seems to

³ [The sense is merely brass, i.e. molten metal, so frequently mentioned in medieval descriptions of hell. Moreover, a belle means a bell that is being cast, not 'a flame.'—W. W. S.]
⁴ [A blunder for author, i.e. either.—W. W. S.]
⁵ [Sir F. Madden reads kere, i.e. turn (thee from).—W. W. S.]
⁶ [To layn is to conceal a thing.—W. W. S.]
have been considered, as essential to their construction, that every part should be dependent, so that if one portion of the stave were remembered, it might easily call to mind the rest. The stanzas just quoted have their eight first lines bound together by an interwoven rime, and the five last by a close rime; but these two divisions of the stave have no other connection between them than is furnished by the Iteration. When the Iteration passed over to the next stave, it served in like manner to aid recitation, and carried the recollection with it a step further in the poem.

The next chapter will be devoted to the staves, which are distinguished by the use of the continuous rime, and the third chapter to the Psalm-staves, or such as have been formed from the Psalm-metres, by the introduction of the mixed rime. The fourth chapter will treat of the Wheel and Burthen; and the fifth of the Ballet-staves, or of those metrical combinations which were introduced into English poetry with the ballets, the roundles, and other similar inventions of the foreigner. The broken-stave will furnish materials for the sixth chapter, and the Spenser-stave for the seventh; and, in the last, we will briefly review the whole subject, and throw a rapid glance over the changes, through which our language and our literature have passed.
CHAPTER II.

STAVES WITH CONTINUOUS RIME

are to be found in all the older poems of the Welsh and Irish, and were, doubtless, familiar to all the other branches of the great Celtic family. The length of the stave seems to have been chiefly regulated by that of the period; and in some of the Welsh poems (probably written in the sixth century) it varies from three or four to as many as twelve or even fifteen verses.

The earlier Romance poems have, in like manner, a continuous rime, varying at uncertain intervals. For the most part each period has its own peculiar rime; but, in some poems, the rime overrides several sentences, and even changes in the midst of a period. These staves of uncertain length were well known to the Romance dialect, which was spoken at the English court during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In some cases, the same rime is repeated as many as twenty or thirty times—the common endings on, ence, ent, &c. affording great facilities, in heaping together these riming terminations. The poems, in which we claim an interest, always, I believe, consist of alexandrines; but the poem on Boethius—the oldest poem in the Romance of Oc, which has come down to us—is written in verses of five accents.

Final rime, when first introduced into English poetry, was sparingly used in detached couplets—the correspondence being confined to the final syllables of the two sections. Occasionally we have four or five of these riming couplets occurring together; and, in Conybeare's riming poem, they are often furnished with the same rime. In

* * *

1 See p. 389.
some poems, also, written in the metre of four accents (as in the Biblical history, quoted by Warton\footnote{Hist. of Engl. Poetry, vol. i. p. 19 [or ii. 35, ed. 1871]. See also Bennet MS. R. 11. [The allusion is to The Story of Genesis and Exodus, ed. Morris, 1865. Warton’s remarks are misleading; for the riming of many lines together is rare, except just at the beginning of the poem.—W. W. S.]}\textsuperscript{1}) we have the verses riming sometimes two, sometimes three, four, five, or even six together. But neither in this, nor in the Anglo-Saxon poem, does the rime exercise that control over the stops, which is essential to the construction of a well-defined stave.

In some of our loose and tumbling Psalm-metres, I think I have met with instances where the rime was continued through an uncertain number of verses, and, at the same time, governed the punctuation. I have, however, lost my references, and cannot readily call to mind any instance of such a combination.

When final rime was first applied to the Latin “rhythmus,” staves both of a simple and of a complicated structure

\begin{verbatim}
Suet | e ie | su : king | of blys | se
Myn huer | te lou | e : min huer | te lis | se
Thou | art suet | e : myd | ywis | se
Wo | is him | : that the | shal mis | se

Suet | e ie | su : min huer | te lyht |
Thou | art day | : without | e nyht |
Thou 3eu | e me strein | the : and | cke myht |
For | te lou | ien : the | aryht, &c. . . .

Swet | e ie | su : lou | erd myn |
My lyt | myn huer | tc : al | is thin |
Vndo | myn her | te : and liht | ther yn |
And wit | e me | : from fen | des engyn, | &c. .
\end{verbatim}

Among our tumbling Psalm-metres we often find staves of four verses riming continuously. Staves of a like kind were used in several of the Latin “rhythm;” and, as the flow of our English verses is generally too loose to afford any safe test, it is hard to say on which of these Latin forms the English staves were modelled. The writers of
had long been familiar. In some of the shorter poems the same rime was continued from the beginning to the end; but, far the most part, the correspondence between the final syllables varied in each stave. Hence were obtained staves of a definite length, that rimed continuously, and exercised the requisite control over the punctuation. Many of these staves have been imitated in the modern versification of Europe.

The favourite combination of the Iambic Dimeter was the stave of four verses; and its "rhythmus" was often furnished with the continuous rime. The following hymn, which was probably written at the close of the thirteenth century, was, no doubt, intended as an imitation of such riming rhythmus. Its cadence seems to have been a good deal influenced by that of our native rhythmus.

Sweet Jesu! king of bliss
Mine heart's love, mine heart's joy,
Thou art sweet, in very sooth
Wo is him, that shall miss thee!

Sweet Jesu! mine heart's light,
Thou art day, all without night!
Give thou me strength, and eke might
Thee for to love aright! &c.

Sweet Jesu! my Lord!
My life, mine heart all is thine,
Change [Open] mine heart, and light therein —
And loose me from the Devil's snare.

the songs noticed in bk. iii. ch. 6, seem to have had in their view the rhythmus of Walter Mapes; and I suspect this favourite combination was floating before many of our poets, in cases where the looseness of the rhythm does not enable us to trace the imitation.

Towards the close of the sixteenth century a stave came

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a Harl. 2253. There are fifteen stanzas in all. [Printed in T. Wright's Specimens of Lyric Poetry, p. 57; and in K. Boddeker's edition of MS, Harl. 2253, p. 191.]

b See pp. 513, 514.

c See p. 475.
into fashion, which consisted of three verses, each of five accents. It kept its popularity nearly a century, but I cannot satisfactorily trace its origin. Ben Jonson has used it more than once. [See An Epistle to a Friend, in Underwoods, poem 55.]

Though you sometimes proclaim me too severe,
Rigid and harsh, which is a drug austere
In friendship, I confess, but, dear friend, hear.

Little know they, that professe amitie
And seeke to scant her comely libertie,
How much they lame her in her propertie.

And lesse they know, who being free to use
That friendship, which no chance but love did chuse,
Will unto license that fair leave abuse, &c.

The affecting elegy, written by Charles, and preserved by Burnet, may furnish us with another specimen.¹

Nature and law by thy divine decree
(The only root of righteous royaltie)
With this dim diadem invested me;

With it the sacred scepter, purple robe,
The holy unction, and the royal globe——
Yet am I levell’d with the life of Job!

Ichot a burde in a bour : ase beryl so bryht
Ase saphyr in seluer : semly on sylt
Ase iaspe the gentil : that lemith with lyht
Ase gernet in golde : and ruby wel ryht
Ase onyce he ys on : yholden on lyht
Ase diamand the dere : in day when he is dyht
He is coral yeud : with cayser and knyht
Ase emeraund amorewen : this may haveth myht
The myht of the margarite : haveth this mai mere
For charbocle ich here chos : bi chyn and by chere.

Hire rode is ase rose : that red is on rys
With lilye white leres : lossom he is
The primerole he passeth : the peruenke of pris
With alisaundre thareto : ache and anys

¹ [Printed in Percy's Reliques of Ancient Poetry.—W. W. S.]
The fiercest furies, that do daily tread
Upon my grief, my grey discrowned head,
Are those that owe my bounty for their bread, &c.

But, sacred Saviour, with thy words I woo
Thee to forgive, and not be bitter to
Such as, thou knowest, do not know what they do!

Augment my patience, nullify my hate,
Preserve my issue, and inspire my mate,
Yet, though we perish, bless this church and state!

The compound staves which rime continuously were,
for the most part, formed on a very simple plan. Certain verses, varying in number from four to eight, took
the same final rime, and a couplet furnished with a different rime shut in the stave—iteration being em-
ployed to bind the two parts together. The following song was written about the year 1300. It is curious as
a store-house of amatory compliment, from which many a
gallant seems afterwards to have drawn his commonplace.
[See MS. Harl. 2253, fol. 63; printed in T. Wright's Speci-
mens of Lyric Poetry, p. 25, and in Bödeker's edition of
MS. Harl. 2253, p. 145.]

I wot a bride in a bower, as the beryl bright;
As sapphire in silver, seemly to sight;
As the gentle jasper, that gleameth with light;
As garnet in gold, and ruby so rightful;
She's one like the onyx, holden on high;
As the precious diamond (in the day when she's dight)
She's [known as] coral with Kaiser and knight;
As emerald in the morn, this maiden hath might;
The might of the margerite (pearl) hath this maid also;¹
For carbuncle I [would have] selected her, for her chin and her com-
plexion.

Her hue is as rose, that red is on branch;
With lily-white skin, lovesome is she;
The primrose she passeth, the pink² of price,
With alissander also, the ache [i.e. parsley], and the aniseed;

¹ [Rather, this famous maid.—W. W. S.]
² [Not pink, but periwinkle.—W. W. S.]
Coynte ase columbine : such hire cunde ys
Glad under gore : in gro and in gris
He is bloome upon bleo : briest under bis
With celydoyne and sauge : ase thou thyself sys
That syht upon that semly : to blis he is broht
He is solsecle : to sanne ys forsoht.

He is papeisai in pyn : that beteth me my bale
Thou trewe tortle in a tour : y telle the mi tale
He is thruslye thuyen ant thro : that singeth in sale
The wilde laveroc ant wolc : ant the wode wale
He is saucoun in friht : dernest in dale
Ant with eueruch a gome : glaest in galè
From weye he is wisist : into Wyrhale
Hire none is in a noote : of the nyhtegale
In annot is hire nome : nempeneth hit non
Whose ryht redeth : roune to Johon.

The next stave likens the favourite lady to the various
delicacies of the table; and the last to different heroes of
romance, the song ending with the line [gentil ase ionas he
iowyth with Ion]—

Gentle as Jonas, she joyeth with Jon.

Hence it is clear the poet’s name was John; and his lady’s
is just as clearly Annot, and not Joan, as Warton strangely
surmises. It may also be well to inform the reader that
all this alliterative jingle was not manufactured for the
occasion, but consists, for the most part, of favourite cor-

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1 “Under gore,” “in gro and in gris,” and “under bize,” are common
phrases in our old English poems, used for the purposes of generalization—just
as the Anglo-Saxon used the phrases, under the heaven, under the welin, on
mold (that is, on earth), and others of the same kind. They show a more
artificial state of society, inasmuch as they all refer to articles of dress. The
word gore is still well-known to the seamstress, and means the triangular piece
of cloth, or linen, which is wanted to complete the fork, or interior angles of a
vestment; gro and gris are different kinds of fur; and bize is a kind of cloth, I
believe no other than our common baize. [Not so; his is Lat. byssus; but
baize, formerly spelt bayes, is merely the pl. of bay, in the sense of bay-coloured
cloth, the etymology being from Low Lat. badius, brown. The words are
therefore perfectly distinct.—W.W.S.]
Skilful as the columbine, such her nature is;
Gladsome under wede, in gro and in gris;
She’s a blossom in colour, the brightest under baize;
With clestony and sage, as thou thyself seest;
He that looks upon that seemly one, to bliss is he brought,
He is the sunflow’r, that to the sun is drawn.

She’s popinjay that in pain: assuageth my sorrow,
[Thou] true turtle, in a tower, [I tell thee my tale];
She is thwart, [well-grown and strong], that singeth in hall;
The wild lark and——? and the wood-welc;
She is falcon, in frith, most secret in the dale,
And with every man most gladdest in song;
From Wey she is wisest unto Wirral;
Her name is in a note of the nightingale,
In a note is her name—let no one name it.
Whoso readeth rightly, let him run to Johan.

respondences, which long kept their place in our literature. The "rightfulnesse of the rubio," "the might of the marguerite," &c. were common alliterations, and probably owed their rise to the superstitions of our ancestors. Both Anglo-Saxon and old English MSS. are still extant, which treat of the virtues of herbs, precious stones, &c.

Minot, the northern poet, who sang the triumphs of our third Edward, often used these compound staves; but the transcriber of the MS. has, in some cases, written the sections as distinct verses. The following staves are part of one of his songs against the Scotch.

2 [Dr. Guest prints swanne. The MS. has sanne. The sense is obscure.—W.W.S.]
3 That is, wisest from Wey-hill in Wiltshire to Wirral in Cheshire.
4 [Rather, "No one names it;" or, "does no one name it?" Nepneth is not an imperative or subjunctive form.—W. W. S.]
5 [Dr. Guest prints roune; but the right reading is roune, i.e. "let him whisper (it) to John."—W. W. S.]
6 [In MS. Cotton, Calbs E. ix; printed in Political Songs and Poems relating to English History, edited by T. Wright in 1859; vol. i. p. 61.]
Skottes out of Berwik: and of Abirdene
At the Bannokburn: war 3e to kene
Thare slogh 3e many saekles: ala it was sene
And now has king Edward: wroken it i wene
It es wroken i wene: wele wurth the while
War 3it with the Skottes: for thi er ful of gile.

Rughsfute riveleng: now kindels thi care.
Rere bag with thi beste: thi biging is bare,
Fals wretche and forgsworn: whider wiltou fare
Busk the unto brig: and abide thare
Thare wretche saltou won: and wery the while
Thi dwelling in Donde: es done for thy gile.

Sometimes Minot gives *eight* verses to the stave—the six first, of course, taking the same rime. In the song from which we have quoted, the second rime remains unchanged throughout. As the strain upon the memory is thus lessened, there is less necessity for the *iteration* to bind together the two portions of the stave; and, in the fifteenth century, it was generally omitted. Dunbar’s ex-postulation with his patron, the fair-spoken and heartless profligate James the Fourth, may afford us an example.¹

The way | crand warl | dis : wretch | ednes |
The fail | ycand and fruit | less : bis | sines |
The mis | pent tyme | the ser | vice vaine |
For | to consid|er : is | ane pane |
The slyd | and joy | : the glaid | ness schort |
The fein | yeid luif | : the fals | comfort |
The sweet | abayd | : the slight | full train |
For | to consid|er : is | ane pane |
The sug | urit mouth | is : with mynd | is thairfra |
The fig | urit speiche | : with face | is tua |
The ples | and toung | is : with hart | is unplane |
For | to consid|er : is | ane pane | &c.

At later periods staves were often made up of couplets,

¹ See Dunbar’s Poems, ed. Laing, i. 204.]
Scots out of Berwick and of Aberdeen,
At Bannockburn were ye too fierce,
There slew ye many, without guilt, as t'was seen,
And now has King Edward aveng'd it, I ween.
It is avenged, I ween, well worth the while!
Yet be ye ware of the Scots, for they are full of guile.

Roughfoot Rivelings,¹ now kindles thy sorrow!
Bear-bag,² with thy boast, thy dwelling is bare!
False wretch and forsworn, whither wilt thou fare?
Get ye unto the bridge, and abide ye there—
There, wretch, shalt thou won, and curse the while,
Thy dwelling in Dundee is lost through thy guile, &c.

which were (as regarded their metre) wholly unconnected with each other. The only property of a stave, these slovenly combinations could boast of, was the control they exercised over the punctuation, and even this was sometimes denied them. Waller closes his Panegyric “to my Lord Protector,” with the following lines—I cannot call them staves.

Illustrious acts high raptures do infuse,
And ev'ry conqueror creates a muse.
Here, in low strains, your milder deeds we sing;
But there, my Lord, we'll bays and olives bring

To crown your head; while you in triumph ride
O'er vanquish'd nations, and the sea beside;
While all your neighbour-princes unto you,
Like Joseph's sheaves, pay reverence, and bow.

¹ The riveling was a brogue of untanned leather worn in Scotland during the fourteenth century. The term was given as a nickname to the Scotch by the well-dressed Englishman, and afterwards (as civilization advanced) was applied by the “tame Scots” to the wild Highlander.

² The Scotchman, in a foray, always carried with him a bag of oatmeal.
CHAPTER III.

THE PSALM-STAVES

are those combinations of verses, which resulted from the application of the mixed rime to the Psalm-metres. Many of these staves are become familiar to us, from the use which has been made of them in our different versions of the Psalms, but their origin is not of modern date—in our own language they may be traced up to the thirteenth century, and in the Latin to a much higher antiquity.

The hymn on the Epiphany, said to have been written in the ninth century by the German monk Hartman, consists of staves, formed from the riming couplet of the imperfect Trochaic Tetrameter by introducing a sectional rime into each verse.

Tribus signis
Deo dignis
Dies ista colitur;
Tria signa
Laude digna
Cætus hic persequitur.

Stella magos
Duxit vagos
Ad præsepe Domini;
Congaudentes
Omnes gentes
Ejus psallunt nomini, &c.

This, it will be seen, is only a particular kind of the ryme coee, or tail-verse, of which we have already spoken. Another kind was obtained by applying the sectional rime to the imperfect Iambic tetrameter. It was used in the Romance song, made by one of Leicester's partizans, after the battle of Evesham, A.D. 1265.

See p. 570.
Chapter mestoit mon cuer le voit : en un dure language
Tut en ploraunt fust fet le chant : de nostre dux baronage
Qe pur la pees si loynz apres : se lesserent detre—
Lur cors trencher et demenbrer : pur saluer Engleterre
Cre est oys la fjur de pris : qe taunt sawoit de guere
Ly quens Mountfort sa dure mort : molt enplorra la terre. 1

The tail-stave, fashioned on the imperfect Iambic Tetrameter, 2 has been adopted into almost all the languages of Europe. It must have been common in English poetry during the fifteenth century, and, it may be, even at an earlier period. The following stave is taken from one of Wyat's songs, written about the year 1520. 3

Consent, at laste,
Since that thou hast
My hart in this demayne,
For service trew,
On me to rewe,
And reche me love agayne.

The stave hero swelled out into six verses is nothing more than two riming Iambic Tetrameters, each of them furnished with a sectional rime. By a similar device other combinations were formed from the stave of four, or even from that of six Tetrameters.

By keeping in mind this origin of the stave we see the reason why, in most cases, the tail-rime remains unchanged. But, as in the original stave the last couplet sometimes takes its own peculiar rime, so, in these staves, the last tail-rime is sometimes given, and varies from the others. The celebrated drinking song, for example, in Gammer Gurnon's needle [Act ii.], ends every stave with the word old.

I cannot eat but little meat,
My stomach is not good,
But sure I think, that I can drink
With him that wears a hood.

1 [Printed in Political Songs, ed. Wright, p. 123.] We have here one of the few instances afforded by our early literature, of an ill-constructed stanza. It will be seen there is no metrical connection between the first and the second couplets; the third couplet is repeated in every stave, and may, therefore, be independent of the others.

2 See p. 475. The lengthening syllable of the "rhythmus" is generally omitted in our slovenly imitations of this metre.

3 [Printed in English Poets, ed. Chalmers, ii. 389.]
Though I go bare, take ye no care,
    I nothing am a-cold,
I stuffe my skin so full within
    *Of joly goode ale and old.*

**CHORUS.**

Backe and side, go bare, go bare,
    Both foot and hand, go colde!
But, belly, God send thee good ale inoughe,
    Whether it be new or olde.

I love no roast but a nut-brown toast,
    And a crab laid in the fire;
A little bread shall do me stead,
    Moche bread I noght desire;
No frost, no snowe, no winde, I trow,
    Can hurte me if I wolde,
I am so wrapt, and throwly lapt
    *Of joly good ale and old.*

**CHORUS.**

Backe and side, &c.

So, in the Not-browne Maid, both the expostulations of
the Gentleman, and the answers of the Lady have their
peculiar endings, with which, of course, the last tail-rime
must correspond.¹

**HE [st. 15].**

Yet take good heed, for ever I drede
    That ye coude not sustein
The thorny wayes, the depe valcis,
    The snowe, the frost, the reyn,
The colde, the hete; for drye or wete,
    We must lodge on the playn,
And us above no other rove
    But a brake, busshe, or twayne;
Which sone shulde greue you, I beleue,
    And ye wolde gladly than,
That I had too the grene wode goo
    *Alone, a banysshyd man.*

**SHE [st. 16].**

Syth I have here ben partynere
    With you of joy and blysse,
I musete also parte of your woo
    Endure, as reason is;

¹ Printed in Skeat’s Specimens of Eng. Literature, p. 102.]
Yet am I sure of oo plesure,
And shortly it is this—
That where ye bee, me semeth, perde,
I coude not fare amysse—
Wythoute more speche, I you beseeche,
That we were soon agone,
For in my mynde, of all mankynde
I love but you alone, &c.

In this poem, which probably dates about the close of the fifteenth century, the first section of the Tetrameter is written as one verse. Archbishop Parker, in his version of the Psalms, treats the first section in the same way; but marks its middle pause with a colon, as also the final pause of the original Tetrameter.

To feede my neede: he will me leade
To pastures grene and fat:
He forth brought me: in libertie
To waters delicate: &c.

We sometimes find the same sectional rime applied to both Tetrameters; but to dance in these setters required no common dexterity, and such cases are but rare.

There is a species of tail-stave, which seems to be formed by a duplication of the first section—such duplicated section riming, and occupying the place of the riming section in the stave, whose properties have been discussed. The following staves are taken from the "Complaint" of the Westphalian monk Bernard. They are based, it will be seen, on the riming couplet of the imperfect Tetrameter.

Canonici, cum cæteris
Collegiorum sociis,
Mundaniter imbuti,
In variis et serico
Vestiti vadunt Jericho
Mollissimis induti.

Ne quid eorum corpora
Sustineant, vel aspersa
Tenerrimos offendant,

1 Here we have a rime in the first section—to feede my neede; but this correspondence is merely accidental, and not to be found in the other staves.
De pretiosis pellibus
Subtilibus et mollibus
Camisias emendant, &c.

This stave was a favourite one with our poets during the

Len|ten is com|e with lou|e to town|e
With bloa|men ant| with brid|des roun|e
That al| this blis|se bryng|eth
Day|es-e|es in | this dal|es
Not|es suet|e of nyht|egal|es
Uch|² foul | song sing|eth . . .

The ros|e rayl|eth hir|e rod|e
The leu|es on | the lyht|e wod|e
Wax|en al | with wil|le
The mon|e man|deth hir|e bleo|
The lil|ic is | los|sum to seo|
The fen|yl ant | the fil|le, &c.

In this song, besides a loose rhythm, we often find the duplicated sections lengthened; but in the next century the structure of the Latin original was still further departed from, and the lengthening syllable of the tail-verse is often wanting. Chaucer's Rime of Sir Thopas affords us many examples of this slovenly versification.

A variety of this stave, fashioned on the common stave of four Tetrameters riming continuously, was well known in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Though it does not

Whon he was brouht uppon his stede
He sprong as sparkle doth of glede
For wraththe and for envye
Alle that he hutte he made hem blede
He ferde as he wolde a wede
Mahoun help he gan crye

¹ [Printed in Wright's Specimens of Lyric Poetry, p. 43; Morris and Skeat, Specimens of Early English, p. 48; Bödeker's edition of MS. Harl. 2253, p. 164.—W. W. S.]
² Uch should certainly have been written uche.
thirteenth century; at the close of which was probably written the song that furnishes us with the following extract,—

Spring is come with love to town, 3
With blossoms and with song of birds,
That all this bliss bringeth—
Daisies in the dunes!
Sweet notes of nightingales!
Each bird singeth song.

*  
The rose she putteth on her colour,
The leaves in the [bright] wood
Spring forth all with good-will!
The moon recovereth [sends forth] her look!
The lily it is lovesome to see,
The fennel and the fille [i. e. wild thyme].

possess facility, it appears to have been a great favourite with the writers of our English romances, many of whom have left us specimens of their skill in the management of this somewhat unwieldy stanza. The extract which follows is taken from a tale of the fourteenth century, called the King of Tars 4 [I. 193]. The terrible "Soudan," it should be prefaced, has been unhorsed by the Christian king, and rescued by his "Sarazins."

When he was brought unto his steed,
He sprung forth as spark doth from glede,
For wrath and for disdain;
All that he hit, he made them bleed,
He fared as if he would go mad;
"Help, Mahoun," gan he cry.

3 In town, to town, &c. were well-known poetical phrases, and might be rendered "in or to habitations of men," &c. The original meaning of the word town was homestead.

4 [Printed in Ritson’s Metrical Romances, ii. 156,—W. W. S.]
Mony an helm ther was unwaved
And mony a bacinet tocleved
And sadeles mony emptye
Men mihte se uppon the feld
Moni a kniht ded under scheld
Of the cristene campaignye.

This stave, it will be seen, has only four riming terminations, the fourth and fifth verses taking the same rime as the first and second, but most staves, belonging to this class, have five. Staves of a similar kind were fashioned on the imperfect Trochaic Tetrameter. They were used by Lawrence, Prior of Durham, in the first half of the twelfth century, and afterwards by Walter Mapes, to whom the following are ascribed in an Oxford MS.¹

Ita dicunt Cardinales,
Ita solent dii carnales
In primis allicere:
Sic instillant fel draconis,
Et in fine lectionis
Cogunt bursam vomere.

Tales regunt Petri navem!
Tales habent Petri clavem,
Ligantl potentiam!
Hui nos docent, sed indocti,
Hii nos docent, et nox nocti
Indicat scientiam!

Cardinales, ut prædixi,
Novo jure crucifixi
Vendunt patrimonium;
Foris Petrus, intus Nero,
Intus lupi, foris vero
Sicut agui ovium. &c.

This was, doubtless, the model which Shakespeare had in view when he wrote the song,

Orpheus with / his huts / made trees,
And the mounthain-polls, / that freeze/,
Bow themselves, when he / did sing/;
To his mu/ sicke plants / and flow/ers

¹ Bodl. MS. Digby 4. [See Poems of W. Mapes, ed. T. Wright, p. 220.]
Many a helm was there unlaced,
And many a basinet was cleft,
And saddles many empty'd;
Men might see, upon the field,
Many a knight dead under shield,
Of the Christian company.

Ever sprung}, as sunne | and show}ers
There | had made | a last|ing spring}.}

Every thing that heard him play,
Ev'n the billows of the sea,
Hung their heads, and then lay by;
In sweet musicke is such art,
Killing care and griefe of heart,
Fall asleepe, or hearing dye!

Henry VIII. 3. 2. 3.

Staves of a similar construction were formed on the verse of six accents. They were used in the elegy, written A.D. 1308, upon Sir Piers of Brimingham, "a noble champion against the Irish." [See MS. Harl. 913, fol. 50.]

An-other thing al-so
To Yrismen he was fo
That wel wide whare
Ever he rode aboute
With streinth to hunt ham utc
As hunter doth the hare.

—Another thing also
To Irishmen he was foe,
That were full widely spread,
Ever he rode about
With strength to hunt them out,
As hunter doth the hare.

For whan hi wend best,
In wildernis hab rest,
That no man ssold ham see
Than he wold drive a quest
Anon to har nest
In stid ther hi wold be.

For when they ween'd best
In the wild to have rest,
That no man should them see,
Then would he drive a quest
Anon to their nest,
In the place where they'd be.

Of slep he wold ham wake
For ferdnis he wold quake
And fond to sculk awai
For the hire of har bedde
He toke har heuid to wedde
And so he ta3t ham pla, &c.

From sleep he would them wake,
For terror would they quake,
And try to skulk away;
For the hire of their bed
He took their heads in pledge,
And so he taught them play! &c.

In some few cases we find the first section twice repeated,

Ye men of Galylee,
Wherfor mervelle ye?

Q Q
Hevyn behold, and se
How Jesus up can weynde,
Unto his fader fre;
Where he syttes in majeste,
Withe hym ay for to be,
In blys withouten ende!

*Townley Myst. Ascencio*; p. 300.

The general form of this stave had been anticipated in the tail-stave of the *lay* and the *virelay*. One of these little poems has been [wrongly] attributed to Chaucer, and by Islip is termed a "ballade."

```
    Alone    \ walking
In thought \ plaining  all des|olate
And sore \ sighing
Me remembring
Of my living, both ear|ly and late,
My death wishing

    Infortunate
So is my fate, out of measure
That wote ye what?
My life I hate, &c.
```

It will be seen that the tail-rime of one stave becomes the sectional rime of the following one. This peculiarity seems to be the chief characteristic of the English *virelay*.

Another set of staves were formed from the *Psalm-metres* by means of the interwoven rime. One of the oldest of these appears to have been based on the stave of four imperfect *lambic Tetrameters* riming continuously. It was

```
The dryv\ers thor\owe the wood|es went |
    For \ to reas \ the dear;
Bo\men byck\arte vppone \ the bent, 
With ther \ browd ar|os cleare |
Then \ the wyld thor\owe the wood|es went |
    On ey\ry syde|\shear |
Grea\hondes thor\owe the grev|is glent |
    For \ to kyll \ thear dear.
```

*Lines 10-13.*

1 [Another version is given in Percy's Reliques of Ancient Poetry, Series II*., bk. 1; and a third in Morley's Shorter Eng. Poems, p. 75. The author was Robert Henryson.—W. W. S.]
used in one of those satires against the Romish clergy, preserved by Flacius.

This stave appears to have been a great favourite with our countrymen during the fifteenth century, at the close of which was written the old song, beginning—

Robene sat in gud grene hill
Keipaud a fлоk of fie
Merry Makyne said him till
Robene thow rew on me,
I haif the luvit lowd and still
Ther yeiris two or thre
My dule in dern bot gif thow del
Doubtles bot dreid I de.

Robin sat on the good green hill,
Keeping a flock of sheep,
Merry Makyn said to him,
"Robin, rue on me,
I have lov'd thee, in speech and silence,
These years two or three,
My secret sorrow unless thou 'suage Doubtless in sooth I die."

In the same stanza there is reason to believe was originally written the well-known ballad of Chevy Chase; and, amid all the additions and blunders of transcribers, we may still, in many parts, very clearly trace this metrical arrangement. The ballad was in all probability composed early in the fifteenth century.²

The drivers through the wood went
For to rouse the deer,
Bowmen hover'd upon the bent (upland)
With their broad arrows clear,
Then the wild deer through the woods went
On every side full many [or, severally]
Greyhounds through the groves glanced
For to kill these deer.

² [Carefully printed from the Ashmole MS. (a corrupt but unique copy) in my Specimens of English.—W. W. S.]
At the laste | a squyar of Northom|berlonde|
    Lokyde at | his hand | full ny|
He was war | ath the doug|hte Dog|las commynge|
    With him | a mygh|tte meany|
Both with spear | bylle|1 and brande|
    Ye was a myght|ti sight | to se|
Hard|yar men | both off hart | nor hande|
Wear not | in cris|tiante|

**Lines 20-23.**

The Dog|glas par|tyd his ost | in thre|
    Lyk a cheffe | cheften | off pryde|
With su|ar speares | of mygh|tte tre|
    The cum in | on eu|cry syde|.
Thrughe | our Yng|glyshe arch|cry|
    Gave man|y a wounde | full wyde|
Man|y a doug|ete the garde | to dy|
    Whych gan|yde them | no pryde|.

The Yng|lyshe men | let thear bo|ys be|
And pulde | owt brandes | that wer brighte|
It | was a hov|y syght | to se|
    Bryght swordes | on bns|nites lyghte|
Thor|owe ryche male | and myn|e ye ple|
    Many sterne | the strocke | done streght|
Man|y a freyke | that was | full fre|
    Ther vu|dar foot | dyd lyght|.

At last | the Dug|las and the Per|se met|
    Lyk to cap|tayns of myght | and of mayne|
The swapte | togeth|er tyll the | both swat|
    With swordes | that wear|4 | of fyn | myllan|
Thes worth|e freck|ys for | to fyght|
    Therto | the wear | full fayne|
Tyll | the bloode owte | off thear bas|netes sprente|
    As eu|er dyd heal | or ran|

**Lines 56-67.**

There is another interwoven stave of eight verses, in which every verse takes four accents. Whether it be founded on one of the Psalm-metres however may admit of doubt. In some cases the rhythm is very precise, and

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1 In Hearne's copy [and in the MS.] it is brylly—should it not be burnie?
2 A basinet was a light kind of helmet.
3 A freck was a common word in our northern dialect, and meant a gallant: daring fellow.
At the last, a squire of Northumberland
   Looked under his hand full nigh,
He was ware of the doughty Douglas coming,
   With him a mighty meiny (following),
Both with spear, bill, and brand,
   'Twas a mighty sight to see!
Hardier men both of heart or hand
   Were not in Christendom.

The Douglas parted his host in three,
   Like a great chieftain of pride;
With sure spears of mighty tree
   They came in on ev'ry side;
Through our English archery
   They gave many a wound full wide,
Many a doughty one they made to die—
   Which gained them no pride.

The Englishmen let their bows be,
   And pull'd out brands that were bright,
It was a heavy sight to see
   Bright swords on bas'nets ² light!
Through rich mail and manoply
   Many a stern one they struck down straight,
Many a flock, ³ that was full free,
   There under foot did fall.

At last the Douglas and the Percy met,
   Like to Captains of might and main;
They swapt together, till they both sweat,
   With swords that were of fine Milan.
These worthy champions for to fight—
   Theceto were they full fain!
Till the blood out of their bas'nets burst.
   As ever did hail or rain, &c.

agrees with that of the full Iambic Tetrameter; but is it
certain this rhythmus ⁵ was known in the middle ages,
and have we any English metre that corresponds with it? ⁶
These questions must be answered in the affirmative, be-

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⁴ The words that wear are probably an addition by the transcriber. Our present copy of the poem is certainly a very corrupt one.
⁵ See p. 474.
⁶ See p. 514.
fore we can pronounce the following to be one of the

When Alexander our king were dide
That Scotland led in luwe and le
Away were sons of ale and brede
Of wyne and wax of gamyn and gle
Oure gold were changyd into lede
Cryst borne into virgynyte
Succour Scotland and remede
That stade is in perplexyte.

As Alexander died in 1285, this stave cannot be of much later date. About the same period too, an interwoven stave of four verses was common, each verse being provided with four accents as in the stave just quoted. But it may be questioned whether such a combination be anything but the stave of four Iambic Dimeters, furnished with the interwoven instead of the continuous rime, and I shall therefore not stop to give examples.

The common interwoven staves of four, which were founded on the Psalm-metres, were certainly of later growth than the interwoven staves of eight verses. The former, however, must have been well known, and familiar, during the fifteenth century, to which period, indeed, we can trace many of our common ballads; and, during the last three centuries, they have been by far the most popular staves in our language.

One of their varieties, founded on the "short metre," must, I think, have originated in the last century, for, though in the sixteenth this metre sometimes split its verses, I do not remember any case where it took the interwoven rime.

To keep the lamp alive,
With oil we fill the bowl;

[Printed in Wyntoun's Chronicle, ed. Macpherson, i. 401, and ed. Laing, ii. 266.—W. W. S.]  
[2 See p. 521.]
Psalm-staves. It is part of an elegy on Alexander the Third, which has been preserved by Wynton.¹

When Alexander our king was dead,
That Scotland led in love and law,
Away went luck of ale and bread,
Of wine, and wax, of game, and glee;
Our gold was changed into lead;
Christ! born in virginity,
Succour Scotland, and restore,
That fix'd is in perplexity!

"Tis water makes the willow thrive,
And grace that feeds the soul.

The Lord's unsparing hand
Supplies the living stream,
It is not at our own command,
But still deriv'd from Him.

Cowper, Olney Hymns, 63.

Among the many varieties, to which the hacknied device of repetition gave birth, some of the earliest were obtained by repeating the first verse. The following stave, which may date soon after the year 1200, is quoted in one of Archbishop Langton's sermons, and applied to the mystical perfections of the virgin!

Bel | e Aliz | matin | leva |
Sun | cors ves | ti et | para |
Enz | un ver | ger seu | entra |
Cink | fluret | tes y | truva |
Un | chapel | et fet | en a |
    De | rose | duri | e |
Fur | deu tra | hez vus | en la |
    Vus | ki ne am | ez mi | e |

The following English stave, which was written in the same century, has fewer repetitions.³

³ [Printed in Wright's Specimens of Lyric Poetry, p. 94; and in Bödeker's edition of MS. Harl. 2253, p. 218.—W. W. S.]
As ye me rod this neder day
By grene wode to seche play
Mid herte y thohte al on a may
Suetest of alle thinges
Lythe and ich ou telle may
Al of that suete thinges.

By means of a similar device Michael of Kildare—the oldest English poet that Ireland can boast of—obtained a

Swet | ie | sus hend | and fre |
That was | i straw3t | on rod | e tre |
Nowth | e and cu | er mid | us be |
    | And | us schild | fram sin| nc |
Let | thou no3t | to hel| le te |
    | Thai | that bith | her in | ne |
So bri3t | c of bec | thou hir | e me |
    | Hop| pe of al | le man kyn | nc |
Do | us i se | the trin| ite |
    | And heu |ene rich | e to win | u |

This world | -is lou | e is gon | awai |
So dew | on gras | se in som | cris dai |
Few | ther beth | weil | awai |
    | That lou | ith god | dis lor | e |
Al | we beth | iclung | so clai |
    | We | schold rew | that sor | e ; |
Prince | and king | what wen | ith thu |
    | To lib | be eu | ir mor | e |
Leu | eth 3ur plai | and cri | eth ai |
    | Ie | su crist | thin or | e, &c.

This sang wro3t a frere
Iesus crist be is socure
Louerl bring him to the toure
  Frere Michel Kyldare
Shild him fram helle bourse
  Whan he sal hen fare
Leucli flur of al honur
  Cast a wei is care
Fram the schoure of pinis sure
  Thou sild him her and thare.

_Amen._

The rhythm of Michael's verse was certainly meant to
As I rode, the bygone day,
By green wood to seek me play,
In heart I thought all on a maid,
     Sweetest of all things,
Listen, and I may tell to you
All of that sweet creature.

new variety from the common interwoven stave of eight verses. [See MS. Harl. 913, fol. 9.]

Sweet Jesu, fair and free,
That wast y-stretch’d on the rood-tree,
Now and ever with us be,
     And save us from sin!
Let thou not to hell depart
     Those, that be herein;
Thou—so bright of look!—hear me,
     Hope of all mankind!
Make us to see the Trinity,
     And heaven’s realm to win.

This world’s love is gone away,
Like dew on grass in summer-day;
Few there be—welaway!—
     That love God’s lore;
We be all y-bound to earth,
     We must rue that sorely;
Prince and king—what ween they?
     To live for evermore?
Leave ye your play, and cry ye ay,
     “Jesu Christ, thy mercy!” &c.

This song a Friar made,
Jesu Christ be his succour!
Lord, bring him to thy tow’r!
     Friar Michael of Kildare—
Save him from Hell’s abode,
     When he shall fare hence;
Lady! flow’r of all honour,
     Cast away his care;
From the show’r of pains so bitter,
     Save thou him, here and there.

be the same as that of the Romance-stave, last-quoted-
that is, as the favourite cadence of Walter Mapes;\(^1\) the rhythm of the other stave was just as clearly meant for that of the imperfect Iambic Tetrameter. It will be seen, Michael introduces two sectional rimes into his four last verses. This may possibly entitle his stave to rank with a class, whose properties we have yet to consider, and which I would call the mixed staves.

The mixed staves result from the introduction into the same combination of verses, of both interwoven and tail-rime, or from the partial application of one of them. They were once extremely numerous, and even at the present day are far from uncommon.

In the well-known song, called Robin Goodfellow,\(^2\) which has been attributed to Jonson, the first four verses take the interwoven rime, and the remainder of the stave the tail-rime. The rhythm may possibly be based on that of the imperfect Trochaic Tetrameter;\(^3\) but, if so, is a very loose imitation of it.

\begin{verbatim}
Betuen | c Mersh | ant Au | eril |
   |    |    |    |
When spray | bigin | neth to spring | c
The lnt | el foul | hath hir | e wyl |
   |    |    |    |
On hyr | e lud | to syn | ge
ICh libbe | in lone | longinge | c
For sem | lokest | of al | le thing | c
He may me blisse bringe |  c
ICHam | in hir | e baundoun |
Au hen | dy hap | ichab | be yhent |
Ichot | from heu | ene it is | me sent |
From al | le wym | men mi lou | e is lent |
    | Ant lyht | on Al | ysoun |
\end{verbatim}

In this stanza the final rime of the interwoven stave is used as the sectional rime of the tail-stave; and as the four last lines are the same throughout the song, there is that

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\(^1\) See p. 475.

\(^2\) [Printed in Percy’s Reliques, Series 3, bk. 2, and in Hazlitt’s Fairy Mythology of Shakespeare, p. 418.]

\(^3\) See pp. 475, 476.

\(^4\) [Hazlitt prints \textit{whinny}, which seems more likely.—W. W. S.]
Sometimes I meet them like a man,
Sometimes an ox, sometimes a hound,
And to a horse I turn me can,
To trip and trot about them round.
   But if, to ride,
   My backe they stride,
More swift than wind away I go—
   Ore hedge and lands,
   Thro pools and ponds,
I whirry 4 laughing ho! ho! ho!

In the middle of the seventeenth century they generally assigned two couplets to the first four lines, as in the famous cavalier song,

   Full forty years, this royal crown
   Has been his father's and his own, &c.

Staves on these models are to be found in almost all the languages of Europe.

The following stanza forms part of a love song which may date about the year 1300. It affords us another specimen of a mixed stave.

Between March and April
   When the spray beginneth to spring,
The little birds have their good will
   With their notes to sing.
I live in yearnings of love
   For the seemliest of all creatures;
She may bring me bliss,
   I am at her command.
A happy chance I have secured,
   I wot from heaven it is me sent;
From all women my love is gone
   And lighted on Alison.

metrical connection of parts, which is necessary to the construction of a well-formed stanza. In the stanzas which follow, this connection is effected by means of the final rime;

* These verses have three, instead of four accents, but the omission is no doubt owing to the blunders of the MS. [Perhaps not; see the last stanza of the poem.—W. W. S.]

* [Printed in Wright's Specimens of Lyric Poetry, p. 27; Morris and Skeat's Specimens of Early English, p. 43, &c.—W. W. S.]
the interwoven rime being only applied partially. "They were written by the old Scotch poet Montgomery, 1 "on the unkindness of his friends when he was in prison."

When men or women visites me,
    My dolour I disguise
By outward signs, that none may see
    Where inward languor lyes.
Als patient as my pait appeares,
With heavy hait, quhen no man heirs,
For bai then burst I out in teirs,
    Allane, with caifull cryis, &c.

Remembering me quhair I haif bene
    Baith lykit and belov't,
And now sen synce quhat I haif sene
    My mind may be commov't;
If any of my dolour dout,
Let ilkane sey thair time about,
Perhaps quhose stomok is most stout
    Its patience may be prov't, &c.

1 [See some account of Alexander Montgomery in Hazlitt's ed. of Warton's Hist. of E. Poetry, iii. 266; and see this poem printed in Sibbald’s Chronicle of Scottish Poetry, iii. 503. His poems were edited by Laing in 1822.—W. W. S.]
CHAPTER IV.

THE BURTHEN, WHEEL, &C.

The burthen we have already defined\(^1\) as a return of the same words, and the wheel as a return of some peculiar rhythm at the end of each stave. Shakespeare and his contemporaries used the words indifferently; but the distinction here taken may be justified, in some measure, by the collateral meanings which are respectively attached to these terms, and will, probably, be excused from its great convenience.

The repetition of some leading thought or expression, at certain intervals, carries with it, in many cases, advantages so obvious, that we might expect to find the burthen a device well-known and familiarly used in the rhythmical system of every language. I know, however, but of one instance where it is met with in Anglo-Saxon, and as this cannot date earlier than the eleventh century, it may possibly have been suggested by the ecclesiastical chants, in which such repetition was common.

One of the oldest Latin specimens is found in the baptismal hymn, attributed to Fortunatus, bishop of Poictiers, in the sixth century.

\begin{center}
Tibi laus perennis auctor  
Baptismatis sacrator,  
Hic fonte passionis  
Das premium salutis;  
Nox clara plus et alma  
Quam luna, sol, et astra,
\end{center}

\(^1\) See p. 572. It was otherwise called the foot. Nares, s.v. Clown, quotes—"Entreth Moros, . . . synging the foote of many songs, as fools were wont." Also the ourturn (Jamieson), the holding or undersong (Tudd), or the down (Cotgrave, s.v. lervlot).
HISTORY OF ENGLISH RHYTHMS.

Quae luminum coronæ
Reddis diem per umbram;

Tibi laus!

Dulcis, sacra, blanda
Electa, pura, pulchra,
Sudans honoré mollæ,
Rigans odore chrisma,

Tibi laus! &c.

In the Anglo-Saxon song¹ which follows, the burthen consists of an alliterative couplet; and the sentiment, as it always should do, gives a colouring to the whole poem. The writer would fain lighten the sense of his own misery

We|land him | be wur|man : wære|es cun|nade
An|hydig cæl|e car|scaht neal
Nœ|de him | to ge-sith | the : sor|ge and long|ath
Win|ter ceal | de wæs|e we | au oft | onfond
Sith|than hin | e nith | -had : on ned |e leg|de
Swonc|re | sean| o-bend |e : ensyl|tan mon |
Thæs | ofer-cod|e : this|ses swa meæ.

Bead|o-hil|de ne wæs| : byr|e broth|ra death |
On set|an swa sår | : swa byr |e sylf | re thing |
Thæt | hæo geæ| o-lie |e : ongiet |en hæf|de
Thæt | hæo eac|en wæs | : ælf |re ne meæh |te
Thris| te ge-thenc| an : hu | ymb thæt | secelde
Thæs | ofer-cod|e : this|ses swa meæ.

We | that maæh | hilde : mon|ge gefrug|non
Wur|don grund| lease : geæ|es frig|e
Thæt him | seo sorg|lufu : slæp | eal|le binom|
Thæs | ofer-cod|e : this|ses swa meæ.

Theod|ric ah|te : thrit|ig win|tra
Mer|inga burg | : thæt | was mon|egum cuth
Thæs | ofer-cod|e : this|ses swa meæ.

¹ [Called "Deor the Scald's Complaint;" printed in Codex Exoniensis, ed. Thorpe, p. 377; and in Grein, i. 249.—W. W. S.].

² Welund, the famous smith, was beset in his dwelling by Nithad and his followers, and carried off captive, having been first hemstrung to prevent escape. To revenge himself he entices Nithad's sons to his workshop, and murders them; and having given their sister Beadchild a sleeping-draught, violates her person; he then makes himself wings, and flies from his oppressor. The whole story may be found in the Edda.
by the reflection, that time and endurance have put an end to the misery of others. If the following translation may be trusted, he was the household-bard of the High Denings, that is, I take it, of the Danish princes who succeeded Knut; and seems to have lost his place at court, when the Confessor mounted the throne of England.

As is usual with the Exeter M.S., the rhythmical dot is very rarely inserted; but each division, ending with the burthen, is written separately. This is, for several reasons, worthy of notice. Most Anglo-Saxon poems run on continuously, page after page, sometimes even to the end, without a break.

Welund 3? tasted of exile;
The firm-hearted man hardships bore;
He had for comrades sorrow and yearnings—
Cold winter-exile! 3 woe did he oft endure,
Ince Nithad him of force laid low,
With failing sinew-tye—hapless man!
That he o'ercame—this too may I!

Nor to Beadohild was her brothers' death
At heart so sore, as her own woe,
For that she quickly had perceived
That she was pregnant; nor ever might she
With all her power think, how that should be!
That she o'ercame—this too may I!

We, many of us, have heard, that for Mæthhild 4
The Geat's passion was without limit 5—
So that grief's yearning sleep from it wholly took.
That he o'ercame—this too may I!

Theodric 7 held for thirty winters
The Mæring's burg—that was to many known.
That he o'ercame—this too may I!

3 See p. 317.
4 I have never seen this adjective elsewhere. [It is spelt swancer in Beowulf, l. 2175; and swancur in Ps. 118. 81; see Grein.—W. W. S.]
5 I know nothing of the story here referred to.
6 If this line be rightly construed, we should read friga instead of frige. [i.e. friga, nom. pl. = loves, yearnings. Grein takes frige to be nom. pl. = woovers, which gives no sense. In the next line, for it read him.—W. W. S.]
7 This passage probably alludes to the fable of Theodric's thirty years' exile
This song is divided by the burthen into unequal portions; but these, as has been observed, are written separately in the MS. In the next specimen the burthen seems to have been introduced at regular intervals; but the whole is written continuously. It is taken from the Layamon MS., and forms part of a "lutel sermun," which

Alle bac-biteres : wendet to helle.
Robberes and reuerees : and the monquelle.

with the Huns; though such a supposition will not remove every difficulty. In explaining this and other historical or mythical allusions in our Anglo-Saxon poems, we must not pay too much attention to the later myths of the Islander and the German. Fable overlaid History, and changed her shape, with wonderful facility in those days.

1 See p. 374, n. 6.
2 I can only construe this line by supposing da a mistake for ḡāḥ. If this correction be admitted, we may, I think, infer that Hearren was Poet Lawresit to the Confessor. But many a hero has been manufactured by our Anglo-Saxon scholars out of an innocent adverb or adjective, and possibly I may be
We have heard tell of Eormanric's
Wolfish counsel. Widely he ruled
The people of the Gotens realm—grim king was he!
Many a soldier sat, wrapt in sorrows,
In expectation of woe; strongly wish'd he
That the kingdom's woe were over past.
That he o'ercame—this too may I!

He's sitteth sorrow-laden, joy-bercaved,
In heart he's darken'd—to himself he thinketh
That endless must be his portion of hardships.
One then may think, that o'er this world
The all-wise Lord worketh full diversely;
To many a man honour he showeth,
A well-order'd prosperity—to some a woe-portion.
That I of myself will say;
For that I whilom was the High-Denings' bard,
Dear to my Lord! My name was Deor;
Many winters had I a noble following,
A faithful Lord—till, that Heorren prevailed.
Now the song-skill'd man the land's hath gotten
Which erst on me bestow'd the earl's protector!
That he o'ercame—this too may I!

was probably written soon after the year 1200. In this
sermon there are two or three changes of metre; and, after
several couplets in the verse of four accents, the preacher,
all at once, changes his subject, and dashes off in the follow-
ing measure.

All backbiters wend to hell;
Robbers and reivers, and the manalayer;

fashioning a poet of no better materials. [Both Green and Thorpe take the
name to be Heorrenda, the verb being geteah.—W. W. S.]

That is, Eormanric's soldier.

The lord-right or land-right was, I have little doubt, the lieu granted to the
court-bard for his professional services. The high rank and dignified station
of these officers during the twelfth century admit of no dispute, and that the
bard was a "King's Thane" during the earliest period of Anglo-Saxon antiquity,
we learn from Beowulf.

[MS. Cotton, Calig. A. ix. The extract here given is printed at the end of
Wright's edition of the Owl and Nightingale, p. 81; and in Morris, Old English
Miscellany, p. 186.—W. W. S.]
Lechurs and horlinges: thider sculen wende.
And ther heo sculen wunicen: enere buten ende.
Alle theos fals chepmen: the seond heom wule habbe.
Bachares and brueres: for alle men heo gabbe.
Lo3,e he holde todore galun: mid berme heo hine fulleth.
And euer of the purse: that seluer heo tulleth.
Bothe heo nuketh feole: heore bred and heore ale.
Habben heo that seluer: ne tellet heo neuer tale.
Godemen for godes lune: beleueth suche sunne.
For atten ende hit bi-nimeth: heuereiche wunne.

Alle prestes wifes: ich wet heo beoth for-lore.
The[s] [persones] ich wenc: ne booth heo no3t for-bore.
Ne theos prude 3ungemen: that lunieth maekin.
And theos prude maideotes: that lunieth janoekin.
At churche, and at cheeping: hwanne heo to-gadere come.
Heo roneth to gaderes: and speketh of derne lune
Hwenne heo to churche cometh: to the holiday.
Euernuch wil his leof iscon: ther 3ef he may.
Heo beholdeth wadekin: mid swithe gled eye.
[Atom his hire pater-noster]: biloken in hire teye.

Masses and matines: ne kepeth heo nouht.
Robin wule Gilot· leded to thon ale.
And sitten ther to-gedere· and tollen heore tale.
He mai quit ten hire ale· and sothen do that gome.
An eue to go mid him· ne thu[n]chet hire no schome.
Hire sire and hire dam· threteth hire to· bote.
Nule heo for-go robin· for al heore thr ese.
Euer heo wile hire schere: ne com hire no mon neh.
For that hire wombe· un arise an heh.

1 That is, “never do they give right measure”
2 That polite device, the celibacy of the clergy, seems ever to have jarred with the good sense and manly feeling of the Englishman. Cardinal ait cardinal was sent over to enforce obedience to this regulation of the chur.
The story, which Matthew Paris tells us of one of these cardinals, and the long list of vices which were, at the same time, imported from Italy—vices which are alluded to in Episcopal Visitations, and proved against, with disgust, particularly in the charters of many Ecclesiastical Foundations—afford us terrible commentary on the system.
3 [Dr. Guest prints `preestes sones, which he explains by “priest’s sons.” B the MS. has “persones,” where “per” is expressed by the usual abbreviation. W. W. S.]
4 [Dr. Guest has “run.”—W. W. S.]
5 [Dr. Guest prints Atora his hire primur, which he explains by “Run swi?
Lechomies and whoremongers thither shall wend,
And there shall they won, ever without end!
All these false chapmen, the fiend shall have them,
Bakers and brewers—for all men they cheat;
Low they hold their gallon, with froth they fill it;
And [ever] from the purse the silver they toll [entice];
Both make they weak—their bread and their ale,
Get they but the silver, never tell they tale.¹
Goodmen, for God's love, leave ye such sin!
For at the end it taketh away the joy of heaven-ric.

All priests' wives,² I wot they be forlorn (lost)!
These [parsons],³ I ween, they will not be let off!
Nor these proud youngmen, that love Malekin,
And these proud maidens, that love Janekin;
At church and at market, when they together come
They [whisper]⁴ together, and speak of secret love:
When to church they come—to the holiday—
Ev'ry one will his love see, there, if he may;
She beholdeth Wadekin, with right glad eye—
[At home is her pater-noster]⁵—lock'd up in her [box]!
Good men for God's love, leave ye such sin—
For, at the end, it taketh away the joy of heaven-ric.

Masses and matins they do not keep!
[Robin ⁷ will] Gillot to the ale-house lead,
And there they sit together, and they tell their tale;
She may quit her ale, and so then to that man,⁶
And ever [At eve] to go with him seemeth to her no shame!
Her sire and her dame threaten her to beat—
She'll not forego Robin, for all their threat!
Ever will she proffer [excuse] herself, nor cometh [has come] any man her nigh,
But that straightway [Until at last], &c.

from her is her primer;” but see Morris, Old English Miscellany, pp. 190, 191. He also explains [eye] by “scrip,” but it is rather “box;” O. F. trist, Lat. trista. Dr. Morris explains it by “tie,” which is even worse.—W. W. S.]

¹ There is here no break in the MS., but the failure of the rime clearly shows there is some omission. If we suppose the burthen of the second stave, and the first verse of the third, to have been passed over in transcription, we shall make each stave consist of twelve verses.

² If we might infer that the good monk is here inveighing against the Morris-dancers and Robin-hood, this would be by far the most ancient mention of that redoubtable personage. Gillot was long given as a nickname to any coarse, vulgar, masculine woman. [The first part of this note is founded on a misreading. Dr. Guest prints wuole instead of wule, and explains it by “Robin's feld.” But there is no mention of folt at all.—W. W. S.]

³ Rather—He may pay for her ale, and afterwards play that game.—W. W. S.]
In this song the burden slightly varies its form. Such shifting appendage was common in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; and the variations tolerated were, in some cases, so great, as hardly to preserve the essential properties of a burden.

Our modern songs occasionally shut in their staves with some lines in prose. These are generally more or less shifting; and sometimes no repetition whatever can be found either of phrase or sentiment. It might, perhaps, in such case, be termed a wheel—the absence of all definite rhythm

Mon that wol of wysdam heren  
At wyse hendgyng he may lernen  
That wes marcolnes sone  
Gode thonkes and monie thewes  
Forte toche fele shrewes  
For that was euer is won.

Ihu crist al folkes red  
That for us alle tholde ded  
Upon the rode tre  
Leue us alle to ben wys  
Ant to cud in his seruys  
Amen par charite

God beginning maketh god endyng.  
quoth Hendyng [ll. 1-16].

Betere were a riche mon  
Forte spouse a god womon  
Thah hue be sumdel pore  
Then to brynge into his hous  
A proud quene ant daungerous

Harl. MS. 2253. [Printed in Specimens of Early English, ed. Morris and]
Good men, for God's love, leave ye your sin!
For, at the end, it taketh away the joy of heaven-ric.

Pray ye Saint Mary, by her gentle heart—
By the tears that she wept—by her son's blood—
(As wise as she is good!) by her burial cheer [intercession]—
To the bliss of heaven may she bring us all!

being considered as a substitute for some particular selection.

Such wheels, however, are not of modern date. There is a song¹ written in the thirteenth century (and probably in the early half of it) which has each of its staves followed by a proverb, connected with and illustrating the subject. The song consisted originally of thirty-eight staves, and is now provided with two others (without prose accompaniment however), which seem to have been added by some copyist, as we might term him, editor. He thus introduces his author to the reader.

The man, that would of wisdom hear,
From wise Hending may he learn,
(That was Marcolf's son,)
Good principles and fair manners,
Them to teach to many a shreward—
For such was ever his wont.

Jesu Christ, all men's succour,
That for us all suffer'd death,
Upon the rood-tree,
Grant us all to be wise,
And to end in his service—
Amen, for Charity!
Good beginning maketh good ending,
quoth Hending, &c.

Better were a rich man
To spouse a good woman,
Though she be somewhat poor—
Than to bring into his house
A proud quean and dangerous

¹ Skeat, p. 35; in Bödsker's edition of MS. Harl. 2253, p. 287; and elsewhere.
—W. W. S. 1
That is sumdel here
Moni mon for londe wyueth to shondo
quoth Hendyng; &c. [ll. 273-281.]

The glotoun ther he fint god ale
He put so muche in ys male
Ne leteth he for non eye
So lône he doth uch mon rytht,
That he wendeth hom by nytht,
Ant lyth ded by the weye
Drynk eft lasse ant go by lyhte hom
quoth Hending, &c. [ll. 290-297.]

Hendyng seith soth of mony thyng
Ihu crist heuenne kyng
Vs to blisse bryngc.
For his sweete moder loue
That sit in heuen vs aboue
3eve us god endyng.

[ll. 306-311.]

A very common kind of wheel originated in the use of the middle rime instead of the final—the last verse of the stave being thus converted into two short ones. It was

My dere sones where ye fare : by frith or by fell
Take good hede in his tyme : how Tristrem woll tell
How many maner bestes : of venery there were
Listenes now to our Dame : and ye shulen here
Foure maner bestes : of venery there are
The first of hem is a hart : the second is an hare
The boar is one of tho
The wolf and no mo.

And where so ye comen : in play or in place
Now shal I tel you : which ben bestes of chase
One of them a buck : another a doo,
The fîx and the marteryn : and the wilde roo
And ye shal my dere sones : other bestes all
Where so ye hem finde : rascal hem call
In frith or in fell
Or in forest y yow tell.

1 [The meaning of hore is very different; it is a substantive.—W. W. S.]
2 [This is a translation of wyueth, as printed in the former edition. But wyueth = wiveth, marrieth.—W. W. S.]
3 A frith was a woodland, not afforested.
That is somewhat hoar (aged) —
Many a man for sake of land winneth his way to shame,

quoth Heding, &c.

The glutton, where he finds good ale,
He putteth so much in his hide,
He ceaseth for no fear —
So long he doth every man "right,"
That he goeth home by night,
And lyth dead by the way.
Drink less hereafter, and go by daylight home,

quoth Heding, &c.

Heding saith truth of many things;
Jesu Christ, king of heaven,
May he bring us to bliss;
For his sweet mother's love,
That sitteth in heaven, us above,
May he give us good ending!

adopted by Damo Juliana Berners, in her Treatise on Hunting, written in the year 1481.

My dear sons, wheresoe'er ye fare, by frith or on hill,
Take good heed, how in his time Tristrem would tell,
How many kinds of Beasts of Venery there were;
Listen now to our Dame, and ye shall hear —
Four kinds of Beasts of Venery there are,
The first of them is a hart, the second is a hare,
The boar is one of them,
The wolf — and no more.

And wheresoe'er ye come, in pageant, or in hall,
Now will I tell you, which are Beasts of Chace —
One of them a buck, another a doe,
The fox, and the martern, and the wild roe;
And ye shall, my dear sons, all other beasts,
Wheresoever ye find them, rascal call them —
In frith, or on hill,
Or in forest — I tell you.

* One of Tristrem's chief accomplishments was his skill in hunting. In the middle ages he was looked upon as the great patron of the sportsman. [See notes to Sir W. Scott's edition of Sir Tristrem. — W. W. S.]
The same wheel occurs in a curious satire, which is found immediately preceding the hymn ascribed to Michael of Kildare, and is probably a work of the same author. This satire is full of local allusions, which, to an Irishman, might be intelligible. Its range is a wide one, for, after glancing at the saints, Christopher, Benedict, Francis, &c.,

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

Hail 3e hole monkes: with 3ur corrin
Late and rathe ifillid: of ale and wine
Depe cun 3e house: that is al 3ure care
With seint benet is scorge: lome 3e disciplineth
Taketh hed al to me
That this is sleche 3e mow wel se.

Hail be 3e marhans: with 3ur gret packes
Of draperie avoir de peise: and 3ur wol sackes
Gold silver stones: riche markes and ek pundes
Litil 3iue 3e ther of: to the wreck pouer
Sle13 he was and ful of witte
That this lore put in writte, &c.

Hail be ye potters: with 3ur bole ax
Fair beth 3ur barnhatres: 3olow beth 3ur fax
3e stondith at the schamin: brod ferlich bernes
Fleis 3ow folowith: 3e swolowith y now
The best clerk of al this tun
Craftefullich makid this bastan, &c.

Makith glad mi frendis: 3e sittith to long stille
Spekith now and gladith: and drinketh al 3ur fille

1 See p. 600. [From MS. Harl. 913, fol. 7.]
2 It seems there was near the town a piece of water called the Lake, with a visit to which he threatens the fraudulent "brewster." The place must also have been one of considerable traffic, and a staple for wool. It seems to have boasted a Benedictine monastery, a nunnery, a house of Dominicans within the walls, and one of Franciscans without. The white Friar is only mentioned as a stroller from Drogheda. What town in Ireland answers these conditions?
and the friars, monks, &c., who followed their rules, it attacks the trader. As the white friar is twitted with his vagabond life, and the black friar with his costly habit, so the merchant is accused of covetousness, the butcher of gluttony, and the baker of fraud. It opens with an address to the poet’s patron saint, the Archangel Michael.

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Hail, Saint Michael, with the long spear!
Fair are thy wings, upon thy shoulder,
Thou hast a red kirtle down to thy foot—
‘Thou art the best of angels, that ever God made’
* This verse is full well y-wrought,
  It is from far y-brought! &c.

Hail, ye holy monks, with your black jack?
Late and early y-filled with ale and wine!
Deep can ye bouse, and that is all your care—
With Saint Bennet’s scourge poorly [often] ye take to discipline!
  Take heed all ye to me—
    That this is sly, ye may well see! &c.

Hail be ye merchants, with your great packs
Of drapery avoir-du-pois, and your wool sacks,
Gold, silver, stones, rich marks, and eke pounds—
Little thereof ye give to the poor wretch!
  Sly was he and full of wit,
    That this lore hath put in writ!

Hail be ye butchers, with your poll-ax,
Fair be your aprons, yellow is your hair,
Ye stand at the shambles, broad and awful fellow—
Flies follow you! ye swallow enough!
  The best clerk of all this town,
    Skilfully made he this baston!

Make you glad, my friends, ye sit too long still,
Speak now, and be merry, and drink ye all your fil

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3 Jamieson gives corves, leather. [He refers to Gawain Douglas, where, as Mr. Small shows, the word is corvesne = corven, i.e. cut!—W. W. S.] “Boethius shewed the art of sowing, as well for tailors as corvers and shoemakers.”—Holland, tr. of Pliny, b. vii. c. 56. [Perhaps then corven or corven is short for Cordovan leather.—W. W. S.]
3e habbeth ithird of men lif: that wonith in lond
Drinkith dep and makith glade: ne hab 3e non other nede
This song is y seid of me
euer iblessid mot 3e be.

It will be seen there is no rime between the third and fourth verses of Michael's stave. The omission, however, was not without its object. Seconded, for the most part, by some change in the rhythm, it gives a very marked and peculiar character to the fourth line—that is, to the verse, in which lies the sting of the satire:

There is none so styf on stede
Ne none so prowde in prese
Ne none so doughty in his dede
Ne none so dere in decee
No kyng no knyght no wight in wede
From dede have maide hym seese
Ne ² fleshe he was wont to fede
It shall be wormes mese
Youre dede is wormes coke
Youre myrroure here ye loke
And let me be youre boke
Youre sampille take by me
Fro dede you cleke in cloke
Siche shalle ye alle be.

Ilkon in siche aray: with dede thai shalle be dighte ⁵
And closid cold in clay: wheeder he be kyng or knyght
For alle his garmenst gay: that semely were in sight
His fleshe shall frete away, with many a wofulle wight
When wofullly sic wyghtys
Shalle gnawe thise gay knyghtys
Thare lunges and thare lightys
There harte shall frete in sonder
Thise masters most of myghtys
Thus shalle thay be broght under.

There then follow four staves, similar in structure to the last. It will be seen that the wheel is always knit to its

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¹ Towneley Mysterics; Lazarus; p. 324.
² Is not ne a mistake for the?
³ That is, the king, knight, warrior, &c.
Ye have heard of men's life—of such as dwell in land—
Drink ye deep, and make ye glad—ye have no other business!
This song has now been sung by me,
Ever y-blessed mote ye be!

Another kind of wheel seems to have been formed, by
the converting of two rizing tetrameters into an inter-
woven stave of four verses. In the example which follows,¹
the first section is tripled. Lazarus, who has just been
raised from the dead, is the speaker.

There is none so stiff on steed,
And none so proud in press,
And none so doughty in deed,
And none so lov'd in hall,
(No king, no knight, no man in weeds,)
That from death hath made him rise [lit. cease]!
The flesh he² was wont to feed—
It must be food for worms!
Your³ death is cook to th' worms;
On your mirrour here you may look;
And let me be your book,
Your sample take by me!
To 'scape from death you may grasp with a clutch—
But such shall ye all be.

Each one in such array—with death shall they be dight,
And closed cold in clay, whether he be king or knight,
For all his garments gay, that seemly were to sight,
His flesh shall be eaten away with many a woeful creature;
When woefully such creatures
Shall gnaw these gay knights,
Their lungs and their lights—
Their heart shall part asunder!
These seignours, high of power,
Thus shall they be brought under.

stave by means of iteration, as well as each stave to the one
preceding by a like artifice.

¹ Here Lazarus more directly addresses himself to the spectators.
² These four verses, it will be seen, answer to the eight verses of the first
   stave.
I have quoted from this Mystery (with some risk of offending the fastidious reader) two staves, because I think the peculiar form, given to the first of them, goes far to prove, that the common stave of eight verses, with alternate rime, is nothing more than the stave of four tetrameters, with a rime interwoven—or rather, I would say, it is an imitation of such stave.

But of all the wheels known to our language, the most important are those fashioned on the bob—that is, on the

Thu | art hel | e and lif | and li3t | .
And hel | pest al | mon-kun | ne .
Thu | us hau | est ful wel | idi3t .
Thu 3eu | e us weol | e and wun | ne .
Thu broht | est dai | and ev | e ni3t .
Heo bro3 | te woht | thu bro3 | est ri3t.
Thu al | messe and | heo sun | ne .
Risih | to me | lau | edi bri3t | .
Hwen | ne ich schal wen | de heon | ne .
So wel | thu miht .

This is clearly the stave of four imperfect Iambic tetrameters, with an interwoven rime, and the first section of the third tetrameters repeated. It is generally to a Psalm-stave of four long verses, or, at least, to some one of the derivative staves, that the bob is found attached in our older poetry; but in the sixteenth century it was used with other staves almost as freely as at the present day.

Whii war 4 and wrake in londe : and manslaught is icome
Whii hungger and derthe on eorthe : the pore hath undernyme
Whii bestes ben thus stowe : whii corn hath ben so dere
Ye that wolen abide : listneth and ye muwen here.
    The skile
I nolle li3en for no man : herkne whoso wile.

1 See p. 595.
2 [MS. Cotton Calig. A. xi. The extract will be found at the end of Wright's edition of the Owl and Nightingale, p. 65; and in An Old English Miscellany, ed. Morris, p. 160.—W. W. S.]
short and abrupt wheel, which came into fashion during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

As to the origin of this singular appendage—whether the bob came from the Latin or the Celtic—I shall not stop to make inquiry. It seems to have been familiar to the Romance dialects before it was adopted by the English. The earliest native specimen I have met with is in a hymn to the Virgin, which is found in the Layamon MS., and may date about the year 1200.

Thou art health, and life, and light,  
And helpest all mankind!  
Thou hast us full well y-dight,  
O give us weal and joy!  
Thou broughtest day, and Eva night,  
She brought wrong, and thou brought'st right,  
Thou alms, and she sin—  
Look on me, Lady bright,  
When I hence shall wend—  
As well thou may'st!

The simplest kind of bob-wheel consists of the bob, and a long verse following, and riming with it. It is used in a satire called Simonia, which is found in the Auchinleck MS., and which appears from the historical allusions to have been written in the reign of Edward the Second. It opens with the stave,

Why war and ruin on land and manslaughter have come,  
Why hunger and dearth on earth, have overtaken the poor,  
Why beasts have thus died, and corn hath been so dear,  
Ye that will abide, listen and ye may hear  
The reason—  
I will lie for no man—hearken whoseo will!

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[Printed in Political Songs, ed. Wright (Camden Society), from the same MS. in the Advocates' Library at Edinburgh. Mr. Wright calls it "Poem on the Evil Times of Edward II."—W. W. S.]
If we suppose the four first verses to rime *continuously*, instead of by couplets, a rime to be interwoven throughout the stave, and each section to be written as a distinct verse, we shall get the curious stanza in which Tristrem was 'written,' and which, in one of his songs, is also used by Minot. To make this complicated stanza still more diffi-

So wyle a wyght as I
In warld was never man
Household and husbandry
Fulle sore I may it ban
That bargain dere I by
Yong men bewar red l
Wedying makys me alle wan
Take me thi brydylle Mary
Tent thou to that page grathly
With alle the craft thou can
And may
He that this warld began
Wyshe us the way

The stanza of Christ's Kirk on the Green is nothing more than the stave of four imperfect Iambic tetrameters, with interwoven rime and this bob-wheel; tho interwoven

Was never in Scotland hard nor scene
Sic dansing nor deryn
Neither at Falkland on the Grene
Nor Peebelis at the play
As was of wowaris as I wene
At Christis kirk on ane day
Thir came our kitties waschen cleene
In thair new kertillis of gray
Full gay
At Christis Kirk of the Green that day.

'To dans thir damsellis them dicht
Thir lasses licht of laitis
Thair gluvis war of the raaffel rycht
Thair shune wer of the straitis

1 See p. 465.
2 Towneley Mysteries; p. 138.
3 [Printed in Pinkerton's Ancient Scottish Poems, ii. 244; and in Sibbald's Chron. of Scot. Poetry, ii. 359; but the text here given agrees with neither of these.—W. W. S.]
cult, the monks doubled the first section of the third and fourth verses; and so got the stanza which is used in the *Fugacio in Egyptum.* 2 Joseph is the speaker—but in these Mysteries, the most awful events are coloured with the humours of low life.

So distracted a creature as I,
In the world was never man!
Household and husbandry—
Full sore may I them ban;
That bargain dear I abye!
Young men, beware—I counsel you—
Wedding makes me all wan!
Take thy bridle, Mary,
Look thou to that child quickly,
With all the skill thou canst
And may'st—
He that this world began,
May He show us the way!

Rime not reaching to the last verse, and the rime between such verse and the bob being only preserved in the first stave. 3

Was never in Scotland heard or seen
Such dancing, or such fun,
Neither at Falkland 4 on the Green,
Nor Peebles at the play,
As was of wooers, as I ween,
At Christ's Kirk on a day—
There came our wenches washen clean,
In their new kirtles of gray
Full gay!
At Christ's Kirk of the Green that day.

To dance these damsels made them ready,
These lasses light of manner;
Their gloves were of roe-leather good,
Their shoon were from the straits (Morocco)

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4 In James the Fifth's reign there was a royal palace at Falkland, and Peebles was famous for its archery-play. The fairs, at both places, were celebrated.
Thair kertillis wer of Lyncombe lycht
    Well prest with mony plaitis
Thay wer sa nyss qhen men thame nycht
    Thay squelit lyke ony gaitis
    Sa Iout
At Christis Kirk of the Green that day, &c.

One can hardly suppose those critics serious, who attribute
this song to the moral and sententious James the First;
every line in it smacks of the royal profligate, who wrote
the Gab[er]zanie man.¹

Another kind of bob-wheel originated in the use of a
sectional rime in the last verse. One of the earliest ex-

Sit|teth al|le stil|le : ant herk|neth to me|
The kyn|of al|emaig|ne : bi ni le|aute|
Thrith|ti thous|ent pound|: as|kede he|
For|te mak|e the pecs|: in the|contre|
    Ant so | he dud e mor|e.
Richard | thah thou | be eu|er trichard|
    Tric|chen shalt | thou neuer mor

Instead of the sectional rime, the first section of the

Lystneth lordinges : a newe song ichulle bigynne
Of the traytours of Scotland : that take beth wyth gynne
Men that loueth falsnesse : and nule neuer blynne
Sore may him adrede : the lyf that he is ynnne
    Ich vnderstonde
    Selde wes he glad
That never nes asad
    Of nythe ant of onde

¹ [Meaning James V. See Chambers, Cyclopædia of English Literature,
where the Gabolunzie Man is printed.—W. W. S.]
² [See Political Songs, ed. Wright, p. 69; Böddeker's edition of MS. Harl.
2253, p. 98.—W. W. S.]
³ Harl. 2253. Also printed by Ritson [in his Ancient Songs, p. 28; and see
Their kirtles were of Lincoln fine,
Well prest with many plaits—
They were so silly, when men came near them—
They squeel'd like any goats
So loud!

At Christ's Kirk of the Green that day, &c.

amples is found in the song made by the rebel barons, after their victory at Lewes, A.D. 1264. The barons had attempted to bribe the king's brother, Richard, Earl of Cornwall and King of the Romans, a circumstance which is thus turned against him in the first stanza.\footnote{Political Songs, ed. Wright, p. 212; or Böddeker's edition of MS. Harl. 2253, p. 126.}

Sit ye all still, and herken to me!

The king of Allemagne, by my lealty,
Thirty thousand pounds asked he,
For to make the peace in the country!
And so did he more—
Richard, though thou be ever a trickster,
Trick us shalt though never more!

last verse was sometimes \textit{repeated}. The song against the Scots,\footnote{This is only one of those expletives, which occur so frequently, and to modern ears so impertinently, in our older poetry.} written in the year 1306, begins as follows,—
Generally, however, the first section was *tripled*. In the following example we have a rime interwoven in the four first verses. It may teach us the meaning of the

Thus shalle I tetch knayys : ensampyll to take
In thare wyttys that ravyes : siche mastre to make
Alle wantones wafys : no lenguage ye crak
No sufferan you savys : youre nekkys shalle I shak
   In sonder
No kyng ye on calle
Bot on Herode the ryelle
Or els many oone shalle
   Apon youre bodys wonder.

From the interwoven stave of four verses may possibly have arisen the common stave of eight verses, with alternate rimo. If this be so, we have here the original of the important stave, which we have already had occasion more than once to notice. It was used alike for the satire, the romance, and the mystery; and seems to have

Alas | for doylye | my la' dye dere
Alle | for-chang|yd is | thy chere
To see | this pynne | without|en perc
   Thus lap|pyd alle | in wo
He was | thi foode|, thi far|yst foine
Thi luft|, thi lake|, thi luft|sum son
That high | on trc | thus hynges | alone
   With bod|y black | and blo
   Alas |
   To me | and man|y mo| : a good | master | he was|

Here the long verses were clearly meant for Iambic tetrameters. When these verses are made use of, we rarely find the long verse of the bob-wheel corresponding; it is almost always, as in the present case, an alexandrine.

Sometimes the wheel contains *two* long verses, both of which rime with the bob. By interweaving a rime,
phrase: "out-Heroding Herod," for this redoubtable personage is the speaker. [See the Towneley Mysteries, p. 152.]

Thus shall I teach knaves to take example,
Them that rave in their wits, to make such mastery;
All wantons, and vagabonds, crack ye no boasts—
No sovereign shall save you, your necks will I break
A-sunder:
On no king do ye call,
Save on Herod the Royal—
Or else many a one shall
On your dead bodies wonder!

* retained its popularity undiminished for nearly three centuries.

In some cases the first section of the last verse takes the final rime instead of the interwoven. The following stanza consists of only two long verses and the bob-wheel; but the first sections of both are tripled. [Towneley Mysteries, p. 224.]

Ahs for dole! my lady dear,
All changed is thy cheer.
To see this prince—one without peer
    Thus wrapped all in woe!
He was thy child, thy fairest fondling *
Thy love, thy sport, thy lovesome son,
That, high on the cross, thus hangs alone
    With body black and blue,
    Alas!
To me and many more a good master was he!

we get the wheel, that was used by Hugh of the Palace, in his romance of Sir Gawaine.3

It will be seen, that the bob-wheel was generally connected with the main body of the stave by a community of rime. When there was no such bond of union—as when the wheel contained a close rime 4—the necessary

See p. 460.  
4 See pp. 624, 626.
connection of parts depended entirely on the *punctuation*. In such cases, the bob was intimately connected with the verses preceding it, and always followed by an important stop; and thus it formed the link, which tied the wheel to the rest of the stave. But in the fifteenth century the bob was sometimes converted into a long verse, which was often separated from the body of the stave by a full stop. In such case, *iteration*¹ was employed to bind the two parts together—though in the later poems, when a more

In this stave was written the Legend of Celestyn, perhaps as early as the thirteenth century; and, about a century afterwards, the romance of Octavian. It was at the same period often used in the mysteries, though soon

¹ See p. 574.
² [Printed in Wright's Specimens of Lyric Poetry, p. 38; and in Bödeker's edition of MS. Harl. 2253, p. 161; see stanza 4. --W. W. S.]
slovenly versification prevailed, it was very generally neglected.

Another kind of bob-wheel, essentially different, as it would appear, from those we have considered, was borrowed from the Troubadour. It was freely used during the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries; and, in later times, has been immortalised by the genius of Burns. The following extract, from a love-song of the thirteenth century,2 is particularly curious, inasmuch as in one of the staves the wheel is repeated.

How shall he with good will sing,
That thus is spoiled with mourning?
She will me bring to death
Long ere my day
Greet her well, that sweet thing
With eyes so grey!

Her eye hath wounded me in sooth,
And her bent brows that bring bliss—
Her comely mouth, whose may kiss,
In great joy were he!
I would exchange mine for his,
That is her fere (companion.)

Would her fere be so bounteous,
And ———? were, that so ’t might be—
All for one I would give three
Without bargaining;
From hell to look to the heav’n and sun,
There’s none so lively * [sly],
Nor half so free;
Whoso would of love be [true],
Mak’ him list to me.

afterwards it disappeared from our literature, and was merely lingering in the songs of a remote district, when Burns again made its rhythm familiar to every lover of English poetry.

2 [Printed acew in the former edition, and explained, conjecturally, by quid. But the word is treur, meaning trae.]
In some few cases the wheel was preceded by two, in-

Now me to spulyie sum not spairis
To tak my geir no captane cairis
Thai ar sa bald
Yit tyme may cum, may mend my sairis
Thoeh I be ald, &c.

Thoeh I be sweir to ryd or gang
Thair is sum thing I've wantit lang
Pafe have I wald
Thame punysit that did me wrang
Thoeh I be ald.

Sometimes the wheel followed an interwoven stave of

Almighty God Iesu Iesu
That borne was of a madyn free
Thow was a lord and prophete trew
Whyls thou had lyfe on lyfe to be
Emanges thise men
Yll was thou ded, so wo is me
That I it ken.

I ken it well, &c.

In the old Scotch song against the Mass an additional

Knawing there is na Christ but ane
Quhilk rent was on the rude with roddis
Quhy give ye glore to stock and stane
In worschipping of uthir goddis
Thir idolis that on alteris standes
Ar fenyeitniss
Ye gar not God amang your handis
Muiling your mes, &c.

In the last song, the rime of the short verses continues unchanged throughout. This is also the case with the earliest Romance specimen, which was written by the celebrated Earl of Poitou—the first troubadour, and grand-
father to Eleanor, Queen of England. It should also be

1 The reference is wrong. The extract is from Maitland's Poem called
stead of three verses, as in Maitland's song against "The Thievis of Liddisdale." 1

Now me to spoil there are who spare not,
To take my gear no captain fears,
They are so bold!
Yet the time may come may mend my sorrows,
Though I be old, &c.

Though I be slow to ride or walk,
There is one thing I've wanted long,
Fain have I would —
Them punished, that did me wrong,
Though I be old.

four verses. [Towneley Mysteries, p. 270.]

Amighty God, Jesu! Jesu!
That hern wast of a maiden free,
Thou wast a lord and prophet true,
Whilst thou hadst life, alive to be.

Among these men;
Yl wast thou dead, so woe is me
 That I it know.

I know it well, &c.

verse is introduced into the stave.

Knowing there is no Christ but one,
Who torn was on the rood with rods,
Why give ye glory to stock and stone
In worshipping of other Gods?
These idols, that on altars stand,
Are feigned things!

Ye make no God between your hands,
Mumbling your mass, &c.

noticed, before we dismiss the subject, that iteration was very often employed to bind together those staves which took the bob-wheel of the Troubadour. Two examples have been already given.

Another kind of wheel was formed by introducing a

"Solace in Age," printed in Pinkerton's Ancient Scottish Poems, ii. 318.--W. W. S.]
peculiar rhythm into some well-known combination—the sectional pause, for instance, into the common interwoven verse of four accents. Of this wheel we gave an example in a preceding chapter. Another variety originated in the use of the riming section 21, the wheel consisting of two riming verses, one or both of which began with this section.

The simplest, though probably not the most ancient combination into which this wheel enters, is found in one of the songs written by Suckling, early in the seventeenth century. 3

That none beguiled be by Time's quick flowing,
Lovers have in their hearts a clock still going;
For though Time be nimble, his motions
Are quicker 4
And thicker
Where Love hath his notions.

Hope is the mainspring on which moves desire,
And these do the less wheels, fear, joy, inspire;
The balance is thought, evermore
Clicking
And striking,
And ne'er giving o'er, &c.

A more complicated stave is found in the Miscellany called "The Handful of Pleasant Delites," published A.D. 1584. The sportsman, we are told, chases the hares to see her wiliness,

More than to win or get the game
To beare away,
He is not greedie of the same
(Thus hunters saie)
So some men hunt by hote desire
To Venus' dames, and do require
With flavor to have her: or else they will die
They love her and prove her: and wot ye why?
For sooth to see her subtilnesse, &c.

But the most important of these staves is that which was used in the "Cherry and the Slae," and which was

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1 See p. 558.
2 See p. 124.
3 [Printed in English Poets, ed. Chalmers, vi. 497.]
4 These three lines would be more correctly written as one verse.
so popular in the north, towards the close of the sixteenth century. The reader is instructed to sing it to "the air of the bankis of Helicon." An old song, with this title, is still extant. It seems to have been written about the year 1550, and was probably the earliest specimen of this singular stanza.2

Declair, ye bankis of Helicon,
Parnassus hills, and daills ilkone,
And fontaine Caballein,
Gif ony of your musis all
Or nymphis may be peregall
Unto my ladye shein?
Or if the ladys, that did havy
Their bodis by your brim,
So seemlie war, or yit sa suave (sweet),
So bewtiful or trim?

Contemple, exempill
Tak be hir proper port,
Gif onye sa benye
Amang you did resort, &c.

We need hardly remind the reader of "Tho Jolly Beggars," or the poems, on Despondency, on Ruin, &e., by which Burns has given to this stanza an enduring place in our poetry. Whatever rhythmical form his genius has consecrated must now be considered classical.

[See Sibbald's Chronicle of Scottish Poetry, iii. 343.]
[Printed in Pinkerton's Ancient Scottish Poems, ii. 257.]
CHAPTER V.

BALLET-STAVES.

Under this head I would arrange all the staves borrowed from the Romance languages, which admit only verses of equal length. I shall, however, whenever it may be expedient, follow them through their various changes, though, in the result, they may possibly get beyond reach of the definition just given.

The term ballet, which is preferred, as being less likely to mislead than ballad,¹ has been used in our language with great vagueness of meaning. Generally, however, the poems, to which I would apply the term, have a very distinctive character, as well in the nature of their poetry, as in the structure of their rhythm. The genius of the people, among whom they originated, was long and deeply impressed upon them. Subtlety, but little depth of thought, cold conceits, and an absence of all genuine feeling, long distinguished the English ballet, no less than the foreign models, from which it was imitated. By degrees it worked itself clear of affectation, but almost in the same proportion its original structure was altered.

In its most characteristic—perhaps I might have said its most perfect—form, the ballet consisted of certain staves, each of them ending with the same verse, and the whole shut in with a short stave, called by the French an envoi, and by the Spaniards a tornada. But neither the burden at the end of each stave, nor the envoi seems ever

¹ Both these terms were used by our poets, though the former prevailed chiefly in the north. The necessity for the distinction here taken will appear from the fact, that Ritson actually waded through an Oxford MS. entitled "The Abstract Breviare, compiled of divers balades, roundels, virelais, tragedies, &c." in search of some counterpart to Chevy-Chase or Johnny Armstrong!
to have been an *essential* characteristic of the ballet. We have many (and some very ancient) specimens, both in French and English, which have neither of these peculiarities; and several metrical forms, which will *here* be classed as ballet-staves, certainly never tolerated either the one or the other. As regards our own literature, I would say the envoi prevailed most in the fourteenth, and the burthen in the fifteenth century. In the latter century, too, the verse of five accents was, I think, more commonly used, than it had been in the century preceding.

There are three staves, which, from their prevalence in our literature, might well be called the *common* ballet staves. They consist respectively of 8, 7, and 6 verses; and the disposition of their rimes will at once appear from the following scheme:

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<th>Ballet-stave of 8</th>
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<th>Ballet-stave of 6</th>
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The ballet-stave of eight, like so many others of our metrical forms, seems to have originated with the Latinist. The German monk Ernfrid wrote a poem in the ninth century, from which is taken the following extract:

Felic ita tis regula
                 Hac fie ne sem per con stiti,
                 Ad punc;ta cum | venit | sua |
                 In se | volvi,ta cor ruit .
Quaeunque vita protulit,
                 Ambigua hata tristia,
Quaeunque se spes extulit,
                Infida dura credula, &c.

This is really our ballet-stave of eight, with two rimes—a variety we shall notice shortly. In English poetry, the ballet-stave of eight with three rimes was much more common than the ballet-stave with two, and seems also
to have been in use at a much earlier period. It is found in the elegy which laments the loss of our first

Al le that beoth | of huer | te trew | e
A stoun | de herk | neth to | my song |
Of duel | that deth | hath dilt | us new | e
That mak | eth me syk | e ant sor | ewe among |
Of | a knyht, | that wes | so strong |
Of | wham God | hath don | ys wil | le
Me thum | cheth that deth | hath don | us wrong
That he | so son | e shall lig | ge stil | le

Al Eng | lont ah | te for | te know | e
Of wham | that song | is, that | y syng | e
Of Ed | ward kynge, | that lith | so low | e
Sent al | this world | is non | e con spring | e
Trew | est mon | of al | le thing | e
Ant | in wer, re war | ant wys |
For him | we ah | te our | hon | den, wryn | ge
Of Cris | tendome | he ber | the pris |, &c.

There are some staves, consisting of verses of equal length, the origin of which is involved in doubt. But I think no one will hesitate to class this English stave with the Latin stave, used by Ernfrid; and when we have once fair hold on a Latin rhythmus, many difficulties vanish. There can be little doubt, that Ernfrid’s stanza was formed from two of the common staves, consisting of four Iambic dimeters; and that the artificial disposition of the riming syllables must be traced to the same spirit of invention, that gave birth to the close and interwoven rimes. This arrangement of the final rimes may now appear a very unimportant matter, accustomed as we are to almost infinite diversity of metrical structure; but in the eighth and ninth centuries it was a startling novelty, and the influences it exerted have been deep and permanent.

I believe Chaucer to be the first English poet that

1 [See Dr. Böddeker’s edition of MS. Harl. 2253, p. 140; and Political Songs, ed. Wright. p. 246. — W. W. S.]
2 See p. 357, n. 7.
Edward, and which, from internal evidence, cannot have been written long after the death of that monarch.\(^1\)

All, that be true of heart,
Awhile hearken to my song—
Of sorrow, that death hath wrought us newly.
That maketh me sigh, and sorrow the while
Of a knyght, that was so strong,
On whom God hath done his will;
Methinks that death hath done us wrong
That he thus early should lie still!

All England hath reason for to know
Of whom the song is, that I sing—
'Tis of Edward king* that lieth so low;
Over all this world his name gan spring:
Trewest man of all the earth,
And, in war, wary and wise:
For him we've cause our hands to wring —

wrote this stanza, with the verse of five accents; but Gower had most probably preceded him with his French "ballades," in which, by-the-bye, he always introduces an envoi, and makes the last line of each stave a burthen. Besides some smaller poems, Chaucer has written in this stanza the whole of the Monk's Tale, from which I take my example.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{His wif } & \mid \text{ his lord' es} \quad \text{and } \mid \text{ his con' cubin' es} \\
\text{Ay dronk } & \mid \text{ en, whil' e} \quad \text{her }^1 \mid \text{ap' petit' es last',} \\
\text{Out } & \mid \text{ of thise no' ble ves' sel's} \quad \text{son' dry vin' es} \\
\text{And } & \mid \text{ on a wall:} \quad \text{this king } \mid \text{ his ey' en est' e,} \\
\text{And saw } & \mid \text{ an hand: } \quad \text{arm' les} \quad \text{that wrote } \mid \text{ ful fast' e,} \\
\text{For ferre } & \mid \text{ of whiche } \mid \text{ he quoke } \quad \text{and sik' ed }^6 \mid \text{ sor' e,} \\
\text{This hand } & \mid \text{ of that Bal' thasar } \quad \text{so sor' e agast' e,} \\
\text{Wrote } & \mid \text{ Man e tech' el phar' es} \quad \text{and } \mid \text{ no mor e.} \\
\end{align*}
\]

Cant. Tales, 14205.

It will be seen, that in most kinds of ballet-stave there is some one or more portions, consisting of four verses,

\(^3\) See p. 596.
\(^4\) Their.
\(^5\) This is a beautiful example of the section 5 l. p. See p. 292.
\(^6\) Sighed.
knit together by the interwoven rime. The interwoven is occasionally superseded by the close rime; and the ballet-stave of eight is sometimes formed according to the following scheme:

1 2 2 1
3 3

These ballet-staves with close rime, though they occasionally appear in English poetry, were much more generally used by foreigners; and particularly by those, who modelled their versification on that of the Provencals, as the Italians and the Spaniards. I shall only notice such of them, as have played an important part in our literature —no good end would be answered by calling the reader's attention to every variety, that has from time to time been taken up by affectation or caprice.

The common ballet-stave of seven is perhaps the stanza in which has been written the greatest quantity of English poetry. It was the favourite stave of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries; and though most of the poets, who used it, are now only known by name, it still lives in the pages of Chaucer, of Spenor, and of Shakespeare. The first of these has written in this stanza four of his Canterbury Tales; the second has used it in his "lymns" on Love, Beauty, &c., and in his Ruins of Time; and Shakespeare has selected it for his Rape of Lucrece and his Lover's Complaint.

The following elegant tribute, intended for a man every way unworthy of it, the celebrated Earl of Leicester, is found in the Ruins of Time [ll. 183-196].

It is not long since these two eyes beheld
A mightie prince of most renowned name,
Whom England high in count of honour held,
And greatest ones did sue to gaine his grace—
Of greatest ones he, greatest in his place,
Sate in the bosom of his Soveraine,
And Right and Loyal did his word maintaine.

I saw him die, I saw him die as one
Of the meane people, and brought forth on beare.
I saw him die, and no man left to mone
His dolefull fate, that late him loved deare,
Scarce anie left to close his eyelids neare,
Scarce anie left upon his lips to haie
The sacred sod, or requiem to saie, &c.

Gascoigne calls this stanza rhyme-royal, "and certainly it is a royall kynde of verse, serving best for grave discourses." King James gives a somewhat similar name to the ballet-stave of eight, which he calls the ballet-royal. The epithet royal seems to be derived from the chant-royal of the French, a short poem in ballet-stave, written in honour of God or the Virgin Mary; and by which, according to French critics, the abilities of "the king" were tested in the poetical contests at Rouen. There are in our own literature many traces of the use, to which these stanzas were originally put; thus, in his Confessio Amantis, Gower changes his couplet metre of four accents to the ballet-stave of seven, immediately he begins his supplication to Venus.

King James terms the ballet-stave of six, common verse; and the frequent use, which was made of it during the whole of the sixteenth and the latter half of the fifteenth century, in some measure justifies the title. He thinks it well-fitted for "materis of love;" but the range of its application was by no means limited. The following staves are taken from [the section named Thalia in] Spenser's Tears of the Muses. One would almost wish to retain the old delusion, that the compliment was meant for Shakespeare, but modern criticism says Sir Philip Sydney.

Where be the sweete delights of Learnings treasure,
That went with comick sock to beautifie
The painted Theaters, and fill with pleasure
The list'ner's eyes, and cares with melodie,
In which I late was wont to reign as Queene,
And maske in mirth with Graces well bescene?

1 Thalia is the speaker.
O all is gone, and all that goodly glee,
Which wont to be the glorie of gay wits,
Is layd abed, and no where now to see,
And in her roome unseemly sorrow sits,
With hollow browes, and griesly countenance,
Marrying my joyous gentle dalliance, &c. . . .

And he the man, whom nature self had made
To mock herself, and truth to imitate,
With kindly counter, under mimick shade,
Our pleasant Willy, ah! is dead of late;
With whom all joy and jolly merriment
Is also deaded, and in dolour drent.

In stead thereof, scoffing scurrilitie
And scorning folly with contempt is crept,
Rolling in rimes of shameless ribaudrie,
Without regard, or due decorum kept;
Each idle wit, at will, presumes to make,¹
And doth the learned's task upon him take.

But that same gentle spirit, from whose pen
Large streams of homie and sweet nectar flow,
Scorning the boldness of such base-born men,
Which dare their follies forth so rashly throw,
Doth rather choose to sit in idle cell
Than so himself to mockery to sell, &c.

The ballet-stave of five is of very rare occurrence in our poetry. In seems naturally to range with the ballet-stave of six, as it most nearly approaches it in the peculiarities of its structure. It is written in verses both of four and of five accents; and was chiefly used at the end of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth century. Its rimes were ranged in the following order.

1 2
1 2
1

The couplets which shut in the ballet-staves of 6 and 7, have no metrical connection with the rest of the stanza; and I believe it was the metrical union that is found in the

¹ That is, to write poetry.