he wrote history, in Latin he wrote satires and romances. Amid these labours, he had little time to study the niceties of Anglo-Saxon grammar, and the Homilies, the English Scriptures, Cædmon’s Paraphrase, the national songs, the magnificent Judith, and other treasures of native genius, must soon have lain on the shelves of his cloister as little read, or, if read, almost as little understood as if they had been written in a foreign tongue. When he addressed himself to the unlearned, noble or ignoble, he used the vulgar dialect of his shire, with its idioms, which the written language had probably rejected as wanting in precision, and with its corrupt pronunciation, which alone would require new forms of grammar. In this way, many specimens of our old English dialects have been handed down to us; and these, however widely they differ from each other, agree in one particular—in confounding the characteristic endings of the Anglo-Saxon.

For want of a standard literature none of these dialects could fix its grammar. Every century brought with it fresh changes; and the student, who sits down to Robert of Gloucester, will derive but little aid from his previous knowledge of Layamon. In the fourteenth century, the final e began to waver; and during the following century our language may be considered as once more in a state of disorganization. It is a singular fact, that several of the other European languages were shortly after threatened with a revolution of the very same nature; when the press came to their aid, and by doubling the influence of their literature put a stop to further changes.

1 See the version of the Brunanburgh War-song, made or rather attempted by Henry of Huntingdon.

2 Layamon wrote his history expressly for the nobles, and Robert of Brunne “schewed his Inglis” for the “lordes lewed.”

3 There are two dates, which, as regards the history of our language, it is important to have fixed—the earliest period when the final e became mute, and also the period when it was first used for mere purposes of orthography—to lengthen, for example, the vowel of the preceding syllable. Both these dates will, I think, be found in the fourteenth century; the first near the beginning, the latter probably near the close.

4 The final e is still very commonly dropt in the boor-speech of Germany, and even in the classical language there are many traces of the same mutilation.
Hitherto little mention has been made of the Latin or the French. The various ways in which these languages influenced our own, have never yet been clearly traced, and by some writers have been most strangely misunderstood. There are not wanting those, who look upon the English tongue as a mongrel jargon, invented for purposes of intercourse between the Norman and his Saxon serf; a notion which can only be matched by the theory, that was once started as to the origin of the Sanscrit. The Latin and the French deranged the vocabulary of our language, but never its form and structure; and the streams which successively came from these two sources flowed through various channels, and at periods widely separated from each other.

Latin words are found in Anglo-Saxon MSS. of a very early date; especially when the subjects are connected with the economy and discipline of the church. Thus we find *wunystre*, *munyre*, a minster, monasterium; *portic*, a porch, porticus; *clastre*, a cloister, claustrum; *munuc*, a monk, monachus; *biscop*, a bishop, episcopus; *arceiscop*, an archbishop, archiepiscopus; *suct*, a saint, sanctus; *profast*, a provost, praepositus; *pæell*, a pall, pallium; *calic*, a chalice, calix; *candela*, a candle, candela; *psalter*, a psalter, psalterium; *messe*, a mass, missa; *pistol*, an epistle, epistola; *prædic-ian*, to preach, prædic-are; *prof-ian*, to prove, prob-are, &c. &c. From the Latin also came the names of foreign animals and plants, as *leon*, the lion, leo; *cammel*, the camel, camelus; *ylp*, the elephant, elephas; *fico-beam*, the fig-tree, ficus; *fefer-fuge*, the feverfew, febrifugia; *peterslige*, parsley, petroselinum, &c. &c., and of many articles of merchandise the growth or manufacture of distant countries, as *pipér*, pepper, piper; *purpura*, purple, purpura; *pumic-stone*, the pumice-stone, pumex, &c. &c.

Some of these words had to share their honours with English duplicates; but there can be little doubt the greater part had, at a very early period, sunk deeply into the language. They are nearly all _concrete_ terms, and are found in almost equal profusion in all the kindred dialects. The _abstract_ Latin terms, which begin to show themselves in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, may, I think, be laid to
the account of careless, or rather of pedantic translation.\(^1\)
A latinized style was looked upon as a proof of *clerkship*; and the scholar was always ready with such easy proof of his learning. We have but little space to follow the corruptions, which flowed from this source at later periods.

Norman-Romance became the court language in the reign of the Confessor; and the *law* appears to have been the channel, through which it first mixed with the native language of the country. The Aula regia, or King's household-court, enrolled its proceedings in Latin, but in its pleadings, &c. used the language of the Palace. Those who feared local influence in the county courts, purchased the judgment of the sovereign; and the King's court, by degrees, became that of the nation. Hence its legal terms grew familiar, and early in the thirteenth century we find sprinkled through our MSS. such words as *cancelere*, a chanceller; *curt*, a court; *pleit*, a plea; *prisun*, a prison; *battel*, a conflict (originally trial by combat); *clame*, a claim; *fin*, an end, &c. &c. As this source of corruption was peculiar to our country, few words of this class are to be met with in the other Gothic dialects.

From the court-dialect were also taken many terms relating to courtly pastime and pageantry; more particularly those of the chase; and sometimes we have French salutations and exclamations, introduced much in the same way as in our fashionable novels, though certainly with less of impropriety. But it was not till the rage for translation came upon us, during the latter half of the fourteenth century, that foreign words overspread the language. It is painful to think how many men of genius have forwarded the mischief. Perhaps we might point to the "ballades" and "envoys" of Chaucer and his school, as offering the worst French specimen of our language; and to Johnson as the writer, who has most laboured to swamp it in the Latin.

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\(^1\) Hampole, in his version of the Psalms, which was written about the middle of the fourteenth century, plainly tells us he used words, "most like unto the Latyne, so that thai that knowes noght the Latyne, bi the Ynglis may come to mani Latyne words."
The evils resulting from these importations have, I think, been generally underrated in this country. When a language must draw upon its own wealth for a new term, its form and analogies are kept fresh in the minds of those, who so often use them. But with the introduction of foreign terms, not only is the symmetry—the science—of the language injured, but its laws are brought less frequently under notice, and are the less used, as their application becomes more difficult. If a new word were added to any of the purer languages, such as the Sanscrit, the Greek, or the Welsh, it would soon be the root of numerous offshoots, substantives, adjectives, verbs, &c., all formed according to rule, and modifying the meaning of their root according to well-known analogies. But in a mixed and broken language few or no such consequences follow. The word remains barren, and the language is "enriched," like a tree covered over with wreaths taken from the boughs of its neighbour; which carries a goodly show of foliage, and withers beneath the shade.

The language of Layamon may perhaps (at least in substance) be considered as the dialect spoken in South Gloucestershire during the twelfth century. One of its most striking peculiarities is its nunnation, if we may be allowed to use a term, already familiar to the scholar. Many words end in e, which are strangers to that letter, not only in the Anglo-Saxon, but in all the later dialects of our language; and as this letter assists in the declension of nouns, and the conjugation of verbs, the grammar of this dialect becomes, to a singular degree, complicated and difficult.

Perhaps the following changes of termination may give a tolerably correct notion of the masculine declension.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sing.</th>
<th>Plur.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N. A. God</td>
<td>God-es</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. God-es</td>
<td>God-e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. God-e</td>
<td>God-en₁</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-es</td>
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</table>

₁ The inflexion in en is always a matter of great uncertainty. The Dutch definite adjective sometimes ends its nominative in -e, sometimes in -es.
The neuter nouns are declined in the same way, but take no inflexion in the plural save the *e* of the genitive, and perhaps the *en* of the dative. In both genders the *e* of the dative singular is often omitted.\(^1\)

The feminine nouns take *e* as their only inflexion in either number, but, I think, in some few instances, make the dative plur. in *en*. Some feminines have the genitive singular in *es*, as in the Anglo-Saxon.

There is also what may be termed the *n* declension, common to all the three genders. The singular ends in *e*, and the plural in *en*; the genitive, however, sometimes taking *ene*. As some nouns have the *n* even in the nominative singular, it is difficult to say whether *n* be used as an inflexion in that number.

The indefinite adjective has almost the same declension as in the Anglo-Saxon.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>m.</th>
<th>f.</th>
<th>n.</th>
<th>Plur.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N.</td>
<td>god</td>
<td>god</td>
<td>god-e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G.</td>
<td>god-es</td>
<td>god-re</td>
<td>god-es</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.</td>
<td>god-e</td>
<td>god-re</td>
<td>god-e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.</td>
<td>god-ne</td>
<td>god-e</td>
<td>god</td>
</tr>
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</table>

When the adjective is definite (that is, connected with the definite article, a possessive pronoun, or a genitive case), it takes an *e* and is indeclinable. Sometimes, however, the definite adjective appears to take *en*.

The verbs are conjugated much in the same way as in the Anglo-Saxon; the endings *a* and *e*, *an* and *en*, *ath* and *eth*, being, of course, confounded. The *i* conjugation is still clearly distinguished, as *clepien* to call, *ic clepie*, I call, &c.; and the gerund in *enne* is sometimes met with. The points in which Layamon's verb differs from the Anglo-Saxon may, I think, be ranged under three heads.

1. The plural of the present indicative sometimes ends in *en*, instead of *eth*; and the first and third persons sin-

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\(^1\) The Anglo-Saxon noun also sometimes omits the inflexion of the dative.

\(^2\) See note 1, p. 404.
singular, in the past tense of the "complex" verb, sometimes take an e. Both these peculiarities may, I think, be traced to the same cause—the use of the subjunctive mood instead of the indicative. In some of our dialects the former mood seems, at length, entirely to have supplanted the latter.

2. The plural of the past tense, and also the past participle sometimes ends in e, instead of en. But, I believe, that in neither of these cases was the vowel-ending quite unknown even to the Anglo-Saxon.

3. The first person singular of the present indicative, and the third person singular of the past tense indicative, and of the present optative or imperative, sometimes end in en instead of e. The en in the first person of the present reminds one of the Frankish; but its occurrence in the other cases is, I believe, peculiar to this singular and perplexing dialect.

The third person of the present indicative sometimes ends in ethe instead of eth, but I can only consider this as a blunder of the transcriber.

Among the possessive pronouns we find min and thin, and also nii and thi.1 The vowel of the definite article is singularly varied, but in other respects its inflexions closely resemble the Anglo-Saxon. As it is constantly occurring I will here give its declension.

Chil|dric the Kai|sore | biwon : al | that he lok | cde on |.
He | nom sum | er-set | e : and | he nom | dorset | e .
And | al deu | ene ² scir | e : that | volc al | for-ferd | e .
And | he wil | tün-scir | e : mid with | erc ³ | igret | te .
He | nom al | le tha lond | cs : in | to thær | e sa | ⁷ stron | de .
Tha | set than last | e : tha let | te heo blaw | en .

1 I cannot agree with Mr. Thorpe in considering these latter pronouns as mere corruptions of the former; I believe them to be distinct words, and probably of far higher antiquity.

² [This alludes to Sir F. Madden, whose excellent edition of Layamon appeared in 1847.—W. W. S.]

³ I can find no parish or hamlet of this name on the banks of the Severn.

⁴ th has been substituted for the Anglo-Saxon characters ǫ and þ, as the facilities thus afforded to the English reader seemed to outweigh any inconvenience, which might result from confounding these two letters. But the Old English ǫ can be represented by no letter of our modern alphabet, without
That this slight sketch is very imperfect, and in some points probably inaccurate, I am well aware. It would require a much better acquaintance with the MS. than I can lay claim to, always to distinguish between blunders of transcription and peculiarities of dialect, between the syllable which makes part of the root, and that which is merely its inflexion. The whole MS. will, however, be published; and by a gentleman who, I have little doubt, will do justice to a very difficult subject. 3

Laymon informs us that he was a priest, and lived at Ernley, 3 by Severn. The books from which he compiled his history, were “the English book” which Bede wrote, a book in Latin composed by St. Austin and St. Albin, and the book of the Frankish clerk Wace. The extract 4 which follows, describes the famous battle of Bath [beginning at l. 21,011]. The “Kaiser,” it should be observed, had already been once in Arthur’s power, had agreed to quit the country for ever, had broken his pledge, and was now wasting the land with fire and sword.

Childric the Kaiser won: all that he looked on,
He took Somerset: and he took Dorset,
And all the Devon-shire: —that folk were all destroy’d;
And he Wilton-shire: with cruelty oppress’d.
He took all the land[s]: unto the sea-strand.
Then, at the last: caused they [rather, he] to blow

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5 Devene is the gen. pl. of Deven, which answers to the Anglo-Saxon Defan, the men of Devonshire.
6 I have never met with this substantive elsewhere, but there can be little doubt of its meaning. [Sir F. Madden has—“with hostility he greeted.”]
7 Soe, is here the genitive case singular; in which number this substantive is rarely found declined, even in the Anglo-Saxon.
Horn|es and bemon|en: and bon|nien| his ford|en.
And forth| he wol|de bu3|en: and bath|en al| bilig|gen.
And sec| bristow|e: abut|en birouw|en.
This| was heor|e ibeot: ær heo| to bath|e com|en.
To bath|e com| the kaiser|e: and| bilæi| thene cas|tel ther|e.
And| tha men| within|nen: oht|liche| agun|nen.
Step|en up|penny stan|ene wal|: wel| iwep|ned ou|er al.
And wer| eden| tha rich|e: with| than strong|e children|e.
Ther lai| the Kaisor|e: and Col| grim his| iuer|e.
And bal|ulf his broth|er: and mon| i an oth|er.

Arth|ur wes| bi north|e: and noht| her of|nus|te.
Fer|de geond al| scotland: | and set| te het ain| his ag|ere hond|2.
Or|canai|e and Geb|ewei|e: man| and mure|ne.
And al|le tha lond|es: the ther| to ðæ|ien.
Ar|thur hit wend|de: to| iwis|lichen thing|e.
That chill|drick ilith|en wer|en: to| his ag|e lond|de.
And that| he nau|ere mær|e: nodle cum|en her|e.
Tha com|en tha tid|ende: to Ar|thur King|e.
That chill|drick tha kæ|sere: icum|en wes| to lond|en.
And| i than suth|-ende: sor|3en ther worht|en.

Tha Ar|thur seid|e: æth|elest king|en.
Wal| a wa wal|awa: that| ich spar|ede min|e iua.
That| ich nau|ede| on hol|te: mid hun|ere hine|e ade|m.
Oth|er mid sweord|e: al hin|e to swug|en [or to swungen].
Nu he| me gelt med|e: for mir|e god-ded|e.
Ah| swa me hælp|en driht|ten: þæ scop| þæs de|ies lih|ten.
Ther for| e he seal| ibid|en: bit|terest al|re bal|uwen.
Hard|e gom|enes: his bon|e ich wulu|le iwur|then.
Col|grim and Bal|ulf: bei|ene ich wulu|le a Aquel|len.
And| at heor|e du3|ethue: dæth| scal ither|ien.
Gif| hit wulu|e inn|uen: wald|ende bæf|uen.
Ich wulu|le wurth|liche wrôk|en: al|le his with|er-ded|en.
3if| me mot| ilas|ten: that lif| amir|e breos|en.
And| hit wulu|le me| iu|ne: that| iscop mon|e and sun|e.
Ne| scal nœu|ere chi|drue: ɑft| me bihar|ren.

Nu cleop|ede Arthur: æth|elest king|en.
Whar| beo 3e min|e e niht|es: oht|e men| and with|te.
To hors|e. to hor|se: 3e [MS. he] hal|ethes god|e.

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1 The preposition uppenn governs both an accusative case and a dative. If
wal be the accusative, the adjective ought, according to rule, to have been
stanen/n; but we sometimes find the definite adjective in cases where the
ordinary rules of grammar would seem to require the indefinite—in such
phrases as, anne Sæsia cuhht. Sometimes, though very rarely, we find the
indefinite, where we might look for the definite adjective, as in the words, thes.
Horns and trumps: and their [his] soldiers to be boon [assembled];
And forth he wish'd to fare: and the Baths all beset,
And eke Bristow: round about to row;
This was their threat: ere to Bath they came.

To Bath came the Kaiser: and beset the castle there;
And the men within: gallantly began
Step upon the stonern wall: well yweapon'd over all,
And defended them the great ones [the place]: gainst the strong Childric.
There lay the Kaiser: and Colgrim his fere,
And Baldulf his brother: and many an other.

Arthur was in the north: and nought hereof wist he;
He journey'd over all Scotland: and brought it under his own hand;
Orkeney and Galoway: Man and Morey,
And all the lands: that thereby lay.
Arthur wcn'd it: as a settled thing,
That Childric was gone: to his own land;
And that he never more: would come here.
Then came the tidings: to Arthur King,
That Childric the Kaiser: was y-come to land,
And in the south quarter: sorrows there wrought.

Then Arthur said: (noblest of kings,)
"Walawa! walawa! : that I spared my foe!
"That I had not on the holt: with hunger kill'd him!
"Or with the sword: him all silenced [cut to pieces]!
"Now does he pay me back the meed: for my good deed!
"But, so help me the Lord: that shaped the light of day,
"Therefore he shall bide: the bitterest of all bale!
"Pains full grievous!: his bane I will be.
"Colgrim and Baldulf: both I will quell,
"And all their nobles: death shall suffer.
"If it will grant: He that wields the heavens,—
"Worthily will I wreak: all his misdeeds;
"If the life may last: within my breast,
"And He will grant it: that shaped sun and moon,—
"Childric shall never: again slip by me!"

Now call'd out Arthur: (noblest of kings),
"Where be ye my knights: gallant men and wight?
"To horse, to horse: ye nobles good!

*heges kinges. If these be not mere blunders on the part of the transcriber, I cannot satisfactorily account for them.
* Hond is here the dative singular, in which case it is often found without inflexion in the Old English.
* The holt refers to the wood of Caledon, into whose hilly recesses Arthur, according to the history, drove Childric before his submission.
And we scul|led bu|3|e : tou|ward Bath|e swhite|e.
Let|eth up fus|en : he|3|e fork|en.
And bring|eth her | tha gæ|f|les : bifor|en ur|e cniht|es.
And | heo scul|len hong|ien : on he|3|e treow|en.
Ther | he let|e fordon| : feow|er and tue|ti child|erren1.
Al|e main|isc men| : of swhite|e he|3|e cun|nen.
Tha com|en tid|ende : to Ar|thure | than king|e.
That seoc | wæs how|el his mei| : ther for|e he| wæs sar|i.
I clud | lig|ginde : and ther | he hin|e bilæf|de.

Hi5|enlich|e swith|e : forth | he gon lith|e.
That he | behal|nes bad|e : beh | to an|e ðel|de.
Ther | he alih|te : and | his cniht|es al|le.
And on | mid heor| e burn|en : beorn|es sturn|e.
And he | a fif|3| | dæle : dæl|de his feord|e.
Tha | he haf|de al | iset| : and | al hit | isem|ed.
Tha du|l|e he on | his burn|e : ibroid|e of stel|e.
The mak|ede | on al|isc smith| : mid ath|elen | his craf|te.
He | wæs ihat|en wyg|ar : the wit|e3e wurh|te.
His sconk|en he hel|ede : mid hos|en of stel|e.
Cal| beorn|e his sword| : he cwem|de [rather sweinde] bi | his sid|e.
Hit | wæs iwyrht | in au|alnu : mid wî3|ele-ful|le craf|ten.
Halm | he set | on haf|de : hæh|4 | of stel|e.
Ther on | wæs mon|i 5im-ston| : al | mid gol|de bi-gon.
He | wæs ud|eres : thas ath|elen king|es.
He | wæs ihat|en Gos|whit : al|chen oth|ere un|lic.

He heng | an his sweor|e : æn|ne sceall deor|e.
His nom|e wæs | on brut|tisc : prid |-wen ihat|en.
Ther | wæs in|nen iarau|en : mid red|e gol|de stau|en.
An on| -lînes deor|e : of driht|enes mod|er.
His sper|e he nom | an hond|e : tha ron | wæs ihat|en.
Tha | he haf|den al | his wedge|en : tha leop | he on | his sted|en.
Tha | he miht|e bi|hald|en : tha | bihal|ues stod|en.
Then |e uæ|rste cniht| : the ver|e scol|de led|en.
Ne | isæh meu|ere na | man : sæl|ere | cniht nen|ne.
Then |e him | wæs Ar|thrur : ath|elest cun|nes.

Tha cleop|ede Ar|thur : lud|ere stæf|ne.
Lou|war5 | her | bifor|en us | heth|ene hund|es.
The slo|3|en ur|e al|deren : mid luth|ere heor|e craf|ten.

1 This is the earliest instance I know, of the plural ending eren in our language. In the Dutch there are many such plurals, blad-eren, leaves; lied-eren, songs; kind-eren, children; eij-eren, eggs; kalv-eren, calves; &c. &c.
2 The brewie seems to have been a kind of breastplate, accommodated in the
C. III.

LAYAMON'S RHYTHMS.

"And we must turn us: tow'rd Bath quickly;
Let them haste up: the high gallows,
And bring here the pledges: before our knights,
And they shall hang: on the high trees."
There he caus'd them slay: four-and-twenty youths,
Alemannish men: of right noble kins.

Then came tidings: to Arthur the king,
That sick was Howel his kinsman: (therefore was he sorry)
In Clyde lying: and there he left him.

With full great speed: forth gan he fare,
Till beside Bath: he turn'd him to a field,
Where he alighted: and his knights all;
And on with their burnies: the barons stern;
And lie in five portions: dealt out his army.
When he had all set out: and it all array'd,
Then don'd he his burnie: wide-spread with [fashioned of] steel;
An elvish smith it made: with his noble craft,
(IHe was hight Wygar: the soothsaying smith);
His shanks he cover'd: with hosen of steel;
Caliburn his sword: he fitted [swung] by his side;
It was wrought in Avalon: with arts of grammar.
Helm he set on head: high-rais'd of steel;
Thereon was many a gem-stone: all with gold beset;
It was Uther's: the noble king's;
It was hight Goswhit: —to every other unlike.

He hung on his neck: a precious shield,
Its name in British: Thridwen [Pridwen] was hight;
Therein was graven: with red gold stones [tracings],
A precious likeness: of our Lord's mother.
His spear he took in hand: that Ron was hight.
When he had all his weeds: then leapt he on his steed.
Then might they behold: who beside him stood,
The fairest knight: that host could lead,
And ne'er saw man: better knight any,
Than was Arthur: —he of noblest kin.

Then cried out Arthur: with loud voice,
"Lo! every where here before us: the heathen hounds,
That slew our elders: with their loathed [wicked] arts;

mail armour of the period. The word is constantly occurring in the Old English romances. [A. S. byrne].

a See p. 349, n. 7.

4 This adjective takes no inflexion, according to the rule on p. 321.

5 Does this word answer to the Anglo-Saxon la aghwer? [No; "lo! where are here," &c.—W. W. S.]
And | heo us beoth | on lon|de : læth|est al|re thing|e.
Nu fus|en we | hom to|: and stær|lîche | heom leg|gen on|.
And wre|k|en wun|derlîch|e | ur| e cun | and ur| e rich|e.
And wre|k|en then|e much|ele scom|e : that heo | us iscend | habbeoth .
That heo | ouer uth|en : com|en to dert|e-muth|en.
And al|le heo beoth | for-swor|ene : and al|le heo beoth | forlor|ene.
Hew | beoth for-dem|ed al|le : mid driht|tenes fuls|te.
Fus|e wc | nu forth|ward : uas|te to som|en .
Æf|ne al | swa sof|te : swa we | nan uf|el ne thoh|ten.
And then|ne we | heom cum|eth to|: mi seolf | ic wul|len onfon|.
An al|re froom|este : that fht | ich wul|le'bigun|nen.
Nu | we scul|len rid|en : and ou|er land glid|en .
And na | man bi | his liu|e : lud|e ne wurch|en .
Ah far|en fæst|lîche : driht|en us fulst|en.
Tha rid|en agon|: Ar|thur the rich|e mon|.
Beh|ouer wal|de : an Bath|e wol|de isech|en .
Tha tid|ende com | to childrich|e : than strong|en and | than
rich|en.
That Ar|thur mid fer|e com |: al 3ar|u to fh|te .
Chil|dric and | his oht|e men |: leop|en heom | to hors|en.
Igrip|en hoor|e wep|nen : heo wus|ten heom | ifæi|ed .
This | isæh Ar|thur : ath|elest king|e .
Isæh | he æn| ne hæth|ene1 eorl|: hæl|den him | to 3cin|es .
Mid seou|en hun|dred | cnihht|en : al 3er|ewe | to fhht|en .
The orl | him seolf fer|d|en : bifer|en al | his geng|e .
And Ar|thur him | seolf arn|de : buor|en al | his fer|d|e .
Ar|thur the rei|e : ron | nom an hon|de .
He strah| te saefcht stær|ne : stith|imod|en 3 king|.
His hors | he let|te ir|non : that | tha eorth|e dun|ede .
Sceald | he brai|l | on bres|teu : the king | wes abol|3en .
Hæ | smat bor|el then|e eorl|: thurh ut | tha bres|ten .
That | the heor|te to chan| : and | the king cleop|ede | anan |.
The for|meste | is fæi|e : Nu ful|sten us driht|te .
And | tha hef|enlich|e quen|e : tha driht|ten aken|de .
Tha cleop|ede ar|thur : ath|elest king|e .
Nu | heom to nu*| heom to |: that for|mest is wel | idon .
Brut|es hom leid|en on : swa me | scal a luth|ere don .

1 See p. 408, n. 1.
2 I am not satisfied as to the meaning of this word. In the following

Then sayde that rich raye,
I will have that fayr May,
And wedde her to my quene.—Emare, 430.
"And to us they be, on earth: loathed most of all things;
"Now haste we to them: and stoutly on them lay,
"And wondrously avenge: our kin, and our realm;
"And wreck the mickle shame: that they have done us,
"For that o'er the waves: they came to Dertemouth;
"And they be all forsworn: and they [shall] be all forlorn!

"They [shall] be doomed all: with the Lord's help!
"Haste we forward: quickly together,
"E'en all as softly: as we no evil thought,
"And when we to them come: myself will take [commence]
"The bravest of them all [First of all]: that fight I will begin.
"Now must we ride: and o'er the land glide,
"And no man for his life: must loudly work;
"But fare we stoutly! the Lord assist us!"

Then gan to ride: Arthur the mighty man,
He turn'd him o'er the weald: and the Baths would seek.

Then came tidings to Childric: the strong and the mighty,
That Arthur with army came: all yare for the fight;
Childric and his gallant men: leapt on their horses,
And griped their weapons: —they wist themselves feymen!

This saw Arthur: (noblest of kings!)
He saw a heathen earl: bending his course against him,
With seven hundred knights: all yare for the fight.
The earl himself went: before all his troop,
And Arthur himself ran: before all his army.
Arthur the ray: took Ron in hand,
He levell'd the strong shaft: (sternhearted king!)
His horse he let run: that the earth shook;
Shield he spread on breast: —the king was wrath—
He smote Borel the earl: out through the breast,
That the heart split: —and the king cried anon,
"The foremost one is fey! Now help us the Lord,
"And the heavenly Queen: that bare the Lord."

Then cried out Arthur: (noblest of kings!)
"Now on them! now on them! the first part is well done."
The Brits laid on them: as on villain man should do,

* It might be taken as closely connected with the Old English *roy*, a king; but, as used in *Piers Ploughman*, a familiar, if not a low meaning is attached to it. [Rayes in *P. Plowman*, B. v. 211, is a different word.—W. W. S.]

* Here we have the definite adjective, with *en* in the nominative singular. The definite adjective was frequently used to express admiration; and we still use the definite article for that purpose, as, *Alfred, the good king!*
Many of Layamon's couplets have both alliteration and the middle rime; very few—originally, it may be, none—are without either one or the other. The relative value, in which he held his rime and his alliteration, deserves some notice. In Anglo-Saxon verse, the syllables, which take
Bitter blows they gave: with axes and with swords.
There fell Childric's men: full two thousand,
So never Arthur lost: never one of his.
There were Sexish men: of all folks most wretched,
And the Alemannish men: saddest of all people!
Arthur with his sword: death-doings wrought,
All that he smote against: quickly was it done for.
The king was enraged: all as the wild boar,
When, mid his mast: many he meeteth.
This saw Childric: and gan him to turn,
And bent his way o'er Avene: himself to save;
And Arthur gave them play [flew towards them] : as 'twere a lion,
And drove them to the flood:—many there were fey!

There sunk to the ground: five and twenty hundred;
Then was Avene-stream: all bridged with steel.
Childric over that water fled: with fifteen hundred knights;
He thought to haste hence: and over sea sail.
Arthur saw Colgrim: climb up the mountains,
And turn him to the hill: that o'er the Baths standeth.
And Baldulf got him after: and seven thousand knights;
Thought they on the hill: aloft to stand out,
Defend them with their weapons: and Arthur scare [injure].

Then saw Arthur: (noblest of kings !)
Where Colgrim stood out: and form'd eke his array.
Then call'd out the king: with keen cry,
"My bold thanes: turn ye to the hills,
"For yesterday was Colgrim: of all men the keenest,
"Now is't with him, as with the goat: where she keeps the hill;
"High upon the hill: she sitteth [sighteth] with her horns,
"Then cometh the wild wolf: towards her trail [approaching her],
"Though the wolf be alone: without any fellow,
"And there should be in one flock [fold] : five hundred goats,
"The wolf to them wendeth: and all of them it biteth.
"So now will I to-day: Colgrim all doom,
"I am wolf, and he is goat:—that man shall be fey!"

the alliteration, are always accented; but the sectional rime, and in one or two instances even the middle rime, may be found resting upon a syllable which has no accent. When the latter alliterative metres take the final rime, the riming syllable imperatively demands the accent; and the alliteration is often thrown upon an unaccented syllable. Layamon appears to take a middle course. It would seem, he gave accents both to his riming and his alliterative syllables;
but the former were often obliged to content themselves with a false accent—the proper rhythm of the sentence being sacrificed for that purpose. We very seldom find the rime and the alliteration placed upon adjacent syllables, and each striving for the accent, as is often the case in later poems.

The struggle between alliteration and final rime began later, and continued much longer in this country than on the continent. King Edgar's death-song has one or two couplets, in which alliteration appears to be forgotten; but the MS. is so faulty, and in some parts of the poem so obviously corrupt, that no one can safely speculate on such doubtful premises. On the other hand, Otfrid's Evangole, which may date about the year 870, has few or no traces of alliteration. Its rimes often rest upon a false accent, and its rhythm strongly resembles such as may be found in some of our early sectional metres. It affords us a curious instance, how like will often be the changes of two kindred dialects, long after they cease to influence each other. The following extract is taken from the opening of the second [section of the first] book.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Vuol} & \text{ a druht} \mid \text{ in min} & \text{Oh! my Lord!} \\
\text{ia} & \text{ bin ih} \mid \text{ scale thin} & \text{truly be I slave of thine!} \\
\text{Thiu} & \text{ arm} \mid \text{ a muat} \mid \text{ er min} & \text{Wretched mother}^1 \text{ mine} \\
\text{eig} & \text{ an thiu ist} \mid \text{ si thin} & \text{thine own handmaid} \text{en is she!} \\
\text{Fing} & \text{ ar thin} \mid \text{ an} & \text{Finger thine} \\
\text{daa} & \text{ an} \mid \text{ a mund min} \mid \text{ an} & \text{place within my mouth,} \\
\text{Then ouh} & \text{ hant thin} \mid \text{ a} & \text{Lift up [Lay] eke thine hand} \\
\text{in} & \text{ thia zung} \mid \text{ un min} \mid \text{ a} & \text{upon my tongue,}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Hwan} & \text{ thu sixst} \mid \text{ on leod} \mid \text{ e : king} \mid \text{ that is wil} \mid \text{ ful} \\
\text{And domesmon [ninin]de}^2 & \text{ : proest} \mid \text{ that is wil} \mid \text{ de} \\
\text{Bisch} & \text{ op slon} \mid \text{ : old} \mid \text{ -mon lech} \mid \text{ ur} \\
\text{3unch} & \text{ -mon lic} \mid \text{ er : wim} \mid \text{ mon schom} \mid \text{ eles} \\
\text{Child} & \text{ un} \mid \text{ theand : thral} \mid \text{ un} \mid \text{ buxsum} \\
\text{Ath} & \text{ eling brith} \mid \text{ eling : lond} \mid \text{ withut} \mid \text{ e la} \mid \text{ e} \\
\text{Al} & \text{ so seid} \mid \text{ e Bed} \mid \text{ e : wo ther} \mid \text{ e theod} \mid \text{ e}
\end{align*}
\]

\(1 \text{ That is, the Church.}
\(2 \text{ [This word is omitted in the former edition, its place being supplied by a stroke.—W. W. S.]}\)
C. III. EARLY GERMAN SECTIONAL METRES. 417

Thaz ih | loth thin | az
si | luden | taz
Giburt | sunes thin | es
druht | ines min | es
Ioh ih | bigin | ne red | inon
uuo er | bigon | da bred | igen
Thaz ih | giuuar | si har | to
ther | o sin | ero uuor | to
Ioh zei | chan thiu | er det | a tho
thes | unir bir | un nu | so fro
Ioh uuo | thi se | ba hei | li
nust uuor | olti | gimein | i
Thaz ih | ouh hiar | giscrib | e
uns | zi reht | emo lib | e
Uuio | sirdan | er un | sih fand
tho | er sel | bo doth | es ginand
Ioh uuo | er fuar | ouh than | ne
ub | ar him | ila al | le
Vb | ar sun | nan liicht
ioh | lan thes | an uuor | olt-thiot
Thaz | ih dru | tin than | ne
in ther | o sag | un ne | firb | ne
Noh | in them | o uuah | en
thiu uuort | ni miss | ifah | en
That I thy praise
be singing—
The birth of thy son
my Lord!
Yea, that I begin to tell
how he began to preach;
That I be right heedful
of his words;
Yea, signs that he did then
(whence we are now so glad);
Yea, how the self salvation
now to the world is common;
That I eke here may write
(to further our righteous life)
How sinful he us found,
when of death himself he tasted;
Yea, eke how he fareth then
over the heavens all,
Over the sun's light,
and all this world's rout;
That, O Lord! I then
in this tale err not,
Nor in this recital
any words mislay.

The poor monk then prays, that he may sing to God's laud, and (with needless scruple) not for his own glory.

The reflection contained in the following extract, seems to have been a favourite one; for it may be found in different MSS. and with considerable variations. As here given from a Gotton MS.² it is probably of the 12th century. Alliteration seems to be quite neglected, and there is but one line that rhymes.

When thou see'st 'mongst a people king that is wilful,
And justicer [taking bribes;] priest that is wild;
Bishop sluggish; old man a lechur;
Young man a liar; woman shameless;
Child not thriving; thrall disobedient;
Nobleman prodigal; a land without law—
E'en as Bede said, "Wo to that people!"

¹ This word (if indeed it be rightly rendered) does not take the plural inflexion.
² Layamon MS. Cal. A. xx. [The extract is printed at the end of Wright's edition of the Owl and Nightingale, p. 80.—W. W. S.]
For the most part, however, those poems, which rejected alliteration, took the rime. The Romance of Horn may afford us an example; and may at the same time teach us, how long it was before the sectional verse was generally recognised as such in our manuscripts. In the Cambridge MS.¹ indeed, though some of the couplets are written continuously, most of them are divided into two short verses;

Al|le be|on he blith|e : that | to my | songs lath|e .
A sang | im schal | 3ou sing|e : ² of mur|ry ³ the king|e .
King | he was | biwes | te : so lang|e so | hit last|e .
God | hild het | his quen | : faire ⁴ ne miʒ | te non ben|.
He had | de a son|e that | het horn | : fair | er ne mist|e ⁵ non | beo born| ⁶ .
Ne | no rein | upon | birinc|e : ne sun | ne upon | bischin|e.
Fair | er nis | non than|e he was | : he | was briʒt | so the glas|.
He | was whit | so the flur | : ros|e-red | was his | colur| .
In non | e king | e rich|e : nas nou | his ilich|e .

Twelf fer|en he had | de . that alle ⁷ with him| ladde .
Al|le rich|e man | nes son|e : and alle | bi war | e hur | e gum|es .
With | him for | to plei|e : and most | de hu| ede twei|e .
That on | him het hath | ulf child | : and | that oth|er fiik | enild| .
Ath|ulf was | the bes|te : and fik | enylde | the worst|e .

Hit was | upon | a som|eres day | : al | so ihc | you tel | le may| .
Mur| ri the god | e king | : rod | on his | pleing| .
Bi | the se sid|e : as | e he was | won | ed rid|e .
He fond | bi the strond | e | ariu|ed on | his lond|e .
Schip|es fift|e : with sar|azins ⁸ ken|e .
He ax | ede what | isoʒ | te : oth|er to lon| de broʒ | te . &c .

We will now pass, with Warton, to the education of

The kyng | com in | to hal|le : among | his kniʒ | tes al|le .
Forth | he clup | ede ath| elbrus | : that | was stiw | ard of | his hus| .

¹ Univ. Lib. Gg. 4. 27.
² [Printed in King Horn, ed. J. R. Lumby, for the Early English Text Society, 1886. The extract comprises ll. 1-40.—W. W. S.]
³ No metrical point.
⁴ The difference of names in the two MSS. will not escape notice. It would be easy to show the greater correctness of the Cambridge copy, but space is wanting.
but in the Harl. M.S. which is later by three fourths of a century, the poem is written after the old fashion, in couplets.

I make the following extracts from the Cambridge M.S. The reader may compare them with those, which Warton has taken from the Harleian.²

All they be blithe that to my song listen!

A song I will you sing of Murry the King
King he was by west (as long as it lasted);
Godhild hight his queen — fairer could none be.
He had a son that hight Horn — fairer could none be born,
Nor rain rain upon nor sun shine upon;
Fairer is there none than he was he was bright as the glass,
He was white as the flower: rosy-red was his colour;
In no king’s realm was any his like!

Twelve feres he had: that he with him led,
(All great men’s sons and all of them were fair men)
With him for to play, and most he loved two
The one by him was call’d child Athulf and the other Fikenild,
Athulf was the best: and Fikenild the worst.

It was upon a summer’s day: (as you may tell)
Murry the good king rode for his sport,
By the sea side: as he was wond to ride.
He found by the strand: arriv’d in his land,
Ships fifteen: of Sarazins keen.
He asked what they sought: or what to land they brought, &c.

Horn, and the love of poor Rymenhild [ll. 223-326].

The king came in to hall: among all his knights.
Forth he called Athelbrus: that was steward of his house,

⁶ This is probably a mistake for fairer.
⁷ Here s = z = 3.
⁸ Here the Harl. M.S. reads, that he with him ladde, I have construed accordingly.
⁹ If this be not a mere blunder for Saracines, it is one of the earliest instances I have met with of the contracted plural-ending.
HISTORY OF ENGLISH RHYTHMS.

Stiwiard tak | nu her | e : mi fund | lyng for | to ler | e.

Of thin | e mester | e : of wud | e and of | riuer | e.

And tech | him to harp | e: with | his nay | les scharp | e.

Beuor | e me | to keru | e: & of | the cup | e seru | e.

Thu tech | him of al | le the lis | te : that | thu en | re of wis | te.

In | his feir | en thou wis | e: in | to othere | seruis | e.

Horn | thu un | dernong | e: & tech | him of harp | e & song | e.

Athilbrus | gan ler | e: horn | and his | yfer | e.

Horn | in hert | e la5 | te: al | that he | him ta5 | te.

In | the curt | and ut | e: and el | les al | abut | e.

Luu | ede men | horn child | : and mest | him lou | cde Rym | enhild | .

The kynge | es 03 | ene dos | ter | he | was mest | in tho3 | te.

Heor | cde so | horn child | : that no5 | heo gan wex | e wild | .

For heo | ne mi5 | te at bort | e: with | him speck | e no word | e.

Ne no5 | in the hal | le: among | the kni5 | es al | le.

Ne no | war in | non oth | er sted | e: of folk | heo had | de dred | e.

Bi dai | e ne | bi ni5 | e: with | him speck | e ne mi5 | te.

Hir | e sor | e3e ne | hire pin | e: ne mi5 | e neu | re fin | e.

In heat | e heo had | de wo | : and | thus hier | e bitho3 | te tho | .

Heo send | c hir | c son | dc: Athelbrus | to hond | e.

That | he com | c hir | e to | : and al | so schold | e horn do | .

Al | in to bur | e: for | heo gan | to lur | e.

And | the sond | e seid | e: that sik | lai that mad | e.

And bad | him com | c swith | e: for | heo nas noth | ing blith | e.

The stuard was | in hert | e wo | : for | he nus | te what | to do | .

Wat | rym | enhild hur | e th03 | e: gret wun | der him thu3 | te | 5.

Abut | e horn | the yong | c: to bur | e for | to bring | c.

He th03 to upon | his mod | c: hit nas | for non | e god | c.

He tok | him ano | e: ath | ulf horn | es broth | e.

Ath | ulf he sed | c ri3 | e: anon | : thu | schalt with | me to bur | e gon | .

To speck | e with rym | enhild stil | le: and wit | en hur | e wil | le.

In horn | es ilik | e: thu | schalt hur | e biswik | e.

Sor | e eilc me | of-dred | e: he wold | de horn | mis-red | e.

Ath | elbrus | gan Ath | ulf led | e: and in | to bur | e with | him 3ed | e.

Anon | upon Ath | ulf child | : Rym | enhild | gan wex | e wild | .

He wend | e that horn | hit wer | e: that | heo hau | cde ther | e.

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1 No metrical point.
2 Nept A.S. was a kind of plectrum, with which the harper struck the strings of his instrument.
3 [Read And; J. R. Lumby.]
4 Here we have doster written for do3ter—a clear proof how close was the
"Steward, take now here: my foundling to teach him
"Of thy mystery: of wood and of river.
"And teach him to harp: with his nails\(^4\) sharp,
"Before me to carve: and with the cup to serve.
"Do thou teach him all the arts: that ever thou wist of.
"His feres do thou instruct: in other service—
"Horn take to thee: and teach him harp and song."

Athelbrus gan teach: Horn and his feres;
Horn by heart caught: all that he him taught.
In the court and out: and every where else about,
Men lov’d child Horn: and him most loved Rymenhild,
The king’s own daughter: —he was most in her thought.

She so lov’d child Horn: that she gan nigh wax wild
For she could not, at table: with him speak one word,
Nor in the hall: among all the knights,
And nowhere in other place: —of people she had dread;
By day or by night: with him speak she could not!
Her sorrow and her pain: never might have end;
In heart she had woe: and then bethought her thus.

She sent her message: to the hand of Athelbrus,
That to her he should come: and also should make Horn
Come all to her bow’r: for she gan to sadden.
And the message said: that sick lay the maid,
And bade him come quickly: for she was nothing blithe.

The steward was sad in heart: for he wist not what to do.
What Rymenhild was thinking of: great wonder seem’d to him—
About the youth Horn: —the bringing him to bow’r;
He thought in his mind: it was for no good;
He took him another man: Athulf, Horn’s brother.

"Athulf," he said right anon: "Thou shalt wend with me to bow’r,
"To speak to Rymenhild quietly: and learn her will.
"In likeness of Horn: thou shalt her deceive,
"Sore I fear me: she would Horn mislead."

Athelbrus gan Athulf lead: and to bow’r with him he went,
Anon, upon child Athulf: Rymenhild gan wax wild.
She ween’d that it was Horn: that she had there.

connexion between the two letters \(s\) and \(\grave{s}\). So also doster, daughter; Prompt. Parv. p. 129. See p. 419, n. 6.

\(5\) Thokhte A.S. is the past tense of thencan to seem—thokhte the past tense of thencan to think. The distinction is preserved in the words thôste and thôste
We now confound these verbs.

\(\ast\) A metrical point.
I fully agree in the opinion advanced by Price, as to the origin of this Romance. In its present shape it may be of later date than the Norman version, but the original was in

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1 In the Harl. MS. wolde and holde change places, as they certainly ought to do. One might almost think they were misplaced in this MS. from a spirit of waggishness.
She set him on the seat: with child Athulf went she mad! Within her arms two: Athulf gan she lay.

"Horn," quoth she, "full long: I have loved thee strongly.
"Thou shalt thy troth plight: here on my hand rightly,
"Me as thy spouse to rule: and I thee as my Lord to hold."

Athulf said in her ear: as softly as might be,
"Cease now thy tale: for Horn is not here,
"Nor be we in aught alike: Horn is fairer and is rich,
"Fairer by a rib: than any man that lives.
"Though Horn were under ground: or else where'er he would,
"Or hence a thousand miles: I would not him nor thee beguile."

Rymenhild turn'd her round: and foully Athelbrus she shent,
"Hence go thou, thou foul thief: nor shalt thou to me ever more be dear,
"Wend out of my bow'r: with mickle misaventure, &c. &c.

all probability Anglo-Saxon. The notions which Ritson held on this subject, have been long since losing ground; and may now be considered as exploded.

\footnote{That is, I suppose, \textit{taller} by a rib: I never met with the phrase elsewhere.}
CHAPTER IV.

But for the rime is light and lewde,
Yet make it somewhat agreeable,
Though some verse fayle in a syllable.
And that I do no diligence,
To shewc craffe, but sentence.

Chaucer, Ho. Fame, 3 6.

THE METRE OF FOUR ACCENTS

has its origin involved in much obscurity. It may be doubted, in the first place, whether it originated in the Latin rhythm of four accents, or is of native growth; and secondly, supposing it of English origin, whether it be a sectional metre, or one that has sprung from the alliterative couplet.

The metre of four accents and eight syllables was familiar to our Latinists at a very early period. In their verses, as in our later English rhythms, we find not only the false accent, but alliteration subordinate to the rime, and often resting upon unaccented syllables. Of this character are the well-known verses of Aldhelm, written about the close of the seventh century;

Lec|tor cas|te cath|olic|e
At|que ob|ses ath|etic|e
Tu|is pul|satus | preci|bus
Ob|nixe| flagi|tanti|bus
Hym|nista| carmen | ceci|ni, &c.¹

¹ These accentual verses are not modelled on the Trochaic Dimeter, which is not mentioned by Bede, and seems to have been unknown to his contemporaries; but on the Dimeter “Iambic Colophon,” (Bede calls it tetrameter) consisting of an anapest, two iambics, and a supernumerary syllable. This rhythm is used in a staff of four verses, with continuous rime, by Mapes, p. 48; with interwoven rime, Reliq. Antiq. i. 30; also by Mapes, in a staff with an indefinite number of verses and continuous rime, p. 64. It was a favourite metre, in the 6th and 7th centuries. The verses of Boniface are modelled on the common Iambic Dimeter.
and those of his friend, the great apostle of Germany.

Vale | frater | floren|tibus|
Juven|tutis | cun vir|ibus|
Ut flor|eas | cun Dom'ino|
In sem|ptcr | no so|llo|, &c.  

Now we have early Norman poems, which closely follow the rhythm of these Latin verses; but I have hitherto vainly searched for it in any English poem. As soon as the writer turns to his mother-tongue, the tale of syllables is no longer counted, and the rhythm is measured by the ear. As English and Norman poems are often found in the same MS. the contrast is brought distinctly under the eye of the reader, and may, probably, convince him that, although these Latin rhythms may have forwarded the development of our English metre, they were not the source whence it took its origin.

Whether this metre be sectional or not, is a question of greater difficulty. The Gothic dialects of Northern Europe had a metre of four accents, which was clearly of this character; and our own sectional metres abound in verses of four accents, and occasionally exhibit almost all the peculiarities of the metre before us. Still however the position of the stops, the general flow of the rhythm, and even what remains of the alliteration, all tend to throw doubt on the conclusion, to which these facts would seem to lead us.

For instance, we often find stops in the midst of a verse—sometimes even such as close a period.

And lyghten of heere justenis gode
And yeod| en on fot| e·men | they met|ten
And everiche othir faire gretten.

And they lighted from their chargers good,
And went on foot. Men they met
And each the other fairly greeted.

Alsaunder (ed. Weber), 6801.

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1 See the same, in an interwoven staff of eight lines, Mapes, pp. 93, 185; in an indefinite staff, id. 131.
2 See MS. Cotton, Nero D. xi. And see Wyntoun's Chronicle, 2. 444.
The subordinate stops are of constant occurrence.

Nis non | so hot | that hit | ne col | ath
Ne no3t | so hwit | that hit | ne sol | ath
Ne no3t | so loof | that hit | ne aloth | ath
Ne no3t | so glad | that hit | ne awroth | ath

There is nought so hot, that it cooleth not;
And nought so white, that it soileth not;
And nought so dear, that it doth not disgust,
And nought so pleas'd, that it is not angry.

_Hule and Nistingale_, 1266.

Mi son | e heo sed | e | hav | e this ring .
Whl | he is thin | ne du | te nothing !.
That fur | the bren | ne | ne adren | che se.
Ne ire ne steil ne mai the sle.

My son, she said, take thou this ring,
Whilst it is thine, fear nothing,
That fire burn thee, or sea drown—
Nor iron nor steel may slay thee.

Floriz and Blancheftur, 1. 3.

Again, in such poems as show traces of alliteration, we have the riming letters varying, for the most part, in each verse. Were the metre _sectional_, I think they would be found, more frequently, running through the couplet. As it is, not only is the alliteration confined to the verse, but such verse often fulfils all the conditions of the alliterative couplet, and this, sometimes, through passages of considerable length. In Ywaine and Gawaine nine out of the twelve first verses are of this character.

Almygh | ti god | that ma | de manyn |
He schil | de [3] his ser | vandes | out | of sin !
And mayn | tene them | ; with might | and mayne
That her | kens [4] Y | waine | and | Gawayne |!

---

[1] A metrical point in MS.

[2] In poems of the 14th and 15th centuries, the opening lines often betray the model, which the author had in view, though he widely deviates from it, as the poem advances, and he becomes careless in his versification.


Thai war knightes: of the tabyl rownde
Tharfor e lis tens: a lyt: el stownd: e.
Ar thur the kynge: of Yyn gland:
That wan al Wales with his hand
And al Scot: land: als sayes: the buke:
And man: i mo: if men: will luke:
Of al knightes he bar the pryse
In werld: was non: so war: ne wise: &c. [U. 1-12.]

The oldest English poem, I know of, in this metre is the
Hule and Niȝtengale. It is found both in the Layamon
MS. and in an Oxford MS. of later date; and was pro-
bably written not long after the year 1200. Its author,
I have little doubt, was John of Guildford; for it follows
(in the Oxford MS.) a poem, that was avowedly written
by him; and the praises it bestows upon Nichol of Guild-
ford, could only have proceeded from one, who was an
intimate and friend. The two were probably fellow-
townsmen.

This poem has certainly been underrated by Warton. I
do not think it wanting either in "invention" or
"poetry"; but the quality which most distinguishes it, is
what John of Guildford would doubtless have termed its
wisdom. The contrast he draws between the useful and the
brilliant, occasionally shews both depth of observation and
soundness of judgment.

I shall, however, take those passages which make men-
tion of "Nichole of Guldevorde." So little is known of
our earlier writers, that almost any allusion to them must

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1 2nd pers. plur. imperative. Northern Dialect.
2 Yngland was doubtless intended to have three syllables. The Anglo-
Saxon Engla land had in the Old English sometimes two, sometimes three
syllables, and was written both Engleland and England. These were often
confounded.
3 Cotton MS. Cal. A. 1x.
4 Jesus MS. 86.
5 It is pretty clear, from his observation upon the rimes, and also from his
notice of the contents, that Warton never read the poem. He seems, indeed,
seldom to have opened a MS.; and when he gives an extract, or ventures
a criticiam, both extract and criticism will generally be found in the Catalogue.
Upon the accuracy of the note in the Catalogue he relied in the present case;
and it has misled him.
be matter of interest. Nichol appears to have written in praise of the nightingale—probably in some work on the nature of animals.¹

ICH WOT | WEL QUATH | THE NIGH INGAL | E.
NE THAR | F THAR | OF | BO | NO TAL | E.
MAIS | TER NICHT | OLE | OF GULD | ENSFORD | E.
HE | IS WIS | AN WAR | OF WORD | E.
HE | IS OF DOM | SUTH | E GLEN | E.
AND HIM | IS LOTH | EU | RICH UNTHEN | E.
HE | WOT IN | SIJ | IN ECH | E SONG | E.
WO SING | ET WEL | WO SING | ET WRONG | E.
AND HE | CAN SCHED | E | VROM | THE RIJ | TE.
THAT WO3 | E, THAT THUS | TER | FROM | THE LIJ | TE.

THO LUL | E ONE WIL | E | HI | BI-THO3 | TE.
AND AF | TER THAN | THIS WORD | UP-BRO3 | TE.
ICH GRAN | TI WEL | THAT HE | US DEM | E.
VOR THE3 | HE WER | E | WILL | E BREM | E.
AND LOF | HIM WER | E | NI3 | TINGAL | E.
AND OTH | ER WIJ | TE | GEN | TE AND ANAL | E.
ICH WOT | HE IS | NU | SUTH | E ACOL | ED.
NIS | HE VOR | THE | NOI3 | AFOL | ED.
THAT HE | FOR THIN | E | OL | DE LU | UE.
ME | ADUN LEG | GE | AND | THE BUJ | UE.
NE SCHAL | TU NEU | RE | SO | HIM QUEM | E.
THAT | HE FOR | THE | FAIS | DOM DEM | E.
HE | IS HIM RIP | E | AND | FAST-RCD | E.
NE LUST | HIM UU | TO NON | E UNRED | E.
NU HIM | NE LUST | NA MOR | E PLE | IE.
HE WIL | E GON | A RIJ | E WEI | E.

From the next passage we learn Nichol’s residence and circumstances. An inquiry after the former obtains the following answer, which shows that if the scholars of the

HWAT, NU3 | TE 3E | CWATH HEO | HIS HOM | E.
HE WUNETH AT PORTES-HOM.

AT ON | E TUN | E | IN | E DORSET | E.
BI THAR | E SEE | IN OR | E UT-LET | E.

¹ Works on this subject, or “Bestiaries” as they were called, seem to have been very popular during the 12th and 13th centuries.
² [But the other MS. has leof, i.e. “and the nightingale was dear to him.”—W. W. S.]
The two rivals are selecting a judge, to decide between them [Cotton MS., ll. 189-214]:—

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I wot weel, quoth the Nightingale,
Thereof need there be no dispute.
Master Nichole of Guldevorde,
He is wise, and wary of words;
He in judging is right skilful,
And hateful to him is every wrong;
He has insight in all songs—
Who sings well, who sings badly;
And he can distinguish from the right
The wrong—the darkness from the light.

The Owl awhile bethought her,
And afterwards this word she spake.
I well agree that he should judge us,
For though he was whilom proud,
And his was the praise of the Nightingale,
And of other creatures gent and small,
I wot he is now greatly cooled,
For thee he is no longer fooled,
So that he, for thy old love,
Should put me down, and thee above.
Nor shalt thou ever so him please,
That he for thee false judgment give;
He is ripe and strong in judgment,
Nor welcome to him is any folly;
Now pleaseth him no more to play,
He will go a rightful way.
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12th century were sometimes neglected, they were, by no means, backward in obtruding their merits and resenting the affront [ll. 1749-1776].

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What! know ye not, quoth she, his home?
He wonneth at Portesham,
At a town in Dorset,
By the sea, at an outlet.3

3 Portisham is a parish near Weymouth. The manor and advowson belonged to the monastery of Abbotbury.
Thar | he dem | eth man | ie : riʒ | te dom |
An diht | an writ : man | i wisdom |
An thar | his muth | e : an thar | his bond | e |
Hit | is the bet | ere : in | to scot-lon | de |
To sech | e hin | e : is lht | lich thing |
He nau | eth but | e : on | e woning |
That | his bisch | open : much | el scham | e |
An al | le than | that : of | his nom | e |
Hab | beth ihert : an of | his ded | e |
Hwi nul | leth hi nim | en : heom | to red | e |
That | he wer | e : mid heom | ilom | e |
For to tech | e heom : of his | wisdom | e |
An giu | e him ren | te : a ual | e sted | e |
That he | miʒte heom : ilom | e be nud | e |

Cer | tes cwath | the hul | e : that | is soth |
Theos rich | e men : wel much | e misdloth |
That let | eth than | e : god | e mon |
That of | so feo | le : thing | e con |
An giu | eth rent | e : wel | mislich | e |
An | of him let | eth : wel | lihtlich | e |
With heor | e cum | ne : heo | beoth mil | dre |
An giv | eth rent | e : lit | le chil | dre |
Swo heor | e wit : hi demth | adwol | e |
That eu | er abid : mais | tre nichol | e |

As the thirteenth century advanced, many English poems were written in this metre. Unfortunately the manuscripts are for the most part of later date, and as our language began to change in the fourteenth century, few of them can be implicitly relied on, in any question relating to the rhythm. A Cambridge M.S. of the thirteenth century contains a fragment of Floriz and Blanchefur, and also a poem on the Assumption of the Virgin. The rhythm is

Among | the lef | dis : in | the sted | e |
God | to ser | vi : he hir | e dud | e |

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1 [Read thurh, as in Morris's edition; and translate it by; literally "through." In the next line, Hit is means "it is."—W. W. S.]
2 That is—his spoken judgments and his written works. Nichol seems to have presided in some ecclesiastical court.
3 [Read wīde, as in Morris's edition, and translate—that he might often be with them.—W. W. S.]
4 University Libr. Gg. 4. 27. See p. 418, n. 1.
There he giveth many a judgment just.  
And maketh and writeth many a piece of wisdom,  
And there his mouth, and there his hand —  
They are the best, as far as Scotland!  
To seek him is an easy thing,  
He hath but one dwelling;  
That may his bishops greatly shame,  
(And all, when they of his name  
Have heard, and of his works!);  
Why will they not take thought together  
That he with them might often be,  
For to teach them of his wisdom?  
And give him the rent of some good place  
That he to them might oft be useful?  

Certes, quoth the Owl, that is true;  
These rich men do much amiss;  
They pass by the good man,  
That knoweth of so many things;  
And give rents with very different view,  
And of him think very lightly;  
To their kinsmen they be more indulgent,  
And they give rents to little children!  
So their wit they deem but little,  
Whosoever wait for Master Nichole.

much looser than in the Hule and Ni3tingale, often varying from the common to the triple measure; and the number of accents is much more uncertain. The following extract, from the second of these poems, shows us the part, which the monks assigned to the Virgin, after the resurrection [11. 55-77]. St. John, we are told, took her to the temple, and when she came,

Among the ladies, in that place,  
God to serve she made her ready;  

There is another copy of this poem, but with considerable variations, in one of the lately purchased MSS. of the Museum. The MS. is of the 14th century. [It is the Additional MS. 10036. Both copies of this poem were printed by Mr. Lumby, in the same volume with his edition of King Horn.—W. W. S.]

In the later MS. these ladies become Nuns.
Several poems were written in this metre during the thirteenth century, among which may be reckoned the romances of Ipomydon, Richard, Kyng Alisaunder, and Havelok; and in all probability that curious satiro called the land of Cockaigne, and the Harrowing of Hell. I doubt, however, if there be a M.S. of any of these poems, which can date earlier than the year 1300. The rhythm in all of them is loose, and remarkably so in the Alisaunder. The different fyttes in this poem are divided by a few lines, containing some general reflection or description, and for the most

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1 The meaning of this word *murie* has been fully discussed in the "Observations upon Mr. Fox's letter to Mr. Grey," a work, which was printed at Cambridge some twenty or thirty years back, for private circulation. In this truly elegant piece of criticism, it is shown, that the *merry* note, which Chaucer attributes to the nightingale, implied nothing more than *sweetness of sound*, and that it is, by no means, inconsistent with the *plaintive* character, which others of our great poets assign to the "nocturnal note." The arguments of the accomplished scholar who wrote it might receive (if they needed any) strong confirmation from the text, for the word *murie* is actually replaced in the other MS. by *rueful*.

2 The three first of these poems were printed by Weber in his *Metrical*
C. IV. ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN. 433

There liv'd she all her life,
Nor lov'd she either fight or strife;
Thy, that in the temple were,
Could not with her dispense.
With all her might the while she was there,
She served both humble and great;
To poor and sick she did good,
And serv'd them with hand and foot;
The poor and hungry right fairly she fed,
And the sick she brought unto their bed;
Was there none so whole or fair,
That need of her had not;
They lov'd her all, with all their might,
For she serv'd them right well;
She watch'd more than she slept;
Her son to serve was all her care;
To him she called with sweet voice,
And to her he sent an angel from heaven;
To pleasure her himself he came---
Christ! that of her took flesh!

St. John maintained her, &c.

part ending with the same rime. In these passages, the rhythm very generally inclines to the triple measure. The following is a specimen.

Av | eril is meor | y : and long | ith the day |
Lad | ics lov | en : sol | as and play |
Swayn | es, jus | tes : knygh | tis, turnay |
Syng | eth the nygh | tyngal | e : gred | eth thee jay |
The hot | e sun | ne : chong | eth the clay |
As | ye well : yse | en may |
April is merry, and length'neth the day;
Ladies love solace and play;

Romances, and the last edited by Sir F. Madden for the Roxburghe Club [and reprinted for the Early English Text Society by Sir F. Madden and myself.—W. W. S.]*

3 Hickes published this poem in his Thesaurus [vol. i. p. 231], from a MS. of his friend Tanner—the man, by all antiquaries, "summo cum honore nominandus." There can be little doubt that this MS. is now the Harl. MS. 913; it opens with the satire. [Since reprinted in Early English Poems, ed. F. J. Furnivall, 1862, p. 156; and in Mätzner's Alte Englische Sprachproben, i. 147.
—W. W. S.]

4 Harl. 2253. The poem was published in the Archaeologia. [See the edition of the poems in MS. Harl. 2253, by Dr. Böddecke.—W. W. S.]
Swains the jousts; knights the tournay;
Singeth the nightingalo; screameth the jay,
The hot sun changeth the clay;
As ye well may see.—Alisaunter (ed. Weber), 139.

The gradual change to the common measure is characteristic of the author's rhythm.

In this romancio, the sectional rime is common; and, as regards the final rime, there is a peculiarity which deserves notice. When the verse is lengthened, the writer often contents himself with a rime between the accented syllables; making carpth answer to harpe, l. 5990, and deontis to tent, l. 1848. This kind of rime is occasionally found in other poems of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, among others in Havelok.

The Alisaunter was translated partly from the French, and partly from the Latin; the Richard appears to be a loose translation of an earlier Norman poem, and the same was the case with the Ipomydon; but there can be little doubt, that both the Norman and the English versions of Havelok are founded on an older poem, of English growth, and probably belonging to the Anglo-Saxon period. The romance (in its present form) appears to have been written

\[\text{Hwan} \quad \text{he was hos|led and shriv|en}\\ \text{His quis|te mak|ed : and for | him gylv|en}\\ \text{His knic|tes ded|e : he al|le sit|e}\\ \text{For thor|w them} \quad \text{| : he wold|e wit|e}\\ \text{Ifwo mic|te yem|e : his|e chil|drew yung|e}\\ \text{Till} \quad \text{| that he kouth|en : spek|en wit tung|e}\\ \text{Spek|en and gang|en : on hors|e rid|en}\\ \text{Kniet|es an sweyn|es : bi her|e}^{3} \text{ sid|en}\\ \text{He spok|en ther-offe : and chos|en son|e}\\ \text{A rich|e man was} \quad \text{| that,}^{5} \text{ un|der mon|e}\]

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1 The Norman poem was written by Hugh of Rutland (Hue de Roteland).
2 Laud. 108 [see p. 12 of my edition.—W. W. S.]. The lives of the saints, and the other poems which fill up the MS., are mostly written in the southern dialect.
3 This is clearly a mistake for here. [This note refers to the fact that the
by a Lincolnshire man, and in the dialect of that county; but the manuscript was probably written in a religious house of some southern county, and to the transcriber may perhaps be imputed such traces of the southern dialect, as are occasionally met with.

This romance has all that interest for an English reader, which must ever attach to an old English story. Whether it be founded on historical fact or not, we know it was most devoutly received as history; and, I take it, not many generations have passed, since the good folks of Grimsby would but ill have borne any scepticism on the subject. The tale is but a short one, and, in this matter-of-fact age we cannot calculate on the reader's knowledge of such trifles. Grim the fisherman finds a child floating on the waters; he grows up a hero, and after various adventures turns out to be the son of a Danish king, and marries the daughter of a king of England. The foster-father, with his aid, builds Grimsby. Upon this myth is founded the romance, which has some merit merely as a poem, and at one time appears to have enjoyed extraordinary popularity. The following extract may give the reader some notion of its style. It describes the deathbed of King Birkabeyn [ll. 364-397].

When he was housled and shriven,
His bequests made, and for him given,
His knights he made all sit,
For from them would he know,
Who should keep his children young,
Till they knew how to speak with tongue,
To speak, and walk, and ride on horse,
Knights and servants by their side.

They spoke thereof—and chosen soon
Was a rich man, that, under moon,
Early in the fourteenth century was written, in nearly the same dialect as Havelok, a version of the psalms—a many of them in the metre of four accents. It would not be extravagant praise, to call this one of the best of our English versions; it is indeed a work of singular merit, and some of the psalms are translated with a nerve and spirit, that might do credit even to one of our classical writers.

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1 When the verse is lengthened, we sometimes find the rime confined to the accented syllable, as in the Alisaunder; see p. 433. Wende has clearly two syllables, but I never remember seeing frend with more than one. The e is probably a blunder of the transcriber.

2 One peculiarity of the dialect is the frequent loss of the l final—we stands for well [or rather, for well].

3 Vesp. D. vii. [Printed by Mr. Stevenson for the Surtees Society, 1843—W. W. S.]

4 If ever our orthography be reformed, the best, because the most familiar,
Was the truest that they knew—
Godard, the king's own friend;
And said they, he might best them keep
If their charge he undertook,
'Till his son might bear
Helm on head, and lead out host,
(In his hand a sturdy spear)
And king of Denmark should be made.

He trusted wel to what they said,
And on Goddard hands he laid,
And said, "Here I entrust to thee
"My children all three,
"All Denmark, and all my fee,
"Till that of age my son shall be.
"But I would, that thou swear,
"On altar and on the mass-gear,
"On the bells that men ring,
"And on mass-book from which the priest sings,
"That my children thou shalt well keep,
"So that their kinsmen be well content,
"Till my son may be knight—
"Then give thou him his right,
"Denmark, and what thereto pertains,
"Castles and towns, woods and plains," &c.

In the MS., which contains this version, the vocal th is represented by y, as you, yi, yai, &c. for thou, thy, they, &c. This is the earliest instance I have met with, of a mode of spelling which still survives; for instance in the abbreviations ye, ym, &c. for the, them, &c.¹

The following is the version of the sixth psalm. [See Stevenson’s edition, p. 13.]

¹ representative of the vocal th will be y. Our present y might resume its old form y and so prevent all fears of a mistake.

I think there can be little doubt that the character of this letter has been mistaken, and that too, by one of the most cautious and least speculative of our modern editors. Sir Frederic Madden tells us in his edition of Havelok, that he altered such letters as were "manifestly false," as "th (b) for w (p), y for th (b)." There is every likelihood of his having confounded the vocal and the whisper letters. [See the remarks in my preface to Havelok, p. xxxvi.]
The verses of three accents, which occur in this and in other poems of the same metre, oppose a formidable obstacle to the hypothesis, which has been suggested at the opening of the chapter. They may be attributed to the influence either of the sectional metres, or of certain very peculiar rhythms which we shall notice more at large, in Chapter IX. The Anglo-Saxon writers sometimes gave a very definite rhythm to their prose, and occasionally affected rime in the syllables, which closed the different members of a sentence. We have an example in the following passage, which, there is reason to believe, was written by the sainted Wulstan—the good and venerable

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1 [Here yi is printed for thi; and so on, throughout the extract.—W. W. S.]
2 That is, received it.
Lord! threaten me not in thy wrath,
Nor overtake me with thine anger!
Lord! have mercy on me,
For that I am sick to see!
Heal me, Lord! (best thou may'st)
For all my bones, vexed are they!
And my soul right vexed is.
But thou Lord! change all this;
Turn, Lord! and snatch forth my soul,
For thy mercy make me whole!
For nought is there in death, that is mindful of thee,
And in hell who before thee shriven shall be?
I have labour'd in my place of sighing,
I must wash ev'ry night my bed:
With my tears, in my bed,
Must I wet my place of lying.
Clos'd therefore is mine eye for wrath,
Amongst my foes all aged am I!

Hic from me all ye, that work the wicked thing—
For the Lord heard the cry of my weeping,
The Lord heard my beseeching,
The Lord my prayer—he has kept it!

May they be sham'd and wide-driven, all my foes swiftly!
May they be turn'd back, and sham'd right speedily!

bishop of Worcester. As it contains a very striking notice of King William [Anno 1086], and as it is curious to see how the writer gradually raises his style, till he gives to prose almost the rhythm of poetry, I shall quote it at some length.

No copy of the Chronicle, within reach, containing the passage, I have extracted it from Dr. Ingram's Edition. The rimen syllables are marked in Italics, and when two members of a sentence, or (if we may use the term) two sections seem closely knit together by the rhythm, their accounts are defined in the same way as if they formed a verse.

[Corrected by the later edition by the Rev. Prof. Earle, pp. 221.]
Gif hwa gewilnigeth to gewitane hu gedon man he, wæs. oththe hwilenwe wurthscipe he hæfde. oththe hu fela lande he ware hiafled. thonne wille we be him awritan swa swa we hine ageaton. the him onlocodon. and othre hwile on his hirede wunedon. Se cyng Willem the we eme spreca thæs switic wis man. and swithe rice, and wurthfulnu and strenigere thone ængig his fore-gengra were. He wæs milde than godum mannum the God lufedon, and ofer calle gemet steare than mannum the with-cwædon his willan. On tham ilean steode the God him geuthet thet he moste Englæland gegan, he rænde mærc mynster, &c.

Eac he wæs swythe wurthful. thriwa he bær his cyne-helm ælce geare. swa ofr swa he wæs on Englælande. on easton he hine bær on Winceastre. on pentecosten on Westmynstre. on midde winter on Gleawe ceastre. and thanne wæren mid him calle tha rice menn ofer call Engla land. arce biceps. and leod biceps abbodas and earlas. thgnas and cnhta. Swylce he wæs eac swythe steare man and retæ. swa thet man ne dorste nun thing ongean his willan don. He hælde earlas in his bendum, the dydan ongean his willan. Biceps he satne of heora bicepsce. and abbodas of heora abbodrice. and thgnas on ceweartern. and æt nextan he ne sparode his ægenæ brother, &c.

Betwyx othrum thingum nys na to forgytane thet gode frith the he macode on thisan lande. swa thet án man the himylf alt wære mihte faran ofer his rice mid his bosom full golde unglederad. and man man ne dorste slean otherne man. næfel he næfre swa mycel yfel gedon with thone otherne. &c.

He rixade ofer Engla land. and hit mid his gecape scepe swa thurh smeaede. thet næs án hid landes inman Engla lande. thet he nyto hwa heo hæfde. oththe hwaes heo wurth wæs. and sithlan on his gewrint gesætt. Bryt land him wæs on gewesalde. and he thær inne casteles geworhte. and thet Man cynn mid calle gewesalde. Swylce eac Scotland he him underhæddle for his mycele strengthe. Normandige thet land wæs his gecynd. and ofer thone eorldome the Mans is geluten he rixade. and gif he moste tha gyt twa gear lybban. he hæfde Yrlande mid his werscipe gewunnon. andwithun æleon wæpnon.

Witodlice on his tnan hæfdon men mycel geswinc. and swithe manig-teenan. Cas|tel| hue| lêt wyrc|eæn. and arm|e men swith|eswence|ean. se cyng wæs swa swithe stearc. and benam of his underthextendan man manig marc goldeles. and má hundred punda sclôfres. thet| he nam| be riht|eæn. and| mid myc|e|næn|unrith|eæn. of| his leod|eæn. for|lit| telhe| eæn. he| wæs on git|sunge| befeal|lan. and græd|ines|se| he luf|ode| mid ca|le.|eæn.

He sat|te|nac|el deovr|frith. and| he læg|de lag|a| thaer| with.

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1 Some mention of his bounty to the church.
2 Some account of Odo.
3 The A.S. aht is opposed to the A.S. naht vile, naught. It is the O.E. oht and the modern out of Lancashire—not that’s out, naught that’s good. —Tim Bobbin, sc. 2.
If any wish to know what manner of man he was, or what state he held, or of how many lands he was Lord—then will we of him write, as we him knew, we that have waited on him, and other whiles in his court have wonned. The king Willelm, of whom we speak, was a very wise man and very rich, and more stately and powerful than any of his predecessors were. He was mild to the good men, that loved God, and beyond all measure stern to the men that withsaid his will. In the same place, where God granted him that he might England gain, he rear'd a mighty minster, &c.¹

Eke he was right stately. Thrice he bare his crown each year, as oft as he was in England; at Easter he bare it in Winchester, at pente-cost in Westminster, at midwinter in Gloucester; and then were with him all the rich men over all England—archbishops and folk-bishops, abbots and earls, thanes and knights. So was he a right stern man and hot, so that anything against his will durst no man do; he kept earls in his custody, that did aught against his will. Bishops he put from their bishopric, and abbots from their abbacy, and thanes into prison, and at last he spared not his own brother, &c.²

Amongst other things should not be forgotten the good peace that he made within this land, so that a man, that himself were aught,³ might pass through his kingdom, with his bosom full of gold, uninjured. And no man durst slay his fellow-man, had he done never so mickle evil against that other, &c.

He ruled over England, and by his skill so thoroughly scrutinised it, that there was not a hide of land in England, that he wist not who had it, and what it was worth and then put it in his book. Britland was in his power, and he therein built castles, and the Man-people he ruled withal. So eke Scotland he subdued by his mickle strength. The land of Normandy was his by birth; and over the earldom, that is hight Mans, he reigned; and if he might yet have lived two years, he had won Ireland by his prudence,⁴ and without any weapons.

Assuredly, in his time, had the people much toil, and very many sufferings. Castles he let men build, and the poor people sorely harass. The king was so very stern! And he took from his liege-man many a mark of gold, and moreover many a hundred of pounds of silver. That he took, with right—and with mickle unright—from his people, with little need. He was fallen into covetousness, and greediness he loved withal.

He laid out a mickle dear-forest, and he laid down laws therewith—

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¹ *Worsceipe* may mean the reputation of one's manhood, as *corlesceipe* means the reputation of a great leader or earl; see p. 377, n. 19. But I rather think, in the present case, that it is merely a corruption of *worsceipe*.

² I think the proper accentuation would be *thar with*, but the writer clearly intended it to rime with *deor | frith*. 
Thet swa | hwa swa slog | e heort | oththe hind | e. Thea hin | e man scœol | de blend | ian. He | forbæad | tha heort | as | swylc | e eac | tha bar | as | swa swith | e he lut | ode | tha hea | deôr | swylc | e he wer | e heor | a fleg | er. Eac | he set | te be | tham har | an. Thet | hi mos | -ten freo | fær | an | his ric | e men | hit månd | on | and | tha earm | e men | hit becóð | oðon | ac | he (waes) | swa stith | ¹ | thet | he ne roht | e heora call | ra with | ac | hi mos | ton mid | eal | le. Thes cyng | es wile | le folg | ian | gif | hi wol | don lib | ban | oth | the land | hab | ban | land | oththe euh | ta | oth | the wel | his seht | a. Wa | lawd | thet sen | ig man scœol | de mod | igan swa | hin | e self | upp aheb | ban | and | o fer eal | le men tel | lan. Se ænihhtig | a God | cyth | e his saul | e mild | heortnis | se | and do | hin | his syn | na forgif | enes | se.

I cannot help thinking that this rhythmical prose was one of the instruments in breaking up the alliterative system of the Anglo-Saxons. Its influence may be traced in the rhythm of Layamon; and I think it must also, in some instances, have modified the metre, whose properties we are now investigating. The connexion between them may perhaps be made plainer, if we examine the rhythm of

Sain | te Mar | ie | virgin | e
Mod | er Jhes | u Cris | tes Naz | aren | e
Onfo | schild | help | thin Godric
Onfang | bring hég | elich with | the in God | es rich | e
Sain | te Mar | ie cris | tes bur
Maid | ones æfên | had mod | cres flur
Dil | iæ min sin | ne rix | in min mod
Bring | me to win | ne with the | self god

In the second of these staves (if we may so term them) each verse divides itself into two regular sections; ³ but the rhythm of the first stave can hardly be distinguished from that of the prose we have just been noticing. In this kind of rhythm were also written the verses, which are found in

¹ No metrical point. [The MS. omits was; according to Prof. Earle, there is a metrical point, both after stith and walewa.—W. W. S.]
² I have taken my copy from the King's MS. 5 F. VII.
that whose slew hart or hind, that him they should blind. He forbade to kill the harts, so also the boars. As strongly he lov'd the great game, as though he had been their father. Eke he made laws for the hares, that they should freely pass. His rich men bemoan'd it, and the poor men murmur'd at it; but he was so stern, that he reck'd not all their hate; but they must, withal, the king's will follow, if they would live, or land have—land or possessions, or even his piece. Walaw! that any man should be so proud! himself uplift, and over all men vaunt! may the almighty God show to his soul mercy, and grant him of his sins forgiveness!

certain verses, that were written in the early half of the twelfth century.

The following hymn to the virgin is attributed to St. Godric, who died at Finchale near Durham in the year 1174, after living the life of a hermit, in that sheltered and leafy nook, some sixty years.

Saint Mary! Virgin!
Mother of Jesu Christ the Nazarene!
Take, shield, help thy Godric!
Take, bring him speedily with thee to God's realm.

Saint Mary! Christ's bower!
Maiden's purity! the mother's flower!
If hide my sin! reign in my heart!
Bring me to joy, with thyself good!

the Book of Ely. The monk, who wrote the MS. in 1170, tells us they were made by king Knut, as he approached the isle, on one of the great festivals; they were probably composed not long after the year 1100.

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* In the two last verses we should also notice the rime between sinne and winne; if this be not accidental, it is the first instance, I have met with, of an interwoven rime in our language.
After all, the formation of this metre shows itself under such different aspects, when seen from different points of view, that a writer, who should exclusively adopt any one hypothesis, might give better proof of his courage, than of his prudence. Whatever be its origin—whether the stream has flowed from one source, and coloured its waters with the strata over which it passed—or resulted from the union of two or more independent streamlets, which, in blending their waters, have mixed their properties—it will be admitted, on all hands, that no license should be granted in any classical metre, which is clearly adverse to the usual
Sweetly sung the monks in Ely,
When Knut king row'd thereby,
"Row, knights, near the land,
"And hear we these monks' song.

flow of the rhythm, or strikingly inconsistent with its general character. On this ground, I would still venture to uphold the criticism, which was hazarded in a former chapter.¹ I must still think that the middle pause is essential to this metre; or—to say the least—that when, as in the Allogro and Penseroso, the rhythm has brought it prominently under notice, it cannot be, at pleasure, abandoned. With this exception, the versification of these poems is as exquisite as the poetry; and as to that there can be but one opinion—had Milton written nothing else, his name must have been immortal.

¹ Pages 148 to 157.
CHAPTER V.

OLD ENGLISH ALLITERATIVE METRE.

In the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries many poems were written in a metre, which exhibits all the more essential properties of our Anglo-Saxon rhythms. Each verse may be divided into two sections; the first of which contains two, and the latter one accented syllable, marked with the alliteration.¹ It differs from the alliterative couplet of the Anglo-Saxons in the nature of its pauses, the middle pause being always subordinate to the final; in its greater length, the number of accents being generally 5 or 6, very seldom indeed so few as 4; and in the greater comparative importance of the first section, which has generally more accents than the second. All these points of difference may, I think, be attributed to the influence of the Psalm-metres, of which we shall have more to say in the next chapter.

That an alliterative metre, like the present, should have resulted from the causes which were then in action, might have been expected; but the sudden manner in which it seems to have started into existence, is by no means easy to account for. The year 1360 is the earliest date we can positively assign to any poem in this metre; and I know of none which we can, with any show of reason, suppose to have been written more than twenty or thirty years earlier. If we consider Layamon as an alliterative poet, here is a gap

¹ In place of an obscure or obsolete word, the copyists would often substitute some gloss; and, from the liberty thus taken, the alliteration has in many cases suffered. The rule given in the text agrees with that laid down by Crowley, in his edition of Piers Plowman, A. D. 1550, that there must be "three wordes, at the leaste, in every verse, whiche beginne with some one letter." We seldom find the rule violated in the older MSS.
of nearly two centuries; and, if we deny him that character, of more than two centuries and a half, since the last known date of any regular alliterative poem.

It is, I think, not improbable that alliterative rhythm may have yielded, in the south,¹ to the more fashionable novelties of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; and have kept its place in the north and west, till the success of Langland again made it one of our classical metres. This hypothesis would account for the blank, which breaks in upon the series of our alliterative poems; and must, if admitted, in some measure lessen our hopes of regaining what is lost.

There are, however, critics who go much further, and consider this metre an invention of the fourteenth century. Warton, with some hesitation, would yield the honour to Langland; but, as William and the Werwolf was certainly written before the Vision of Piers Ploughman, the claim, which its editor ² seems half inclined to make in favour of his author, is certainly the better founded of the two. In his preface he quotes the following verses [p. xii. of Skeat’s edition],

In this wise hath William al his werke ended,
As fully as the Frencche fully wold aske,
And as his withe him wold serve though it were febul.
But though the metur be nouȝt made at eche maunes paye,
Wite him nouȝt that it wrouȝt; he wold have do better,
ȝif is wite in eyn weieȝes wold him have served.

In this way hath William ended all his work,
As fully as the French text would require it to be done;
And as his wit would serve him (though that indeed he feeble).
But though the metre be not made to each man’s content,
Blame not him that made it, he would have done better,
If his wit, in any way, would have served him.

from which he infers, that "the alliterativo form of Alexan-

¹ The reader need hardly be reminded of Chaucer’s lines,
   But trusteth wel, I am a southern man,
   I cannot geste rim, ram, ruf, by letter. Cant. Tales, 17353.

² [Sir F. Madden. The poem was re-edited by myself for the Early English Text Society in 1867, with the title William of Palerne.—W. W. S.]
drine verse had not yet become popular, and was, in fact, but lately introduced." But surely the language of the poet is not that of a man, who is beforehand with his hearers. He seems rather to fear the censures of a critical audience—one, that might be ill-satisfied with an old-fashioned rhythm, or at any rate alive to the slightest violation of a metre, that had probably been familiar to them from childhood.

William's patron, Humphrey Bohun, Earl of Hereford, is twice mentioned as still living. As he succeeded to the earldom in 1335, and died in 1361, the romance must have

1 By command of "La Contesse Yolent," daughter of Baldwyn, Earl of Hainault. One MS. of the French version, and I believe the only one now.
been written sometime between these two dates. It was a translation of a French tale, which had itself been translated from the Latin in the twelfth century; and may, perhaps, be looked upon as the oldest specimen of this metre, that has yet been discovered.

The MS. is of the fourteenth century. The middle pause is not marked; and the opening of the tale is missing. The child, who plays the hero, has been carried off by the Werewolf to a distant forest, and hidden in the beast’s den. His discovery by the cowherd is told as follows [ll. 3-53].

It chanced in that forest (fast beside it)
There dwelt a right old curl, that was a cowherd,
That many winters, in that forest, had fairly tended
Men’s cattle, of the neighbourhood, as a common herd.
And thus it chanced that time (as our books tell us)
This cowherd comes, on a time, to tend his beasts,
Fast beside the hole, wherein the child was.
The herdsman had with him a hound, to glad his heart,
And to set on his beasts, when they ranged too widely.
The herdsman sat then with his hound in the warm sunshine,
Not quite a furlong from that fair child,
Clouting as usual his shoon (as is the custom of their craft).
That time was the werewolf gone about his prey,
To bring, as he might, what was needful for the child.

The child then lurk’d in his den, all secretly alone,
And was a big bold barn, and strong for his age;
For readily could it speak then, and quickly move about.
Lovely lay it along in its lonely den!
And he got him out of the bushes, that were greenly blow’d,
And leaved full lovely, so that they gave great shade.
And the birds right shrilly sing on the boughs!
Forsooth for the melody that they made in the [May] season,
That little child, with joy, crept out of his cave,
Fair flowers to fetch that he saw before him;
And to gather some of the grasses, that were green and fair.
And when he had gone forth, so well it pleas’d him,
The savour of the sweet season, and the song of the birds.

*extant, is in the King’s library at Paris. [It has been edited by M. Michelant, with the title Guillaume de Palerne.—W. W. S.]*
Many other alliterative romances appear to have been written in the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. One of the earliest of these may be the poem, which is found at the end of the Roman d’Alexandre, in the Bodleian Library. Its subject is Alexander’s visit to the Gymnosophists, and it was avowedly added for the purpose of supplying an omission in the French romance. It contains more than 1200 verses; and was probably written not long after the French poem was transcribed, perhaps about the middle of the fourteenth century. Another alliterative

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1 Bodl. MSS. B. 264. The poem I have merely glanced over, but have seen enough to show me the gross inaccuracy of Warton’s quotation. Verses are run into each other, and the common word hem (them) is rendered hevi! Price should have corrected these blunders. [See my edition of this poem, published for the Early English Text Society in 1878, with the title Alexander and Dindimus.—W. W. S.]

2 Ashm. MSS. 44. This MS. I have not seen. According to Warton it is
That he rambled fast about, flowers to gather,
And amused him long while with listening to that merry-making.

The cowherd's hound that time, as chanced to happen,
Caught scent of the child, and follow'd fast thitherward.
And soon as he sees him, the sooth to tell,
He gan to bark upon that child, and to hold it at bay,
So that it was nigh out of its wits, mad for fear;
And gan then to cry so keenly and shrilly,
And wept so wondrously fast (for sooth believe it)
That the sound of the cry reach'd even to the cowherd,
So that he knew right well it was the voice of a child.

Then rose he up speedily, and ran thither quickly,
And drew him toward the den, guided by the noise of his dog.
By that time had the child, on account of the hound's baying,
Withdrawn him into the den, and there lurk'd without stirring,
And wept ever as it would go mad for fear;
And ever the dog at the hole held it at bay.
And when the cowherd came thither, he cower'd low,
To look in at the hole, why his dog barked.
Then saw he full soon that beautiful child,
That so lovely lay and wept, in that loathly cave,
Clothed full comely, fit for any far-famed king's son,
In good clothes of gold trick'd out full richly
With jewels and fur, &c.

poem, relating to Alexander, is found among the Ashmolean MSS. Warton [erroneously] "believed" this to be the same as the one last mentioned; but it does not appear that his belief was founded on any examination of the manuscript.

One of the Cotton MSS. contains a string of Scripture histories, written in this metre; such as the story of Noah, of Abraham and the three Angels, of Daniel, and of Jonah. The poem is, for several reasons, curious, and especially so to the philologist; but I do not think it of much earlier

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divided into 27 passus, according to Whitaker (or rather Conybeare), into 16 cantos. See Preface to Whitaker's Piers Ploughman. [Edited by Mr. Stevenson for the Roxburghe Club in 1849; and now being reprinted by myself.—W. W. S.]

3 Nero, A. x. [Printed by Dr. Morris for the Early English Text Society, in 1864.—W. W. S.]
date than the manuscript, which certainly belongs to the latter half of the fourteenth century. Another Cotton MS.\(^1\) the date of which may be some forty or fifty years later, furnishes us with two alliterative romances, the "Chevalere

Vaspasiane dressede hym fro his bedde: and arayde him fayre
Fro the foote to the forhedde: in fyne cloth of golde
And aftur putteth that prince: aboue his gay a ray
An haburione browdered thikke: wit a brest plate

The grate on the graye steel: was of golde ryche
Ther on castede he a cote: of color of his armes
And a grete gyrdell of golde: wit oute gere more
Hc leyde on his lendes: wit lachettes full monye

A bryȝte burnysched swerde: he gyrdeth him a bowte
Of pure polvsched golde: bothe pomell and hyltes
A brode sluyynge sehelde: on his schulder he hanged
And bokeled wit bryȝte golde: a bouen at the nekke

The gloves of graye steele: wit golde were hemmed
When he was a rayde thus: his hors sone he asked
The golde heuweid helme: him was browȝte themne after
Wit visor and ventayle: avysed for the nones

And a crowne of clene golde: was closed a bouen
Rayled rounde a boute the helme: full of ryche stones
Pyȝte prowedly wit perlis: the helme rounde a bowte
And with safyres sette: the sythes to and fro

He stryde ther on a stiffe steece: and styred on the grounde
Lyȝte as a lyon were losed \(^2\): of his cheyne
His menne syȝe hym eche oone: and euerie manne sayde to other
This is a komely kyngye: knyȝtes to lede.

He pryked to the barres: ere he a byde wolde
And beteth on wit his swerde: that the brasse ryngedde
Cometh out ȝe kaytyfes he seyde: that cryste slewe
And knowe hym for ȝor god: ore ye cacche more.

ȝe may sette ȝou no foode: thogh ȝe dye schulde
And also to ȝor watyr: wynne ȝe maye nevere

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\(^{1}\) Cal. A. ii.

\(^{2}\) There is another version of this poem in the metre of 4 accents, which appears to have been made by Adam Davie, early in the fourteenth century. [In MS. Laud 622. There is no reason for attributing it to Adam Davy; see preface to Adam Davy's Five Dreams, &c., ed. F. J. Furnivall, 1878, p. 7. The alliterative Sege of Jerusalem is still unprinted (1881).—W. W. S.]
Assigne, and the "Sege" of Jerusalem. A short extract from the latter will enable us to compare the costly habiliments of the fifteenth century with the simpler toilet, which contented "fair knighthood" in the twelfth.

Vespasian gat him from his bed, and array'd him fairly,
From the foot to the forehead, with fine cloth of gold.
And afterwards that prince putteth above his gay array
A habergeon thickly embroider'd, and a breastplate;
The grit, on the gray steel, was of rich gold.
Thereon he cast a coat, of the colour of his arms;
And a great girdle of gold, without more apparel,
He laid on his loins with ties full many.

A bright burnish'd sword he girdeth about him
Of pure polish'd gold, both pummel and hilt.
A broad shining shield on his shoulder he hung,
And buckled with bright gold above at his neck.
The gloves of gray steel with gold were hemm'd.
When he was thus arrayed his horse soon he ask'd for.
The gold-colour'd helm was then afterwards brought him,
With visor and ventaille, prepared for the nonce.

And a crown of clear gold was encircled above,
Circled round about the helm, full of rich stones;
Proudly fix'd with pearls, round about the helm,
And set with saphyrs to and fro the sides.

He steppeth upon a stiff steed, and pranced on the earth,
Light as a lion, that were loosed from his chain.
His men saw him each one, and every man said to other,
"This is a comely king, knights to lead."

He prick'd to the gates, ere he would stop,
And beateth on them with his sword, so that the brass rung again.
"Come out ye caitiffs, that slew Christ,
"And know him for your God, ere ye suffer more
"Ye may fetch you no food, though ye should die for't,
"And also to your water never may ye get.

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3 See p. 411.
4 The grit was the metal worked into the steel.
5 Here the middle pause is misplaced in the MS. It ought to have followed the word lyon.
A droope though he dye schuld: dayes in 3 or lyue.  
The pale that here pyght is: passe who so may.

It is full bygge at the banke: and hath 5 or cyte closed
For that fowry mene to fy3te: a5ens five bounted
Though 3e were deunces echon; a5eyn turne 3e schull
And 3ette more worsyppe hit were: mercy to be seche.

Then for to marre meteless: ther no myght helpyth
Their were none to speke on worde: but waited her tyme
If any styrte out a straye: wit stones to kylle
Wroth as a wykde bore: he wendeth his brydell

Though 3e dye as dogges: the devell have that rekketh
And though I wende fro the wall: 3e shull a byde me here
And ofte spedelyer speke: erc I 3or speche here 3e.

The right scansion of these verses is a matter of difficulty, owing to the license taken in the use of the ever terminal. This letter is sometimes used for the mere purposes of orthography, and sometimes forms an integral portion of the word; and, in the latter case, it is sometimes pronounced and sometimes mute. As there are other difficulties arising from blunders of transcription, I thought it safer to leave these verses without scanning them.

The poem is divided into staves, after the model, it would seem, of the psalm-metres; but as the rhythm is very slightly, if at all, affected by this division, I have treated it as a specimen of the common alliterative metre.

The latest alliterative tale yet discovered, is the "Scottish Field," written by Leigh of Baguleigh, soon after the year 1515. It was found in the Percy MS.; and, according to the editor, contains a very curious and detailed account of the Scottish invasion, which ended with the battle of Flodden. It were to be wished he had been more copious in his extracts.

But the most valuable specimens of this metre are to be found in the satires and allegories, which the success of

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1 Pale, (peci, in the northern dialect,) originally meant an earthen work; but was afterwards used for any small forntalice, of whatever materials constructed.
"Not a drop (though ye should die for’t) all the days of your life,
"The pale \(^1\) that here is fix’d, let him pass whoseo may;

"It is full large at the bank, and hath your city enclosed,
"So that forty men might fight against five hundred,
"Though ye were devils each one, turn and meet me ye should,
"And yet more worthy thing it were to ask for mercy,

"Than to waste without meat, where no strength availeth."
There were none to speak one word, but they waited their time,
If any stray’d out from shelter, with stones to kill him.
Wroth as a wild boar he turneth his bridle,

"Though ye die as dogs, the devil have him that reeketh,
"And though I turn from the wall, ye shall abide me here,
"And speak often and more readily, ere I your speech hear."

Langland appears to have called into existence. They are valuable not only as pictures of manners, but as showing the prevailing modes of thinking, and the currents of public opinion. The work of Langland is also curious, as being the product of a rich and powerful mind, drawing upon its own stores, unaided (perhaps I might have said unfettered) by rule and precedent. When carefully examined, it will not be found wanting in the important quality of unity, the absence of which so much lessens our enjoyment of many contemporary poems; but the execution of the work is certainly superior to its conception, and shows indeed a wonderful versatility of genius. A high tone of feeling is united to the most searching knowledge of the world; sarcastic declamation is succeeded by outpourings of the most delicate poetry; and broad humour or homespun mother-wit by flights, which neither Spenser nor Milton have disdained to follow.

The author’s name is first mentioned by Bale, in the year 1559. This writer styles him Robert Langland, a native of Mortimers Cloobury, in Shropshire; and is confirmed, both as to name and birth-place, by Holinshed, who also calls him

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\(^1\) How faulty this copy must be, we may partly learn from the imperfect alliteration. [There are other copies.—W. W. S.]
\(^2\) [It is all printed in the edition of the Percy Folio MS., ed. Hales and Furnivall.—W. W. S.]
a secular priest. But according to Stow and Wood, he was named John Malvern, and was Fellow of Oriel; and, according to the latter, a Worcestershire man. Wood also tells us, that he became a Benedictine at Worcester, and was by some persons called Robert Langland.

It is very unlikely that the name and history of our most popular poet (after Chaucer) should be matter of dispute within a century and a half of his death. Both these, seemingly conflicting, accounts may be true, and may be reconciled, as it appears to me, without much difficulty. The poet's Christian name of Robert may, according to a common practice, have been changed into John when he entered the monastery. As to his surname of Langland, this may have been taken from the farm where he was born; and as he makes Malvern (which was then as important an ecclesiastical station as it still is a striking object in the landscape) the scene of his vision, we may readily understand how the surname, derived from an obscure homestead, was supplanted by one so familiar to his fellow-monks of Worcester. As Cleobury, moreover, lies on the borders of Worcestershire, Wood's mistake, in calling him a native of that shire, is easily accounted for.

Another difficulty was started by Tyrwhitt. In some MSS. the title of the work is _Visio Wil' de Piers Plouhman_, and the sleeper throughout is addressed by the name of _Wille_. To write however in a fictitious character was agreeable to the spirit of the age; and the dreamer's name of William, his house on Cornhill, and his daughters, Kitty and Calot, are, I believe, as much inventions of the poet, as the dream itself.

The popularity of this writer is shown by the many copies, which are still extant, of his Visions. But the variations

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1 Ritson attempted, very ingeniously, to get over the difficulty, by melting down _Wille_ into an abstraction, "a personification of the mental faculty," and by considering the _title_ a mistake, arising from the misapprehension of the copyist. But, unfortunately, in some MSS. instead of _Wille_, we have the name at full length, _William_. [The reader should consult my editions of _Piers Plowman_, especially the preface to the edition of the Prologue and Passus I. to VII., as published for the Clarendon Press. — W. W. S.]
between them are so many and important, that neither difference of dialect, nor carelessness on the part of the copyist, will satisfactorily account for them. One set of these MSS. agree[s] well with the early printed editions; and a second may be represented by the modern edition of Mr. Whitaker. As there are copies, in both sets, which clearly belong to the fourteenth century, and were probably written during the lifetime of the author, it has been conjectured, that Langland himself revised the poem; and, according to Whitaker, his copy exhibits the poem as it first came from the hands of its author. But Price found this satire, as it were, in outline,¹ in the Harl. MS. 6041. Though the copy be a late one, the poem shows all the freshness of invention; few of the episodes are inserted, and many passages but slightly touched, which, in all the printed editions, are worked up with much particularity of detail.

From this copy I have hitherto quoted;² and, had space allowed, it was my intention to have extracted the first passus, which answers to the first and second of the printed editions. In the fifth passus are to be found the verses ¹ which refer to the "south-west wind, on Saturday at eve;" and which fix the date of the poem.⁴ There is therefore little doubt that the poem, even in this its earliest form, was not written before the year 1362.

Piers Ploughman's Crude is generally coupled with Langland's Visions. It must have been written after the year 1384, for Wyclif is mentioned as no longer living. This

¹ [That is, there are really three versions of the poem. All three have been edited by me for the Early English Text Society.—W. W. S.]
² [It is so poor a MS. that I have occasionally corrected the quotations by help of better copies.—W. W. S.]
³ They are found in the sixth passus of the printed editions.
⁴ Tyrwhitt, with the sagacity that was natural to him, and which, if it had been equally shown in his philological speculations, would have fully entitled him to Whitaker's epithet esperuoraroe, pointed out a passage in the Decem Scriptores, c. 21, &c. which records, that on the 15th day of January, 1362, "circa horam vesperarum venus vehemens notus australis africus tantâ rabil erupit, &c." The 15th of January was a Saturday, and Langland, we may infer, during this winter was writing his Visions. [But this only fixes the date of the first or earliest version.—W. W. S.]
however is the extent of our knowledge; the author's name or circumstances are alike unknown.  

With these poems may be classed the allegory in the Percy MS. called Life and Death; and the Vision, which the learned editor extracted from "a small 4to MS. in private hands." The former of these poems was probably written a short time before, and the latter a short time after the year 1400. Dunbar's Twa marriit Women and the Wedo, may have been written about the year 1500. Its wit is more than equalled by its grossness.

Besides the alliterative poems already mentioned, there are others which are divided into staves. Strictly, perhaps, these ought not to be noticed in the present book; but, as it is important to take one general view of our alliterative metre, the rule may, I think, in this instance, be departed from with more advantage than inconvenience.

Of these poems one of the most curious is found in the Cotton MS. Nero, A. x. It is quoted by Mr. Stevenson and Sir F. Madden, under the title of "Gawain and the Green Knight," and is referred to by Price, as "the Aunter of Sir Gawain." All reference to their MS. is carefully avoided by these writers, and possibly there may be copies

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1 [The date is about 1394. I have proved that the author was the same person as the author of the Plowman's Tale once attributed to Chaucer, but certainly not his. I have edited the poem for the Early English Text Society. — W. W. S.]

2 [Not so. Life and Death, now printed by Hales and Furnivall in their edition of the Percy Folio MS., is by the author of Fodden Field, and therefore belongs to the reign of Henry VIII. See p. 454. Again, the "Vision" here mentioned is the poem of the Crowned King, written in 1415. It has been printed by me from the Douce MS. 95 (now in the Bodleian Library), at the end of the C-text of Fierc Plowman. — W. W. S.]

3 Price certainly intended to publish this poem, and therefore his jealousy...
of the poem, which have escaped my notice. As Price uses a title, which is found in Wynton’s Chronicle, he would probably, like Wynton, have attributed the poem to “Huchown,” or Hugh. The rime chronicler quotes the “Gest hystoriale,” of one “Huchown of the Awle ryale,” who

made the grete Gest of Arthure,
And the Awntyre of Gawayn,
The Pistle als of Swete Susane.
He wes curyows in his style,
Fair of Facund, and subtile;
And ay to plesans of deyte,
Made in meeter weit his dyte.

As Wynton wrote about the year 1420, Hugh may have flourished at the close of the fourteenth century. ¹ He is certainly the oldest English poet, born north of Tweed, whose works have reached us. His stave is peculiar to him; and consists of an irregular number of verses, separated by a kind of wheel, or burthen. The following passage [ll. 1126-1177], which describes a grand hunting party, contains two of these staves; and will give the reader a more correct notion of their peculiarities than any description. The middle pause is not marked in the M.S.

Full early before the day, the folk uprise;
Guests, that wish’d to go, their grooms they call’d,
And they busk up quickly, their greys ⁴ to [saddle],
They tiff ⁵ their tackle-gear, truss their males,
Rig themselves out most richly, to ride all array’d;
They leap up lightly, and catch their bridles,—

with respect to the M.S. is readily understood; may we infer that the other two have the same intention? [The inference, in one instance, proved correct. It was printed by Sir F. Madden. It has been reprinted by Dr. Morris for the E. E. T. S.—W. W. S.]

¹ [The authorship of Gawain and the Grene Knight is still unsettled. We only know that he wrote the three Alliterative Poems, edited by Dr. Morris in 1864.]

⁴ The word blank means properly a grey horse; but it was afterwards used as a general name for that animal.

⁵ To tiff, to deck out, to dress, is still a common word in several of our counties.
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UCH e wy3 e on his way: ther | hym wel | liked  o
The leu e lord | of the lon | de: wat3 | not the last  o
Aray ed for | the ryd | yng: with renk ke3 ful mon | y
Et e a sop has tyly: when | he had | e herde mas | se
With bu gle to bent felde: he bus | ke3 by-lu | e
By that | that an | y day-ly3t: lem | ed up | on e rth | e
He | with his hath eles: on hy3 | o hors | ses wer | en
Then | ne thise each | eres that couth | e: cowp | led hor houn | de3
Unclos ed the ken | el dor | e: and cal | de hem ther-out | e
Blwe byg ly in bug | le3 | thre bar | e-mot | e
Brach | es bay | ed ther-for | e: and brem | e noys | e mak | ed
And | they chas | tyted | and char | red: on chas | yng that went |
A hun | dreth of hun | teres: as | I haf herde  3 | tel | le
of | the best |
To trys | tors vew | ters 3od |
Coup | les hun | tes of-kest |
Ther ron | for blas | tc3 god | e
Gret rurd | in that | forest
At | the first queth | e of the quest | : quak | ed the wyl | de
Der drof | in the dal | e: dot | ed for dred | e
II3 ed to | the hy3 | e: bot hct | erly | thay wer | e
Restay ed with | the stab | lye | that stout | ly ascry | ed
Thay let | the hert | tes haf | the gat | e: with | the hy3 | e hed | es
The brem | e buk | kes al | so: with | hor brod | e paum | e3
For | the fre | lorde had | e de-fend | : in fer | mysoun tym | e
That | ther schul | de no | mon men | e: to | the mal | e der | e
The hin | de3 were hal | den in | : with hay | and war |
The do | es dry uen with | gret dyn | : to | the dep | e slad | e3
Ther | my3t mon se | as thay slyp | te: slen | tyng of ar | wes
At uch | e wen | de under wan | de: wap | pod a flone |
That big | ly bote | on the browm | : with | ful brod | e hed | es
What | thay bray | en and bled | en | bi bonk | kes thay dey | en
And | ay rach | ches in | a res | rad | ly hem fol | 3es
Hun teres | wyth hy3 | e horn | e: has | ted hem aft | er
Wyth such | a crack | kande kry | : as klyf fes had | en brust | en
What wyl | de so | at-wap | ed | wy3 | es that schot | ten

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1 Bent is the coarse wiry grass which grows upon the upland. It was also sometimes used for the uplands themselves.

2 Barrowt appears to be the name given to some note on the bugle. The last syllable is clearly the old English word moor. [Rather, F. meuue.]

3 There is a mystery with respect to the final e, sometimes found at the end of the past participle. In this case, however, I do not think it was pronounced. [Certainly not. It is the scribe's error.—W. W. S.]

4 The veuters seem to be the same as the feuters of our dramatists—that is, the men who led the lime-hounds in couples.

5 The quest was the opening cry of the hounds.
Each man on the way, where him best pleased.
The dear Lord of the land was not the last,
Array'd for the riding, with fellows full many.
He eats a sop hastily, when he had heard mass;
With bugle to the bent-field, he busketh quickly.
By the time any daylight gleamed upon earth,
He with his nobles upon high horses were.
Then these drivers (that well knew how) coupled their hounds,
Unclosed the kennel-door, and call'd them thereunto.
They blew loudly on bugles three barenotes;¹
The braches bayed therefore, and a furious noise made;
And they chastised and drove them buck, (they that went to the chase)—
A hundred of hunters, as I have heard tell,
of the best!
To the stations the dog-keepers² went,
Their couples the huntsmen cast off,
On account of the good blasts there rose
A great din in that forest.
At the first sound of the guest³ quaked the wild deer;
They drove along, in the dale, mad for fear;
Hied to the heights, but eagerly were they
Stopp'd at [rather, by] the stablye,⁴ that stoutly hallow'd.
They let the harts have the road, with their high heads;
The fierce bucks also, with their broad palms;⁵
For the good Lord had forbidden, in fermynson time,⁶
That any man should make an attempt on the male deer.
The hinds were holden in with the hedge and fear;⁷
The does driven with great din to the deep slades.
There might man see, as they slipt, glancing of arrows.
At each, that went under bough, wapp'd a shaft,
That sank deep in the brown deer, with full broad heads.
How they bray and bleed! beside hillocks they die,
And ay lurchers,¹⁰ with a rush, quickly follow them,
Hunters with long horns hasted after them,
With such a cracking cry, as if the cliffs had bursten.
What game soever escaped the men that shot

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¹ The marksmen at the station, towards whom the game was driven.
² The palme was a word used by our dramatists for the broad part of a deer's antlers.
³ The winter season. The bucks were kept for summer killing, as at that time they were fat and in good plight.
⁴ [Rather, "with hey! and wore?" cries used in hunting.—W. W. S.]
⁵ Whether there was any, and what difference, between a rach and a brack, I know not; both appear to have hunted by the scent. Rach seems to have been used chiefly in the northern dialect.
*

**HISTORY OF ENGLISH RHYTHMS.**  B. III.

Wat all | to-rac ed and rent | at | the res | ayt
B | they were ten | ed at | the hy | e | and tays | ed to | the wat | re
The led | so lern | ed | at | the lo | e | try | teres
And | the gre | houndes | so gret | e | that get | en hem | byly | ue
- And hem | to ylch | ed as fast | : as frek | es my | lok | e.

Thus | to the clerk" | ny |

That this poem is the "Awntyre of Gawayn," which Wynton attributes to Huchown, or Hugh, is probable, for several reasons; and there is one which seems almost decisive—at the head of the MS. is written, in a hand which belongs to a period not much later than the year 1500, what appears to be the unfinished name of its author—*Hugo de.* Hugh's other work, the "Pistill of Swete Susane," is probably the poem entitled *Sussan,* in the Cotton MS.

Hyr kynrade hyr cousyns | and alle that her knewe
Wrongon hondys ywys | and wepten ful sare
Certsys for Sussan sothfast | and semyly of hewe
All wyues and wydowes | awondred they were
They dyde hyr in a downgon | wher never day dewe
Tyll domes mon hadde dempte | the dede to declare
Marred wit manacles | that mede were newe
Meteles fro the morn | till midday and mare

In drede
Tho come her famyr so fre
With all hys affynyte
The prestes were with out pyte
And full of falsndede

In the same kind of stave are written the two poems which Pinkerton published under the titles of "Sir Gawane

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1 The *resaynt* appears to mean the stations in the valley, near the river. The game was driven from the woody hills towards the *stablye,* and when they had slipped by, on their road to the valley, they were chased by the men at "the low stations." The whole puts one in mind of the hunting scenes in Germany; though probably a more zealous sportsman might see important differences between them.
Was all pulled down and torn at the resayt,\(^1\)
After they were baited at the hedge and driven to the waters—
The people were so skilful at the low stations!
And the greyhounds so great, that got them quickly,
And filched them (as fast as people could look at them).
There, right well!
The Lord for bliss [cried ahoy!]
Full oft gan he leap and and be merry;
And the day drove on [he passed the day] with joy,
Thus to the dark night.

Cal. A. ii.;\(^4\) and there are reasons for believing that even
"the grest gest of Arthure" would be forthcoming, if dili-
gently looked for.
The poem of Sussan is written in staves, which are
formed by joining to the stave of 8 lines with alternating
rime, a certain kind of wheel or burthen, of which we
shall have much to say hereafter. The following is a
specimen:

Her kindred, her cousins, and all that knew her,
Wrung their hands ywis, and wept full sorely—
Certes for righteous Susan, so seemly of hew!
All wives and widows, astonnded were they!
They put her in a dungeon, where never did dawn’d,
(Till the doomster gave judgment, to pronounce on the deed.)
Oppress’d with manacles, that were made new,
Meatless from the morn till midday and more—
All in dread!
Then came her father so good,
And all his kinsmen.
The priests were without pity,
And full of falshood!

and Sir Galaron," and "Gawane and Gologras;" also Hol-
land’s satirical fablo called The Howlat; and Gawin Douglas’s

\(^1\) Qu. darke.
\(^2\) The MS. was written about the year 1400.
\(^4\) A more perfect copy may be found in the Vernon MS. of the Bodleian
Library, and a third copy in one of Whitaker’s MSS. See Whitaker’s Pref.
to Piers Ploughman.
well-known Prologue to the 8th Æneid. But there is one peculiarity in these poems which should not pass unnoticed. The short line, or in technical language the bob, which introduces the wheel, is lengthened out into a full alliterative verse; and is always closely connected with the wheel, instead of being separated from it by a stop. The same peculiarity is found in every Scotch poem of the fifteenth century, that admits a wheel of this kind—a strong argument to show, that the poems, from which we have quoted, are of earlier date. This notion is also, in some measure, countenanced by Dunbar. In his "Lament for the death of the Makars," he mentions,

The gude Schir Hew of Eglentoun,

who was probably Wynton’s Huchown; and afterwards laments for another writer, who may have written the tales which Pinkerton published,

Clerk of Trauent cik he (Death) hes tane
That made the auntris of Gawane.

Douglas’s Prologue, whether we look to its subject, or to its present waning popularity, may well take for its text “all is vanity.” Its merit is not easy to estimate under the disadvantages of an obsolete dialect, bygone idioms, and a reference to a state of life and manners so unlike our own. Many strokes of satire, which at the time may have had a direct and personal application, are now sunk into vapid generalities, or lost from our ignorance of local circumstances. Still enough remains to excuse, if not to justify, the praises that were once lavished on this favourite poem. The crowd of images, and the grotesque combinations, produce almost the same effect on the mind as the noise, and hubbub, and confusion of another vanity-fair upon the ear of Bunyan’s pilgrim. The broken and sketchy style, and the curious idiomatic turns, must, even at the time, have given the work a character of quaintness and oddity; and may have recommended it to many, who otherwise were little likely to pay attention to the lessons it read them. Want of space alone prevents me from extracting it.
There are also alliterative poems, written in the common ballot-stave of eight verses. One of these, entitled "Little John Nobody," was composed as late as the year 1550.

I have, in the course of this chapter, called Hugh the oldest English poet, born north of Tweed, whose works have reached us. Tyrwhitt, on the faith of a passage in Robert of Brunne, which he thought attributed the Gest of Tristrem to Erceldon and Kendale, gave these writers, or rather the first of them, the credit of its authorship; and Sir Walter Scott supported the claim in an elaborate criticism. Were this criticism sound, Erceldon would precede Hugh by at least a century. I think, however, that the general opinion, both at home and abroad, is against it. To me it always seemed, that the first stave of the poem [of Sir Tristrem] went far to exclude Erceldon from all share in its composition.

I was at Erceldon
With Tomas spak Y thare,
Ther herd Y rede in roune
Who Tristrem gut and bare.
Who was king with crow
And who him fosterd yare;
And who was bold baron
As their elders ware
Bi yere—
Tomas tells in town
This auentours as thai ware.

Now the story of Tristrem (as we shall presently see) was variously told; and it was a common practice to solicit the confidence of the hearer by quoting some well-known name as authority. The earlier "disieur" sheltered himself under the name of Breri; the Germans preferred the story of Thomas the Cornish Chronicler; and Kendale, it appears, followed Thomas of Erceldon. Whether Erceldon told the tale in English or Romance, in prose or verse, we have no means of ascertaining. From him the Westmoreland poet learned the story, and this seems to be the extent of his

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1 See Percy's Reliques.
obligations. Had the poem been a mere copy, we should doubtless have heard something of the original—of the "boc" or the "parchemin."

The dispute as to the authorship of Tristrem involved another (and one of much greater interest), as to the origin of British romance. This cycle of fictitious narrative has exerted so powerful an influence on the early literature of Europe, that I shall probably be forgiven if I lay before the reader some speculations on the subject.

The early romances, which relate to our race or country, may be divided into two classes—English stories,¹ such as the Fall of Fins-burgh, Beowulf, Byrthnoth, Horn, Havelok, &c.; and British, or such as treat of Arthur, and other knights of Wales, Cornwall, or Britany. The first class may be traced up to the fifth century, and perhaps to a period even more remote; but we have no specimen of the second, in our mother-tongue, till the latter half of the thirteenth century. These two cycles of romantic fiction exhibit a striking contrast, not only as to style, but also in their incidents, the state of manners which they unfold, and their general moral tendencies. Our present inquiry relates only to the British cycle.

The earliest names recorded, in connexion with the authorship of these tales, are those of three Englishmen,² Luke Gast, who is said to have lived near Salisbury;³ Walter Mapes, the jovial, witty, and satirical Archdeacon of Oxford; and Robert Borron. The first of these is said to have translated the Tristrem from Latin into Romance;⁴ the second

¹ In this class I would range all the romances which the Engle appear to have brought with them from the Continent, though the merit of their invention may possibly belong to other Gothic races—such as the tales of Ælfa, of Theodric, and perhaps of Weland. English romances on these subjects were certainly extant in the eleventh century, but it is now impossible to say how far they agreed with the tales on the same subjects, which are still extant in the Icelandic and the German.

² Two or three other persons are said to have assisted in the writing of these tales, all of whom appear to have been attached to the English court.

³ In the neighbourhood of this city was the royal palace of Clarendon, which may account for the importance given to it in some of these romances.

⁴ Bibl. du Roi, Cod. 6776, and Cod. 6956. See Montfaucon.
to have written, in Latin, the Birth and Life of Arthur, the
Launcelot, the Saint Graal, and the Death of Arthur, the last
at the express suggestion of our Henry the Second;¹ and,
by command of the same monarch, Robert Borron is said to
have translated into Romance, from Walter Mapes’s Latin,
the Launcelot and the Saint Graal.² There is still extant a
copy of the Tristrem,³ which cannot be later than the early
half of the thirteenth century, and may be the version of
Luke Gast; also a MS. of the Launcelot,⁴ of the twelfth
century, which, as far as it goes, agrees with the French
printed copy,⁵ and is probably Robert Borron’s translation
above referred to; but the Latin versions of Walter Mapes
seem utterly to have perished.

With one doubtful exception,⁶ all these tales appear to
have been written in prose. But before the year 1200 the
Tristrem was certainly versified by the French poet, Chris-
tian of Troyes; and also, it has been conjectured, by a poet
named Thomas, round whose name has gathered a cloud of
mystery, which has misled not a few who have endeavoured
to pierce it.

The French government has lately published the early
romances which relate to Tristrem; and, among others, a
Norman MS.⁷ of the thirteenth century, and the well-known
Douce MS. which probably belongs to the same period.

² Bibl. du Roi, Cod. 6783, at the end. The Vatican MS. 1687, says he trans-
lated the Saint Graal from Latin into romance by order of holy Church. The
Saint Graal, it may be observed, was the miraculous cup which received our
Lord’s blood, and the adventures undergone in search of it are the subject of the
romance.

There are some reasons for believing that Luke Gast began this translation,
and that Robert Borron merely finished it.
³ Harl. 20. D. 2.
⁴ Harl. 20. D. 3.
⁵ The Histoire du Roy Artus, &c. (see n. 1), contains the life of Launce-
lot, &c.
⁶ One edition of the Saint Graal (Paris, A. D. 1516), states that Robert
Borron translated the Saint Graal first into rime, and then into prose.
⁷ Some of the French critics conjecture, that this is the version of Christian
of Troyes; but, as the dialect is clearly Norman, they would meet with great
difficulties in maintaining this criticism.
The former refers to Berox, as the best authority for the story, and the latter to Breri,

Who knew the gests and tales
Of all the kings—of all the counts,
Who had been "en Bretagne."

The Douce MS. also tells us, that Thomas would not admit certain parts of the story, but undertook to prove them false. Now Godfrey of Strasburg, who translated the Tristrem into German soon after the year 1200, mentions Thomas of Britannia, as being well-read in British books, and the best authority upon the subject. As Godfrey professes to follow him, and as it is clear, from his use of French words and phrases, that the German had a French original before him, it has been supposed that Thomas wrote the life of Tristrem in French. Were this so, our first conjecture would naturally be, that Thomas of Ercedon was the man; but, as it is impossible to reconcile the dates, the opinion of Sir F. Madden may be entitled to some weight, which attributes a Norman version of the tale to Thomas of Kent—the same who assisted in composing the Roman d'Alexandre, and who may probably claim an interest in the Norman versions of Horn and Havelok, both of which refer to a Thomas as their author.¹

But, as if to double the confusion, another German poet, Wolfram von Eschenbach, mentions Thomas of Britany's Chronicle of Cornwall, as the authority he followed in one of his romances. Hence it would appear, that Thomas was a chronicler; and unless we conclude that a Welsh Thomas chronicled the story, which an English Thomas versified, and a Scotch Thomas most strangely appropriated, it would be difficult to admit the hypothesis above stated.

On the whole, it may perhaps be safest to conclude, that Godfrey had before him the Romance poem of some nameless author, which professed to give the story of Thomas the Chronicler, rather than the highly wrought tale which

¹ From the introduction of English phrases, and allusion to English customs, it is clear that the Norman version of Horn, Harl. 527, was the work of an Englishman.
Luke Gast had put together; but I cannot tell in what way Thomas of Erceldon was connected with the story, except as being one of the famous “seggers” of the thirteenth century.

A like preference of the Chronicler to the mere storyteller is met with in other romances. In the fifteenth century Henry Skynner gave an English version of the story, which “Maister Robert of Borrown” translated into French; but he tells those, that

will knowen in sertayne
What kynges that weren in grete Bretaygne
Sithen that Christendom thedyr was brouht
They scholen hem fynde has so that it sawht
In the storye of Bwttes boke
There scholen ye it fynde and ye weten look
Which that Martyn de Beure translated here
From Latyn into Romaunce in his manere.

I incline to think the “Bwttes boke” here attributed to Martin of Bury, is still extant. The Harl. MS. 1605 contains the fragments of a British History, written in the same language and metre as Langtoft’s Chronicle, that is, in Norman Alexandrines, with the rime running through fifteen or twenty verses. The poem was probably written before the year 1200, for the manuscript cannot be of much later date; by an ecclesiastic, from the frequent allusions to Scripture history; and by an Englishman, from the intimate knowledge displayed of the English language. It shows all the learning of the cloister, and the skill of the practised versifier, and, moreover, an imagination to the full as active as the “manere” is curious. It may have given rise to much of the romantic fiction of the thirteenth century; and

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1 Nasmyth, as quoted by Warton, furnishes the extract. Either the MS. or his transcript of it, must have been very carelessly written. [The MS. is very carelessly written. A large portion of it is printed in Mr. Furnivall’s edition of The Holy Grail; but the extract here cited occurs in a later portion, in the story of Merlin.—W. W. S.]

2 De la Rue has advanced some strong arguments to show that Geoffrey Gaimar must, like Wace, have versified the Brut; and that his history of the Anglo-Saxon Kings is merely the sequel. But the poem referred to in the text has neither his metre, nor, if I may be allowed to judge, his style.
is, I think, full as likely to be the "British History" referred to by French and German romauncers, as the Latin of Geoffrey, or the cold and prosaic narrative of Wace. Perhaps it would not be so difficult, as might appear at first sight, to connect this Martin of Bury with the Breri and the Beroe, whom we have seen quoted as authorities, on the subject of Tristrem. Breri may be a Norman blunder (perhaps the usual and recognized corruption,\(^1\)) for Beri, a mode of spelling which is sometimes met with in the thirteenth century; and in the old English dialect of that and the preceding century, the writer would also be termed Martin Burigs,\(^2\) (or according to diversity of spelling, Beroe) that is Martin of Bury. I would say then, (if we may be allowed to speculate on such slender premises,) that Martin of Bury may have left some account\(^3\) of Tristrem, which agreed with that afterwards given by Thomas the Chronicler, and generally followed by later and more scrupulous romancers.

Where the property in those tales lay originally is a question not very easily answered. Many Welsh copies of the Brut are met with in our libraries; and in one of them, written in the year 1470, by a Welsh poet named Guttyn Owen, the Brut is ascribed to Tyssilio, a bishop, and son of Brocmael Ysychthroc, King of Powis. It has been conjectured, indeed, that these Welsh copies may be translations from Geoffrey's Latin; but, as several of the names bear a close analogy to those which figure in history, while the corresponding names in the Latin can only be reconciled to history, by supposing them to be the latinized forms of the Welsh names—the Welsh version is probably the original Brut y Brenhined, which Geoffrey translated. There

\(^1\) Like Dunesine for Dunholm, and Nichole for Lincoln. Durham is one of the few instances in which the Norman corruption has permanently got the better of the English name. Bristol, I believe, is another instance.

\(^2\) The same idiom is still met with in the names of places, as Leamington Priors, Leamington of the Prior, St. Saviour Overies, St. Saviour of the Over, or strand.

\(^3\) Possibly interpolated into some part of his "Brwittes bok," which is now missing.
is also a Welsh San Graal; but, as the Welsh certainly translated some English romances, this may possibly have been of the number.

Perhaps we may come nearest to the truth, by supposing that our early English romancers invented some of these tales from the scanty notices which they found in the Brut and other works of the same kind; and translated others either from the Welsh, or from Latin stories written by Welshmen. The Morte Arthur may have been the invention of Walter Mapes, but the story of the San Graal is certainly of earlier date; and we have some faint notices of a "British Hermit," who lived at the beginning of the eighth century, and is said to have written a book entitled Sanctum Graal, de Rege Arthure et rebus gestis ejus, de mensâ rotundâ, &c.¹. This work was probably in Welsh. The Latin Tristrem, from which Luke Gast translated, may have been a version from the same language.

¹ Pitts, p. 222; Bale, x. 21; Usser, Primord. p. 17.
CHAPTER VI.

THE PSALM-METRES.

By this name we have hitherto designated a class of metres, which seem to have been borrowed from the Church-hymns, and used, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, chiefly for purposes connected with the Church-service. The name of Church-metres, however, would have been too comprehensive; and the present title was thought not in-appropriate, inasmuch as the staves, which are commonly used in our versions of the Psalms, may be directly traced to these metres, as their origin.

The Church-hymns may be divided into two classes, accordingly as the rhythm is measured by quantity or accent. The versification of the first class seems to have been known by the name of "metrum," and that of the latter by the name of "rhythmus." Bede, in his work De Metris, after noticing such of the classical metres as were popular in his time, has a chapter upon "Rhythmus." It presents us with difficulties, arising as well from the nature of the subject, as from the discrepancies which are found to exist between the different copies. I think however we may gather, that in "rhythmus" quantity was disregarded, and the number of syllables fixed—so that, although in "metrum" a foot of three syllables might, in some cases, be used for one of two, this license was not allowed in the corresponding "rhythmus." He quotes as an instance of accentual verse, made in imitation of the Iambic metre, "that celebrated hymn,

"Rex aeterne Dominc,"
Rerum Creator omnium,

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1 This verse is deficient by a syllable. Must we split the diphthong, and read aeterne? [No; rather take rex as constituting a foot by itself.—W. W. S.]
C. VI.

"RHYTHMUS."

Qui eras ante sæcula
Semper cum Patre Filius, &c.

and many others of Ambrosius."  

"They sing," he also tells us, "in the same way as the trochaic metre, the hymn on the day of judgment, running through the alphabet."

Apparebit repentina dies magna Domini,
Fur obscurâ velut nocte improvísos occupans," &c.

Some critics are of opinion, that the laws, which governed these accented verses, corresponded with those that regulated the accentus, or sharp tones of the classical metres; while others consider their accents as substitutes for the metrical ictus. I shall not venture to discuss a question, which Bentley and Dawes and Foster have failed in answering satisfactorily—more especially as there still exist MSS. which treat expressly of the structure and peculiarities of this class of verses. It may, however, be observed, that, as the later Latin poets seem to have preferred, and in some feet required, the coincidence of the sharp tone with the ictus, the question whether the accent of the "rhythmus" represented the ictus or the accentus of the "metrum," is not of that very great importance it would appear at first sight. I incline also to think, that some of these "rhythmi" had their accents determined by causes, which were wholly independent both of the one and of the other.

The Iambic "rhythmus," noticed by Bede, was a favourite one during the middle ages; and is probably the origin of the common metre of eight syllables, now so common

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1 The celebrated Bishop of Milan.

2 The first verse, it will be seen, begins with A. Compare—

Tres cento rum cubito rum : æcon long itu do,
Sed et quin quies deno rum : ejus la titu do,
Sex ics quoque quino rum : ejus al titu do.


3 When we remember how little is known, and what different opinions have been holden, on the subject of arsis and thesis, and how much light must necessarily be thrown upon it by an examination of these MSS., it is by no means creditable to modern scholarship, that they have been so long neglected.
throughout Europe. His trochaic "rhythmus" was modelled on the Catalectic Tetrameter; and, in his verses on the year, was used with final rime.

An | nus so | lis con | tine | tur : quat | uor | tempor | ibus |
Ac | deim | de ad | ample | tur : du | ode | cim men | ibus |
Quin | quagin | ta et | du | bus : cur | rit heb | domad | ibus |
Tre | cente | mis sex | agin | ta : at | que quin | que di | ebos | &c.

From the sixth to the fourteenth century, this "rhythmus" was common throughout Europe. The complete tetrameter (though little, if at all, known to the monks) was doubtless the classical metre, on which St. Austin modelled his verses against the Donatists.

A | bundan | tia | pec | catot | um : so | let fra | tres con | turba | re
Prop | ter hoc | Domi | us nos | ter : vo | luit | nos prae | mone | re
Com | parus | regnum | cecel | rum : ret | icu | lo mis | so in mar | c
Con | gregan | ti mul | tos pis | ces : on | ne ge | nus hinc | et in | de
Quos | eum trax | isceit | ad lit | tus : tue | cepe | runt sep | ara | re
Bon | os in | vasa | mise | runt | re | liquos | malos | in ma | re, &c.

In one of the letters of the Irish Saint Columban, we find a rhythmus, which, from its pause and cadence, seems to have been formed upon the trochaic septenarius. It was written about the year 600.

Mun | dus is | te tran | sit et : quotid | ie | decres | cit
Ne | mo vi | vens man | ebit : nullus | vivus | reman | sit
To | tum hu | manum | genus : ortu | uti | tur pa | ri,
Et | de sim | ili | vita | fine | cadit | aqua | li, &c.

Another rhythmus, closely resembling the last, was very popular in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, particularly

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1 See Müller's Deutsche Dichter, 1 ; Gryphius, pp. 196, 200, 206. Whether our English metre of four accents originated in this "rhythmus," or was merely influenced by it, has been discussed in Chapter IV.

2 Gallias Caesar subegit ; Nicomedes Cesarem ;
Exce Caesar nunc triumphat, qui subegit Gallias,
Nicomedes non triumphat, qui subegit Cesarem.

Suetonius ; Julius, c. 49. See also capp. 51, 80.

3 Among the licenses taken by the writers of "rhythmus," crasis appears to have been one of the most frequent.

4 Here is no rime.


6 Here we have a specimen of the Irish or vowel rime.
among our countrymen. The first stave of Walter Mapes’ celebrated drinking song may serve as an example. I cannot satisfactorily connect it with its “metrum.”

Mi\hi est | propos\itum|: in | taber\na mo\ri
Vi\num sit | appos\itum| : mo\rien\tis o\ri
Ut | dicant | cum ven\erint | : an|geo\num cho\ri
De|us sit | propri\tius| : hu|ic po\tato\ri.\n
But no “rhythmus” has left more traces in our English versification, than that which was borrowed from the Greek church in the twelfth century, and modelled on the Ca\ta\lectic Iambic Tetrameter. One of the earliest specimens is the work of Psellus on the Civil Law, addressed to Michael Ducas, the “Royal Kaisar,” or heir apparent. As he ascended the throne in 1071, it must have been written before that year. It opens thus,

Πολὺ καὶ ἐνσεθήσθην τὸ μάθημα τοῦ νόμου,
Ἐν πλατὶ δυσπρεπῆτων, ἀσαφεῖς ἐν σύνοψι,
Καὶ λόγω δυσιρήνετον, ἀλλ᾽ ὡς ἀνάγκαιον,
Καὶ δὲ τὸν αὐτοκράτορα τοῦτον μᾶλλον φροντίζειν,
Δικαίως γὰρ τε δίκαιον ἐν δίκαιος φιλάκτην
"Οθεν ἐγὼ σοι τὰ πολλὰ τοῦ λόγου συνοφίσας,
Ἐνθίματον τι σύνταγμα πεποίηκα τῶν νόμων.

Wide spread and hard to theorize: the Law’s important science! Both hard in full to comprehend: and darken’d by abridgment, And hard in words to construe right: but ne’ertheless ‘tis needful— And most an Emp’r or it believes: to weigh well all its bearings, For justly in his judgements he: should ever deal out justice; So now in compass small I’ve brought: full many things together, And of our laws a simple sketch: have made for thee to study.

Strange to say, Foster, whose learning and good sense no man will question, considered the στίχων πολίτικοι not as “iambics regulated by accent, but loose trochaics, as independent of it as any in Euripides;” and a writer in one of our Reviews,² who acknowledges them as accentual, nevertheless connects them with the Trochaic metre. Were they

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¹ See a staff with interwoven rime, Mapes, p. 208; a staff of three, closed with a hexameter, Polit. Songs, ed. Wright, p. 27; a staff of four, closed with a hexameter or pentameter, with sectional rime, Polit. Songs, p. 182.
² Edin. Rev. xii. 10.
so connected, we should have the Trochaic "rhythmus" of
the Latins accented on the odd, and that of the Greeks on
the even syllables—a discrepancy that might well startle us.
The Reviewer asserts, that the Iambic Tetrameter has not
the same division, and but rarely the same cadence. I be-
lieve neither of these assertions will bear examination. The
cadence of the Catalectic Tetrameter, or in other words the
position of its sharp-toned syllables, is very commonly
found to be the same, as in these accentual verses; and,
both in the metrum and rhythmus, the pause imme-
diately follows the close of the second metre. The full
tetrameter, indeed, divided after the first syllable of the
third metre, and this very probably led to the Reviewer’s
mistake.

In the same rhythm as these Greek verses, was written,
during the latter half of the twelfth century, a very long
and curious English poem. The writer tells us, he was
christened by the name of Ormin; and, in another place, he
gives the title of Ormulum to his work, "because that Orm
it made." Of his mode of spelling we have already
spoken; it appeared to some of our critics so barbarous,
that they at once denounced him as a Dane, and fixed him
as a native in one of our eastern counties. A later writer,
who entertains juster notions of his orthography, tells us
nevertheless, that "Orm's dialect merits, if any, to be
called Dano-Saxon; his name also betrays a Scandinavian
descent."

Why his name should be "Scandinavian," I cannot tell,
unless it be that the Danish word orm answers to our
English worm! But is not Orm the abbreviation of Ormin,
like Will for William, or Rob for Robert? and is not Ormin
the German Herman, and the Latin Arminius? We need

1 See p. 104.
2 What would Ormin have said to the orthography, in which these gentlemen
conveyed their censures?
3 Analecta Anglo-Saxonica, p. x. [edited by Thorpe].
4 It may perhaps be questioned, if Herman be not the Anglo-Saxon Here-
man, and a different name from Arminius; but there can be little doubt that
Arminius was the same as Ormin. [Yet I doubt it very much.—W. W. S.]
not, however, rest content with speculation. Reginald of Durham, who lived in the reigns of Stephen and of Henry, having occasion to mention this name of Orm, expressly calls it an English name, and thus he distinguishes it from the Northern or Danish name of Wilhelm.

To the native purity of his language the poet himself bears witness. In one place, he terms it "thiss Engglisshe;" in another, "thiss Ennglisshe writt;" and in a third, he tells us that he wrote, "Ennglisshe menn to lare," that is, for the lore or instruction of Englishmen. I consider it as the oldest, the purest, and by far the most valuable specimen of our Old English dialect, that time has left us. Layamon seems to have halted between two languages, the written and the spoken. Now he gives us what appears to be the Old English dialect of the West; and, a few sentences further, we find ourselves entangled in all the peculiarities of the Anglo-Saxon. But Ormin used the dialect of his day; and, when he wanted precision or uniformity, he followed out the principles on which that dialect rested. Were we thoroughly masters of his grammar and vocabulary, we might hope to explain many of the difficulties, in which blunders of transcription and a transitional state of language have involved the syntax and the prosody of Chaucer.

In taking even a rapid view of our literature, we cannot fail being struck with the varying forms, through which our language passes. To notice all these changes, would leave us little room for any other inquiry; but wholly to pass them by, might deprive the reader of information, which, in some cases, may be necessary, for the full elucidation of passages that will be laid before him. So far as the changes have been effected by lapse of time, they have already furnished matter for speculation; I would now offer some remarks on the influence of place, as the subject of local

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1 Reginaldi Monachi Dunelm. Libellus, &c. p. 105. This curious book was published by the Surtees Society in 1835. [I should call Wilhelm Frankish, and therefore quite different from Ormin, which I should call Northern English of Scandinavian origin. See notes at the end of the volume.—W. W. S.]

2 See p. 399.
dialect is more directly brought before our notice, by the work of Ormin.

In a late article, upon our "English dialects," was quoted the following passage from Higden, written about the year 1350. "Although the English, as being descended from three German tribes, at first had among them three different dialects, namely Southern, Midland, and Northern; yet being mixed, in the first instance with Danes, and afterwards with Normans, they have in many respects corrupted their own tongue, and now affect a sort of outlandish babble (peregrinos captant boatus et garritus). In the above threefold Saxon tongue, which has barely survived among a few country people, the men of the east agree more in speech with those of the west—as being situated under the same quarter of the heavens—than the northern men with the southern. Hence it is that the Mercians or Midland English—partaking as it were the nature of the extremes—understand the adjoining dialects, the northern and the southern, better than those last understand each other. The whole speech of the Northumbrians, especially in Yorkshire, is so harsh and rude, that we southern men can hardly understand it."

With this division of our dialects the Reviewer is dissatisfied; he thinks it "certain, that there were in his (Higden's) time, and probably long before, five distinctly marked forms, which may be classed as follows: First, Southern or standard English, which in the fourteenth century was perhaps best spoken in Kent and Surrey, by the body of the inhabitants. Secondly, Western English, of which traces may be found from Hampshire to Devonshire, and northward as far as the Avon. Thirdly, Mercian, vestiges of which appear in Shropshire, Staffordshire, south and west Derbyshire, becoming distinctly marked in Cheshire, and still more in


2 The Avon of Bristol, or of Warwickshire?
south Lancashire. Fourthly, Anglian, of which there are three subdivisions—the East Anglian of Norfolk and Suffolk— the Middle Anglian of Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, and east Derbyshire—and the North, Anglian of the west riding of Yorkshire, spoken most purely in the central part of the mountainous district of Craven. Fifthly, Northumbrian, of which we shall speak more fully in the sequel."

It were to be wished, the Reviewer had told us, what were the distinctive peculiarities of his five dialects, and by what process of reasoning and investigation he arrived at the results here stated. I have myself been led to very different conclusions. So far from "southern or standard English" being the language generally spoken in Kent and Surrey, during the fourteenth century, I think it may be shown, very satisfactorily, that till the beginning of the seventeenth "western English" was to be met with at the very gates of London. By western English, I presume, is meant that dialect, which still prevails in Wiltshire and Somerset, and, with greater purity, in Devonshire; which prefers the vocal letters v, z, dh, to the whisper-letters f, s, th; which ends the third person of its verb in th,—he loveth, he zeeth, &c.; and takes ich, or ch for its first personal pronoun, ch’ad, ch’am, ch’ull, &c.

There are marks of this dialect, in the poems of John of

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1 He only once alludes to these peculiarities—he makes k characteristic of the "Anglian," and ch of the "Mercian" dialect. I incline to think, that ch has been substituted for k, somewhat more generally in the western, than in the eastern countries; but to make it a test of dialect, is very hazardous criticism. Have we not kurl a churl, kinkhoast a chincough, skriking shrieking, flixt a fitch, &c. in the "Mercian" dialect of South Lancashire? and plunck a plank, milcher a milker, &c. in the "Anglian" dialect of Suffolk? Rob. of Brunne, though an "Anglian," seems to have preferred the ch, witness his bishopriche a bishopric, oisehe alike, betch to betake, cheittif a caittif, Chain Cain, &c. [It is sufficient to consider only three dialects, Northern, Midland, and Southern; see p. 485. The South-Western dialect agrees sufficiently with the Southern. The true test of dialect is grammar; see p. 482. See Introduction to Specimens of English, ed. Morris and Skeat, p. xviii.—W. W. S.]

2 This verbal inflexion is no longer heard, east of the Parret (see Jenning's Obs. on the Western Dialects); but, at an earlier period, it was used throughout the south of England, even in the formation of the plural verb.
Guildford,¹ almost as decided as in those of Robert of Gloucester; and in the "Ayenbyte of Inwy,"² which was written "mid Englis of Kent," a. d. 1340, we see its peculiarities even more clearly developed. But we need not dwell upon these early instances, for we find it overspreading the south of England, as late as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It is put into the mouth of the Essex peasantry³ by the author of Gammer Gurton's Needle; of the Middlesex yeomanry by Jonson;⁴ of the men of Kent by Sir Thomas More⁵ and Shakespeare.⁶ It seems, indeed, to have reached from Devon over all England south of Thames; over south Gloucestershire; and north of the river, over Essex and Middlesex. It may, I think, be fairly considered as the Old English dialect of the Sex; and seems to have overrun (if ever they were different) the dialects of the Cant-ware and the Wihn-ware—that is of the Iutish settlers in Kent and Hampshire.

¹ See p. 427.
² Arundel MS. 57.
³ That the scene of this play was laid north of Thames, we learn from poor Hodge, Act 3, Sc. 4.

.part—ich know, that's not, within this land,
A murrainer cat than Gib is, betwixt the Thames and Tyne,
Sh'ase as much wit in her head, almost as ch'ave in mine.

John Still, the author (the future Master of St. John's and Trinity) was rector of Hadleigh, which is about four miles from Essex; and Cambridge, where the play was acted, is some twelve. The Gammer's St. Sith is clearly the virgin saint of Essex—the queenly Osith; and in the language we may trace a mixture of the northern dialect, (the third person of the verb sometimes ending in s, instead of th, and the second in s instead of st) just as we might expect on the borders of the two counties, Essex and Suffolk. There can be little doubt, that Still used the dialect, which he heard spoken around him—in other words, the dialect of North Essex.

⁴ See his Tale of a Tub. The speakers, it should be observed, come from the very suburbs of London—from Kilburn, Islington, and St. Pancras.

⁵ In his well-known story of the Tenterden Steeple.

⁶ Lear, 4. 6. Shakespeare gives the force of a future—ise try, I'll try; and in Gammer Gurton's Needle, we have ise teach, I'll teach, we're ha, we'll have, &c. In the Northern dialect this form generally indicates future time, but, I believe, always present time in the dialect of Devonshire. It is however sometimes used in Lancashire, as in Devon; see ise think, I think, in Tim Bobbin, sc. 7. [The country dialect, as exhibited in dramas, is very conventional, and not much to be depended on.—W. W. S.]