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Editorial Comment
Rhythms of English Verse II—Peals of Iron—
Notes.

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IRE,” announced the servant to the King, “the saint Narottam never deigns to step into your royal temple. He is singing God’s praise under the trees by the open road. The temple is empty of all worshippers. They flock round him like bees round the fragrant white lotus, leaving the golden jar of honey unheeded.”

The King, vexed at heart, went to the spot where Narottam sat on the grass. He asked him, “Father, why leave my temple of the golden dome, and sit on the dust outside to preach God’s love?”

“Because God is not there in your temple,” said Narottam.

The King frowned and said, “Do you know twenty millions of gold have been spent on that marvel of art,
and the temple was duly consecrated to God with costly rites?"

"Yes, I know," answered Narottam. "It was the dread year when thousands of your people lost their homes in fire and stood at your door for help in vain. And God said, 'The poor creature who can give no shelter to his brothers would aspire to build my house!' Thus he took his place with the shelterless under the trees by the road. And that golden bubble is empty of all but hot vapor of pride."

The King cried in anger, "Leave my land!"

Calmly said the saint, "Yes, banish me where you have banished my God."

THE PRICE

Only one lotus braved the blast of winter and bloomed in the garden of Sudas the gardener. He took it to sell to the King.

A traveller said to him on the way, "I will buy this untimely flower, and take it to my master Buddha. Ask your price."

The gardener asked one golden masha, and the traveler readily agreed. Just then the King came there.

"I must take that lotus to Lord Buddha," he said to the gardener. "What is your price?"
The gardener claimed two golden mashas. The King was ready to buy it. The traveler doubled the price and the King's offer ran still higher.

The gardener thought in his greed he could get much more from the man for whom they were eagerly bidding.

He hastened with his flower to the grove where Buddha sat silent. Love shone in his eyes, on his lips was wisdom beyond words.

Sudas gazed at him, and stood still. Suddenly he fell on his knees, placing the lotus at Buddha's feet.

Buddha smiled and asked, "What is your prayer, my son?"

"Nothing, my lord," Sudas answered, "only a speck of the dust off your feet."

UNION

Tulsidas, the poet, as was his custom, was wandering, deep in thought, by the Ganges, in that lonely spot where they burn their dead.

He found a woman sitting at the feet of the corpse of her dead husband, gaily dressed as for her wedding.

She rose as she saw him, bowed to him and said, "Permit me, master, with your blessings to follow my husband to heaven."

"Why such hurry, my daughter?" asked Tulsi. "Is not this earth also his who made heaven?"
"For heaven I do not hanker," said the woman; "I want my husband."

Tulsi smiled and said to her, "Go back to your home, my child. Before the month is over you will find your husband."

The woman went back with glad hope. Tulsi came to her every day and gave her high thoughts to think and immortal truths for meditation; till her heart was filled to the brim with love divine.

When the month was scarcely over, came to her curious neighbors and enquired, "Woman, have you found your husband?"

The widow smiled and said, "I have."

Eagerly they asked, "Where is he?"

"In my heart is my lord, one with me," said the woman.

THE GIFT

Sanatan was telling his beads by the Ganges when a Brahmin in rags came to him and said, "Help me, I am poor!"

"My alms-bowl is all that is my own," said Sanatan. "I have given away everything I had."

"But my lord Shiva came to me in my dreams," said the Brahmin, "and counselled me to come to you."

When suddenly Sanatan remembered he had picked up a stone of priceless value from the pebbles on the
banks of the river, and thinking that someone might need it had hid it in the sands.

He pointed out the spot to the Brahmin, who dug up the stone and was surprised.

The Brahmin sat on the earth and mused alone till the sun went down behind the trees, and cowherds went home with their cattle.

Then he rose and came slowly to Sanatan and said, "Master, give me the least fraction of that wealth that disdains the wealth of all the world."

And he threw away the gem into the water.

THE TRYST

Upagupta, the disciple of Buddha, lay asleep on the dust by the wall of Mathura. Lamps were all out, doors were all shut in the town, and stars were hidden in clouds in the murky sky of August.

Whose feet were those tinkling with anklets, touching his breast of a sudden? He woke up starting, and the rude light from the woman's lamp struck his forgiving eyes.

It was the dancing girl drunk with the wine of youth, starred with jewels and clouded with a pale blue mantle.

She lowered her lamp and saw the young face, where mercy shone in the eyes and purity beamed from the forehead.
"Forgive me, young ascetic," said the woman; "graciously come to my home. This hard dusty earth is not a fit bed for you."

The ascetic answered, "Go on your way, fair woman. When the time is ripe, I will come and see you."

Suddenly the dark black night showed its teeth in a flash of lightning. The storm-fiend growled in the sky and the woman trembled in fear.

* * *

The New Year had not yet begun. It was an evening of March. The wind was wild. The branches of the wayside trees were aching with blossoms.

Gay notes of the flute came floating in the warm spring air from afar. The citizens had gone to the woods, to the festival of flowers. From the mid-sky smiled the full moon on the empty and silent town.

The young ascetic was walking alone in the lonely city road. The moon-beam chequered with shadows fell on his path and sleepless Koels sang from the flowering mango branches.

He passed through the city gates and stood at the base of the rampart.

What woman was it lying on the earth in the shadow of the wall at his feet?

She was struck with the black pestilence; her body was spotted with sores. She was driven from the town with haste for the fear of her fatal touch.
The ascetic sat by her side, gently took her head on his knees, moistened her lips with water and smeared her body with balm.

"Who art thou, kind angel of mercy?" asked the woman.

"The time, at last, has arrived for me to visit you, and I have come," replied the young ascetic.

Rabindra Nath Tagore

VISION

Mother, I have come home to you
Out of my sore distress.
Mother, how beautiful you are
In your dull working dress!

"Then if you see me so, dear child,"
I heard my mother say,
"See, too, the beauty of the soul
In her worn dress of clay."

Alice Brown

[81]
OUR LADY OF IDLENESS

They in the darkness gather and ask
Her name, the mistress of their endless task.

The Toilers

Tinsel-makers in factory gloom,
Miners in ethylene pits,
Divers and druggists mixing poisonous bloom;

Huge hunters, men of brawn,
Half-naked creatures of the tropics,
Furred trappers stealing forth at Labrador dawn;

Catchers of beetles, sheep-men in bleak sheds,
Pearl-fishers perched on Indian coasts,
Children in stifling towers pulling threads;

Dark bunchy women pricking intricate laces,
Myopic jewelers' apprentices,
Arabs who chase the long-legged birds in sandy places:

They are her invisible slaves,
The genii of her costly wishes,
Climbing, descending, running under waves.
Our Lady of Idleness

They strip earth's dimmest cell,
They burn and drown and stifle
To build her inconceivable and fragile shell.

The Artist-Artisans

They have painted a miracle-shawl
Of cobwebs and whispering shadows,
And trellised leaves that ripple on a wall.

They have broidered a tissue of cost,
Spun foam of the sea
And lilded imagery of the vanishing frost.

Her floating skirts have run
Like iridescent marshes,
Or like the tossed hair of a stormy sun.

Her silver cloak has shone
Blue as a mummy's beads,
Green as the ice-glints of an Arctic zone.

*   *   *

She is weary and has lain
At last her body down.
What, with her clothing's beauty, they have slain!

[83]
The Angel With the Sword

Come, brothers, let us lift
Her pitiful body on high,
Her tight-shut hands that take to heaven no gift
But ashes of costly things.
We seven archangels will
Bear her in silence on our flame-tipped wings.

The Toilers

Lo, she is thinner than fire
On a burned mill-town’s edge,
And smaller than a young child’s dead desire.
Yea, emptier than the wage
Of a spent harlot crying for her beauty,
And grayer than the mumbling lips of age.

A Lost Girl

White as a drowned one’s feet
Twined with the wet sea-bracken,
And naked as a Sin driven from God’s littlest street.

Florence Wilkinson
IRRADIATIONS

I

The iridescent vibrations of midsummer light
Dancing, dancing, suddenly flickering and quivering,
Like little feet or the movement of quick hands clapping,
Or the rustle of furbelows, or the clash of polished gems.
The sparkling mosaic of the mid-day light
Colliding, sliding, leaping and lingering:
Oh, I could lie on my back all day,
And mark the mad ballet of the midsummer sky.

II

Over the roof-tops race the shadows of clouds:
Like horses the shadows of clouds charge down the street.

Whirlpools of purple and gold,
Winds from the mountains of cinnabar,
Lacquered mandarin moments, palanquins swaying and balancing
Amid the vermilion pavilions, against the jade balustrades;
Glint of the glittering wings of dragon-flies in the light;
Silver filaments, golden flakes settling downwards;
Rippling, quivering flutters; repulse and surrender,
The sun brodered upon the rain,
The rain rustling with the sun.

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Over the rooftops race the shadows of clouds,  
Like horses the shadows of clouds charge down the street.

III

The trees like great jade elephants  
Chained, stamp and shake 'gainst the gadflies of the breeze;  
The trees lunge and plunge, unruly elephants,  
The clouds are as crimson howdah-canopies,  
The sunlight glints like the golden robe of a Shah.  
Would I were tossed on the wrinkled backs of those trees!

IV

O seeded grass, you army of little men  
Crawling up the low slopes with quivering quick blades of steel:  
You who storm millions of graves, tiny green tentacles of earth,  
Interlace your tangled webs tightly over my heart  
And do not let me go:  
For I would lie here for ever and watch with one eye  
The pilgrimaging ants in your dull savage jungles,  
While with the other I see the long lines of the slope  
Break in mid air, a wave surprisingly arrested;  
And above it, wavering, bodiless, colorless, unreal,  
The long thin lazy fingers of the heat.
Irradiations

V

The wind that drives the fine dry sand
Over the strand:
The salt wind spinning arabesques
With a wrinkled hand.

Labyrinths of shifting sand,
The dancing dunes!

I will run and catch at the flying sand
And scatter it higher with my hand;
I will wriggle like a long yellow snake over the beaches.
I will lie curled up, sleeping,
And the wind shall carry me
Far inland.

My breath is the music of the mad wind;
Shrill piping, stamping of drunken feet:
The fluttering, tattered broidery flung
Over the dunes' steep escarpments.

The fine dry sand that whistles
Down the long low beaches.

VI

Not noisily, but solemnly and pale,
In a meditative ecstasy, you entered life,

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POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

As for some strange rite, to which you alone held the clue.
Child, life did not give rude strength to you;
From the beginning you would seem to have thrown away,
As something cold and cumbersome, that armor men use against death.
You would perchance look on death face to face and from him wrest the secret
Whether his face wears oftenest a smile or no?
Strange, old and silent being, there is something
Infinitely vast in your intense tininess:
I think you could point out with a smile some curious star
Far off in the heavens which no man has seen before.

VII

The morning is clean and blue, and the wind blows up the clouds:
Now my thoughts, gathered from afar,
Once again in their patched armor, with rusty plumes and blunted swords,
Move out to war.

Smoking our morning pipes we shall ride two and two
Through the woods.
For our old cause keeps us together,
And our hatred is so precious not death or defeat can break it.
God willing, we shall this day meet that old enemy
Who has given us so many a good beating.
Thank God, we have a cause worth fighting for,
And a cause worth losing, and a good song to sing!

VIII

Oh, all you stars up yonder,
Do you hear me? Beautiful, sullen eyes,
I am tired of seeing you in the same old places,
Night after night in the sky.
I hoped you would dance—but after twenty-six years,
I find you are determined to stay as you are.
So I make it known to you, stars clustered or solitary,
That I want you to fall into my lap tonight.
Come down, little stars, let me play with you!
I will string you like beads, and shovel you together,
And wear you in my ears, and scatter you over people—
And toss you back, like apples, as I choose.

IX

As I wandered over the city through the night
I saw many strange things,
But I have forgotten all
Except one painted face.
Gaudy, shameless night-orchid,
Heavy, flushed, sticky with narcotic perfume,
There was something in you which made me prefer you
Above all the feeble forget-me-nots of the world.
You were neither burnt-out nor pallid;
There was plain, coarse, vulgar meaning in every line
of you,
And no make-believe:
You were at least alive,
When all the rest were but puppets of the night.

X

Slowly along the lamp-emblazoned street,
Amid the last sad drifting crowds of midnight
Like lost souls wandering,
Comes marching by solemnly
As for some gem-bedecked ritual of old,
A monotonous procession of black carts
Full-crowded with blood-red blossom:
Scarlet geraniums
Unfolding their fiery globes upon the night.
These are the memories of day moulded in jagged flame:
Lust, joy, blood and death.
With crushed hands, weary eyes, and hoarse clamor,
We consecrate and acclaim them tumultuously
Ere they pass, contemptuous, beyond the unpierced veil
of silence.

XI

The flag let loose for a day of festivity:
Free desperate symbol of battle and desire,
Leaping, lunging, tossing up the halliards:
Below it a tumult of music,
Irraditions

Above it the streaming wastes of the sky,
Pinnacles of clouds, pyres of dawn,
Infinite effort, everlasting day.
The immense flag waving
Aloft in glory:
Over seas and hilltops
Transmitting its lightnings.

John Gould Fletcher

THE FOUNDLING HOSPITAL

Strangely silent, strangely bare,
Tiny faces everywhere,
Strangely old and gaunt and drawn
In the dawn.

Haunting, piteous baby eyes!
Suffering mute, vicarious lies:
Sacrifice for world-old sin,
Deep therein.

"Man of pleasure," you who lay
In your mother's arms one day,
These upon their mother's breast
May not rest.
These your passions touched to blight,
Seed of sated appetite,
Starve upon a pauper's dole—
Body, soul.

That your pleasures play at ease
Babes must battle with disease:
Heavy toll of your light way
They must pay!

With the damp of anguished sweat
See these matted tresses wet!
And these unkissed, shrivelled hands
Bear the brands.

Christ, have pity! You were man
When your martyrdom began:
For men's sins must the new-born
Feel the thorn?

Rosalie Jonas
THE MALAY TO HIS MASTER

The woman is mine, O chief,
White chief whom the spirits fear!
The woman is mine,
I have bought her with blood,
My mark is upon her brow.
I swept like a shark the sea,
O lord of unbelief!
I swept with a trusty score to her isle
And brought her home in my prau!

She lay in her atap-thatch,
Clad—ah!—in her red sarong.
The cocoanut palms
In the wind she heard,
But never my paddles near.
I seized her with mating arms—
O chief, no moon is her match!—
She cried to the hunting men of her tribe,
But lo, I carried her clear.

And tossed her across the surf!
O chief, she is mine, not yours!—
I bore her away
Though the pearls of her teeth
Bit deep, and her rage beat blind.
An hundred hissing darts,
Each dipped in a venom's scurf,
Slid after us like swift asps of air,
But ever they sunk behind.

And so she is mine, twice mine,
For when in the jungle here
I hid her, O lord,
And sang to her heart
And planted the rubber round,
And bought her your rings and silks
And bracelets jewel-fine,
And swept her with kisses like the sea,
At last was her long hate drowned.

And so she is mine, is mine!
White chief, you must give her back.
I bought her with blood,
I will keep her with blood,
So chasten your heart of lust;
Or swift, as you say the night
Of Malaya falls, at a sign,
My people, led by the gods, shall fall,
And make of your passion dust.

Cale Young Rice
THE SHARING

[Martin works in the garden. Stephana comes from the cottage door. Upon a bench under the eaves are ranged three very small wooden cages of the kind used by bird-sellers for their stock in trade.]

Stephana. At last we have our quiet holiday. Come, father, take your leisure. I fetched the birds to blink beyond the way And know a bit of pleasure.

Martin. Twelve sold within a week—and that is well.

Stephana. And these?

Martin [Aside.]. She never tires Of birds and birds! [Aloud.] Whoever may foretell?

Stephana. Oh, oh, the silly buyers!

I, keeping back the loveliest three, and you, Although you saw the hiding, Making as if you never, never knew!

Martin. You elf, demurely gliding! [They laugh merrily.]

Stephana. [Soberly.] No more shall come to buy—and that’s my dream.

Martin. The sun is on the hedges.

Stephana. How all the little upward petals gleam!

Martin. Look—there, along the ledges, Comes wandering a worn and meager man! Look—from the road he’s turning!

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Stephana. Perhaps a beggar from the caravan
That kept me from my churning.
We cannot heed so many passing here.

Martin. Now see him bend and falter
And shuffle in his gait. . . . Yet, coming near,
He seems to loom and alter. . . .
He is even young.

Stephana. No, no, his hair is gray.
See, now the stile he's over!

Martin. He has a word for us. He walks our way
Across the bed of clover. . . .
Where do you come from, melancholy guest?

The Stranger. Out of the dark of sorrow.
They said it was the east, it was the west,
And there was no tomorrow.

Stephana. The birds are fluttering.

The Stranger. The birds?

Stephana. Oh, look,
The yellow, bright canaries!
They light the dailiness of this dull nook,
They are my gentle fairies.
For father teaches at the village school,
And I'm forlorn and lonely,
Except for these, my heartlings beautiful.
All would be happy. . . . only . . .
When they begin to love me, off they go.

The Stranger. The price, the price, for ever.

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Martin. For all, the price is all the hand may show.
We may be fools, or clever—
It is the earthly cry of everyone.

The Stranger. Poor birds! No songs embolden
Their little breasts. Their eyes forget the sun.

Stephana. But they are soft and golden.

The Stranger. The narrow cells!

Stephana. Yes, narrow are their homes.
But never knew they wider.

The Stranger. His houses He has made with azure
domes,
The bountiful Provider.

Stephana. [Aside.] Dread of my heart! The sign is on
his brow!

Dread of my heart is calling!
He'll buy my darlings! On the settle now
His silver hoard is falling!

Martin. [Whispering to Stephana.] You'll have a bit of
satin home to try.

The Stranger. The birds are bonny, bonny.
Take you my all—give me what it will buy.

Stephana. Father! Forego the money!

Martin. Now leave me to my bargain, child!

Stephana. Ah me!

Martin. You'll have a rosy fillet.

Stephana. Father!

Martin. Good stranger, they are yours, all three.
The Stranger. Mine! Nothing shall outwill it!
Stephana. But oh, whatever is your good of them?
The Stranger. Why, look you, Blossom-Lady—
Come, Yellow-throat, come, Puff and Speckle-Gem,
Come leave your dwellings shady!

Hop, One,
Forth of your door!
Fearing no more,
Wing to the sun!

Hop, Two!
Sidle not so.
Hasten to know—
Summer is new.

Three, up!
Scatter the dim,
Fly to the rim
Of the sun's cup!

They are out and away
Over hedge, over hay.
Over hill, over stone
They have flashed, they have flown.
They have winged, they have won!
There is gold in the sun!

Martin. Stop grieving, girl. Your tears are no amends.
The Sharing

Stephana. Gone, gone, my sweet companions!

The Stranger. Freedom is worth the price of tears.

Now friends,
I’m off to heights and cañons.

Stephana. Ah, they will die out yonder, far and high,
The sport of wind and shadow!

The Stranger. And that is where God’s creatures ought to die.

Martin. Plague on his fine bravado!
And yet the birds were his—he paid the score.
Let the foolhardy ranger
Go follow them!

Stephana. Go! Go!—but not before
I have your why, dark stranger!

The Stranger. I was their fellow, in my cage apart,
Born of a world’s blaspheming.
I served my term, without a dream at heart,
Save this one song of dreaming:

If ever you shall be, man,

Where the leaves blow,

Make, as you go,

Fettered wings free, man!

My cage was opened, and I left the blight
The weary darkness leavens.
But, free at last, I could not face the light,
Till I could share the heavens.

Agnes Lee

[99]
EDITORIAL COMMENT

RHYTHMS OF ENGLISH VERSE, II

Coleridge's *Christabel* is in the main iambic, but it is richly varied by a free use of tribrachs and rests. It is in tetrameter lines, three of which, typical of all, may be analyzed as follows:

```
'Tis the middle of night by the castle clock
Tu-whit! tu-whoo!
Hath a toothless mastiff bitch.
```

Trochaic verse is rare in English, but Shelley handled the measure with exquisite delicacy in the beautiful song from *Prometheus Unbound*. Strict accuracy would require, perhaps, a 6-8 measure for the notation of most trochaic verse, its alternate stresses being stronger than the others.

```
Life of life! Thy lips enkindle
With their love the breath between them.
```

*The Skylark* is much less consistently trochaic, though on the whole it may be so classed. Longfellow's *Hiawatha* is a heavier example.
Longfellow's *Evangeline* is another three-time measure, one still rarer in English, which may account for the confusion of the commentators over this poem. Even Prof. Genung makes the usual mistake of saying that it is written in the dactylic hexameters of antiquity. Apparently Longfellow tried to do this, and fondly imagined that he succeeded. But instead of the majestic four-time combination of dactyls and spondees which produced "the mighty thunder-roll of Homer's verse," he achieved only a light and lilting three-time measure, as follows:

```
This is the for-est prim-e-val; the murmuring pines and the hemlocks—
```

Nothing could be more misleading than to call this measure dactylic. True dactyls are rare in English, being so difficult of achievement as to be impossible for a long poem. Mr. Charles G. D. Roberts has written a few fine classic hexameters, and George Meredith gives a hint of the true Homeric measure in his few fragments from the *Iliad*. For example:

```
Nay, nor is ev-er the roar of the fierce fire's rush so a-rous-ing
As rose then stu-pen-dous the Tro-jan's cry and A-chai-ans.
```

For English hexameters these are very good, though even our loose laws of quantity resent the poet's making
the first syllable of ever long. The slow succession of long syllables in the second line produces an effect very rare in English verse. Spondees were common in Greek and Latin, but our poets have rarely used four-time measures. In our three-time iambic measures spondees are often used to vary the rhythm, but only by extending the length of one syllable into the next bar, as in the following lines from The Tempest:

Wound the loud winds, or with be-mock'd at stabs
Kill the still clos-ing wa-ters, as di-min-ish

Here loud winds and still clos are all long syllables, and the poet gains his spondaic effect by shortening the syllables which follow them.

George Meredith's Love in a Valley, which has many true spondees, is a charming experiment in four-time, of a movement much lighter than the classic hexameters:

Un-der yon-der beech-tree stand-ing on the green sward
Couched with her arms be-hind her lit-tle head—

Four-time measure of a still lighter movement, with a swift succession of short syllables and many rests, is much used nowadays in comic verse, especially in the
librettos of comic operas. A familiar example is Bunthorne’s song in Gilbert and Sullivan’s *Patience*.

\[
\text{If you’re anxious for to shine in the high aesthetic line}
\]
\[
\text{As a man of culture rare—}
\]

All the above examples of four-time measures may be roughly called dactylic in type, since the long syllable and the stress usually begin the bar. But in English most four-time verse is anapaestic in type, with the long syllable and the stress at the end. Usually English poets treat their anapaestic verses very freely, not only using spondees, which are allowed, but often forcing short syllables to do the work of long ones—an irregularity which is not, however, so offensive to the English ear as it would have been to the Greek. Two masterpieces of English anapaestic verse, Shelley's *Cloud* and Coleridge’s *Ancient Mariner* show all possible variations. Here are the first two lines of the former poem:

\[
\text{I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers}
\]
\[
\text{From the seas and the streams.}
\]

*The Ancient Mariner* has been a puzzle to the analysts, because usually they have tried to scan it as iambic
verse, therefore in three-time, and so have quite missed the secret of its slow and pounding four-time movement. Many feet have only two syllables, it is true, but they are either spondees or else the first syllable has one beat of the bar and the second three. Two famous lines, for example, read as follows, and therefore they are not in the least iambic, even though each bar has but two syllables:

```
Water, water everywhere
Nor any drop to drink.
```

_The Ancient Mariner_ has a magic music, but its rhythm is perhaps the least bound by ancient rules of all familiar English poems. A child feels it, but few of the elders who sit in judgment have seemed to understand it. In the first stanza the slow fall of the long syllables is very stately and beautiful. And the poem holds this pace to the end.

```
It is an ancient mariner
And he stoppeth one of three
By thy long gray beard and glittering eye
```
Rhythms of English Verse

Thus the four-time measure of this poem is richly varied, its typical foot being of two syllables, the second three times as long as the first. The spondees are common, the following line being entirely spondaic:

The bridegroom's doors are opened wide.

And I am next of kin.

The guests are met, the feast is set—

Mayst hear the merry din.

Thus the four-time measure of this poem is richly varied, its typical foot being of two syllables, the second three times as long as the first. The spondees are common, the following line being entirely spondaic:

Hold off—unhand me, graybeard loon!

The poem may be roughly called anapaestic, if that term may be enlarged to include all four-time measures which usually have the long syllable and the stress at the end of each bar. The following line is all anapaestic.

For the sky and the sea and the sea and the sky

Swinburne, of course, has sung in anapaests more than any other poet, and held with more regularity to

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the type. In certain poems of his the measure is perhaps too regular and the music therefore monotonous. *Atalanta in Calydon* has a number of anapaestic songs, for example:

```
We have seen thee, O love, thou art fair, thou art goodly, O Love!
Thy wings make light in the air as the wings of a dove.
```

Here is another anapaestic measure which he loves:

```
When the might of the summer
Is most on the sea:
When the days overcome her
With joy but to be,
With rapture of royal enchantment, and sorcery that sets her not free—
```

But the anapaestic is not Swinburne’s only four-time measure. In the dainty *Cradle Song*, the first bar of each
Rhythms of English Verse

line will be read by most persons as four short syllables. For this measure we have no name, though it is more dactylic than anapaestic, as the long syllable (when there is one) and the stress are at the beginning of the bar.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{Baby, baby bright} \\
\text{Sleep can steal from sight} \\
\text{Little of your light.}
\end{array}
\]

Poe's *Raven* moves to a similar four-time measure, and therefore it is not in the least trochaic, as it used to be classed.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{Once upon a midnight dreary, as I pondered weak and weary} \\
\text{O'er many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore—}
\end{array}
\]

Shakespeare and one or two of his lyric contemporaries produced now and then a quite magical effect by a swift change of measure from three-time to four-time, or the reverse, as in every stanza of this song:

[107]
Come away, come away, Death,
And in sad cypress let me be laid.
Fly away, fly away, breath—
I am slain by a fair cruel maid.
My shroud of white, stuck all with yew—
Oh prepare it!
My part of death no one so true
Did share it.

Tennyson tries the same experiment in this song, with a success somewhat less exquisite:

The splendor falls on castle walls
And snowy summits old in story
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The long light shakes across the lakes

And the wild cata-ract leaps in glory

Blow, bugle, blow! set the wild echoes flying!

Blow, bugle, answer echoes—dying, dying, dying!

These analyses cover almost all the variations usual in English verse. Certain measures, common in Greek and Latin, alter their rhythms when English poets experiment with them. A classic choriambic foot, for example, consists of four syllables—a long, two shorts, and a long, and counts six beats; whereas in the hands of Swinburne and others it becomes a charming thing, but very different. Horace's choriambic lines run thus:

Ex-e-gi mo-nu-men't, ae-re per-en-ni-us

In English the attempt to write such a line results as follows:

Come, love, over the fields, green with the spring's first kiss.

The Latin measure is stately, the English is a delicate dance-time.

[109]
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Vers libre, whose rhythmic subtleties may be only at the beginning of their development, is a demand for greater freedom of movement within the bar and the line. In the following examples, quoted by Charles Vildrac in his Notes sur la Technique Poétique, the four bars, or feet, in each are of the same length, while the number of syllables varies from two to six:

Cette rose | à ton corsage |
Cette fleur rouge | à ton col entr’ouvert |

— André Salmon.

Oh elles existent, | elles attendent, |
Ils n’auraient qu’à choisir, | ils n’auraient qu’à prendre. |

— Charles Vildrac.

The above analysis is, I repeat, elementary, and perhaps too conservative in attempting to adhere somewhat to the old classification. My own feeling is that the familiar terms, iambic, anapaestic, etc., might better be thrown away, and a system of musical notation observed more in accordance with musical laws. But though the practice of centuries cannot be changed at once, it may be subjected to question. Poetic technique is still a mediaeval province unillumined by modern scientific research.

The analysis of poetic rhythm on the basis of musical notation seems so obvious as to make it incredible that Sidney Lanier should have been the first to apply it to English verse. Poets usually think too little about the elements and laws of that verse-music which must be
an instinct with them. A closer study would enrich their own rhythms, and greater zeal in acquainting the public with the technique of poetry would increase the general understanding of the art. More scientific knowledge of this subject is necessary in order to remove English poetry from the rack of "accentual" prosody, and restore it to the great universal laws of rhythm, to which all music and the poetry of all languages must consciously or unconsciously conform. 

H. M.

PEALS OF IRON


Sing, O ye poets, sing on,
Of golden summer's gales;
Of patented magic casements,
And copyright nightingales!

Thus Mr. Fletcher in the earlier book, while he still sat under the aegis of Verlaine. Mr. Fletcher has left that aegis. He has left his native Arkansas. It is five years since he took that step which would seem to be almost imperative for any American who has serious intentions toward poetry. He left the virgin republic of the west as a duckling departs from a hen. For five years he has kept an indifferent silence, and now with an
equally indifferent bravura, he puts forth five volumes at once—some of them, or at least some parts of them good, and at least one of them important.

And I did not rush
To print my teething pains,

he says in an earlier work. Whatever lines in these books may be classified under that title have been given out with deliberation. Yet having been convinced by *The Dominant City* that this author is not wholly a fool, one is heartened for the search of the other books. And even these are not without their charm, are not without touches of beauty, of mockery and of grimness. Here is an author set to portraying the real; he is contemporary, he has heard of the city of Paris, and even if his book had been written in French it would not be called old-fashioned. This would be bad enough in an Englishman, but in an American, in a compatriot of five thousand professors of literature who have never heard of any French author since Béranger, it is wholly and simply appalling.

Mr. Fletcher's English is not always good, for he is trying to use the speech of his time, which renders him inelegant, and he does not escape all the prevalent faults of his continental contemporaries; that is to say, he falls into rhetoric and into using abstractions. Yet he talks about a factory as if it were a factory and not a mythological beast. He can at his best be concrete and grim and specific. He still likes to lump his "griefs," and
things of that sort, into some general term, and he still writes of life, hope, pleasure, death, lust, and that sort of thing, but so does the great Verhaeren. At least Mr. Fletcher has never mentioned

*Le bondissant tocsin des vérités vivantes.*

As with Barzun's *Hymne des Forces*, I have here come upon a work that moves me, although my own canons suffer violence.

**E. P.**

**NOTES**

The great Oriental poet who has just received the Nobel prize for literature, may fitly open our Christmas number. *Poetry* having introduced Mr. Tagore's lyrics to American readers a year ago, is now the first magazine to present his translation of a group of narrative poems. No one can question the "idealistic tendency" of this poet's work; the recognition by the Swedish academy of its artistic and spiritual beauty opens another door between East and West, and leads occidental nations into a comparatively unknown province of oriental art.

Florence Wilkinson (Mrs. Wilfrid Muir Evans) formerly of Chicago and now a resident of Florence, is the author of numerous novels and of *Two Plays of Israel* and *The Far Country* (McClure).

Mr. Cale Young Rice, of Louisville, is the author of numerous books of poems and poetic plays, the latest being *Porzia* (Doubleday, Page & Co.).
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Mr. John Gould Fletcher, born in Arkansas in 1886, refused to take a degree at Harvard, and went to London in 1908. This year five small volumes of his verse have been published by Max Goschen, Ltd.

Agnes Lee (Mrs. Otto Freer) has already appeared in Poetry.

BOOKS RECEIVED

The Dominant City, by John Gould Fletcher. Max Goschen, Ltd.
Merchants from Cathay, by William Rose Benet. Century Co.
A Symphony and Other Pieces, by Arthur E. J. Legge. John Lane Co.
The Flame in the Wind, by Margaret Steele Anderson. John P. Morton & Co.
A Wand and Strings, and Other Poems, by Benjamin R. C. Low. John Lane Co.
Lyrics and Dramas, by Stephen Phillips. John Lane Co.
Words with Wings, by Charles G. Fall. Elliot Stock, London.
The Faun and Other Poems, by Genevieve Farnell-Bond. Sherman, French & Co.
Minions of the Moon, by Madison Cawein. Stewart & Kidd Co.
Sonnets of a Suffragette, by Berton Braley. Browne & Howell Co.
Patriot or Traitor, by Charles G. Fall. Old Corner Bookstore, Boston.
A Little Dreaming, by Fenton Johnson. The Standard Co.
Poems (Privately printed), The Voice of One Crying. Adam & Charles Black.
In the Starlight, by Elizabeth Gibson Cheyne. Samurai Press.
Poems and Ballads, by Herman Hagedorn. Macmillan Co.
Tristram and Isoult, by Martha Kinross. Macmillan Co.
The Sign of the Tree, by Harriet Mason Kilburn. Sherman, French & Co.
Eve, by Katharine Howard. Sherman, French & Co.
Love Triumphant, by R. Gorell Barnes. Longmans, Green & Co.
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