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ART. I.—RECENT TRANSLATIONS OF CLASSICAL POETS.

1. *Virgil's Works.* Translated by the Rev. Rann Kennedy and by (his son) Charles Rann Kennedy. London: 1849.
2. *The Lyrical Dramas of Æschylus.* Translated into English Verse by John Stuart Blackie, Professor of Latin Literature in Marischal College, Aberdeen. London: J. W. Parker, West Strand. 1850.
3. *Horace: Odes, Epodes, and Carmen Sæculare.* Translated into English Verse by G. J. Whyte Melville, late Coldstream Guards. London: Simpkin and Marshall. 1850.

THE literature of the Greek and Roman Classics no longer retains engrossing importance to the cultivated nations of modern Europe. Once, it was the only food to an active understanding and masculine taste; and although from day to day it proved the fertile parent of modern literary works, yet these were so pervaded by allusions to it, as not to be wholly understood and enjoyed without some classical knowledge. Our very poets breathed the heathen mythology; philosophy trod in the steps of Plato; historical writing was but beginning to be developed: and English law, by refusing to avail itself of Roman precedent, attained no scientific shape. In such a state of things, all who desired intellectual culture sought it through the languages of Greece and Rome; and those who could not

afford the time and effort which these require, were glad to study the best translations of the standard classics. Naturally, therefore, in those days a high premium was offered to translation. In fact, the public was not and could not be so fastidious as now. A bad translation was thought to be better than none at all, and the best that existed was sure to be eagerly sought after. Moreover, every translator then knew by instinct what was his proper task; viz. to let the English reader know all that was *characteristic of the original:* and in regard to the prose writers, this was not a very arduous undertaking, except in some few who have a peculiar and cherished style of their own, which cannot be lost in the translation without losing much of the substance;—as eminently in Sallust and Tacitus, partially in Livy and Thucydides. But, we may remark, it is with translation as with landscape painting. The unartistical painter goes to his work with great conscientiousness and little self-consciousness. He conceives it to be his obvious duty, with whatever amount of trouble, to convey to others a faithful conception of what he sees; and as he drives direct at this end without being ashamed of his own failures, he succeeds wonderfully well in letting others know what it is that he tried to paint, but could not. His colours have not taken as he wished. He incautiously selected a point of view which was magnificent in itself, but too difficult for his art. He made errors of perspective, and greatly failed in the lighter and distant tints. Nevertheless, when we look at his work, we understand perfectly what *he meant*; nay, the more we study it, the more we see into it: for it is characteristic of the country depicted.—Let the same country be painted by an educated hand, and there is imminent risk that he will think more of the Art and of the Artist, than of the professed end. He is afraid to encounter the sneers of connoisseurs against defects in his skill; and to be faithful to his original becomes secondary to the desire of making a picture which shall fulfil the demands of fastidious criticism. In an art so much cultivated, there is no want of high talents which can really combine the two objects; but inferior men who pretend to aim at two things at once, attain only that which is of first importance with them. And such has been the course of classical translation.

When modern science and literature began to open, the most powerful minds, in England at least, were drawn away from the cultivation of the old classics; and after English poetry had received its last polish, the task of poetical translators became immensely more difficult, owing to the increased fastidiousness of the reader. Men's taste for poetry is not unlike their taste for food, in the speediness with which *satiety* comes. The brain appears to have an infinite capacity; you may pour knowledge in for ever, and the understanding never says, It is enough! but the heart cannot admit at once many objects of love. *Amore amor, ut clavus clavo, traditur.* The more beautiful, or the more congenial, extinguishes the less. Satiated and languid readers demand of a translator the melody of Milton and the smoothness of Pope; and if he were to reply that his original had no such melody or smoothness, he fears the retort,—Then why did you translate him?

The pressure of this difficulty has in fact led many to deprecate all metrical translation as absurd. You cannot (say they) satisfy the demands of the reader, without being so unfaithful to the original, as to lose all the ends of translation. For what is the end? To give pleasure? but more pleasure is to had from our native poetry. Or is the end, to convey an imagination of the original? but that you cannot do, in smooth English verse. Where the original is grand and good, a prose translation is best; where the original is flimsy, no translation is deserved.—Such on the whole, we think, was the prevailing sentiment of men of good taste, after Cowper's attempt to translate Homer had proved as great a failure as Pope's: nevertheless, if we are not mistaken, a sensible change is taking place, from our recent acquaintance with the extent to which the Germans have carried poetical translation.

We may divide the poetical writers of antiquity into three classes;—*first,* the light versifiers, who lay no claim to be "bards;" the satirists and comic epigrammatists. These, as a whole, do not deserve to be translated; and if specimens of their style be desired, free imitations suffice: but to desire religious faithfulness in the translation, or rather in the paraphrase, would be absurd.—A *second* class is those, who have little high poetry, but great perfection in poetical form; in rhythm, metre, diction, and oratorical

structure. Such is Horace in his Odes; such often is Euripides in his lyrical parts: and these poets afford to the translator by far the most difficult problem. To his distress he discovers, that if he tries to be faithful, *everything* which constituted the charm of the original is apt to evaporate. In place of a perfectly finished, melodious, and ornamental composition, he perhaps presents the reader with something singularly bald, flat, and ungraceful. The Greeks and Latins have so many artificial modes of ornamenting and elevating style, *short of attaining real poetry,* which in our less flexible language are inimitable. Here then it does become a question, whether it is worth while to translate at all.—The *third* class embraces the true bards, whose poetry shines even through a close prose translation. Such writers undoubtedly deserve elaborate efforts to transfer them faithfully into our tongue, nor are good talents wasted in setting them forth to the highest perfection. Yet it is only of late that we have seen any hopeful beginnings of this desirable course.

To us it appears that the importance of translation, both of Prose and of Poetry, has now assumed a totally new aspect. The national mind of England at large is no longer destined to be cultivated through the medium of Greek and Latin literature: there is a large and increasing proportion of our middle classes possessed of much intelligence, imbued with practical and modern knowledge, exercising great and about to exercise greater political influence, yet deriving no culture of taste from ancient literature, and at present very apathetic or incredulous as to the advantages of it. Want of time to study Greek and Latin adequately, is a difficulty never to be removed from this class of the community; and whatever they are to learn concerning the ancient world must be through the English language. The repugnances which contrasts of education produce, have many evil political consequences which cannot here be specified. If really good translations existed, and the general suffrage of the learned had pronounced which deserved the palm; those who aspire to frequent the highest cultivated society, yet do not find it expedient to study Greek and Latin, would regard it as a necessary complement of their education to give a serious study to such translations. In fact, it is a grave miscalculation on

the part of any translator of ancient poetry, to think that he will have to do with a reader, whose first object is *to be pleased.* No Englishman, of whatever rank, age or culture, will read an English Virgil or an English Æschylus for mere *pleasure,* whether it be in prose or verse, blank or rhyme. Unless a reader can be got who will read for *instruction,* and therefore be willing to take pains and bestow thought,—the case is desperate; no reader is to be had at all. The careless and languid, the idle or tired reader, can always get more pleasure and more relief from Milton than from Æschylus, and probably more from Scott's novels than from Milton, or more from Dickens and Thackeray than from Scott. This consideration seems to us of primary importance. If the translator has any substantial food to offer, he may and must calculate on a good power of digestion in the reader. To rub off all the angles of the original, lest they should grate against the reader's palate;—to spoil the historical faithfulness of his work, in order to accommodate himself to the modern idler, —is, to become uninstructive to the earnest, and still not sufficiently amusing to the unstrung mind.

But, we say, if faithful and characteristic translations had been executed, and had received the imprimatur of opinion, they would soon become matter of serious study to all cultivated females, and to a very important part of our middle classes. In Ancient History, several noble original works have of late seemed likely to make English readers fully on a par with those who can read Thucydides and Livy; but to read *of* a nation, never gives so deep an insight as to hear them speak themselves. A little volume by the same Mr. C. R. Kennedy who now appears as a translator of Virgil, was published in 1841, containing select private speeches of Demosthenes, with ample and valuable notes. We had hoped that this would be continued: Orators and Poets undoubtedly best let one into the heart of a nation. In them are seen the objects and sentiments most admired, the arguments which are esteemed cogent, the aims which are approved, the best morals and manners of the day. We cannot forget this *historical* importance of ancient poetry, or consent to make it secondary in translation.

The three works, the titles of which are at the head of

this article, are very various in merit. Two of them are executed by accomplished scholars, the third by a gentleman who was late of the Coldstream Guards, and whose modest dedication of his work to Dr. Hawtrey of Eton is in a tone which implies that to Eton he owes all his classical instruction. A warm admiration for Horace is implied in the labour which he has bestowed; but his scholarship is far from perfect, and he does not always understand his original. Nevertheless, we are unwilling to dwell on this, when he has devoted so much time to produce what we suppose is on the whole the most pleasing and satisfactory representation of the Horatian Odes in our language; and we prefer to give the reader a specimen, taken by opening the book at random.

Odes, I. 21.

Sing, virgins! sing the tender Dian's fame;
Shout, boys! the everblooming Cynthian's name;
Latona too, the secret love
Of all-subduing Jove.

Laud her, ye girls! who guards the mountain rill,
The woods which wave on Algidus' cool hill,
And Erymanthus' deepening shades,
And Cragus' verdant glades.

Be not outdone, ye boys! but shouts of praise
For Tempe and Apollo's Delos raise—
The quiver'd god, who at his side
His brother's lyre hath tied.

In Cæsar's reign may he propitious please
To drive from us war, famine and disease
To Parthian wilds or Britain's shore,
While ye his aid implore.

Mr. Melville has here thoroughly understood his original, but he has not chosen to represent it so strictly as our canon would claim. In his first line he transfers the word *tender* from the virgins to Diana herself, who, next to Minerva, deserves it least of all the goddesses: whereas *teneræ virgines* means, young girls of thirteen or fourteen years old. In his second line he transforms "the *unshorn* Apollo," Φοῖβον ἀκερσεκόμαν, into *everblooming*, so as to

miss what is characteristic in the image of the god. In his third, he attributes to Jupiter a clandestine love for Latona; which is indeed the current tale, yet Horace here simply says, "Latona *inly beloved* by supreme Jupiter;" and in an address to tender maidens probably was careful to avoid a sinister suggestion. In the penultimate line, Mr. Melville seems to be more charitable than Horace, who does not pray that war and plague may be dissipated in the wilderness, but may fall "on Persians and Britons." But perhaps Mr. Melville means this to be understood.

The two Messrs. Kennedy and Professor Blackie have approached their work with a deep previous meditation on all that it demanded, and with a full sense of its arduousness in detail. The difficulties which present themselves in Æschylus are far more various and perplexing than any which are to be found in Virgil; yet the very want of variety is in itself a formidable inconvenience in so long a work as the Æneid. Messrs. Kennedy have fully convinced themselves, and we think they will convince their readers, that the Blank Verse of Milton is a metre every way suitable and alone suitable for translating Virgil into English.—We say *Virgil,* not Dactylic Hexameters in general: for that this metre is not adapted to Homer, we think Cowper's attempt has shown; while it is still worse for Juvenal and for Horace's Satires. Our blank verse, as variously handled by Shakspeare and by Milton, corresponds to the fervid and energetic march of Tragedy, or to the tranquil and majestic flow of a smooth and cultivated Epic, like the Æneid. The elaborate, ornamental, and dignified style, in which Virgil delights, has its perfect counterpart in Milton; and the metre is well adapted to a long poem, because of the variety of pauses which it admits, and the numerous liberties which we can take without losing the rhythm. These advantages, joined to its freedom from any confined stanza, enable a translator to attain a faithfulness which will rival that of prose, while giving us Miltonian cadences. How successful the Messrs. Kennedy* are, will be seen by a few examples, selected solely as being characteristic in the original:—

* The Eclogues, Georgics, and 4 first books of the Æneid, are translated

Georgic II. 136.

But not the groves of Media, richest land,
Not the majestic Ganges, nor the stream
Of Hermus, turbid with its golden sands,
Can with our Italy in praises vie:
Not Ind, nor Bactra, nor the fragrant wealth
Of all Panchaia's incense-yielding soil.
Never did bulls with nostrils breathing fire
This region plough, nor was it ever sown
With a huge dragon's teeth, thickly to raise
A bristling crop of men, with helms and spears.
But it is fill'd with loaded stems of corn
And, gift from Bacchus, juice of Massic vine.
Olives and joyful flocks possess the plains.
Hence to the battle field with stately neck
Prances the warrior steed. Hence, often lav'd
In the pure waters of thy sacred flood,
Thy snow-white herds, Clitumnus, with the bull,
A victim noblest of them all, have led
Rome's triumphs to the temples of the Gods.
Perpetual Spring is here, and Summer reigns
In months beyond her own.

Few translations of prose writers compare to this in faithfulness; yet neither energy or melody is here wanting. In the first line Mr. Kennedy has followed perhaps a wrong punctuation:

Sed neque Medorum silvæ, ditissima terra:

Better, it seems, is Heyne's:

Sed neque Medorum, silvæ ditissima, terra:

but this is a trifle. If disposed to criticize, we may add that the seventh line, "*Never* did bulls, &c.," sets the reader a moment astray as to the jist of the remark, which perhaps would be more clearly expressed by:

What though no bulls . . . . ?
Yet it is fill'd, &c. . . .

by the Rev. Rann Kennedy; the rest of the Æneid by his son. We fear that there may be difficulty in getting the work, since it was published by subscription, and is not in the hands of any London Publisher.

But we pass to a specimen from the Æneid:—

Æn. I. 459.

He stood, and weeping said: What places now,
What tracks of earth, Achates, are not full
Of our sad tale? See Priam! Even here
Hath merit its reward. Woe wakens tears,
And mortal sufferings touch the heart of man.
Banish thy fear. This fame shall be our guard.

He spake, *while shadowy* pictures feed his *mind*;
Then groan'd, with floods of sorrow on his face.
For he beheld, round Ilion, how her hosts
This way in battle chas'd the warrior Greeks
But that way fled, where with his chariot wheels
Crested Pelides thunder'd on their rear.
Not far remov'd, weeping, he recogniz'd
The snow-white tents of Rhesus, which, betray'd
In his first sleep, Tydides' bloody hand
Was making desolate with heaps of slain,
And towards the Grecian camp his fiery steeds
Was leading off, ere they had tasted yet
Pastures of Troy, or flood of Xanthus drank.
* * * * * * * *

496.

Dido the Queen, most beauteous in her form,
The temple reach'd with a long youthful train.
As when Diana, upon Cynthus' tops,
Or on Eurotas' banks, hath sallied forth
With circling dances, whom on every side
A thousand Oreads follow trooping round;—
With quiver on her shoulder, as she moves,
Her head o'er all the deities is rais'd,
While silent gladness thrills Latona's heart;—
Such Dido was, &c.

We will only remark that a still closer and more obvious translation of the line,

Sic ait, atque animum picturâ pascit inani,

would seem to us to be decidedly better:—

He spake, *and with the empty* picture feeds *his soul*,

though this is an Alexandrine.

Let us now hear Mr. Charles R. Kennedy:

Æn. VI. 861.

But here Æneas: for a Youth he saw
Walking beside, bright arm'd and beautiful,
Yet with a sad aspéct, and downcast eye:
Say, what is he, who on the chief attends?
A son? perchance a grandson? what a hum
Of comrades round! how like the countenance!
But o'er his brow night's gloomy shadow hangs.

Anchises weeping answer'd: Oh my son,
Seek not to learn thy children's grievous woe.
This youth the Fates will only show to earth,
Not suffer him to stay. Ye Pow'rs above,
Too mighty would ye deem the Roman race,
Had such gifts been irrevocably theirs.
What lamentation shall the field of Mars
To the great city pour! what funeral pomp
Thou, Tiber, gliding by the recent tomb
Shalt then behold! None born of Teucrian blood
Shall e'er the hope of Latian sires exalt
So high as he; nor ever glory so
In any son the land of Romulus.
O ancient faith! O piety, and right hand
Of force unrivall'd! Him to meet in arms
None could have ventur'd *with impunity*
Nor marching to the field, nor when he spurr'd
His charger's foaming flanks. Lamented Youth!
Couldst thou the cruel destinies rescind,
Marcellus thou shouldst be. Oh bring your laps
With lilies full; let me with purple flow'rs
Bestrew the ground; such tribute to my son,
An empty honour to his spirit, pay.

The words in Italics are to us painfully prosaic. Each of the Messrs. Kennedy appears occasionally liable to this fault, from their desire of the melody of Latinized words; but we decline further criticisms, since we think the powers of the metre are fully demonstrated. If here and there the translators are unequal to themselves, that admits of an easy remedy: and (so far as we can judge,) as a whole, no such imputation can rest upon them. We may, therefore, congratulate English readers, that it is at length allowed them to form a conception for themselves what Virgil was.

We pass to Professor Blackie's more ambitious and stirring subject. It was not left for him to demonstrate,—for it had long since been proved,—that the blank verse of Shakspeare was adequate to express the tragic senarian. Even Potter's version sufficed to establish this. It is not, therefore, from undervaluing Mr. Blackie's spirited and racy version,* that we decline to make any extracts, but because we desire to fix attention on the far more difficult problem which he has so bravely met, and often with so much success,—of translating the choral odes into rhymed measures, carefully retaining the antistrophic divisions of the original. The following will please the reader:—

Æschylus, Suppl. 80. *Strophe* 4.

O would that Jove might show to men
 His counsel as he plann'd it!
But ah! he darkly weaves the scheme:
 No mortal eye hath scann'd it.
It burns thro' darkness brightly clear
 To whom the god shall show it;
But mortal man, through cloudy fear,
 Shall search in vain to know it.

Antistr. 4.

Firm to the goal his purpose treads,
 His will knows no frustration,
When with his brow the mighty god
 Hath nodded consummation.
But strangely, strangely weave their maze
 His counsels, dusky wending,
Conceal'd in densely-tangled ways
 From human comprehending.

Strophe 5.

From their high-tow'ring hopes the proud
 In wretched rout he casteth.
No force he wields; his simple will,
 His quiet sentence blasteth.
All godlike pow'r is calm; and high
 On thrones of glory seated,
Jove looks from heav'n with tranquil eye,
 And sees his will completed.

* From want of space we cannot comment on his learned and valuable Introductory Essays, and other merits of the book, which we heartily commend to the reader.

Antistr. 5.

Look down, O mighty god, and see
  How, this harsh wedlock planning,
That dry* old tree in saplings green
  The insolent lust is fanning!
Madly he hugs the frenzied plan
  With pérverse heart unbending,
Hotspurr'd, till ruin seize the man,
  Too late to think of mending.

Strophe 6.

Ah, well a day! ah, well a day!
Thus sadly I hymn the sorrowful lay,
  With a shrill-voic'd cry,
  With a sorrow-streaming eye,
  Well a day, woe 's me!
Thus I grace my own tomb with the wail pouring free,
Thus I sing my own dirge, ah me!
Ye Apian hills, be kind to me,
And throw not back the stranger's note,
  But know the Libyan wail.
Behold how, rent to sorrow's note,
My linen robes all loosely float,
  And my Sidonian veil.

This passage is perhaps as fair an instance which can be given of Mr. Blackie's skill. It at the same time shows how he is driven to amplify the original, although he takes good care not to carry this so far as to weaken its force. Yet we cannot feel that a version which bears this character, as yet attains our ideal of what a translation ought to be. Sometimes, indeed, the form of the original violently resists amplification, as in the dirges where the wailers sing alternate lines. It is astonishing how well Mr. Blackie succeeds in these; (we mean at the end of the "Persians," and of the "Seven Chiefs;") which makes us think that if he were more severe against himself, he would succeed still better than he does, in spite of the extreme difficulties which rhyme creates. We shall give one more extract from him, and put into Italics all the words which he has interpolated:

* The corrupt text seems here to have set Mr. Blackie astray. We cannot believe that there is any contrast between old and young. Metre and grammar demand Blomfield's correction, τεθαλὼς for τὸ θάλος; "See how the green stock wantons!" *Dry old* is not in Æschylus.

Strophe 1.

The curse, *that rides on* sable *wing*
 Hath done its part,
And horror, *like a creeping thing*,
 Freezes my heart.
Their ghastly death *in kindred blood*
 Doth pierce me thorough,
And deeply stirs the Thyad flood
 Of wail *and sorrow*.
An evil bird *on boding wing*
 Did darkly sway,
When steel on steel did *sternly* ring
 In strife to day.

Antistr. 1.

The voice that from the blind old king
 With cursing came,
In rank fulfilment forth doth bring
 Its fruit *of shame*.
O Laius, thou didst work our woe
 With faithless heart,
Nor Phœbus with a half-dealt blow
 Will now depart.
His word is sure,—or pacing slow,
 Or wing'd with speed;—
And now the burden'd cloud of woe
 Bursts black indeed.

The last six lines are scarcely to be accounted for from the original, of which we subjoin an accurate translation:—

Strophe 1.

Oh black and perfected
 Curse of the race and of Œdipus,
An evil chill hovers round my heart.
 I made for their tomb a melody,
Like a Thyiad [or, one frenzied], on hearing
 The blood-dripping corpses were miserably
 Dead. Verily ill-omened is
 This concert of the spear.

Antistr. 1.

The votive utterance of the sire
 Has achieved, and has not* broken down;

* Οὐκ ἀπεῖπε, "has not refused to fight on," as a weary athlete.

The disobedient plans of Laius have been effective:
There is anxiety all over the city,
And the oracles are not blunted.

[*The corpses are now borne in.*]

Oh ye of many sorrows, ye have wrought
This incredible deed! Not in mere word
The lamentable woes are arrived
[i. e. are presented before our eyes].

This will very well serve to exhibit how the fatal desire of a rhyme seduces even so practised, so skilful and so powerful a versifier as Mr. Blackie, to dilute and to deviate; rather to hash up the poet afresh than translate him. In short, we have never seen a rhymed translation of any length, which was at once faithful and spirited. We need hardly mention as an exception Lord Byron's admirable version of the Morgante Maggiore; for here the comi-tragic spirit allows him liberties which would be impossible in more serious style. So also Shelley's very clever translation of the Homeric Hymn to Mercury, is not only funny, but funnier than the original. Altogether, the uniform failure *in the long run* which rhyme entails, has long forced on us the conviction, that the ends of translation will be generally sacrificed, until we learn to dispense with it; and we desire here to enlarge on the feasibility of so doing.

No doubt we shall be met by the assertion, that no translator can introduce new metres; that this must be left to the original poet, and that only after he has tuned the national ear to his cadences, may the translator follow him at cautious distance;—which is the process that has been pursued successfully in the case of Blank Verse.

To this we have several replies; and FIRST, that the common blank verse of 5 feet by no means exhausts the stock of all that our native poets have already made familiar to us. Milton in his Samson, and Shelley in Queen Mab, have unrhymed lines of other lengths; and to speak roughly, 3 or 4 feet are to the full as acceptable to the vulgar ear as 5; in fact, we have no doubt are *more* acceptable, as more similar to ballad measure. SECONDLY, we reply, that both a translator and an original poet will fail, if they endeavour to introduce metres opposed to the

genius of the language. Southey did not translate his Vision of Judgment from Latin hexameters, but wrote it as an original; yet he failed as entirely, as have the English translators of Homer and Goethe, to introduce his metre. THIRDLY, if the new metre be duly congenial, the translator has never less, but often more, advantage for introducing it than an original poet. For in proportion as the latter is popular, he addresses himself to readers who read for amusement, and who resent it as an impertinence, if they are called to exert themselves and learn anything fresh. But the translator (whatever his metre, or no metre) writes in vain, unless he has readers, few perhaps, but select, who are willing to come forth from their old habits and learn new lessons, in melody and in rhythm, as well as in thought. He *must* presume on readers who desire instruction, and are willing to take pains for it: he therefore is peculiarly the person, who (if any one) is in a position to introduce such novelties. LASTLY, those who advise us to wait till native poets take the lead,—in regard to the Tragic and Pindaric odes, or those of Horace,—are advising us to imitate the rustic in the fable. The torrent of English *rhyme* rushes forward

. . . in omne volubilis ævum:

and will not change or stop its course for the convenience of translators.

We said, first, that the Blank Verse of 3 or 4 feet is to the full as acceptable to the popular ear, as that of 5 feet. Even for a continuance, we regard the four-foot verse as every way unimpeachable, and thoroughly to represent the Tragic Anapæsts. Will it be said, that it is wanting in dignity and force? Let us try an energetic passage in the Prometheus, where the unfortunate Io is seized with madness:*—

Prometheus, 896.

Woe, woe! death, death!
Again, again th' heart-smíting pang
Of madness burns. The hornet's barb,

* The reader will note, that in Æschylus the purely dramatic principle had not been developed; and his characters occasionally describe their own symptoms unsuitably. This must be accepted as a postulate, just as soliloquies are; though we know both things to be unnatural.

Forg'd on no mortal anvil, fierce
Empoisons me. My frighten'd heart
Kicks at its own frail case; my eyes
Reeling in dizzy circles swim.
Goaded by furious spirit, I rush
Devious, of tongue incontinent;
And turbid cries unmeasur'd dash
'Gainst frightful Frenzy's billows.

Once more; let us put it to a severer trial, of narrative and reflection mixed, from the opening chorus of the Agamemnon:—

Nine years are past; behold the tenth!
Since Priam's rival-suitor kings,
Agamemnon and prince Menelas,
Stout yokefellows, by gift of Jove
Twin-thron'd, twin-sceptred,—floated hence
The Argive thoúsand-sailing fleet,
A host of soldier-comrades.
The princes' heart peal'd mighty war,
Like vultures which, with hermit-grief
For ravish'd brood, above their couch
Oar'd by the oarage of their wings
Rove circling round to quest their charge,
Their callow nestbound younglings.
But some Apollo, Pan or Jove,
Hearing aloft the shrill lament
Of parents' anguish, sends in wrath
A champion for the transmigrants,*
A late-avenging Fury.
And so, for that much-courted dame,
The God of Strangers, highest Jove,
Sends against Paris Atreus' sons;
And many a limb-distressing wrench
Of knees in dust firmprest and shafts
In the preluding† snapt,—on Greece
And Troy alike imposes.
But now the tale
Rests where it rests; and Fate must rule.
Of fireless rites the wrath intense,
Nor secret tears nor sacred drops
Of sprinkled wine‡ shall soften.

* The political metaphor is equally harsh in the original: the stolen birds are intended.

† προτέλεια, a preliminary *sacrifice*, is an inexpressible metaphor.

‡ We omit οὔτε δακρύων, as mere repetition, perhaps a gloss.

But we, with aged frame despis'd,
Rejected from that martial band
Linger; on staves
Fain to support our childlike strength.
For ev'n the ténder-gushing sap
Of stripling's breast with Age will match:
Mars dwells not in his rightful place.
And when the foliage now is sear,
Spent Age on three feet wends his way;
For war no mightier than a child,
And as a daydream doating.

The closing line, which we use as the equivalent of the Parœmaic, is in appearance more nearly like the well-known measure of Anacreon; which it also admirably replaces. That no metre is to be desired, better suited to represent Anacreon's rhythm, may appear by a translation of his first ode:—

Fain would I sing the Atridæ,
And fain would tell of Cadmus;
But harp or string refuseth
To aught but Love to vibrate.
The strings at first I alter'd,
Then chang'd my lyre entirely;
But while I sang the labours
Of Hercules, the music
To Love, to Love responded.
Henceforth farewell, ye heroes!
For aye my harp refuseth
Of aught but Love to warble.

This metre leads to a simple, but important remark. It is but three feet and a half to the eye; yet it must be made *four bars of time* to the ear. This is well-known to the schoolboy, who scans Anacreon in his own doggrel way, and gives a pointed accent to each of the two last syllables, assigning to them also the time of two full bars; thus:—

Θελώ λεγείν Ἀτρεί-δάς—
Θελώ δε Κάδμον ᾄ-δείν—&c.

But the time may partly be made out by a short musical rest at the end of the line; or sometimes, by a peculiarly long dwelling on the penultima, as on a dotted note in

music. And this is a chief difficulty in the properly lyrical metre, that English tongues hate to pause* on an accented syllable; while in the recitation, the penultima of each verse ought to have as much *time* (not *stress*) given to it, as our language allows. Perhaps in strictness we ought to cut the knot by professing to sing and not to read all lyrical pieces. Certainly we never attain the full spirit of the more lively odes until this is done; and in song, we take far greater liberties with our prose pronunciation than (we apprehend) Æschylus or Anacreon could have approved. But we beg attention to this point, as a great deal in lyrical translation turns upon it. Where the *oratorical* principle predominates, a poet would be thought offensive who gave directions to the reader how to recite; since (with whatever propriety) all readers are assumed to be well-trained Elocutionists. But the moment the *musical* element comes in, all know and feel the necessity of frequent dictation from the composer, who, without offence, writes Andante or Allegro, as the case may be; then we have Forte or Piano, Crescendo, Rallentando, Staccato, Sostenuto, Con Moto, Scherzando, &c..... Unless the reader of lyrical poetry will submit to a little of this dictation, he cannot expect to attain the mind of the composer, and will not give the melody aimed at: and peculiarly it is necessary to keep musical time in the accents.

Having said thus much, we subjoin a translation of an ode of Horace, which is the only one of its kind, and possibly was a mere *jeu d'esprit*. Its stanza is of three lines, of which the middle is the longest; yet we make no doubt that each had four bars of time:—

* The mistakes of *fact* which educated Englishmen here make, are wonderful. We are habituated to call certain vowel-sounds *long;* hence it is inferred that they can be easily dwelt upon, and that (especially if accented) they occupy "more time" than other syllables; which is often the reverse of truth. In the translation of Horace's Ode, i. 8 (just below), the word *vipers* occurs, which we desire to regard as a Spondee occupying two full bars of time; yet, in fact, the first syllable, though called "long," cannot easily be made to occupy a full bar, without seeming to *drawl.* But on the second syllable we can dwell with less difficulty, *because* it is unaccented.

Southey (Preface to his Vision of Judgment) says that *Egypt* is the only true Spondee in the English language; and that *twilight, evening,* are really Trochees. To us it appears that words like *twilight, female,* may be Spondaic, but that the first syllable can be hurried and cannot well be prolonged.

Hor. Od. I. 8.

Lýdia, díc, per ómnés
Té Deós oró, Sybarín
Cúr properés amándó, &c.

Since the Roman sang, he found it quite natural to dwell on *ómnés*, &c. for two whole bars; and this is what we must beg our readers to do, when possible, in the following. We bespeak of them a bouncing merry impetus of voice on the accents, and a distinct but glib utterance of the intermediate syllables.

1. Lydia, too bewitching!
Whý wilt thóu poor Sýbaris* kíll,
Smitten in heart by fiérce lóve?
2. Whý does he háte (by áll góds!)
Sunlit plain, who once could bear
Summer or dust so bravely?
3. Prythee and why nor rides he
Midst his equal soldier-youth,
Nór wi' the bridle's stróng bít
4. Featly the Gaulish jáws guídes?
Why the turbid Tiber now
Féars he to féel? why shúns he,—
5. Worse than the blood of vipers,—
Wrestler's oil? nor more displays
Blotches of blue on hárd théws
6. Léft by the strain, when óft-tíme
Fame he gain'd by quoit or dart
Over the barrier húrl'd cléar?
7. Why does he lurk in lóne pláce,
Ev'n as seaborn Thetis' son
Díd (as they sáy) when óld Tróy's
8. Terrible fall approach'd, lest
Manly garb mid Lycian troops
Hurry him off to slaughter?

Such a piece as the last may be denoted by *Scherzando;* but various metres, to the eye not dissimilar from the Anacreontic, are of widely different moral feeling. The Bac-

* The reader will observe the significance of the Latin *rules of position.* If the name were *Sybari* instead of *Sybaris,* the verse would be more melodious, because the closing syllable, not being "long by position," would be slipt along with less effort of the tongue. Contrariwise, *Sybaris slay* is worse than *Sybaris kill,* because the three consonants *s sl* clog the utterance still more than the two *s k.* But this has nothing whatever to do with accentual metre.

chic measures, called Ionic a Minori, seem to have been wild and plaintive, with a certain religious mystery conjoined. How deeply serious were the Asiatic votaries of the divinity whom the Greeks turned so strangely into the god of drunkenness, is known to the readers of Dr. Layard, who witnessed and strikingly describes the rites of the Corybantes to Dionysus (or *Sheitân !*), as celebrated by the devout and simple Yezidi of northern Mesopotamia. Something of the true Asiatic feeling is preserved by Euripides in his brilliant play, the Bacchæ; from which we venture on an extract, rendered into a metre analogous to the original.

Who's abroád ?—who's abroád? (*Slow and serious.*)
In his hóme bé he secréted,
And let eách hólily seál clóse the discreét moúth !
For in wórds sácred of óld tíme
Dionýsus I' must chánt.
Ah !——
The belóv'd of gods is blest,— (*Rather quicker.*)
Who is vérs'd in rites divine,—
Who in sánctimonies lives,
And in soúl is Troop-inspir'd;
On the moúntains rapture-led
Into púrifications holy.
Under mýstic ordination
To the míghty mother Kýbĕle
And begárlanded with ivy,
He revéres greát Dionýsus.

We expect to hear it reiterated, that the English public is too stubborn to endure experiments of this kind; and that the patience of the most docile reader must not be tried too much. Undoubtedly, if a whole poem were to be written in such a metre, it would be unendurable,—alike in Greek or in English: but the essence of these metres implies that they are used only for occasional songs.

The songs in Scott's Marmion are pleasing in their own place, but only so: and for a choral hymn of no great length, we think that any reader of good taste would feel more interest in an eccentric metre which smacked of the original, than in any polished rubbing away of its wildness.

Having touched on the Ionic a Minori, we are led to exhibit one more illustration of its use by Æschylus in a hymn of some excitement and magniloquence, where the Chorus is describing the passage of Xerxes into Greece.

Andantino sostenuto.

Str. 1. To the ádverse-cóasted néar lánd
Acróss has careér'd the kíng's hóst
City-scáling, tow'r-despoiling;
On a ráft of flaxen moorings
Thick swárming óver the sált stréam
Of the váinly-escáping* Helle;
With a náil-compacted causeway
Having yók'd the neck of Pontus.

Ant. 1. Over áll the eárth the proúd lórd
Of the várious-peopled Asia,
On his stérn and sturdy captains
By sea, by land relying,
The human flock majestic
In double line onward urges;—
Of the góldbegotten offspring
To the góds a mortal equal.

Str. 2. From his éyes dárting the blúe líght
Of a fiérce-destroying serpent,
Manyhánded, ánd manyboáted,
And a Sýrian warcar urging,
Into cómbat against the Spear-fam'd
He condúcts an Archer wargod.

Ant. 2. But the vást floód of the ármy
No might to stem availeth,
To repel with sturdy barrier
The swell of the surge unconquer'd.
For unchéck'd are the arms of Persia,
And of wárlike heart her people.

But we must turn to metres of greater importance, applicable to longer poems, and having less of the musical element. In all this time we have said nothing about the Homeric Hexameter, to represent which (we think it is demonstrated), Pope's couplets, Cowper's blank verse, and Southey's or Lockhart's hexameters, are wholly unfitted. Indeed, if rhymes could be had without distorting the original, we should gladly profess, that as Sir Walter Scott is of all our poets the most Homeric, so the measures of Marmion and of the Lady of the Lake would be excellent equivalents to Homer's hexameter,—in boldness, variety, simplicity and popular genius. But we have not yet seen,

* In giving Helle the epithet Αθαμαντις, the poet means to suggest her unfortunate history.

and do not believe, in the possibility of being faithful in a rhymed metre; and this sends us to the problem,—What unrhymed metre will be a proper substitute?

As a *præjudicium* on the subject, we turn to the history of Greek poetry itself. A time came, when the Greeks disused the lyre as an accompaniment of poetry, and forgot their old epical chants or recitatives; when the oratorical began to prevail over the musical principle, and when, in consequence, metres came to depend on accent, and no longer on quantity. The same change has probably passed over all the languages of Europe, except the Magyar; (indeed, concerning the Turkish we do not distinctly learn;) hence the Greeks themselves have had to deal with the very same problem as we, and their solution of it will be of value to us, since they had a native sense of the æsthetic value both of the old and of the new.

The modern Greek Epic metre, or substitute for Homer's hexameter, is justly compared by Lord Byron to the following:—

A captain brave of Halifax | who liv'd in country quarters.

It has also a double rhyme at the end, which we need not imitate. Here however is a specimen taken from a well-known patriotic address, stimulating the Greeks to free themselves from Turkey:*

δεν εἶσθε σεῖς απόγονοι | εκείνων τῶν Ἑλλήνων,
των ελευθέρων, των σοφῶν, | και τῶν φιλοπατρίδων;
και πῶς εκεῖνοι απέθνησκον | δια τὴν ελευθερίαν,
και τώρα σεῖς ὑπόκεισθ' εις | τετοίαν τυραννίαν;

This is extremely similar to our balladmeasure (or *common metre* of our hymn books), and the fact at once tells how eminently popular it is, and in so far, analogous to the Homeric. But the double ending has the great advantage of more readily satisfying the ear without rhyme; and various experiments assure us, that on this trifle turns the full solution of the problem. The only doubt which moves us, is, whether the compass of this metre is not (in the English language) too great for a translator of Homer;

* Mere classical scholars may need to be told that *δὲν* stands for *οὐδὲν*, and means *not;* and *σεῖς* is the Turkish *siz*, "ye," which has supplanted *ὑμεῖς*, because the modern Greek pronunciation cannot distinguish *ὑμεῖς* from *ἡμεῖς*. Thus *δεν εἶσθε σεῖς* means, *οὐκ ἔσθ' ὑμεῖς*— ;

Also *τώρα* (*τῇδε τῇ ὥρᾳ*) means *νῦν*: *τέτοιος* is equivalent to *τοῖος* or *τοιοῦτος*.

for, by reason of our monosyllables, the thoughts pack closer with us than with the Greeks or Germans. It is true, that in a flowing poem there is generally no need of rendering line by line; but occasions occur, in which energy or beauty will be lost, if this be not done, and it is not desirable to be tempted to amplify, by having a measure of too great compass.

There is no question, that for every long poem a metre ought to allow considerable variety, and we have convinced ourselves (though naturally we cannot here give proof to the reader) that for the mere preventing of monotony the first part of the verse ought to admit of more lengths than one. It is not for us here to dictate what variations would commend themselves to the ear of a judicious versifier; but our belief is, that for Homeric translation, while the second part of the line must be religiously unalterable, it would be better to have in ordinary only *three* accents on the first part, with the right of occasionally introducing *four*. As one short example, we subjoin a translation of a well-known and much-admired Homeric passage; Il. i. 47:

As thús he spáke, his pray'r | was heard by bright Apollo.
Dówn from Olympus' heights | the god in wrath descended,
Bów on his shoulder bearing | and closely cover'd quiver:
And ráttled loúd and ángrilý | the weapons at his shoulder,
As he started on his path; | but Hé, like Night, came rushing.
At distance from the galleys | he sate;—and aim'd an arrow:
Then of the silver-bow | right fearful was the twanging.

We ought not to omit, that Mr. Blackie has vindicated the claims of a *trochaic* tetrameter, to replace Homer's rhythms; and we are every way desirous that any such suggestion should be well considered. In many of his notes, he gives specimens of Homeric or Hesiodic verses thus translated.

Vol. II. p. 209; from Hesiod. Theog. 132:

Earth to Uranus wedded bore | Ocean deep with whirling currents,
Cœus, Creios, Hyperíon, | Theia, Rhea, Iapetus,
Themis, Mnemosyne, lovely Tethys, | likewise Phœbe goldencrown'd
Then the youngest of them all, | deep designing Cronos—

Again, 362:

Thrice ten hundred are they counted | delicateancled Ocean-maids,

Again, p. 300, from Odyss. iii. 147:

Witless, in his heart he knew not | what dire sufferings he must bear,
For not lightly from their purpos'd counsel swerve the eternal gods.

We do not distinctly understand what latitude Mr. Blackie would reserve for himself; but we have an *a priori* prejudice, which his versions confirm, against any metre for a long poem, which necessarily commences the lines with an accented syllable. Very frequently, a naturally-formed verse *must* begin with a word which deserves no oratorical stress; such as And, Of, In, For, By, If, &c... and although, now and then, we may wink at the liberty of putting a stress on such words, great weakness results when this is common. On the other hand, what we call our Iambic verse, admits of a Trochee in place of the first Iamb; so that in that metre we have variety and energy: while the Trochaic is never melodious, unless the first syllable of the verse is decidedly emphatic. Even so, in gaining melody we incur monotony, exactly as in Lockhart's hexameters.

We would propose a certain mutilation of the second part of the Epic line (which admits of no variety whatever in that metre), to form a substitute for the Pentameter; viz. by omitting the unaccented syllable at each end of the Anacreontic:

⏑ | – ⏑ – ⏑ – | ⏑

which leaves only – ⏑ – ⏑ – as the terminating part of the Pentameter.

In this metre we will translate first some of the earlier specimens of Elegeiac verse, which savour somewhat of the roughness of antiquity.

1. *Epitaph on Archedike, daughter of Hippias.*

Of all the Greeks who liv'd beside him, Hippias was foremost,
And here is hid his daughter's dust, Nam'd Archédiké.
Her father, husband, brothers too, And sons, alike were princes;
Yet not to proud outrageousness Lifted was her mind.

2. *Epitaph on the Spartans slain at Thermopylæ.*

O stranger, to our country bear | this tiding; that to honour
The laws of Lakedaimon, | here our bodies lie.

3. *Pausanias's inscription on the Delphic tripod.*

The prince-commander of the Greeks, | Pausanias, who routed
The Medish host, to Phœbus did | this remembrance give.

4. *Epitaph on the Athenians first slain in the Peloponnesian war.*

The sky, it hath the souls of these | receiv'd; the earth their bodies
Hard by to Potidæa's gates | fated was to hold.
Their foes, one part a granted grave | hath gain'd; and others, fleeing,
Of longer life their trustiest hope | found behind the wall.
The city, and all Erechtheus' land | longs sadly for her warriors,
Who, Potidæa's walls beside, | foremost battling fell,
All children of Athenians; | who, bent to purchase virtue,
Casting into the scale their lives, | made their country bright.

As more polished pieces, apparently difficult, and therefore useful as testing the powers of this metre, we selected two epigrams of the Greek Anthology.

To the Nightingale.

O prattling honeyfed marauder, Attic maid, who bearest
The prattling cricket, dainty food, | fór thy callow young;
By prattler prattler kidnapt is, | by vernal one the vernal,
By wingèd one the wéllwinged, | stranger by the strange.
O drop him quick! for men and gods | alike regard it lawless,
For song-devoted throats to slay | votaries of song.

The Cricket's Complaint.

Why thus by merciless constraint, | O shepherds, do ye drag me,
The cricket, friend of solitude, | off my dewy sprigs?
To the Nýmphs a wayside nightingale, | which fills with dusky* prattle
The mountains and the shady groves | throúgh the midday heat.
The thrushes and the blackbirds see, | and see the trooping starlings,
Of all the gushing rural wealth | rude and wasteful thieves!
The ravagers of fruits to slay | is lawful: thése extírpate:
But whó can grudge the leaves to me, | ór the juicy dew?

Finally, we add a specimen of the metre, applied to humorous and unpoetical subjects:

I once was young, but poor; and now | in age behold me wealthy!
Compassion I of all, alas! | need on both accounts.
For then I able was to use, | when nót a farthing hád I;
And when no longer able to use, | plenty háve I nów.

* *Ξουθὰ λαλεῦντα.* We translate according to the ordinary sense of *ξουθὸς*, and leave others to discuss what are the *ξουθαὶ γέννες* assigned by Euripides to the nightingale.

No other proof is possible of the sufficiency of a proposed metre to satisfy the national ear, than such proof as specimens may afford. Of course the first time a new metre is heard, many ears are slow in understanding it; and the abrupt descent of our Pentameter will offend, until it is felt that that is the very thing aimed at. A little repetition, we are satisfied, will induce expectation of the cadences; after which, no rhyme will be desired.

Having entered thus deeply into the subject, we do not like to drop the pen without finishing that which remains concerning several classes of lyrical measures, though it is impossible to dwell on their secondary modifications. When once the Dactylic Hexameter and Pentameter have been duly represented in English, versifiers will be at no loss to express certain modifications of them found in Horace. So also of the Iambic lines. Yet we think that that form of the Iambic, which Archilochus is supposed to have called *Epodes*, and in which Horace wrote an entire book, is important enough to receive here a separate notice. The stanza has but two lines, of which one contains six, the other four, Iambs. The former, as usual, we shall represent by our *five* foot blank verse; but what then of the latter? It appears to us that a four-foot line has too great compass, and with some diffidence we suggest the Anacreontic as here also better. The reader may judge by a specimen.

Hor. Epod. II.

How blest is he, who, far from troublous care,
  As the ancient race of mortals,
With his own oxen tills his father's fields,
  From usuries exempted!
Nor by the savage trump in the camp is rous'd,
  Nor quails at the angry billows;
And shuns the forum, and the thresholds proud
  Of citizens overweening.
But he the vine's glad upgrown progeny
  Weds to the lofty poplars,
And with his curv'd knife pruning useless boughs,
  Engrafts more hopeful scions:
Or in the vale's deep bosom views afar
  The lowing cattle roaming,
Or in pure jars the wellprest honey stores,
  Or shears the helpless bleaters:

Or from the fields, when Autumn rears her head
With mellow fruitage comely,
How joys he, plucking his engrafted pears,
And grape that vies with purple,
To honour thee, Priapus, and thee, father
Silvanus, guard of landmarks!
Now beneath ancient holm he lists to lie,
Now in the clinging herbage:
In their deep banks the meanwhile glide the streams,
The birds moan in their thickets;
With trickling element pure babble the springs,
Inviting gentle slumbers, &c.

As to Trochaic measures, Mr. Blackie himself freely uses them without rhyme, and, indeed, is manifestly fond of them. We cannot please ourselves with a passage from him, partly because he gives *occasional* rhymes, which offend us, partly because he so often fails of a pure and strong utterance in the first syllable. One of the longest Trochaic passages which we know in the Greek Tragedians is in the Phœnissæ of Euripides. It is smooth and sparkling;—the charms of the Greek almost deceive one into the belief that it is poetry: but when translated, it is seen to be only a legend prettily told. The *strophe* runs thus:—

Hither the Tyrian Cadmus came, [*Lively and smooth.*]
He, to whose approach the calf
Plung'd with four untámèd feet
Down,—and glad completion gave to a [*Quickening.*]
Word oracular aptly boding
Whére his déstiny báde him to dwéll in the
Wheatful plains of the A'onés.
Here a dewy meandering ripple of [*Light.*]
Waters comes on the acres broad of
Dirkè grassy and deep to sow.
Here was Bromius born of his mother [*Slackening.*]
Wedded in fire to a heavenly lord.

Him, when yet a babe, the Ivy, [*Majestic.*]
Cluster'd o'er him, wreath'd around him,
Waving down his back, with juicy
Green and shadowy chaplets bless'd him; &c. &c.

After the Trochaic, the Choriambic measure next demands our attention. In point of fact, many verses which

are called Choriambic come naturally to us as a sort of Iambic or Trochaic. The Choriambic *stanza* however is known by its closing cadence, which also is to us very melodious. We give first a pretty regular stanza from the dirge in the Choëphori, where the spirit of Agamemnon is invoked by his children.

Orestes. Father, O Father of woe, reveal, (*Str.*)
Whát shall I act or utter,
Hither in safety to waft thy soul,
Rous'd from a lair so distant?
Light and darkness are evenmix'd;
Grief itself is a glory,
Whílst the dirge of Atridan woe
Chants to their ancient lordship.

Electra. Listen, O Father, in turn to *me*, (*Ant.*)
Melted in tearful sorrow.
Hark, the plaint of thy children twain
Pours a sepulchral anthem.
Suppliants both, we approach thy tomb;
Both alike, we are exiles.
Nought is well; it is all amiss;
Ruin is here triumphant.

In the following, an Iambic beginning turns into Choriambic; which is not felt at first, until the similarity of initial cadence, and finally the close, teaches the ear the genius of the passage.

Æsch. Agam. 191.

But whén the seer, on A'rtemís
Chárging the cause, announc'd a cure
Wórse to the chiefs than angry storm;
Thén on the ground did Atreus' sons
Smíte wi' their staves, and down their cheeks
Stealthily flow'd the teardrop.

Thus far, the Choriambic is peculiarly melodious; the difficulty arises when two Choriambs come together, which (it might seem) can never be wisely imitated in English. We have not room here to discuss the point; we admit that such a thing can only be exceptional, and allowable in abrupt and fervid passages; to illustrate which, one translation will suffice.

Æsch. Choëph. 378.

Míne may it bé to greet with joy (*Str.*)
The crúelly rúeful howling
Of a mórtally wóunded gallant
And shríek of a dáme expiring!
For whý should I hide the fury,
Which stíll, swóoping alóft, vées to my bóws,
And stríkes as a fiérce gále of the heárt?
'Tis ráncour of óld engénder'd.

* * * * * *

Feárfully pánts my foolish heart, (*Ant.*)
As I líst to the hymn of sorrow.
One time I despond and languish,
And darkness enwraps my vitals
At sound of the sad bewailing.
Agáin, bóld in my caúse, férvid in hópe,
I scórnfully cást ánguish asíde,
And all to my view is brilliant.

But we lay no stress on this, and pass on, to remark on the Choriambics of Horace. There is in them this peculiarity, that when two Choriambs come together, the verse has a Cæsura between them; which has been justly (we think) urged, as proving a rest in the music. In light sportive pieces it seems to us best to retain his divisions of the lines, though it is impossible to aim at any close similarity. Perhaps nothing closer is possible or desirable, than results from turning the Dactyl of the Choriamb into a Trochee. In the following,—where Horace has *three* Choriambs together,—to avoid monotony, we have made yet another modification :—

Ode I. 11.

Seek not to discover
(Lawless is the search!) | what results the gods,
O Leucónöe, destine
O'r for thee or me; | nór desire to try
Babylonian numbers.
Better far to take | whátsoe'er betides;
Whether winters many
Be for thee reserv'd ; | whether Jove bestows
This the last, which roughly
Stems by mouldering rocks | adverse Tuscan waves.
Then be wise, good lady!

Pour the merry wine; | and to man's short life
Cut down distant longings.
While we talk, the hours | spiteful will be gone.
Present joys embrace thou:
Wisest he, who least | trusts the morrow's hopes.

As a more difficult exercise, because the original is so perfect in form and so antithetical, may be proposed Ode iii. 9. We are not confident that the following is the very best metre, yet in it we certainly feel no need whatever of rhyme.

Horace. Whílst I fóndly appróvèd wás;
Whílst no rívai yoúth, | fávour'd móre by thée,
Clasp'd that ivory neck around;
Not the Persian king | happier throve than I.

Lydia. Whílst no rívai as yét sedúc'd
Thée,—nor Lydia's love | áfter Chloë's rank'd;
Thén was Lydia great of name:
Nót more bright than I | Roman Ilia throve.

Horace. Mé now Chloë the Cretan rules,
Taught in tuneful strains, | skill'd the harp to twang.
Deáth for hér will I feárless brave,
Might the Fates for mé | spáre her spirit to live.

Lydia. Born of Thurian O'rnytus,
Me with mutual torch | Cálaïs scorches now.
Twófold deáth would I bráve for hím,
Might the Fates for mé | spáre the youth to live.

Horace. Whát if Love as of old return,
A'nd with brazen yoke | fast the sunder'd join,
Auburn Chloë aside be toss'd,
Wide to mé* be op'd | jilted Lydia's door?

Lydia. Brighter thóugh than a stár is he,
Lighter thou than cork, | squallier than the rude
Wave of Adria; yet to me
Life with thee were blithe, | death with thee were good.

We must leave the Horatian Sapphics and Alcaics to be judged of more maturely, after it has been conceded how much less necessary rhyme is than our translators imagine.

* Mr. Melville, by mistake of an ambiguous case, makes Horace propose to open *his* door *to* Lydia.

It shall suffice to remark in passing, than the genuine stanza of Sappho herself hardly needs any change in English.

> *ποίκιλόφρον, ἀθανατ' Α'φροδίτα,*
> *παί Διός, δολόπλοκε, λίσσομαί σε*
> *μή μ' ασαίσι, μή μ' ανιαίσι δάμνα,*
> *πότνια, θύμον.*

> Subtly-soul'd, immortal Aphrodítè,
> Child of Jove, snare-twining, I implore thee,
> Not by loathings nor by griefs subdue my heart, kind goddess!

But this metre seems to us to have rather too much compass for Horace, and to be unsuited to his narrative and jocose Sapphics. The mode of transference, however, which has here been used, succeeds excellently in certain grave Pindaric measures, common to the Tragedians; which have generally five or six accents in each line; there being also a Cæsura in that of six, nearly as in our Alexandrine. A sufficient example of what we mean may be taken from the Medea of Euripides:—

> Ερεχθεῖδαι το παλαιον ολβιοι . . . .[1]

> Fortunate was old Erechtheus' race!
> Children they of blessed gods, from land
> Sacred and unravag'd, freshly suck'd
> Glorious wisdom, aye luxuriously
> Thro' brilliant æther stepping, where (they tell)
> Once the auburn-hair'd Harmonia bore
> The holy nine Pierian Muses.

The closing line has four accents, those which precede have five each. This whole class of metres is fundamentally related to the Sapphic; less closely to the Alcaic.

But we must still devote a few words to that remarkable metre, the Dochmiac. A pure doctrine is formed as *τῐς ᾱν δ̄η̄τᾰ μο̄ι*; which we imitate by *ă wīse prīncĕ's aīd*. The commonest variation of it, is by writing a Tribrach for the opening Iamb, as *ε̆μο̆λ̆ε μ̄εν Δῐκᾱ*. We do not know, but we assume, that this is analogous to *mĕrrĭlў rāng thĕ bēlls*;

with the metrical accent on the first syllable of the Tribrach. The double Dochmee is a very exciting metre, and as far as we can judge, may with very little change be advantageously used by the translator. This may be exemplified by the first chorus in the Seven Chiefs of Æschylus.

Woe! woe! | mighty and terrible woe!
The hóst ránges free, | leáving the cámp behínd.
Poúring advánces a máss | in frónt gálloping ón.
The dúst hígh in áir | the díre trúth reveáls,—
A téll-tále precíse, | a múte trústy spy.
The fráme-ríveting noíse, | the groúnd-ráttle of hóofs
Neárer and neárer cómes, | fliés on the wínd, and roárs
A's a resístless floód | láshing the moúntain-síde.

Gods and goddesses all, | duly the hurrying harm
Avért! ló! with shóuts | the whíte-shíelded hóst
In árms wéll bedíght | rúshes agaínst the walls,
Eager to reach the city.

A. Whó will deliver us, oh! | who nów, goddess or god,
Will réscúe achiéve?

B. Am I to fall and bow | to thése fórms divine,
Ye blést ónes, who hére | posséss lóv'd abodes?

C. Fast by the images hold, | now or never: oh whý
Deláy, rúeful soúls?

But when the Dochmees are not heaped directly on one another, but blend with Iambs, or change into a series of Bacchic feet, ⏑ – – | ⏑ – – | &c. which in result differ not from continuous Cretics | – ⏑ – | – ⏑ – | &c., the genius of the metre is far less abrupt. It is vigorous, but not spasmodic. Indeed Foster, in his once celebrated Essay on Accent and Quantity, has called the following English line *Cretic:*

Ōh thĕ swēet | cōuntrў līfe | nēar tŏ bōw'rs | glādes ănd strēams |

yet, having regard to accent only, we call it Anapæstic, because the metrical beat falls on the 3rd, 6th, 9th, 12th syllables. If we choose so to write our accentual Ana-

pæsts that they be in quantity Cretics, we believe that they will excellently replace the more calm and stately Dochmiacs. We give two specimens differing in kind, placing a long mark, *without* an accent, on certain syllables.

Æsch. Choëph. 397.

Electra. (*Str.*) *Slow.*

Where áre yē who hóld | the émpīre beneáth?
O Cúrse, dīre of míght, | that véngēst the déad,
The rémnānt of A′treūs | behóld hēre distrést
In éndlēss misfórtune | and oútcāsts from home.
Oh Jove, what home awaits us?

* * * * * *

Orestes. (*Ant.* 7.)

Can wórds rīghtly frám'd | aváil? shōuld we fáwn,
To soóthe āll the pángs | that piérce thrōugh the heart,—
The pángs fēlt from párēnts? | they wīll nōt be soóth'd.
As wild wōlves that rávin | despíse gēntle chárms,
So these from birth are chárm-proof.

Some persons imagine that the English Anapæst is essentially a *dancing* metre, by which they mean something tripping and frivolous. But a minuet differs much from a jig. The movement of the Anapæst, if rightly constructed and suitably read, may be either smooth and majestic, or abrupt and vigorous: and in both sorts it will express the Cretics or *quasi*-dochmiacs of which we speak. But it suffices to express a smooth and plaintive passage from the Seven Chiefs, 293:

(*Steady.*)

Where, ye gods, can ye find dearer regions than here,
If to foes now ye yield up the land deep of soil,
And the sweet wells of Dirkè, the oiliest of draughts
Which Poseidôn who winds round the earth poureth out,
Or the offspring of great Amphitritè?

To conclude. We disclaim all hostility to rhyme, and

are not at all disposed with Milton to talk about "monkish fetters." We regard *pure* and *good* rhymes (about which we confess ourselves fastidious) to be a very elegant ornament, which is never to be despised even in high poetry, and which advantageously gives a marked and distinctive form to versification of a commoner sort. But, we maintain, those do not know the powers of our language, who regard rhyme as essential, or who imagine that only one sort of "Blank Verse" can please; and we are inveterately hostile to rhyme in translation, because in the most accomplished efforts we trace *how much worse the work is done*, how large sacrifices of various kinds are made—for the sake of this single ornament; we must add,—how many *bad* and offensive rhymes even good translators make a favour of giving us. Nor are we willing to allow the plea, that passages occur in great poets, like Æschylus, which are too weak to bear an unrhymed version; for such passages may be found in noble odes; and if the reader is allowed to hear rhyme in one part, his ear will demand it in the rest. Better is it to omit, to shorten, or to let a great poet's occasional baldness appear; better even to lend some little elevation of another kind in such exceptional passages—than take on ourselves a burden which crushes the rest of the performance. If however a whole song,—as a dirge of alternate speaking,—has little poetry, and will be improved by rhyme, as the last 100 lines of the Persians, we thankfully accept a rhymed version from a hand as skilful as Mr. Blackie's.

But if any one is charitably willing to work up for the unlearned the raw materials of antiquity into a modern manufacture, he must not expect *those* to construct his machinery who work only at home-grown produce. He must rig his loom for himself; and though his tapestry will not be so soft and luxurious as the Hellenic byssus or the Persian silk, it may still express in bold and clear outline all the lineaments of antiquity; provided that this is made the principal aim, and is not sacrificed to the very arbitrary and vain desire of deceiving the reader into the belief that a translation is not a translation. With the total abandonment of rhyme by translators, and a sedulous cultivation of such forms of blank verse as are conge-

nial to accentual metres and to a language abounding with consonants,—will begin the eminent success of the English tongue, as a medium for reproducing all the poetical thought, by which other literatures have been enriched and ennobled.

Postscript.—We regret too late, that we have neglected to strengthen our argument by the example of Dean Milman, a high authority in questions of this nature; who in certain translations from Sanscrit poets has used unrhymed metre, specimens of which we ought to have adduced.