

ESSAY ON POETICAL TRANSLATION.

BY FRANCIS W. NEWMAN.

WHAT shall be the form of Poetical Translation? is a problem wholly separate from the other, What is the best form for an original Poem?

Those who have an inward impulse to original poetry will not attend to general discussion, but will settle the question in their own way. Nevertheless, we may perhaps say that our cultivated public in general is agreed in the opinion, that, for short poems and all lighter versification, rhyme is desirable; but for long poems and poems of high aim rhyme is less suitable. It seems to be undeniable that the use of *rhyme* too easily satisfies the ear, and is adverse to the cultivation of various and melodious *rhythm*; yet in every grand poem rhythm is of first-rate importance.

Just so in translation. If your original is light or without any marked perfection in form, it is better translated with rhyme. To try to introduce an excellence which it has not is not faithfulness. To adhere at all closely to the words is superfluous as well as unpleasing. If you may deviate from them considerably, the demand of rhyme is not painfully severe; and rhyme easily gives sufficient form for your purpose. I will add the concession that where, for instance, Greek Tragedy is comparable in spirit to the modern opera; where dialogue is short and rapid, perhaps in half-lines, which in the Greek eminently needed the support of music, rhyme is our most obvious aid. Such passages may have deep pathos, but they seldom have any other qualities of high poetry. But when the original has great perfection, and marked peculiarities of form, and specially chosen diction, the duty of faithfulness becomes more and

more incumbent on the translator—more and more difficult. I elsewhere compared his problem to that of a draughtsman who has to imitate Assyrian sculpture with the pencil; thereupon a critic interpreted me as recommending *industrial* imitation! Of course the problem is eminently *artistic*; but the artist is not at liberty to smooth away peculiarities of the original, and introduce turns which are to us customary and more pleasing. Accidental failures and errors of the original he need not reproduce, but in proportion to its real merit he is bound to adhere to whatever in it is systematic. There are ancient poets who, because of the inadequacy of our language, if translated at all, are perhaps best rendered in our prose: such is Pindar. The French in general prefer prose. Nevertheless, where the original is in metre, a total sacrifice of metre is a severe loss; and very few Englishmen will read through the translation of a foreign poet if it be executed in prose. For nearly all Latin and Greek poets our metres may be used. Precisely because so few of us seem to discern the powers of our language to develop unrhymed metre, I was impelled to translate the Odes of Horace, as affording a large variety of specimens how stanzas may be constructed.

It may be worth while here to remark that there are *original* poets, still living or recently dead, who think the substance of their poetry so valuable that they may quite disembarass themselves of all concern about the melody, energy, and elasticity of their rhythm. To talk to them of accent and cæsura, to complain of loads of consonants and lumber, would be utterly useless so long as they have a public which

will praise and buy their books for the sake of the philosophy (I suppose) which is contained in them. But no *translator* can claim the exemptions which these writers assume. The material pre-exists; he who undertakes to translate is bound to present it in a form and dress as analogous to the original as the change of language permits. He has no right to turn a most elegant Greek ode into our coarsest, rudest blank verse, marred by unpronounceable combinations of -ts, st. . . and other consonants, and utterly destitute of the original grace. Every translator has a constant duty, in line after line, of studying long and short, cæsura and accent, as much as an Eton schoolboy. One who fancies that his genius can supersede this will only succeed in proportion as he is careless of conforming to the original.

All schoolboys are probably aware of certain elementary facts, which nevertheless may here fitly be recited. Our metres belong to two classes widely contrasted—those in which the beats of the voice fall on alternate syllables, and those in which two strongly accented syllables are separated by two unaccented. The former are called (inaccurately) Iambic or Trochaic according as the beats are on the *even* or the *odd* syllables; the latter (also inaccurately) are called Anapæstic or Dactylic. This latter class is apt to be either light and dancing or eminently prosaic. A Cambridge mathematician is said to have unawares expressed an Optical Theorem in words which opened: 'If parallel rays come contrary ways, and fall upon opposite sides . . . ' This form of metre can only by exception be used in high poetry, and then with the greatest care to avoid unpleasant flatness. By making the *unaccented* syllables sensibly *long*, and securing that some marked passion shall be expressed, much may be done to counteract the evil. The excited

double dochmee of the Greek Tragedians, I fancy, may sometimes be rendered in this metre. As a specimen of what I mean I will produce an experiment which I long since made in the *Agamemnon* of Æschylus, where the chorus bursts into fury at the murder of Agamemnon by his wife.

(*Strophe.*) O woman, what Evil earth-nur-
tur'd hath fed thee,
What draught from the briny wave stream-
ing hath fill'd thee,—

For incense, to lay public curse on thy
head?

Thou hast fell'd and cut off, and shalt out-
cast be deem'd,

To the townsfolk a direful abhorrence.

(*Antistr.*) Proud schemer art thou, and too
lofty thy vauntings.

As with gore-dripping fortune thy spirit is
frenzied,

Behold! on thy forehead outblazeth a
drop

Of blood unaveng'd. Still destin'd art thou,
Reft of friends, blow for blow to encounter.

So much I have written just to show that I do not venture wholly to proscribe this class of unrhymed metres in the translation of high poetry; but I believe it can so seldom be used with advantage, that I intend to say no more about it now, and to confine myself to the other class, in which the beats are alternate. When we have either four or three beats in each line, the rhythm is adapted to music, as is manifest both in our Psalm tunes and our ballad tunes. But a line with 5 beats is less musical and more oratorical.

Such is our 'Heroic' measure, whether in Blank Verse, or in Pope's Couplets, or in Spenser's Stanza, or in the Sonnet, or in the imitations of Ariosto's metre. This 5-foot verse belongs to higher cultivation than the Ballad, and in it great variety of rhythm has been developed, eminently by Milton and finally by Thomson, who perhaps brought 'Blank Verse' (so called) to its perfection. The prevalent monotony in the rhymed couplet, in contrast

to the varied melody when rhyme is absent, is certainly a marked fact.

This 'Iambic metre,' in which the beats fall on the even syllables, is alone suited for a long poem, for the cardinal reason that in our language sentences and clauses habitually and naturally begin with unaccented syllables, such as *articles* (The, A), *conjunctions* (If, When, &c., And, But, Or), *pronouns* (He, His, Our) and other small words. Besides, by a liberty universally conceded, this metre admits in the first foot an inversion of the beat (*i.e.* what is called a Trochee instead of an Iamb), so that great ease of composition results. No such liberty is granted to the Trochaic metre. Versifiers indeed (from mere laziness apparently) do take liberties with it which I regard as inadmissible. For me, the first syllable must admit of a *strong accent*, and the second syllable must generally be *sensibly shorter than the first*, to make a Trochaic line melodious; and this is too severe a requirement to fulfil continuously. But it appears to me that neither our poets nor our translators rightly esteem the great additional power of compacting vigorous stanzas, which the Trochaic opening of the line gives us. Does anyone ask me, Why is a stanza wanted? I may reply, Why did Sappho make a stanza? Why did Alcæus? Why do Catullus and Horace write oftener with a stanza than with a continuous monotony of line? I cannot doubt that the Epic recitative tired them. One nation in Europe still keeps up the Greek system of making metres depend on Quantity, not on Accent, namely, the Hungarians; but their best poets so complain of monotony that, in a poem of any length, they frequently change the metre. We know that Sappho, Alcæus, and Horace all were glad of the lyre as an accompaniment. Horace often tells us how much he counts on the aid of a music girl; still, the poetry,

though written for music, was much oftener read than sung, the musician not being at hand. This made a vast change from the Tragic choruses. When a play was elaborately got up at the expense of the State, and the singers were drilled by the poet, who controlled alike music and words, fixed stanzas were not thought of. The music was allowed its free swing, though we see strong tendencies to certain final cadences. But when music was taken away, it was hard to know how to sing or read, unless fixed intelligible cadences recurred. Out of this, evidently, arose the principle of a Stanza. This holds equally with us, though our rhythm is no longer based on music. Few Englishmen are content with Milton's choruses in *Samson Agonistes* as fulfilling their desires of poetical melody. The ear never knows *what to expect*, and is frequently disappointed. Thus to me it is almost an axiom that we must have either a single rhythm repeated or a stanza. We do not forbid the first by valuing the second.

By adopting a Trochaic line of five beats with the general rhythm of our Epic Blank Verse, we at once get a powerful new metre for lyric use. This I find highly suited to Horace's *Ægei monumentum*, &c.

I not all shall perish. Funeral-Queen!
Still a goodly part of me shall shun
Thy recording. I, in later praise,
Fresh shall thrive, long as the silent maid
Climbs the Capitol in Pontiff's train.

Here we get all the energy and variety of rhythm which characterises our Epic Verse, with just enough innovation to make it felt as Lyric, not Epic. Let it be observed (for few seem to be aware) that the successive beats ought seldom to be all of equal strength, and perhaps never at equal intervals of time. For energy and elasticity the syllables must at one moment be quicker, at another

slower; and, to avoid monotony, it is important to have the chief beats differently placed in different lines, sometimes falling on long syllables, sometimes on short. Thus in the last line above, the accented syllables *Climbs, Pont-, Train,* are all long: but in *Cápitol* the first syllable is very short, but strongly accented, the third is short and very feebly accented. To illustrate another fact, that modern poetry is antagonistic to the ancient doctrine of Equable Times, take the following:

Oh Pierian maid, whose touch
Sweetly *modulates* the golden shell;
Who at pleasure canst bestow
Swan-like *melody* on fishes mute.

We may observe that, owing to the double accent on the trisyllable words *modulates, melody,* the accent on the last syllable is not only very weak, but is hurried. Let us alter this, which it is easy to do. For instance—

Oh Pierian maid, whose touch
Tunes the golden-shell to utterance sweet;
Thou, who canst at pleasure lend
Notes of plaintive swan to fishes mute.

No one of these lines is in itself bad; yet in combination they are more monotonous than the first version, because the accents are more equable and more equably timed, of which we very soon tire. The *sweetness* of a verse depends on the ease of utterance, the due proportion of broad soft vowels, and absence of troublesome consonants; somewhat perhaps also on equable times; but the *energy* depends on unequable and unequal accent, falling sometimes on broad and strong, sometimes on short and weak vowels.

While the ordinary Epic Blank Verse seems to me to need cautious and rare use in lyrics, it yet becomes highly suitable when elongated by a very short syllable, with the preceding accent energetic. We may call this a line of $5\frac{1}{2}$ Iambs. I find that it makes an

excellent couplet with either a 4-foot Iambic or a 3-foot Iambic preceding. Thus in Horace's Epode 15:

'Twas night, and in the sky serene
The Moon among the smaller lights was
shining; . . .

or in Æschylus, *Prometheus,*

Never may all-disposing Jove,
With sway o'ermatching, my resolves en-
counter;
Nor to approach the gods may I
Be slack, with kine for holy banquet
slaughter'd
On margin of my Ocean-Siro's
Exhaustless channels, nor in words be
guilty!

This stanza I find quite to satisfy the ear. When the first line of the stanza is only 3 feet, it admits of being doubled at pleasure, giving new variety. First, taking it single, I thus translate from the first chorus of Sophocles' *Antigone,* concerning Capaneus attacking Thebes:

(*Strophe 2.*) Foil'd in his frantic rush,
Though still with blasts of hate against us
raving,
Down dropt he, torch and all,
And heavy rung on Earth, who upward
spurn'd him, &c.

(*Antistr. 2.*) But now since Victory
Mighty of name at length is come, rejoicing
In car-borne Theba's joy;
Henceforth forget we battle's past annoy-
ance, &c.

Again, if we double the first line of the stanza, making it an Alexandrine, we get an excellent rhythm. *Euripidis Alcestis:*

Therefore at Boibis' meer | bright stream-
ing, holdeth he
A hearth with flocks innumerable ayo
abounding;
And sets, for acres plough'd | and leas out-
spread, his bound
Tow'rd where the sun his darkling car
arresteth,
Molossia's lofty clime: | but tow'rd the
Ægean main,—
Shore havenless, —o'er Pélion hereigneth.

The Alexandrine also admits an additional syllable at the end; then, perhaps, the second line is better without it. Take Horace, Epode 16:

There sprouts the olive shoot | with bloom
 undisappointing,
 And the dark fig her proper tree adorns.
 With light foot brawling leaps | the stream
 from lofty mountains,
 And honey trickles from the hollow holm.
 There to the constant pail | come the she-
 goats unbidden,
 And the dear flock show udders alway
 full.

Other slight variations yield equally
 good rhythm, and may often enable
 us to make a stanza commensurate
 with the original. I take another
 example from the *Antigone*, and
 write the stanzas in three separate
 lines, $3\frac{1}{2}$, $3\frac{1}{2}$, $5\frac{1}{2}$:

(*Str.* 1.) O Love, in fight unconquer'd ;
 Love, who on' proud souls fallest,
 And nightly restand on soft cheek of maiden ;
 Who sea-traversing roamest,
 Or where field-dwellers nestle ;
 Thee none escapeth oven of immortals.
 Us, creatures of a moment,
 Whom'er of us thou interest, frenzy seizeth.

(*Antistr.* 1.) And thou to unjust outrage
 Even just hearts pervertest,
 And now mid heroes stirrest kinsman's
 anger.
 Enchantment in the eyelids
 Of damsel ripe for wedlock
 Doth signal triumph, Counsellor high-seated
 With Sanctities primæval.
 For matchless sports among them Love's
 great goddess.

Here it will be observed that two
 stanzas of $3\frac{1}{2}$, $3\frac{1}{2}$, $5\frac{1}{2}$ are followed
 by a third stanza of two lines only,
 $3\frac{1}{2}$, $5\frac{1}{2}$; yet the genius of the stanza
 remaining, no shock is felt by the
 ear. Thus we can keep closer to
 the Greek without embarrassment.

Let us try the reverse order in
 another choral ode of the same
 play :

Blest they, whose life the taste
 Of misery knows not ; for, when Heav'n-sent
 ruin
 Shatters a house, there lacks
 No weight of woe on kin promiscuous rented.
 Like as the briny billow
 On nether darkness riding,

When panting² puff of Thracian tempest
 rages,
 Uprolleteth from the bottom
 Black heaps of foul confusion,
 And the vext shores reply by squally
 moaning.

These examples satisfy me that
 we have here several very effective
 new stanzas without rhyme.

For Horace's Sapphics, which are
 generally mild or playful, we easily
 get an effective substitute in an
 Iambic stanza of 4 lines, which
 may be defined as $4\frac{1}{2}$, $4\frac{1}{2}$, $4\frac{1}{2}$, and
 $2\frac{1}{2}$. In a few places of the Greek
 tragedians I have tried this, and
 make no doubt that a skilful ver-
 sifier can use it with effect. After
 three or four efforts at the *ἀκτις*
ἀελίου of the *Antigone*, which I
 suppose all will call difficult, I
 could not keep so close to the ori-
 ginal with any other metre in the
 1st Strophe as with this :

O ray of Sun, of all the fairest
 Reveal'd to Theba seven-gated,
 Eyelid of golden day! late gleaming
 O'er streams of Dirka ;
 We saw thee stir to foremost gallop
 With keener rein the fleeing hero,
 Who with white shield and full equipment
 From Argos started.

Not knowing what music Sappho
 herself used, which *may* have been
 very wild and plaintive, we cannot
 say whether this English metre
 might have suited to translate her
 poetry, if it were extant. That
 does not concern us, if it will suit
 Horace or occasionally Euripides.
 In a more pretentious ode, where
 Horace aims at grandeur, this metre
 suits well enough. Ode iv. 6 :

As pine by biting iron smitten,
 Or cypress snapt by squall of Eurus,
 Down dropt he huge, in dust of Troas
 His neck abasing, &c.

As a result of numerous experi-
 ments, I venture to assert from the
 decisions of my own ear (while I
 cannot rightly assume that all ex-

¹ I conjecturally correct the inadmissible word *κτῆμασι* into *λήμασι*.

² *δυσπνόοις πνόαις*.

perienced cultivators of verse will agree with me), that the short unaccented syllable at the end is a very great aid in contenting us without rhyme. What is called a 'double ending' seems to satisfy my ear. I first discovered this in substituting the modern Greek Epic metre for Homer's Epic. It is simply our commonest Ballad metre with a double ending, as in Campbell:

By this the storm grow loud apace: | the
waterwraith was shrieking;
And in the scowl of heav'n each face | grew
dark as they were speaking.

Just drop the rhymes, and you
have such lines as:

For they no earthly viands eat, | nor drink
they wine resplendent;
And therefore bloodless are they all, | and
deathless are reputed. *Iliad*, v. 341.

Or again, *Iliad* x. 296:

When to the child of mighty Jove | they
thus had paid their worship,
They hied to go, as lions twain, | in gloom
of night enshrouded,
Midcarnage, over carcases, | through dusky
gore and armour.

It is sometimes of great importance to be able to express each line of the original in a separate line of the imitation. Not that it can be wise to bind ourselves to this, yet it is, often enough, so urgent that our line or stanza ought to be commensurate in compass to the task imposed. This is one of the elements to be allowed for in the choice of a metre.

A modification of Iambic metre well known to poets ought not here to be omitted. I have never seen it noticed by any metrical grammarian. In it alternate accents are of double emphasis. An example from *Agamemnon* (3rd choral ode) will illustrate it sufficiently:

(*Str.* 1.) Who so veritably wise did the
Cäptivatress näme,
The spëar-espoused Hëlen,³ prize of
strife?

Was it öne to us unseën, who a fäte-presag-
ing töngue
Truly guided? for sho fitly ships and
mën

And cities carried cäptive.
From öüt the dainty weälth of the bridal
hangings shë

By Titan Zephyr's brëath sailed alöng;
And a shiëlded huntsman-tröop on her
vänish'd oary träck

At Simois' leafy bänks push'd to shöre,
In a cäüse of gory quärrrel.

(*Antist.* 1.) It was pürpose-working Wräth
that inflicted her on Tröy

As a chäрге of Wedded-Cäiro⁴ truly
nämed;

To avënge in later timë the dishönour of
the böärd

And of hearth-commüning Jöve upon the
räce

Who pervërsely chanted Hÿmen, &c.

One who undertakes the problem of finding a substitute for the Greek Dactylic Hexameter, may naturally be asked what he recommends when a Pentameter is joined; nor is it easy to answer with any decision. Long poems in this Couplet, like Ovid's Epistles, seldom have enough high poetry in them to come into this discussion. Short pieces, such as abound in Greek collections of Epigrams, are sometimes elaborately beautiful, and the powers of the English language are put on severe strain to reproduce any good imitation of their form. Tyrtaeus's spirited Elegeiacs are, I think, well enough translated into the metre indicated above, as used by me for Horace's Epode 16, viz. Iambic $6\frac{1}{2}$ and 5. It is not more monotonous than the Hexameter and Pentameter. But for simple Greek inscriptions and other ditties of no great pretension in this metre, I think that an abrupt change in the second line of my Homeric substitute succeeds as well as anything.

³ The poet translates the name Helen to mean captivatress.

⁴ A pun in the Greek, untranslatable.

The following are remarkably close to the Greek :

Four are the public games of Greece, | and
all the four are sacred ;

To mortal men do two belong : | two th'
immortals claim.

The names are Jove, Latona's son, | Arché-
moros, Palaimon ;

Their prizes are the olive wild, | apples,
parsley, pine.

Again :

If to thy mind, Demosthenes ! | thy body
had been equal,

Never had Mæcedonian Mars | play'd the
lord in Greece.

When a Greek elegeiac is elaborately beautiful, I think it must be dealt with by a translator just as a choral ode. Each piece should be allowed to dictate its own metre ; no uniformity should be attempted, else the difficulty of the problem, already too great, is increased. Full use also should be made of Trochaic lines, of which I have now more to say.

The Trochaic lines most familiar in English poetry are in 7 or 8 syllables, with 4 beats in each line. In Psalm books a metre called 'Eights and Sevens' is *Trochaic Tetrameter*. This is, like the Ballad metre, closely allied to music, and is very spirited when followed by a $5\frac{1}{2}$ Iamb. This I used for Horace's Ode i. 5 to Lucius Sestius :

Now the winter's keenness loosens ; | Spring
and Zephyr's pleasing change

Is come, and engines haul the dry-keel'd
galleys.

When an Elegeiac is very full of matter, with compound Greek epithets saying much concisely, this stanza may not be at all too long. But it is probably too ringing and bold for a plaintive piece.

The Trochaic line, when elongated, is still musical, and may be quite available in translation. The following may rather be interpreted as Trochaic followed by Iambic :

Varus ! plant not other tree | before the
sacred vine,

All around Catillus' walls, | in Tibur's mel-
low soil. Hor. Od. i. 18.

In longer lines still I give this from the *Agamemnon*.

Jove ! what'er thy nature be, | if this the
name thou lovest,

This will I to thee address ; | for, weighing
every other,

Nought beside can I conjecture, | Save the
name of Jupiter,

If 'tis right in sooth to scorn | Load of vain
solicitude, &c.

Several modifications of this are obvious. First, in a stanza of 3 lines, as in a light piece of Horace (Ode, i. 8) :

Why (I pray) abhors he now
Sunlit course, who once could bear
Dust and heat so bravely ?

Next, in a stanza of 4 lines (*Prometheus*) :

Marriage, with my equal join'd,
Nought affrighteth me ; but never
Let celestial Love at me
Dart its glance unerring.

Further, in 5 lines, the last of them Iambic (telling *who weep* for Prometheus) :

(*Strophe* 1.) All in land of Colchis dwelling,
Maiden-hearts, in fight undaunted ;
All the troop of Scythia, holding
Outmost range of earth, around
The desolate pool, Mæotis :

(*Antist.* 1.) All Arabia's warlike blossom,—
Men who near Caucasian summits
Lofty dwell on cliffs encastled,
Bristling sharp with fretful spears,
—A terrible host,—beware thee.

But a far more oratorical line is when there are 5 Trochaic beats. This holds the same relative place in Trochaic metres as the 5-foot Blank Verse among Iambus. Not that it is suited for long continuance, but that it gives a new energy and variety. In translating Tragic choruses, we may sometimes use for a *short* continuity the line of 5 Trochees. Thus in the *Prometheus* :

(*Str.* 1.) Wise, oh wise, was he, who first
by judgment
Compass'd, and in words the maxim
fashion'd,

'Wed thy peer, and win the prize of wedlock:
Venture not with those whom riches pamper,
Nor with those by lofty birth disdainful,
Thou of humble rank, to play the suitor.'

(*Ant. i.*) Never, never, O ye Fates [primæval],

May ye in the bed of Jove espy me!
Never may a heav'n-descending bridegroom
Press to me! for ah! I shrink, beholding
How, by Juno's wrath, in frightful roam-
ings
Io, chaste and timid maid, is mangled.

But in general I think 3 lines of this form suffice, and that a stanza is well ended by a fourth line somewhat different; such as I use in Horace for the metre of Ode i. 6:

Wé, Agrippa! touch not these achieve-
ments,
Nor Pelides' anger unrelenting,
Pelops' ruthless house, nor deep Ulixes
Roaming wildly on Ocean-wave.

The alternate combination of Trochaic with 4 beats and with 5, I find peculiarly susceptible of elegance and pathos. In general it has not compass enough for the Greek Elegeiac, for which it might otherwise be recommended. I am highly satisfied with it as a substitute for Horace's familiar metre, Od. i. 3:

Surely round his heart had hé
Oak and threefold brass, who dar'd to yield
Bark so frail to deep so fierce
First of men; nor fear'd South-western
puffs
Battling hard with stiff North-east,—
Stars with Rainy name, nor frenzied South,
Who than none less mighty sways,
Bidding Hadria swell or sink at will.

Many a Greek chorus, which has resisted other incantations, would yield, I fancy, to this metre. Another adaptation to a stanza of 4 lines is as follows:

Praise, ye maidens, her whom streams and
groves
Leaf-haired please; which jut from Cragus
green,
Or Erymanth, black with'woods,
Or, from Álgidus' icy top.

Further, the Iambic stanzas spoken of above may be modified by changing one of the Iambic lines, at pleasure, into Trochaic; that is, so as to constitute a *new* stanza, not as taking liberty with the old. Thus, instead of

'Twas night, and in the sky serene
The Moon among the smaller lights was
shining,

where the stanza consists of 4 and $5\frac{1}{2}$ Iambs, we may change the second line into one of 5 Trochees, which adds to it somewhat of abruptness and energy. Thus, of Helen escaping from Sparta (*Æsch. Ag.*):

She to her townsmen left behind
Clash of shield and spear and naval armings,
And as a dow'r to Ilion bare
Ruin,—whilst with ill-adventur'd venture
The gates she fleetly pass'd; and much
Groan'd the palace bards, the news pro-
claiming:
' Ah, the house! the house and royalty!
Ah, her couch, and steps of tenderness!' &c.

From this Trochaic with 5 beats (accented on last syllable) I have at last satisfied myself with a substitute for the Alcaic metre. In my translation of the Odes of Horace, published in 1853, I confessed that the substitute which I had adopted was too small in compass, and cramped me; yet, trying in several directions, I could not gain without losing, and did not succeed. Years afterwards, coming to the problem quite afresh, I at once discovered that the two first lines of my Alcaic, instead of 4 Trochaic beats, must have 5; but that Trochaic the lines ought to remain. Even the most difficult of the Alcaic Odes, that to Drusus Cæsar (Ode iv. 4), with its merciless long-winded opening, proved comparatively manageable. It must be noted that in every faithful translation the Alcaic Odes of Horace will always show to worst advantage, simply because they have nearly always more of moral thought in them and less flavour of poetry. Many of them are mere morality and rhetoric dressed up with great skill, by aid of the peculiar power of transposition and compact construction in which Latin so far excels us. Wherever the lack of true poetry is compensated in Latin by rhetorical art, translation disenchants the reader. All that

we can hope to do is to retain terseness and vigour, and present everything emphatically in the English which is emphatic in the Latin. Very many regard Horace's address to Mæcenas, 'Tyrrhena regum progenies' (Od. iii. 29), as the finest of his Alcaics; hence it is a good test of the capacity of a proposed metre. I am not ashamed of my new stanza when I make the trial:

Wisely God in murkiness of night
Shrouds the issues of futurity,
And laughs if heart of mortal flutter
Too intent. But thou the Present
Ever calm improve. The world runs on,
Borne in fashion of a mighty flood,
To Tuscan deep now down the channel
Peaceful gliding, now engulfing
Stones corroded, trunks of trees upturn,
Flocks and habitations: nor the brawl
Of hills and neighbouring woods is absent,
When the deluge, wild descending,
Tranquil pools disturbeth. He shall live
Self-possess and glad, who day by day
Can justly call his task accomplish'd.
Let the Sire his sky to-morrow
Cloud with gloominess or light with sun:
Ne'er will Pow'r Divine the deed once done
Annul, or carry in reversal
What the gliding hour has stranded.

I no longer find any questions of metre remaining for a translator of the Odes of Horace; and his metres are so numerous, as to arm one beforehand for a large mass of the Greek lyrics. Various suggestions have been made above of stanzas suitable to translate the tragic odes. Difficulties must remain where music and acting played a large part with the Greek, especially when there are several speakers and short utterances; or generally, when there is great excitement. This is often accompanied by the 'dochmiac' metre, for which we have no correlative. Boeckh, I understand, says that the music was in $5/4$ time, as is a certain modern piece called *The Gypsy Glen*, which ladies generally despair of executing in true time. But when the utterances in dochmees are of moderate length, and come from one mouth, I have thought that a sort of 'God

save the King' metre is not inappropriate. Thus when the chorus in the Seven against Thebes is terrified at the enemy, and bursts out after every speech of the king, her excited prayers may be cast into this form:

(*Str.* 1.) O Gods, with victory
Crown ye our champion
Since for the State
Righteous he combateth.
Yet dire my terror is,
Fate of my dearest ones
Bloodstain'd to see.

(*Antistr.* 1.) Perish, who 'gainst the State
Vaunteth unseemly words!
Him may high Jove
By lightning-bolt arrest,
Ere he my home invade,
Rifling with haughty lance
Our maiden-seats!

What we never can attain in English is, a series of words with short syllables, short vowels, and very few consonants, so that the tongue runs over them with double rapidity. For this the Greeks have full power, and to the excited utterances it gives an inimitable peculiarity. But this, and other things, the English reader will not miss, for he cannot guess at their existence. It is sufficient to say that, for the translation of by far the greater part of that foreign poetry which has a merit deserving of careful translation, with close adherence to its expressions and form, we have ample resources in unrhymed lines, which are in full harmony with current and customary metre, and introduce nothing new in principle. Without denying that rhyme may exceptionally be desirable, the present writer maintains that ordinarily the translator of high poetry will have to purchase rhyme at far too high a sacrifice of faithfulness, and that when attained, it will be of little worth. It will generally be found to have lowered the qualities of his rhythm, and added nothing to the dignity and energy obtainable without rhyme.