

**A FIRST BOOK OF
POETICS: FOR
COLLEGES AND
ADVANCED SCHOOLS**

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A First Book of Poetics: For Colleges and Advanced Schools by Martha Hale Shackford

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MARTHA HALE SHACKFORD

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For Colleges and Advanced Schools

BY

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PREFACE

THIS volume is designed to meet the needs of a class in the outline history of English literature, and does not attempt to give elaborate statements. Simply worded definitions, abundant illustrations, and a few suggestions in regard to supplementary books for further study make up the contents of the book. Once in possession of the elementary facts in regard to poetry, students may be led by the most advanced inductive methods to analyze individual poems, and so gradually build up a more complete and more independent knowledge of the details of poetics.

M. H. S.

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VERSIFICATION

° **Scansion.** The scansion of English verse is based chiefly upon stress, or accent, not, as in Latin and Greek, wholly upon quantity.

Ex. "Grow rích | in thát | which név|er ták|eth rúst|."

SIDNEY: *Astrophel and Stella.*

In this instance the reader follows the normal pronunciation of these words in prose, paying little attention to the length of the vowels.

° **Metre and Rhythm.** Rhythm is the recurrence of stress at intervals; metre is the regular, or measured, recurrence of stress. A verse (a single line of poetry) may contain from one to seven stresses.

Monometer (mo-nóm-e-ter) is a verse of one stress, rarely used in English poetry except in sequence with longer verses.

Ex.

"We díe|

As yóur | hours dó | and drý|

Away|."

HERRICK: *To Daffodils.*

° *Dimeter* (dím-e-ter) is verse of two stresses.

"Her prét|ty feét|

Like snails | did creep|."

HERRICK: *On Mistress Susan Southwell: Her Feet.*

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Trimeter (trím-e-ter) is verse of three stresses.

Ex. "Then wél|come éach | rebúff|
That túrns | earth's smóoth|ness róugh|."

BROWNING: *Rabbi Ben Ezra*.

Tetrameter (te-trám-e-ter) is verse of four stresses.

Ex. "His thoughts | were hígh|er thán | the hílls|."
DYER: *Cynthia*.

Pentameter (pen-tám-e-ter) is verse of five stresses.

Ex. "And gáth|ering swá||lows twít|ter ín | the skíes|."
KEATS: *Ode to Autumn*.

Hexameter (hex-ám-e-ter) is verse of six stresses.

Ex. "Tíbur is | béautiful, | too, and the | orchárd | slópes,
and the | Ánio|."

CLOUGH: *Amours de Voyage*.

Heptameter (hep-tám-e-ter) is verse of seven stresses.

Ex. "The fá||ling out | of fáith|ful fríends | renéw|ing ís
of lóve|."

EDWARDS: *Amantium, Ira*.

Place of Stress. A foot is that portion of a verse which contains one stressed syllable and one or more unstressed syllables.

An *iambus* (i-ám-bus) is a foot of two syllables in which the stress falls upon the second syllable. This is the foot most frequent in English verse.

Ex. "They ál|so sérve | who ón|ly stánd | and wáit|."

MILTON: *On His Blindness*.

A *trochee* (tró-ke) is a foot of two syllables in which the stress falls upon the first syllable.

Ex. "Willows | whítén, | áspens | quíver|."
TENNYSON: *The Lady of Shalott.*

A *dactyl* (dác-tyl) is a foot of three syllables in which the stress falls upon the first syllable.

Ex. "Bírd of the | wílderness |
Blíthesome and | cúmberless|."
HOGG: *The Skylark.*

An *anapest* (án-a-pest) is a foot of three syllables in which the stress falls upon the third syllable.

Ex. "The Assýr|ian came dów|n | líke a wól|f | on the fól|d|."
BYRON: *The Destruction of Sennacherib.*

A *spondee* (spón-dee) is a foot of two stressed syllables, and is used most frequently in combination with the dactyl.

Ex. Sílence and | sórrow are | stróng and | pátient en|dúr-
ance ís | gódlíke | .
LONGFELLOW: *Evangeline.*

Other feet less frequently found in English verse and imitated from the classics are named below. Definitions may be found in the dictionary. Amphibrach, Amphimacer, Bacchius, Antibacchius, Molossus, and Tribrach.

A verse is called *catalectic* when one syllable is lacking in the final foot, *acatalectic* when the final foot is complete.