

A TREATISE ON VERSIFICATION

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A Treatise on Versification by R. W. Evans

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R. W. EVANS

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VERSIFICATION**

TREATISE

ON

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VERSIFICATION.

BY THE

REV. R. W. EVANS,

VICAR OF BEVERSHAM,

AND LATE FELLOW OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

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PREFACE.

THE following Treatise has long lain by the Author, in hopes that its subject might be taken up by some other hand, more able to discuss the general principles which should give a common basis to ancient and modern Versification, and thus introduce some breadth of view and interest into a subject which seems to have been considered with partial glimpses, and made more dry and dull than any other. The confusion hence arising is exceedingly great, as may be seen in the attempts to introduce the ancient metres into our modern tongues, which have no prosody of quantity.

No such work having appeared, as far as the Author's knowledge extends, he has been induced to put the Treatise in order for publication.

He is moved also by the consideration of the very essential use which a knowledge of the principles of versification, involving as they do the elements of recitation, is to correct and good reading; both as to the clear and firm enunciation of the syllables, and the management of the pauses. Without these no flexibility can be obtained, but all will be an indistinct monotonous drawl, varied perhaps by unmeaning starts. It has been remarked that poets always write good prose. The reason is obvious. And not less obvious is the reason why good readers of poetry are always good readers of prose: nor can there be a good reader of prose, fully equal to every occasion, who has not first made himself a good reader of poetry. His recitation will not have been surely founded on the principles of the language, and must, therefore, be uncertain at best. Unfortunately good reading is quite as scarce as every

other good thing. And, therefore, it seems no unprofitable work to promote it, especially when it is considered on what serious occasions it comes into exercise, and what a grievous hindrance bad reading then is.

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