

**ESSAYS AND
STUDIES,
VOLUME VII**

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Essays and Studies, Volume VII by John Bailey

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VOLUME VII**

ESSAYS AND STUDIES
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PREFATORY NOTE

I SHOULD like to thank the writers of the following papers for the kindness with which they responded to my appeal for their help, and enabled the English Association to issue this seventh volume of 'Essays and Studies'.

It will be understood that each writer is solely responsible for his own contribution, and for it alone.

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RHYME IN ENGLISH POETRY

THE pleasure of rhyme is so simple and primitive that its analysis is peculiarly difficult. Aristotle thought that the germ of all artistic pleasure was to be found in the recognition of resemblances; we are charmed by the picture of a horse because we see at the same time that it is not a horse and that it is one; there is identity and there is difference. In rhyme two or more currents of sense and sound coalesce in such a way as to exhibit, through an identity point, certain reciprocities or divergences of meaning or of motion. The child with his spelling bee brings rhyming syllables together in a tune, but he likes also to rhyme the thought whenever he can: á, t, at, b', a, t, bat, is enjoyable for its rhythm: b, a, t, bat, c, a, t, cat, for its idea; while in many languages popular sentiments, saws, familiar idioms, fortify themselves with this picturesque and vivifying element. We speak of the 'lop and top' of a fallen tree, though the top is lop as well as the sides, and the rhyme of 'morning' with 'warning' seems of itself to make a wet day probable when the sun rises in a red sky.

The close affinity of rhyme and rhythm is expressed in English in a characteristically illogical way: the two words are spelled alike. There is rhythm without rhyme, but, for the student of poetry at least, there is no rhyme without rhythm. To understand the conditions of rhyme in any language, to know what constitutes a rhyme, we must first acquaint ourselves with the rhythmical structure of its poetry. The way has not been made very easy for us by our own poets. Most of them have composed without formulating metrical principles, and several who have made pronouncements have either pronounced wrongly or else, having suggested certain rules, have immediately proceeded to break them. Milton's tempestuous foreword to *Paradise Lost* is a conspicuous example of critical irrelevance. Fortunately, no one can think the worse of rhyme when the author