

**ENGLISH VERSIFICATION.  
A COMPLETE  
PRACTICAL GUIDE TO  
THE WHOLE SUBJECT**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649524730

English Versification. A Complete Practical Guide to the Whole Subject by E. Wadham

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**E. WADHAM**

**ENGLISH VERSIFICATION.  
A COMPLETE  
PRACTICAL GUIDE TO  
THE WHOLE SUBJECT**



A PRACTICAL GUIDE  
TO  
ENGLISH VERSIFICATION.

# ENGLISH VERSIFICATION.

*A COMPLETE PRACTICAL GUIDE TO THE  
WHOLE SUBJECT.*

BY E. WADHAM.

---

O sing it to a subtle melody,  
That the sweet warbling cadences may fall  
Like dew about the flowers of fair poësy.

---



LONDON:  
LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.  
1869.

302. f. 15.

## P R E F A C E.

---

THIS WORK claims to be an exhaustive treatise on English versification, giving a complete view of all measures, their nature, relative bearing, and application. Every possible form that English verse can assume will here be found indicated, besides every moot-point, such as the feasibility of naturalising the hexameter, fully and finally settled. It is shown how much too narrowly drawn are the accepted limits of verse, and from how much the poet has allowed himself to be debarred, from a great if not indeed, the better part of his domain.

In addition to the fact that this is the first treatise of the kind ever completed, it is also the first attempt to set native versification on its own basis as independent of the system pursued by the Greeks and Romans, on which the British muse has so long been unwisely affiliated.

To the blind regard for precedent at the bottom of the false method prevalent is to be ascribed the present most backward and unsatisfactory state of the art both in practice and in theory, and its non-attainment of

anything approaching what must be held as its due development. From time to time a very slight step in advance has been taken by some poet, in a slightly novel arrangement of rhymes, seldom more ; but the progress has been slow and painful to the last degree, that to this hour much is unaccepted and tentative what to have been fully known and worked two centuries ago would not have been early.

From this neglect and misconception that English versification has so long lain under, having had to delineate almost a new science, it has been necessary, like for an explorer in an unknown country, to give appellations to every landmark pointed out ; and here, be it said, care has been taken to render these as appropriate as possible.

A perusal of the present analysis will at once show, even to such as are comparatively unacquainted with the orthodox scope of English poetics, how much our national literature is likely to have suffered through want of some such induction to metric science as is now at length made attainable. It is hoped that this manual will in no mean degree serve to advance the proper study of the mother-tongue, only now beginning to receive in our schools and colleges some slight share of the consideration most justly its due.

To compare the number of hand-books that teem continually from the press, for teaching versification in Greek and Latin, with the utter dearth of books of the



like nature for English, surely, if better were not known, one would be for forming notions quite contrary to correct as to which were the dead speech, which the living. Surely this is a state of affairs other than in national honour it should be, and here at least is one step remedial. It remains to be seen whether the confidence in a general desire for better things which this publication implies has or has not been misplaced.

*January 7, 1869.*



## CONTENTS.

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. OUTLINES OF METRE . . . . .	1
II. HISTORIC—OLD ALLITERATIVE MEASURE . . . . .	10
III. MARCH METRE—BLANK VERSE . . . . .	14
IV. MARCH METRE, RHYMED . . . . .	27
V. TRIPPING METRE . . . . .	38
VI. QUICK VERSE, UNRHYMED—CROWN . . . . .	43
VII. FALSE METRE AND DUBIOUS . . . . .	54
VIII. QUICK VERSE, RHYMED . . . . .	61
IX. THE UNRHYMED STAVE . . . . .	68
X. THE STAVE RHYMED . . . . .	75
XI. CONTINUATION OF DITTO . . . . .	85
XII. THE LAY . . . . .	92
XIII. MID-RHYME FORMATIONS . . . . .	98
XIV. REMAINING FORMS OF THE ODE . . . . .	102
XV. REVERT . . . . .	109
XVI. ON RHYME, HALF-RHYME, ALLITERATION, &c. . . . .	112
XVII. JUNCTIONS . . . . .	121
XVIII. TONE VERSE . . . . .	126
XIX. CESURAL VERSE . . . . .	129
XX. FREE VERSE . . . . .	132
XXI. HOVER—FEET VERSUS MAIN . . . . .	135
XXII. MAIN . . . . .	139
XXIII. ON THE RENDERING OF GREEK METRE . . . . .	145
XXIV. CONCLUSION . . . . .	150