

**ELEMENTS OF ENGLISH PROSODY  
FOR USE IN ST. GEORGE'S  
SCHOOLS. EXPLANATORY OF THE  
VARIOUS TERMS USED IN "ROCK  
HONEYCOMB."**

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Elements of English prosody for use in St. George's schools. Explanatory of the various terms used in "rock honeycomb." by John Ruskin

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**JOHN RUSKIN**

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ENGLISH PROSODY

*FOR USE IN ST. GEORGE'S SCHOOLS.*

EXPLANATORY OF THE VARIOUS TERMS USED IN  
"ROCK HONEYCOMB."

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## PREFACE.

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I HAVE never hitherto printed any book falling so far short of what I hoped to make it as this sketch of the system of English Prosody; but I had no conception, when I threw the first notes of it together, what a number of difficult and interesting questions would arise out of the variable conditions of national ear for music, and intention in song. On some of these I have not even touched in the following pages—others are only alluded to; and even the formal arrangement of elementary metre is incomplete: but I cannot delay the long-promised book longer, nor do I think my time would be well spent in endeavouring to follow out the questions it has suggested to myself. I must leave them to better scholars, while I still hope that what is here done by way of introduction to the systematic criticism of English rhythm may be of some use in checking the lawlessness of recent popular versification. I have been, however, chiefly disappointed in finding myself unable to interest any of my musical friends in



obtaining more direct correspondence between verbal and harmonic intention. I arranged the examples of verse here chosen on musical lines, hoping that my harmonic friends aforesaid would be good enough either to construct or choose for me passages of pure music which would fit the verses, note to syllable ; but I found them all incredulous or disdainful of the propriety of such correspondence, and bent, unanimously, upon establishing a code of abstract sound which should be entirely independent of meaning. Merely to show what I wanted, I have put a few chords to three of the simplest iambic measures ; and can only pray the reader to excuse—or use, perhaps, for himself—the otherwise unnecessary apparatus of bar and line.

A most interesting letter, lately received from a friend in Sheffield to whom the first proofs of the following pages had been submitted, directing my attention to the difference between the stress-accent in English verse, the (probably) intonation-accent in Greek, and the properly so-called quantity, or duration, of syllables, should have been printed *in extenso*, had I been able to answer its inquiries satisfactorily. But I know nothing whatever of Greek accentuation, while I believe the stress-accent on English words will be found always to involve delay as well as energy or loudness of pronunciation, and that, at all

events in verse, it may be considered as identical with quantity. It is true that the shrillness of a cry, or the strength of a word spoken in brief anger or appeal, will not of course imply the duration of sound ; nor am I at all sure that what, throughout the following treatise, I have called long and short syllables, may not in several, or even frequent instances, be only loud and low ones. But the stated system itself will not be found, for this reason, inaccurate ; and the reader will only have occasion to substitute for the examples in which accent has been mistaken for quantity, others, better chosen, of which the rhythmic time may be unquestionable.

CHARTRES, *15th September, 1880.*

