

Not being a bit convinced by his impudent invention of a name, I continued to examine the composition before me, but, getting no nearer to the sense, I contented myself with praising it, and especially commending the originality of the treatment. On handing my back the paper to my friend, he glanced at it to show me something particular, his face suddenly fell and looked puzzled.

"Hang it", said he, "I gave you the wrong paper. This is only my tailor's bill".....!!!

Let the poetic critic take as a lesson this most unhappy episode.

On that bane of poetical feeling, blank verse, I shall only touch lightly, but as several friends of mine have repeatedly asked me for the formula or recipe for its production, I hereby communicate the directions to those of my readers who are so far gone. To tell the truth, there is not, in the whole range of poetry anything easier to produce than blank verse. The first thing to do is to procure yourself ink, paper, and a pen; then write down, in ordinary, commonplace language you speak (technically called prose) what you wish to say or what you think; the next step is to procure a ruler graduated in inches or centimetres, and mark off, from your prose effusion, bits each about four inches or ten centimetres long; these are the lines of your blank verse composition. In case the measurement is not strictly correct four-inch line does not divide into the prose effort without remainder, either the addition of a few Alases or Ohs, or Ahs, or the introduction of an invocation to the Muses will fill in the required space; but if you turn back a little in this

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essay, you will find ^{that} the most legitimate ~~remedy~~ ^{remedy} is to suppose that some of the lines or the last lines only, have been amputated by the poetical license I have minutely described. Never mind about the scansion of your blank verse; good or bad the critics will find in it the most outrageous flaws, but, if in time you attain to poetical greatness, you will find, to your astonishment, that the same gentlemen justify every ~~mistake~~ ^{idiotry} you have committed and turn your most horrid flaws into mere peculiarities of genius.

Before taking leave of this part of my essay, ~~or~~ I beg to point out to the reader that, in this, the age of Kipling, there is no restriction as to the length of a line in poetry; you can write lines of two, ~~four~~ three, four, ten, twenty, thirty, or more - that is of the least import, only when the lines of ~~composition~~ ^{a poem contains more than} ~~pass~~ a certain number of syllables, ~~it is~~ ^{said to be written in} that composition is more generally called prose.

I now turn to ~~one of~~ ^{one} the very least essential things in poetry, which I take purposely last - I refer to the thought or sense of the poem. Critics in olden times were indeed accustomed to place this before all things, but in this enlightened age such an ideal of the poetical art would be a most lamentable anomaly. The reason for this is simple: a poem need not have sense or thought, for how would ~~the~~ readers of poetry, especially the young ladies, understand it? Form is to a poem what form is to woman - the only essential; however rude and unpoetical that form may be

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