

sung and written till the French system of rhymes, metres, and accents was transferred to the English tongue ; and it continued, alongside of the French system, to be used, sometimes much and sometimes little, until the sixteenth century. Nor, though its use was finished then, was its influence lost. Its habits, especially alliteration, have entered into all English poetry.

6. **The Characters of this Poetry.** — (1) It is marked by parallelism. It frequently repeats the same statement or thought in different ways. But this is not so common as it is, for example, in Hebrew poetry. (2) It uses the ordinary metaphorical phrases of Teutonic poetry, such as the *whale's-road* for the sea, but uses them with greater moderation or with less inventiveness than the Icelandic poets. Elaborate similes are not found in the earlier poetry, but later poets, Cynewulf especially, invent them, not frequently, but well. (3) A great variety of compound words, chiefly adjectives, also characterise it, by the use of which the poet strove to express with brevity a number of qualities belonging to his subject. When Tennyson used such adjectives as *hollow-vaulted*, *dainty-woeful*, he was returning to the custom of his ancient predecessors. (4) At times the poetry is concise and direct, but this is chiefly found in those parts of the poems which have some relation to heathen times. For the most part, save when the subject is war or sea-voyaging, the poetry is diffuse, and wearies by a constant repetition. But we owe a great deal of this repetition to the introduction of extempore matter