

1st. The line must always commence with a *long* syllable, and close with two long preceded by two short.

2d. More than two short syllables can never be found together, nor fewer than two.

3d. Two long syllables which have been preceded by two short can not also be followed by two short.

These few rules fulfill all the conditions of an Hexameter line with relation to order of arrangement."—*Lord Kames, "Elements of Criticism."*

One who attempts to write English Hexameter, under the Greek and Latin rules, will speedily be made aware that the English language "super-abounds in short syllables." Why then should we rigidly adhere to rules repugnant to the genius of our language, if they can be modified so as to adapt the sonorous Hexameter to the structure of our mother-tongue? Can they be so modified? I have attempted it. I venture to change them as follows:

1st. By beginning each line with a *short* syllable instead of a long one. And it will be seen that I often begin a line with two short syllables.

2d. By often using one short syllable unaccompanied by another.

3d. I have increased the average number of syllables in the line to better adapt it to our super-abundance of short syllables.

4th. In *Winona* I have introduced a rhyme at the pivotal pause of the line, not because my Hexameter requires it, but because I think it increases the melody, and more emphatically marks the central pause.

I am not quite sure that, in a long poem, the rhyme is not detrimental. That depends greatly, however, upon the skill with which it is handled. Surely the same Hexameter can be written as smoothly and more vigorously without rhyme. Rhyme adds greatly to the labor of composition; it rarely assists, but often hinders, the expression of the sense which the author would convey. At times I have been on the point of abandoning it in despair, but after having been under the hammer and the