

and syllables (synizesis); and in resolving the same, taking one example out of many, we find $\xi\eta\nu$, $\eta\epsilon\nu$, $\eta\eta\nu$, for $\eta\nu$. Such anomalies would have been removed by the practice of *written* composition, had it in this case exercised its necessary and peculiar power of narrowing and determining the forms of language.

A further proof of their not being composed in a *written* form, is the Æolic Digamma,* which undoubtedly existed at the time when the poems were composed, and disappeared when the earliest copies were written. It has been maintained that some of the Rhapsodists, and even Homer himself, was blind, and that therefore the latter could not have written, while to the former a manuscript would be useless. Believing, as we do, that the poems were not written by the poet who composed them, we are under no necessity to meet this objection of blindness; yet we may observe that poems, and long poems, have been *composed*, as in Milton's case, by the blind; and, as all authorities seem to concur in making the recital of the Homeric Rhapsodists a *joint* undertaking, different rhapsodists having different parts, yet all acting in concert, we see nothing unreasonable in supposing the existence of a manuscript among them, even though some of them were blind. Such persons, most probably, were selected on account of their extraordinary memories, and trained by their colleagues. Nor is it irrelevant to observe that, generally speaking, blind men have in all ages been distinguished, not only by their powerful memories, but by a positive passion for music, poetry, and legendary lore. Now such an aptitude, and their comparative incapacity for other pursuits, would render the

* See Vol. ii., Appendix on the Digamma.