

ume—as Mr. Bainton has done for prose-writers in his “Art of Authorship”—statements from poets themselves as to their actual method of composing, one could offer, I believe, empirical proof that the employing of a rhythmical dummy is pretty universally practised. At any rate we suspect—to take a notable instance—that the singular popularity of Kipling’s “Departmental Ditties” and “Barrack-room Ballads” is due to their lilt, and that this lilt has the same origin as the tunefulness of Burns’ lyrics, or of Sullivan’s operas. The subtle ‘music’ of the poetry of Tennyson or Swinburne is one thing, and has an highly artificial origin. The tunefulness of Burns’ lyrics, or the lilt of Kipling’s ditties and ballads, is another thing, and has a natural rhythmical basis. If the employing of the rhythmical dummy be characterized as mechanical or artificial, it is just to reply that the music of Tennyson’s poetry is much more ‘made’ than the lilt of Kipling’s verse, or the genuine tunefulness of Burns’ lyrics.

If a recipe for verse-making were really available, it could only be that of the rhythmical dummy. While indeed knowledge of the laws and forms of poetry is immensely worth while to the poet,—the poet in this case who is somewhat made, not born,—composing to the burden of a rhythm is the best means of securing, not, perhaps, beauty of idea, or nicety of poetic form, but fundamental music and the breath and life of poetry.