

2. **Printed Books** were not the first form in which literature existed. Before the invention of the art of printing, literature was perpetuated by tradition ; it was handed down from father to son. Then the memory of man was his library. It is said that the magnificent works of Homer were preserved in this manner among the Greeks for five hundred years. Later, symbolical characters, or letters, were impressed on various substances, such as the bark of trees and prepared leaves. In the year 1474 books began to be printed in England, and the monks, who had laboriously preserved great masterpieces of literature by writing and illuminating them with wonderful care and taste, now learned to print by the aid of carved blocks and hand-presses. Many of the terms now in use among printers may be traced to the printing-offices of the Benedictine monks, who eagerly made use of any new art. To the care of the monks we owe not only the Bible, but the great classics.

3. **Verse** was the earliest form of literature in all languages. The oldest English poetry was not in rhyme as we understand it. Alliteration and accent were essential. There are generally four accents in a line; but sometimes there are more accented syllables, and sometimes more than three alliterations. This is the usual form of the alliteration :

“ Soft is the Silence of Silvery twilight.”

Two alliterations are in the first part of the line, and one in the second. Compound words are common