

THE RHYTHMICAL DUMMY: A RECIPE FOR VERSE-MAKERS.

Mr. George Ade, librettist of musical comedies, has humorously described the method that obtains between the composer and the librettist in the making of the verse of a comic opera. His own composer, he says, often found it impossible to adjust the words and rhythms of the verse to the score. The composer overcame the difficulty in an original way. He would send the librettist, as Mr. Ade calls it, a "dummy" of the lilt or rhythm needed in the verse to aid the composer in his scoring. The dummy, he adds, would run like this:

"The dumble-doo and the dilly doss,
The umpty umpty oo;
While the livelong hours of the do-dad day
Did tra-tra la la la-loo."

What, of course, was meant by Mr. Ade to be taken as an absurd fiction, contains, none the less, two significant truths. One of these is well known; the other is not recognized at all: and with the second I am here concerned. When the composer attempted to aid the librettist with a rhythmical dummy, he said implicitly that the strictly musical element in verse is not a certain quality in the tones of the syllables or of the