

finger. It is likewise styled *digitus studiosorum*, the finger of the studious or learned; also, probably from the ring worn on it as a part of the insignia of a degree. Another name for this ring-finger, curiously, was *digitus medicus*, "because the ancient physicians used to mix their medicines with it," (*quia prisci medici miscerent eo pharmaca*). Finally, the last or little finger is designated *amator* in the monkish verse. It bears circlets and gems given and received as pledges of mutual affection. Another name for this finger was *digitus auricularis*, the ear-finger; by its help, we, for the most part, scratch the ear and clear

it of obstructions. In his article on *metropolitan* Minsheu indulges, I observe, in flattering notices, couched in his best Latin, of George Abbots and Tobias Matthew, the then Archbishops of Canterbury and York. Of the former, he says, the King (*Rex noster Jacobus*), had advanced him to the highest pitch of honour and dignity solely on account of his preeminent talents and his meritorious services to the Church and Commonwealth both in England and Scotland, whilst the latter he pronounces a prelate learned and eloquent, and indefatigable in preaching; an ensample of virtue, industry, labour and hospitality.

RHYME.

IT is surprising that so artificial a device as rhyme should have attained the dignified and acknowledged position which it occupies in modern literature. Its sole merit is in the harmony resulting from the recurrence of similar sounds at the end of metrical lines, except that sometimes, in a lively and jingling composition, or in describing certain repeated noises, as in Poe's "Bells," it may have an onomatopoeic value.

Yet it never would have been brought into such general use, if it had not developed a capability of producing, with the help of versification—which rhyme assists by marking the divisions of verses,—and of alliteration—which is but a rhyme of letters,—the sweetest and subtlest effects of mere sound of language. In this it subserves one of the highest purposes of poetry; for, according to Puttenham, "Poesie is a pleasant manner of utterance, varying from the ordinary, to refresh the mind by the ear's delight." Rhyme, nevertheless, is not only artificial and independent of

sense, but is, furthermore, a direct restraint upon simple and forcible expression. How much it may be owing to the prevalence of rhyme and of lyrical verse, I do not know, that recent poetry has lost so much of that terseness and force which we find in "Shakespeare," in "Paradise Lost," in Young's "Night Thoughts," in Cowper's "Task," and in Bryant's "Thanatopsis." Pretty sentiments prettily expressed, with a pleasant ring of words, has, to a great extent, taken the place of those better sayings of the poets, pregnant with intensity and power, which, when quoted, carry in themselves the spell of eloquence and of heroic song. The Civil War scarcely produced a strong, noble poem, though it inspired many beautiful ones. Yet the prevailing tone of our prose writings is similar to that which I have described in our poetry; and the general use of rhyme may be a result rather than a cause. There is evident, in all the literary work of the time, a striving for style and form, for fine-sounding words and well-balanced