O.E. "Nieras" ("Beowulf," 422, 575, 845, 1427)

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philologically more probable than the alternative suggested. That our forefathers were susceptible to natural beauty, and to beauty just of the particular kind suggested here, viz., a pleasant bank sloping down towards a river, seems to be clearly shown by the mention in an O.E. charter (BCS 862) of a ford across the river Ebble in Wiltshire called *fæger hylde ford*, which can only mean, 'ford by the fair slope.'

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NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE.

O.E. 'NICRAS' ('BEOWULF,' 422, 575, 845, 1427).

The cognate forms of O.E. *nicras*, *nicor*, i.e., O.N. *nykr*, O.D. *necker*, all show a final syllable in *-r*, with the exception of O.H.G., which has the form *nihhus*. The etymology given by Skeat, Kluge, Bradley, Falk-Torp and Fick is that it corresponds to a Gothic form **niquiza* or **nikuza* from the Germanic root **nik^w* and the I.E. root *nig^w*, 'wash' or 'bathe.' From this the primary meaning of 'water-sprite' is derived. But the usual meaning of *nicor* is somewhat removed from 'water-sprite.' Sweet translates it by 'water-monster' and Holthausen by 'walrus.' Bugge and Rieger have 'walrus' and 'hippopotamus.' In the O.H.G. Glossaries *nihhus* is rendered by 'crocodile.' Bugge (*Zachers Zeitschrift*, IV, 197) quotes *Epist. Alex. ad Arist.* ed. Cockayne: 'him wæron ða breost gelice nicres breostum' = 'hippopotami pectore,' and further, 'potius in aliis locis, equus marinus, walrus, interpretandum.'

This confusion of beasts and the substitution of one for another is, of course, natural enough with people who had never seen these strange beasts even in pictures. Such a confusion is, indeed, a common enough occurrence. In the Wright-Wülker Glossaries, for example, *anhyrne* = 'unicornis vel monoceros vel rhinoceros.' It is also used to render the biblical unicorn, which is probably identical with the rhinoceros (Brehm, *Tierleben*, III, 108). But in the same place we read that, 'ðæt deor hæfd ænne horn bufan ðam twam eagum, swa strangne and swa scearpne ðæt he fihð wið ðone myclan ylp, and hine oft gewundað on ðære wambe of deað. He hatte eac rinoceron and monoceron.' By an easy transition of meaning *anhyrne* might therefore stand for the various meanings of *nicor*. And it is not impossible that *anhyrne* in its Latin form *unicornis* does actually so stand for the Low Latin form of *unicornis*, through the stage of *illu unicorn* > *nicorn*, Modern French *licorne*. This form *nicorn* taken into Germanic with

a shifting of the stress to the first syllable and the dropping of the final -n would give the O.E. form *nicor* and the O.N. *nykr*, though it would not explain the O.H.G. *nihhus*.

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A CRUX IN THE TEXT OF DONNE.

In John Donne's Elegy beginning 'Since she must go,' which was first printed in full as the fourteenth elegy in the edition of 1669, there is a phrase which has never been satisfactorily explained. The poet is accusing Love of having dealt harshly with him and his mistress:

Was't not enough, that thou didst hazard us
To paths in love so dark, and dangerous:
And those so ambush'd round with household spies,
And over all thy husbands trowing eyes
Inflam'd with th'ouglie sweat of jealousy. ll. 39-43.

In l. 42 the word 'thy' shows that he changes by an abrupt turn from Love, whom he has been addressing, to his mistress; but the curious expression 'trowing eyes' has gravelled all Donne's editors. There is no help to be got from those MSS. which differ here from the text of 1669 given above; three of them, the Phillipps MS., the O'Flaherty MS. at Harvard, and the Brit. Mus. Stowe MS. 961, read 'towed' for 'trowing'; the Brit. Mus. Harl. MS. 4064 reads 'the towred husbands eyes'; and the Rawlinson Poetical MS. 31 in the Bodleian reads 'the Loured, husbandes eyes.' It will be seen that this last MS. alone gives any suggestion of a more plausible reading; and the Grolier Club editors have tacitly taken the hint and changed 'trowing' to 'lowering,' which certainly gives the sense required by the passage at the cost of altering a single letter. Grosart less happily split the dangerous word, and conjectured 'two red' eyes; Mr E. K. Chambers (in whose edition the Elegy is No. XIII) prints 'towering' without comment of any kind; and Mr Gosse, quoting the lines in his *Life of Donne*, does not attempt to explain the phrase. In the excellent text of the Clarendon Press edition of 1912, the Elegy appears as the twelfth, and Professor Grierson, though he finds 'trowing' a 'strange' epithet, regards it as 'probably correct, being a bold metaphor from hawking, and having the force practically of "threatening." The hawk towers threateningly above its prey before it "sousing kills with a grace." If "trowing" is not right, "lowering" is the most probable emendation.'