The Rhetoric of John Donne's Verse by W. F. Melton

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in *Modern Philology*, iv, pp. 397–422, in which periodical I shall also deal at greater length with the form of this poem in the *Shirburn Ballads*. No. LXXIV is written to the tune of *An Oyster Pye*, or *Robinson's Galliard*. There is another dance that bears Robinson's name, viz., *Robinson's Allemande*. In 1603 there appeared in London *The Schoole of Musicke*, by Thomas Robinson. Cp. Land, *Luitboek van Thysius*, p. 285.

In conclusion, a word about the footnotes. They contain partly corrections of the text, partly elucidations. As regards the explanations, more might have been expected. To give a few examples, *poore peat* on p. 303, *tole-dish* on p. 217, *courtnoules* on p. 218, should have been explained. Occasionally the editor would seem to have misunderstood the Elizabethan idiom; for instance, he corrects 'even soone at night' into 'even this very night.' All lovers of the old ballads and all students of Elizabethan and Jacobean literature owe Mr Andrew Clark a debt of gratitude for this interesting volume.

A. E. H. SWAEN.

The Rhetoric of John Donne's Verse. By W. F. MELTON. A Dissertation submitted to the Board of University Studies of the John Hopkins University. Baltimore: J. H. Furst Co., 1906. 8vo. 206 pp.

It may be remembered that the volume called *An English Miscellany*, compiled in honour of Dr Furnivall in 1901, contained a paper *Concerning Grammatical Ictus in English Verse*, by Professor J. W. Bright, in which some remarkable views of English verse-construction were expounded. These views were combated in a letter written by Professor H. C. Beeching to the *Athenaeum* of June 1, 1901, but apparently with little effect in modifying Professor Bright's standpoint. They have also recently been discussed by Mr Omond in his *English Metrists in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*. It is not possible here to give an exposition of Professor Bright's teaching as regards English verse. In brief, it may be said that he will not allow there is such a thing as 'inversion of stress' in English iambic verse¹. Every second syllable must have a stress, whether this is in accordance with the ordinary pronunciation of English or not. We must not scan:

	Be in their flowing cups frêshly remembered,
but:	Be in their flowing cups freshlŷ remembered;
nor:	To be or not to be thát is the question,
but:	To be or not to be that ís the question.

¹ He apparently makes an exception in favour of the first foot, and so, as Mr Omond says, gives away his case.

A secondary stress derived from the form of the word in earlier English is supposed to be latent in terminations such as those of 'freshly,' 'doubtful,' 'garden,' 'waters,' ready for the poet's use when he cannot write his lines without recourse to this aid. Professor Bright has expounded these views orally as well as in print, and his pupils have seen a vista of endless dissertations to be manufactured by the simple process of applying their professor's principles to every English poet in turn. Mr George Dobbin Brown has written his dissertation on *Syllabification and Accent in Paradise Lost* (1901), Mr Raymond Durbin Miller his on *Secondary Accent in Modern English Verse (Chaucer to Dryden)* (1904), and now Mr Wightman Fletcher Melton follows with his 206 pages on the *Rhetoric of the Verse of Donne*.

The whole treatment is a case of 'petitio principii.' When it is said that Donne's verse is often rough, what is meant is that in reading it one often finds that to give the natural stress to the poet's words is to obscure the rhythm of his verse. But if we once allow that in poetry, it is not necessary to give a word its natural stress, but that one may remove the stress at will from the root-syllable to the suffix, the roughest verse becomes at once perfectly regular. This is the process which is here adopted, with a rare degree of self-satisfaction on the part of the writer.

Mr Melton's method tends to close his eyes to the real phenomena of Donne's verse. When verse is rough, the cause often lies in the fact that two or more feet of abnormal construction (*e.g.* with weak stress or inverted stress) occur together. There would only be a sense of pleasing variety if one such foot had stood alone, but the collocation of two or three causes the reader to lose the rhythm of the line. Mr Melton takes the case of a stress laid on a preposition such as 'of,' and has no difficulty in showing that even in Shakespeare and other poets, 'of' may bear a secondary stress. But he does not point out that whereas in Shakespeare an irregular foot is generally isolated, in Donne such feet occur in juxtaposition to one another. There is an enormous waste of labour in finding parallels for lines which present no metrical difficulty, and no discrimination is made between such lines and lines that do.

Mr Melton takes (p. 111) the lines:

If they be two they are two so
As stiff twin compasses are two.

To me the first line seems somewhat abnormal owing to the slight stress which must be given to 'are,' and the practically even heavy stress which must be given to 'two so.' Mr Melton accents in the mechanical manner enjoined by Professor Bright:

If thêy be twó thêy áre twó só,

and goes on his way rejoicing. Other lines have their irregularities smoothed out with the same flat-iron: *e.g.*

Than wén winds ín our ruin'd abbeyes roar—
Both thê years ánd thê dáy's dēep midnight is—

Kiss Hím, and with Him into Egypt go—
 No hand among them to vex them again—
 And I which was twó fóols do so grow three—
 Who áre a little wise, the best fóols be.—
 I hate that thing whispérs itself away.

This system of dealing with verse is so simple and obvious that it hardly requires to be illustrated in 200 pages.

What, again, are we to make of this? After quoting a sentence from Donne's thirteenth Sermon: 'That world, which finds itself truly in an autumn, in itself, finds itself in a spring in our imagination,' Mr Melton continues: 'Here we see thirteen words taking the place of twenty, and it is no extravagance to fancy the Dean of St Paul's delivering his thought in this fashion:

That wórld which *finds itself*
 Trúly *in* an autumn *in itself*
Finds itself in a spring
In our imagination.'

(The italics, whatever their meaning, are Mr Melton's own.)

Here is a specimen of Mr Melton's method of determining the authenticity of a poem on metrical considerations (p. 173): 'The first lines of *To the Praise of the Dead, and the Anatomy* (Chambers, II, 102) will convince one that Donne did not write it; *world*, for example, appears four times, always in arsis, and with no companion-sound in thesis. Two lines (21-22) both have and have not Donne's "measure":

Enough is us to *práise* them *thát* *práise* thee
 And say, *thát* but enough those *práises* be.

This arsis-thesis variation of *praise*, and *that*, is to be found in Donne, to be sure; but it is also in Shakespeare. The repeated word *enough*, with the first syllable in thesis and the second in arsis, both times, is not in Donne's manner and therefore furnishes the solution.'

But enough. We can only say that we regard this as one of the most laboriously worthless dissertations we have ever seen.

G. C. MOORE SMITH.

Table des Noms Propres de toute nature compris dans les Chansons de Geste imprimées. Par ERNEST LANGLOIS. Paris: Bouillon, 1904. 8vo. xx + 674 pp.

The present volume was prepared in competition for a prize offered by the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres. Its usefulness is so great that to leave the book unmentioned or to pass it by with a few generalities of criticism would be unjustifiable. Hundreds of scholars have been for years supplying the lack of such a work the best way they could. Accordingly they welcome with joy the large and handsomely printed catalogue of Professor Langlois.

The work appeared too early in the year to include *Anseïs de Mes*, which was published by E. Stengel, at Greifswald, in May, 1904. It