

**A STUDY IN  
ENGLISH METRICS**

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A Study in English Metrics by Adelaide Crapsey

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VERSE

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## AN INTRODUCTORY NOTE

It is hoped that the study here presented may prove of value not only to professional students of metrics but to all who are seriously interested in poetry. It forms only one part, in itself complete, of an investigation of certain problems in verse structure the full carrying out of which was prevented by Miss Crapsey's death in the autumn of 1914. An indication of what remained to do may be found in the note appended to the essay. The tables printed as *Additional Analysis* present a portion of the data which had been collected for a second part of the study.

To any one who reads to the end, it must be evident, that Miss Crapsey regarded the use of exact measurement and analysis—which probably is denoted as the application of phonetics to metrics?—as essential to the “finer and righter” appreciation of poetry; that she considered a full awareness of technique the necessary equipment of one who would understand fully the subtle and delicate beauty of verse. This is a position that

has long been won in regard to music; no one would attempt to be a critic of musical composition who was unaware of the technical problems of musical construction. Is it not likely that the criticism of poetry may become far more significant when our literary critics consider necessary a corresponding equipment? At least it may be stated that the laborious analysis was in Miss Crapsey's case dictated by an acute sense of the beauty of verse, by an æsthetic experience of unusual intensity. To one who knew her and watched her work Miss Crapsey's untimely death seems to have brought about a double frustration; it prevented the completion of the study in prosody and the undertaking, which that study would so much have enriched, of a series of essays in criticism. That a scientific knowledge of the technique of verse may be a potent tool in the hand of the poet also will probably at once occur to the readers of Miss Crapsey's verse.

E. L.

## SYNOPSIS

### MAIN THESIS

That an important application of phonetics to metrical problems lies in the study of phonetic word-structure.

### SUB-THESIS UNDER PRESENT CONSIDERATION

That systematic analysis of English poems indicates the existence of a distinct structural differentiation of vocabularies into three main types:

I. A type of vocabulary purely, or mainly, mono-dissyllabic, *i. e.*, showing a characteristic occurrence of polysyllables running from 0 to about 2%.

II. A type of medium structural complexity, *i. e.*, showing a characteristic occurrence of polysyllables running from about 3% to about 5½%, with a tendency to drop towards 2% and to rise towards 6%.

III. A type of extreme structural complexity, *i. e.*, showing a characteristic occurrence