

Color in Old English Poetry

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IV.—COLOR IN OLD ENGLISH POETRY.

I.

It is a somewhat singular fact that although students of our language and literature have been carefully gleaning their chosen fields and leaving scarcely any entirely new theme for investigation, there should remain practically untouched a subject of high interest and æsthetic importance,— I mean the use of color in poetry. To some extent the matter has attracted attention in the study of other literatures than ours. Critics often remark upon the brilliant color-sense of the Celtic poets and of the writers of the Old Norse sagas and poems. Gladstone devoted a long section of his *Homeric Studies* to the color-epithets in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*; and a German scholar, with characteristic thoroughness, has made an exhaustive study of the color-words in the entire body of the Latin and Greek classics. But an adequate investigation of the development of the color-sense in English poetry is yet to be written. I know of but one paper that treats the matter in any detail, and that paper<sup>1</sup> is confessedly tentative and leaves the older periods untouched.

<sup>1</sup> H. Ellis, *The Colour-sense in Literature*, *Cont. Rev.*, LXIX, 714-730.

As for color in Old English poetry, a few words by Professor March<sup>1</sup> and a few more in a very rare paper by Dr. Sweet<sup>2</sup> exhaust about all that has been said on the subject.

The scientific study of color has strangely lagged behind that of other natural phenomena. In fact, it is only of recent years that men of science have attempted to construct a scientifically accurate color nomenclature. Most of us have a very limited color vocabulary, and we differ hopelessly in our terminology as soon as we move away from a few sharply defined colors. There are now listed (in Biedermann's *Chemiker Kalender*) about three hundred and fifty commercial dyes, of which probably less than a twentieth could be properly named by the average person. When we consider, furthermore, that the number of shades produced by mixing is practically unlimited, and that nature proceeds in her work without much regard to the deficiencies of our vocabularies, we can understand how there may be an initial difficulty in assigning an exact value to the color-words in Old English poetry. Aelfric's *Nomina Colorum* (Wright-Wülcker's *Vocab.*, I, 163) and other glossaries aid somewhat, but the Latin equivalents have not always a settled color-value.

The remarkable fact about a great number of the Old English words that possibly are to be taken as color-words, is that they are so indefinite in their application as scarcely to permit us to decide whether a color-effect is intended or not.<sup>3</sup> Take for example the word *hār*, hoary or gray, or, secondarily, aged. Does the emphasis of this word when applied to persons lie upon the grayness or upon the age implied by it? The answer is by no means certain. On the

<sup>1</sup> *The World of Beowulf* in *Trans. of Am. Phil. Soc.* for 1882, p. xxi.

<sup>2</sup> H. Sweet, *Shelley's Nature Poetry*, Lond., 1888. Twenty-five copies printed.

<sup>3</sup> The peculiar fondness of Old English poetry for formal, conventional phrases adds an element of doubt, in many cases, as to whether the color-word is to be regarded as anything more than an epithet, without a special color-value.

other hand, when the word is used in describing a stone or a suit of armor, a color-effect is doubtless intended—the dull mixture of black and white which we call gray. Similar questions arise in regard to the words *deorc*, *mirc*, *nīpan*, *wan(n)*, *gold*, *blōd*, and others.

To discuss all the problems that are suggested by the topic would far transcend the limits of this paper. I shall be compelled, therefore, in this preliminary discussion to leave many important matters altogether untouched, or at most merely referred to in passing. In a full discussion, the relation of each poem to its source, with a consideration of the probability of a large transfer of borrowed color-epithets, should hold a prominent place. But such an investigation, if made at all, must be made in detail, and must therefore be reserved for another occasion.

One of the first things that strike the reader of Old English poetry is the comparatively small number of genuine color-words that it contains. Some important colors do not appear at all. Blue, for example, is practically non-existent, although one instance occurs.<sup>1</sup> This color, by the way, has never been much used in English poetry until our own century. Yet in a single page Tennyson uses it twice, and Byron and Shelley and Browning and others find it useful. This early neglect of blue is the more remarkable, since modern psychological tests have shown that in some quarters blue heads the list of favorite colors.<sup>2</sup> Possibly, however, what we distinguish as blue our ancestors were content to call merely dark.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ex. 476. Wæs sēo hāwene lyft heolfre geblandan.

<sup>2</sup> Sixty-six Columbia students, tested for preference of color, gave the following results:

blue, . . . 34.9 per cent.	yellow, . . . 7.5 per cent.
red, . . . 22.7 “	green, . . . 6.1 “
violet, . . . 12.1 “	white, . . . 6.1 “

no preference, . . . 10.6 per cent. *Psych. Rev.*, 3, 635.

I am indebted for this note to Dr. C. H. Judd.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Ellis, *The Colour-sense in Lit.*, p. 727.

If we take the entire body of Old English verse we find that the most frequent of the genuine simple colors is green; next comes red, and then yellow. But violet, indigo, and orange do not appear at all. These last three colors are, in fact, very slightly represented in the English poetry of any period. Violet is almost wholly used as the name of a flower; indigo is too technical a term for poetry; and orange has only now and then appeared, more perhaps in our own century than in any other. Of the mixed colors, *fealu*, *brūn*, and *hwīt* are most pronounced. These will be discussed in their proper place.

The list of Old English colors is at best a rather short one, and its meagreness is the more striking as soon as we begin to compare it with the richness of color that appears in Chaucer, or the mediæval romances, or in Shakespeare. The difference is seen not merely in the greater amount of color used by the later poets, but in the greater vividness and freshness with which the color-words are applied. Look for a moment at Chaucer's *Prologue*, which contains 858 lines. The color-words are indeed simple,—black, white, brown, blue, green, grey, pers (sky-blue), red, yellow,—but they are deliberately employed for a picturesque effect, which is enhanced by the use of comparisons, a device never used for this purpose in Old English poetry. The Frankleyne's beard is as white as a daisy; a purse is as white as morning's milk; the monk's neck is white as the fleur-de-lys. The mere mention of this lack of comparisons tells us much in a negative way with regard to the Old English use of color. The nearest approach to anything like comparison with color-words appears in the use of such compounds as *blōdfāg*, *goldfāg*, and in the words descriptive of brightness—*heofonbeorht*, *sigelbeorht*, *sigeltorht*, *heofontorht*, *swegltorht*. It is not too much to say that after the Norman Conquest and after the contact with French literature, English poets acquired a new sense, which enabled them to see (or at least to express)

things only dimly apprehended before. How great the difference is can be shown only by detailed comparison.

If we had authoritative tabulations of the colors used by the English poets in different periods, with a list of the objects to which the colors are applied, we should have a solid basis for generalization. This is in part supplied by the concordances to Shakespeare, Milton, and Pope, but the lists found in these books should be supplemented by a great number of others. In the lack of such tabulations I have limited my comparison mainly to Old Saxon, Old High German, and Icelandic poems, and to the Celtic poems contained in the so-called *Four Ancient Books of Wales*.

The comparative lack of color in Old English poems does not necessarily mean that they are without poetic value. A lavish use of color is not necessarily an excellence. Over-luxuriance is rather a token of weakness and of immature taste. The Latin poets of the decadence, such as Statius and the mediæval imitators of Ovid, are far more free with their color-phrases than is Horace or Vergil, and they try to make up for their lack of imagination by a liberal use of the paint-pot. An almost colorless poetry may have life, movement, imagination, strength, picturesqueness, but it will lack pictorial richness and be less alluring to the general taste. In Old English poetry the appeal to the senses is common enough, but some of the best passages of the *Beowulf* or *The Battle of Maldon*, though almost Homeric in life and vividness, are well-nigh destitute of color. Yet they have a vigor of conception and a depth of feeling that amply compensate for the lack of superficial glitter. A brilliant instance occurs in *Beow.*, 1896-1913, where the voyage of Beowulf is described, yet there is not a word of color in it, unless we count the phrase *fleāt fāmīg-heals*. There is opportunity enough in all of the poems that are not religious hymns or versified sermons for far more color than is used. The Old English mind was evidently fixed upon something else.

## II.

In marked contrast with the small number of color-words is the great variety of terms expressing light and darkness. These are in many cases used symbolically, and find their proper place in the religious poems or in passages having a religious turn. That this is still true of religious poetry may be verified by any one who will turn the leaves of a collection of modern hymns. One may almost say that the characteristic words in Old English religious poems are such terms as *beorht*, *lēoht*, *torht*, *sunne*, *scīr*, *scīnan*, and such as *deorc*, *nīht*, *þīestre*, *sweart*. It is to be noted also that a large number of these words are used conventionally.

The relative frequency with which these two groups of words are used is shown by the following rough lists, which are approximately correct as far as they go. In the first list I include the words expressing light or brightness.

*Beorht* (with its compounds or derivatives, *beorhte*, *beorhtian*, *beorhtlic*, *beorhtlice*, *beorhtnes*, *beorhtu*, *ælbeorht*, *eallbeorht*, *efenbeorht*, *goldbeorht*, *hēafodbeorht*, *heofonbeorht*, *hiwbeorht*, *rodorbeorht*, *sadolbeorht*, *sigelbeorht*, *sigorbeorht*, *sweglbeorht*, *wlitebeorht*) is used 204 times; *blīcan*, 26 times; *hādor*, *hādre*, 13 times; *lēoht* (sb.), *lēoht* (adj.) (together with *lēohte* (adv.), *lēohtbære*, *lēohtan*, *in-*, *on-lēohtan*, *onlȳhtan*, *æfenlēoht*, *fȳrlēoht*, *heofonlēoht*, *morgenlēoht*), 193 times; *lēoma*, 33 times; *līxan*, 25 times; *scīnan* (and its compounds), 73 times; *scīma*, 9 times; *scīr* (adj.), *scīre* (adv.) (and compounds), 45 times; *sunne*, 59 times; *sun-wlitig*, once; *scȳne* (and compounds), 29 times; *torht* (and compounds), 88 times. These make an aggregate of 798, and still do not entirely exhaust the list of words that suggest brightness.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For example, more words for flame and fire might have been added, compounds like *fȳrlēoma*, kennings for *sunne*, the word *glæshluttur* (Run. 30), the verb *glitīnian*, etc. See also the discussion of the words in the "white group."

For some remarks on "verba des leuchtens, glänzens, scheinens," see Sievers, Paul and Braune's *Beiträge*, XII, 196-197.

The total number of passages in which light or brightness is mentioned or suggested considerably exceeds 800. But if now we estimate the whole amount of extant Old English poetry at about 30,000 lines, we see that on an average we have one word suggesting light or brightness in every thirty-seven lines. When we consider that the great majority of these words occur in the religious poems, we find that the actual frequency is considerably greater.

If we turn to the words denoting or implying darkness, we find an equally striking group. As in the preceding list, there is difficulty in deciding where to draw the line of exclusion. I have, however, included such words as *swært* and *wann*, on which, along with some others, I remark later. A great number of words of this class are used symbolically and conventionally, but I cannot take the space necessary for illustration. For the sake of brevity I present merely the base-words, and do not specify compounds.

blæc.....	13	niht.....	131	bēostre } .....	53
deorc.....	43	nīpan.....	6	(býstre) }	
dim.....	15	sceadu.....	11	wann.....	37
drysmian.....	1	scuwa.....	9		—
heolstor.....	16	swearcan .....	12		448
mirc.....	7	swært.....	84		

Of course not all these words (particularly *dim* and *niht*) have a distinct color value. The most notable fact is that the words expressing light or brightness are about twice as numerous as those expressing darkness, even though we exclude such words as *dæg* and *hwīt* from the first list. The words in the second list, as well as those in the first list, occur mostly in the religious pieces.

When we take out these two groups of words, we have comparatively little color left. We may not very inaptly describe Old English religious poetry as a series of studies in black and white, or, rather, darkness and light, the darkness applying to hell and devils, and the light, to heaven and angels and saints. Blackness and darkness meant to the



primitive Germanic mind something fearful and terrible. Light, on the other hand, was symbolic of joy and bliss.<sup>1</sup>

### III.

Having thus cleared the ground by excluding a large number of words that are in the strictest sense colorless, we may look at the color-words proper. The simplest and, on the whole, the most satisfactory method of treatment will be to arrange the color-words in groups, and to specify the frequency with which they are used and to what objects they are applied. The list of examples is intended to be practically complete, and it contains several passages overlooked by Grein.<sup>2</sup>

1. WHITE. The words belonging to this group are *hwīt*, *blāc*, *blanc*, and possibly *fāmig*, and *fāmigheals*.<sup>3</sup> Nearly all the passages where these words are used imply something bright or shining. *Blanc* is used but three times,<sup>4</sup> and is

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Gummere, "The Use of Black and White in Germanic Tradition," *Haverford College Studies*, I, 12.

<sup>2</sup> Most of the abbreviations referring to O.E. poems will be recognized without further explanation. The following may need expansion:

A. = *Andreas* (Grein-Wülker).

B. = *Beow.* = *Beowulf* (Wyatt).

B. D. D. = *Be Dōmes Dæge* (E.E.T.S.).

C. and S. = *Christ and Satan* (Grein-Wülker).

Sol. = *Solomon and Saturn* (Grein).

Wyrde = *Be Manna Wyrðum*.

The texts used are as follows: Grein-Wülker, *Bibl. d. ags. Poesie*, I, II (except *Beow.*); Gollancz, *Exeter Book*, Part I; all others from the older Grein.

<sup>3</sup> If *blāt*, livid, pale, ghastly, can be counted as a color-word, it should be included in this group. Examples occur,—A. 1090, 1281, *Chr.* 771. Cf. *blātende nāð*, *Gen.* 981.

<sup>4</sup> B. 855.

mēarum rīdan

beornas on blancum.

*El.* 1183.

sē ðe foran lædeð

brīdels on blancan.

*Rid.* 23:17.

brōhte hwæðre

beornas ofer burnan and hyra bloncan mid.

applied to the white, well-groomed steeds that shine in the sun. The word is the same as the mod. Ger. *blank*, bright or shining.

*Blāc* is merely an ablaut form of the stem of *blācan*, to shine, and perhaps hardly means white at all. In a few cases it evidently means pale or ghastly. It is properly applied to the fire,<sup>1</sup> or the fire-light,<sup>2</sup> and even to the red flame,<sup>3</sup> or to the lightning,<sup>4</sup> or to the light of the stars.<sup>5</sup> Of the twenty-eight instances where the word occurs,—either alone or as part of a compound,—nearly all seem to lay emphasis on the brightness rather than on the whiteness. The word is used in describing the bright spots on the tail of the Phoenix,<sup>6</sup> and in referring to armor<sup>7</sup> or clothing. In such expressions as *blāchlēor ides*,<sup>8</sup> when referring to Judith, or *blācne*, when describing the ghastly face of the dead Holofernes,<sup>9</sup> the near-

- <sup>1</sup>*Dan.* 246.      bæron brandas on bryne blācan fýres.  
<sup>2</sup>*B.* 1516.      fýr-lēoht gesah  
                   blācne lēoman beorhte scīnan.  
*A.* 1540.      Him þæt engel forstōd,  
                   sē ðā burh oferbrægd blācan lige.  
*Rid.* 4:44.      blācan lige.  
*Rum.* 16.      Cēn byþ cwicera gehwām cūþ on fýre  
                   blāc and beorhtlic., byrneð oftust.  
<sup>3</sup>*Chr.* 808.      blāc rāsetteð  
                   rēcen rēada lēg  
<sup>4</sup>*Az.* 105.      wolcna genipu  
                   and þec liexende ligetta hergen  
                   blāce breahnum hwate  
*Dan.* 380.      and þec ligetu,  
                   blāce, berhtmhwate, þā þec blētsige.  
<sup>5</sup>*Met.* 4:8.      blācum lēohte beorhte steorran  
<sup>6</sup>*Ph.* 295.      þonne is sē finta fægre gedæled  
                   sum brūn, sum basu, sum blācum splottum.  
<sup>7</sup>*Ex.* 212.      sǣton æfter beorgum in blācum rēafum  
*Rid.* 11:7.      brimes and bēames on blācum hrægle  
<sup>8</sup>*Gen.* 1969.      Sceolde forht monig  
                   blāchlēor ides bifiende gān  
                   on fremdes fæðm.  
*Jud.* 128.      blāchlēor ides  
<sup>9</sup>*Jud.* 278.      funde ðā on bedde blācne licgan  
                   his goldgifan.

est approach is made to suggesting whiteness. But even in these there is no pure white.

Other instances of the use of *blāc*, and of the occurrence of *flōdblāc*, *heoroblāc*, *wigblāc* and of the verb *blācian* are given below.<sup>1</sup>

The form *blāc* = *blāc* occurs,—*Dom.* 56, *Pan.* 26, *An.* 1264.

The word *hwīt* occurs thirty-one times, commonly with a suggestion of brightness or light, though some instances of a literal use of the epithet in the modern sense appear to be

<sup>1</sup> <i>Ex.</i> 109.	behēold ofer lēodwerum līge scīnan, byrnende bēam. Blāce stōdon ofer scēotendum scīre lēoman, scinon scyldhrēoðan, sceado swiðredon: neowle nihtscuwan nēah ne mihton heolstor āhȳdan. Heofoncandel barn :
<i>Ex.</i> 120.	Hæfde foregenga fȳrene loccas, blāce bēamas, bēlegsan * hwēop in þām herebrēate, hātan līge.
<i>El.</i> 91.	wæs sē blāca bēam bōcstafum āwriten beorhte and lēohte
<i>B. D. D.</i> (Exon.) 66. <i>Wyrde</i> 41. <i>Atmosen</i> (Grein, II, p. 350) 6.	on ful blācne bēam bunden fæste blāc on bēame bīdeð wyrde lēg ādwæsse, þæt hē leng ne mæg blāc byrnende burgum sceððan.
<i>Ex.</i> 496.	sāwlum lunnon fæste befarene, flōdblāc here
<i>B.</i> 2487.	gūð-helm tō-glād, gomela Scylfing hrēas [heoro-] blāc.
<i>Ex.</i> 204.	werud wæs wigblāc
<i>Run.</i> 90.	Ēar [tir] byþ egle eorla gehwylcun, ðonn fæstlice flæsc onginnep hrāw cōlian, hrusan cēosan blāc tō gebeddan blēda gedrēosaþ wynna gewitaþ, wera geswīcaþ.
<i>Seaf.</i> 91.	Yldo him on fareð, onsyn blācað gomelfeax gnornað.

\* *Sweet*, *bālegs*.

unquestionable. The apparently literal instances are cited below.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to these literal uses of the word, there are a number of cases in which *hwīt* is used to emphasize the shining of light, or of a roof, or a helmet, or a gem, or the gleam of silver.<sup>2</sup>

On the border between mere white and shining may be the use of *hwīt* to describe the raiment of the blessed.<sup>3</sup> In such cases some degree of symbolism is doubtless introduced, a symbolism as old as Christianity. Largely symbolic too must be the instances in which *hwīt* is applied to the angels

- <sup>1</sup>*Zaubersegen*, I, 54. *and þære brādan bere wæstma*  
*and þære hwītan hwæte wæstma*  
*Brun.* 62. þone hasu-pādan  
*Ph.* 297. sindon þā fibru  
*hwīt hindan-weard*  
*Rid.* 16:1. Hals is mīn hwīt and hēafod fealo.  
*Rid.* 41:98. ne hafu ic iu hēafde hwīte loccas  
*Chr.* 1110. þā hwītan honda *and* þā hālgan fēt.  
*Run.* 25. Hægl byþ hwītust corna; hwyrft hit of heofenes lyfte.  
<sup>2</sup>*Gen.* 614. nū scīneð þē lēoht fore  
glædlic ongēan, þæt ic from gode brōhte  
hwīt of heofonum.  
*Gen.* 1820. Abraham maðelode, geseah Egypta  
hornsele hwīte *and* hēa byrig  
beorhte blīcan  
*B.* 1448. ac sē hwīta helm hafelan werede  
*Rid.* 11:8. sume wæron hwīte hyrste mīne.  
*Met.* 19:22. gimmas  
hwīte and rēade.  
*Ex.* 301. Hōfon hereciste hwīte linde,  
segnas on sande.  
*Reim.* 66. græft hafað  
searo hwīt solað, sumur hāt cōlað.  
*Gen.* 2731. ac him hygetēonan hwītan seolfre  
dēope bete.  
<sup>3</sup>*Chr.* 447. þæt þær in hwītum hræglum gewerede  
englas ne oðēowdun  
*Chr.* 454. þæt h̄y in hwītum þær hræglum oðywden.  
in þā æbelan tīd swā hīe eft dydon.

who live in the light of heaven. The examples explain themselves.<sup>1</sup>

*Fāmig*, foamy, occurs nine times,<sup>2</sup> always in a literal sense.

- <sup>1</sup>*Gen.* 254. Hæfde hē hine swā hwītnē geworhtne;  
Swā wynlic wæs his wæstm on heofonum, þæt him  
[cōm from weroda drihtne:  
Gelic wæs hē þām lēohtum steorrum.
- Gen.* 349. Wæs ær godes engel,  
hwīt on heofne, oð hine his hyge forspēon  
*Chr.* 895. engla and deōfla  
hwītra and sweartra
- Gen.* 265. cwæð, þæt his lic wære lēoht and scēne,  
hwīt and hīowbeorht.
- El.* 72. þūhte him wlitescýne on weres hāde,  
hwīt and hīwbeorht hæleða nāthwylc.
- Chr.* 1017. ðonne sīo hālgē gecynd  
hwīt and heofon-beorht hēag-engla mægen.
- B. D. D.* 289. þær þæra hwītra hwyrfð mædenhēap.  
blōstmum behangen.
- Gen.* 603. þæt hire þūhte hwītre heofon and eorðe  
and eall þeos woruld wlitigre and geweorc godes  
micel and mihtig.
- Chr.* 545. ær þon ūp-stige, alles waldend,  
on heofona gehyld hwīte cwōman,  
eorla ēad-giefan, englas tō-gēanes.  
*C. and S.* 200. and ymb þæt hēhsetl hwīte standað  
engla fēðan and ēadigra.
- <sup>2</sup>*Gen.* 1417. Fōr fāmig scip l and c  
nihta under roderum
- Met.* 26 : 26. ferede on fifelstrēam fāmigbordan  
þrierēðre cēol.
- A.* 1524. fāmige walcan  
mid ærdæge eorðan þehton.
- El.* 237. Lēton þā ofer fifelwæg fāmige scrīðan,  
bronte brimþisan.
- Sol.* 156. oð þæt him heortan blōd  
fāmig flōdes bæð foldan gesēceð.
- Rid.* 4 : 19. fāmig winneð  
wæg wið wealle.
- Rid.* 4 : 32. fēore bifohten fāmig rīdan  
yða hrycgum
- Gen.* 1452. hwæðer fāmig sē  
deop þā gýta dæl ænigne  
grēnre eorðan ofgifen hæfde.
- Gen.* 2213. fāmige flōdas

*Fāmig-heals*,<sup>1</sup> foamy-necked, the beautiful epithet applied to the ship, is found three times. *Fāmig-bosma*, *fām* and *fām-gode* occur once each.<sup>2</sup> These words may not in the strictest sense be regarded as color-words, but they certainly suggest color, and white more definitely than any other. The examples given below are grouped according to their relations.

2. BLACK. To the black group belong *blæc*, *sweart*, *swear-tian*, (*ge*)*sweorcan*, *gesweorc*, *wann*, *salowigpād*, *earp*, and probably some of the other words already given in the list of terms denoting darkness. Just as the words of the white group pass by insensible stages into meanings that suggest light, so the words of the black group shade insensibly into those suggesting a mere absence of light. The indefiniteness with which words like *mirc* and *deorc* are used leaves us somewhat in doubt as to whether a color-effect is really intended. Opinions on this matter will necessarily differ, and the decision must be subjective.

*Blæc* is our modern black, and is used comparatively seldom—once in describing the black sea-roads,<sup>3</sup> once as

- <sup>1</sup>B. 218. flota fāmi-heals fugle gelicost.  
 B. 1908. sǣ-genga fōr,  
 flēat fāmig-heals forð ofer yðe.  
 A. 496. is þēs bāt ful scrid,  
 færeð fāmigheals fugole gelicost.  
<sup>2</sup>Ex. 493. Fāmigbōsma flōdwearde slōh.  
 Rid. 3:3. gifen bið gewreged,  
 [flōd āfýsed], fām gewealcen.  
 Ex. 481. flōd fāmgode  
<sup>3</sup>A. 1261. is brycgade  
 blæce brimrāde  
 B. 1799. reced hliuade  
 gēap ond gold-fāh; gæst inne swæf,  
 oþ þæt hrefn blaca heofones wynne  
 blīð-heort bodode; ǰā cōm beorht scacan  
 [sunne ofer grundas].  
 Sol. 471. blōdige earnas and blace nǣdran  
 Rid. 58:1. pēos lyft byreð lītle wihte  
 ofer beorghleoðu, þā sind blace swīðe,  
 swearte salopāde.

applied to the raven, once in referring to adders, and a few times in other cases cited in the examples. Conventional and symbolical is the use of black in mentioning evil spirits.<sup>1</sup>

The most characteristic word for black is *sweart*, which is used more frequently than all the other words of this group combined. Eighty-four instances occur, if we count the adv. *swearte*. In the religious poems its use is mainly symbolic, figurative and conventional, and it is applied to hell and black souls. But it is also used literally of black nights, of the black raven, of black mists, of black water. Nine times it is used as an epithet with *lēg*, flame. In these cases we may have to do with a pitchy, smoky flame, such as was doubtless very familiar to the Old English people, or possibly we may assume a certain degree of symbolism in the expression. The conception has long been a familiar one in English poetry. Compare Milton's lines :

A dungeon horrible on all sides round  
As one great furnace flam'd; yet from those flames  
No light, but rather darkness visible  
Served only to discover sights of woe. *Par. Lost*, I, 61-64.

Quarles (*Emblem xv*) presents the same image :

- Rid.* 88 : 18.                    Nū ic blace swelge  
wuda and wætre.  
*Rid.* 52 : 1.                    Ic seah wrætlīce wuhte fēower  
samed sīðian : swearte wāran lāstas  
swaðu swīðe blacu.  
<sup>1</sup>*C. and S.* 196.                    hū þā blacan fēond  
for oferhygdum ealle forwurdon.  
*C. and S.* 71.                    Blace hworfon  
scinnan forscepene  
geond þæt atole scref  
*Chr.* 895.                    engla and dēofla,  
beorhtra and blacra  
*C. and S.* 721.                    blac bealowes gāst  
*Sol.* 25.                    worpað hine dēofol  
on dōmdæge draca egeslice  
bismorlice of blacere liðran.

a dying spark  
Of Vulcan's forge, whose flames are dark,  
A dang'rous, dull, blue-burning light,  
As melancholy as the night.

We now pass to the cases under examination. The great number of examples, many of which are essentially of the same sort, makes it impracticable to present all of the citations in full. The more striking instances, however, are given, and all the examples and references are arranged in groups. As might be expected, the literal and symbolic uses of the word are not in all cases kept sharply apart, and some of the examples belong as much in one group as in another.

(1). In the first group the literal meaning is in the foreground, though the use of the word is doubtless influenced somewhat by conventionality and symbolism.<sup>1</sup>

- <sup>1</sup>*Gen.* 1449. Hē þā ymb seofon niht sweartum hrefne  
of earce forlēt æfter flēogan  
ofer hēah wæter haswe culufnan  
on fandunga, hwæðer fāmig sē  
deop þā gýta dæl ænigne  
grēnre eorðan ofgifen hæfde.
- Gen.* 1438. lēt þā ymb worn daga,  
1441. sunu Lameches sweartne flēogan  
hrefn ofer hēahflōd of hūse út.
- Rid.* 50:4. Hwīlum on þām wicum sē wanna þegn,  
sweart and saloneb
- Soul and Body* 54. ne nænigum gesybban, þonne sē swearta hrefen.
- Brun.* 61. sweartan hrefn.
- Finns.* 35. Hræfen wandrode  
sweart and sealobrūn, swurdlēoma stōd  
swylce eal Finnsburuh fyrenu wære.
- Rid.* 13:3. fæste binde  
swearte Wēalas
- Rid.* 22:10. and mīn swæð sweotol sweart on ððre
- Rid.* 58:1. þēos lyft byreð lýtle wihte
3. swearte salopæde
- Met.* 4:22. ær sē swearta storm
- Jul.* 472. sweartum scūrum
- Gen.* 1413. lago ebbade,  
sweart under swegle



(2). Conventional and symbolic are the following cases:<sup>1</sup>—

- Gen.* 1299.                            þū scealt frið habban  
mid sunum þīnum, ðonne sweart wæter,  
wonne wælstréamas werodum swelgað.
- Gen.* 1325.                            symle bið þý heardra, þe hit hreoh wæter,  
swearte sæstréamas swiðor bēatað.
- Gen.* 1374.                            egorstréamas  
swearte swōgan
- Gen.* 1354.                            þā be ūtan bēoð earce bordum,  
þonne sweartracu stigan onginneð
- B.* 3144.                              wud[u]-rēc āstāh  
sweart ofer swioðole
- Rid.* 4 : 46.                            feallan lāetað  
sweart sumpsendu sēaw of bōsme  
and ic fūltre eom þonne þis fen swearte.
- Rid.* 41 : 31.  
*Rid.* 41 : 92.                            sē micla hwæl  
sē þe gārsecges grund bihealdeð  
sweartan syne.
- Rid.* 42 : 1.                            edniwu  
þæt is möddor monigra cynna,  
þæs sēlestan, þæs sweartestan
- Rid.* 42 : 94.  
*Gen.* 118.  
*Met.* 4 : 6.  
*Chr.* 870.                            sweartan syne  
sweart synnihte  
swylce sēo sunne sweartra nihta  
scīre gesceafte swā oft sceaða fæcne  
þeof þristlice þe on þýstre fareð  
on sweartre niht.
- Other examples occur,—*B.* 167, *B. D. D.* 198, *Chr.* 934, *Gen.* 109, 134,  
*Guth.* 678.
- Gen.* 390.                              hafað ūs god sylfa  
forswāpen on þās sweartan mistas  
sunne for þæm sweartum mistum
- Met.* 5 : 45.  
*Met.* 23 : 5.  
*B. D. D.* 104.                            Eal bið ēac ūpheofon  
sweart and gesworcen, swiðe geþuxsað  
deorc and dimhīw and dwolma sweart.
- Rid.* 52 : 2.  
*Rid.* 27 : 1.                            swearte wāran lāstas.  
siðade sweart-lāst.
- <sup>1</sup>*Chr.* 1605.                            ðæt sceolon fyllan firen-georne men  
sweartum sāwlum
- C. and S.* 51.                            Ðā him andsweradan atole gāstas,  
swarte and synfulle.
- Chr.* 895.                              onhælo gelāc engla and dēofla  
beorhtra and blacra weorpeð bēga cyme  
hwītra and sweartra

(3). Hell is five times referred to in the interpolated portion of the Genesis with the accompanying epithet, *swearte*,

- Chr.* 1104. swearte syn-wyrcend.  
*Sol.* 148. mānfullra hēap  
sweartne geswencan  
*Guð.* 650. mīne myrðran *and* mǎn-sceapan  
swearte sigelēase  
*Jul.* 468. sweartra gesyrede  
*Partridge,* 6. *and* gē hellfīrena  
sweartra geswīcað  
*Soul and Body,* 73. swearte wihte  
*Chr.* 268. æþelan rīce,  
þonan ūs ær þurh syn-lust sē swearta gæst  
forteah *and* fortylde  
*Jul.* 311. þūs ic wrāþra fela  
mid mīnum brōþrum bealwa gefremede  
sweartra synna  
*C. and S.* 639. hū hīe him on edwīt oft asettað  
swarte sūslbonan  
*Guð.* 666. ðā ēow sē waldend wrāðe bisencte  
in þæt swearte sūsl  
*El.* 930. ond þec þonne sendeð in þā sweartestan  
*and* þā wyrrestan wītebrogan  
*Gen.* 72. hēo on wrace syððan  
seomodon swearte sīðe  
*Gen.* 732. ac hīe tō helle sculon  
on þone sweartan sīð.  
*Chr.* 1411. sār *and* swār gewin *and* sweartne dēað  
*Gen.* 477. þonne wæs sē oðer eallenga swear,  
dim *and* þýstre : þæt wæs dēaðes bēam.

A few miscellaneous examples, not especially notable, occur,—*Rid.* 13:13, 18:7, 71:9, *Sol.* 488, *C. and S.* 704, *Gen.* 487.

The following instances of the figurative use of the adverb *swearte* seem to belong to group (2):—

- C. and S.* 371. Satanus swearte geþōhte  
*C. and S.* 445. *and* hēo furðor sceaf  
in þæt neowle genip nearwe gebeged,  
þær nū Satanus swearte þingað  
*C. and S.* 578. him þæt swearte forgeald  
earm æglæca inn on helle.  
*Guð.* 625. swearte beswicene, swegle benumene.

but this precise combination appears not to be found elsewhere in O.E. poetry.<sup>1</sup>

Scarcely to be distinguished from genuine color-words are such terms as *gesweorc*, (*ge*)*sweorcan*, *sweartian*, but the literal uses shade easily into the figurative and the symbolic.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Gen.* 312. on þā sweartan helle.  
*Gen.* 345. Satan siððan, hēt hine þære sweartan helle.  
 Cf. *Gen.* 529, 761, 792.

*Jul.* 553. Ðā hine sēo fæmne forlēt  
 æfter þræc-hwile þýstra nēosan  
 in sweartne grund

*Ps.* 142 : 7. wese ic earmum gelíc,  
 be on sweartne grund siððan astīgað.

With these cases may be compared the following, which might, perhaps, have been put into group (2):—

*Gen.* 1925. for wera synnum wylme gesealde  
 Sodomā and Gomorran, sweartan lige.

*Gen.* 2414. þæt sceal wrecan  
 swefyl and sweart lig, sære and grimme

*Gen.* 2504. Unc hēht waldend for wera synnum  
 Sodoma and Gomorra sweartan lige,  
 fýre gesyllan.

*Gen.* 2538. þā sunne ūp,  
 folca friðcandel furðum eode,  
 þā ic sendan gefrægn swegles aldor  
 swef of heofnum and sweartne lig  
 werum tō wite.

*Gen.* 2856. and blōtan sylf  
 sunu mid sweordes ege and þonne sweartan lige  
 lēofes líc forbærnan.

*Chr.* 983. færeð æfter foldan fýr-swearta lēg  
 weallende wiga

*Chr.* 1531. þæt on þæt dēope dæl dēofol gefeallað  
 in sweartne lēg.

Cf. also *Chr.* 966, 994.

<sup>2</sup>*B.* 1789. Niht-helm geswearc  
 deorc ofer dryht-gumum.  
*A.* 372. wedercandel swearc  
*Guð.* 1279. swearc norð-rodor  
*Ez.* 461. lyft ūp geswearc :  
 fægum stæfnum flōd blōd gewōd.  
*Gen.* 807. gesweorc ūp færeð

*Wann*,<sup>1</sup> dark, dusky, is also a favorite word, being found thirty-seven times. Unlike *sweart* it is commonly used in a literal sense. It is thus applied to a variety of objects,—to the raven, to the dark waves, to the gloomy height overlooking the sea, to the murky night, to the dark armor, etc. The examples given below supply the details. Now and then the word seems to be a mere conventional epithet and to be introduced largely for the sake of the alliteration.<sup>2</sup>

- B. D. D.* 108. *and sēo sunne forswyrceð sona on morgen*  
*ne sē mōna næfð nānre mihte wiht,*  
*þæt hē þære nihte genipu mæge flecgan.*
- C. and S.* 78. *hē sweartade, ðonne he spreocan ongan,*  
*fyre and ättre.*
- Guð.* 1052. *hefige æt heortan hreþer innan swearc*  
*B. 1766. oððe ēagena bearhtm*  
*forsiteð ond forsworceð.*
- Jul.* 78. *geswearc þā swið-ferð swōr æfter worde*  
*Wand.* 58. *forþon ic geþencan ne mæg geond þās world*  
*for hwan mōd-sefa mīn ne gesweorce.*
- Deor.* 28. *Siteð sorgceorig sælum bidæled*  
*on sefan sweorceð.*
- <sup>1</sup> For *brūnwann*, see *brūn*.
- \**B.* 3024. *ac sē wanna hrefn.*  
*Gen.* 1983. *Sang sē wanna fugel*  
*under deoreðsceaftum, dēawigfeðera*  
*hræs on wenan.*
- Jud.* 205. *þæs sē hlanca gefeah*  
*wulf in walde and sē wanna hrefn*
- El.* 52. *hrefen uppe gōl*  
*wan and wælfel.*
- Ex.* 164. *wonn wælcēasega.*  
*B.* 3154. *wæl-fylla wonn.*
- Rood.* 52. *þýstro hæfdon*  
*bewrigen mid wolcnum wealdendes hræw,*  
*scīre scīman; sceaðu forðeode,*  
*wann under wolcnum.*
- B.* 702. *Cōm on wanre niht*  
*scriðan sceaðu-genga*
- Guð.* 1023. *in þisse wonnan niht*  
*Rid.* 85: 8. *wudubēama helm wonnan nihtum*  
*Met.* 11: 61. *Hwæt! þā wonnan niht*  
*mōna onlihteð*

- B.* 649. oþðe nīpende niht ofer ealle,  
scadu-helma gesceapu scrīðan cwōman,  
wan under wolcnum
- Wand.* 103. hrīð hrēosende hrūsan bindeð  
wintres wōma þonne won cymeð  
nīpeð niht-scau norþan onsendeð.  
hrēo hægl-fare hæleðum on andan.
- Ph.* 98. sēo deorce niht  
won gewiteð
- Gen.* 108. geseah deorc gesweorc  
semian sinnihte, sweart under roderum  
wonn *and* wēste
- Guð.* 1279. swearc norð-rodor  
won under wolcnum
- A.* 836. sceadu sweðerodon  
won under wolcnum
- Met.* 5 : 4. gif him wan fore wolcen hangað.  
*Gen.* 118. wonne wægas  
*Gen.* 1301. wonne wælstrēamas  
*A.* 1168. þā for þære dugoðe dēoful æt̄wde  
wann *and* wlitelēas, hæfde wériges hīw.
- Gen.* 1378. wrēah *and* þeahhte  
mānfæhðu bearn middangeardes  
wonnan wæge.
- Gen.* 1460. Gewāt sē wilda fugel  
on æfenne earce sēcan  
ofer wonne wæg
- Gen.* 1429. þā hine on sunde geond sīdne grund  
wonne yða wīde bæron.
- Rid.* 4 : 37. won wægfatu  
*B.* 1373. þonon yð-geblond ūp āstīgeð  
won tō wolcnum.
- Rid.* 4 : 19. fāmīg winneð  
wæg wīð wealle; won ārīseð  
dūn ofer dýpe.
- Gen.* 210. Fægere lēohte  
þæt līðe land lago yrnende,  
wylleburne; nalles wolcnu ðā gīet  
ofer rūmne grund regnas bæron  
wann mid winde.
- Chr.* 1422. *and* mec þā on þēostre ālegde  
biwundenne mid wonnum clāpum
- Rid.* 54 : 7. wonnum hystum.
- Rid.* 50 : 4. Hwīlum on þām wicum sē wanna þegn.

*Salowigpād*,<sup>1</sup> dark-coated, is applied a few times as an epithet to the raven, the eagle, and to gnats: *Wyrde* 37, *Jud.* 211, *Brun.* 61, *Rid.* 58:3. *Salo* and *salonebb* are also slightly used. *Earp* (*eorp*), dusky, dark, is used three times: *Rid.* 4:42, *earpan gesceafta*; *Ex.* 194, *eorp werod* (of the Egyptians); *Rid.* 50:11, *eorp unwita*.

3. GRAY. Remarkable in Old English poetry is the fondness for mixed and neutral colors. A group of such colors is found in the words *græg*, *flōdgræg*, *flintgræg*, *hār*, *hasu*, *blondenfeax*, *gamolfeax*. The color gray lies somewhere between white and black, with nothing to determine precisely where.

*Græg* is used seven times, and its compounds are found once each.<sup>2</sup> In every case it is used literally. It describes

*Rid.* 41:105. Māra ic eom and fætra, þonne amæsted swīn  
bearg bellende on bōc-wuda  
won wrōtende wynnum lifde

*Rid.* 85:14. is mīn bæc  
wonn and wundorlic.

*Chr.* 1564. won and witelēas hafað werges blēo.

*Rid.* 53:5. þāra oðrum wæs ān getenge  
wonfāh Wale

A parallel to the expression, *sē swearta lēg*, is found in *sē wonna lēg*; and a similar explanation doubtless applies to both.

*B.* 3114. Nū sceal glēd fretan  
(weaxan wonna lēg)

*C. and S.* 715. hwīlum sē wonna lēg  
læhte wið þes lāþan

*Chr.* 964. ðonne eal þrēo on ēfen nimeð  
won fyres wælm wīde tōsomne  
sē swearta līg

<sup>1</sup> For the etymology of *salo*, see Uhlenbeck in Paul and Braune's *Beiträge*, 20, 564.

<sup>2</sup>*Gen.* 2864. ac hine sē hālga wer  
gyrde grægan sweorde.

*B.* 2680. Nægling forbærst,  
geswāc æt sæcce sweord Biowulfes,  
gomol ond græg-mæl.

*Finns.* 6. gylleð græghama, gūðwudu hlynned,  
scyld scefte oncwýð.

*B.* 333. fætte scyldas,  
græge syrcan ond grim-helmas,

the sword, the shirt of mail, the wolf, the seamew, the flood of the sea, the ash-spear with the gray bark still left on the shaft, the curling smoke, the hoar-frost. Especially picturesque is the mention in one of the Riddles (4:19) of the *flintgrægne flōd*.

*Hār*, hoary, is used more conventionally than *græg*, and appears at times to be chosen more for the sake of the alliteration than for the sake of the color. *Hār* occurs twenty-seven times,<sup>1</sup> and *unhār*, *feaxhār* and *ræghār* once each. Seven times *hār* is applied to the hoary, gray stone, once to the gray cliff, four times to armor, once to a sword, once to the ocean, once to the gray heath, three times to the wolf, twice to the frost, and seven times to warriors, in each case with some touch of conventionality and with an apparently slight feeling for the color. Even *unhār* seems to emphasize the age of Hrōðgār quite as much as his grayness. In *feaxhār cwēne* the color element appears to predominate.

- Brun.* 64.                    þæt græge dēor,  
wulf on wealde
- Gnom.* (Ex.) 149.    Gryre sceal for greggum, græf dēadum men.  
Hungre hēofeð, nales þæt hēafe bewindeð  
ne huru wæl wēpeð wulf sē græga.
- A.* 370.                    horufisc plegode,  
glād geond gārsecg and sē græga mæw  
wælgifre wand; wedercandel swearc.
- Gnom.* I. 30.            Æa of dūne sceal  
flōdgræg fēran.
- Met.* 7.                Swā oft smylte sǣ sūðerne wind  
græge glas-hluttre grimme gedrēfed  
æsc-holt ufan græg.
- B.* 330.  
*Rid.* 4: 19.            Ic sceal tō staðe þýwan  
flintgrægne flōd.
- <sup>1</sup>*B.* 887.                hē under hārne stān,  
*B.* 1415.            ofer hārne stān.  
*B.* 2552.            stefn in becōm  
heaðo-torht hlynnan under hārne stān.
- B.* 2743.            Nū ðū lungre geong  
hord scēawian under hārne stān,  
Wiglāf lēofa.
- A.* 841.                ymbe hārne stān  
tigelfāgan trafu

- Ruin.* 40. weal eall befēng  
 beorhtan bōsme, þær þā baþu wæron  
 hāt on hreþre; þæt wæs hƿ̄ðelic:  
 lēton þonne gēotan . . . ofer hārne stān  
 hāte strēamas
- Rid.* 41 : 74. sē hāra stān  
*Met.* 5 : 12. Swā oft æspringe üt āwealleð  
 of clife hārum cōl and hlūtor.
- Heil.* 210. þænne embe eahta niht  
 and fēowerum þætte fān gode  
 besentun on sǣgrund sigefæstne wer,  
 on brime hāran
- Jud.* 327. lǣddon  
 tō ðære beorhtan byrig Bethuliam  
 helmas and hupseax, hāre byrnan,  
 gūðsceorp gumena golde gefrætewod
- Wald.* II. 16. feta, gyf ðū dyrre,  
 æt ðus heaðowērgan hāre byrnan.
- B.* 2153. hāre byrnan  
*B.* 2988. hāres hyrste Higelāce bær.  
*Wald.* I. 2. huru Welandes geworc ne geswīceð  
 monna ænigum, ðāra ðe Mimming can  
 hēarne gehealdan.
- Ex.* 117. þƿ̄ lās him westengryre  
 hār hǣð
- Rid.* 22 : 3. hār holtes fēond  
*Wand.* 82. sumne sē hāra wulf  
 dēaðe gedǣlde.
- Wyrde.* 12. sceal hine wulf etan  
 hār hǣðstapa.
- Rid.* 88 : 7. hwīlum hāra scōc  
 forst of feaxe.
- A.* 1257. swylce hrīm and forst,  
 hāre hildstapan hǣleða ēðel  
 lucon, lēoda gesetu.
- Brun.* 38. on his cyððe norð Constantīnus,  
 hār hilderinc; hrēman ne ðorfte  
 mēca gemānan.
- B.* 1306. þā wæs frōd cyning  
 hār hilde-rinc
- B.* 3135. æþeling boren,  
 hār hilde [-rinc], tō Hrones næsse.
- Mald.* 168. þā gƿ̄t þæt word gecwæð  
 hār hilderinc



*Haso*, 'gray,' is found seven times,<sup>1</sup> and the compounds *hasofāg*, *hasupāda*, *haswigfeðra*, once each. *Haso* is used with an apparent definiteness of color-feeling, and is applied to the dove, to the eagle, to the curling smoke, to the leaves of plants, and even to the *herestræta*, the highways with their dusty, dirty-white surfaces. The examples are not sufficiently numerous to enable us to decide whether it was often used conventionally, but there is certainly little evidence in the instances cited that such was the case.

*Blondenfeax*, blended-haired, that is, gray-haired, is hardly a color-word at all, but it occurs four times in *Beowulf*, twice

*B.* 1677.      Ðā wæs gylden hilt gamelum rince,  
hārum hild-fruman, on hand gyfen.

*Ex.* 240.                      Gamele ne mōston,  
hāre heaðorincas, hilde onþēon

*Ex.* 181.      hāre heorawulfas hilde grēttōn

*B.* 356.                      þær Hrōðgār sæt  
eald ond un-hār.

*Rid.* 73 : 1.      Ic wæs fæmne geong, feaxhār cwēne.

The picturesque word *ræghār*, meaning gray with moss or lichen, is used in describing a broken wall in the *Ruin* 9-10.

Oft þæs wāg gebad  
ræghār and rēadfāh rice æfter oþrum.

<sup>1</sup>*Gen.* 145.                      haswe culufrān

*Rid.* 25 : 4.      hwīlum ic onhyrge þone haswan earn

*Ph.* 121.                      swā sē haswa fugel.

beorht of þæs bearwes bēame gewiteð

*Rid.* 12 : 1.      Hrægl is mīn hasofāg.

*Brun.* 62.                      þone hasu-pādan

earn, æftan hwīt

*Ph.* 153.                      ðonne bið gehefgad haswig-feðra

gomol gēarum frōd [g]rēne eorðan

*Rid.* 2 : 6.                      rēcas stīgað

haswe ofer hrōfum.

*Rid.* 14 : 8.      meahtrum āweahte mūðum slītan

haswe blēde.

*Rid.* 41 : 60.      swylce ic eom wrāðre þonne wermōd sȳ,

[þe] hēr on hyrstum heasewe stondeð.

*Ex.* 283.                      Wegas syndon drȳge,

haswe herestræta.

in Genesis and once in the Battle of Brunanburh with about the same meaning as hār.<sup>1</sup> Gamolfeax, old-haired, gray-haired, occurs three times, *Beow.* 608, *Seafarer*, 92, *Edg.* 46.

4. BROWN. Brown is an indefinite color, which may shade through various degrees of duskiness into black or red. We may, however, properly enough speak of a brown group, though the variants *brūnfæg*, *brūnwann*, *sealobrūn* occur but once each. *Brūn* is used eleven times, apparently with a variety of meanings.<sup>2</sup> *Brūnecg* is found twice. When applied to helmets or to the edge of the sword the term *brūn* possibly

- <sup>1</sup>B. 1593.            þæt wæs ƿ̄ð-geblond eal gemenged  
brim blōde fāh. Blonden-feaxe  
gomele ymb gōdne on geador spræcon
- B. 1790.                                 Duguð eal ārās;  
wolde blonden-feax beddes nēosan,  
gamela Scylding.
- B. 1872.                         hruron him tēaras  
blonden-feaxum.
- B. 2961.            þær wearð Ongenðiow ecgum sweorda  
blonden-fexa, on bið wrecen.
- Gen.* 2600.                                 Ne wiste blondenfeax  
*Gen.* 2340.            self ne wēnde, þæt him Sarra,  
brȳd blondenfeax, bringan mealite  
on woruld sunu.
- Brun.* 44.                                 gylpan ne þorfte  
beorn blandenfex billgeslihtes.
- <sup>2</sup>B. 2614.                                 ond his māgum ætbær  
brūn-fāgne helm.
- Jud.* 318.                                 hyrsta scȳne,  
bord and brād swyrð, brūne helmas,  
dȳre mādmas.
- Rid.* 18:7.            hwilum ic sweartum swelgan onginne  
brūnum beaduwæpnnum.
- B. 2577.                                 þæt sio ecg gewāc  
brūn on bāne.
- B. 1545.            Ofsæt þā þone sele-gyst, ond hyre seaz geteah  
brād, brūn-ecg.
- Mald.* 162.            Ðā Byrhtnōð bræd bill of scēðe,  
brād and brūnecg [sic]
- Ex.* 69.                wiston him be sūðan Sigelwara land,  
forbærned burhhleoðu, brūne lēode  
hāte heofoncolum.

means bright, glittering, or flashing, with a suggestion of redness. In the Ep. Gloss. *burrum* is glossed by *bruun*, and *burrum* is the equivalent of *rufus*. As applied to the sword-edge, the word appears to be used somewhat conventionally. In the Exodus the Ethiopians are called *brüne lēode*, brown people. In the poem on the Phoenix (296) that wonderful bird has a tail partly brown. But the Latin original (l. 31) reads :

Caudaque porrigitur fulvo distenta metallo,

which implies a reddish-yellow or tawny cast. The raven is referred to in the *Fight at Finnsburh*, 36, as *sweart and sealobrūn*, which means a sallow or dusky-brown. This I take to be the dull, rusty, brownish black color which dark feathers may assume in some lights. In the *Andreas*, 1306, night is described as *brūnwann*, a color that can scarcely be distinguished from 'dark.' Milton twice uses a similar expression :

To arched walks of twilight groves,  
And shadows brown that Sylvan loves.

*Il Pens.*, 133, 134.

and where the unpierc't shade  
Imbrown'd the noontide bow'rs.

*Par. Lost*, IV, 245.

- Ph.* 295.      *ponne is sē finta fægre gedæled*  
                  *sum brūn sum basu sum blācum splottum*
- Ex.* 497.      *fæste befarene, flōdblāc here*  
                  *siððan hīe onbugon brūn yppinge*
- Rid.* 88 : 9.    *Siððan mec isern innanweardne*  
                  *brūn bennade.*
- Rid.* 27 : 8.      *spyrede geneahhe*  
                  *ofer brūnne bred.*
- A.* 519.        *sē ðe brimu bindeð, brūne yða*  
                  *ðyð and þrēatað.*
- Rid.* 61 : 6      *ac mec uhtna gehwām yð sīo brūne*  
*Met.* 28.        *pā weard ceald weden*  
                  *stearc storma gelāc : stunede sīo brūne*  
                  *yð wið oðre.*
- Finns.* 35.      *Hræfen wandrode*  
                  *sweart and sealobrūn*
- A.* 1304.        *oð ðæt sunne gewāt tō sete glīdan*  
                  *under niflan næs : niht helmade,*  
                  *brūnwann oferbræd beorgas stēape.*

The passages where the waves are called 'brown' may mean simply that they are dark, with perhaps a trace of muddiness. Yet possibly the suggestion of Merbach<sup>1</sup> has some force, when he says that the waves may mirror the sky and thus seem like a molten mass of bronze.

Brown was a favorite color with English poets of the eighteenth century,<sup>2</sup> but it appears in our own time to be much less popular.

5. RED. No color is more distinctive than red, yet its use in Old English poetry is comparatively restricted. The only words properly belonging to the red group appear to be *rēad*, *rēadfāh*, and *baso*. Such words as *blōd*, *blōdig*, *blōdfāg*, *swātig*, have only a secondary claim to be regarded as color-words.

1. *Rēad*. Of the twenty passages in which *rēad* occurs, all but four are found in the religious poems. The four exceptions occur in the Riddles. But the word *rēad* does not once occur in the *Beowulf* or in any other heroic poem or in the lyrics. In the *Ruin* (10) occurs the compound *rēadfāh*, describing the shattered walls of the desolate city.

The various objects with which the word is used are as follows: Flame or fire is five times described as red, partly perhaps for the sake of the alliteration. Roses are twice called red. In *Exod.* 296 the waters of the Red Sea are referred to as *rēade strēamas*, as though the poet really imagined them to be red.<sup>3</sup> We have also four passages in which gold is called red. This is a familiar convention of the Middle Ages, which may be due to the fact that the gold of that time was often darker than that of our own, and contained a considerable alloy of copper. Red trappings are referred to in the Riddles. The cross, reddened with blood, is mentioned in *Chr.* 1101; the red edges of the sword are

<sup>1</sup>*Das Meer in den Dichtungen der Angelsachsen*, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup>Ellis, *The Colour-sense in Lit.*, p. 720.

<sup>3</sup>This is very different from the cases in which the Red Sea is merely referred to by name. Cf. *Ex.* 134; *Ps.* 105: 8, 9, 18; 135: 13, 15.

spoken of in describing the sacrifice of Isaac (*Exod.* 412). Some other miscellaneous examples are found in the list given below.<sup>1</sup>

We see, then, that the color which is strongest and most effective has a relatively restricted use, and that an obvious convention has determined the choice of the word in many passages where it occurs.

Red is probably suggested now and then by the words

<sup>1</sup> <i>Ruin.</i> 9.	Oft þæs wāg gebād ræghār <i>and</i> rēadfāh rīce æfter ðprum ofstanden under stormum.
<i>Gen.</i> 41.	þā hē hit geara wiste sinnihte beseald, sūsle geinnod, geondfolen fýre <i>and</i> færcyle, rēce <i>and</i> rēade lēge.
<i>Chr.</i> 807.	þonne frætwe sculon byrnan on bæle; blac rāsetteð recen; rēada lēg rēþe scrīþeð.
<i>B. D. D.</i> 149.	rēadum līge bið emnes mid þý eal gefylled. Ðonne fýren līg blāweð <i>and</i> braslað rēad <i>and</i> rēðe
<i>Wyrde.</i> 46. <i>Met.</i> 9:12.	rēad rēðe glēd. gif þæt fýr meahte līxan swā lēohte <i>and</i> swā longe ēac rēad rāsettan.
<i>B. D. D.</i> 286.	þær þā ærendracan synd ælmihtiges godes <i>and</i> betweoh rosena rēade hēapas þær symle scīnað. þær þæra hwītra hwyrfð mædenhēap, blōstnum behangen, beorhtost wereda.
<i>Ex.</i> 295.	nū sē āgend ūp ārærde rēade strēamas in randgebeorh.
<i>Rid.</i> 49:6.	Ryne ongietan rēadan goldes guman galdorewide
<i>Gen.</i> 2403.	gesāwon ofer since salo hlifian, reced ofer rēadum golde.
<i>Jud.</i> 338.	sweord <i>and</i> swātigne helm, swylce ēac sīde byrnan gerēnode rēadum golde.
<i>Dan.</i> 59. <i>Met.</i> 18:5.	berēafodon þā receda wuldor rēadan golde Hwæðer gē willen on wuda sēcan gold þæt rēade on grēnum trēowum?

*blōd*, *blōdig*, *blōdfāg*, *drēorig*, *heolfor*, *swātig*, which in the aggregate are used much more frequently than *rēad*. One cannot always be sure that a color effect is intended, but some passages appear unmistakable. I present a few selected examples:<sup>1</sup>

6. **YELLOW.** From the frequent reference to gold in Old English poetry one might perhaps expect yellow to be often

- Rid.* 12 : 1. Hrægl is mīn hasofāg, hyrste beorhte  
rēade and scire on rēafe [mīnum].
- Reden der Seelen.* 57. Ne magon þē nū heonon ādōn hyrsta þā rēadan.  
*Chr.* 1101. ðonne sio rēade rōd ofer ealle  
swegle scīneð on þære sunnan gyld  
on þā forhtlice fīrenum fordōne  
swearte syn-wyrcend sorgum wlītað
- Ex.* 411. wolde slēan eaferan sīnne,  
unweaxenne *egum* rēodan.
- Met.* 19 : 22. æðele gimmas  
hwīte and rēade and hīwa gehwæs.
- Rid.* 27 : 15. Nū þā gerēno and sē rēada telg.  
*Chr.* 1174. ðā wearð beān monig blōdigum tēarum  
birunnen under rindum rēade and þicce  
æp wearð tō swāte.
- Rid.* 70 : 1. Ic eom rīces æht rēade bewæfed,  
stīð and stēap wong.

*Baso*, purple or crimson, occurs twice,—once in *Dan.* 724, *baswe bōcstafas*, and once in the *Phoenix* 296, in describing the bird's tail:

þonne is sē finta fægre gedæled  
sum brūn, sum basu, sum blācum sploottum.

- <sup>1</sup>*B.* 484. Ðonne wæs þeos medo-heal on morgen tīd  
driht-sele drēor-fāh, þonne dæg līxte,  
eal benc-þelu blōde bestymed,  
heall heoru-drēore.
- B.* 847. Ðær wæs on blōde brim weallende,  
atol yða geswing eal gemenged  
hāton heolfre, heoro-drēore wēol.
- B.* 446. ac hē mē habban wile  
d[r]ēore fāhne, gif mec dēað nimeð  
byreð blōdig wæl.
- B.* 934. þonne blōde fāh,  
hūsa sēlest heoro-drēorig stōd.
- B.* 1416. wæter under stōd  
drēorig ond gedrēfed.

mentioned. But of the use of *geolo* only four instances occur, and three of these are plainly conventional. Twice the word is used in the compound *geolorand*, once alone in referring to linden shields, and once in describing fine cloth.<sup>1</sup>

*Fealo*. This is a somewhat indefinite color which occurs seventeen times. The prevailing meaning appears to be a pale yellow shading into red or brown, and in some cases into green. Two compounds, *fealohilte* and *appelfealu*, occur once each. A tolerably clear use of the word is in the *Battle of Maldon*, 166, where the sword is called *fealohilte*. This evidently means 'golden-hilted.' *Fealwe mēaras* (*Beow.* 865) are probably bay horses of a golden color shading into red. *Fealwe strāte* (*Beow.* 916) may be roads covered with pale yellow sand or gravel. *Fealwe linde* (*Gen.* 2044) probably means the yellow borders of the linden shields (cf. *geolo*), which were either painted or gilded. The most common use of *fealo* is in connection with water. Some of the examples already cited appear to involve a genuine realization of the color. But the various passages in which the sea is referred to as the fallow flood seem to be more conventional and to introduce the word, in part, perhaps, because of the convenient alliteration. I hardly think that in these passages the word means dusky, as is sometimes suggested, but per-

- Ex.* 448.      Wæron beorhhliðu blōde bestēmed,  
                  holm heolfre spāw.
- Ex.* 571.      Gesāwon hīe þær wealles standan;  
                  ealle him brimu blōdige þūhton
- Chr.* 934.      sunne  
                  on blōdes hīw
- Chr.* 1085.     bēacna beorhtast blōde bestēmed
- Wald.* 153.     sē full cāfīce  
                  bræd of þām beorne blōdigne gār.
- <sup>1</sup>*B.* 2609.      hond rond gefēng  
                  geolwe linde, gomel swyrd getēah.
- B.* 438.      geolo-rand tō gūðe
- El.* 118.      gāras ofer geolorand on gramra gemang
- Rid.* 36:9.     Wyrmas mec ne āwæfan wyrda cræftum  
                  þā þe geolo godwebb geatwum frætwað.

haps yellowish green, a common color in the English and Irish channels.

A more vivid sense of color is found in *fealo lig* (*Ph.* 218), the yellow flame in which the Phoenix is consumed, and in a few other examples cited below.<sup>1</sup>

- <sup>1</sup>*B.* 1949.                                    syððan hīo Offan flet  
ofer fealone flōd be fæder lāre  
sīðe gesōhte.
- A.* 420.                                    Lang is þēs sīðfæt  
ofer fealuwne flōd
- Brun.* 35.                                crēad cnear on flot, cining ūt gewāt,  
on fealone flōd feorh generode
- A.* 1536.                                Wēox wāteres þrym; weras cwānedon,  
ealde æsberend; wæs him ūt myne  
flēon fealone strēam.
- A.* 1588.                                þær in forlēt  
flōd fæðmian, fealewe wægās.
- Wand.* 45.                                Ðonne onwæcneð eft winelēas guma  
gesihð him beforan fealwe wægās
- Gnom. II.* 51.                            Storm oft holm gebringeb  
geofen in grimmum sælum; onginnað grome  
fundian,  
fealwe on feorran tō lande.
- Bī Monna Cræftum,* 53.                sum fealone wæg  
stefnan stēoreð.
- B.* 865.                                    on geflit faran, fealwe mēaras
- B.* 916.                                    Hwīlum flitende fealwe stræte  
mēarum mæton.
- Gen.* 2043.                                þæt mehte wel æghwylc  
on fyrd wegan, fealwe linde.
- Ph.* 217.                                hrēoh ōnetteð  
fealo lig feormeð and Fēnix byrneð.
- Ph.* 310.                                sindon þā scancan scyllum biweaxen  
fealwe fōtas
- Ph.* 74.                                    ne fealleð ðær on foldan fealwe blōstman  
and swīora smæl, sīdan fealwe.
- Rid.* 72 : 15.                             þær wæs hlin and āc and sē hearda īw  
and sē fealwa holen.
- Rid.* 16 : 1.                                Hals is mīn hwīt and hēafod fealo.
- Mald.* 166.                                feoll þā tō foldan fealohlite swurd
- B.* 2163.                                Hȳrde ic, þæt þæm fræt wum fēower mēaras  
lungre gelice lāst weardode,  
appel-fealuwe.



*Gold.* In addition to the strict color-words we may have to include in the yellow group the word *gold*, which in some passages appears to suggest a color effect.<sup>1</sup> There is room for much difference of opinion as to how many of the passages are genuine instances of the use of the word for this purpose, but such compounds as *goldfāh*, *goldtorht*, *goldbeorht* appear unmistakable. The primary word with its various derivatives is used something like a hundred times in Old English poetry. How many of these cases are to be taken as clear instances of color-words can be shown only by detailed discussion, for which I have not space here. I will, therefore, reserve the topic for later examination.

7. GREEN. As might perhaps be expected, the favorite color in Old English poetry, taken as a whole, is green, the color of growing plants. The extraordinary fondness for this color in English ballads has been often pointed out. But, singularly enough, the examples in Old English poetry are found almost wholly in the religious poems, one-third in the Genesis alone. Yet not a single example occurs in the Beowulf or in any other heroic poem. In the religious poems the word is commonly used in a somewhat conventional way, and seldom with a keen appreciation of the color. The earth, the fields, the grass, the trees, the hills, and other objects are mentioned, but the color-word appears to be added in many cases as a mere epithet. Now and then, however, the color-word seems to be used in order to make the passage more vivid. Thus the rod of Moses is called a *grēne tāne* (*Exod.* 281). Green streets leading to the home of the angels are once mentioned (*C. and S.* 287). Two instances of the deliberate use of green for descriptive purposes are found in the Phœnix, a somewhat artificial poem based upon a still more artificial Latin original, but nevertheless containing a greater variety of color-words than any other Old English poem. We read (l. 293) that the back of the bird's head is

<sup>1</sup> Etymologically, gold is, of course, "the yellow metal."

green, *hēafod hindan grēne*, and then (l. 298), *sē hals grēne nioðowearð and ufewearð*. In these passages the Old English poet is evidently trying to reproduce the *viridante zmaragdo* of his Latin original (l. 135). Yet in no passage do we find anything like the easy mastery of color-phrases that is so marked in Tennyson and Shelley and Keats.

The examples given below are intended to be complete, and they are self-explanatory.<sup>1</sup>

- <sup>1</sup>*Gen.* 1517. eorðe ælgrēne and ēacen feoh  
*Chr.* 1128. eorðan eal-grēne and ūp-rodor  
*A.* 797. hwā æt frumscafte furðum tēode  
 eorðan eallgrēne and ūpheofon.
- Gen.* 1453. þā gȳta dæl ænigne  
 grēnre eorðan ofgifen hæfde.
- Ph.* 154. [g]rēne eorðan  
*Gen.* 1560. þa him wlitebeorhte wæstmas brōhte,  
 geartorhte gife grēne folde.
- Ex.* 311. wōd on wægstrēam, wigan on hēape  
 ofer grēnne grund.
- Rid.* 67 : 3. sæs mē sind ealle  
 flōdas on fæðmum and þas foldan bearm,  
 grēne wongas.
- Guð.* 476. Sægde him tō sorge þæt hȳ sigelēase  
 þone grēnan wong of-giefan sceoldan.
- Heil.* 206. þæt ūs wunian ne mōt wangas grēne  
 foldan frætuwe.
- Guð.* 746. Stōd sē grēna wong in godes wære  
*Gen.* 1655. Gesetton þā Sennar sīdne and wīdne  
 1657. heora gēardagum, grēne wongas.
- Rid.* 41 : 50. Eom æghwær brædre  
 and wīdgielra þonne þes wong grēna.
- Rid.* 13 : 1. Fōtum ic fēre, foldan slīte,  
 grēne wongas, benden ic gæst bere.
- Rid.* 16 : 5. ordum ic steppe  
 in grēne gras.
- Gen.* 1137. siððan Adam stōp  
 on grēne græs, gāste geweorðod.
- Gen.* 116. Folde wæs þā gȳt,  
 græs ungrēne: gārsecg þeahhte,  
 sweart synnihte sīde and wīde  
 wonne wægās. þā wæs wuldortorht

## IV.

We have thus gone through the color-words found in Old English poetry and rapidly observed the way in which they are used. If the list is somewhat disappointing, it is at all events far more striking than anything that the Old High

- heofonweardes gāst ofer holm boren,  
miclum spēdum. Metod engla hēht,  
līfes brytta, lēoht forð cuman.
- Gen.* 510.                   brāde synd on worulde  
grēne geardas *and* god siteð  
on þām hēhstan heofna rīce
- Gen.* 1017.                 forðon hēo þe hrōðra ofūihð  
glāemes grēne folde.
- Gen.* 1920.               Him þā Loth gewāt land sceawigan  
be Iordane, grēne eorðan:  
sēo wæs wætrum weaht *and* wæstmum þeaht,  
lagostrēamum lēoht
- Ph.* 33.                   sun-bearo līxeð  
wudu-holt wynlic wæstmas ne drēosað  
beorhte blēde, ac þā bēamas ā  
grēne stondað swā him god bibēad.
- Ph.* 78.                   on þām græs-wonge grēne stondaþ  
gehroden hyhtlice hāliges meahtum,  
beorhtast bearwa.
- Gen.* 1479.               ac hēo land begeat,  
grēne bearwas.
- Ph.* 13.                   þæt is wynsum wong, wealdas grēne
- Gen.* 841.                 on þone grēnan weald
- Sal.* 312.               Lȳtle hwīle lēaf bēoð grēne.
- Met.* 19 : 5              Hwæðer gē willen on wuda sēcan  
gold þæt rēade on grēnum trīowum.
- Gen.* 1472.               līðend brōhte  
elebēames twig ān tō hande,  
grēne blāedæ.
- Dan.* 517.               oð þæt eft cyme  
grēne blēda
- Ex.* 280.               hū ic sylfa slōh *and* þēos swīðre hand  
grēne tāne gārsecges deop.
- Gen.* 2548.               Līg eall fornān,  
þæt hē grēnes fond goldburgum in.
- Ph.* 293.                 hēafod hindan grēne

German literature has to offer, for this, as represented by Otfrid and other versifiers, is almost utterly destitute of color-words. The Old Saxon, as represented by the *Heliand*<sup>1</sup> is almost equally barren. The equivalents of O.E. *blæc*, *brūn*, *feala*, *græg*, *hār* and *haso* are not found at all. *Blēk* (O.E. *blāc*) occurs four times; *gelo* (O.E. *geolo*) once; *rōd* (O.E. *rēad*) once; *grōni* (O.E. *grēne*) six times; *swart* (O.E. *sweart*) five times. *Berht* and *torht* are also found, but they play a minor role. Not much perhaps is proved by such a comparison, for if more poems, of a different type, had been preserved, we might have a different story to tell. But there is nevertheless some interest in finding that several of the rarer color-words of Old English poetry are rare or non-existent in Old Saxon poetry, and that green and black (*swart*) hold a prominent place in Old Saxon, as they do in Old English poetry.

In so far, then, as Old English poetry is compared with contemporary Germanic poetry it more than holds its own. When, however, it is put beside the Celtic poems contained in the so-called *Four Ancient Books of Wales* or the Icelandic poems found in the *Corpus Poeticum Boreale*, it is seen to be lacking in vividness and richness of color. In the Welsh

<i>Ph.</i> 297.	sindon þā fiþru hwīt hindan-weard <i>and</i> sē hals grēne niþo-weard <i>and</i> ufe-weard.
<i>Ps.</i> 141 : 4.	On þyssonum grēnan wege.
<i>U. and S.</i> 286.	Gemunan symle on mōde meotodes strengþo, gearwian ūs tōgenes grēne stræte ūp tō englum.
<i>A.</i> 775.	foldweg trēdan grēne grundas.
<i>Guð.</i> 231.	sceoldon wræc-mægcas ofgiefan gnornende grēne beorgas.
<i>Gnom.</i> I. 34.	Beorh seal on eorþan grēne standan.
<i>Rid.</i> 22 : 9.	mē bið gongendre grēne on healfe
<i>Met.</i> 11 : 57.	lēaf grēnian.

<sup>1</sup>The recently discovered O.S. original of the interpolation (ll. 235-858) in the O.E. Genesis, is of course to be credited with all the color-words occurring in that long passage.

poems we meet twelve times the color blue—which is found but once in Old English poetry. In every case the word seems to be used with a sharp definition of the object, even though the exact shade of color may vary. Note these lines :

A shield, light and broad,  
Was on the slender swift flank,  
A sword blue and bright,  
Golden spurs and ermine<sup>1</sup>—

or this,

With his blue streamer displayed, while his foes range the sea.<sup>2</sup>

Yellow occurs thirteen times; black, fourteen times; brown, seven times; green, nineteen times; red or purple, thirty-five times; white, fifty-three times. Lack of space forbids further illustrations, but they would show brilliantly beside almost any example from Old English poetry.

Very different too from the Old English color-scheme is that presented by the Old Icelandic poems. I have gone through the first volume of the *Corp. Poet. Bor.* (comprising 374 pages) and collected all the color-words. The first notable fact is the comparative lack of words for light and darkness, words which play so prominent a part in Old English poetry. The symbolic use of color is also less marked than in Old English. The leading color in Icelandic poetry is red—the most brilliant color of all. This occurs forty-six times, and, it must be confessed, is often used somewhat conventionally. The suggestive phrase, to ‘redden the spear,’ or to ‘redden the sword,’ occurs more than once. ‘Red rings’ and ‘red gold’ are also favorite expressions. White occurs thirty-one times, usually with a keen appreciation of the value of the color. We find the phrases ‘sun-white,’ ‘swan-white,’ ‘drift-white maid,’ ‘whiter than egg-film,’ ‘linen-white,’ ‘white-throated,’ ‘red and white shields,’ and the like. Black occurs thirteen times. We read

<sup>1</sup>*Four Anc. Books*, I, 374.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, I, 402.

of bears with black hide, of something blacker than a raven, of black targets, of a coal-black ox, and so forth. Gray is found eight times, in every case apparently used for the sake of a genuine color-effect. The wolf is once called 'the gray-coated beast,' as in Old English poetry, and the eagle is referred to as 'the gray bird of carrion.' A novelty is found in the mention of a gray mouse and of gray silver. Blood is used eight times, and bloody five times, with a sort of color-effect; but the favorite way of referring to blood is to suggest it by indicating the color which it gives to the sword or to the field. Green occurs but six times, and is used in the most commonplace way. It is applied as a mere epithet to the fields, to paths, herbs, and the forests, once to the ash-tree *Yggdrasil*, and once to the city of the gods. When we remember how freely green is used in Old English poetry, we see that the difference is remarkable.<sup>1</sup> Brown is found only three times, and twice is used as an epithet describing hair. Yellow occurs twice, once as an epithet for the sword and once in describing hair. A fallow steed is mentioned once. Blue is twice used, once to describe a coverlet and once to describe a sark. But this blue was probably not blue in our sense, but more like a deep raven black—*hrafnblár*.<sup>2</sup>

I need hardly say that this sort of numerical comparison is very rough and arbitrary, and that it attempts merely to point out some broad lines of difference in two or three considerable bodies of poetry. In order to make the comparison perfectly fair, we ought, if possible, to take pieces of about the same length and of the same general type, but in so rapid a sketch as the present one I can do no more than call attention to salient characteristics. I cannot undertake in the present paper to make generalizations or to enter upon theoretical explanations of the facts, and I cannot, therefore, make further comparisons, for which I have collected material. I

<sup>1</sup> Yet the rarity of green in most of the O.E. secular poems must be remembered.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Paul's *Grundriss der germ. Phil.*, II., II, 237.

realize clearly the tentative character of the paper in its present form, but I cannot do more without opportunity for more extended discussion. The two notable facts to consider are, that the color-sense in the Old English poets is comparatively feeble, and that conventionality plays a large part in the passages where color is used at all. Genuine freedom in the employment of color-phrases does not come until long after the Norman Conquest, but the tendency to individuality in this respect is one of the most striking characteristics of Elizabethan poetry, as it is also of nineteenth century literature.

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