Discussion Problem for Metrical Variation

A. Lines by Shelley

The following lines are from works of Shelley. Each line contains one or more stressed syllables in W position (underlined). For each such syllable, explain why it is permitted to occupy W. Then determine if the line would have been metrical for Shakespeare and for Pope.

1. one too like me: **tame**less and swift and proud
   Ode West Wind 4.14

2. Meanwhile the sun **paused** ere it should alight
   JM 53

3. Down the **steep** West into a wondrous hue
   JM 73

4. And lofty hopes of **divine** liberty
   Al. 159

5. This day had been **cheer**ful but cold, and now
   JM 34

6. His sad **meek** face and eyes **lustrous** and glazed
   JM 285

7. Of starry ice the grey **grass** and bare boughs
   Al. 10

8. With doubtful smile **mock**ing its own **strange** charms
   Al. 295

9. The lone **couch** of his everlasting sleep:
   Al. 57

10. A schemer subtle **beyond** all belief
    Merc. 2.4

11. Do the **troops** mutiny? — **decimate** some regiments?
    Oed. Tyrr. 1.103

12. Of grass, a wailful gnat, a bee **bustling**
    Endym. 450
B. A poem of Wyatt

Consider the lines marked with ! in the margin. Why are they metrically unusual?

Original spelling

He is not ded that somtyme hath a fall,
The sonne retorneth that was under the clowd,  
And when fortune hath spitt oute all her gall,  
I trust good luck to me shalbe allowd.
For I have sene a shipp into haven fall  
After the storme hath broke boeth mast and shrowd,  
And eke the willowe that stoppeth with the wynde  
Doeth ryse again and greater wode doeth bynd.

Modern English spelling

He is not dead that sometime hath a fall,  
The sun returneth that was under the cloud,  
And when fortune hath spit out all her gall,  
I trust good luck to me shall be allowed.
For I have seen a ship into heaven fall  
After the storm hath broke both mast and shroud,  
And eke the willow that stoppeth with the wind  
Doth rise again and greater wood doth bind.

shroud: sail  
stoppeth: stoops  
greater wood doth bind: ties itself around trees that are larger and stronger