

## Primary Hebrew Rhythm.

WM. HENRY COBB.

BOSTON, MASS.

THE first word of this title is not used in any technical sense ; such as it bears, for instance, in a book to which I am under great obligations, Sidney Lanier's *Science of English Verse* (1880). What is intended here is to simplify, so far as possible, a subject on which the doctors disagree sadly at present, but which I believe to be simple in its fundamental elements. To speak, however, of the "Elements of Hebrew Rhythm" might suggest an attempt more ambitious than this.

I shall confine myself pretty closely to the Massoretic text. Hebrew poetry covers so wide a field that if it is really built on metrical principles, the rhythm will have survived all the fortunes of the text in cases numerous enough to verify its primary forms, at least. It follows that any metrical hypothesis which can only maintain itself by continual manipulation of the text cannot be established at all.

That Hebrew poetry is characterized by parallelism has been a truism since Bishop Lowth's great work, *De sacra poesi Hebraeorum*, 1753. But a clear distinction must be drawn between parallelism, which may belong to either prose or poetry, and rhythm, which belongs to poetry by its very nature. Some modern scholars, who revolt from the extravagances of this or that metrical novelty, have obscured this essential point. A single example should make the difference felt. "A wise son maketh a glad father ; but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother." Here is an excellent prose translation, preserving the contrasts of the original : wise, foolish ; glad, heaviness ; son, father ; son, mother. The parallelism is perfect, but yet something has evaporated ; it is the swing and song of the Hebrew :

*Bēn ḥākām y'sāmmach āv ;*  
*Uvēn F'sil tūgath immō.*

"Son discreet rejoiceth sire ;  
And son a foul his mother's wo."

By comparing these English words with the Authorized Version as given before (the Revised is the same), we are able to ascertain the *differentia* of rhythmical form, whether English, or Hebrew, or other. For the form stands wholly apart from the content. The average child, who knows not a word of Hebrew, will recognize the rhythm and imitate it exactly; meaningless words like *abracadabra* would answer the purpose as well. A moment's inspection shows that the form in the specimen given is of the simplest. The second line, "And son a fool his mother's wo," exactly fits the pendulum movement referred to by Bridaine in the sentence which Longfellow has made familiar: "L'éternité est une pendule, dont le balancier dit et redit sans cesse ces deux mots seulement, dans le silence des tombeaux: 'Toujours! jamais! jamais! toujours!'" The first line also falls into this very scansion, if we render it "A son discreet," etc.; but it corresponds, as it stands, with many such slightly shortened lines, in English and other modern poetry.

The very conception of rhythm suggests the notion of balance, of equipoise. That which is equal cannot be the number of syllables in the words employed; for although this happens to be the same in each segment of Bridaine's pendulum call, it is otherwise in Longfellow's version, which is certainly identical in metre with the original:

"Forever — never — never — forever."

Neither can the fundamental law be found, where it is often plausibly put, in the regular recurrence of the accent. There are four accents, to be sure, in either half of our Hebrew example, and these correspond, each to each; the same is true, too, of the translation which I have put under the Hebrew. But then, the same is true of the unrhythmical prose translation in A.V. and R.V.; any attempt to read this metrically results only in a sing-song utterance of what is unquestionably prose. A piece must first *be* rhythmical, and then the accent *marks* the rhythm; while accents dispersed in any way whatever over a prose selection cannot transform it into metre. Reverting to the pendulum, when we ask what it is that is marked by its swing, the answer is obvious. It is *time*; to speak with the grammarians, it is *quantity*. A deal of absurdity has been written to the effect that English poetry is marked by accent but is destitute of quantity. Quantity is the *conditio sine qua non* of all poetry. Lanier inveighs well against the bondage to Greek and Latin canons of classicism, which is implied in the narrow conception of quantity,

that knows only a long foot and a short foot, and gives every vowel of a word its label apart from its connection. The spontaneous instinct for rhythm of the most varied orders is innate in children and in childlike races; Lanier mentions the "patting dances" among the negroes, where the time may be altered at will, may be synco-pated, or otherwise complicated, and yet the dancer "catches on" readily.

But let us keep for the present to the simplest forms. A child, intoning the Mother Goose melody, *See saw, Margery Daw*, even without having heard a tune for the words, will give each of the monosyllables the same time as the trisyllable. It is easily shown that this is not merely an imitation of what the child has heard from others. For let us write out the full stanza as it is printed nowadays, and taking the shortest syllable for a unit of measure, let us place a figure over the longer syllables, denoting their equivalent time in the child's recital. The result is as follows, neglecting slight varieties due to individual peculiarities of speech :

<sup>1</sup> <sup>2</sup> <sup>3</sup>  
 See saw, Margery Daw,  
<sup>1</sup> <sup>2</sup> <sup>3</sup> <sup>4</sup> <sup>5</sup>  
 Jack shall have a new master;  
<sup>1</sup> <sup>2</sup> <sup>3</sup> <sup>4</sup> <sup>5</sup>  
 He shall have but a penny a day,  
<sup>1</sup> <sup>2</sup> <sup>3</sup> <sup>4</sup> <sup>5</sup>  
 Because he won't work any faster.

Now show the child the lines in their original form. The adjustment will be made instantly and correctly, the crucial test coming at the fourth line :

<sup>1</sup> <sup>2</sup> <sup>3</sup>  
 Se saw, Margery Daw,  
<sup>1</sup> <sup>2</sup> <sup>3</sup> <sup>4</sup> <sup>5</sup>  
 Jacky shall have a new Master;  
<sup>1</sup> <sup>2</sup> <sup>3</sup> <sup>4</sup> <sup>5</sup>  
 Jacky must have but a Penny a Day,  
<sup>1</sup> <sup>2</sup> <sup>3</sup> <sup>4</sup> <sup>5</sup>  
 Because he can work no faster.

From the same original edition, which the child has never seen before, let the following be assigned ; each syllable will be given its true length :

<sup>1</sup> <sup>2</sup> <sup>3</sup> <sup>4</sup> <sup>5</sup>  
 Se saw, saccaradown,  
<sup>1</sup> <sup>2</sup> <sup>3</sup> <sup>4</sup> <sup>5</sup> <sup>6</sup> <sup>7</sup>  
 Which is the way to Boston town?  
<sup>1</sup> <sup>2</sup> <sup>3</sup> <sup>4</sup> <sup>5</sup> <sup>6</sup> <sup>7</sup>  
 One foot up, the other foot down;  
<sup>1</sup> <sup>2</sup> <sup>3</sup> <sup>4</sup> <sup>5</sup> <sup>6</sup> <sup>7</sup>  
 That is the way to Boston town.

The next experiment brings out the remarkable fact that children give the right quantity to rests as well as tones, with nothing to guide

them except their own sense of rhythm. A bracketed figure denotes the equivalent time of a rest :

Dickery, Dickery, Dock; [4]  
 The mouse ran up the clock; [4]  
 The clock struck one, the mouse ran down [1]  
 Dickery, Dickery, Dock. [5]

It is singular, but true, that while a child of quick, nervous temperament will give the passage as above, a child of slower habit will double the time of *dock* and *clock*, and shorten to the same extent the pause that follows, so that the figure 3 will take the place of 4 in the brackets, and 4 that of 5, preserving the rhythm exactly. The fact that the main movement in these nursery rhymes resembles dactylic rather than iambic verse is of minor consequence; the chief matter is the double rhythm. For the sake of brevity, I shall occasionally use the terms "trochee," "iambus," etc., in a modified sense.

I have not thought it best to illustrate by musical notation, as Lanier does; for that is less intelligible than Hebrew to some readers; my method and examples also are different from his. I had not seen his "Science of English Verse" when the greater part of this paper was read before the Harvard Biblical Club in November, 1898. The principal matter I have borrowed from him is the demonstration that for the fundamental element in rhythm we must go behind accent to time. Before taking leave of his book, I wish to protest against the superficial way in which it has generally been criticised—when not entirely neglected—and to quote the opinion of his fellow-poet, E. R. Sill (*Atlantic Monthly*, Nov., 1885) :

"The work of Sidney Lanier on English verse may be recommended as the only one that has ever made any approach to a rational view of the subject. Nor are the standard ones overlooked in making this assertion."

That may be an extravagant judgment, but no one can contradict it with authority, unless he is, like Lanier, both a fine poet and a fine musician.

And now the graver readers of this JOURNAL, who may consider Hebrew folk-lore more dignified than Mother Goose's melodies, are invited to turn to Samson's song of triumph over the Philistines, which, like those we have been examining, is in double rhythm. Many years ago, when my children were little, I recited this couplet in their hearing, and they were so taken with its droll movement that they seized on it with avidity, and have repeated it at intervals

ever since ; sometimes miscalling a Hebrew syllable, but never mistaking the rhythm :

Bil'hî hâh\*môr h\*môr h\*morothâyim  
 Bil'hî hâh\*môr hikkêthi êlēph ish.

Note that a metronome would mark the same time as consumed in the utterance of *h\*môr* and *h\*môrôthâyim*,—a good argument against the syllabic theory of Bickell. The ingenious change in vocalization suggested by Professor Moore (*h\*martim*, *I heaped them*, for *h\*môrôthâyim*, a *double heap*) might be adopted without affecting the rhythm. It is otherwise with Professor Bacon's emendation, as proposed in *The Genesis of Genesis*, p. 14. The author introduces it very confidently :

"The merest tyro in criticism will see at a glance that the word translated 'an ass' in the text, which is identically the same word (*hamor*) as that twice repeated at the end of the first line, is simply what is called a dittograph, the commonest of scribal errors, by which a word is accidentally duplicated in writing. Either because the word *Lehi* ('jaw-bone of') suggested the translation 'an ass' for the first *hamor*, or because the reduplication of the word ('a heap, two heaps') to signify great numbers made confusion, the simple fragment of a war-song

At (Heb. *be*) *Lehi*, a heap, two heaps,  
 At *Lehi* I have slain a thousand men,

was transformed into

With (a secondary sense of *be*) the jaw-bone of an ass, heaps upon heaps,  
 With the jaw-bone of an ass  
 I have slain a thousand men."

Professor Bacon remarks in his second appendix that he has found the same emendation proposed by Schenkel in the *Bibellexicon*. And yet, *pæce tantorum virorum*, could anything be flatter than this result? Without its savage humor and pithiness, the distich might possibly have been remembered thirty years, certainly not thirty centuries.

The pendulum rhythm which we are following lends itself readily to brief and terse utterances. The book of Proverbs abounds in them. Chapter 10 has several besides the one already given ; verse 5 is very similar :

אֵיךְ בָּרוּךְ בֶּן מְשֻׁבֵּל  
 טָרָם בְּקִצְרֵי לֵן מְבִישׁ :

Compare verse 22 :

בְּרַכַּת יְהוָה הִיא תַעֲשֶׂה  
וְלֹא יִסְרֹף אֲנָב טָמֵה :

As the tetragrammaton will often meet us in these rhythmical lines, I will simply state without argument my conviction that its second consonant should be distinctly vocalized, giving to the word the quantity of two and a half syllables ; my own preference is for the form Yā-h<sup>a</sup>-vê. The segholate in the line last quoted gives us a trochee instead of the usual iambus or anapaest. The phenomenon is common enough in our English poets. Perhaps, however, it is commoner in Hebrew ; and one of the objects of this paper is to show with what perfect freedom the Hebrew poet varies his rhythm at will. There are two trochees in Noah's blessing of Shem, Gen. 9<sup>26</sup> :

בְּרָדֶךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי שָׁם  
וְיֵהֱ כִנְעַן אֶבְרָם לָמוֹ :

There are two others in the song of Sarah at Isaac's birth, Gen. 21<sup>6</sup> :

אֲזָכַר קְשֵׁה לִי אֱלֹהִים  
כִּל הַשְׁמֵט אֲזָכַר לִי :

Some of the specimens already adduced refute the mistaken dictum that Hebrew poetry objects to two accents in immediate succession.

The double rhythm may be prevailingly or wholly trochaic ; for the former case, take the call to the Shulammitte, Cant. 7<sup>1</sup> :

שׁוּבֵי שׁוּבֵי הַשׁוּלָמִית  
שׁוּבֵי שׁוּבֵי וַיִּחַדָּהּ בָּךְ :

The beautiful line which opens the prayer of Jonah is wholly trochaic :

קָרָאתִי מַצָּרָה לִי אֵל יְהוָה וַיִּשְׁמָעֵנִי :

*When I called upon Jehovah  
From my deep distress, he heard me.*

Perhaps this comes as near the form of modern verse as anything in the Hebrew Bible. Prov. 10<sup>1</sup> might, it is true, be scanned in the same way. But according to the analogy of similar proverbs, it is better, I think, to regard the first foot as shortened and the whole as iambic.

The metre in question is by no means confined to short sentences. A long example, almost wholly in this form, is the so-called oracle of the desert of the sea, Isa. 21<sup>1-10</sup>. I quote two consecutive verses, just as they stand in MT (vss. 3, 4. The whole passage is given, with an English rendering, in this JOURNAL, vol. xvii, 1898, pp. 47-49) :

עֲלֵינוּ מַלְאֵי קִתְּנֵי חֲלֻקָּה  
 צִדִּים אֲחֻזֵי קִצְרֵי יוֹלָה  
 נִשְׁחֵתִי מִשְׁמַע נְבִלְתֵי מְרָאוֹת:  
 חֲקֹה לְכָבִי פִלְצוֹת בְּעִתְּחֹנִי  
 אִם נִשְׁחֵת חֲשֵׁקִי עִם לִי לְחֻרְדָּה:

The last word has two accents, the previous לִי being glided over as unimportant. One more example may suffice; this double measure is the prevailing one in the song of Moses, Ex. 15, occurring in more than half of its verses. I give the first verse and the last three :

אֲשַׁרְדָּה לַיהוָה בְּרִנָּה נָא  
 טוֹם וּרְכָבוֹ רָמָה בָּיָם:  
 הַפֶּל עֲלֵיהֶם אֵימָתָה וְסַחַר  
 בְּגֹל דוֹעֵף דָּמֹו קֶאֱבֹן  
 עַד יַעֲבֹר עִמָּךְ יְהוָה  
 עַד יַעֲבֹר עִם אֱלֹהֵי:  
 תִּבְאֲמוּ וְתִשְׁעֲמוּ בְּהַר נְחֻלְתֶּךָ  
 מִכֹּזֶן לְשִׁבְתֶּךָ שְׁעֵלְתָּ יְהוָה  
 מִמִּקְדָּשׁ אֲדֹנָי בּוֹנֵנוּ יְדָד:  
 יְהוָה יִמְלֹךְ לְעֹלָם וָעֶד:

The last verse, and several others which have been copied, show that the pendulum rhythm is written in 4-toned lines rather than 8-toned lines.

The objection may arise here, that to find this simple rhythm I have leaped over many verses which would not fit into the scheme. This I not only admit, but claim; it is not a difficulty to be met, but merely a new fact, illustrating a principle that will presently be plain. It has no bearing whatever on the other fact, which I hope is now manifest, that the pendulum metre, 2 = 2, is frequent in Hebrew poetry. I might have quoted hundreds of such lines.

The next in point of simplicity would be 3 = 3; and this is even more common than the other; probably it is the commonest of all. We find it, for example, in Psalm 18, with its duplicate in 2 Sam. 22. Turn to Psalm 18<sup>17-19</sup>:

ישלח סמרום יקחני ימשני סמים רבים:  
 תאלני מארבי ען ומשנאי כי אמצו ממני:  
 יקרבני ביום ארדי יהי דהו למשקן לי:

The rhythm is a surer guide as to the last word than the heavy *Sillug*; the accent falls on the previous syllable, while לִי is enclitic as before. At the beginning of Isa. 41 there are six consecutive verses written in this metre without a break. The rough conjunction of accents and rests in verse 2 וּמַלְכִים יִרְדֵּי is doubtless intentional, to express the idea, the subjection of kings. It is probably unnecessary to print the Hebrew, as the accents run in accordance with the following version:

Keep silence before me, O isles!  
 Ye people, gather fresh strength.  
 They approach; yea, they will speak;  
 Together for judgment we come.  
 Who stirred him up from the East?  
 Right will call him to its foot, [will]  
 Give up the nations before him,  
 Make him to rule o'er kings,  
 Like the dust his sword shall make them,  
 Like driven stubble his bow.  
 He pursues them, passes on safe,  
 Treads not the ground with his feet.  
 Who hath wrought and accomplished,  
 Calling of old the generations?  
 I, Jahve, the first;  
 Yea, with the last I am He.  
 Coast-lands beheld and feared;  
 The ends of the earth were afraid;  
 Lo, they approach, they have come!  
 Each his companion doth help,  
 Each saith to his brother, "Be strong!"

While some of these double lines are English hexameters, others imitate the flexibility of the original, which is as likely to begin a line with an amphibrach or an anapaest as with a dactyl. But the quantity, and hence the rhythm, remains constant, as shown by the triple tone.



This metre occurs regularly from beginning to end, in the forty-three Massoretic verses, making seventy lines of poetry, that form the song of Moses, Deut. 32. We may test it anywhere, e.g. in vss. 31-33:

כִּי לֹא כַעֲדֵנוּ צִדִּים וְאֵיבֵנוּ פְּלִלִים :  
 כִּי מָנֹן קָרִים נִסְתָּם וּמִשְׁדָּמַת עַמֶּיךָ  
 עֲנֹבְמוּ עֲנֵבֵי רֹאשׁ אֲשַׁכְּלֶת מִרְדַּת לָמוֹ :  
 חֲמַת חַיִּים הֵנָּה רֹאשׁ פְּתִימִים אֲכֹד :

We can hardly call this triple measure a pendulum rhythm, for the beat of the pendulum is not divisible into threes. Let us then adopt the symbol of a balance, with three divisions in each half, thus :



The first half of the stichos balances the second half in quantity ; in other words, the time consumed in enunciating the syllables contained in  $a+b+c$  equals that represented by  $d+e+f$ . In strictness, each of these six letters stands for an equal division of time. Now just as all mathematics is reducible to addition, all possible metres are variations of twos and threes. Here comes in the principle alluded to before, and well brought out by Professor Briggs (e.g. "Study of Holy Scripture," p. 365), namely, that the Hebrew poet, in a given composition, was not held to rule so rigidly as his modern successor. When he chose, he used the same rhythm throughout a long passage, as the double measure in Isa. 21<sup>1-10</sup>, or the triple measure in Deut. 32 ; when he chose to do otherwise, he violated no law. Instead of formulating complicated rules with countless exceptions, let us observe and recognize his spontaneity ; the whole subject will then be simplified. Thus, the alternation between twos and threes is pleasing to the ear as it occurs in the sixth Psalm ; it seems fair to draw the inference that it was meant to be. The triple time in verse 2 is followed at once by the double time in verse 3. Observe the two accents in the penultimate word of verse 2 :

זֶהָ אֵל בְּאִפְסֹד תִּזְכְּרֵנִי  
 וְאֵל בְּהִמְתָּד תִּיִסְרֵנִי :  
 חֲנֵנִי יְהוָה כִּי אֶמְלֵל אֹנִי  
 רַחֲמֵי יְהוָה כִּי נִבְרָלִי עַמִּי :

Psalm 29 has several such changes; for example verses 4 (triple) and 5 (double):

קֹל יְהוָה בְּקוֹל יְהוָה בְּהַקְדָּר:  
 קֹל יְהוָה שֹׁבֵר אֲרָזִים  
 יִשְׁבֹּר יְהוָה אֵת אֲרָזֵי הַלְבָּנוֹן:

In the last line, the four tones cover fourteen syllables, whereas Prov. 10<sup>1a</sup> has only seven syllables for the same rhythm. What could furnish a more decisive refutation of Bickell's theory that the Hebrew poets, like the moderns, counted the syllables of their lines? Exceptions can be pointed out in modern compositions, it is true; but the *rule* must have been different in Hebrew verse. Psalm 29<sup>3b</sup> illustrates also the difference between Hebrew and classic metre; הַלְבָּנוֹן is one of our modified iambs, and יִשְׁבֹּר is another. As Professor Briggs remarks ("Biblical Study," p. 263), we can only approximate to the effect of the Hebrew by frequent practice in the utterance of its verses.

The next step in point of simplicity is to make the change from twos to threes, or *vice versa*, within the compass of the line itself. This gives a 5-toned line, regarded as composed of 2 + 3 tones, or of 3 + 2 tones, according to the place of the cesura. Here the objector seems to have a clear case against us for violating the fundamental nature of rhythm. What has become of the balance, the equipoise, which belongs to the very essence of rhythm? I reply, it is not far to seek. Children can balance at see-saw on an unequally divided teter-board, provided the heavier child moves through the smaller arc. Conversely, the longer space determines the more rapid movement. Let us proceed inductively, as before, in the application.

Ex. 15<sup>5</sup> gives a regular example of two tones followed by three. The weighty pause at the cesura helps to even up the line:

תְּרַמֵּת יִבְסְלוּ יְרֵדוּ בַמַּצֹּלֹת כְּמוֹ אֶבֶן:

The same thing occurs twice in the blessing pronounced on Rebekah, Gen. 24<sup>60</sup>:

אֲחֻזָּה אֵת הָיָי לְאֵלֶיךָ רֵבְקָה  
 יְרֵדֶשׁ יְרֵדֶשׁ אֵת שְׁעַר שְׂנְאָיו:

Two more, and again in immediate succession, are found in Cant. 5<sup>2b</sup>; the second is less regular, just as Shakespeare often breaks up the uniformity of his pentameter by trioles, pauses, etc.:

פְּתַחֵי לִי אֲחֻזֵי רֵעִיתִי זִנְתִי תַמְתִּי  
 שְׂרָאשִׁי נִמְלֵא קוֹל קוֹצוֹת רֵסִים לִילָה:

Far more commonly, the cesura follows the third beat. In that case, the pause at the end of the line preserves the balance. A good example is the beginning of the vineyard song, Isa. 5<sup>1</sup>:

כָּרִים הָיָה לִידְרֵי בְּקָרָן בֶּן שָׁמֶן:

We have the same rhythm repeatedly in the latter part of the nineteenth Psalm, where the English version makes it as clear as the original:

The law of the Lord is perfect,  
restoring the soul:  
The testimony of the Lord is sure,  
making wise the simple.  
The precepts of the Lord are right,  
rejoicing the heart:  
The commandment of the Lord is pure,  
enlightening the eyes.  
The fear of the Lord is clean,  
enduring for ever:  
The judgments of the Lord are true,  
and righteous altogether.

Very often, but as we have just seen not always, a line with three tones before two produces the characteristic metre of elegy, *Qind*, *Klagelied*, which Professor Budde has made his own. The typical example is the book of Lamentations, especially chapters 2, 3, 4. A more brilliant specimen is the mocking elegy in Isa. 14. I quote vss. 12-14:

הִלַּל בֶּן שֹׁחַד	אֵד נִפְלְתָה מַשְׁמַיִם
: חוֹלַשׁ עַל נְלִיָּם:	אֵד נִנְרַטְתָּ לְאֶרֶץ
הַשָּׁמַיִם אֵטְלָה	וְאֵתָה אֲמַרְתָּ בְּלִבְבְּךָ
אָרִים בְּסֵאֵי	מִמֶּעַל לְכֹכְבֵי אֵל
: בִּירְבַּתִּי צִפּוֹן:	וְאֵשׁב בְּנֵר מוֹעֵד
: אֲדַמָּה לְעַלְיוֹן:	אֵטְלָה עַל בְּמַחְתֵי עֵב
: אֵל יִדְבַּחְתִּי בּוֹר:	אֵךְ אֵל שְׂאוֹל תִּיָּדֵר

For regularity and beauty, this will challenge comparison with any passage in the Lamentations.

It is not unusual to meet with a 7-toned line, in which, as in the 5-toned line, the cesura may fall on either side of the centre, 3+4

or 4+3. We have an example of each in the song of Deborah.  
First, Judg. 5<sup>4b</sup>:

אֶרְצָן רָעָשָׁה זָם שָׁמַיִם נָטְפוּ  
זָם עָבִים נָטְפוּ מַיִם:

This is 4+3. But verse 12<sup>a</sup> is 3+4:

שׁוּרֵי שׁוּרֵי דְבוֹרָה  
שׁוּרֵי שׁוּרֵי דְבוֹרָה שִׁיר

The Massoretic note, here and at Isa. 51<sup>9</sup>, calls attention to the variation of accent, עֲוֹרֵי followed by עֲוֹרֵי. I suppose the design of the change, in either case, was purely metrical, namely, to avoid an uneuphonic succession. The play on the name of Deborah would have been unparadonable if it had been introduced thus:

שׁוּרֵי שׁוּרֵי דְבוֹרָה  
שׁוּרֵי שׁוּרֵי דְבוֹרָה שִׁיר

There is a 7-toned line at the close of the one hundredth Psalm (4+3):

כִּי מִוֶּב יִהְיֶה לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד  
תֵּדַד הַר הַיְיָ אֲמוֹנָתוֹ:

Another begins David's song of the bow, 2 Sam. 1<sup>19</sup>:

הֶאֱבִי יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל בְּמִוְחָד תִּלְל  
אֵדָד נִסְלוּ גְבוּרִים:

The cesural pause here is full of pathos.

Sometimes the triple rhythm meets us thrice instead of twice in immediate succession, giving a 9-toned line, whose symbol is the triangle instead of the balance or the pendulum. A clear case is the blessing of Asher, Deut. 33<sup>29</sup>:

בְּרִיחַ מִקְנִים אֲשֶׁר  
יְהִי רֹצֵחַ אֶחָיו  
וַיַּכֵּל בְּשֶׁמֶן רֵגְלוֹ:

There seems to be no other way to read this, and no reason for trying to escape from the symmetry of its  $3 \times 3$  accents. Compare the blessing of Joseph, Gen. 49<sup>22</sup>:

בֵּן פִּרְתַּי יִזְכֶּר  
 בֵּן פִּרְתַּי עָלַי יֵן  
 בְּנֹת צַעֲדָה עָלַי שָׂר:

This might, indeed, be hurried into a 7-toned line (4+3), but is more effective, and much more accordant with the context, if the voice dwells upon each בֵּן.

Psalm 24 is metrical throughout; it illustrates nearly all the varieties of form which we have been examining. It illustrates also the perfect freedom with which the poet passed at will from one metrical mode to another. Note the three 9-toned lines in regular sequence, vss. 7, 8, 9. Mark the assonance in vss. 1, 3, 6. Observe too the change from *מִי יְהוָה* in verse 8 to *מִי הוּא יְהוָה* in verse 10, and the consequent alteration of the accent, which I have imitated in the English. The metrical scheme of the psalm is as follows:

Verses 1, 2 are 6-toned lines, 3, 3.

Verse 3 is an 8-toned line, 4, 4.

Verse 4 is a 4-toned line, followed by a 7-toned line (4+3).

Verse 5 is a 7-toned line (4+3).

Verse 6 is a 6-toned line, 3, 3.

(But LXX and RV. would make it a 7-toned line (3+4).)

Verses 7, 8, 9 are 9-toned lines, 3, 3, 3.

Verse 10 is a 7-toned line (3+4).

In this last line, the pause after the first *הַקְּבוֹד* is like that after *רְבוֹרָה* in Judg. 5<sup>12</sup>. It would be simpler to regard this, and indeed every 7-toned line, as two lines of 3 and 4 tones respectively; were it not for the fact that a line of only three tones violates our conception of rhythm; there being nothing to suggest the idea of balance. I prefer to consider the isolated three tones at the beginning of the eighteenth and the one hundredth Psalms as standing outside the proper metrical scansion, just like the two-toned *Hallelu-jah* at the beginning and end of the last five Psalms.

If the reader will now turn to the Hebrew of the twenty-fourth Psalm, and compare it, line for line, with the appended English version, he will find a close correspondence in the rhythmical structure of the two. The admittedly mechanical translation will accomplish

its purpose if it helps to familiarize any one with the graceful flow of the original, which surely deserves the name of poetry by the strictest of modern tests:

1. To Jahvé the earth and its fulness,  
the world and the dwellers therein.
2. For Hé upon seas has based it,  
yea, upon floods established it.
3. Who shall ascend the mount of Jahvé,  
and who shall stand in the place of his holiness?
4. The clean of hands and the pure of heart,  
who lifteth not up his soul to fraud,  
and sweareth not to deceit.
5. A blessing is his from before Jahvé,  
even right from the God who saves him.
6. This is the race of his followers;  
seeking thy face, O [God of] Jacob.
7. Lift up, O gates, your heads;  
be uplifted, O doors of old;  
now enters the King of glory.
8. Who is yon King of glory?  
Jahvé, the strong, the hero;  
Jahvé, the hero of battle.
9. Lift up, O gates, your heads;  
be uplifted, O doors of old;  
now enters the King of glory.
10. Who is yon King of glory?  
Jahvé of hosts is the King of glory.

At this point the sceptic may be inclined to ask whether all things are not possible to this elastic metrical system. Already we have postulated lines of 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 tones; could we not take any sentence in the Old Testament and bring it under some one of these classes? By no means, I reply; and if we could, we would not forget the gulf between prose and poetry. A piece, I repeat, must first *be* rhythmical; then the tone *marks* the rhythm. The man who should attempt to scan the seventh chapter of Numbers or the nineteenth chapter of Joshua would be the man that hath no music in himself. Let no such man be trusted.

But furthermore, the thing is impossible. Accidental verses are exceptional in any language; I believe there are only two or three

such in the whole compass of the New Testament (*e.g.* Luke 5<sup>21</sup> τίς ἐστὶν οὗτος ὃς λαλεῖ βλασφημίας;) Doubtless there are many more such in the Old Testament; but whoever supposes these metres adjustable anywhere can soon be cured; by practising, for instance, on the lists of names in the sixth chapter of 1 Chronicles.

It is altogether probable that, if we could recover the true text in many passages which are really metrical, the scansion would be greatly simplified; the crooked would be made straight and the rough places plain. Thus far I have followed the Massoretic consonants strictly, except that I supplied (with the best editors) the single word  $\text{אֱלֹהִים}$  at Isa. 14<sup>12b</sup>. The two procedures to which I object are first the attempt to establish a metrical theory by changing the received readings whenever they prove stubborn, and next the use of a theory established in that way to justify further emendations. I would go so far as to hold that a prophet, or a psalmist, about to publish his oracles, may have cared so little for form in comparison with substance, as to begin with a rhythmical intent, which he would not take time to carry out to perfection. Nevertheless, we all must grant the presence of a large amount of error in the traditional Bible; we all assign a certain value, be it more or less, to conjectural readings; and certainly a conjecture is none the worse when by a trifling change it brings metrical order out of disorder. In studying the metres, I have not had this end in view; my interest has been literary, not critical. The value of the metres as an aid to critical analysis has been well brought out by Professor Francis Brown (this JOURNAL, vol. ix, 1890, pp. 71-106). In my article on the Ode in Isa. xiv (vol. xv, 1896), I offered a few slight emendations, on which I would not lay much weight. But that something of the sort is needed acquires some probability from the fact that the ode would thus fall into five regular and perfect seven-lined strophes like the one I have given above (Isa. 14<sup>12-14</sup>). Another suggestion has occurred to me, which I give for what it may be worth. The song of Lamech, Gen. 4<sup>23f</sup>, consists of three lines, the last of which emphasizes the number seven. It is itself a perfect 7-toned line (4+3). So too is the first line; and the second would be also, if we could make a slight insertion, supplying, for example, the subject  $\text{אָנִי}$  after  $\text{הִרְגֵנִתִּי}$ . Then the whole would read:

קָדָה תְּצַלֶּה שְׂמֵת קוֹלִי  
נָשִׂי לְמַד הַאֲזִינָה אִמְרָתִי  
כִּי אִישׁ הִרְגֵנִתִּי אֲנִי לְסֹאֵסִי

וְלִדְ לַחֲבֵרֹתַי׃  
 כִּי שִׁבְעָתַיִם יָקַם לָחֹ  
 וְלִמְדָ שִׁבְעָתַיִם וְשִׁבְעָה׃

Adhah and Šillah, hear ye my voice;  
 wives of Lamech, give ear to my speech!  
 For a man have I slain because he did wound me,  
 a youth because of my bruise.  
 For seven fold is the vengeance of Cain,  
 but Lamech's is seventy and seven.

The subject of strophes I shall leave untouched at present; they seem to relate quite as much to rhetorical distinctions of thought as to metrical distinctions of form. Moreover, I think that the needed harmony among students of Hebrew poetry would be secured sooner if the matters discussed could be confined within narrow limits.

I have made myself acquainted with the leading modern authorities on the subject of Hebrew metre. It appears to me that Professor Budde, and also Professor Briggs (especially in his later work, *The Study of Holy Scripture*), are in the right in their general method of treatment. Professor König's recent work in this department is also admirably done (see this JOURNAL, 1901, p. 90). But I feel obliged to differ from the two scholars who have written most extensively on this theme, Professor Gustav Bickell and Dr. Julius Ley. With many of Ley's positions in his *Grundzüge des Rhythmus* I find myself in substantial accord; but when he comes to apply these general principles, I cannot follow his lead. Instead of starting with simple forms, he begins with octameters, to which he assigns an inherent virtue of expansion and contraction. Though doing little violence to the Massoretic text, he shows, I think, great lack of judgment in measuring it. His first example is the one I have just given, the sword song of Lamech. This is made an octameter by putting a distinct pause between the construct נָשִׁי and the governing noun לִמְדָ; this is his count:

קָדְרָה וְצִילָה שָׁמְעוּ קוֹלִי  
 נָשִׁי לִמְדָ הָאֲזָנָה אִמְרָתִי

as though he had said, "O wives! O Lamech! attend to my word." This case is not exceptional with Dr. Ley, but typical. Further, he has elaborated a system of compensation and substitution, by which



the octameter develops into the decameter, the trichotomic octameter, the catalectic hexameter, the elegiac pentameter, and many others, with a good margin for miscellaneous combinations. Were this simply a matter of nomenclature, it would be of little consequence; but when precisely the same metre is regarded as a variety of octameter or of pentameter according to the *subject* treated, the confusion between form and content is obvious. It is no wonder that Budde and Briggs, who start with him, soon draw back.<sup>1</sup>

I have given much attention to Bickell's principal work, *Carmina Veteris Testamenti metrica*. In my opinion, this is wrong fundamentally. It follows the alleged (though disputed) analogies of Syriac poetry in a way so prosaic that it would sap the life of any poetry. The author never seems to perceive the suicidal character of his theory, which he forces through by making the necessary hacks and twists in the received text. Under his guidance, Job begins the narrative of his woes in these trochaics:

Jöbäd jöm ivväléd bö,  
V'hallajja, — mar: horä gäbr!

I am sure that if Job could have heard his sorrows chanted in that procrustean measure, he would have smiled at all his pain.

But a truce to these strictures; lest I forget that with what measure I mete, it will be measured to me again. I surrender myself to the goodly fellowship of the critics, and join thereby the noble army of martyrs.

<sup>1</sup> In his later work, *Leitfaden der Metrik*, 1887, Dr. Ley has abandoned the scheme of compensation and substitution.