

CHAPTER I

VERSIFICATION AND RHYTHMIC PARALLELISM

THE Bible is the worst-printed book in the world. No other monument of ancient or modern literature suffers the fate of being put before us in a form that makes it impossible, without strong effort and considerable training, to take in elements of literary structure which in all other books are conveyed directly to the eye in a manner impossible to mistake.

Literary form of
Scripture ob-
scured by ordi-
nary modes of
printing

By universal consent the authors of the Sacred Scriptures included men who, over and above qualifications of a more sacred nature, possessed literary power of the highest order. But between their time and ours the Bible has passed through what may be called an Age of Commentary, extending over fifteen centuries and more. During this long period form, which should be the handmaid of matter, was more and more overlooked; reverent, keen, minute analysis and exegesis, with interminable verbal discussion, gradually swallowed up the sense of literary beauty. When the Bible emerged from this Age of Commentary, its artistic form was lost; rabbinical commentators had divided it into 'chapters,' and mediæval translators into 'verses,' which not only did not agree with, but often ran counter to, the original structure. The force of this unliterary tradition proved too strong even for the literary instincts of King James's translators. Accordingly, one who reads only the 'Authorized Version' incurs a double danger: if he reads his Bible by chapters he will, without knowing it, be often commencing in the middle of one com-

position and leaving off in the middle of another; while, in
in particular: whatever way he may read it, he will know no dis-
verse printed as tinction between prose and verse. It is only in
prose our own day that a better state of things has
 arisen. The Church of England led the way by issuing its 'New
 Lectionary'; the new lessons will be found to differ from the old
 chiefly in the fact that the passages marked out for public reading
 are no longer limited by the beginnings and endings of chapters.
 Later still the 'Revised Version' of the Bible, whatever it may
 have left undone, has at all events made an attempt to rescue
 Biblical poetry from the reproach of being printed as prose.

It is to the latter of these two points — the distinction between
 verse and prose — that I address myself in the present chapter.

**Biblical Versifi-
 cation based on
 parallelism of
 clauses**

No doubt the confusion of the two would have
 been impossible, were it not that the versification
 of the Bible is of a kind totally unlike that which
 prevails in English literature. Biblical verse is
 made neither by rhyme nor by numbering of syllables; its long-
 lost secret was discovered by Bishop Lowth more than a cen-
 tury after King James's time. Its underlying principle is found
 to be the symmetry of clauses in a verse, which has come to be
 called 'Parallelism.'

Hast thou given the horse his might?

Hast thou clothed his neck with the quivering mane?

Hast thou made him to leap as a locust?

The glory of his snorting is terrible.

He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength:

He goeth out to meet the armed men.

He mocketh at fear, and is not dismayed;

Neither turneth he back from the sword.

The quiver rattleth against him,

The flashing spear and the javelin.

He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage;

Neither standeth he still at the voice of the trumpet.

As oft as the trumpet soundeth he saith, Aha!

And he smelleth the battle afar off,

The thunder of the captains, and the shouting.

It is abundantly clear, first, that this is a passage of the highest rhythmic beauty; secondly, that the effect depends neither on rhyme nor metre. Like the swing of a pendulum to and fro, like the tramp of an army marching in step, the versification of the Bible moves with a rhythm of parallel lines.

How closely the effect of this versification is bound up with the parallelism of the clauses, the reader may satisfy himself by a simple experiment. Let him take such a psalm as the one hundred and fifth; and, commencing (say) with the eighth verse, let him read on, omitting the second line of each couplet: what he reads will then make excellent historic prose.

He hath remembered his covenant for ever: the covenant which he made with Abraham, and confirmed the same unto Jacob for a statute, saying, "Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan," when they were but a few men in number, and they went about from nation to nation. He suffered no man to do them wrong, saying, "Touch not mine anointed ones."

Let him now read again, putting in the lines omitted: the prose becomes transformed into verse full of the rhythm and lilt of a march.

He hath remembered his covenant for ever,
 The word which he commanded to a thousand generations;
 The covenant which he made with Abraham,
 And his oath unto Isaac;
 And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a statute,
 To Israel for an everlasting covenant:
 Saying, "Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan,
 The lot of your inheritance":
 When they were but a few men in number;
 Yea, very few, and sojourners in it;
 And they went about from nation to nation,
 From one kingdom to another people
 He suffered no man to do them wrong;
 Yea, he reprov'd kings for their sakes;
 Saying, "Touch not mine anointed ones,
 And do my prophets no harm."

I am loth to delay the reader with what may seem to be merely technical matters. But attention to just a few of the elementary forms of Hebrew verse will richly repay itself in increased susceptibility to the rhythmic cadence of Biblical poetry. Passing then to other figures, it is natural to mention first the Quatrain, which has four lines. The four lines may be related to one another in various ways, of which the commonest is Alternation, the first line being parallel with the third, and the second with the fourth.

Quatrains and
Double Triplets

With the merciful
Thou wilt show thyself merciful:
With the perfect man
Thou wilt show thyself perfect.¹

In the Quatrain Reversed, or Introverted, the first line corresponds with the fourth, and the two middle lines with one another.

Have mercy upon me, O God,
According to thy loving kindness:
According to the multitude of Thy tender mercies
Blot out my transgressions.²

Usually such introversion is merely a matter of form; but sometimes it is found to be closely bound up with the sense.

Give not that which is holy unto the dogs,
Neither cast your pearls before the swine:
Lest haply they [*the swine*] trample them under their feet,
And [*the dogs*] turn and rend you.³

¹ *Psalm* xviii. 25. The following verse is another example, and this figure is very common.

² *Psalm* li. 1. Compare the metre of *In Memoriam*. Other examples are *Psalm* ciii. 1; ix. 15.

³ *Matthew* vii. 6. It will be observed that Hebrew parallelism strongly influences the language of the New Testament, and of Apocryphal books originally Greek. It is therefore technically correct to treat 'Biblical' literature as a department by itself.

Very rarely the couplets of a Quatrain are not only parallel but interwoven, so that the sense of the first line is carried on by the third, and the sense of the second by the fourth.

I will make mine arrows drunk with blood,
 And my sword shall devour flesh :
 With the blood of the slain and the captives,
 [*Flesh*] From the head of the leaders of the enemy.¹

As we have Quatrain and Quatrain Reversed, so we have the Double Triplet and the Triplet Reversed.

Ask, and it shall be given you ;
 Seek, and ye shall find ;
 Knock, and it shall be opened unto you.
 For every one that asketh receiveth,
 And he that seeketh findeth,
 And to him that knocketh it shall be opened.²

The eye catches what the ear confirms in this arrangement : how the first line of the second triplet balances the first line of the first triplet, the second the second, and the third the third. But in what follows the order of the second triplet is reversed, so that the beginning of the whole corresponds with the end, and the middle lines with one another :

No servant can serve two masters :
 For either he will hate the one,
 And love the other ;
 Or else he will hold to one,
 And despise the other.
 Ye cannot serve God and mammon.³

It is to be observed that such figures occur either **Recitative additions to Figures** pure or intermixed with a sequence of words that

¹ *Deut.* xxxii. 42.

² *Matthew* vii. 7, 8. Other examples are *Matthew* xii. 35 ; *Isaiah* xxxv. 5.

³ *Luke* xvi. 13. Other examples are *Proverbs* xxx. 8, 9 ; *Ezekiel* i. 27.

remains outside the rhythm, like the 'recitative' of a chant. Such a recitative may occur at the beginning :

And in that day thou shalt say

I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord,
 For though thou wast angry with me,
 Thine anger is turned away,
 And thou comfortest me.

or at the end :

Make the heart of this people fat,
 And make their ears heavy,
 And shut their eyes :
 Lest they see with their eyes,
 And hear with their ears,
 And understand with their heart :
and turn again and be healed.

Or the recitative may even occur by interruption in the middle of the figure : a passage in *St. Matthew* has two Reversed Quatrains in succession thus interrupted.

Whosoever shall swear by the Temple, it is nothing,
 But whosoever shall swear by the Gold of the Temple, he is a debtor :
 (*Ye fools and blind*)
 For whether is greater, the Gold?
 Or the Temple that hath sanctified the Gold?

And, Whosoever shall swear by the Altar, it is nothing,
 But whosoever shall swear by the Gift that is upon it, he is a debtor :
 (*Ye fools and blind*)
 For whether is greater, the Gift?
 Or the Altar that sanctifieth the Gift?

There is no limit to the length or variety of such figures in Biblical versification. Of the more elaborate it will be enough to instance two. The Chain Figure is made up of a succession of clauses so linked that the goal of one clause becomes the starting-point of the next.

The Chain Figure

That which the palmerworm hath left
 hath the locust eaten;
 and that which the locust hath left
 hath the cankerworm eaten;
 and that which the cankerworm hath left
 hath the caterpillar eaten.¹

The figure is all the more impressive when an additional line comes to complete the chain of ideas by connecting the end with the beginning.

For her true beginning is
 desire of discipline;
 And the care for discipline is
 love of her;
 And love of her is
 observance of her laws;
 And to give heed to her laws
 confirmeth incorruption;
 And incorruption bringeth near unto God;
 So then desire of wisdom promoteth to a kingdom.

But perhaps the most important figure, and the one most attractive to the genius of Hebrew poetry, is the Envelope Figure, by which a series of parallel lines running to any length are enclosed between an identical (or equivalent) opening and close. The Envelope
Figure

By their fruits ye shall know them.
 Do men gather grapes of thorns?
 Or figs of thistles?
 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit,
 But the corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit:
 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit,
 Neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.
 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit
 Is hewn down, and cast into the fire.
 Therefore by their fruits ye shall know them.²

¹ *Joel* i. 4. Other examples are in *Hosea* ii. 21, 22; *Romans* x. 14, 15; *II Peter* i. 5-7. The passage next cited is from *Wisdom* vi. 17-20.

² Compare *Psalms* viii: or, in English poetry, the opening stanza of Southey's *Thalaba*.

The same artistic effect of envelopment is produced when in such a figure the close is not a repetition of the opening, but completes it, so that the opening and the close make a unity which the parallel clauses develop.

Consider the ravens :

that they sow not,
neither reap :
which have no store-chamber nor barn ;
and God feedeth them :

Of how much more value are ye than the birds !¹

The general subject of versification includes not only these Figures of Parallelism, the ultimate form by which Biblical verse separates itself from prose, but also those larger aggregations of lines and verses making integral parts of a poem, which may be called 'Stanzas.' Four points may be noted in regard to the position of the stanzas in the structure of Hebrew verse.

First, a poem may be composed of similar figures throughout : this is the treatment most familiar to the reader of English literature. The hundred and twenty-first psalm is made up of four similar quatrains.

Psalm cxxi I will lift up mine eyes unto the mountains :
From whence shall my help come ?
My help cometh from the LORD,
Which made heaven and earth.

He will not suffer thy foot to be moved :
He that keepeth thee will not slumber ;
Behold, he that keepeth Israel
Shall neither slumber nor sleep.

The LORD is thy keeper :
The LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand ;
The sun shall not smite thee by day,
Nor the moon by night.

¹ *Luke* xii. 24. — The figure made by a Question and its Answer comes under this head ; e.g. *Psalms* xv, or *Psalms* xxiv. 3-6.

The LORD shall keep thee from all evil :
 He shall keep thy soul ;
 The LORD shall keep thy going out and thy coming in,
 From this time forth and for evermore.

Here may be mentioned a device of versification which applies to this as to all varieties of structure. It is the Refrain : the recurrence of a verse (or part of a verse) the repetition of which, besides being an artistic effect in itself, assists also in marking off such divisions as stanzas. A refrain in stanzas of this first kind will be given by the familiar hundred and thirty-sixth psalm ; the poem is wholly composed of couplets, and the second line of each couplet is the refrain,

For his mercy endureth for ever.

A second treatment of stanzas is seen where a psalm is found to be composed of different figures. The analysis of the first psalm yields a result of this nature. First we have a triple triplet preceded by a recitative.

2. Stanzas of
 Varying Figures

Blessed is the man

Psalm i

that walketh not
 in the counsel
 of the wicked,
 Nor standeth
 in the way
 of sinners,
 Nor sitteth
 in the seat
 of the scornful.

This is followed by a quatrain reversed.

But his delight
 is in the law of the LORD :
 And in his law
 Doth he meditate day and night.

The next verse is a good example of the closeness with which form reflects matter. Its form is found to be a double quatrain with an introduction. On examination this recitative introduction will be seen to put forward the general thought — the comparison of the devout life to a tree ; while the figure works this thought out into particulars, on the plan of the left-hand members of the figure suggesting elements of vegetable life — the planting, the fruitage, the foliage — and the right-hand members predicating perfection of each.

And he shall be like a Tree

Planted
 by the streams of water,
 That bringeth forth its fruit
 in its season ;
 Whose leaf also
 doth not wither,
 And whatsoever he doeth
 shall prosper.

Next, we have a single couplet, sharply contrasting with what has gone before the mere worldly life.

The wicked are not so,
 But are like the Chaff which the wind driveth away.

A simple quatrain and a quatrain reversed bring the poem to a conclusion.

Therefore the wicked shall not stand
 in the judgement,
 Nor sinners
 in the congregation of the righteous.

For the LORD knoweth
 the way of the righteous,
 But the way of the wicked
 shall perish.

As much lyric beauty is here produced by the avoidance of similar figures in successive verses as in the former case by the repetition of them.

Where lyrics are constructed on this second plan the refrain may still come to emphasise the divisions. The forty-sixth psalm is arranged in the Revised Version in two stanzas of six lines and one of seven: the refrain — a shout of triumph — brings each to a climax. It has, however, dropped out by accident from the first stanza in the received text, and must be restored.¹

God is our refuge and strength, Psalm xlii

A very present help in trouble.

Therefore will we not fear, though the earth do change,
And though the mountains be moved in the heart of the seas;
Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled,
Though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.

THE LORD OF HOSTS IS WITH US;

THE GOD OF JACOB IS OUR REFUGE!

There is a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God,
The holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High.

God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved:
God shall help her, and that right early.
The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved:
He uttered his voice, the earth melted.

THE LORD OF HOSTS IS WITH US;

THE GOD OF JACOB IS OUR REFUGE!

Come, behold the works of the LORD,
What desolations he hath made in the earth.

He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth;
He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder;
He burneth the chariots in the fire.

“Be still, and know that I am God:

I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.”

THE LORD OF HOSTS IS WITH US;

THE GOD OF JACOB IS OUR REFUGE!

¹ On the general subject of textual emendation, I would lay down the principle that, where the sense is affected by a proposed change, it is prudent to be conservative and chary of admitting it. But where (as with a repetition) it is only a question of form, the long period of tradition mentioned above, during which the literary form of Scripture was overlooked, justifies us in expecting many omissions and misplacements.

We have a more elaborate symmetry of parallelism when we come to *Antistrophic* stanzas. The word is Greek, and the spirit of this beautiful form of structure is best caught from the complete realisation of it in Greek lyrics.

3. **Antistrophic structure of stanzas** A Greek ode was performed by a body of singers whose evolutions as they sang a stanza carried them from the altar towards the right: then turning round they performed an answering stanza, repeating their movements, until its close brought them to the altar from which they had started. Then a stanza would take them to the left of the altar, and its answering stanza would bring them back to the starting-point: and of such pairs of stanzas an ode was normally made up. From a Greek word meaning 'a turning' the first stanza of a pair was called a *strophé*, its answering stanza an *antistrophé*: and the metrical rhythms of the antistrophe reproduced those of the corresponding strophe line by line, though the rhythm might be wholly changed between one pair of stanzas and another. Hebrew lyrics contain examples of this disposition of stanzas in pairs; and the two stanzas of a pair agree, not of course in metre, but in number of parallel lines. Though somewhat rare in the Bible, this structure is worthy of close study wherever it occurs. The simplest case is where each antistrophe immediately follows its strophe, and of this the thirtieth psalm is an example.

Strophe 1

Psalm xxx I will extol thee, O LORD; for thou hast raised me up,
 And hast not made my foes to rejoice over me.
 O LORD my God,
 I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me.
 O LORD, thou hast brought up my soul from Sheol:
 Thou has kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit.

Antistrophe

Sing praise unto the LORD, O ye saints of his,
 And give thanks to his holy name.
 For his anger is but for a moment;
 In his favour is life:
 Weeping may tarry for the night,
 But joy cometh in the morning.

Strophe 2

As for me, I said in my prosperity,
I shall never be moved.
Thou, LORD, of thy favour hadst made my mountain to stand strong:

Antistrophe

Thou didst hide thy face; I was troubled.
I cried to thee, O LORD;
And unto the LORD I made supplication:

Strophe 3

“What profit is there in my blood when I go down to the pit?
Shall the dust praise thee? Shall it declare thy truth?
Hear, O LORD, and have mercy upon me:
LORD, be thou my helper.”

Antistrophe

Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing;
Thou hast loosed my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness:
To the end that my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent.
O LORD my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever.

But in the parallelism of stanzas, as well as the parallelism of lines in a figure, the device of introversion is found, by which, it will be recollected, beginning corre-

**Antistrophic
Introversion**

sponds with end, and middle part with middle part. An example of such antistrophic introversion is found in the hundred and fourteenth psalm, which thought and form

Psalm cxiv

combine to make one of the most striking of Hebrew lyrics. It is a song inspired, not only by the deliverance from Egypt, but also by the new conception of Deity which that deliverance exhibited to the world. In the age of the exodus the prevailing conception of a god was that of a being sacred to a particular territory, out of the bounds of which territory the god's power did not extend. But the Israelites in the wilderness presented to the world the spectacle of a nation moving from country to country and carrying the presence of their God with them; it was no

longer the land of Goshen, but the nation of Israel itself that constituted the sanctuary and dominion of Jehovah. The wonder of this conception the psalm expresses by the favourite Hebrew image of nature in convulsion ; and the effect of introversion in giving shape (so to speak) to the whole thought of the poem may be conveyed to the eye by the following scheme :

A new conception of Deity!
 Nature convulsed!
 Why Nature convulsed?
 At the new conception of Deity.

Those phrases sum up the thought of the successive stanzas, which are so related to one another that the first strophe is followed by a second, and the antistrophe to the second strophe precedes the antistrophe to the first.

Strophe 1

When Israel went forth out of Egypt,
 The house of Jacob from a people of strange language;
 Judah became his sanctuary,
 Israel his dominion.

Strophe 2

The sea saw it and fled;
 Jordan was driven back.
 The mountains skipped like rams,
 The little hills like young sheep.

Antistrophe 2

What aileth thee, O sea, that thou fleest?
 Thou Jordan, that thou turnest back?
 Ye mountains, that ye skip like rams?
 Ye little hills, like young sheep?

Antistrophe 1

Tremble, thou earth, at THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD,
 At the presence of the God of Jacob;
 Which turned the rock into a pool of water,
 The flint into a fountain of waters!

Again, we find as a rare effect in Hebrew poetry what is common in Greek, an interweaving of stanzas similar to the interweaving of couplets in a quatrain noted above; the first strophe is followed by a second of different length, then succeed the antistrophe to the first and the antistrophe to the second. The ninety-ninth psalm has this structure; and the effect is assisted by a double refrain: the longer strophe of five lines has a short refrain, while the shorter strophe of three lines has a longer refrain.¹

Antistrophic
Interweaving

Strophe 1

The LORD reigneth: let the peoples tremble:
He sitteth upon the cherubim; let the earth be moved.
The LORD is great in Zion;
And he is high above all the peoples.
Let them praise thy great and terrible name.
Holy is He!

Psalm xcix

Strophe 2

The king's strength also loveth judgement;
Thou dost establish equity,
Thou executest judgement and righteousness in Jacob.
EXALT YE THE LORD OUR GOD
AND WORSHIP AT HIS FOOTSTOOL.
HOLY IS HE!

Antistrophe 1

Moses and Aaron among his priests,
And Samuel among them that call upon his name;
They called upon the LORD, and he answered them.
He spake unto them in the pillar of cloud:
They kept his testimonies and the statute that he gave them.
Holy is He!

Antistrophe 2

Thou answeredst them, O LORD our God,
Thou wast a God that forgavest them,
Though thou tookest vengeance of their doings.
EXALT YE THE LORD OUR GOD,
AND WORSHIP AT HIS HOLY HILL;
FOR THE LORD OUR GOD IS HOLY!

¹ The short refrain has dropped out of Antistrophe 1, and must be restored (at the end of verse 7).

But the commonest treatment of stanzas in Biblical poetry is that which is also the freest: where a poem is allowed to fall into well-marked divisions, which have, however, no distinct relations with one another as regards length or parallelism. By an awkwardness of nomenclature, such irregular divisions have come to be called 'strophes': it is too late to change the usage, but the reader must be on the watch to distinguish the 'strophic structure,' where the stanzas may be unequal, from the 'antistrophic structure,' in which the two stanzas of a pair are exact counterparts. A simple example of such division by natural cleavage only will be afforded by the twentieth psalm.

4. Strophic structure of stanzas

Strophe 1 — The People

Psalm xx The LORD answer thee in the day of trouble;
 The name of the God of Jacob set thee up on high;
 Send thee help from the sanctuary,
 And strengthen thee out of Zion;
 Remember all thy offerings,
 And accept thy burnt sacrifice;
 Grant thee thy heart's desire,
 And fulfil all thy counsel.
 We will triumph in thy salvation,
 And in the name of our God we will set up our banners:
 The LORD fulfil all thy petitions.

Strophe 2 — The King

Now know I that the LORD saveth his anointed;
 He will answer him from his holy heaven
 With the saving strength of his right hand.

Strophe 3 — The People

Some trust in chariots, and some in horses:
 But we will make mention of the name of the LORD our God.
 They are bowed down and fallen:
 But we are risen, and stand upright.
 O LORD, save the king;
 And answer us when we call.

In this strophic structure the refrain has a special value for marking out the stanzas which have no other rhythmic distinction. A splendid example of such treatment is given by the poem which opens the second book of Psalms. *Psalms xlii-xliii* The allusion of one of its verses seems to associate it with some high ground — mountains of Hermon, or hill Mizar — which was the last point from which the Holy Land could be seen by an exile carried eastwards ; in any case, it is appropriately named 'The Exile's Lament.' The spirit of the whole lyric is summed up in its refrain, which is a struggle between despair and hope.

*Why art thou cast down, O my soul?
And why art thou disquieted within me?
Hope thou in God:
For I shall yet praise him,
Who is the health of my countenance
And my God!*

This refrain is found to unify into a single poem the psalms numbered forty-two and forty-three ; and the whole falls into three strophes. Though the refrain does not change, yet its repetition is made to suggest advance. The first strophe has nothing but longing memories : how the poet was wont to mingle with the throng, or perhaps lead them in procession to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, a multitude keeping holyday. Its struggle towards hopefulness is so unsuccessful that, after the refrain, the second strophe opens with the deepest note of despondency. A single ray of light, however, is cast into the future, and there is just a mention of loving-kindness by day and songs in the night, after which thoughts of mourning and oppression resume their sway. But the third stanza begins with a more resolute appeal to God as the judge, or righter of the oppressed ; the turn has been taken, and we advance through ideas of light and truth to joy and praise of harp, until the third repetition of the refrain makes us feel that its summons to hope has proved successful.

Strophe 1

As the hart panteth after the water brooks,
 So panteth my soul after thee, O God.
 My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God:
 When shall I come and appear before God?
 My tears have been my meat day and night,
 While they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?
 These things I remember, and pour out my soul within me,
 How I went with the throng, and led them to the house of God,
 With the voice of joy and praise, a multitude keeping holyday.

*Why art thou cast down, O my soul?
 And why art thou disquieted within me?
 Hope thou in God:
 For I shall yet praise him,
 Who is the health of my countenance
 And my God!*

Strophe 2

My soul is cast down within me!
 Therefore do I remember thee from the land of Jordan,
 And the Hermons, from the hill Mizar.
 Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts:
 All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me!
 Yet the LORD will command his loving-kindness in the day-time,
 And in the night his song shall be with me,
 Even a prayer unto the God of my life.
 I will say unto God my rock, "Why hast thou forgotten me?
 Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?
 As with a sword in my bones, mine adversaries reproach me;
 While they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?"

*Why art thou cast down, O my soul?
 And why art thou disquieted within me?
 Hope thou in God:
 For I shall yet praise him,
 Who is the health of my countenance
 And my God!*

Strophe 3

Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation:
 O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man.
 For thou art the God of my strength; why hast thou cast me off?

Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?
 O send out thy light and thy truth; let them lead me:
 Let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles.
 Then will I go unto the altar of God,
 Unto God my exceeding joy:
 And upon the harp will I praise thee, O God, my God.

WHY ART THOU CAST DOWN, O MY SOUL?
 AND WHY ART THOU DISQUIETED WITHIN ME?
 HOPE THOU IN GOD:
 FOR I SHALL YET PRAISE HIM,
 WHO IS THE HEALTH OF MY COUNTENANCE
 AND MY GOD!

But the maximum of lyric effect drawn from this combination of the strophic structure and the refrain is found in a portion of the hundred and seventh psalm. Here there is a double refrain: one puts in each stanza a cry for help, the other the outburst of praise after the help has come; each refrain has a sequel verse which appropriately changes with the subject of each stanza. Thus the form of the strophes is that which the eye catches in the subjoined mode of printing it; the body of each stanza consists of short lines putting various forms of distress; then the stanza lengthens its lines into the first refrain with its sequel verse, and enlarges again into the second refrain with its sequel.

Psalm cvii. 4-32

Strophe 1

They wandered in the wilderness
 In a desert way;
 They found no city of habitation.
 Hungry and thirsty,
 Their soul fainted in them.

*Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble,
 And he delivered them out of their distresses.*

He led them also by a straight way,
 That they might go to a city of habitation.

OH THAT MEN WOULD PRAISE THE LORD FOR HIS GOODNESS,
 AND FOR HIS WONDERFUL WORKS TO THE CHILDREN OF MEN!
 For he satisfieth the longing soul,
 And the hungry soul he filleth with good.

Strophe 2

Such as sat in darkness
 And in the shadow of death,
 Being bound in affliction and iron;
 Because they rebelled against the words of God,
 And contemned the counsel of the Most High:
 Therefore he brought down their heart with labour,
 They fell down, and there was none to help.

*Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble,
 And he saved them out of their distresses.*

He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death,
 And brake their bands in sunder.

OH THAT MEN WOULD PRAISE THE LORD FOR HIS GOODNESS,
 AND FOR HIS WONDERFUL WORKS TO THE CHILDREN OF MEN!
 For he hath broken the gates of brass,
 And cut the bars of iron in sunder.

Strophe 3

Fools because of their transgression,
 And because of their iniquities, are afflicted.
 Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat;
 And they draw near unto the gates of death.

*Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble,
 And he saveth them out of their distresses.*

He sendeth his word, and healeth them,
 And delivereth them from their destructions.

OH THAT MEN WOULD PRAISE THE LORD FOR HIS GOODNESS,
 AND FOR HIS WONDERFUL WORKS TO THE CHILDREN OF MEN!
 And let them offer the sacrifices of thanksgiving,
 And declare his works with singing.

Strophe 4

They that go down to the sea in ships,
 That do business in great waters,
 These see the works of the LORD,
 And his wonders in the deep.
 For he commandeth,
 And raiseth the stormy wind,
 Which lifteth up the waves thereof:
 They mount up to the heaven,

They go down again to the depths;
 Their soul melteth away because of trouble :
 They reel to and fro,
 And stagger like a drunken man;
 And are at their wits' end.

*Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble,
 And he bringeth them out of their distresses.*

He maketh the storm a calm,
 So that the waves thereof are still.

Then are they glad because they be quiet :

So he bringeth them unto the haven where they would be.

OH THAT MEN WOULD PRAISE THE LORD FOR HIS GOODNESS,
 AND FOR HIS WONDERFUL WORKS TO THE CHILDREN OF MEN !
 Let them exalt him also in the assembly of the people,
 And praise him in the seat of the elders.

It is just such structural variations as these that it is the special mission of a musical rendering to express.¹ In the psalm just cited the melancholy monotony of men's voices in unison might be used to bring out the various phases of distress which make the subjects of successive strophes. Children's voices in harmony and unaccompanied would fitly express the cry for help (refrain and sequel verse), while full choir and organ would give out the thanksgiving. In the more extended final stanza a monotone of men's voices in unison would leave more scope for organ accompaniment to bring out the changes of the sea. Then as before the whole would resolve into the silvery harmony of children's voices heard alone ; while all that full choir and instrument could do would be needed for the final climax.

Musical expres-
 sion of structure

¹ Bishop Westcott's *Paragraph Psalter* (Macmillan) is a step in the direction of such structural chanting. A musical setting of *Psalms lxxviii and civ* in illustration of it has been published by Dr. Naylor, Organist of York Minster (Novello).