

## Example :

“When thoughts  
Of the last bitter hour come like a blight  
Over thy spirit, and sad images  
Of the stern agony, and shroud, and pall,  
And breathless darkness, and the narrow house  
Make thee to shudder and grow sick at heart—  
Go forth under the open sky, and list  
To nature’s teachings, while from all around,  
Earth, and her waters, and the depths of air,  
Comes a still voice : ‘ Yet a few days, and thee  
The all-beholding sun shall see no more  
In all his course ; nor yet in the cold ground,  
Where thy pale form was laid with many tears,  
Nor in the embrace of ocean, shall exist  
Thy image.’—*Bryant.*

*Note.*—The pause does not imply a falling of the voice, but merely its suspension.

§ 2. *The cæsural pause.*

730. In most poetry the sentences are so constructed as to admit a pause, or slight suspension of the voice, at certain intervals.

This pause is called the *Cæsura* (from *cædere*, to divide), or *cæsural pause*, because it divides the line. The parts into which the line separates are called *cæsural members*.

## Example :

“ Oh ! breathe not his name, || let it sleep in the shade,  
Where, cold and unhonored, || his relics are laid ;  
Sad, silent, and dark || be the tears that we shed,  
As the night-dew that falls || on the grass o’er his head.

“ But the night-dew that falls, || though in silence it weeps,  
Shall brighten with verdure || the grave where he sleeps ;  
And the tear that we shed, || though in secret it rolls,  
Shall long keep his memory || green in our souls.”—*Moore.*

731. The cæsural pause unites several advantages :

1. The close of the line is the part where the interest of the hearer is greatest ; a fresh breath somewhere about the middle assists the reader to bring out the close with a happy effect. The cæsura gives breathing-time.

2. The harmony of the verse is enhanced by dividing it into sections, as sections may be divided into feet or parts of feet, and feet into syllables.

3. By grouping together more immediately the words which the sense requires to be connected, the cæsura assists the intelligence.

4. It gives prominence to a certain idea which the word immediately before it or immediately after it expresses.

732. The following will exemplify the first three advantages :

“ How oft have I thought, when the last light has faded  
From off the clear waves of some soft-flowing stream,  
That, like its bright waters, my last hopes were shaded  
By darkness, uncheered by the hope of a beam !

“ Oh ! could I but fly from this false world for ever,  
Where those whom I trust are the first to betray,  
From the cold and the fickle my young heart I’d sever  
Ere they steal all its bloom and its sweetness away.

“ I’d seek in some orb of the blessed above me  
The peace that on earth I can never receive :  
The spirits that dwell in that bright orb would love me,  
For they are too gentle to wound or deceive.

“ Oh ! why should the hearts of the purest be shaken  
While calmly reposing ’neath love’s sunny beam ?  
If they slumber so sweetly, why should they awaken  
To muse o’er the past and to weep o’er a dream ?”

—*Amelia Welby.*

733. The next will illustrate particularly the fourth advantage :



“ My barb ! my glorious steed !  
Methinks my soul would mount upon its track  
More fleetly, could I die upon thy back !  
How would thy thrilling speed  
Quicken my pulse ! O Allah ! I get wild !  
Would that I were once more a desert child !

“ Nay, nay—I had forgot !  
My mother ! My star mother ! Ha ! my breath  
Stifles !—more air ! Ben Khorat !—this is—death !  
Touch me !—I feel you not !  
Dying !—Farewell ! Good master !—room !—more room !  
Abra ! I loved thee ! Star ! bright star ! I—come.”  
—Willis.

§ 3. *The semi-cæsural pause.*

734. There frequently occurs, especially in a long line, a secondary cæsura, called the **semi-cæsural pause**. Thus twice, or even three times, the suspension of the voice subdivides the verse. The semi-cæsural pause, however, is less prolonged than the cæsural. In the following extract the parallels mark the cæsural, the single lines the semi-cæsural rest.

A writer had compared Ireland in her sufferings to Judea, and the Irish to the sons of Juda. This poem contains Moore's reflections on the subject. It is replete with Scriptural allusions, and terms once applied to the land of the outcast Hebrews. It is addressed to the city of David :

“ Yes, sad one of Sion ! || if closely resembling  
In shame | and in sorrow || thy withered-up heart,  
If drinking deep, | deep || of the same ‘ cup of trembling,’  
Could make us | thy children, || our parent | thou art.  
Like thee | doth our nation || lie conquered and broken,  
And fallen from her head || is the once royal crown ;  
In her streets, | in her halls, || Desolation | hath spoken,  
And ‘ while it is day yet, || her sun | hath gone down’ ;

Like thine | doth her exiles, || ‘mid dreams of returning,  
Die far | from the home || it were life | to behold ;  
Like thine | do her sons, || in the day of their mourning,  
Remember the bright things || that blessed them of old.  
Ah ! well may we call her, || like thee, | ‘ the forsaken’ :  
Her boldest | are vanquished, || her proudest | are slaves ;  
And the harps | of her minstrels, || when gayest | they waken,  
Have tones | ‘mid their mirth || like the wind over graves.”

—Moore.

735. In **rhyming verses** the cæsural pause falls generally about the middle of the verse ; the semi-cæsura about the middle of the cæsural members. In the example just given, and in the two found in Nos. 730 and 732, it would be difficult to omit these pauses without injury to melody. We are more inclined to place the cæsura about the middle, on account of our predilection for grace and symmetry. We like to see measure answering to measure, member to member, in due proportion. The flow of the verse, besides, is smoothest when these parts correspond. For this reason good poets generally so construct their sentences as to admit a pause in the sense at that point where a metrical pause would be most available ; and it may be laid down as infallible that there is nothing in which the artistic skill of the poet is evinced more forcibly, nothing on which the polish and melody of the composition depends more, than on the clever management of the cæsural members and their adaptation to the sense.

736. But strict uniformity in the position of the pause cloy the taste. A sprinkling of **variety**, without detracting from the polish of the verse, will add at times the beauty of novelty to the execution.

737. In **blank verse** the pause is far less uniform. The majestic motion of the strain is arrested by the cæsura, not so much to refine the melody or enhance the metrical cadence, as to improve the expression and heighten the



grandeur of the thought. Thus, in "Satan's soliloquy," the expression of highly wrought passion and depth of feeling is rendered more intense by the irregular but judicious fall of the pause:

"So farewell hope, | and with hope || farewell fear!  
Farewell remorse: || all good to me is lost.  
Evil, || be thou my good: | by thee at least  
Divided empire with Heaven's King I hold—  
By thee! and more than half, perhaps, will reign;  
As man ere long, || and this new world, | shall know."

—Milton.

738. Here, by force of the cæsura, we are made more sensible of the fiend's emotion as each succeeding passion gains the ascendancy. Anguish and despair tremble through the first lines, checking his speech; then a paroxysm of rage hurries him impetuously along, till at the close haughty resolve and defiance are breathed heavily between his lips. The pauses give dignity to the language, manifest the grandeur of the thought, and inspire awe into the soul.

739. Note the startling effect of it in the "description of Moloch":

"His trust was || with the Eternal to be deemed  
Equal in strength, || and rather than be less  
Cared not | to be at all; || with that care lost  
Went all his fear |; of God, | of hell, || or worse,  
He reck'd not."

740. The study of effect in the fall of the cæsura is important, as upon it depends often the sweetness, the vivacity, or the majesty of the expression. In poetry where no high or strong emotions are to be stirred, but where the pleasurable feelings are addressed, where simple beauty is to be displayed or a shade of pathos to be cast, the place of the cæsura is generally uniform.

## BOOK VI.

### *NATURE AND VARIETIES OF POETRY.*

741. The study of poetry affords considerable **advantages**:

1. It contributes sensibly to that **liberal culture** which has ever been so highly appreciated in civilized communities. This culture consists in a detachment of the heart from the gross pleasures of sense, an appreciation of mental and spiritual excellence.

742. 2. It affords powerful **aids towards success in other literary compositions**:

(a) It stores the memory with beautiful images;

(b) It excites the imagination to suggest illustrations and even proofs to the orator;

(c) It makes the heart sensitive to beauty, and intensifies all the passions which an orator may employ to advantage;

(d) It perfects the judgment or taste, which must preside over all works of art;

(e) It furnishes the most pleasing and energetic expression of thought. Therefore poetry has always been studied in connection with eloquence.

743. 3. It yields exquisite and elevating **pleasure**, which ennobles him who can enjoy it, and especially him who, by