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<https://doi.org/10.18297/etd/1030>

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"SOME PECULIARITIES OF SHELLEY'S RHYTHM"

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE

OF

"MASTER OF ARTS"

BY

ETHEL ALLEN MURPHY

1911

SOME PECULIARITIES OF SHELLEY'S RHYTHM.

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The most striking quality of Shelley's poetry meets our attention at once, in the play of ever-changing emotion through his lines. When he called himself "A pard-like Spirit beautiful and swift," he characterized the spirit of his poetry, with its ever-shifting imagery, and its pulsing, leaping rhythms continually falling into new and unexpected adjustments of difficult stresses, but always resolving themselves into a wonderful coherency of thought and form which produces the effect of strange and beautiful music. He builds up large rhythm-forms in what we may call the phrasing of his lines, using the term in a musical sense, and over these large waves play the verse-waves in a vast variety of subtle adjustments. As striking an illustration as we could find of this, lies in that magnificently descriptive line from *Alastor* -

Of wave || ^xruining ^xon wave, and
 blast ^xon blast. 327.

His favorite images of waves, fountains, leaping flames, lightning, "implicated leaves," all indicate an intense susceptibility to rhythm in nature, and are types of that perpetual emotion which pulses in his verse, so that we seem to see his thought and feeling palpably working and taking shape as his lines unfold:

Then from the caverns of my dreamy youth
 I sprang as one sandalled with plumes
 of fire. Epipsychidion 217.

The characteristic of Wordsworth's poetry is a very deep but quiet emotion which often rolls its ^hrythm stress through lines which, without this informing emotion, would be commonplace in their suggestion and nearly level in their stresses:

It is not now as it hath been of yore
 Turn wheresoe'er I may,
 By night or day,
 The things which I have seen, I now can
 see no more.

Ode on Intimations of Immortality, Stanza I.

Shelley builds up his lines from many intense emotion centers from which the rhythmic impulses radiate through the lines. The words themselves are charged with intense emotional or pictorial connotations, and one word may open a vast picture, or set moving a powerful train of associations. The lines of Alastor exemplify this strikingly, and the vast, phantasmagoric imagery of Prometheus shows it at its height. No poet shows such intimate psychological connection between the rhythm of his thought and the rhythm of his expression in verse. From the influence of these highly charged words come many of Shelley's most characteristic rhythm-forms. A few examples may serve to illustrate the prevalence of these high emotion points and the way in which the rhythm of the line plays through the impulses secondary to them:

are grouped together, rather than the simple relationship of one word to another word, or of one syllable to another syllable, - as a word which is primary in stress when compared with a preceding word, may be secondary when compared with a following word, or as the highest accent in an adjective of several syllables, while primary in relation to the other syllables of the word, may be secondary to a following noun. Of course, all these fine adjustments of stresses enter into the full rhythmic value of a line, though it is not always possible to indicate their gradations by our system of notation.

• A curved mark under a secondary stress, indicates that it is in the low part of the rhythm - wave, or, to use the German term, in the Senkung. A curved mark over the secondary stress mark, indicates that it is in the high part of the wave, or, to use the German term, in the Hebung.

Stress of Subject + Verb.

The normal stress relation of subject + verb is secondary + primary ($\overset{''}{ll}$ $\overset{'}{l}$).

As,

$\overset{''}{T}ime$ $\overset{'}{p}assed$, I know not whether months
or years. *Revolt of Islam*, VII, xxvi, 1.

$\overset{''}{M}orn$ $\overset{'}{f}led$, $\overset{''}{n}oon$ $\overset{'}{c}ame$, evening, then night
descended. *Revolt of Islam*, III, iv, 1.

Occasionally there occurs in Shelley's verse a line where the subject receives heightened stress. As, in,

$\overset{''}{A}s$ $\overset{''}{t}he$ $\overset{''}{s}ong$ $\overset{''}{f}loats$, $\overset{''}{t}hou$ $\overset{''}{p}ursue$
Prometheus, II, i, 179.

Perhaps the linking of song and thou in a parallel thought-structure may have something to do with the heightened stress - thou art to pursue, as the song floats; perhaps the emphatic thou following the subject + verb ($\overset{''}{ll}$ $\overset{'}{l}$) causes the two preceding impulses to become secondary and so subject to the rhythmic variation dictated by the verse, which in this case is single falling rhythm. Then, the falling rhythm type having been established in the preceding line and sustained by the beginning and end of the line cited, naturally tends to force the two words into its type.

$\overset{''}{S}oon$ $\overset{''}{I}$ $\overset{''}{c}ould$ $\overset{''}{h}ear$ $\overset{''}{t}he$ $\overset{''}{l}eaves$ $\overset{''}{s}igh$ $\overset{''}{a}nd$ $\overset{''}{c}ould$ $\overset{''}{s}ee$
The myrtle-blossoms starring the dim grove
Revolt of Islam, III, xxxiv, 5.

The circumstances preceding the situation depicted in this line are such that they make the word leaves a focusing point of interest. Laon has just fled across the sea from his enemies. He is drawing near to the land and to safety; the land-interest connotation of leaves is thus so intense as to give to the word an increment of stress. This is a very characteristic habit of Shelley's, and is on the same principle of emotion stress which so often causes a heightening of his adjectives.

Stress of Verb + Object.

The usual stress of verb + object is secondary + primary. Thus,

And love taught grief to fall like music
 from his tongue
 Adonais, XXX, 9.

In the following line we find a violation of this normal relationship:

Young Love should teach Time in his
 own gray style
 All that thou art
 Epipsychidion, 55.

Possibly the strong interest centered in teach gives it the higher stress.

Stress of Compound Nouns.

Compound nouns normally take primary stress on the first element and secondary on the second element (1 11).

The lamp-light through the rafters cheerly
spread Revolt of Islam. II, 1, 7.

And rarest sea-shells which the eternal flood,
Slave to the mother of the months, had thrown
Revolt of Islam, IV, 1, 6.

Upon a couch of grass and oak-leaves inter-
laced. Revolt of Islam, IV, 11, 9.

The transient gulf-dream of a startling sleep
Queen Mab, IX, 175.

The melancholy winds a death-dirge sung
Queen Mab, IX, 104.

Poets sometimes violate this stress through the force of a prevailing rhythm or under the influence of a strong interest centered in the first element of the compound. This strong interest in the first element practically has the effect of breaking up the compound into its original adjective and noun elements, thus giving to it the adjective + noun stress (11 1). Numerous instances of this abnormal stress of compound nouns are found in Shelley's poetry.

Bright clouds // float in heaven
Dew-stars // gleam on earth

How like death-worms the wingless moments crawl
Prometheus, II, i, 16.

In the death-chamber for a moment Death,
Shamed by the presence of that living might,
Blushed to annihilation

Adonais, XXV, 1.

Nor when the flakes // burn in the sinking sun
Or the star-beams dart through them
Mont Blanc, V, 134.

Where Power in likeness of the Arve comes down
From the ice-gulfs that gird his secret throne
Mont Blanc, II, 6.

If two or more adjectives precede a noun all these adjectives are secondary to the noun and thus subject to differentiation according to rhythm stress laws. This is true to a certain extent in normal prose thought, as, A dull dark day. We find it profusely exemplified in Shelley's verse. As,

On black, bare, pointed islets ever beat

In the case where a compound noun is preceded by an adjective, especially a monosyllabic adjective, there seems to be a strong tendency to break the compound into its adjective and noun elements, thus giving two secondaries rhythmically differentiated. In the following, it is possible to account for the abnormal stress on the ground of interest in the first element. I group them together as a tentative judgment in regard to the influence of the preceding adjective:

But its own curved prow of thin moonstone
 Revolt of Islam, I, xxiii, 2.

My brethren, we are free! The plains and
 The ^{mountains} gray sea-shore, the forests and the
 fountains
 Are haunts of happiest dwellers
 Revolt of Islam, V, Song, 4.

The spotted deer // bask in the fresh moonlight
 Epipsychidion, 533.

I do remember well the hour which burst
 My spirit's sleep: a fresh May-dawn it was
 Revolt of Islam, Introduction III.5.

What form leans sadly o'er the white death-bed
 Adonais, XXXV, 3.

Adjectives.
Rhythm Stress.

In normal English thought, the adjective + noun group takes secondary + primary stress (l' l). As,

Like the bright-shade of some immortal
dream Revolt of Islam, II. xxii. 8.

Sweet Lamp! my moth-like Muse has
burned its wings Epipsychidion, 53.

Through the lone paths of our immortal
land Revolt of Islam, II, xxvi, 3.

Sad storm, whose tears are vain
 Bare woods, whose branches strain,
 Deep caves and dreary main
 A Dirge. Posthumous Poems, 1824.

Where the high stress of the noun is followed by another high stress, the two preceding stresses then become subordinated to the final high stress and are subject to the laws of rhythm stress, which in the case of single rising rhythm would raise the first of the subordinate impulses above the second. As

That ^ufair ^ustar ^ufell, he turned and shed
his brother's blood.
Revolt of Islam, I, xxvi, 8.

Shelley's verse affords abundant instances of this adjective-noun rhythm-stress, of which I cite the following:

Adjective + Noun + Verb.

The foam-wreaths which she watching eye
the faint tide
wove below. Revolt of Islam, I, xvii, 9.

Earth and the upper air but far on high between
the vast clouds flew. Revolt of Islam, I, iv, 8.

Then had no great aim recompensed my
sorrow
I must have sought dark respite from its
stress. Revolt of Islam, II, xix, 1.

A mighty Senate; some whose white hair shone
Like mountain snow, mild, beautiful and blind
Revolt of Islam, I, LIV, 3.

Round whose worn base the wild waves hiss
and leap Revolt of Islam, II, xviii, 5.

Thou wilt depart and I with tears shall stand
Watching thy dim sail skirt the ocean gray
Revolt of Islam, II, XLV, 3.

A mighty crowd, // such as the wide land pours
Once in a thousand years
Revolt of Islam, V, xxix, 1.

Their red swords flash // in the unrisen sun
Revolt of Islam, VI, v, 3.

The warm tears burst in spite of faith and fear
From many a tremulous eye
Revolt of Islam, XII, xiv, 1.

And heard, and cried, 'Ah woe is me!'
And died as mad as the wild waves be
Prometheus, I, 98.

To the last fiber of the loftiest tree
Whose thin leaves trembled in the frozen air
Prometheus, I, 155.

The loud deep calls me home even now
to feed it Prometheus, III, ii, 41.

Green stalks burst forth and bright flowers grow
Prometheus, IV, 364.

One in mixed rising rhythm shows:

And the weak day weeps
That it should be so

Prometheus, IV, 493.

And the wild antelope that starts whene'er
The dry leaf rustles in the brake, suspend
His timid steps

Alastor, 104.

Thy fiery tears, and let thy loud heart keep
Quench, within their burning bed
Adonais, III.

The soft sky smiles, - the low wind whispers near
Adonais, LIII, 7.

Adjective + Noun + Post-positive Adjective (or participle).

The bright stars shining in the breathless sea
Revolt of Islam, II, xi, 8.

Her white arms lifted through the shadowy stream
Revolt of Islam, II, xxix, 1.

The green lands cradled in the roar
Of western waves
Revolt of Islam, V, Song 6.

As famished mariners through strange seas gone
Revolt of Islam, V, XLIV, 5.

In white wings swift as clouds in winter skies
Revolt of Islam, V, L, 6.

Under the wave in flowers and herbs which make,
those green depths beautiful when skies are blue
Revolt of Islam, V, LIII, 6.

A wand'ring Meteor by some wild wind sent
Revolt of Islam, VI, xxxii, 4.

Their white arms lifted o'er their streaming hair
Prometheus, III, ii, 46.

The white Moon smiling all the while on it
Epipsychidion, 318.

Grief made the young spring wild, and she
threw down
Her kindling buds Adonais, XVI, 1.

Adjective + Noun + Noun in Apposition.

Our simple life wants little, and true taste
Hires not the pale drudge Luxury to waste
The scene it would adorn Epipsychidion, 526.

Adjective + Noun + Object-Complement.

(Single Falling Rhythm)
And thy smiles before they dwindle
Make the cold air fire; then screen them
Prometheus, II, v, 51.

These are only a few from a great number of instances of this adjective rhythm-stress in Shelley. I subjoin two examples, where through inversion of the predicate and its complimentary verb a high-stressed participle (not functioning as an adjective) follows the adjective + noun group. This seems interesting as an instance of the way in which Shelley by unusual juxtapositions and inversion of words, brings about varied and unusual rhythmic combinations.

That mountain and its column, the known mark
Of those who in the wide deep wand(e)ring are
are wandering

Revolt of Islam, III, xxx, 6.

Of horse^xmen o'er the ^{//}wild fields ^{//}murd(e)ring ^{//}went
 the loose array
 Revolt of Islam, VI, vii, 4.

Rhythm Stress in Possessive Pronouns.

Possessive pronouns, like adjectives, show this phenomenon of rhythm stress:

Mine ^{//}eyes and my ^{//}heart ^{//}ached, and but
 that she
 Who loved me did with absent looks defeat
 Revolt of Islam, VII, LII, 6.

All things confess his strength. // Through the
 Of mar^xble and of ^{//}color ^{//}his ^{//}dreams ^{//}pass
 cold mass
 Prometheus, IV, 413.

Artificial Adjective Stress.

A violation of the normal secondary + primary stress of the noun + adjective group where no high stress immediately follows the noun, occurs so frequently in Shelley's poetry as to become a striking characteristic of his versification. When the emotional associations of the adjective are very intense, a heightening of the adjective stress occurs, as in the following lines:

But none was near to mock my streaming
 Which poured ^{//}eyes ^{//}their ^{//}warm ^{//}drops ^{//}on the ^{//}sunny
 ground
 Revolt of Islam, Introduction IV, 3.

She pressed the white moon on his front with pure
And rose-like lips Revolt of Islam, VI, xxvi, 3.

Then on the white edge of the bursting surge
Revolt of Islam, I, xiii, 1.

Which spreads its shrunk leaves in the sunny
air Revolt of Islam, VI, LV, 4.

She leapt upon a pile, and lifted high
Her mad looks to the lightning and cried, 'Eat!'
Revolt of Islam, VI, LII, 2.

Fair clinging weeds with ivy pale did grow
Clasping its gray rents with a verdurous woof
Revolt of Islam, VI, xxvii, 8.

Through many a cavern which the eternal flood
Had scooped as dark lairs for its monster brood
Revolt of Islam, VII, x, 5.

Though it can wake the still cloud and unbind
The strength of tempest
Revolt of Islam, VII, XL, 3.

Soon the dust drinks that bitter dew - then meet
The vulture and the wild dog and the snake
Revolt of Islam, X, iii, 6.

The warm touch of a soft and tremulous hand
Revolt of Islam, XII, xviii, 1.

And Winter robing with pure snow and crowns
Of starry ice the gray grass and bare bough
Alastor, 10.

Beneath the cold glare of the desolate night
Alastor, 234.

Startled by his own thoughts he looked around;
There was no fair fiend near him, not a sight
Alastor, 297.

With fierce gusts a whirlwind swept it on
and precipitating force
Alastor, 321.

Exposed those black depths to the azure sky
Alastor, 375.

In rainbow and in fire, the parasites,
Starred with ten thousand blossoms, flow around
The gray trunks, and, as gamesome infants' eyes
Fold their beams round the hearts of them that love,
Alastor, 441.

The dark earth and the bending vault of stars
Alastor, 576.

And led the loveliest among human forms
To make their wild haunts the depository
Alastor, 594.

And to the damp leaves and blue cavern mould
Commit the colors of that varying cheek.
Alastor, 597.

Beneath the wan stars and descending moon
Alastor, 554.

Which wheresoe'er it fell, made the earth gleam
With bright flowers and the wintry boughs exhale
From vernal blooms fresh fragrance.
Alastor, 674.

I flitted like a dizzy moth whose flight
Is as a dead leaf's in the owl's light
Epipsychidion, 221.

Under the gray beak of some promontory
She met me
Epipsychidion, 500.

Between the quick bats in their twilight dance
Epipsychidion, 532.

Over the calm floor of the crystal sea
Prometheus, II, v, 24.

cities then
Were built, and through their snow-like
columns flowed
The warm winds, and the azure ether shone
Prometheus, II, LV, 96.

and how the sun
Changes his lair, and by what secret spell
The pale moon is transformed, when her
 broad eye
Gazes not on the interlunar sea.

Prometheus, II, iv, 90.

In mixed rising rhythm:

The pale stars are gone Prometheus, IV, 1.

And a thick hell of hatreds, and hopes, and fears
Prometheus, IV, 119.

We'll pass the eyes
Of the starry skies,
? | Into the hoar deep to colonize
Prometheus, IV, 143.

In certain cases the adjective stress is heightened above that of the noun partly through the emotion interest in the adjective notion, and partly, it seems, through anticipation of the final high stress, which, working back through the line, reduces the series of preceding stresses to secondaries and makes them subject to the laws of rhythm stress.

It is to be noted that the stress immediately following the adjectives in these lines is a secondary, and not a low stress as in the group of examples just preceding these:

But, like the vapor of the tempest fled
Over the plain; her dark hair was dispread
Like the pine's locks upon the lingering blast
Revolt of Islam, X. xxi. 5.

Gentle, and brave, and generous, - no lorn bard
Breathed o'er his dark fate one melodious sigh
Alastor, 59.

Our myriads, whom the swift bolt overthrew
Revolt of Islam, VI, xiv, 7.

As if it drowned in remembrance were
Of thoughts which make the moist eyes
overflow. Revolt of Islam, V., iv., 6.

Fretted with many a fair cloud interwoven
Revolt of Islam, I., iv., 4.

On Atlas, fields of moist snow half depend
Sonnet to the Nile, 5.

The sweet air I felt within thy parted lips
that sustained me and the
warmth Prometheus, II., i., 104.

In wanton sport the bright leaves whose decay
Red, yellow, or ethereally pale
Rivals the pride of summer. Alastor, 594.

Ay, even the dim words which obscure thee
now
Flash lightning-like with unaccustomed glow
Epipsychidion, 33.

In falling rhythm:

And that one star which to her
Almost seems to minister
Half the crimson light she brings
Euganean Hills, 323.

Where the wild bee never flew
Through the noontide darkness deep
Prometheus, II., i., 180.

These heightened stresses recur so frequently in connection with characteristic and favorite Shelley adjectives, - such as dark, gray, white, pale, wan, fair, wild, quick, moist, bright, and others, - as to suggest a very interesting psychological basis for the phenomenon.

Stress in Compound Adjectives.

The normal stress of compound adjectives is, like that of compound nouns, primary on the first element and secondary on the second. As,

- And see! be^uneath a sun-bright ca^uno^upy
 Revolt of Islām, XII, v. 1.
- And see the Ty^xra^xnt's ge^um-wro^ught cha^urio^ut gl^uide
 Revolt of Islam, XII., ii. 5.
- The wild-eyed wo^umen throng a^uround he^ur pa^uth
 Revolt of Islam, IV., xx., 1.

Sometimes this stress is violated through rhythm stress falling on the second element; sometimes the idea in the first element of the compound is so prominent that the effect is to resolve the compound into a phrase relationship of adverbial thought + adjective, and this relationship takes the phrase stress of secondary + primary (1' 1').

- The blo^usm^uy spring's star-bright in^uvesti^uture
 Revolt of Islam, IV., xxxiii., 8.

(Adverbial element in star-bright, like a star)

And Faith and Custom and low-thoughted cares
 Revolt of Islam, Introduction XIII. 7

The "autumnal winds as if spell-bound had
 made
 A natural couch of leaves in that recess
 Revolt of Islam, VI., xxvii., 1.

Oh, sister, look! White fire
 Has cloven to the roots yon huge snow-loaded
 cedar Prometheus, I., 433.

Close those wan lips; let that thorn-wounded
 brow
 Stream not with blood; it mingles with thy tears.
 Prometheus, I., 507.

And the white dew // on the new-bladed grass
 Prometheus, II., 148.

Of cataracts from their a howl
 thaw-cloven ravines
 Prometheus, II., iii., 34.

The floating bark // of the light-laden moon
 or
 The floating bark of the light-laden moon
 Prometheus, III., ii., 26.

The dew-mists of my sunless sleep shall float
 Under the stars like balm, night-folded flowers
 Shall suck unwithering hues in their repose
 Prometheus, III., iii., 34.

From Man's high mind even to the central stone
 Of sullen lead; from Heaven's star-fretted domes
 Prometheus, IV., 541.

Before the immortal Senate and the seat
 Of that star-shining Spirit whence is wrought
 The strength of its dominions good and great
 Revolt of Islam, XII., xxi., 3.

Whilst my beloved race is trampled down
 By his thought-executing ministers
 Prometheus, I., 387.

'Tis Jove's world-wand(e)ring herald, Mercury
Prometheus, I., 325.

The folded depth of her life-breathing bosom
Prometheus, II., i., 49.

He taught the implicated orbits woven
Of the wide-wand(e)ring stars and how the sun
Changes his lair Prometheus, II., iv., 89.

The crawling glaciers pierce me with the spears
Of their moon-freezing crystals: the bright
chains
Eat with their burning cold into my bones
Prometheus, I., 32.
(freezing beneath the moon)
(beneath-the-moon freezing)

The Caesura.

Shelley makes striking use of the caesura and of the reversal, the latter both at the beginning and after the pause in the line. There are most marked and characteristic effects produced by his use of the caesura and reversal - emotional, rhetorical, dramatic, and pictorial effects, by which his rhythm and his thought are welded into a wonderfully coherent yet plastic and ever shifting union.

Very common in Shelley's poetry, is an artificial caesura interposed between parts of the sentence which are normally so closely connected in thought as to admit of no appreciable pause between them. This may be explained as the result of an intense emotion centered in the word immediately preceding or following the pause, which emotion causes a dwelling upon the word and thus

We hear: thy words || waken Oblivion
Prometheus, IV., 543.

When night || makes a weird sound of
its own stillness Alastor, 30.

The eloquent blood || told an ineffable tale
Alastor, 168.

In the examples following, it is possible to read the line without the caesura and reversal by giving a rhythm stress to the word following the verb. However, the rhythm stress following a verb is rather violent, and the caesura seems more effective. The pressure of intense emotion seems to justify it.

As calm || decks the false ocean:— well ye know
which smiles adorn
Revolt of Islam, VIII., xv., 6.

Beneath their feet, the sea || shook with their
navies' sound
Revolt of Islam, X., iv., 9.

As one whom winds || waft o'er the bending
grass
Revolt of Islam, IV., xxxiii., 2.

The fitness of the rhythm to the picture is very beautifully exemplified in the line just quoted.

My spher'd light || wane in wide Heaven;
the sea
Was lifted by strange tempest
Prometheus, I., 165.

And beasts || hear the sea moan in inland
caves
Prometheus, I., 582.

And cherished friends || turn with the multitude
Revolt of Islam, Introduction VIII.8

These were forebodings of my fate - Before
A woman's heart || beat in my virgin breast
Revolt of Islam, I., xxxvii., 2.

The printless air || felt thy belated plumes
Prometheus, II., i., 34.

Unwonted tears || throng to the horny eyes
Prometheus, II., i., 3.

What veiled form || sits on that ebon throne?
Prometheus, II., iv., 1.

And the abyss || shouts from her depth laid bare
Prometheus, IV., 421, 2.

Or that the name my heart || lent to another
Could be a sister's bond for her and thee
Epipsychidion, 46.

Caesura between Verb and Object.

I have noted a few instances of caesura between verb and object, where, as with the subject and verb caesura, there is intense emotion present.

they behold
Beyond that twilight realm, as in a glass,
The future; may they speak || comfort to thee
Prometheus, I., 663.

To whom I owe || life and these virtuous
thoughts The Cenci, I., ii., 8.

If you divide || suff(e)ring and dress, you may
Diminish till it is consumed away;
If you divide || pleasure and love and thought
Each part exceeds the whole
Epipsychidion, 178-180.

As sudden earthquakes light // many a
volcano-isle

Revolt of Islam, VI., vii., 9.

Caesura between Adjective and Noun.

Occasionally we find in Shelley's verse a caesura between the adjective and noun as a result of the intense emotional associations of the adjective.

And in that soul a wild // odor is felt
Epipsychidion, 109.

The lone // couch of his everlasting rest
Alastor, 57.

Her looks were sweet as Heaven's when loveliest
In autumn eves. The third // Image was
drest
In white wings swift as clouds in winter skies
Revolt of Islam, V., L., 5.

Sometimes the caesura comes between the preposition and its object; when the thought following the preposition is of a very intense and arresting nature. It seems as if the poet's mind, dwelling on the picture beforehand had paused with a sense of the importance of what he was about to say:

Prometheus saw and waked the legioned hopes
Which sleep within // folded Elysian flowers
Prometheus, II., iv., 60.

Was spread beneath // the banquet of the free
tree many a dark cypress
Revolt of Islam, V., LIV., 5.

The following line shows the caesura between adverb and participle. Its place here just after *aye* (always) makes that word more deeply expressive.

She knew the King
Had praised her dance of yore; and now she
its circles, *aye* || ^{wove} weeping and murmuring
Mid her sad task of unregarded love.

Revolt of Islam, V., xxi., 7.

Two lines of very difficult rhythm suggest the possibility of a very artificial caesura between the two elements of a compound word, one a compound noun, the other a compound adjective. The fact that any other scansion would distort the pronunciation of the words most abnormally, seems to leave this as the most probable scansion. In both cases there is a high interest point in the first element of the compound word, and this resolves the compound into its constituent elements of adjective and noun, in the one case, or adverb and verb in the other. We have already seen that Shelley introduces the caesura between such elements of the sentence. It is possible that in contemplating the emotion-charged picture involved in cloud and in weed, the poet's mind pursuing their associations paused appreciably and then resumed the thought with the stresses of the following words of the compounds quite independent of the stresses attached to them in the compound form. The intense quality of Shelley's habitually emotion-charged thought-processes, lends at least some credibility to the suggestion:

One who methought, had gone || from the
world's scene

And left it vacant Revolt of Islam, IV., xxix., 5.

A dim and feeble joy whose glimpses oft
Were quencht || in a relapse of wild(e)ring dreams

Revolt of Islam, III., xxxiii., 2.

Her madness was a beam of light, a power
Which dawned || through the rent soul; and
words it gave

Which might not be withstood Revolt of Islam, VII., vii., 2.

Which gazed || on the undazzling sun, now
blinded

By the white lightning

Prometheus, III., ii., 4.

We two will sink || Sink with me then
on the wide waves of ruin

Prometheus, III., i., 71.

It stood like light || on a careering stream

Revolt of Islam, I., XLII., 3.

Like a great ship || in the sun's sinking sphere

Revolt of Islam, I., vi., 8.

From the blue paths || of the swift sun have
faded

Revolt of Islam, V., xxiv., 3.

There is a path || on the sea's azure floor

Epipsychidion, 410.

Each if the tramp || of a far steed was heard
Started from sick despair

Revolt of Islam, XI., x., 6.

The floating bark || of the light-laden moon

Prometheus, III., ii., 26.

" / " " x /
 I hear: || I am a leaf || shaken by thee
 Prometheus, IV., 528.

Shelley frequently has two caesura's in a line. The line quoted above is an example of the effective use of the two caesuras; it gives just the broken, shaken effect rhythmically that the words express in their sound and motion connotes.

" " / " x /
 And, as a cloud || charioted by the wind
 She led me to a cave in that wild place
 Epipsychidion, 290.

Then from the caverns of my dreamy youth
 I sprang as one || sandalled with plumes
 of fire Epipsychidion, 248.

Wild numbers then
 She raised with voice || stifled in tremulous
 sobs Alastor, 164.

x " x x /
 A wild-eyed charioteer || urging their flight
 Prometheus, II., iv., 132.

" " " " /
 Whilst me who am thy foe, || eyeless in hate
 Hast thou made reign and triumph to my
 scorn Prometheus, I., 9.

" / " /
 Ye icy springs, || stagnant with wrinkling
 frost Prometheus, I., 62.

x " /
 And self-contempt || bitt(e)rer to drink than
 blood Prometheus, II., iv., 25.

" " /
 To forgive wrongs || darker than death or
 night Prometheus, II., iv., 25.

behind lurks Fear
 And Hope, twin Destinies, who weave
 Their shadows o'er the chasm || sightless
 and drear
 Sonnet 6, Posthumous Poems, 1824.

I trod as one || tranced in some rapturous vision
 Revolt of Islam, V., xvii., 1.
 Fell like a shaft || loosed by the bowman's error
 Revolt of Islam, X., xxvi., 3.

With a monosyllabic adjective the line may be read without the caesura by throwing rhythm stress on the word following the adjective or participle. As,

Fell like a shaft, loosed by the
 bowman's error

But this seems to deprive the line of much of its emotional and pictorial effect as well as its musical phrasing.

Others with the present participle are:

The many ships || spotting the dark blue sea
 Revolt of Islam, IX., iii.

Calm and rejoicing in the fearful war
 Of wave || ruining on wave, and blast
 on blast Alastor, 327.

And like a storm || bursting its cloudy
 prison Prometheus, IV., 376.

The action connotes in the participles make the rhythm of these last two lines strikingly effective.

Word Stress.

Some interesting variations of the normal New English word-stress are found in Shelley's verse. Some of these may be referred to Elizabethan stress-forms, others to the working of rhythm laws through two impulses nearly even in stress or secondary proportionately to a following high impulse. Crystalline, a favorite word of Shelley's, he uses both with the Elizabethan and New English stress:

Athwart the glowing steps, || and the
crystalline throne

Revolt of Islam, I., LVI., 9.

Bear witness, Night, and ye mute Constellations
Who gaze on us from your crystalline cars

Revolt of Islam, V. - Song 6.

Beside the windless and crystalline pool

Prometheus, III., iii., 159.

Why lookest thou || on the crystalline skies?

Revolt of Islam, IX., xxxvi., 6.

And caverns on crystalline columns poised

Prometheus, IV., 282.

As when eclipse hath past, things sudden

To men's astonished eyes ^{shine} most clear and
crystalline

As the dissolving warmth of dawn may fold
A half unfrozen dew-globe, green and gold,
And crystalline, till it becomes a winged

mist Prometheus, IV., 433.

On the level, quiv(e)ring line
Of the waters crystalline

Euganean Hills, 103.

Antique, another favorite word, he uses with Elizabethan stress:

The antique-sculptured roof and many a
tome. Revolt of Islam, IV., iii., 8.

I met a trav(e)ler from an antique land
Ozymandias, 1.

Our antique empire insecure, though
built
On eldest faith, and hell's coeval, fear.
Prometheus, III., i., 10.

Of antique verse and high romance,
in form,
Sound, color

Now, new fires from antique light
Spring beneath the wide world's light
Euganean Hills, 265.

Divine, still another favorite word of Shelley's, he uses now and then with the stress obviously stronger on the first syllable, at other times with the stress stronger on the last syllable, and in still other cases, where a reversal is possible before the word, it is a matter of doubt as to which accent he intended. In the case of a reversal the nearly level stresses may be differentiated according to rhythm:

Bore to thy honor through the
divine gloom
The lamp which was thine emblem
Prometheus, III., iii., 169.

And lofty hopes of divine liberty
And lofty ^{or} hopes || of divine liberty
Alastor, 159.

Whose divine darkness fled not from
that green
And lone recess - or -

Whose divine darkness fled not from that green
Revolt of Islam, VI., xxxvii., 3.

With strange and star-bright flowers which

Breathed divine odor; high above was spread

The emerald heaven of trees - or -

Breathed divine odor; high above was spread
Revolt of Islam, Xii., xviii., 6.

A divine presence in a place divine
Epipsychidion, 135.

The fountains of divine philosophy
Alastor. 71.

Response in Shelley's verse sometimes has a heightened stress on the first syllable. The fact that re has a rather high secondary accent in the first place makes the change less violent.

If there must be no response to my cry
 Revolt of Islam, Introduction XIV. :

To weave a bondage of such sympathy
As might create some response to the
thought Revolt of Islam, II., xvi., 3.

yielding one only response at each pause
Alastor, 564.

In some cases the position of the word makes a reversal possible on the preceding word and if the two syllables of response are considered as secondary as compared with the word following, the normal stress may be maintained:

and my heart gave
The response thou has given; and of such truth
Each to itself must be the oracle.
Prometheus, II., iv., 122.

her touch would meet
Mine, and our pulses calmly flow and beat
In response while we slept; and on a day
Revolt of Islam, VII., xxi., 6.

This reading makes a great many rhythm stresses in the line, and the effect is not very good. It is possible, following the other usage to read:

In response while we slept; and on a day -

Which was Shelley's reading, it is difficult to conjecture. In all readings where two nearly level stresses are read with rhythm stress so applied as to heighten a syllable contrary to the New English stress, it must be remembered that the preponderance of stress should be very delicately applied and not in an exaggerated manner; for often very slight variation will suffice to sustain the wave in a line of subtly adjusted stresses.

There follow other instances of this tipping over of the balance of stress onto the first syllable of words normally accented on the last syllable. The same explanation holds here, of rhythmic variation of nearly level stresses both secondary to a following high stress:

Another clipped her profuse locks and threw
The wreath upon him, like an anadem
Adonais, XI., 3.

In profuse strains of unpremeditated art
The Skylark, 5.

This latter could, as with response be read as two secondaries after a reversal:

In profuse strains of unpremeditated art

And if, with infirm hand, Eternity
Mother of many acts and hours, should free
Prometheus, IV., 566.

Scarce visible from extreme loveliness

or

Scarce visible || from extreme loveliness
Epipsychidion, 104.

Invisible corruption waits to trace
His extreme way to her dim dwelling place

or

His extreme way to her dim dwelling place
Epipsychidion, 321.

At length into the obscure forest came
 The Vision I had sought through grief and shame
 Epipsychidion, 321.

Beneath his feet, mongst ghastliest forms repress
 Lay Faith, an obscene worm who sought to
 rise
 Revolt of Islam

The obscene ravens clamorous o'er the dead
 Adonais, XXVIII, 2.
 or

The obscene ravens clamorous o'er the dead.

The fact that there is much emotion (deep loathing)
 centered in obscene seems rather to argue against sinking this in-
 tensely expressive word into the comparative obscurity which a
 place in the Senkung of the wave would give to it.

Was raised by intense pensiveness - two eyes
 Two starry eyes // hung in the gloom of
 thought Alastor, 490.

or

was raised // by intense pensiveness - two eyes

shall that alone which knows
 Be as a sword consumed before the sheath
 By sightless lightning? the intense atom glows
 A moment then is quenched Adonais, XX., 8.

Whose windings gave ten thousand various
 tongues
 To the loud stream. Lo! where the pass expands
 Its strong jaws, the abrupt mountain breaks
 Alastor, 551.

And he, the supreme Tyrant on his throne
Prometheus, I., 208.

Some peculiar instances of this same stress inversion occur in verbs, notably the verb become:

The battle became ghastlier in the midst
Revolt of Islam, VI., xvi., 1.

Of slaughter became stiff, and there was
peace anew Revolt of Islam, X., xi., 9.

And all my being became bright or dim
As the moon's image in a summer sea
Epipsychidion, 296.

Weeping till sorrow becomes ecstasy
Epipsychidion, 39.

So delicate is this preponderance of stress, that in lines where a reversal is possible, there is a doubt as to whether the line is better read one way or the other.

They wait for thee, beloved! - then I knew
The death-mark on my breast and became
calm anew Revolt of Islam, XII., xxv., 9.

or

The death-mark on my breast || and became
calm anew

They came and questioned me, but when
they heard
My voice they became silent and they
stood Revolt of Islam, VII., xli. 7.

or

My voice. || they became silent and they
stood

Other peculiar Shelleyan stresses are:

Enduring thus, the ^{I wait}retributive hour
Prometheus, I., 406.

The New English Dictionary notes this stress as a peculiarity of Shelley and Southey following the stress of the noun.

Autumn's evening meets me soon
Leading the infantine moon
Euganean Hills, 322.

In thy devastating omnipotence
Alastor, 613.

Devastating was a rare word in Shelley's time, and possibly was influenced by devast.

It is possible to scan the line with a reversal on dev and rhythm stress on ing.

In thy || devastating omnipotence.

The pictorial quality of the rhythm is rather heightened by the latter reading.

Of unintangled intermixture, made
By Love of light and motion; one intense
Diffusion, one serene omnipresence
Epipsychidion, 95.

And as I looked the bright omnipresence
Of morning through the orient cavern
flowed

The Triumph of Life, 343.

Ethel Allen Murphy

1911.