The three divisions are discussed in closely parallel fashion, with much repetition of phraseology. In each case a specific command to make a census is given first (2,22,29). Then the age limits of this particular census are stated (3,23,30). Next the service of each division is stated. The charge of Kohath describes in full the work of Aaron and his sons in packing up the sacred vessels (5-15a) and then states that the other sons of Kohath are to carry these vessels after they have been packed (15b). It ends with a statement that Eleazar, the son of Aaron, is over the most holy objects in particular (16), followed by an extensive warning against any intrusion among the uncovered holy things on the part of the Kohathites (17-20). The charge of the Gershonites (25-26) repeats with some further details the service described in iii.36-37. The charge of Gershon and that of Merari end with a statement that immediate supervision over them is committed to Ithamar, the youngest son of Aaron (28 and 33). For fuller understanding of the work of each group it would be well to study the detailed account of the parts of the tabernacle in _Ex.xxv-xxvii, xxxv-xxxviii.

Cut ye not off...the Kohathites (18). This expression is used as a vivid way of showing the great responsibility of Moses and Aaron to impress on the Kohathites the danger of any intrusion upon the sacred things by individuals who are not priests. Failure to warn them adequately might lead to a transgression which would cause the entire family of Kohath to be killed, and thus to be entirely cut off from the tribe of Levi.

e. The results of the numbering (iv.34-49)

Each division is taken up separately with Kohath first. The statements about the three sections agree almost word for word. A fourth parallel section gives the total. Each of these four sections begins by naming the division under consideration (34,38,42,46). Next the age limit given above (3,23,30) is repeated (35,39,43,47). The result is stated: Kohath, 2,750 (36); Gershon, 2,630 (40); Merari, 3,200 (44); total 8,580 (48). In conclusion, the name of each division is stated again (37,41,45,49).