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INTENSIVE STUDIES IN AMERICAN  
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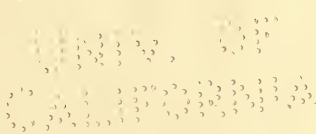
TORONTO

# INTENSIVE STUDIES IN AMERICAN LITERATURE

By

ALMA BLOUNT, PH. D. (CORNELL)

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH IN THE MICHIGAN STATE  
NORMAL COLLEGE



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TO THE  
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TO THE MEMORY OF MY FATHER,  
**Joseph Blount, M. D.,**  
WHOSE APPRECIATIVE READING WAS  
MY FIRST INSTRUCTION IN LITERATURE.



## PREFACE

Rhetoric and literary criticism have been so long and so thoroughly discussed that it would be difficult to treat of them in a strictly original manner. In the present volume general indebtedness to the works enumerated in the Bibliography to Part I will be evident, and there are, without doubt, echoes of many other volumes that have been consulted in the years during which this text has been developing. An attempt has been made to give specific credit wherever possible. Professor Clark S. Northup of Cornell University kindly read the manuscript and suggested improvement in certain details. Doctor Ida Fleischer of the Michigan State Normal College assisted in the proof-reading.

The selections from C. D. Warner's *My Summer in a Garden*, Longfellow's *Life, Letters, and Journal*, Emerson in *Concord*, and Scudder's *Life of Lowell* are used by permission of, and by special arrangement with, Houghton Mifflin Company, authorized publishers of these works. In the course of the text courtesies are acknowledged to the following publishers: Ginn and Company, D. Appleton and Company, Doubleday, Page, and Company, Charles Scribner's Sons, The American Book Company, Harper Brothers, Estes and Lauriat, and The Macmillan Company.



## SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

Every teacher of literature knows how often students come unprepared to the class with the excuse, "I didn't know how to *go at* the lesson." They have in their hands some edition of a masterpiece, carefully annotated to explain words and allusions, but failing to suggest any plan of study. If the teacher has no time or opportunity to formulate such a plan, the students probably gain only detached and fragmentary notions of the classic, and no conception at all of its purpose and value. The studies in this volume are intended to show the pupils one way "to go at" their work, by outlining plans for the study of some of the masterpieces most profitable for class work and most often used in the high school class in American literature. The STUDIES are the product of class-room experience, and have been found practically useful as a means of inspiring in not a few young persons an intelligent appreciation of good literature. It may not be amiss to state here a few of the aims the volume attempts to achieve.

1. It is *not* the intention that the book shall furnish the student with material for memorizing — shall do his thinking for him. It is the purpose, rather, to direct his thought and work. The book is to point out to him the various features to which, in certain works of literature, he should give his attention. It is expected that, through the study of certain poems and stories and essays, he will form such

habits of reading and observation as will develop in him the power to apply the same principles to other works, and to analyze independently other classics of the same kind and no greater difficulty. One test of the success of school work and text-book direction in literature is the increase in the student's power to read good books with understanding and with pleasure.

2. An attempt is made in each one of these STUDIES to emphasize the *thought* of the masterpiece, and to make that the basis of work. Rhetorical devices are discussed not for their own sake, but as means by which a certain thought is well expressed, or a certain effect is successfully produced.

3. It is the endeavor of these STUDIES to keep the masterpiece before the student *as a unit*, to emphasize the unifying notion — "the informing spirit" that governs and gives life to the expression. In the study of any work of art, the parts must not be made so prominent as to seem greater than the whole; rather, details, while not neglected, must be subordinated to and blended into the effect and harmony of the whole. It is a mistake to be so occupied with the trees that one cannot see the forest. A literary classic must not be made to appear a *pot-pourri* of figures, sentences, words, strung together for their own sake, with little system and no method. Therefore each masterpiece is here considered first as a whole and last as a whole, that the unity of impression may not be lost.

4. This careful and detailed study of an author's works must precede any intelligent general statements about his style, and in classes of students sufficiently advanced may properly be followed by a paper summarizing the results of the study of the individual works. Such a paper will tell how a writer commonly makes forcible, suggestive, and

artistic the expression of his thought; will set forth his usual method (comparison and figure, specific word and epithet, allusion, etc.) of developing his thought or calling up images in the mind of the reader; and will treat of all such matters of style as reveal the author's habit of mind. The student will attain one of the most satisfying results of the study of literature if he can come to know his author as an acquaintance and friend — can enumerate the qualities of his mind and heart, as well as those of his art, and feel the influence of his personality.

5. However thorough and conscientious may be the formal study of a work of art, it yet leaves something to be desired — an intimate and spiritual appreciation, without which the best of formal work is vain and empty. The formal study should help to prepare the mind and heart for such appreciation by concentrating the attention on the beauty of the conception and of its expression; but sympathy is not a necessary or direct result of even *good* formal study. Every intelligent being is more or less susceptible to the influence of beauty, and this natural susceptibility may be cultivated. The means of cultivation comes to most persons through the influence of some personality. A text-book is, perforce, too impersonal to furnish the atmosphere necessary for the most complete and profitable study of any work of art. It is the teacher's province to create this atmosphere in the class-room. The text-book relieves the teacher of careful and troubled attention to many details and formal matters, that he may give himself more freely to this better part. Love of and enthusiasm for beauty are contagious; they are transmitted, indeed, rather by contagion than by direct instruction. The ability to bring an inspiring atmosphere into the class-room is a *sine qua non* for a teacher of art. A mechanical

instructor teaches nothing really worth while in literature, and no text-book can do for his class what his personality should be able to do.

6. It is recommended that the students be encouraged to look up critical estimates of a classic *after* it has been studied carefully, never before. They will thus learn to be independent in work and in judgment.

7. There are many good and inexpensive annotated editions of some of the works discussed in this volume (*e. g.*, Emerson's *Essays* and Poe's *Tales*), and the compiler of these STUDIES has not thought it worth while to explain allusions and references found in these pieces of literature. The necessary notes will naturally be in the hands of the students. In all cases where the author of this book has, in her own experience, found it difficult to obtain texts satisfactorily annotated, she has furnished here notes and explanations necessary for a complete study of detail.

8. In this volume reference is made, unless otherwise stated, to *lines* of poetry and to *paragraphs* of prose. The STUDIES are grouped for convenience under the authors of the selections studied, and the authors are placed chiefly in chronological order. Unless, however, the STUDIES are used in connection with the history of American literature or to bring out the distinctive style of the various writers, it may be found more desirable to use them in connection with the *Rhetorical Introduction* until the subjects of Meter and Melody and Harmony have been discussed (see exercises for practice after these topics in the *Introduction*), and after the discussion of Figures of Speech to take up the easier before the more difficult poems and stories, combining with them the remaining sections of the *Introduction*. For example, Lanier's *Tampa Robins* should precede the more



difficult poems of earlier writers, if nothing is to be considered but the study of the poem itself.

9. Other groupings of material and innumerable other exercises will readily occur to the teacher. For example, various works of the same kind may be studied together. The ballads of Longfellow, Lowell, and Whittier may be compared with each other and with the Early English ballads; variations in style may be observed, and in some cases reasons for such variations can be discovered. Again, comparisons of authors on certain points of style may profitably be made. Which depend most on epithets for effects? Which on figures of speech? Which authors have the broadest interests, and how do they show it? Which are most influenced by Nature? Which by books and scholarship? How do they show such influence — in choice of subjects, in source of figures, in abundance of allusions, by imitation? What mental qualities do all these peculiarities of style reveal? For purposes of comparison, poems may be grouped according to subjects, *e. g.*, poems addressed to flowers by several writers may be studied together to show how in various ways to various persons

the meanest flower that blows can give  
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

— WORDSWORTH.

Another exceedingly profitable exercise may be used for training the frequently neglected *ear* to catch an author's meaning and method. After listening to a first reading by the teacher of, say, Emerson's *Each and All*, the class should be able to state clearly in a single sentence the central thought of the poem; and on hearing it a second time, the teacher having directed them to listen now for the poet's method,

they should be able to discover that the theme is developed by example, and to say which example is evidently the most important one in the poet's mind — perhaps even the *raison d'être* of the entire poem.

10. Little attempt is here made to define formally the rhetorical terms explained and used. The writer has found that beginners do better to acquire familiarity with and usage of technical terms rather through example and practice than through formal definitions, which belong to later, more philosophical study. It is believed, however, that the less formal explanations of this volume are in accord with the discussions to be found in the most scholarly of advanced books on literary forms and criticism, and that this volume will serve, therefore, for those students who go on to a college course, as an introduction to more advanced work. Neither do these discussions pretend to be exhaustive, or to settle vexed questions. They are intended merely to make the young student more sensitive to the form and content of works of literature, in order that he may read with greater profit and pleasure. The suggestions for supplementary reading are intended to furnish a background for the selections more carefully studied. In the study of the history of American literature, the class should have access also to some book (like Stedman's *Anthology*) containing selections from minor poets, and of course to the Stedman and Hutchinson *Library of American Literature*. The various bibliographies are not intended to be complete, but to name some books that have been found particularly useful to young people.

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INTENSIVE STUDIES IN AMERICAN  
LITERATURE



# INTENSIVE STUDIES IN AMERICAN LITERATURE

## PART I RHETORICAL INTRODUCTION

### CHAPTER I.

#### INTRODUCTORY — WHAT LITERATURE IS

If some one should ask us, "What are the text-books you study in school good for?" we should not hesitate to reply, "They teach us things we have not known before about language, about the earth and the life upon it, about men of past ages, about mathematical quantities." And it is true that a great many of the books we study are written to increase our *knowledge*.

But there are other books from which we may derive quite as much benefit as from scientific books, and perhaps even more pleasure, if we learn to use them properly; these are books of *literature*. They are not intended primarily to teach us *facts*, though in studying a book of literature we may incidentally learn a great many facts. They are intended through harmonious language to present beautiful images to the imagination, to suggest noble thoughts, and so to lead us to broader and higher views of life. It is this purpose of elevating us through our emotions or sympathies that distinguishes, fundamentally, books of literature from books addressed merely to the intellect, like our text-books and many other scientific works.

In his essay on *The Poetry of Pope*, De Quincey has this to say about "The Literature of Knowledge and the Literature of Power:"

In that great social organ which, collectively, we call literature, there may be distinguished two separate offices that may blend and often *do* so, but capable severally of a severe insulation, and naturally fitted for reciprocal repulsion. There is, first, the literature of *knowledge*; and, secondly, the literature of *power*. The function of the first is—to *teach*; the function of the second is—to *move*; the first is a rudder; the second, an oar or a sail. The first speaks to the *mere* discursive understanding; the second speaks ultimately, it may happen, to the higher understanding or reason, but always *through* affections of pleasure and sympathy. . . . Men have so little reflected on the higher functions of literature as to find it a paradox if one should describe it as a mean or subordinate purpose of books to give information. But this is a paradox only in the sense which makes it honourable to be paradoxical. Whenever we talk in ordinary language of seeking information or gaining knowledge, we understand the words as connected with something of absolute novelty. But it is the grandeur of all truth which can occupy a very high place in human interests that it is never absolutely novel to the meanest of minds: it exists eternally by way of germ or latent principle in the lowest as in the highest, needing to be developed, but never to be planted. To be capable of transplantation is the immediate criterion of a truth that ranges on a lower scale. Besides which, there is a rarer thing than truth, —namely, *power*, or deep sympathy with truth. What is the effect, for instance, upon society, of children? By the pity, by the tenderness, and by the peculiar modes of admiration, which connect themselves with the helplessness, with the innocence, and with the simplicity of children, not only are the primal affections strengthened and continually renewed, but the qualities which are dearest in the sight of heaven, —the frailty, for instance, which appeals to forbearance, the innocence which symbolizes the heavenly, and the simplicity which is most alien from the worldly, —are kept in perpetual remembrance, and their ideals are continually refreshed. A purpose of the same nature is answered by the higher literature, viz., the literature of power. What do you learn from *Paradise Lost*? Nothing at all. What do you learn from a cookery book? Something new, some-

thing that you did not know before, in every paragraph. But would you therefore put the wretched cookery-book on a higher level of estimation than the divine poem? What you owe to Milton is not any knowledge, of which a million separate items are still but a million of advancing steps on the same earthly level; what you owe is *power*, — that is, exercise and expansion to your own latent capacity of sympathy with the infinite, where every pulse and each separate influx is a step upwards, a step ascending as on a Jacob's ladder from earth to mysterious altitudes above the earth. *All* the steps of knowledge, from first to last, carry you further on the same plane, but could never raise you one foot above your ancient level of earth: whereas the very *first* step in power is a flight — is an ascending movement into another element where earth is forgotten.

We must not suppose, however, that a person can read a book of literature without using his intellect. It would be a very shallow book — indeed one not worth reading carefully — that did not require concentrated attention. In fact, it is often harder to grasp the thought in a book of literature than that in a book addressed merely to the intellect. For, in order to make more effective the truth which the literary book presents, the bare thought is frequently overlaid with images, which the imagination must master before the reader can grasp the underlying truth. When we read a poem, a story, an essay, a great oration, we need to be alive in every part of our being — memory, imagination, intellect, feeling.

All books belonging to the “literature of power” differ more or less in style from books belonging to the “literature of knowledge.” This is necessary because the purpose of one differs from the purpose of the other. We are satisfied if a book that merely conveys information is clearly, correctly, and pleasantly written. We expect much more of a book of literary power; in fact, a book cannot belong to the “power”

class unless it offers us a great deal more than clearness and correctness. The purpose of poetry is farthest removed from that of mere science, therefore the style of poetry differs most from that of scientific writing. We shall now inquire what peculiarities of style belong to poetry; and we shall see that most (not all) of those that do not relate to the peculiar structure of poetry belong also to literary prose, intended, like poetry, to describe vividly some scene, or to make us feel deeply some truth or some phase of beauty.



## CHAPTER II

### THE FORMS OF POETRY

#### 1. METER

Every line of poetry is divided into measures, as music is divided. A poetic measure is called a **foot**.

The feet in a line of poetry, like the measures in a musical composition, are given equal time. Each foot has one accent, and the accented syllable, being the most prominent, is the longest in the foot.

The English poetic foot has sometimes two, sometimes three, syllables. Feet are divided into classes on the basis of the number of syllables and the position of the accent. To these classes are still given the names they received from the ancient Greek rhetoricians.

The **Iambic** foot contains two syllables, the accented coming last.

× / × / × / × / × /  
The cur | few tolls | the knell | of part | ing day,  
× / × / × / × / × /  
The low | ing herd | winds slow | ly o'er | the lea,  
× / × / × / × / × /  
The plow | man home | ward plods | his wear | y way,  
× / × / × / × / × /  
And leaves | the world | to dark | ness and | to me.

— GRAY: *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*.

The iambus is the most common foot in English. Each iambus is a climax (× /), and a line of iambic feet has a

serious, sustained effect. It is especially appropriate when solemn, serious thoughts are to be expressed.

The **Trochaic** foot is the two-syllable foot that begins with the accented syllable and ends with the unaccented syllable.

/    ×    /    ×    /    ×    /    ×  
Should you | ask me | whence these | stories,  
/            ×    /    ×    /    ×    /    ×  
Whence these | legends | and tra | ditions.

— LONGFELLOW: *Hiawatha*.

The trochee has the effect of an anti-climax, and is lighter, brighter, and more rapid than the iambus. It is used when less weighty thought is to be expressed.

The **Spondee** is made up of two syllables, both accented. An entire line could not be made of spondaic feet, because that would require every syllable to be accented. The spondee occurs in combination with other two-syllable feet, especially with the iambus, to retard the time and emphasize certain words.

× /    × /    × /    × /  
I hold | it truth | with him | who sings  
× /    / /    × /    × /  
To one | *clear harp* | in div | ers tones,  
× /    × /    × /    × /  
That men | may rise | on step | ping stones  
× /    / /    × /    × /  
Of their | *dead selves* | to high | er things.

— TENNYSON: *In Memoriam*.

× /    / /    × /    / /    × /  
The long | *day wanes*; | the slow | *moon climbs*; | the deep  
/            /    ×    /    ×    /    ×  
*Moans round* | with ma | ny voic | es.

— TENNYSON: *Ulysses*.

The **Anapest** is the three-syllable foot that corresponds to the iambus. It ends with the accented syllable, and has

therefore the effect of a climax. The anapestic foot is more rapid in movement than the iambic, but it, also, is adapted to the quiet, meditative spirit.

× × / × × / × × / × × /  
At the close | of the day | when the ham | let is still.

The **Dactyl** is the three-syllable foot that corresponds to the trochee, an anti-climax. It is the opposite of the anapest. Longfellow's *Evangeline* is written partly in dactylic measure.

/ × × / × × / × × / × × / × × /  
This is the | forest pri | meval. The | murmuring | pines and the | hem-  
×  
locks,  
/ × × / × × / × / × × / × × /  
Bearded with | moss, and in | garments | green, indis | tinct in the | twi-  
×  
light,  
/ × / × × / × / × / × × / ×  
Stand like | Druids of | eld, with | voices | sad and pro | phetic,  
/ × / × / × / × / × × / ×  
Stand like | harpers | hoar, with | beards that | rest on their | bosom.

The brightness of the dactylic movement is toned down here by the use of the trochaic measure, which has but one quick, unaccented syllable.

The **Amphibrach** is not often used. It is a three-syllable foot, with the accent in the middle.

× / × × / × × / × × / ×  
There came to | the beach a | poor exile | of Erin,  
× / × × / × × / × × /  
The dew on | his thin robe | lay heavy | and chill.

—THOMAS CAMPBELL.

The second line here has no final unaccented syllable.

We have said that the poetic foot is, like the musical measure, an exact time unit. But to pronounce a line with

such exact marking of the accents and time units would be to *scan* it, not to read it. Good poetry, like good music, must be interpreted with expression. And the best poetry is full of variations and slight irregularities that serve to bring out more forcibly the thought which the words express. Some rhetoricians prefer to call poetry *rhythmical* rather than *metrical*, thus indicating that there is an exact time interval between the accents, but stating nothing with regard to the number or length of syllables that occupy this interval.

Read aloud one of the rather mechanically constructed couplets from Pope's *Essay on Man*.

×	/	×	/		×	/	×	/	×	/	
Know	then		thysel	,		presume		not	God		to scan
×	/	×	/	×	/	×	/	×	/	×	/
The	pro		per	stud		y	of		mankind		is man.

This poem is addressed chiefly to the intellect, and the somewhat wooden character of the meter is not, therefore, a very serious defect. Compare this with a few lines from Coleridge's *Christabel*.

×	/	×	/	×	/	×	/
There	is	not	wind	enough	to	twirl	
×	/	/	/	×	/	×	/
The	one	red	leaf	the	last	of	its
×	/	×	/	×	/	×	/
That	dances	as	often	as	dance	it	can,
/	×	×	/	×	/	×	/
Hanging	so	light	and	hanging	so	high	
×	/	×	/	×	/	×	/
On	the	topmost	twig	that	looks	up	at
×	/	×	/	×	/	×	/

Coleridge himself explains his meter in *Christabel*:

[It] is not, properly speaking, irregular, though it may seem so from being founded on a new principle, namely that of counting in each line the accents, not the syllables. Though the latter may vary from seven to twelve, yet in each line the accents will be found to be only four. Never-

theless, the occasional variation in number of syllables is not introduced wantonly, but in correspondence with some transition in the nature of the imagery or passion.

The correspondence of sound and meaning in the passage quoted is thus explained by Johnson (*Forms of English Poetry*, page 31):

The slow iambs in the first line suggest quiet night. The second line is more drowsy. The spondee, 'red leaf,' makes the movement slow and halts the line. 'Of its clan,' anapest, however, imparts movement. In the third line the iambs and anapests give more liveliness. The fourth line is more rapid still, and in the fifth the iambus and three anapests correspond to the idea of restless movement. \*

In a sentence, we may say that the movement is slow when the poet speaks of the quiet, windless night, and rapid when he speaks of the quick, dancing motion of the leaf. Thus it is evident that in good poetry variation is not made merely for the sake of variation, but to bring out some particular shade of thought or feeling. The poet is the master, not the slave, of his meter.

Observe the vivid suggestion to the imagination, and the accompanying emotional effect obtained by reversing the position of the accents in these lines from Poe's *Annabel Lee*.

× /        × /    ×× /        / ×  
A wind | blew out | of a cloud, | *chilling*  
My beautiful Annabel Lee.

That, the wind came out of a cloud by night,  
/ × ×    / × ×    / × × /  
*Chilling and | killing | my Ann | abel Lee.*

Clayton Hamilton, in his *Materials and Methods of Fiction* (pages 206, 207), has the following paragraph:

\* From *Forms of English Poetry*. Copyright, 1904, by Charles F. Johnson. Permission of American Book Company, publishers.

The appeal of rhythm to the human ear is basal and elemental; the style depends for its effect more on mastery of rhythmic phrase than upon any other individual detail. In verse, the technical problem is two-fold: first, to suggest to the ear of the reader a rhythmic pattern of standard regularity; and then, to vary from the regularity suggested as deftly and as frequently as may be possible without ever allowing the reader for a moment to forget the fundamental pattern. In prose, the writer works with greater freedom; and his problem is therefore at once more easy and more difficult. Instead of starting with a standard pattern, he has to invent a web of rhythm which is suited to the sense he wishes to convey; and then, without ever disappointing the ear of the reader by unnecessarily withholding an expected fall of rhythm, he must shatter every inkling of monotony by continual and tasteful variation.\*

The subject of prose rhythm is rather subtle for the elementary student, and is not, therefore, discussed in this volume. If the teacher or a more advanced student wishes to take up the subject, he will do well to begin with Genung's *Working Principles of Rhetoric*, pages 210-220, and Lewis's *Principles of English Verse*, Chapter I.

"The appeal of rhythm to the human ear" is so "basal and elemental" that it is acknowledged by the most primitive man and the youngest child. To the undeveloped mind the appeal of rhythm alone is sufficient, without regard to sense, as our nursery and non-sense rimes prove. Children are pleased with verses rich in devices for securing rhythm and melody, but absolutely wanting in thought. Many of our old ballads contain meaningless lines, repeated again and again, often at regular intervals, solely for their movement and "jingle."

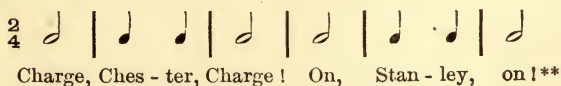
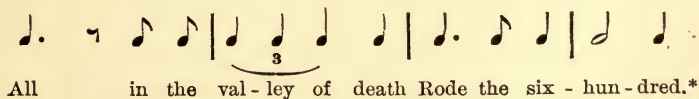
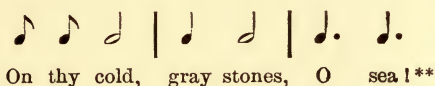
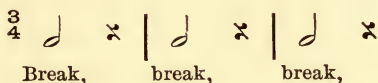
Variations between iambic and anapestic feet and between trochaic and dactylic are particularly common, and make no change in the rhythm, because the relative position of accented and unaccented syllables remains the same. The

\* The quotation from Hamilton is made by kind permission of Doubleday, Page and Company, publishers of the book quoted.

anapest and the dactyl present two very quick unaccented syllables for the longer unaccented one of the iambus and trochee; in the terms of the following paragraphs, two eighth notes for one quarter. That is, the *meter* is varied without disturbing the *rhythm*, which is secured by maintaining equal time intervals between the accents.

Some persons find it helpful to mark the movement of poetry with the musical notation. The following examples of this method are taken from Genung's *Working Principles of Rhetoric* and Winchester's *Principles of Literary Criticism*.

The literary critic, like the musician, would say here that

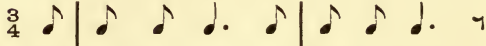


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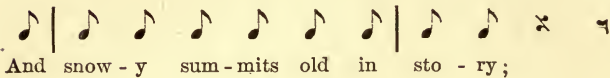
\*\* Used by permission of The Macmillan Company.



For old, un - hap - py, far - off things.\*\*



The splen-dour falls on cas-tle walls,



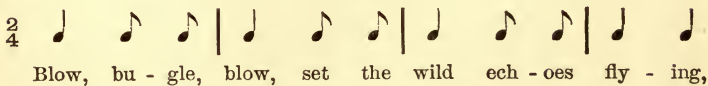
And snow - y sum - mits old in sto - ry;



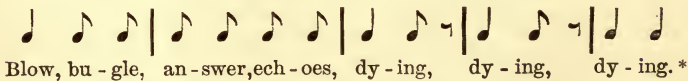
The long light shakes [a - cross the lakes,



And the wild cat - a - ract leaps in glo - ry.



Blow, bu - gle, blow, set the wild ech - oes fly - ing,



Blow, bu - gle, an - swer, ech - oes, dy - ing, dy - ing, dy - ing.\*

the first three lines of *The Bugle Song* begin on the up-beat, and that the regular measure begins with the second syllable of each line. The rests are convenient representations of sentence pauses and metrical pauses.

In iambic movement, the first syllable of a line may be given stress by the use of a trochee for the first measure.

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/ × × / × / × / × /  
*Seasons* | return, | but not | to me | returns  
 / × × / × / × / × /  
*Day, or* | the sweet | approach | of ev'n | or morn.

— MILTON: *Paradise Lost*, III, 41, 42.

The initial trochee has the effect of what musicians call a sharp, clear "attack." This emphasis of the first syllable is particularly common in the first line of a poem, and strengthens the opening.

Or such inversion may be made for the purpose of giving proper sentence-accent, as in the first foot of this line from Poe:

/ × × / × / × × /  
*I was* | a child, | and *she* | was a child.

— POE: *Annabel Lee*.

Or the unaccented syllable of the first iambic measure may be omitted, as in the first two lines below:

/ × / × / × /  
*Tow* | ered cit | ies please | us then,  
 / × / × / × /  
*And* | the bus | y hum | of men,  
 × / × / × / × /  
 Where throngs | of knights | and bar | ons bold  
 × / × / × / × /  
 In weeds | of peace | high tri | umph hold.

— MILTON: *L'Allegro*.

We may say that a "rest" takes the place of this unaccented syllable. The rest often occurs for the unaccented syllable at the end of the line; and occasionally within the line, as in

Break, break, break.

In run-on lines the rhythm may be sustained unbroken by the combination of a final incomplete foot with an initial incomplete foot.

Till the dirges of his Hope that melancholy burden bore  
 Of "Never — never more."

— POE: *The Raven*.

/ ×

*Bore* of keeps up the trochaic movement. Since there is no pause after *bore* to fill the place of the wanting unaccented syllable, the effect is probably smoother without an accent at the beginning of the next line.

There is occasionally an extra unaccented syllable at the end of a line, which produces a falling cadence after an iambic foot.

× / × / × / × / × /

On helm | and har | ness rings | the Sax | on hammer,  
 × / × / × / × / × / × /

Through Cimbric forests roars the Norseman's song,  
 × / × / × / × / × /

And loud | amid | the u | niver | sal clamor  
 × / × / × / × / × / × /

O'er distant desert sounds the Tartar's gong.

— LONGFELLOW: *The Arsenal at Springfield*.

× / × × / × × / × /

We thought as we hollowed his narrow bed,  
 × / × × / × /

And smoothed | down his lone | ly pillow,  
 × × / × × / × × / × × /

How the foe and the stranger would tread o'er his head,  
 × / × × / × × /

And we | far away | on the billow.

— WOLFE: *The Burial of Sir John Moore*.

The meter sometimes requires the omission of an unaccented syllable.

/ × / × / × / × / × / × / × / × / × / × / × / × /

Then this | ebony | bird be | guiling | my sad | fancy | into | smiling.  
 — POE: *The Raven*.

The syllable to be omitted in reading is left out in writing such words as *o'er*, *e'en*.

There is often elision of two vowels coming together in successive words.

/ × / × / × /  
 On a sudden open fly,  
 / × / × / × / × / × /  
 With impetuous recoil and jarring sound,  
 × / × / × / × / × / × /  
 The (in)fernal doors, and on their hinges grate  
 / / × / × / × / × /  
 Harsh thunder, that the lowest bottom shook  
 × / × /  
 Of Erebus.

— MILTON: *Paradise Lost*, II, 879–883.

Not all accented syllables have the same force. Each word has its own natural accent, and each sentence its most emphatic word or words. When one or both of these accents combine with the metrical accent, the result is naturally a heavier emphasis. There is, therefore, no monotony in the effect of the accents, though they are placed regularly in the line. Notice particularly in this connection the quotation from Milton above. These lines are marked again below for the variety in force with which the accented syllables are spoken. 1 represents word-accent; 2, sentence-accent; 3, metrical accent.

  3  13    123  123  
   On a sudden open fly,  
       3      13  3   123    123    13  
 With impetuous recoil and jarring sound  
           13    123    3      13    123  
 The (in)fernal doors, and on their hinges grate  
   123  123    3    13    13    123  
 Harsh thunder, that the lowest bottom shook  
   123  3  
 Of Erebus.  
           13   123          13          123    13  
 Know then thyself, presume not God to scan;  
       13   13  3      13   123  
 The proper study of mankind is man.

The three accents, it will be observed, combine to give the greatest stress to the words most significant in developing the thought of the passage; the strongest emphasis is on the words that unlock the thought.

The sentence (*i. e.*, the *thought*) accent may even contradict the scansion, and thus cause some variation in the "rhythmical pattern."

×   ×   /   ×   ×   /   ×   ×   /   ×   /  
 And this maiden she lived with *no* other thought  
 ×   ×   /   ×   ×   /   ×   /  
 But to love and *be* loved by me.

Here *no* and *be*, unaccented in meter, receive sentence stress.

/   ×   ×   /   ×   /   ×   ×   /  
*I* was a child and she was a child.

Moreover, all unaccented syllables are not equally faint. In compound words particularly, and words originally compound, the unaccented syllable receives considerable stress, and is sometimes said to have "secondary accent." Compare *cross-bow* and *government*. The member with the secondary accent may even take the metrical stress.

×   /   ×   /   ×   /   ×   /  
 Why look'st thou so? — With my *cross-bow*  
 I shot the Albatross.

— COLERIDGE: *The Ancient Mariner*.

Rarely feet occur in which neither syllable is stressed; such feet are named **pyrrhics**. Or perhaps it is better to regard them as having weak stress only on the metrically accented syllable; usually only word or metrical accent without any sentence stress whatever.

A line of poetry often contains a complete grammatical unit, *i. e.*, a phrase or a clause.

A little knowledge is a dangerous thing;  
 Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian Spring.

— POPE: *Essay on Criticism*.

But a long succession of lines regularly ending in a pause (**end-stopped lines**) is likely to be monotonous. The best poetry avoids this danger by using frequent **run-on lines**, and by varying the position of the medial pause.

The chief medial pause is often called the **cesura**. It may come anywhere in the line, and usually, for the sake of variety, shifts position in successive lines.

Seasons return; || but not to me returns  
 Day, || or the sweet approach of ev'n or morn.

— MILTON: *Paradise Lost*, III, 42, 43.

It may even come within a foot.

/ × × / × × / × × / × × / × ×  
 This is the | forest pri | meval. || The | murmuring | pines and the |  
 / ×  
 hemlocks

Read aloud the following lines from the first book of *Paradise Lost*; note the run-on lines, the position of the pauses, and the effective sweep of poetic phrasing.

Of man's first disobedience, || and the fruit  
 Of that forbidden tree, || whose mortal taste  
 Brought death into the world, || and all our woe,  
 With loss of Eden, || till one greater Man  
 Restore us, || and regain the blissful seat,  
 Sing, Heavenly Muse, || that on the secret top  
 Of Oreb, or of Sinai, || didst inspire  
 That Shepherd || who first taught the chosen seed  
 In the beginning || how the heavens and earth  
 Rose out of chaos.

The arrangement and distribution of pauses, end and medial, produces the **Rhythmic Phrase**, whose musical curves cover with grace and beauty the sharp, abrupt angles of the metrical skeleton. In the best poetry the rhythmic phrases vary constantly in length and cadence, and thus prevent the monotony of the regular metrical beat from becoming offensive. Good reading brings out the rhythmic phrasing of a poem rather than its metrical structure. When the rhythmic phrasing exactly corresponds to the metrical structure, a sort of "doggerel verse" is produced, which it is almost impossible to read without scanning — a tiresome and inartistic form. Chaucer makes one of his Canterbury pilgrims begin a tale in "rym dogerel," but the judge interrupts him and compels him to abandon his sing-song romance. One hesitates to call the poetry of Pope by such an uncomplimentary term as "doggerel," but it is probably the sense and not the sound that saves it. Our best artists in rhythmic phrasing are our great masters of blank verse. Read again the lines from Milton quoted above.

The old Greek rhetoricians have given us also names for lines of various lengths. A line of one foot is a **monometer**; one of two feet is a **dimeter**; one of three is a **trimeter**; one of four is a **tetrameter**; one of five a **pentameter**; one of six a **hexameter**; one of seven a **heptameter**; one of eight an **octameter**.

A tetrameter line made up of iambic or trochaic feet is said to be **octo-syllabic**, because it contains eight syllables. Iambic or trochaic pentameter is **deca-syllabic** (ten-syllabled).

Lines rarely contain more than six accents. A seven-foot measure is usually written in two lines, one of four, the other of three, feet. An octameter is usually written as two te-

trameter lines. Both tetrameter and pentameter are very common.

There is no very great virtue in the difficult classic names for our measures and lines. We may employ, if we wish, especially for convenience in writing, a simpler symbol. As an abbreviation for iambic pentameter we may write *5xa*; for trochaic tetrameter *4ax*; for dactylic trimeter *3axx*; etc.

Long lines naturally give a slower, more sweeping and dignified phrasing to the poem. They are apt to be found, therefore, in the expression of thoughtful, serious sentiment, while the more vivacious short lines are appropriate for brighter, livelier composition.

Monometer and dimeter are seldom used for complete poems, though examples are found. They are frequently used to produce the effect of echoing the longer lines that precede them.

$\times / \times / \times /$   
 Is this a fast, to keep  
 $\quad \times / \times /$   
 The larder lean  
 $\quad \quad \times /$   
 And clean  
 $\times / \times / \times /$   
 From fat of veal and sheep?

— HERRICK: *To Keep a True Lent*.

See also Burns's *To a Mouse*, Wordsworth's *At the Grave of Burns*, and Herrick's *To Daffodils*.

A verse of six iambic feet is called an **Alexandrine**. A fine example from Pope shows its effect.

A needless Alexandrine ends the song,  
*And, like a wounded snake, drags its slow length along.*

— *Essay on Criticism*, II.

The line of six feet, in a poem composed of pentameter lines,

retards the time, as the figure of Pope indicates. He further retards by means of the spondee "*slow length*."

## 2. STANZA AND RIME

Two words are said to **rime** when they differ in the initial consonant or consonants of the riming syllables, and are identical in the following vowel and consonant sounds. Rime occurs in accented syllables, because they alone are conspicuous enough to make the identity of sound effective. Rime relates to *sound*, not to *spelling*. The following words show pairs of rimes: *run: son (sun); rain: main; air: fair; gay: say*.

The rime may include two syllables, the first being accented: *charming: harming; willow: pillow; any: penny*. A two-syllable rime is sometimes called a *feminine* rime, and the single-syllable rime is called *masculine*.

Even three syllables may be included in the rime, or identity of sound, the first of the three being accented: *tenderly: slenderly; (un)fortunate: (im)portunate; (un)dutiful: beautiful*.

All poets make use of imperfect rimes, in which there is similarity, but not absolute identity, between either the riming vowel or the riming consonant(s): *June: moon; home: come; love: prove; only: homely; humanly: womanly*.

An imperfect rime disappoints the ear of the reader, and is a blemish in a poem; but sometimes it is impossible for a poet to avoid the use of one, because he has to consider sense and meter as well as rime. An occasional imperfect rime is hardly noticed, but a great number seriously impair the musical effect of a poem.

Identical rimes are rare, and not as effective as rimes on words with different consonants preceding the accented vowel.





THE SHAKESPEARE HOUSE, STRATFORD-ON-AVON



THE BIRTH ROOM

THE  
MUSEUM  
OF  
THE  
CITY OF  
BOSTON

For some were hung with arras green and *blue*,  
 Showing a gaudy summer morn,  
 Where with puff'd cheek the belted hunter *blew*  
 His wreathed bugle-horn.

— TENNYSON: *The Palace of Art*.

Rime is useful because it is pleasing in itself, and because it binds lines into groups called **stanzas**.

A poet may make any stanza combination he pleases, using as many lines as he likes, and arranging the rimes as he likes; but there are in our literature a great many conventional stanzas used by all poets. Variety in the stanza may be made by variation in the meter and the line-length, as well as by the arrangement of rime.

For convenience and brevity in describing rime in stanza structure, the end syllables will here be represented by the letters of the alphabet, riming syllables by the same letter. The rime-scheme for the stanza below is *ababcb*.

It was many and many a year ago,  
 In a kingdom by the sea,  
 That a maiden there lived whom you may know,  
 By the name of Annabel Lee;  
 And this maiden she lived with no other thought,  
 Than to love and be loved by me.

— POE: *Annabel Lee*.

The shortest possible stanza is the couplet of two riming lines.

All are but parts of one stupendous whole,  
 Whose body Nature is, and God the soul.

— POPE: *Essay on Man*.

The iambic pentameter couplet, of which the above is an example, is sometimes called the *heroic* couplet.

Tennyson in *The Two Voices* has used a three-line stanza, all the lines riming.

A still small voice spake unto me,  
 "Thou art so full of misery,  
 Were it not better not to be?"

Four-line stanzas are very common. They may rime *abab*, *aabb*, *abcb*, *abac*, or *abba*. The lines may be of any length and any meter. Often the lines are alternately tetrameter and trimeter, and the four lines are equivalent to a couplet in heptameter.

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,  
 The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea,  
 The plowman homeward plods his weary way,  
 And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

— GRAY: *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*.

So runs my dream: but what am I?  
 An infant crying in the night:  
 An infant crying for the light:  
 And with no language but a cry.

— TENNYSON: *In Memoriam*, LIV.

Stanzas are found containing as many as twenty-four lines, but the longer ones are less common. Five-line stanzas occur in Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and Shelley's *To a Skylark*; six-line stanzas in Collins's *How Sleep the Brave* and Rossetti's *Blessed Damozel*; seven-line stanzas in Morris's *The Earthly Paradise* and Milton's *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity* (Introduction); eight-line stanzas in Burns's *To Mary in Heaven*; nine-line stanzas in Campbell's *Battle of the Baltic*; ten-line stanzas in Keats's *Ode to a Grecian Urn*. Other examples may be noted as they present themselves in literature.

A famous stanza is the **Spenserian stanza**, invented by the poet Spenser for *The Faery Queene*, and used by many later poets.

As gentle shepherd in sweet eventide, '  
 When ruddy Phoebus 'gins to welke in west,  
 High on a hill, his flocks to viewen wide,  
 Marks which do bite their hasty supper best,  
 A cloud of cumbrous gnats do him molest,  
 All striving to infix their feeble stings,  
 That from their noyance he nowhere can rest,  
 But with his clownish hands their tender wings  
 He brusheth oft, and oft doth mar their murmurings.

— *Canto I, Stanza 23.*

We count nine lines in the stanza. The rime scheme is *ababbcc*. Careful study shows that the first eight lines are iambic pentameter, and the ninth is iambic hexameter (an Alexandrine). The longer line at the end gives finish and dignity to this most musical of stanzas.

The **Sonnet** is one of the finest forms we have for the short poem complete in one stanza.

Milton! thou should'st be living at this hour:  
 England hath need of thee; she is a fen  
 Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,  
 Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,  
 Have forfeited their ancient English dower  
 Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;  
 Oh! raise us up, return to us again;  
 And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.  
 Thy soul was like a star, and dwelt apart:  
 Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea:  
 Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,  
 So didst thou travel on life's common way,  
 In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart  
 The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

— WORDSWORTH.

If you scan this sonnet, you will find that all the lines are iambic pentameter. The rime-scheme is *abbaabba cddece*.

The fourteen lines of the sonnet are divided into two parts of eight and six lines — the **octave** and the **sestet**. This division is indicated by the change of rime, the octave containing *ab* and the sestet *cde*. The change is justified by a turn in the thought. In the octave of this sonnet Wordsworth discusses the need in the England of his day for men like Milton; in the sestet he speaks of the character of Milton. The rime in the octave of a sonnet is usually *abbaabba*, rarely other arrangements of *ab*. The rime in the sestet may be any arrangement of *cde* chosen by the poet.

The Shakespearian "sonnet" is not properly a sonnet at all, but a fourteen-line poem made up of three quatrains and a couplet. The third quatrain often shows a turn in the thought, and the couplet gives the climax or application of the first twelve lines. The rime-scheme is *abab cdcd efef gg*.

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?  
 Thou art more lovely and more temperate.  
 Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,  
 And summer's lease hath all too short a date:  
 Sometimes too hot the eye of heaven shines,  
 And often is his gold complexion dimmed;  
 And every fair from fair sometimes declines,  
 By chance or nature's changing course untrimmed;  
 But thy eternal summer shall not fade,  
 Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest,  
 Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his shade,  
 When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st;  
 So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,  
 So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

— *Sonnet XIII.*

Observe the turn of thought as shown by "but" at the beginning of the ninth line. The couplet expresses the poet's wish to preserve forever in his sonnets the fame of his friend.

Some of the finest and most dignified poetry in English literature is written in **Blank Verse**, that is, verse without rime. Iambic pentameter is used in regular blank verse. Since there is no rime, the lines are arranged, not in stanzas, but in paragraphs that correspond to the outline of the thought. Blank verse has been used by Milton in his epics, by Shakespeare and other dramatists, by Tennyson in some of his longer poems, by Bryant in his best nature poems, and by many other English poets who have treated sublime and profound themes. It is particularly suitable for such themes because, not calling attention by rime to the end of the lines, it admits of longer, more sweeping rhythmic phrasing.

Poetry with rime is occasionally written in paragraphs (topic divisions) instead of stanzas (rime-scheme divisions). See Longfellow's *Building of the Ship* and Lowell's *Vision of Sir Launfal*. There is rime in these poems, but no fixed and repeated rime-scheme to bind the lines into formal stanzas.

Blank verse must by no means be considered a form of prose. Though it has no rime, it has all the metrical construction of poetry, and in every other respect follows poetic conventions.

### 3. THE KINDS OF POETRY

Poetry is divided according to its subject-matter into several kinds.

1. The **Narrative Poem** is written to tell a story. It may relate legends of persons, of places, or of nations; it may tell stories from real life, or those furnished by the imagination. Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* and *Enoch Arden*, Longfellow's *Evangeline*, *Hiawatha*, and *Miles Standish* are examples of narrative poetry.

An important kind of narrative poetry is the **Epic**. Some

epics are the product of primitive peoples, survivals of the life and thought of a pre-historic age. Such are the Greek *Iliad* and the Old English *Beowulf*. These unite into one poem legends and myths perhaps sung as short and separate hymns by the tribes at their festivals and dances. The joining was probably done by a single poet after the tribe had gained some degree of culture. Other epics, as Virgil's *Aeneid* and Milton's *Paradise Lost*, are the work of one poet living in a time of culture, who has turned a legend of national or ecclesiastical interest into a noble poem.

**Ballads** are short narrative poems that have grown up among the people in a primitive state of society. The real folk-ballad was probably a chant with a refrain, an accompaniment to a dance. Its subject would naturally be an event of tribal or local interest — the deed of a hero, the manifestation of the supernatural in ghosts or elves, etc., etc. Since these folk-songs grew up before the tribe could write, we have no ballads in their earliest form, just as we have not the earliest form of any folk-epic. Our oldest English ballads deal with chivalry and legends of history, with the supernatural, with love, with personal prowess, and with tragic themes. Some of the most interesting are those that tell of the deeds of Robin Hood and of the border wars between England and Scotland. Just as some culture poets have imitated the early epic form, many modern poets have written ballads. Cowper's *John Gilpin*, Longfellow's *Skeleton in Armor*, Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome* are examples of the modern ballad.

2. A **Drama** is written to be acted on the stage. It may be in prose or in poetry, or partly in prose and partly in poetry. It may be in riming poetry or in blank verse. Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream* contains prose, short riming lines,



longer riming lines, and blank verse. It is interesting to study the play to find out why the poet used each form of expression as he did.

The dramatic form is too complicated to be studied thoroughly in a short, general treatise, but we may define here briefly the two great moods of the drama — tragedy and comedy.

**Tragedy** presents a human being in conflict with a force that is too strong for him and finally causes his overthrow. This overwhelming force may be the outcome of his own sin, as in *Macbeth*, where the hero sealed his own doom, physical as well as moral, when he murdered Duncan and drove Duncan's son to England, to return with an avenging army. Or the destroying force may be the result of the hero's error; Othello was the victim of a mistaken jealousy. But however the force may be awakened, the end of tragedy is disaster.

In **Comedy** the danger is only apparent, or, at any rate, not overwhelming. The end of comedy is a happy solution of the difficulties of the hero. If any person meets disaster, it is the villain, at whose overthrow we are pleased. Since comedy does not move us to "pity or terror," it may properly contain much that is laughable. A comedy is often the working out, through a series of blunders, of an amusingly perplexing situation, as Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors*. It often presents droll characters, as Mrs. Malaprop, in Sheridan's *Rivals*. Yet some of our best comedy is not particularly laughable; it is simply the development to a happy conclusion of a situation more or less complex.

A tragedy may, for particular reasons, contain laughable scenes. See De Quincey's *On the Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth*.

Occasionally a work written in dramatic form is not suited to

presentation on the stage, usually because it involves too little action. Such a piece is called a "closet drama."

3. **Lyric poetry** is the immediate expression of the feeling of the poet — his desire, his love, his hope, his fear, his grief. The early lyrics were sung — as indeed was early poetry of other kinds — by a minstrel to the accompaniment of the lyre; hence the term *lyric*. Lyric poems are usually short; or a long lyric may be composed of a series of short poems, as Tennyson's *In Memoriam*. The reason for briefness is that intense emotion cannot be long sustained. Descriptive, meditative poetry is usually of lyric character, *e. g.*, Bryant's nature poems.

The most dignified lyric is the **Ode**. With sustained dignity it expresses emotions profound and exalted, and deals with some elevated subject, as a national celebration or an important anniversary. Though the ancient ode was of perfectly regular construction, the English ode is generally irregular in length of line and stanza, and in arrangement of rime. Some excellent English odes are Dryden's *Alexander's Feast*, Wordsworth's *Ode on Intimations of Immortality*, Lowell's *Commemoration Ode*. A stanza of an ode is often called a **strophe**.

4. A **Didactic poem** appeals more to the intellect than a lyric, which is strongly emotional. Didactic poetry cannot, therefore, be the highest kind, since the appeal of poetry is not merely to the intellect. Pope's *Essay on Man* deals with philosophical questions; his *Essay on Criticism* with rules of rhetoric and literary criticism. A didactic poem may have for its subject a political question, as the political satires of Dryden. It may express party or class spirit, as Butler's *Hudibras*, a satire on Puritanism.

## AN EXERCISE ON METER AND STANZA

Study meter and stanza forms in the following poems.

1. Whittier, *Maud Muller*.
2. Whittier, *The Barefoot Boy*.
3. Bryant, *Green River*.
4. Longfellow, *The Village Blacksmith*.
5. Longfellow, *The Children's Hour*.
6. Longfellow, *Three Friends of Mine*.
7. Longfellow, *My Lost Youth*.
8. Poe, *Annabel Lee*.
9. Poe, *The Haunted Palace*.
10. Shelley, *The Cloud*.
11. Thomas Hood, *The Bridge of Sighs*.
12. Thomas Hood, *The Song of the Shirt*.
13. Walter Scott, *Lochinvar*.
14. Caroline E. Norton, *Bingen on the Rhine*.
15. Longfellow's Sonnets: *Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Keats, The Sound of the Sea, In the Churchyard at Tarrytown, Eliot's Oak, To the River Rhone, The Three Silences of Molinos, Wapentake*.

## CHAPTER III

### MELODY AND HARMONY

#### 1. MELODY

Since poetry is intended to give the reader pleasure, the poet must take some pains to use words that are musical and agreeable. A passage has **Melody** when it is musical and pleasing in sound.

Some sounds are in their nature less pleasing than others. The explosive consonants (as *d, t, b, g, k*) are more abrupt than the spirants (as *s, f, v*), and are apt to produce a hurried, staccato, sometimes even a rather harsh effect. The spirants, and especially the liquids (*l, m, n, r*), are easily prolonged, and blend with the following sounds; they give the verse a smooth, flowing, legato effect. Notice the predominance of liquids and spirants in these lines from Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey*:

Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
And the round ocean, and the living air,  
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man.

Poe, who studied sound effects carefully, says that he chose "Nevermore" as the refrain for *The Raven* largely because the word contains the most sonorous vowel, *o*, and the most "producibile" consonant, *r*. An amusing story is told of an Italian lady who knew not a word of English,

but who, when she heard the word *cellar-door*, was convinced that English must be a most musical language. If the word were not in our minds hopelessly attached to a humble significance, we, too, might be charmed by its combination of spirant, liquids, and vowels.

Words which contain awkward combinations are avoided in literary prose as well as in poetry (*sixthly*, *pledged*, etc.).

Authors are careful, likewise, to make pleasant combinations in adjacent words.

Drink to me only with *thine eyes*.

— BEN JONSON.

*Mine eyes* have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord.

— MRS. JULIA WARD HOWE.

These combinations are much more agreeable than *my eyes* and *thy eyes* would be, because *n* separates the vowel sounds in the adjacent words. Tennyson never ceased to regret one of his earlier verses in which the letter *s* was awkwardly used in three successive words.

In such great offices as suit  
The full-grown energies of heaven.

The following are a few devices occasionally used by poets, some of them by writers of prose, to add to melodic effect.

**Alliteration** is the linking of neighboring accented syllables by the recurrence of the same initial consonant sound. The *sound* must be the same, though the *letter* may be different: *cellar*: *said*; *keep*: *can*. The words must be so near together that the sound carries over from one to the other in the mind of the reader, or no effect is produced.

The splendor falls on castle walls,  
 And snowy summits old in story;  
 The long light shakes across the lakes,  
 And the wild cataract leaps in glory.

— TENNYSON: *The Bugle Song*.

The alliteration may change quickly.

The lisp of leaves and ripple of rain.

— SWINBURNE.

We sometimes find "cross alliteration."

I come from haunts of coot and hern.

— TENNYSON: *The Brook*.

**Assonance** means the linking of neighboring words by the recurrence of the vowel sound in their accented syllables. We need to have a keen ear for the *sound* recurrence, since the spelling often disguises it to the eye.

So all day long the noise of battle rolled.

— TENNYSON: *The Passing of Arthur*.

From the molten-golden notes.

— POE: *The Bells*.

**Internal Rime** is used for its musical effect.

The splendor *falls* on castle walls.  
 The long light *shakes* across the lakes.

— TENNYSON: *The Bugle Song*.

My *wing* is *king* of the summer time.

— LANIER: *Tampa Robins*.

When the end of a line rimes with the middle, as in the quotation from Tennyson, the long line has the effect of

two short ones. A person could not tell from the sound whether such a line were written in one tetrameter or in two dimeters.

**Repetition** of words and phrases is often melodious, and strengthens their effect. This is especially noticeable in a refrain repeated at the end of each of a series of stanzas. Poe's *Raven* would not be nearly as effective a poem if it were not for the insistent and melancholy "Nevermore" at the close of each stanza. Read aloud Longfellow's *Old Clock on the Stairs*, and observe the return of the striking

Forever — never;  
Never — forever.

The repetition of *to-morrow* in the following line emphasizes the notion, and imitates the slow, monotonous passage of time to one who has lost his pleasure in living.

*To-morrow, and to-morrow, and 'to-morrow,*  
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,  
To the last syllable of recorded time;  
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools  
The way to dusty death.

— SHAKESPEARE: *Macbeth*, V, 5.

Both repetition and internal rime are used in:

And the *same* rose blows, and the *same* sun glows,  
And the *same* brook sings of a year ago.

— WHITTIER: *Telling the Bees*.

In connection with the subject of melody, R. L. Stevenson's essay on *Style in Literature* is interesting, as the thought of a master of melody and style.

## 2. HARMONY

Under melody we have considered the musical quality of words and phrases and sentences, without regard to the thoughts they express. Under **Harmony** we shall consider the suitability of the sound to the thought.

Harmony, or fitness, is a higher principle than mere melody, or agreeableness. Even harsh or abrupt sounds may be effective in the description of harsh noises or strong passions. The expression is best that best helps the reader's imagination to grasp the thought of the writer, and to feel the effect intended. This principle of writing is well stated in the lines of Pope. (*Essay on Criticism*, Book II.)

But true expression, like th' unchanging sun,  
Clears and improves whate'er it shines upon,  
It gilds all objects, but it alters none.  
Expression is the dress of thought, and still  
Appears more decent as more suitable;  
A vile conceit in pompous words expressed,  
Is like a clown in regal purple dressed:  
For diff'rent styles with diff'rent subjects sort,  
As sev'ral garbs with country, town, and court.

\* \* \* \* \*

'Tis not enough no harshness gives offense,  
The sound must seem an echo to the sense.

The contrasting couplets below follow excellently well the advice they give. Read them aloud, and note the alliteration of the flowing spirants and the swift movement in I and IV, and the pauses and difficult combinations that make II and III slow and heavy.

- I Soft is the strain when zephyr gently blows,  
And the smooth stream in smoother numbers flows;  
II But when loud surges lash the sounding shore,  
The hoarse, rough verse should like a torrent roar.



- III When Ajax strives some rock's vast weight to throw,  
 The line, too, labours, and the words move slow;  
 IV Not so when swift Camilla scours the plain,  
 Flies o'er the unbending corn, and skims along the main.

Milton, in the second book of *Paradise Lost*, suggests the harsh grating of the doors of hell:

On a sudden open fly,  
 With impetuous recoil and jarring sound,  
 The infernal doors, and on their hinges grate  
 Harsh thunder.

The utter desolation of the Ancient Mariner is suggested by the pauses and the long, resonant vowels in Coleridge's:

Alone, alone, all, all alone,  
 Alone on a wide, wide sea.

Read aloud the following paragraph from Irving's *Westminster Abbey*. Observe the sonorous majesty of the words that describe the organ music, and the pure melody of those that describe the clear voices of the choir. His description contains many of the adornments more common to poetry than to prose, for the paragraph is written with a poetic purpose, *i. e.*, to elevate and refine us through our sympathy with the beautiful. Notice especially the use of alliteration.

Suddenly the notes of the deep-labouring organ burst upon the ear, falling with doubled and re-doubled intensity, and rolling, as it were, huge billows of sound. How well do their volume and grandeur accord with this mighty building! With what pomp do they swell through its vast vaults, and breathe their awful harmony through these caves of death, and make the silent sepulchre vocal! And now they rise in triumph and acclamation, heaving higher and higher their accordant notes, and piling sound on sound. — And now they pause, and the soft voices of the choir break out into sweet gushes of melody; they soar

aloft and warble along the roof, and seem to play about these lofty vaults like the pure airs of heaven. — Again the pealing organ heaves its thrilling thunders, compressing air into music and rolling it forth on the soul. What long-drawn cadences! What solemn, sweeping concords! It grows more and more dense and powerful, — it fills the vast pile, and seems to jar the very walls — the ear is stunned — the senses are overwhelmed. And now it is winding up in full jubilee — it is rising from the earth to heaven — the very soul seems rapt away, and floated upwards on this swelling tide of harmony.

Some of the devices named under melody may be used for sound suggestion rather than for musical effect. For example, alliteration of explosives is not always musical; it may be suggestive of irregularity or harshness.

What a tale of terror now their turbulency tells!

— POE: *The Bells*.

Certain words are, in their own sound, imitative of the sounds they name: *buzz, hiss, whiz, rush, tinkle, murmur, rumble, rattle*. These are **Onomatopoeic** words. They are vivid because they bring clearly to the imagination the sound of which the author is writing.

How they *tinkle, tinkle, tinkle*.

— POE: *The Bells*.

How they *clang, and clash, and roar*.

— POE: *The Bells*.

Whole lines or sentences may be imitative.

I galloped, Dirck galloped, we galloped all three.

— BROWNING: *How They Brought the Good News*.

That toward Caunterbury wolden ride.

— CHAUCER: *Prologue*.

*Drops the light drip of the suspended oar,  
Or chirps the grasshopper one goodnight carol more.*

— BYRON: *Childe Harold*, III, 86.

The last example shows also onomatopoea in the word *chirps*.

A more subtle study is that of vowel quality, on which depends the tone-color of a poem. This subject can hardly be discussed apart from examples of some length. One of the best poems in the English language for such study is Poe's *Bells*. In preparation for the study of this poem, it may be said here that the vowels made in the front of the mouth (*e, i*) are light, and produce a tone-color bright and gay; while the vowels made far back in the mouth (*a, o, u*) are more sonorous, and produce a more serious effect. Compare *tinkle* and *toll*. The explanation is purely physiological. When we speak the front vowels, we do not use fully the resonance cavities of the head, and the sounds are not, therefore, sonorous. When we speak the back vowels, we do use the resonance cavities, and the sounds are deeper and fuller.

From what has been said of meter, rime, melody, and harmony, it is clear that an author, particularly a poet, intends to produce his effect on our minds and emotions partly through sound. Literature is, then, addressed partly through the ear to the intellect and feelings, and we cannot enjoy it properly through the eye alone. Literary prose and all poetry must be read aloud if we are to feel its full power. Poetry, however, is not to be *scanned* in reading. Scanning emphasizes the metrical frame-work. By varying the accent, by observing proper pauses, by phrasing, a good reader of poetry builds upon this metrical framework, so that to the ear is presented a finished and beautiful musical structure.

## AN EXERCISE ON METER, MELODY, AND HARMONY

1. Poe: *The Bells*. See the study printed later.
2. Bungay: *Creeds of the Bells*.
3. Poe: *The Raven*. See the study in this volume.
4. Holmes: *The Last Leaf*.
5. Lanier: *The Song of the Chattahoochee*. See the study printed in this volume.
6. Emerson: *The Humble-Bee*. Note the effect of the short lines; the use of *z* and the humming sounds.
7. Finch: *The Patriot Spy*.
8. Read, Thomas Buchanan: *Drifting*. Note the effect of long vowels and frequent rimes.
9. Bryant: *Robert of Lincoln*.
10. Trowbridge: *The Charcoal Man*.
11. Trowbridge: *Evening at the Farm*.
12. Shelley: *The Skylark*.
13. Dryden: *A Song for St. Cecilia's Day*.
14. Dryden: *Alexander's Feast*.
15. Southey: *The Cataract of Lodore*.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE SENTENCE

#### 1. LOOSE AND PERIODIC SENTENCES

The English language, being practically uninflected, shows the relation of words chiefly by their position in the sentence. The usual order is: the subject and its modifiers plus the verb, its complement, and its modifiers. A sentence of this common type, used in many rhetorics, is: "We came to our journey's end, at last, after much fatigue, with no small difficulty, through deep roads and bad weather."

Sentences like this, producing the effect of anti-climax because subordinate elements follow main elements, are called **Loose**. Such sentences might be ended before the actual period occurs; the one quoted might close after *end*, *last*, *fatigue*, or *difficulty*.

For greater effect this sentence may be arranged to produce a climax; that is, the main parts may be put last. "At last, with no small difficulty, after great fatigue, through deep roads and bad weather, we came to our journey's end." This sentence cannot be ended before the final words. The meaning is held in suspense, and the mind is kept expectant to the very end. This is a **Periodic** sentence.

Other examples of the periodic sentence often cited are the following:

In the beginning of the thirteenth century, when the clouds and

storms had come, when the gay, sensuous pagan life was gone, when men were not living by the senses and the understanding, when they were looking for the speedy coming of Anti-Christ, there appeared in Italy, to the north of Rome, in the beautiful Umbrian country, at the foot of the Apennines, a figure of most magical power and charm — St. Francis.

— MATTHEW ARNOLD.

Ere man learned

To hew the shaft, and lay the architrave,  
 And spread the roof above them, — ere he framed  
 The lofty vault, to gather and roll back  
 The sound of anthems; in the darkling wood,  
 Amid the cool and silence, he knelt down,  
 And offered to the Mightiest solemn thanks  
 And supplication.

— BRYANT: *A Forest Hymn*.

In reading the periodic sentence, one notes the effect of climax, and the superiority of this form over the loose in dignity, strength, and weight. Since, however, the periodic form is a departure from the usual English word-order and a device to secure an effect, it would be undesirable to make all the sentences of a composition periodic. Moreover, it would be impossible to make some sentences strictly periodic. We may say, however, that a writer has a "periodic style" when he frequently places the more important parts of the sentence after the subordinate parts, and thus secures the effect of sentence climax. The following sentence is not strictly periodic, because a time clause occurs after the main part of the sentence; yet the main verbs (*go* and *list*) are held so long in suspense that the sentence has the power and dignity of one truly periodic.

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,

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HOLY TRINITY CHURCH, STRATFORD-ON-AVON





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.

— BRYANT: *Thanatopsis*.

## 2. SENTENCE INVERSION

Any element out of its usual place in the sentence attracts attention, and therefore gains force.

In the following sentences, the predicates (in whole or in part) stand before the subjects. Note the emphasis given the first words.

Down dropped the thermometer!

Up you go!

There goes the express!

Not once was he defeated.

Him they loved.

Flashed all their sabres bare.

Observe the strong emotional effect gained by beginning the following sentences with their predicate adjectives.

Great is Diana of the Ephesians.

Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great.

Fair as a summer dream was Margaret.

Great is the mystery of space, greater is the mystery of time.

Occasionally the inversion is made to secure coherence between two sentences.

His friends took the necessary steps for placing him as an apprentice at some shop-keeper's in Penrith. *This* he looked upon as an indignity. (Quoted from Genung's *Rhetoric*.)

*Thus* is the law of progress secured.

— CARLYLE: *Sartor Resartus*.

### 3. LONG AND SHORT SENTENCES

Some writers incline to very long sentences, some to shorter ones; most writers mix long and short sentences, for variety, and as the effects they desire to produce require the one or the other.

Statements are often more easily understood when made in a succession of short sentences than when made in one long involved sentence. Short sentences make the style lively and animated. But too many of them in succession are abrupt, monotonous, and tiresome. The short sentence makes a bald statement, without modification, and is, therefore, likely to present a one-sided or incomplete view. See the study of Emerson's *Essays* in this volume.

Long sentences have more dignity than short ones, and give a fine opportunity for climax. In the hands of the most skillful writers they produce a long sweep of rhythmic phrasing. A writer in the "periodic style" generally uses long sentences, elaborately constructed, holding a "flock of clauses" in suspense, and moving with stately rhythm (Minto). See the examples from Arnold and Bryant above.

### 4. THE BALANCED CONSTRUCTION

When the clauses of a compound sentence are similar in form and weight, they are said to be **Balanced**.

The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork.

Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge.

These verses are taken from the Nineteenth Psalm. Balance was a regular device in Hebrew poetry, and there is a strong rhythm to our translation of it into balanced sentences. Read through the Nineteenth Psalm and find all the balanced sentences in it.

The examples given above show balance in the clauses of a compound sentence. We find also balance of phrases, of infinitives, and of subordinate clauses. Series of phrases or clauses give the effect of balance.

*Studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability. — To spend too much time in studies is sloth; to use them too much for ornament is affectation; to make judgment wholly by their rules is the humor of a scholar.*

— BACON: *Of Studies.*

*They ascribed every event to the will of a Great Being, for whose power nothing was too vast, for whose inspection nothing was too minute.*

— MACAULAY.

It will be observed (see the series of clauses in the quotation from Bacon) that if one member of the series is a little longer or otherwise more weighty than the others, it is placed at the end, to secure the effect of climax.

Balance is very often employed to express **Antithesis** (contrast; one thing set over against another). The balance gives force to the contrast. The conjunction between the balanced clauses or phrases in antithetical expression is the adversative *but*.

Blessings are upon the head of the just, but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked. — *The Psalms.*

If you would make one rich, study not to increase his stores, but to diminish his desires.

The Puritans hated bear-baiting, not because it gave pain to the bear, but because it gave pleasure to the spectators.

— MACAULAY: *Milton*.

The force of the balanced construction comes partly from the expression of the thought in definitely defined units, and partly from the rhythm that accompanies the repetition of similar and equivalent units.

#### 5. RHETORICAL INTERROGATION AND EXCLAMATION

Authors sometimes throw sentences into exclamatory or interrogative form simply for gain in force, the declarative form being without emotional effect.

What a piece of work is man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculties! in form how moving! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals!

— SHAKESPEARE: *Hamlet*.

Hath not a Jew eyes, hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same summer and winter as a Christian? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge?

— SHAKESPEARE: *The Merchant of Venice*, III, 1.

Shylock's thought is perfectly clear; he expects no answer to his questions, for there could be only one. Change the two quotations from Shakespeare into declarative form, and see how much they lose in force.

## AN EXERCISE ON SENTENCES

Discuss the form of the following sentences, and the rhetorical value of the form chosen.

1. If the flights of Dryden therefore are higher, Pope continues longer on the wing. If of Dryden's fire the blaze is higher, of Pope's the heat is more regular and constant. Dryden often surpasses expectation, and Pope never falls below it. Dryden is read with frequent astonishment, and Pope with perpetual delight.

— DR. JOHNSON: *Lives of the Poets* (Pope).

2. Upon me, as upon others, scattered thinly by tens and twenties over every thousand years, fell too powerfully and too early the vision of life. — DE QUINCEY: *Suspiria de Profundis*.

3. Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit  
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste  
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,  
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man  
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,  
Sing, Heavenly Muse, that on the secret top  
Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire  
That shepherd, who first taught the chosen seed,  
In the beginning how the heaven and earth  
Rose out of chaos: or, if Sion hill  
Delight thee more, and Siloa's brook that flowed  
Fast by the oracle of God, I thence  
Invoke thy aid to my adventurous song,  
That with no middle flight intends to soar  
Above the Aonian mount, while it pursues  
Things unattempted yet in prose or rime.

— MILTON: *Paradise Lost*, I, 1-16.

4. The style of Dryden is capricious and varied, that of Pope is cautious and uniform. Dryden obeys the motions of his own mind. Pope constrains his mind to his own rules of composition. Dryden is sometimes vehement and rapid, Pope is always smooth, uniform, and level. Dryden's page is a natural field rising into inequalities, and diversified

by the varied exuberance of abundant vegetation: Pope's is a velvet lawn, shaven by the scythe, and levelled by the roller.

— DR. JOHNSON.

5. If you look about you, and consider the lives of others as well as your own; if you think how few are born with honour, and how many die without name or children; how little beauty we see, and how few friends we hear of; how many diseases and how much poverty there is in the world; you will fall down upon your knees, and, instead of repining at your affliction, will admire so many blessings which you have received at the hand of God.

— SIR WILLIAM TEMPLE.

6. On whatever side we contemplate Homer, what principally strikes us is his invention.

7. Sitting last winter among my books, and walled around with all the comfort and protection which they and my fireside could afford me, to wit, a table of high-piled books at my back, my writing desk on one side of me, some shelves on the other, and the feeling of the warm fire at my feet, I began to consider how I loved the authors of these books.

— LEIGH HUNT.

## CHAPTER V

### DICTION

#### 1. THE VOCABULARY

Words are the material with which an author works, and no author can write well who has a poor vocabulary. There is a great difference in the size of the vocabulary used by various authors; but every good writer has at his command the words demanded by his subject and his style.

An author's vocabulary is often an index to his character and interests. Every man accumulates words relating to the subjects on which he talks, reads, and thinks most. "If we should count, we should find that two men using about the same number of words upon the whole, have the depths and shallows of their verbal wealth at different places" (Minto). A farmer uses fluently the language of the farm, a lawyer that of the court-room, a mechanic that of the shop; and, as far as technical terms are concerned, they speak different tongues.

**Synonyms** are, strictly, words that convey precisely the same meaning; but practically no two words in a language are precisely the same in both denotation and connotation. If there is no other difference, one is learned and the other is popular. De Quincey says: "All languages tend to clear themselves of synonyms as intellectual culture advances, the superfluous words being taken up and appropriated by new shades and combinations of thought evolved in the

progress of society." The word *synonym* is loosely used to designate words with the same general significance, fine distinctions in meaning and usage being ignored. But the best writers choose carefully among the words loosely listed as synonyms, knowing that each has its individual shade of meaning or its peculiar association, and that accurate selection is therefore necessary.

We need not estimate for most authors, as has been done for Shakespeare and Milton, the exact size of the vocabulary, but we may observe by careful reading whether a writer is able to express his thought without monotonous repetition of words — whether he seems to have at his command all the words he needs, and whether he makes fine distinctions in the use of them. If he is satisfactory in these respects, we may say that he has a *copious vocabulary*, and is *precise in his diction*.

## 2. GENERAL AND SPECIFIC TERMS

**General terms** name classes; **Specific terms** name individuals under classes. The following sentences are sometimes given in rhetorics as containing examples of general (1) and specific (2) terms.

1. Consider the *flowers*. No *king* was ever arrayed like one of these.
2. Consider the *lilies*, how they grow. . . . I say unto you that *Solomon* in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

The following paragraph from C. D. Warner's *My Summer in a Garden* contains other examples. Find them.

I left my garden for a week, just at the close of a dry spell. A season of rain immediately set in, and when I returned the transformation was wonderful. In one week every vegetable had fairly jumped



forward. The tomatoes, which I had left slender plants, eaten of bugs and debating whether they would go backward or forward, had become stout and lusty, with thick stems and dark leaves, and some of them had blossomed. The corn waved like that which grows so rank out of the French-English mixture at Waterloo. The squashes — I will not speak of the squashes. The most remarkable growth was the asparagus. There was not a spear above the ground when I went away; and now it had sprung up and gone to seed, and there were stalks higher than my head.\*

Why do the specific terms impress the mind so much more strongly than the general terms in these sentences? Because the specific terms bring to the mind definite pictures, and the general terms do not. The word *lily* calls up the image of a beautiful blossom, whiter and purer than any shining, royal robe. The name *Solomon* calls to mind the splendor of a rich Oriental monarch, beside whom George V and Alphonso XIII are quite like plain, ordinary mortals. A writer will do well, then, to use specific terms when he wishes to produce images in the minds of his readers. In descriptive and narrative writing, specific words are particularly useful. Bryant appeals to the imagination (suggests pictures to the reader) chiefly by means of specific nouns modified by epithets. Any of his poems describing Nature will furnish excellent examples of the power of specific terms in description.

Nouns are not the only words that may be classed as general or specific. In the following sentences (quoted from Wendell's *English Composition*) the verbs are progressively more specific, and the sentences become more forcible as the manner of death is more exactly told.

Major André *died*.

Major André *was killed*.

\* Used by permission of Messrs. Houghton Mifflin Company.

Major André *was executed*.

Major André *was hanged*.\*

The following paragraph shows very well the descriptive power of specific verbs.

Every country has its own rivers, and every river has its own quality; and it is the part of wisdom to know and love as many as you can, receiving from each the best it has to give. The torrents of Norway *leap* down from their mountain homes with plentiful cataracts, and *run* brief but glorious races to the sea. The streams of England *move* smoothly through green fields and beside ancient, sleepy towns. The Scotch rivers *brawl* through the open moorland and *flash* along steep Highland glens. The rivers of the Alps are born in icy caves, from which they *issue* forth with furious, turbid waters; but when their anger has been forgotten in the slumber of some blue lake, they *flow* down more softly to see the vineyards of France and Italy, the gray castles of Germany, and the verdant meadows of Holland. The mighty rivers of the West *roll* their yellow floods through broad valleys, or *plunge* down dark canyons. The rivers of the South *creep* under dim arboreal archways heavy with banners of waving moss.\*

— VAN DYKE: *Little Rivers*.

But general terms, too, have their use. They are better than specific terms — better because broader — in making summaries and general statements regarding classes. They are better when the writer desires, not to call up an image to the imagination, but to express an abstract notion. General terms are, therefore, particularly useful in some sorts of expository writing.

### 3. LONG AND SHORT WORDS

There is no virtue in words because of their length or their shortness. That word is, in general, best which is familiar to

\* The quotations from Wendell and Van Dyke are used by kind permission of Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons, publishers of the books quoted.

the reader and best expresses the author's meaning. Short words are more apt to be familiar than their longer synonyms, and are often preferable for that reason. They lend an air of simplicity to the style. Long words, on the other hand, give dignity to the style, and are sometimes to be preferred for that reason. You will notice the long words in Bryant's fine blank-verse poems. And you have observed the use of some long words in Poe's *Bells* for musical and metrical effect.

It is usually unnecessary to comment on the length of an author's words, but occasionally one shows a decided preference for long or short words, apparently merely because of their length. Bunyan, in his *Pilgrim's Progress*, uses a great proportion of words of one syllable; perhaps because he was an unlettered man. Dr. Samuel Johnson seems to have delighted in ponderous words; Goldsmith said of him that, if he were to write a fable about little fishes, he would make them all talk like whales.

Perhaps "popular" (or "familiar") and "learned" would be a better classification of words than "short" and "long." Roughly the two divisions coincide, though there are exceptional words.

#### 4. DENOTATION AND CONNOTATION

The **Denotation** of a word is its actual meaning — its dictionary definition. Its **Connotation** is the association it suggests to us, over and above its actual meaning and definition. *Home* may be defined as "one's dwelling-place or residence." But the mere definition would never explain the happy anticipations with which we exclaim, after an absence of a few days, "I am going home to-morrow!" We do not think merely of going to the house whose roof shelters

us; we think of all that the word *home* connotes — parents, brothers, sisters, affection, happiness. It is the connotation of the word — associations that no dictionary can enumerate — that makes us love it.

The connotation of a word may, in time, become so prominent that it actually becomes its commonest meaning, and is turned into a real definition. *Angel* at first meant "a messenger." The word was often used in speaking of a messenger of God. A messenger of God would naturally be a pure, holy, radiant, beautiful being. It is this derived meaning — this suggestion or connotation — that we have most often in mind now when we use the word *angel*, as in saying of some one whom we greatly admire, "She is a perfect angel!" And this connotation has finally become the meaning of the word, *i. e.*, the word has come to *denote* what it once only *connoted*. (See the *Century Dictionary*, under *angel*.)

Since connotation depends on the association suggested, a word may connote different things to different persons. *Home* to most of us connotes love and happiness. But we have all read of unfortunate children that have grown up in the "slums" of our great cities, in the midst of vice and wretchedness, without the love of parents and family. For them there is no such pleasant connotation in the word *home*. There may be a connotation of an opposite kind, if home is the place where they receive the least kindness and the most ill-treatment. But for every person that uses the English language, *home* has the same denotation — "one's dwelling-place, or residence."

It is as important for an author to consider the connotation of his words as to consider the denotation. If a word has pleasant associations, he ennobles the person or thing that he applies it to; if it has unpleasant associations, he degrades the person or thing that he applies it to. It is as bad to call a

man a Benedict Arnold or a Uriah Heep as to call him a traitor, or a hypocritical liar and thief. The word *hang* has such evil associations that the sentence "Major André was hanged" is an arraignment of the unfortunate man's character until the circumstances of the execution are explained.

### 5. POETIC DICTION

Since poetry (more than any other sort of literature) is addressed to the imagination and the emotions, it requires certain peculiarities of diction to help it fulfil its special office. It requires, also, some indulgence because it must be constructed with regard to metrical laws and rime — limitations to which even the most literary prose is not subject. Literary prose, however, as it approaches the feeling and the exaltation of poetry, may also use to some extent the poetic style of diction. Some of the peculiarities of poetic diction are given in the following paragraphs.

1. When we express intense feeling or excitement we usually abridge the grammatical structure of our sentences. An exclamatory sentence is often elliptical. In poetry words are sometimes omitted under the emotional stress, and sometimes for the sake of the meter. In descriptive poetry it is often wise to omit copula, connectives, and other comparatively insignificant words readily understood, that stress may be laid on the words rhetorically more effective. In the descriptive lines of the following stanzas by Philip Bourke Marston, *Thy Garden*, only the picturing words are present; verbs are conspicuously absent.

Pure moonlight in thy garden, sweet, tonight —  
 Pure moonlight in thy garden, and the breath  
 Of fragrant roses! Oh my heart's delight,  
 Wed thou with Love, but I will wed with Death.

Dawn in thy garden, with the faintest sound, —  
 Uncertain, tremulous, awaking birds!  
 Dawn in thy garden, and from meadows round,  
 The sudden lowing of expectant herds.

Wind in thy garden tonight, my love,  
 Wind in thy garden and rain;  
 A sound of storm in the shaken grove,  
 And cries as of spirits in pain!

Snow in thy garden, falling thick and fast,  
 Snow in thy garden, where the grass shall be!  
 What dreams tonight? Thy dreaming nights are past,  
 Thou hast no glad or grievous memory.

Night in thy garden, white with snow and sleet,  
 Night rushing on with wind and storm toward day!  
 Alas, thy garden holdeth nothing sweet,  
 Nor sweet can come again, and thou away.

Connectives of all sorts are freely omitted, for economy of expression and to make the meter. In this example the relative pronoun is not expressed:

And you may gather garlands there  
 Would grace a summer queen.

The preposition is omitted before *whom* in,

Grant me still a friend in my retreat,  
 Whom I may whisper, "Solitude is sweet."

The main subject is omitted for the sake of meter in the opening sentence of Burns's famous poem:

Is there for honest poverty  
 That hangs his head and a' that?

That is, "Is there *anyone* who hangs his head in shame because of honest poverty?"

2. Words in forms shortened by the omission of a syllable are sometimes used by the poet for the sake of meter: *oft*,

*o'er, marge, list, mount, e'er, ne'er, 'neath, 'twixt.* Here may be mentioned also such poetic contractions as *'twere, 'twas, 'tis.*

3. A poet sometimes uses a genitive where a prose writer would use an *of*-phrase. This briefer expression and change in the order and relation of accents helps the poet make his meter.

And the *barn's* brown length.

The *sundown's* blaze on the window-pane.

— WHITTIER: *Telling the Bees.*

Beside the *snowbank's* edges cold.

— BRYANT: *The Yellow Violet.*

4. **Poetic Compounds** are sometimes coined, for economy of expression, and to suit the meter.

The *cleft-born* wildflower.

— BRYANT: *Inscription for the Entrance to a Wood.*

The *grief-shadowed* present.

— BRYANT: *The Flood of Years.*

The hills, *rock-ribbed* and ancient.

The *all-beholding* sun.

— BRYANT: *Thanatopsis.*

The *earth-o'erlooking* mountains.

— BRYANT: *Monument Mountains.*

5. **Archaic words** are retained for poetic use when quite obsolete in prose. They stimulate the imagination by taking the reader out of the commonplace atmosphere of every-day life. Here belong, among other obsolescent words, the old forms of the pronouns (*thou, thy, thee, ye*), and the *-est* and *-eth* forms of the verb.

He *giveth* his beloved sleep.

— MRS. BROWNING.

There was a dwelling of kings, *ere* the world was *waxen* old.

— WM. MORRIS.

6. Words are changed from one part of speech to another. In "the great *deep*," a descriptive adjective is used for the noun *ocean*, which it describes. In "bleeding drops of *red*," the adjective is used for the noun *blood*, the quality is named for the object.

7. **Epithets** are of great value in both poetry and literary prose. They are descriptive adjectives, but they are not *mere* descriptive adjectives. The mere adjectives help the reader form a correct image of the object described: *white* (horse), *tall* (man), *pretty* (girl). The epithet emphasizes some quality or characteristic of the object that the poet wishes the reader at the moment to have in mind. It is used more for its suggestive effect than for the actual information it conveys. Such is the purpose of Bryant in the use of the **Decorative Epithets** in his *Forest Hymn* and *Thanatopsis*: *winding* (aisles), *clear* (spring), *dim* (vaults), *woody* (wilderness), *darkling* (forest), *insensible* (rock), *sluggish* (clod).

**Essential Epithets** name some quality that of necessity belongs to the object. They seem almost tautological; they are so in meaning, but they serve some rhetorical purpose in their context: *wet* (waves), *white* (milk).

**Conventional Epithets** are used as a matter of custom, the adjective being a usual attendant on the noun whenever the latter occurs. The Greeks regularly spoke of Aurora as "*Rosy-fingered* Dawn, daughter of the Morning." The English ballads sing always of *merry* men, *fair* ladies, *bonny*



brides, and *good* steeds. Perhaps the expressions "*nut-brown* ale" and "*sturdy* oak" have become conventional in our poetry.

**Phrasal Epithets** are whole phrases, or even clauses, in a nut-shell, and by virtue of their economy in expression are useful in making the meter, as well as for their condensed descriptive force. See Keats's "*viewless* wings of poetry," *i. e.*, those that cannot be viewed, or seen. Many poetic-compounds are used as phrasal epithets: (the) *all-beholding* (sun); (the) *century-living* (crow); (the) *earth-o'erlooking* (mountains).

Epithets may help to produce unity in the atmosphere of a poem. Read Bryant's *Forest Hymn*, and observe how by the use of decorative epithets he keeps constantly before us his conception of and feeling for the forest.

EXERCISES ON DICTION

1. Find the definitions of the following words; then explain what connotation they have for you: giant, fairy, gnome, brownie, patriot, traitor, patriarch, mother, Republican, Democrat, Yankee, Englishman, foreigner.

2. Find and classify the epithets in the following poems: —

Bryant — The Prairies.

Lowell — To the Dandelion.

3. Study specific words and epithets in: —

Bryant — Green River.

Bryant — June.

Bryant — The Evening Wind.

Emerson — The Humble-Bee.

## CHAPTER VI

### FIGURES OF SPEECH

#### 1. LITERAL AND FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

We have now to consider the difference between **literal** and **figurative** expression.

“The soldier is strong and brave.” This sentence means exactly what it says. It is perfectly matter-of-fact, *i. e.*, it is a *literal* statement.

“The soldier is a perfect lion in battle.” Of course this does not mean that the soldier is exactly a lion, with four feet and a shaggy mane; but he has the unusual courage and strength that we associate in our thought with the king of beasts. Such less direct manner of expression is *figurative*; it contains a **Figure of Speech**.

Literature is full of figures; for the well-chosen figure, through its power of suggestion, stimulates the reader's imagination and adds greatly to the force of expression.

In our daily language, also, we use many figures.

There are fifty *sails* (ships having sails) on the bay.

A *red-coat* (a man wearing one) rode up.

The boy *broke loose* from authority (as a colt breaks away from his post).

I was *tied up* at home (as a horse is tied to a post).

It is interesting to know that some of our prosiest, most matter-of-fact words originated in figures. Language has been called “a bunch of faded metaphors.”

That we may better understand how to interpret the figures of speech, we shall divide them into a number of classes. Most of these classes are called by Greek names, for the Greek rhetoricians were the founders of our study of figures. The names may seem a little difficult, but it is always convenient to have names for things we must talk about, and we are obliged to use the nomenclature we find in the language. The important thing, however, is not to know the names merely, but to learn to interpret the figures so that we shall grasp their meaning and feel their strength.

## 2. FIGURES OF COMPARISON

1. While from my path the hare  
Fled like a shadow.

— LONGFELLOW: *The Skeleton in Armor.*

2. She speaks poniards, and every word stabs.

— SHAKESPEARE: *King Lear.*

3. As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul  
after thee, O Lord.

— *The Psalms.*

4. Like a beauteous barge was she,  
Just beyond the billow's reach.  
But he  
Was the restless, seething, stormy sea.

— LONGFELLOW: *The Building of the Ship.*

5. Long ago,  
In the deer-haunted forests of Maine,  
When upon mountain and plain  
Lay the snow,  
They fell, — those lordly pines!  
Those grand, majestic pines!  
' Mid shouts and cheers  
The jaded steers,  
Panting beneath the goad,

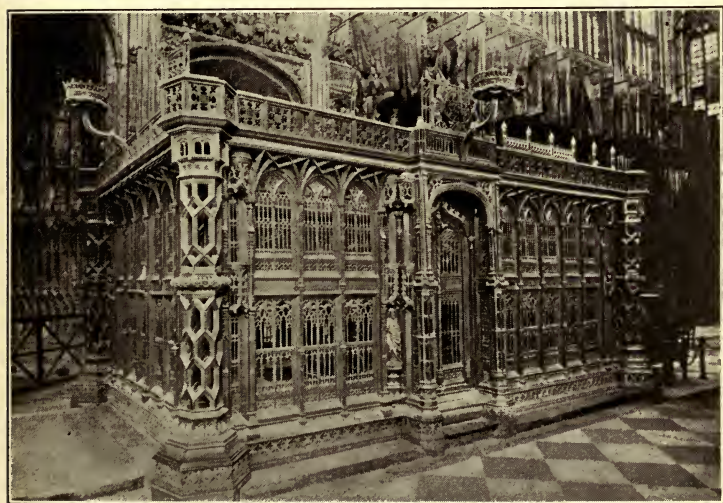
Dragged down the weary, winding road  
Those captive kings so straight and tall,  
To be shorn of their streaming hair,  
And, naked and bare,  
To feel the stress and the strain  
Of the wind and the reeling main,  
Whose roar  
Would remind them forever more  
Of their native forests they should not see again.

— LONGFELLOW: *The Building of the Ship*.

Let us study the comparisons in these quotations. We notice about them, first, that they are not literal. In reality a hare is not like a shadow (1), nor a maiden like a barge (4). In each comparison the things compared seem, at first glance, strangely coupled, because they belong to quite different classes. But, on further study, they reveal, in spite of their differences, some point of likeness, which brings them together. The shadow cast by a cloud is like a hare in the silence and swiftness of its movement. The beautiful young woman, on the eve of her wedding-day, was about to begin a new life, just as the graceful, newly-built ship on the shore was waiting to begin its career on the sea.

These are all figurative comparisons. They are to be interpreted not simply by our matter-of-fact reason, but by our imagination. And our interpretation of them depends on our clear recognition of the point of likeness in the two things compared. Until we have had considerable experience in the study of literature, it is well for us to state accurately the meaning of the figurative comparison, that we may not fall into the bad habit of reading vaguely.

Figures of comparison that contain some word indicating comparison (*as, like, resemble, etc.*) are called **Similes**. We find similes in the quotations numbered 1, 3, 4. Explain the



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simile in 3 as those in 1 and 4 are explained above, stating clearly what two things are compared, and in what respect they are alike.

We shall need to be careful in order not to confuse the simile and the literal comparison.

Tom, like his brother Jack, is tall.

Here we speak in a perfectly literal way of two boys, *Tom* and *Jack*. The simile is a comparison of things belonging to entirely different classes:

That soldier was like a lion.

These things of *different classes* are brought together by the imagination because of a certain likeness.

Some of the quotations above contain a comparison and yet express no word of comparison (*like, as, etc.*). Number 2 means: She speaks words that hurt the spirit as poniards hurt the body. In 4 the youth is compared to the sea because he is full of energy and action. In 5 the pines are called "kings" because they stood in the forest as upright and stately as a royal person ("lordly," "majestic"); and their fall and passage to the river reminds the poet of the humiliating progress of vanquished and captive kings in the triumphal procession of a Roman emperor.

These comparisons are called **Metaphors**. They differ from the simile in containing no word of comparison (*like, as*). An object of one class is called by a name literally belonging to an object of another class; one thing is spoken of in terms used literally for a thing quite different, the two things being brought together in the imagination of the writer by some point of resemblance.

A metaphor sometimes affects the diction of a writer for some lines. In 5 the words *lordly*, *majestic*, *captive*, *shorn*, *hair*, *naked* are brought into the poem because of the reference to *kings*, barbarian chieftains once dignified and powerful, now insulted and led in triumph behind the chariot of the conqueror.

The correct interpretation of the metaphor, like that of the simile, depends on the clear recognition of the point of likeness in the two things compared, which, in the metaphor as well as in the simile, must belong to different classes.

The metaphor is a stronger figure than the simile, because, being without the word of likeness, it is more condensed, and the interpretation of it requires greater concentration of thought. It is more stimulating to the imagination than the simile. However, even in the strongest passages, when a metaphor would not be perfectly clear, an author uses a simile. Sometimes a simile begins a comparison and a metaphor continues it, as in quotation 4; the maiden is compared in simile to a barge, and her lover in metaphor to the sea. The latter part of the poem continues the metaphor at some length, and also presents its reverse, comparing the ship to the maiden and the sea to her bridegroom.

A third figure of comparison is found, though it is much less common than simile and metaphor.

And first, with nicest skill and art,  
Perfect and finished in every part,  
A little model the Master wrought,  
Which should be to the larger plan  
What the child is to the man,  
Its counterpart in miniature.

— LONGFELLOW: *The Building of the Ship*.

Here is expressed not a likeness of qualities, as in simile and



metaphor, but a likeness of relations. We have an **Analogy**, which might be indicated by a proportion of four members:

the model: the ship:: the child: the man.

Another example is found in these lines from Longfellow's *The Day is Done*.

A feeling of sadness and longing  
That is not akin to pain,  
And resembles sorrow only  
As the mist resembles rain.

Here the proportion is:

this feeling: sorrow:: mist: rain.

There is still a fourth figure of comparison. Read Bryant's poem called *The Yellow Violet*, and observe carefully the author's attitude toward nature. He applies to the violet terms that belong to human qualities and actions: *modest, gentle, humble, smile*. He speaks of spring as having *hands* and *planting* the violet, as if spring were a gardener. The sun, whose warm rays brought the flower into existence, is its *parent*, who feeds and cares for it and demands from it obedience ("bade"). The taller, gayer flowers are *haughty* and *flaunting*. Of all these objects Bryant speaks in terms belonging literally to creatures having life, intelligence, and personality. He *personifies* the violet, the other flowers, the sun, Spring; that is, he speaks of them as if they were persons.

Other examples of **Personification** are:

The mountains and the hills shall *break forth before you into singing*,  
and all the trees of the field shall *clap their hands*.

— *Isaiah 55:12*.

Nature through all her works *gave signs of woe*.

— MILTON: *Paradise Lost*.

Charity *suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up; doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.*

— I Corinthians 13:4-7.

Personification gives inanimate things or abstractions the attributes of life and personality. The origin of the figure in the feeling of the writer we may gather from a few lines of Whittier's *Snow-Bound*.

We minded that the sharpest ear  
The buried brooklet could not hear,  
The music of whose liquid lip  
Had been to us companionship,  
And, in our lonely life, *had grown*  
*To have an almost human tone.*

The figure evidently grows out of the author's sympathy with and love for nature and the inanimate world. It rouses in the reader the same sympathy and love, and therefore strengthens the writing. Moreover, it adds to the dignity of the passage, by raising a lower order of creation or an abstraction to the level of a living, thinking, willing being.

Personification is a sort of general metaphor — a comparison of some lower creature to a human being. Many metaphors and similes involve personification, because they, too, compare a lower creature to a human being. It is best to call the figure simile or metaphor when the comparison is *specific* instead of *general*; *e. g.* when *pin*es are compared to *kings*, and are not simply given universal human attributes or characteristics. But the personification involved in this metaphor justifies the use later of the words *feel, remind, see*.

3. APOSTROPHE AND VISION

A figure often (not always) associated with personification is **Apostrophe**. This is the figure in which a writer or speaker addresses absent persons as though they were present, or inanimate things as though they could hear and understand. The address is figurative, not literal, because the person or thing addressed is not expected to hear; the writer exercises the imagination in making the address. Bryant's *The Yellow Violet* is an apostrophe to that flower. He has written, also, an apostrophe *To the Fringed Gentian*. These apostrophes involve personification, because the flowers are addressed as if they were human. Others are:

Roll on, thou deep and dark blue ocean, roll!  
A thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain.

— BYRON: *Childe Harold*.

Go, lovely rose,  
Tell her that wastes her time and me,  
That now she knows  
When I resemble her to thee  
How sweet and fair she seems to be.

— WALLER.

No personification is involved in David's lament for Absalom:

Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!

A figure similar to apostrophe is **Vision**. An author uses vision when he declares that he sees objects **not** actually present before him. He employs this figure to bring the past or the absent vividly before himself and his readers or hearers.

Methinks I see it now — that one solitary, adventurous vessel, the Mayflower of a forlorn hope, freighted with the prospects of a

future state, and bound across the unknown sea. I behold it pursuing with a thousand misgivings the uncertain, the tedious voyage. I see them now, scantily supplied with provisions; crowded almost to suffocation in their ill-stored prison; delayed by calms, pursuing a circuitous route. The awful voice of the storm howls through the rigging; the laboring masts seem straining from their base; the dismal sound of the pump is heard; the ship leaps, as it were, madly from billow to billow; the ocean breaks and settles with ingulfing floods over the floating deck, and beats with deadening, shivering weight against the staggering vessel.

— EDWARD EVERETT.

See also Tennyson's *The Miller's Daughter*.

The verbs in such passages are used in the present tense — “the historical present” — for the purpose of bringing the picture vividly before the imagination.

Sometimes a writer imagines that he *hears*, instead of sees, things past or absent, and therefore not literally audible.

I hear even now the infinite fierce chorus,  
The cries of agony, the endless groan,  
Which, through the ages that have gone before us,  
In long reverberations reach our own.

— LONGFELLOW: *The Arsenal at Springfield*.

#### 4. FIGURES OF ASSOCIATION

When the figure of **Synecdoche** is used, some striking part of the object is named instead of the object itself; or, less often, the whole is named for a part. This figure occurs frequently in common language: a thousand *head* of cattle; a hundred *sails*, eighteen *summers* old, a factory employing thirty *hands*. These expressions refer, of course, to the *cattle* themselves, the *ships*, the *years*, the *workmen*. In the sentence, “All the *world* was pleased,” the whole is named for a part, since it is only the people of the world who are pleased.

Synecdoche is found in a verb when a specific act is mentioned instead of the notion of living in general.

All that tread  
The globe are but a handful to the tribes  
That slumber in its bosom.

— BRYANT.

A writer (or speaker) uses **Metonymy** when he names, instead of the object he has in mind, something closely associated with it or accompanying it. This is also a common figure in every-day language.

*Gray hairs* (old age) are honorable.

The *kettle* (the water in the kettle) boils.

They sat around the festive *board* (table made of boards).

She sets a good *table* (the things on the table are good).

He assumed the *scepter* (the power which the scepter symbolizes).

I am reading *Milton* (books which Milton wrote).

The thing named is so closely associated in our mind with the thing intended that the mention of one calls up the other. Metonymy names the cause for the effect, the effect for the cause, the container for the thing contained, the sign for the thing symbolized, the material for the article made of it, the producer for the thing produced.

## 5. SOME GENERAL REMARKS ON FIGURES

The primary use of figures of speech is to strengthen expression by association. The figure stimulates the imagination of the reader, and enables the writer to say more vigorously and effectively what he wishes to say.

“Figures add also beauty to the style. It is artistic to make expression as suggestive as possible, and the image called up by the figure is often beautiful in itself.”

We ennoble an idea when we connect with it some exalted image; and we degrade an idea when we connect with it a lower one.

It is interesting to observe the sources of an author's figures. They reveal the breadth of his interest and knowledge. He may take them from nature, from human life, from science, from books. The things he is most interested in are, naturally, most readily called up in his mind to be used in comparison. The number of figures he uses will show whether his mind is apt in comparing, associating, relating, or whether he sees objects and facts absolutely, for and in themselves alone.

#### PRACTICE IN FIGURES

One should not be satisfied with the mere naming of figures. One should be able to state clearly what two things are compared, and what the point of likeness is; to tell for what whole the name of the part stands, etc.

1. I just squeezed through that examination.

2. One generation blows bubbles, and the next breaks them.

— COWPER.

3. Poor man! I know he would not be a wolf,  
But that he sees the Romans are but sheep:  
He were no lion, were not the Romans hinds.

— SHAKESPEARE: *Julius Cæsar*.

4. A sudden little river cross'd my path,  
As unexpected as a serpent comes.

— BROWNING.

5. Youth is a garland of roses; age is a crown of thorns.

— TALMUD.

6. Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day  
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain-tops.

— SHAKESPEARE: *Romeo and Juliet*, III, 5, 9-10.

7. In that calm, Syrian afternoon, Memory, a pensive Ruth, went gleaning the silent fields of childhood, and found the scattered grain still golden, and the morning sunlight fresh and fair.

— G. W. CURTIS.

8. I was hammering away at my lessons when Jack called.

9. Government patronage should not be so dispensed as to train up a population to the one pursuit of boring gimlet-holes into the treasury, and then of seeking to enlarge them, as rapidly as possible, into auger holes.

10. Her angel's face,  
As the great eye of heaven, shined bright,  
And made a sunshine in the shady place.

— SPENSER.

11. My May of life  
Is fallen into the sere, the yellow leaf.

— SHAKESPEARE.

12. Friendship is not a plant of hasty growth,  
Though planted in esteem's deep fixed soil;  
The gradual culture of kind intercourse  
Must bring it to perfection.

— JOANNA BAILLIE.

13. Shakespeare himself would have been commonplace had he been paddocked in a thinly-shaven vocabulary.

— LOWELL.

14. Wordsworth's longer poems are Egyptian sand-wastes, with here and there an oasis of exquisite greenery, a grand image, Sphinx-like, half-buried in drifting commonplaces, or the solitary Pompey's Pillar of some towering thought.

— LOWELL.

15. There is much that is deciduous in books, but all that gives them a title to rank as literature in the highest sense is perennial.

— LOWELL.

16. The conscious water saw its Lord and blushed.

17. For very young he seemed, tenderly reared;

Like some young cypress, tall, and dark, and straight.

— M. ARNOLD.

18. Break, break, break,

At the foot of thy crags, O sea!

— TENNYSON.

19. Ships that pass in the night, and speak each other in passing,

Only a signal shown, and a distant voice in the darkness;

So on the ocean of life we pass and speak one another,

Only a look and a voice, then darkness again and a silence.

— LONGFELLOW.

20. Strike for your altars and your fires!

21. How far that little candle throws its beams!

So shines a good deed in a naughty world.

— SHAKESPEARE: *The Merchant of Venice*.

22. The day is done; and slowly from the scene

The stooping sun upgathers his spent shafts,

And puts them back into his golden quiver.

— LONGFELLOW.

23. The depth saith, It is not in me: and the sea saith, It is not with me.

— *Job 28:14*.

24. If you blow your neighbor's fire, don't complain when the sparks fly in your face.

25. Faith builds a bridge across the gulf of Death.

— YOUNG.

26. Explain the figures in Longfellow's *Maidenhood*.

27. Explain the figures in Tennyson's *Crossing the Bar*.



## CHAPTER VII

### VARIOUS QUALITIES OF STYLE AND KINDS OF WRITING

#### 1. WIT AND HUMOR

Writings that amuse us and make us smile or laugh have **Humor**. A humorist is usually a kind-hearted person, who presents the ridiculous or incongruous aspect of his subject in a perfectly genial spirit.

One of our best humorists is Washington Irving, and from his writings we may illustrate some of the common ways of presenting a subject humorously.

An author may present a trivial, sordid, or commonplace subject with the diction and in the manner suited to a serious, important one — using long words and words of serious meaning, dignified periods, and noble comparisons. He then writes in the *mock-heroic* style.

In speaking of Rip Van Winkle's character, Irving says:

Those men are most apt to be *obsequious* and *conciliating* abroad who are under the *discipline* of shrews at home. Their tempers, doubtless, are *rendered pliant* and *malleable* in the *fiery furnace* of domestic *tribulation*, and a curtain lecture is worth all the sermons in the world for *teaching the virtues of patience and long-suffering*. The great error in Rip's composition was an *insuperable aversion* to all kinds of *profitable labor*.

Again, speaking of the group of gossiping idlers in the little Dutch village, Irving uses such expressions as these:

It would have been worth any statesman's money to have heard

the *profound discussions*; how *sagely* they would *deliberate*; the opinions of this *junto* were controlled by Nicholas Vedder, a *patriarch* of the village; that *august personage*, Nicholas Vedder.

Of Ichabod Crane Irving writes:

The *gallant* Ichabod now spent at least an extra half-hour at his toilet. . . . That he might make his appearance before his mistress in the true style of a *cavalier*, he borrowed a horse, — and thus *gallantly mounted* issued forth *like a knight-errant in quest of adventures*. . . . But it is meet I should, *in true spirit of romantic story*, give some account of the looks and equipments of my *hero* and his *steed*.

We can hardly call Irving ironical or sarcastic here; he is too good-natured. He uses this grandiloquent style merely to make Ichabod and Rip as amusing to us as they were to him.

We sometimes read articles that are unconsciously humorous in the way we are now considering. During the base-ball season not many years ago, a daily paper in a large city printed in an editorial and with all seriousness the following paragraph about a favorite pitcher:

And behind them stands B- D-, the man who is to base-ball what Shakespeare was to poetry, what Alexander the Great was to conquest, what Columbus was to discovery, what Whistler was to art — the master.

Humor often rises from association of the subject with the ridiculous or incongruous, through figures of speech or through the connotation of words.

The cognomen of *Crane* was not inapplicable to his person. He was tall, but exceedingly lank, with narrow shoulders, long arms and legs, hands that dangled a mile out of his sleeves, feet that might have served for *shovels*, and his whole frame most loosely hung together. His head was small, and flat at the top, with huge ears, large, green,

glassy eyes, and a long *snipe* nose, so that it looked *like a weather-cock* perched upon his *spindle* neck, to tell which way the wind blew. To see him striding along the profile of a hill on a windy day, with his clothes bagging and fluttering about him, one might have mistaken him for the *genius of famine* descending upon the earth, or some *scare-crow* eloped from a corn-field. . . . He rode with short stirrups, which brought his knees nearly up to the pommel of the saddle; his sharp elbows stuck out like *grasshoppers*; he carried his whip perpendicularly in his hand, like a sceptre, and as the horse jogged on, the motion of his arms was not unlike the *flapping of a pair of wings*.

Humor may arise from the relation of events humorous in themselves, as in Irving's *Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, and in Mark Twain's *Tramp Abroad* and *Innocents Abroad*.

**Wit** is keener, more cutting than humor. "Its thrust must, then, be quick and sharp." Much of its effect comes from putting something before us in a new and unexpected light. Witticisms are produced by brilliant minds, keenly analytic.

A witty remark often makes the point of an anecdote.

A king, disturbed by the importunities of an officer, exclaimed impatiently, "You are the most troublesome officer in my whole army!" "*Your majesty's enemies have often said the same thing,*" retorted the officer quickly.

A judge threatened to fine a lawyer for contempt of court. "I have not been guilty of any such offense," flashed back the lawyer; "*I have carefully concealed my feelings.*"

An **Epigram**, or brief, pointed saying, is a form of wit. It often contains an apparent contradiction.

Beauty *unadorned* is adorned the most.

She is *conspicuous* for her absence.

A **Pun** is a play on words.

"Thy mistress leads thee a *dog's* life of it," said Rip Van Winkle to his dog Wolf.

When Shylock was sharpening his knife on his shoe to cut the pound of flesh from Antonio, Gratiano cried,

Not on thy *sole*, but on thy *soul*, harsh Jew,  
Thou mak'st thy knife keen.

Romeo, pierced at first sight of Juliet by the dart of Cupid, declared,

I am too *sore* empiercèd with his shaft  
To *soar* with his light feathers; and so *bound*  
I cannot *bound* a pitch above dull woe.

— SHAKESPEARE: *Romeo and Juliet*, I, 4, 18-20.

The pun was a favorite device in certain styles of Elizabethan diction.

## 2. PATHOS

Humor moves us to laughter. Its opposite is **Pathos**, which moves us to pity and tears. The death of the gentle Beth in Miss Alcott's *Little Women* is a pathetic incident.

Both humor and pathos must occur in literature — even at times in the same book; for some varieties of literature are intended to picture a considerable section of life, and life offers every person both amusement and sorrow.

## 3. HYPERBOLE

**Hyperbole** means "exaggeration." It is plainly not to be taken literally, and an author using it has, therefore, no intention to deceive. He uses a strong statement to stimulate the imagination to a just picture of the thing described. Irving, doubtless, uses hyperbole in his description of Ichabod

Crane (see above), but he has chosen an excellent method to make us imagine the exceeding awkwardness and ungainliness of his "hero." "The waves smote the stars of heaven," says Virgil, describing a great storm; and we understand that the waves ran as high as waves could mount.

#### 4. IRONY, SARCASM, SATIRE

**Irony** is ridicule in the words of praise, or praise in terms of ridicule or blame. The writer (speaker) means the exact opposite of what he says; the true significance is clearly indicated by the context, the tone of voice, or in some other unmistakable way.

No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you!

— *Job 12:2.*

Some boys are discussing a bright classmate, and one of them says, ironically, "John is *terribly stupid*, he is!"

**Sarcasm** is bitter irony, sharp and cutting. Perhaps the quotation above from *Job* has a touch of sarcasm. Mark Antony thus expresses his indignation against the Roman conspirators:—

Here, under leave of Brutus and the rest  
 (For *Brutus is an honorable man*,  
*So are they all, all honorable men*)  
 Come I to speak at Cæsar's funeral.  
 He was my friend, faithful and just to me:  
 But Brutus says he was ambitious;  
 And *Brutus is an honorable man.*

— SHAKESPEARE: *Julius Cæsar.*

A **Satire** is a piece of literature intended to overwhelm a person or a cause with ridicule and sarcasm. Satires are not usually in the highest class of literature, because they are concerned with feelings that belong to a certain period of

social or political history, rather than with those of universal and permanent interest; and when the period or the movement in connection with which they were written passes by, its literature passes with it. The great English satires were written in connection with the personal and political quarrels of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and are not of much general interest today. A well-written satire is, however, of great influence while the question with which it deals has living interest. Lowell's *Biglow Papers*, First Series, intensified in New England opposition to the Mexican War.

## CHAPTER VIII

### ALLUSIONS AND HOW TO STUDY THEM

We have already seen that the mind is apt to compare and associate one thing with another, and that such comparison and association often produces figures of speech. But all the associations of the mind and imagination do not reveal themselves in figurative language. A student of books is likely to be reminded by his thoughts of observations and expressions he has read, and when he writes he frequently refers, or *alludes*, to these. Facts of history, biography, science — whatever interests a man — are suggested to him by his more original thought, and furnish him with the allusions that enrich his writing. We can learn a great deal about an author's mind and range of reading by observing the sources of his allusions.

We do not understand what we read unless we understand the allusions it contains, and what purpose the writer had in view when he made each of his allusions. Each should be studied for its definite relation to the context, as each simile and metaphor is studied for its definite point of comparison. When we explain an allusion we should not give an account as long as an encyclopedia article on the subject referred to, but we should state clearly and concisely the one point which the author had in mind when he made the reference.

Bryant in *Thanatopsis* writes these lines:

Take the wings  
Of morning, pierce the Barcan wilderness,  
Or lose thyself in the continuous woods  
Where rolls the Oregon, and hears no sound  
Save his own dashings — yet the dead are there.

We wish to know what the poet means by alluding to the "Barcan wilderness" and the "Oregon." If we discuss all that history and geography might teach us of these names, we shall wander hopelessly away from Bryant's poem. All we need to dwell on is that one is far east, the other far west, and that Bryant selected them as specific examples of uninhabited places. The thesis of his poem is this: The earth is only the great and magnificent tomb of the human race. "O, but," some reader might object, "that can't be true; parts of it are not even inhabited." "Yes," insists the poet, anticipating the thought of his reader; "even the desert and the pathless forest — the uttermost parts of the earth — are full of graves."

We should never allow our study of allusions to spoil the unity of our poem or story. We must grasp the point of the allusion, and ignore for the time all the rest of the information we may have gained about the subject referred to.

A well-edited text will explain for us, in its notes, many of its author's allusions. But we do not wish always to be dependent on an editor or another person, and sometimes we have no notes. It is well, therefore, for us to know how to consult various books of reference. The librarian of the school or of the public library can best tell us what books are accessible for reference. A good dictionary, an encyclopedia, and a cyclopedia of proper names are indispensable. These books will usually give a starting-point, and will suggest what more special works may be used in tracing out any



allusion. The books most commonly referred to are usually well worth knowing for their own sake, and, once mastered, give no further difficulty. Such a book is the *Arabian Nights*; everyone should know so well at least the story of Aladdin that an allusion to it is understood as quickly as it is read.

The two chief sources of allusions in English literature are classic mythology and the King James version of the Bible. With these sources every student should become as familiar as possible. He should also have at hand a good text on mythology (like Gayley's or Fairbanks'), so that he may look up at any time an unfamiliar reference he may chance upon. Although a school-book is not the place to recommend the Bible as a book of religion, it is entirely within the province of a book on literature to call attention to its literary importance. Since the national book of religion will naturally be widely read, it is most fortunate for us that the Biblical translation accepted as the standard for three hundred years was made in the simplest, purest, most dignified of English. The charm of its style did not escape persons of literary taste and feeling, and its influence is felt in the phraseology and manner of our best writers. Its characters, too, and its stories are so frequently alluded to that one cannot afford to be ignorant of them; and one should know how to use Biblical concordances and indexes as well as he uses other reference books.

For references to saints and to the legends of the early Christian church Mrs. Jameson's books are very useful: *Legends of the Madonna*, *Legends of the Monastic Orders*, *Sacred and Legendary Art* (2 vol.).

Quotations are often more difficult to trace than simple allusions. There are books (*e. g.* Bartlett's *Familiar Quotations*) that place for us many of the common ones, and a

writer sometimes names or indicates by the context what book he is quoting. Phrases that are not exact quotations but echoes of the phraseology of another must be recognized by general knowledge and experience in reading. There are no direct quotations from Milton in Collins's *Ode to Evening*, but one familiar with *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* feels in every line of the *Ode* the influence of the great master.





THE POETS' CORNER, WESTMINSTER ABBEY

## CHAPTER IX

### THOUGHT AND STYLE

We have been studying the principles that underlie literary expression, and we may have felt sometimes that we have been studying the body of literature instead of its soul. Why pay such careful attention to style? Because the style is as much a part of the poem or the story as the thought is, just as a man's physical traits and habits are as much a part of his personality as his mental characteristics are. Indeed, style and thought are as intimately connected as body and soul.

Style is good when it is suitable to the thought it expresses; it is poor when it is unsuitable. We are not to imagine that a great writer says to himself, "I will put a simile here and a metaphor there." He works rather by instinct, his unerring good taste — which is so important an element of his genius — guiding him to the most appropriate expression of his thought. Because of this close connection between the thought and its expression, we cannot learn to appreciate literature properly without cultivating a feeling for style.

The superior character of truth and seriousness, in the matter and substance of the best poetry, is inseparable from the superiority of diction and movement marking its style and manner. The two superiorities are closely related, and are in steadfast proportion one to the other.

— M. ARNOLD: *The Study of Poetry*.

And yet we should miss the most abiding and profitable

part of literary study if we should content ourselves with the study of style alone, without reference to the thought. Such a study could be nothing more than a mere mechanical listing of figures, words, sentences, and metrical devices — a study not in the least worth while. Style is a means to an end, and should be studied as such. It exists for the expression of thought.

Epictetus had a happy figure for things like the play of the senses, or literary form and finish, or argumentative ingenuity, in comparison with 'the best and master thing' for us, as he called it, the concern, how to live. Some people were afraid of them, he said, or they disliked or undervalued them. Such people were wrong; they were unthankful or cowardly. But the things might also be overprized, and treated as final, when they are not. They bear to life the relation which inns bear to home. 'As if a man, journeying home, and finding a nice inn on the road, and liking it, were to stay forever at the inn! Man, thou hast forgotten thine object; thy journey was not *to* this but *through* this. "But this inn is taking." And how many other inns, too, are taking, and how many fields and meadows! but as places of passage merely. You have an object, which is this: to get home, to do your duty to your family, friends, and fellow-countrymen, to attain inward freedom, serenity, happiness, contentment. Style takes your fancy, arguing takes your fancy, and you forget your home and want to make your abode with them and stay with them, on the plea that they are taking. Who denies that they are taking? but as places of passage, as inns. And when I say this, you suppose me to be attacking the care for style, the care for argument. I am not; I attack the resting in them, the not looking to the end which is beyond them.'

— M. ARNOLD: *Wordsworth*.

Though thought is the thing of ultimate importance in literature, it is not as easily classified as the elements and qualities of style, and there is less that can be said about it in a text-book. We may, however, ask the question, "What kind of thought is found in literature? What is it about?"

In the essay on *Wordsworth*, quoted above, the great critic, Matthew Arnold, answers our question thus:

Long ago, in speaking of Homer, I said that the noble and profound application of ideas to life is the most essential part of poetic greatness. I said that a great poet receives his distinctive character of superiority from his application, under the conditions immutably fixed by the laws of poetic beauty and poetic truth, from his application, I say, to his subject, whatever it may be, of the ideas

‘On man, on nature and on human life,’

which he has acquired for himself . . . It is important, therefore, to hold fast to this: that poetry is at bottom a criticism of life; that the greatness of a poet lies in his powerful and beautiful application of ideas to life — to the question: How to live.

This sounds very solemn indeed. It may seem to us that Arnold expects all literature to be profoundly serious. Perhaps we have not quite understood his phrase, “how to live,” and the word “moral” as we have seen it used by other critics. If we study carefully such expressions as they are used in literary criticism, we shall find that the writers believe that the best literature touches or relates to some phase of life. Now, there are many phases of life, and each has, or may have, its literature. There is the serious phase, and its literature sets forth the profounder emotions. A poem in this class is Wordsworth’s *Tintern Abbey*, which expresses a feeling for nature both deep and exalted. Gray’s *Elegy*, Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, Shakespeare’s *Lear*, Bryant’s *Forest Hymn* all express the profounder emotions or depict the tragic side of life.

There is, however, another side of life. We need to be inspired to cheerfulness and gaiety as well as to serious thought. Recreation is as necessary as effort. It is right, then, that there should be a cheerful and gay type of

literature, for this corresponds to a phase of life. Poems like Burns's *Tam O'Shanter* or Holmes's *One Hoss Shay*, plays like Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* or Sheridan's *Rivals*, which move us to laughter, are as legitimately literature as any that set us to thinking profoundly or move us to tears.

If life is the subject of literature, it naturally follows that the reader must have had a certain experience of life before he can truly appreciate literature. Certain books are less suitable for the young than for the more mature because they discuss questions which do not ordinarily enter into the experience of the young. If a young person finds that he does not care for a literary classic, he should not blame himself and depreciate his own powers, but rather wait until he has grown to it. A little time and a broader experience of the world will often teach the beauty and value of what has, a short time before, seemed without significance. In order to understand a certain piece of literature one need not have had the exact experience of life described in that piece; but he must have had such experience and gained such insight as will enable him to comprehend imaginatively the phase of life set forth. On the other hand, older persons may grow out of sympathy with phases of life described in books written for younger persons, and therefore cease to care for books that still interest the young. Even the race outgrows certain experiences, and with them the literary forms and subjects they have inspired; as the Renaissance discarded Mediævalism.

Some of our best writers exalt us emotionally by awakening in us a new and fuller sense of the beauty of the world about us. The greatest of these love Nature not merely for her beauty, but because she gives them peace and strength. To them "she speaks a various language," as clearly as a human friend might speak in words, and her message to them they translate to us. These are poets gifted with the "interpre-



tative imagination." All poets who write of nature have more or less of this gift. Bryant is the greatest of the American poets in this respect. Wordsworth, the foremost of all the poets of the world in his sympathy with Nature, says that communion with her awakens in him

that blessed mood  
 In which the burden of the mystery,  
 In which the heavy and the weary weight  
 Of all this unintelligible world,  
 Is lightened: — that serene and blessed mood,  
 In which the affections gently lead us on,—  
 Until, the breath of this corporeal frame,  
 And e'en the motions of our human blood  
 Almost suspended, we are laid asleep  
 In body and become a living soul:  
 While with an eye made quiet by the power  
 Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,  
 We see into the life of things.

— *Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey.*

Literature re-creates life — every aspect of life. The nobler literature represents the more exalted aspects of life and of nature. But all is worthy that leaves the reader better, stronger, happier. As regards style, a man of literary genius has unusual taste and power. As regards thought, he has remarkable insight into the principles of life and nature. His insight is sometimes very deep, though his range is not very broad (*e. g.*, Wordsworth). English literature boasts one writer whose insight was penetrating and profound, and whose range was as broad as life — the "myriad-minded" Shakespeare.

We often use the word *moral* in a more restricted sense than that just explained. We say that a poem or a story has a *moral* when it expresses or implies an exhortation to some

definite improvement in the character or manners of the reader. Some of the noblest pieces of literature have no such definite lesson expressed or implied. They aim to lift us by putting us into a high and noble frame of mind, or by rousing in us exalted emotions; to refine us through our sympathy with the beautiful. These pieces of literature have nothing that, in the restricted sense of the word can be called *a moral*, though their thought is in the realm of the truly moral, because it touches the great question "how to live" and feel and think.

Some pieces of literature that teach a definite lesson, *a moral* in the restricted sense of the word, hold it "in solution," to borrow a term from the language of science. Hawthorne gives no definite statement of the moral in *The Great Stone Face*; but we cannot help knowing that he meant to have us understand that Ernest became good and noble by meditating on something good and noble, and we feel that the author is covertly advising us to follow the example of Ernest. Other pieces of literature "precipitate," or "crystalize" the moral thought in definite words. The last stanza of Holmes's *Chambered Nautilus* and the third paragraph from the last of Hawthorne's *Snow-Image* state the exhortation and the moral thought directly and distinctly in so many words. The majority of readers prefer, perhaps, the moral "in solution" to the "crystalized" moral; for they enjoy the discovery of the meaning for themselves. But we can hardly say that one method is better under all circumstances than the other. The taste and judgment of great writers lead them to use sometimes one method, sometimes the other.

One way of teaching a moral lesson is through **Allegory**. The allegory describes one thing in terms belonging literally

to another, and is sometimes called "a continued metaphor." A great allegory in English is Bunyan's *Pilgrim Progress*, which describes life in terms of a traveller's journey from one city to another. Here the application of the moral thought to life is made clear by the names: Slough of *Despond*, *Doubting* Castle, Giant *Despair*, etc. Some of Hawthorne's stories are allegorical, as *The Birthmark* and *The Minister's Black Veil*.

**Parables** and **Fables** also teach definite moral lessons. Read some of the parables of the New Testament and some of the fables of Æsop, and state clearly the lesson taught by them.

We may consider briefly one other subject connected with the thought element of literature — the relative value of *fact* and *truth*.

A book is true to *fact* when it is an exact description of something as it exists, or an accurate narration of events as they occurred, or a precise explanation of causes, effects, relations, etc. In the domain of science, *fact* is of the greatest interest and importance.

In the domain of literature *fact* becomes less important and *truth* is the main consideration. We say that a piece of literature has *truth* when it is entirely consistent in itself and to the laws of the realm in which its class places it. If it is in the realm of human life, it must be true to the laws — physical, mental, moral — that govern man. It must show the working out of the laws of nature and the great moral laws of the universe — the effect of man's acts on his character and on events, and the effect of his environment on him. If the subject is in fairy-land, it must be consistent with the conventions and traditions of fairy-land. *Alice in Wonderland* is a marvelous tale; but it does not pretend to

be a narration of actual experience, and anything is possible in a dream. There may never have been four girls in a family exactly like Miss Alcott's *Little Women*, who did precisely the things they are said to have done; but Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy have conceivable and consistent characters and personalities, and there is nothing in the book inconsistent with the life it pretends to depict. Therefore *Little Women* is, from a literary point of view, "convincing" and true.

True books of fiction are often great teachers. The authors have unusual insight into human life and motives, and construct their plots to bring out clearly some phase of life. Even when they base their plots or characters in part on fact, they select and re-combine, omitting the accidental and unrelated, throwing emphasis on the essential, so that they clear away the impediments and the multiplicity of detail that obstruct our weaker view in actual life, and show us a related series of events leading to some important effect — the climax of the story. In them, "Experience is converted into thought, as a mulberry leaf is converted into satin." (Emerson, *The American Scholar*.)

The world of the imagination is not the world of abstraction and nonentity, as some conceive, but a world formed out of chaos by a sense of the beauty that is in man and the earth on which he dwells. It is the realm of Might-be, our haven of refuge from the short-comings and disillusionings of life. It is, to quote Spenser, who knew it well, —

'The world's sweet inn from care and wearisome turmoil.'

Do we believe, then, that God gave us in mockery that splendid faculty of sympathy with things that are 'a joy forever'? For my part, I believe that the love and study of works of imagination is of practical utility in a country so profoundly material (or, as we like to call it, practical) in its leading tendencies as ours. The hunger after purely

intellectual delights, the content with ideal possessions, cannot but be good for us in maintaining a wholesome balance of the character and faculties. I for one shall never be persuaded that Shakespeare left a less useful legacy to his countrymen than Watt. We hold all the deepest, all the highest satisfactions of life as tenants of the imagination.

— LOWELL: *Books and Libraries*.

Turn back, now, to the remarks on literature that constitute Chapter I of Part I of this book, and read again DeQuincey's words on the two kinds of literature. We may use here the terms he has given us: *fact* is the material of the literature of *knowledge*; *truth* is the material of the literature of *power*.

## CHAPTER X

### HOW TO STUDY A PIECE OF LITERATURE

The style of a piece of literature is sometimes called, in metaphor, the *dress* of the thought. We all know that different dress is suitable for different occasions. For simple, every-day life, simple dress is most appropriate; for more formal occasions, we don more elaborate attire. In like manner, what is proper and in good taste in literary expression depends entirely on the character of the thought to be expressed.

The general principle regarding the adaptation of style to thought is strongly put by Herbert Spencer in his *Philosophy of Style*. The chief consideration in expression is economy of the reader's attention; *i. e.*, that style is best which distracts the attention of the reader least to itself and concentrates it most on the thought. All the graces of adornment, all the devices of expression used, should emphasize not themselves but the thought they express, the effect they are intended to produce.

If then, the thought and the effect are the main considerations, we have first, in studying a piece of literature, to determine what is the thought and what is the effect desired; *i. e.*, what is the "informing spirit" of this work of art. The study of the writer's style is a study of the means by which he forcibly and elegantly expresses his thought or produces his effect.

To ascertain the thought we must first give the poem (or story, or essay) a careful, though not detailed, reading. After this preliminary reading we should be able to state concisely what thought the author wishes to convey, or what effect he wishes to produce. We should know whether the spirit of the work is pathetic, humorous, animated, vigorous, dignified or sublime; and we should have noticed whether the style is touching, lively, energetic, brilliant, stately, lofty, or splendid. We should see the general plan, also, of the work.

We should next consult biographies, histories of literature, and critical works to learn whether the circumstances of composition throw any light on the author's purpose or method. Sometimes they do not; often they do. One of Longfellow's poems grew out of the circumstances of his visit to the United States Arsenal at Springfield, Massachusetts, and it is impossible to appreciate the poem, or even to study it intelligently, without first knowing what was said on that occasion.

We are now ready to examine our classic in detail. Since every piece of writing worth careful study shows perfect adaptation of style to thought, we shall understand and feel the thought better for the attention we give the style. We shall gain by saying definitely what we find in the diction, the sentence-structure, the figures, the allusions, the meter, the melody, the harmony of the classic that impresses on us more deeply the effect the writer wishes to produce. Our study of rhetorical devices should not be a mere listing of epithets, figures, etc.; it should be a clear explanation of the manner in which the writer, by his form of expression, makes his meaning more effective. This is the only sort of rhetorical study sufficiently vital to be worth our time and effort; and

this is worth our time because it gives us an intelligent appreciation of the author's thought and art.

Many students wish to content themselves with the first preliminary reading of a classic, and do not wish to go on with a study of details. Bacon was right when he said, "Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed." It is a good thing to be able to read books of no great importance "in part" and not "curiously." But Bacon was equally right when he added, "and some few to be chewed and digested." We make a great mistake if we fail to read those that come under this last class "wholly, and with diligence and attention." Without careful study of the details of style, we miss the fine points in the development of the thought, and we miss also much of the force lent by the suitable expression. In a general reading we may, in minor details, even misinterpret our author. He has employed no word without a definite purpose, and it is our duty to give him a fair hearing.

Ruskin, in *Sesame and Lilies*, has spoken strongly of the necessity for careful study of literature. The following passages are particularly note-worthy.

— At least be sure that you go to the author to get *his* meaning, not to find yours. Judge it afterward, if you think yourself qualified to do so; but ascertain it first. —

And therefore, first of all, I tell you, earnestly and authoritatively (*I know I am right in this*), you must get into the habit of looking intensely at words, and assuring yourself of their meaning, syllable by syllable — nay, letter by letter.—

Then, after explaining carefully a passage from Milton's *Lycidas*, he continues:

We have got something out of the lines, I think, and much more yet is to be found in them; but we have done enough by way of example of



the kind of word-by-word examination of your author which is rightly called 'reading;' watching every accent and expression, and putting ourselves always in the author's place, annihilating our own personality, and seeking to enter into his, so as to be able assuredly to say, 'Thus Milton thought,' not 'Thus I thought, in mis-reading Milton.'

The understanding is not the only one of our faculties that needs to be thoroughly alive in our study of literature. The activity of the imagination is exceedingly important. We do not fully comprehend unless we realize so vividly the thought of the author that we actually, for the time, believe that we see the sights, hear the sounds, smell the odors, taste the food, feel the sensations, experience the emotions, and live the life described. The purpose of the author is to make the reader "live sympathetically through the experience he is interpreting." We must give ourselves, for the time, wholly into the author's power, to be guided and controlled, intellectually and emotionally, by him. We may judge afterward, if we will, but we must first know.

It is more difficult to realize clearly a general or abstract statement than a specific or concrete one. It is, therefore, often desirable that the reader illustrate an abstract statement for himself, if the writer does not do it for him. He will thus make the statement clearer, and at the same time enlist in its interpretation his imaginative powers. An example of such illustration is to be found in this volume in the study of Emerson's *Heroism*, where an abstract moral question is converted into a concrete one by reference to a story involving it. (See page 285 and Appendix II.)

It is easier to state the principles discussed above than it is to give rules for their application. For the precise method of studying any work of literature depends on the construction of that particular work, and directions general enough

to apply universally may be of little assistance in any individual case. The studies in this volume are intended to illustrate the application of these principles under a variety of circumstances. A few concise directions at this point may, however, be helpful.

First, recognize clearly the intellectual basis of the work. In *A Forest Hymn* Bryant declares that the forest is a proper place to worship God. In *Westminster Abbey* Irving attempts to transmit to us the sense of melancholy that filled him when he visited the Abbey. In *The Fall of the House of Usher* Poe wishes to create in his readers a sensation of horror. In *Compensation* Emerson expounds the doctrine that every advantage in life has a counterbalancing disadvantage, and vice versa.

After the clear recognition of the thought, try to discover the author's method of working out his purpose concretely and artistically, of inspiring the imagination, of pleasing the fancy, of quickening the mental powers of his readers. The beauty of Bryant's poem is in its noble descriptions of the forest, from a worshipper's point of view. The charm of Irving's sketch is in the sympathy with which he points out evidences of the decay of earthly glory and power. Poe horrifies us with a tale in which he unites in vivid narrative two startling motifs. Emerson interests us by means of exposition, elucidation, and illustration.

Then study the form of expression; *i. e.*, the style. Point out the elements that give lightness, humor, beauty, vivacity, vigor, force, dignity, or whatever the quality may be, to the work. Show how the expression is so thoroughly in harmony with the thought, the tone, the artistic method that the whole creates a unified work of art — a piece of *literature*.

A final reading of our classic should be a complete and accurate *vocal* interpretation of it. We have come to understand it thoroughly in the second, or detailed, reading, and now with complete sympathy we express the author's work for him — sense and sound. No worthy vocal expression can come except through entire comprehension of and sympathy with the author; and this final vocal interpretation, as a summary and culmination of the study of a classic, should never be omitted.

## THE STUDY OF LITERATURE

The following quotations tell us what some scholars and men of genius have thought of literature and the study of literature.

The study of literature is the study of life and feeling as it is reflected in the best prose and poetry.

— HART: *Rhetoric*.

Criticism may be broadly and provisionally defined as the intelligent appreciation of any work of art, and by consequence the just estimate of its value and rank.\*

— WINCHESTER: *Some Principles of Literary Criticism*.

[Criticism is] a disinterested endeavor to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world.

— M. ARNOLD: *The Function of Criticism*.

The poet is, then, gifted in two ways: he discerns the essential meanings of things, and he has the technical ability to make others see with his eyes and feel with his feelings.†

— SHERMAN: *Analytics*.

Poetry is the suggestion by the imagination of noble grounds for noble emotions.

— RUSKIN: *Modern Painters, III*.

Poetry is the perpetual endeavor to express the *spirit* of things.

— EMERSON.

Truth is the aim of literature. Sincerity is moral truth. Beauty is æsthetic truth.

— LEWES: *Principles of Success in Literature, I*.

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† Used by permission of Messrs. Ginn & Company.

Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge; it is the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all science.

— WORDSWORTH: *Prefaces*.

Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings, taking its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility.

— WORDSWORTH: *Prefaces*.

Poetry is the utterance of a passion for truth, beauty, and power, embodying and illustrating its conceptions by imagination and fancy, and modulating its language on the principle of variety and uniformity.

— LEIGH HUNT: *What is Poetry?*

[Poetry is] the presentment of the correspondence of the Universe to the Deity, of the natural to the spiritual, and of the actual to the ideal.

— BROWNING: *Essay on Shelley*.

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- MATTHEWS, BRANDER: *The Short Story*. New York, 1907.
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## SUPPLEMENTARY CRITICAL READINGS

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PATER, WALTER: "An Essay on Style;" in *Appreciations*.

ARNOLD, MATTHEW: "The Study of Poetry;" in *Essays in Criticism, Second Series*.

ARNOLD, MATTHEW: "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time;" in *Essays in Criticism, First Series*.

LESSING, G. E.: *Laocoön*; translated into English by Ellen Frothingham.

STEDMAN, E. C.: *The Nature of Poetry*.

SHAIRP, J. C.: *Aspects of Poetry*.

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PART II  
INTENSIVE STUDIES

CHAPTER XI

WASHINGTON IRVING

REFERENCE BIOGRAPHIES

*Life*, by David J. Hill; New York, 1879.

*Life*, by Charles Dudley Warner; Boston, 1881.

*Life and Letters*, 3 Vol., by Pierre L. Irving; New York, 1869.

SUPPLEMENTARY READING

*The Sketch Book, Bracebridge Hall, Wolfert's Roost, Tales of a Traveller;*  
and see Appendix I, titles 9 to 24 inclusive.

STRATFORD-ON-AVON

I. Read the *Sketch*, following the map, and consulting the pictures. Is Irving's purpose to narrate or to describe? Does he describe chiefly to tell the appearance of persons and places, or to reproduce in the reader the effect the visit had on himself, and the thoughts inspired in him by it?

II. Study the *Sketch* carefully under the following heads; and this time study also the notes in your text:—

1. Introduction (paragraphs 1-3). Where did Irving stop when he visited Stratford? Explain the first words of paragraph 2. What figure used in paragraph 1 is continued in paragraph 2? Explain the allusion

at the end of 2. What does "quicken" mean (paragraph 3)?

2. Method of description: The author tells us what he saw in a day's walk.

The point on which the *Sketch* turns and on which it is based is mentioned in paragraph 16. Is the unity good?

3. Descriptive passages: observe the suggestiveness and single impression of each; the use of detail in sight and sound; the choice of words — significant adjectives and verbs; figures and comparisons; allusions.

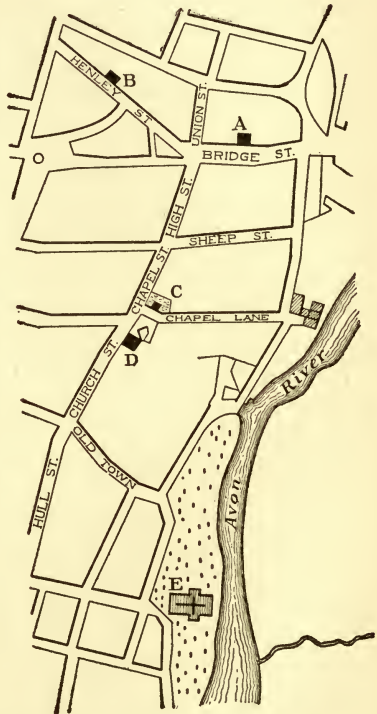
a. The birthplace: paragraph 4.

b. The churchyard: paragraph 8.

c. The sexton's house: paragraph 9.

d. The church: paragraph 13; interior: paragraphs 13-16.

e. Spring in England: paragraphs 3, 22, 23.



A. Red Horse Inn      D. Grammar School  
 B. Shakespeare House      E. Church and Churchyard  
 C. New Place

Chart of Stratford-on-Avon

Handwritten text in a cursive script, possibly a signature or a list of names, located at the top of the page. The text is arranged in several lines and is somewhat faint and difficult to decipher.

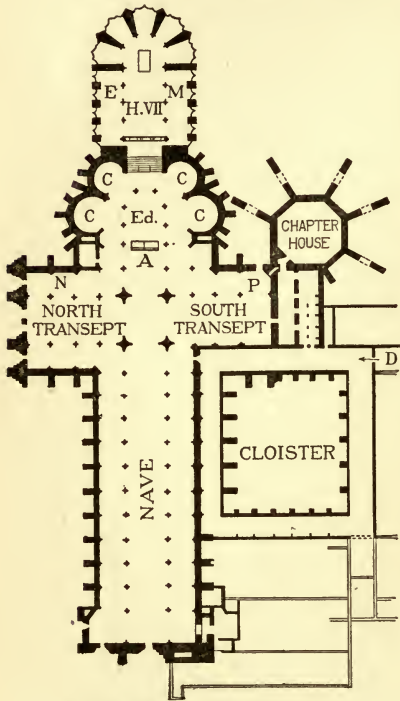


AN INTERIOR AT CHARLECOTE HALL

- f. The road to Charlecote, and the Park: paragraphs 24, 26-30. Here the point of view progresses.
  - g. Charlecote Hall: paragraphs 29, 31; interior: paragraphs 32-35.
  - h. The old lady: paragraph 5.
  - i. The portraits: paragraph 34.
4. The humor of the *Sketch*: pretense to believe or to take seriously what is absurd; contradiction between the real meaning of words and the author's meaning — use of long and important words for trifling things; humor in figures and in allusions; character of the humor (kindly or bitter); etc.
    - a. The relics: paragraphs 5, 6, 7, 11, 12.
    - b. The Lucys: paragraphs 31, 33.
    - c. Explain Shakespeare's humor in the quotation from *Merry Wives* (paragraph 32).
  5. Power of Irving's imagination to respond to suggestion: paragraphs 6, 23, 28, 35, 37, 38.
  6. Moralizing; *i. e.* application to life in general of ideas suggested by circumstances: paragraphs 1, 25, 39.
  7. Irving's sympathy with the youthful exploits of Shakespeare: paragraphs 17, 18, 19, 20, 40.
  8. Make a list of the plays of Shakespeare mentioned and quoted in the *Sketch*; the notes will help you to the names of the plays. Explain why each of the allusions is appropriate here.
- III. Read the *Sketch* again, this time aloud. Note the passages that seem to you especially good in sound, and explain the reason for your choice.

WESTMINSTER ABBEY

I. Read the *Sketch* carefully, consulting plan, pictures, and the following outline:



- A. The Altar and the Chancel.
- C. Chapels Containing Tombs.
- D. The Dark Cloister.
- E. The Tomb of Elizabeth.
- Ed. The Chapel of Edward the Confessor.
- H.VII. The Chapel of Henry VII.
- M. The Tomb of Mary.
- N. The Nightingale Tomb.
- P. The Poets' Corner.

Plan of Westminster and Cloister

Paragraph 1: Introduction  
Paragraph 2: atmosphere given to *Sketch*.

Paragraph 3: The approach to Abbey through the dark passage and the cloister.

Paragraph 4: The cloister-square.

Paragraph 5: The cloister-walk.

Paragraphs 5, 6: First impressions of the Church.

Paragraph 7: The Poets' Corner.

Paragraph 8: The Chapels — tombs of kings and nobles.

Paragraph 9: The Crusader's Tomb.

Paragraph 10: The Nightingale Tomb.

Paragraph 11: Sounds of life without.

Paragraphs 12-18: The Chapel of Henry VII.

Paragraphs 19, 20: Sounds of the evening service.

Paragraph 21: Meditation during vespers.

Paragraph 22: The Chapel of Edward the Confessor.

Paragraph 23: The departure.

Paragraphs 24, 25: The lesson.

We have spent the afternoon in walking with Irving among the monuments. The passage of time is indicated in paragraphs 3, 12, 19, 20, 21, 23.

II. Even at the first reading of this *Sketch*, one is struck by the absence of detail in description. The reason for this lack of detail is stated in paragraph 24. The few details given are mentioned not so much for their physical appearance as for the *effect* they produce on the beholder. In a number of cases the author is led from the object described to moralize on human life (paragraphs 7, 15, 22, 24). The finest aspect of the *Sketch* is found in its *tone*. The author strikes the key-note in the very first sentence. The season of the dying year harmonizes with the sentiment of pleasant meditative melancholy, growing out of the consciousness of the transitoriness of all things earthly. "Sic transit gloria mundi." The human heart longs for an immortal memorial, but even these monuments of stone decay and pass away. Read the *Sketch* through again aloud, noting the diction, the sentence-structure, the figures, and the sound effects that bring out the tone. Note, too, how the writer's imagination responds constantly to the influence of the Abbey.

III. Study in detail:—

1. Contrast to the main tone in paragraphs 3 and 11.
2. Contrast of the bright and the gloomy in paragraphs 14, 15.
3. Harmony of sound and thought in paragraph 20.
4. Consult the notes in your text for explanation of allusions and other difficult points.

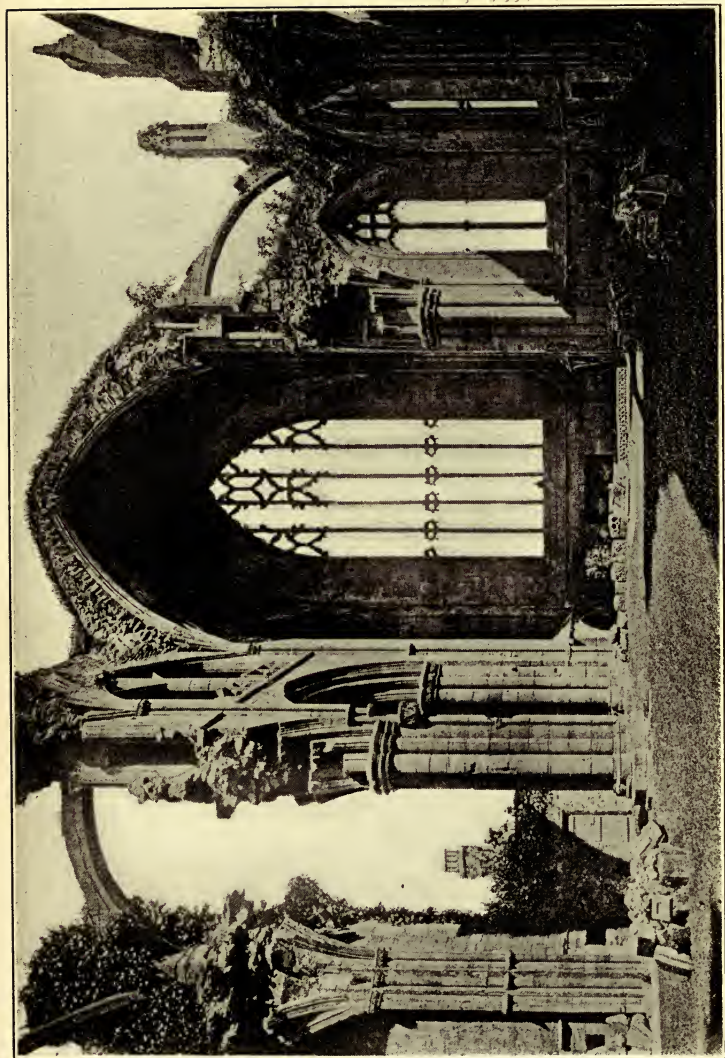
IV. *The Sketch Book* was published in 1819. With the concluding paragraph of *Westminster Abbey* compare these lines from Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, published in 1805.

If thou would'st view fair Melrose aright,  
 Go visit it by the pale moonlight,  
 For the gay beams of lightsome day  
 Gild but to flout the ruins gray.  
 When the broken arches are black in night,  
 And each shafted oriel glimmers white;  
 When the cold light's uncertain shower  
 Streams on the ruined central tower;  
 When buttress and buttress alternately  
 Seem framed of ebon and ivory;  
 When silver edges the imagery,  
 And the scrolls that teach thee to live and die;  
 When distant Tweed is heard to rave,  
 And the owlet to hoot o'er the dead man's grave,  
 Then go — but go alone the while —  
 Then view St. David's ruined pile;  
 And, home returning, soothly swear  
 Was never scene so sad and fair.

Irving, by echoing the diction of the well-known poem, prophesies a future for Westminster like the fate of Melrose — utter ruin. Is this in harmony with the moral thought and the tone of the *Sketch*? (See II above.)

V. Irving's work is sometimes compared to that of the English essayist, Addison, who lived about a century earlier than Irving. Addison has an essay called *Thoughts in Westminster Abbey*. Read it carefully (Appendix III). Has it the same tone as Irving's *Sketch*? Is Addison's unity of tone as good as Irving's? Which of his paragraphs are best? Which essay is the finer production of the imagination? Which writer was more under the spell of the great Abbey?





THE RUINS OF MELROSE ABBEY



The study of Irving here suggested is of a purely literary character. The *Sketches* furnish excellent material for the composition class also, as models for the study of paragraph structure, of sentence form, of coherence, and of outlining, or the logical development of the whole composition.

## CHAPTER XII

### WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

#### REFERENCE BIOGRAPHIES

*Life*, 2 Vol., by Parke Godwin; New York, 1883.

*Life*, by David J. Hill; New York, 1879.

*Life*, by John Bigelow; Boston, 1890.

*Life*, by Wm. A. Bradley; New York, 1905.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY READING

The Yellow Violet, To the Fringed Gentian, Green River, June, Autumn Woods, The Death of the Flowers, The Gladness of Nature, The Evening Wind, The Snow-shower, Robert of Lincoln, The Planting of the Apple-tree, The Prairies, a Lifetime.

The Past, The Poet, O Fairest of the Rural Maids (written to the lady who became his wife; compare with Wordsworth's *Three years she grew*, as expressing the educating power of Nature), The May Sun Sheds an Amber Light (Godwin II, 31).

The Green Mountain Boys, Song of Marion's Men, Oh! Mother of a Mighty Race, The Death of Lincoln.

See also Appendix I, titles 25 to 27 inclusive.

#### TO A WATERFOWL

I. This poem is an apostrophe to a flying bird, and an expression of the moral thought it brings the poet. Seeing the dark figure outlined against the glowing evening sky, he reflects that the Power which guides the bird safely through its journey will lead him also safely through life.

The circumstances under which the poem was composed give it special significance. Bryant was about to begin his

career as a young lawyer. He felt, as every young man must feel when he takes his first independent step in life, an intense loneliness and a great anxiety for the future. The following paragraph is quoted from *Godwin I*, 143, 144.\*

How was he to live until success should come? There was, in fact, no alternative for him but to begin in some small country village, where, if the prospects of practice were not very alluring, the cost of subsistence at least might be managed. On the opposite hillside from Cummington, about seven miles distant, and to be seen from his father's residence, was a hamlet called Plainfield, whither he resolved to go to try his fortune. — On the 15th of December [1815] he went over to the place to make the necessary inquiries. He says in a letter that he felt, as he walked up the hills, very forlorn and desolate indeed, not knowing what was to become of him in the big world, which grew bigger as he ascended, and yet darker with the coming on of night. The sun had already set, leaving behind it one of those brilliant seas of chrysolite and opal which often flood the New England skies; and, while he was looking upon the rosy splendor with rapt admiration, a solitary bird made wing along the illuminated horizon. He watched the lone wanderer until it was lost in the distance, asking himself whither it had come and to what far home it was flying. When he went to the house where he was to stop for the night, his mind was still full of what he had seen and felt, and he wrote those lines as imperishable as our language, 'The Waterfowl.' The solemn tone in which they conclude, and which by some critics has been thought too moralizing, — was as much a part of the scene as the flight of the bird itself, which spoke not alone to his eye, but to his soul. To have omitted that grand expression of faith and hope in a divine guidance would have been to violate the entire truth of the vision.

II. The picture is described in the first two stanzas. Study it word by word, bringing together the color words that describe the splendor of the sky, and the words that speak of the one dark spot against it. Is the bird flying

\* Quotations from Parke Godwin's *Life* are made by permission of Messrs. D. Appleton and Company.

high or low? If you were an illustrator exactly what picture would you make for this poem?

In connection with the seventh line, read the following extract from a letter from Bryant to his publisher, who has objected to a change in wording. See Godwin II, 288, 289.

In regard to the change made in the *Waterfowl* in which the line now stands

As darkly *seen* against the crimson sky,

instead of

As darkly *painted* on the crimson sky,

please read what I have to say in excuse. I was never satisfied with the word *painted* because the next line is

Thy figure *floats* along.

Now, from a very early period — I am not sure that it was not from the very time that I wrote the poem — there seemed to me an incongruity between the idea of a figure painted on the sky, and a figure moving, 'floating,' across its surface. If the figure were painted, then it would be fixed. The incongruity distressed me, and I could not be easy till I had made the change. I preferred a plain, prosaic expression to a picturesque one that seemed to me false. *Painted* expresses well the depth and strength of color which fixed my attention when I saw the bird — but it contradicts the motion of the winds and the progress of the bird through the air.

Do you agree with the poet or with the publisher?

III. Study the style of the poem with respect to the following points:—

1. Diction: poetic words, epithets, suggestiveness and connotation of the words chosen.
2. Sentence-structure: inversion, periodic form.
3. Figures: apostrophe, personification, metaphor.

Do not make lists merely, but try to show how the poet's

expression is related to his thought, and how he rouses the imagination of the reader. Was he always as conscientious in his art as he was when he substituted *seen* for *painted*?

IV. Has Bryant chosen meter and stanza-structure suitable to his thought? What effect have the run-on lines? Are the pauses arranged well? Study the poem for its melody and harmony. Bigelow (p. 43) tells us that Hartley Coleridge, son of the great English poet, declared to his college friend, Matthew Arnold, that this was the finest poem in the English language, and that he quoted with special pleasure the fifteenth and sixteenth lines. Why should he have remembered and cited these lines particularly?

V. Read the poem aloud. Do not neglect the beauty of sound, which will make more effective the expression of the thought.

#### INSCRIPTION FOR THE ENTRANCE TO A WOOD

I. In this poem the forest is regarded as the abode of peace and gladness, to which man may retire for comfort and strength when he is weary of the sins and cares of the world. Nature — innocent and therefore happy — is contrasted with humanity — sinful and therefore miserable. Make a list of the words of content and gladness applied to Nature and the things of Nature; make another list of words relating to sin and sorrow applied to human life.

II. The thought is serious; the style should, therefore, be dignified. Prepare to say how the style enforces the effect of the thought in the following particulars:—

1. in the choice of adjectives and epithets; in the use of specific words;
2. in the use of figures of speech;

3. in the use of archaic and poetic words;
4. in the sentence length and structure;
5. in the allusions;
6. in the use of blank verse;
7. in the passages in which sound harmonizes with sense.

Under 2 speak particularly of apostrophe, personification, and metaphors. Under 4 observe the approach to periodic structure in lines 1-6, and the suspense in lines 28-32, 34-36. Under 5 the only possible difficulty is in lines 11-15. The "primal curse," when Adam and Eve were driven out of Paradise, declared that the earth should bring forth thorns and thistles. (See *Genesis* 3: 18.) But this was not to punish the sinless earth; misery comes only to guilty man. Under 6 speak of the long phrasing produced by run-on lines and medial pauses. Under 7 note especially lines 34 and 35.

In discussing all these points, avoid mere enumeration. Your work is to show how these rhetorical features, by producing a certain style, make more effective the thought the poet desires to express.

Does Bryant in his description of the wood depend more on figures or on specific words and epithets?

III. From the biographies of Bryant find out when and under what circumstances this early poem was written and published, and what name was first given to it. Read all the criticism and comment you can find on it. A good comment is to be found in Godwin's *Bryant*, I, 142: "Composed in a noble old forest that fronted his father's dwelling-house, it is an exquisite picture of the calm contentment he found in the woods. Every object . . . is painted with the minutest fidelity, and yet with an almost impassioned sympathy."

IV. Read the poem aloud. Try to express with your



voice everything Bryant intended his readers to think and feel.

### A FOREST HYMN

I. This poem was Bryant's farewell to his country life, just before his departure to New York in 1825. See Godwin I, 214. Here he regards the forest as a place for the worship of its Creator. Read the poem carefully with the following outline:—

1. Introduction: The forest worship of primitive man might well be practiced sometimes by civilized man.
2. The Creator is still in the forest he has made.
3. The forest is an expression of life triumphant — of the creative power of God still active.
4. The poet finds it profitable there to meditate on the judgments and mercies of God.

II. The poem is serious, meditative, and dignified in thought, and the rhetorical devices should be such as will help to produce the effect of majesty and sublimity. Discuss the style under the following topics:—

1. Diction: long words; archaic and poetic words; specific words; epithets; poetic compounds.
2. Sentences: length and form. Notice the effect produced by the periodic sentences. Contrast the difference in thought and effect shown by the loose sentence (lines 90–99) and the periodic (lines 101–111.) Suspended structure produces an effect similar to that of the periodic. What is the effect of the broken sentence in line 55?
3. Figures: apostrophe, personification, metaphor, simile — lists of each. Notice the continued metaphor in

lines 1, 18, 24, 25, 33-35. Which of the personifications concern nature? Which concern abstract notions?

4. Meter and sound: effect of blank verse; use of paragraphs instead of stanzas; foot; length of line; run-on lines; retards and pauses (including spondaic feet); alliteration; harmony of sound and thought.

III. Read the poem aloud. Try to express with your voice all its meaning, beauty, and majesty.

Line 36 alludes to the "fantastic carvings" found in and on the mediaeval cathedrals. "The Imp of Lincoln" and "the Devil of Notre Dame" are well-known examples.

#### MONUMENT MOUNTAIN

I. Near Great Barrington, Massachusetts, rises a great precipice that overlooks the lovely valley of the Housatonic and the Berkshire Hills. At its southern extremity there was once a pile of stones, gathered, tradition says, in honor of an Indian woman who had thrown herself from the precipice. The legend is given in lines 49ff. of the poem. Is the story a painful one?

Relate the legend as you learn it from the poem. It is a simple tale — your language should be as pure and simple as that of Bryant. Let your method of telling the story show your appreciation of Bryant's diction. If he has used any epithets or other adjectives, or any figures that seem to you particularly appropriate, you may use the same. Try to give to your legend the same note of patient, restrained pathos Bryant has given to his.

II. Lines 1-48 are introductory, describing the precipice and the view from its summit. Do you think the introduction is too long? Why does Bryant make it so long? The

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MONUMENT MOUNTAIN PRECIPICE



author apostrophizes the visitor who would see, from the summit of the cliff, the "*lovely*" and the "*wild*." Go carefully through this introduction, dividing into these two classes the objects and scenes mentioned. Notice how your attention is directed to the various objects and in various directions by "here," "there," "to the north," "the western side," "to the east." Show particularly how the pictures of the *lovely* and the *wild* are made more vivid by the use of epithets. How much does evidence of human life and activity enter into Bryant's ideal of the "lovely"? Follow carefully the continued metaphor in which the poet uses terms of architecture for the cliffs and rocks (lines 21, 25, 27, 30, 31, 36, 48). Find examples of personification; what feeling for nature does the use of this figure show?

III. The poem is written in blank verse. Discuss its meter, the use of run-on lines, and the medial pauses. Do you find any places where the sound is particularly well suited to the thought?

IV. Read the introduction (lines 1-48) aloud. Try to make your auditors imagine the scene Bryant has described.

#### THE ANTIQUITY OF FREEDOM

- I. Read the poem carefully with the following outline:—
  1. Introduction, lines 1-12: the forest is the scene of the poet's meditation; its age and undisturbed growth suggest the age and nature of liberty.
  2. Freedom is conceived under the metaphor of a warrior, assailed by his foe with *force*: lines 13-32.
  3. Freedom is coeval with the human race: lines 33-47.
  4. Though he will be ultimately victorious, Freedom must watch long against the *cunning* of his foe: lines 48-64.

5. Conclusion, lines 64-70: the forest is the resting-place for Freedom in the intervals of his struggle, it being the primal home and present abode of liberty.

II. Study the poem in detail.

Topics 1 and 5. The introduction and the conclusion may be considered together rhetorically. The former, particularly, describes the forest by means of specific nouns and epithets. The age of the forest (line 10) explains the descriptive element of the conclusion (lines 66-70).

Topic 3. Lines 33-47 may next be considered, as standing nearer the title of the poem than the second and fourth paragraphs. Freedom should rule the human race by right of birth — he is older than usurping Tyranny, his enemy. He began with the beginning of the race, and has gone with the race through its history. Lines 34-40 allude to the pastoral period of our race's history. Pastoral peoples, watching their flocks by night (for darkness brings the wild beasts), have always been astronomers; and in poetry shepherds are always represented as playing on the "reed." (See the story of Pan, god of shepherds, and the nymph Syrinx.) Also, pastoral peoples are obliged to fight the wild beasts that would decimate their flocks. Lines 40-42 refer to the early agricultural period of our race's history. Tyranny, being younger, is, by the law of primogeniture, a *usurper*, if he takes the place of the elder. Does he feel secure in his wrongfully obtained position?

Topic 2. (Lines 13-32). The whole of the poem proper is an apostrophe to Freedom. The French emblem of Freedom is a young girl in a Roman cap. The poet rejects this metaphor; he conceives Freedom as a warrior, fighting (lines 17-22). Power (called "Tyranny" in line 42) has attacked Freedom. "Thunderbolts" and "lightnings" sug-

gest Zeus, who is regarded as a tyrant in the story of Prometheus. Power makes Freedom prisoner, but Freedom escapes and rallies the nations around his standard. The "swart armorers" are smiths (*black-smiths*), whose work in early times included the making of armor. Throughout this paragraph Freedom is represented as struggling against the *force* of the enemy in warfare and battle. He may be conquered for a time, but his immortal strength finally puts the enemy to flight.

Topic 4. (Lines 48-64). Here Freedom is represented as fighting against the enemy's *cunning* — the weapon of the weak and failing. Tyranny sets traps and ambushes, if perchance he may take Freedom unawares. Lines 53-59 refer to pleasures and rewards tyrants, or would-be tyrants, have sometimes prepared for their slaves. Roman history, for example, tells how food was distributed to the populace, and how they were entertained by spectacles when would-be tyrants were trying to gain power over them. Can you give from history any other illustration for these lines? Lines 59-64 warn Freedom to be prepared for these cunning attacks of his enemy. "Tumult" and "fraud" in line 65 recall the ideas of "force" (lines 21ff.) and "cunning" (lines 50ff.).

III. Discuss the sentence-structure in this poem. What is the effect of inversion in lines 27-28, 34-35, 42-45, 45-47?

IV. Discuss the meter, and the use of run-on lines and pauses.

V. What devices do you find in the poem for securing melody and harmony?

VI. Read the poem aloud. Try to bring out fully its meaning, beauty, and strength.

## THANATOPSIS

I. When Bryant was a young man of twenty-three, his father found in his desk the verses which now appear as *Thanatopsis*, lines 17-66. Mr. Bryant gave the lines to his friend Mr. Phillips, then editor of *The North American Review*, and they were published in that magazine in September, 1817. They are supposed to have been written some five or six years earlier. Lines 1-17 and 66-81 were added by the poet in his volume of 1821. See Godwin I, 97-101, 148-155.

II. The title of the poem is from the Greek, and means "a vision of death." One should read first the original lines (17-66), which are the core of the present poem. The poet conceives the earth as a splendid tomb for man, and the beauties of nature as decorations of that tomb. He meditates on the universality of death. This seems a strange topic for the meditation of a young man of healthy mind; but we know that "graveyard poems" occupied a prominent and honored place in English literature of the late eighteenth century. Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* is the best known of these poems. Another, which seems particularly to have influenced Bryant, is Blair's *Grave*. See Godwin I, 37, 97.

What is this world?

What but a spacious burial-field unwall'd,  
 Strew'd with death's spoils, the spoils of animals  
 Savage and tame, and full of dead men's bones.  
 The very turf on which we tread once lived,  
 And we that live must lend our carcasses  
 To cover our own offspring; in their turns  
 They, too, must cover theirs.



The thought of Blair, though infinitely less well expressed, is plainly that of the young Bryant, who was doubtless familiar with the then popular poem of the older man. Of the lines added later, 1-17 are of the nature of an introduction, 66-72 are so closely related to the thought of the poem that they became really a part of it, and 73-81 are appended to attach a moral thought to the poem. These lines can hardly be called a *conclusion*, because they do not grow necessarily, or even naturally, out of the thought of the poem proper.

III. Read now the entire poem as it stands at present, consulting the following outline: —

1. Introduction: Nature comforts man when the thought of death makes him gloomy, telling him that: —
2. it is true his body will return to earth;
3. yet he will thus become one of the company that includes all the great, the beautiful, the good of the past;
4. the beauties of Nature are decorations for the tomb of man;
5. the dead are everywhere, and all who are to come will ultimately join their number.
6. Moral thought: So live that you will not be afraid to die.

Consider the thought of the poem carefully. This is sometimes called a "pagan poem." See Hill's *Bryant*, 214, 215; and Richardson's *History of American Literature*, II, 37. Does Bryant say any more in this poem than a pagan philosopher could have said?

IV. The thought of the poem is serious and majestic. The style should then be dignified and stately. Show how the style becomes the thought in the following particulars: —

1. Diction: length of words; use of specific words; use of

words from the poetic vocabulary (archaic words, epithets, poetic compounds); words not adjectives used for descriptive power.

2. Sentences: length; inversion and suspension; use of series; periodic structure.
3. Figures: apostrophe; personification; simile; metaphor.
4. Meter: blank verse; foot; length of line and placing of pauses.
5. Melody and harmony: alliteration; assonance; dignity of movement; sonorous quality of words used.

Even if you do not consider the subject a profitable one for meditation, you cannot but be impressed with the sublime manner in which Bryant discusses it. His fine poetry awakes the imagination, brings to the mind magnificent pictures, and makes the subject almost attractive.

V. It is interesting to compare the present form of the poem with its first form. Has the poet improved the following early lines?

Line 40. The venerable woods — the floods that move  
 In majesty — and the complaining brooks,  
 That wind among the meads and make them green,  
 Are but the solemn decorations all

Line 47. Are glowing on the sad abodes of death.

Line 50.                   Take the wings  
 Of morning — and the Barcan desert pierce —  
 Or lose thyself in the continuous woods  
 That veil Oregon, where he hears no sound

Line 58. So shalt thou rest — and what if thou shalt fall  
 Unnoticed by the living — and no friend  
 Take note of thy departure? Thousands more  
 Will share thy destiny. — The tittering world  
 Dance to the grave. The busy brood of care  
 Plod on, and each one chases as before  
 His favorite phantom. —

Bryant once wished to change line 51 to "traverse the Barcan desert," but his editor insisted on "pierce." Why? See Godwin I, 176 and II, 288.

VI. Discuss the poet's feeling for nature as shown in this poem.

VII. Compare *Thanatopsis* with *June* in subject matter and style. How is the difference in effect produced?

VIII. Read the poem aloud. Try to show by your reading what you have learned about the sustained majesty of its style.

With line 50 compare *Psalms* 139:9. "If I take the wings of morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea." Bryant tells us to travel in imagination with the speed of morning light and the comprehensiveness of advancing day from the far east (the Barcan desert in Africa) to the western Oregon (Columbia River); even in these lonely places, these "uttermost parts," the dead are found. The phraseology which the Psalmist uses to express the omnipresence of God, the poet adopts to express the omnipresence of Death.

### THE FLOOD OF YEARS

I. *Thanatopsis* was the young Bryant's "vision of death." When the poet was eighty-two years old (in 1876), he wrote another poem on the universality of death, and it is interesting to observe that he adds to his picture of death the anticipation of a life beyond; he does not stop at the grave now, as he did in *Thanatopsis*. And he expresses in this later poem the sympathy with human sorrow that would naturally grow out of the experiences of life.

Read the poem carefully, with this outline: —

1. The work of the Flood in the "Life that is" — devastation: lines 1-122.

- a. It bears away all persons and all things:
    - (1) Men of every age and class,
    - (2) The cities and nations of earth — illustrations.
  - b. A look at the Past shows nothing but the devastation of the Flood, and the sorrow that has accompanied loss and disappointment.
  - c. The earthly future, "where the Flood must pass," mingles hope and fear; finally the Flood passes the dark barrier of Death, "where the life to come touches the life that is."
2. The work of the Flood in the "Life to come" — restoration: lines 122–152.
- a. All that have been swept away re-appear: lines 125ff.
  - b. And are carried into realms of peace and beauty: lines 134ff.,
  - c. Where friends are united: lines 140ff.,
  - d. And there is eternal happiness: lines 143ff.

II. The expression of the thought we find in this poem should naturally be dignified and solemn. As the basis of the whole, Bryant uses a majestic metaphor, comparing time to an everlasting and all-powerful flood. The figure has probably occurred to many men besides Bryant. Who can sit quietly and thoughtfully on the bank of a stream, watching its never-ending current flow past him, without being impressed by its continuance and irresistibility; without saying to himself, "These bits of wood and other débris are borne along on this river as we human beings are borne on the *stream of time*?" Go through Bryant's poem carefully, and list all the words that belong to his fundamental metaphor. You will find that all those before line 122 picture the flood as rough, stormy, violent, devastating. Those

after line 122 picture the flood as calm, peaceful, beneficent. Refer again to the outline, and explain why this is so.

1. Find all the other figures used in the poem, and explain them accurately.
2. Discuss the use of specific words (verbs as well as nouns), of epithets, of poetic compounds, to make vivid the description of the path of the Flood in the present life and in the life to come. Observe contrasts, as "Emperor" and "felon," etc. Notice especially such words as "stricken" (line 43) and "overpays" (line 145).
3. The sentences are rather long, and, since the poem contains much enumeration, the sentences contain many series of phrases and some balance.
4. Discuss the meter. The rhythm is somewhat like that of a chant; each phrase should be read as a unit, smoothly, monotonously for the most part, and rather quickly. In which part are there the most run-on lines? In which is the phrasing more long and sweeping? Why?
5. Make a list of onomatopoeic words used in the poem. Discuss the harmony of sound and meaning. Notice all prominent cases of alliteration. In reading, you should emphasize the explosives before line 122 and the liquids and spirants after line 122; why?

III. Read the poem aloud. Keep in mind the powerful movement of a mighty stream: in the first division of the poem, dark, sweeping, and all-destructive; in the last section not less mighty, but at the same time calm and gracious in its course.

## CHAPTER XIII

### EDGAR ALLAN POE

#### REFERENCE BIOGRAPHIES

*Life*, by George E. Woodberry; Boston, 1885.

*Life and Letters*, by James A. Harrison; New York, 1902.

*Life*, by Eugene L. Didier; New York, 1879.

*The Mind and Art of Poe's Poetry*, by J. P. Fruit; New York, 1899.

*A Critical Study of Poe*, by Arthur Ransome; New York, 1910

#### SUPPLEMENTARY READING

Israfil, To Helen, The City in the Sea, Ulalume.

See also Appendix I, titles 28 to 32 inclusive.

### THE BELLS

I. The excellence of this poem is in melody and harmony, not in profundity of thought. The poem is made up of four stanzas of unequal length, each describing the sound of one kind of bell. The author's purpose is to recall to the reader's imagination the sounds characteristic of various bells, and to inspire in him the emotion appropriate in each case. The first three lines of each stanza state its theme and set its tone-color; the last line summarizes the effect of the stanza.

II. The first stanza describes the sound of sleigh-bells, here conceived as *silver* bells, because of their "silvery," tinkling music. The occasion is gay; the movement is rapid, the sounds in the stanza are light and jingling. The predominant vowels are the light vowels *e* and *i*, made in the front of the

mouth, and these give the tone-color to the stanza. The great number of liquid and spirant consonants make the combinations smooth and flowing, in harmony with the spirit of the occasion; some explosives are used for imitative effects. The melody is aided by the alliteration of *m* (line 3), *s* (line 6), *r* (line 10), and by the assonance of *ĩ* (line 14) and *ĩ* (line 4). The words *tinkle*, *jingling*, and *tintinnabulation* are onomatopoeic.

III. The second stanza tells of wedding-bells. As the occasion is more formal and significant than that alluded to in stanza one, the bells are made of finer material and their music is less light. The tone-color of the stanza is richer and deeper, and is produced by such vowels as are found in *golden*, *world*, *happiness*, *harmony*, *balmy*, *molten-golden*, *notes*, *tune*, etc., these vowels having more resonance than the *e* and *i* of stanza one. The melody is still carried on smoothly by an abundance of liquids and spirants. Alliteration of *h* (line 17) and *s* (line 25), and assonance of *ō* (line 20), of *ĩ* (line 22) of *ũ* (line 23) and of *ũ* (line 26) add to the music. *Gush* and *chiming* are onomatopoeic.

IV. The third stanza strikes a new note at once in the harsh word *brazen*, which gives the keynote for the tone-color of the stanza, as *silver* suggests gay lightness and *golden* suggests richness of sound in the two earlier stanzas. The use of *tale* instead of *world* in the third line is significant in the tone-scheme of the stanza. The harsh words *scream* (line 40), *shriek* (line 42), *clang*, *clash*, *roar* (line 54), *twanging* (line 58), *clanging* (line 59), *jangling* (line 62), *wrangling* (line 63), *clamor* (line 69) are onomatopoeic, and are admirably adapted to the purpose of the stanza. Many of them are emphasized by repetition. Many of the consonants are explosives, and this gives abruptness to

the movement. With two exceptions (*s* in line 65 and *f* in line 45) those emphasized by alliteration are explosives: *t* (lines 37, 52), *b* (line 36), *d* (line 47), *c* (lines 54, 69). Assonance of *a* in line 69 adds to the vocalic effect. Lines 60 and 64 imitate the rise and fall of flames. Abrupt pauses within the short lines help to produce the irregularity of meter desired in this description of the jangling fire-bells.

V. The fourth stanza (lines 70–92), speaking of the stern, heavy, tolling, deep-toned iron bells, has a slow, solemn melody. The tone-color is made by long, deep vowels formed far back in the mouth, so that they use the resonance cavities of the head; especially by *ō*. Liquid consonants make the melody smooth; alliteration of *m* (lines 75, 83) and of *r* (lines 97, 101) emphasizes the liquids. Assonance of and frequent rime on *ō* emphasize that sound. *Groan* is onomatopoeic. *Toll*, onomatopoeic, is emphasized by assonance, repetition, and rime. The solemnity of the first part of the stanza is relieved by the brighter lines 93–101, describing the merry, fantastic sprite of the steeple. Here are found the light, front vowels *e* and *i*, which give the tone-color of stanza one. Lines 102–108 come gradually back to the tone-color of stanza four; and the stanza ends with the effect of the iron bells. The last half of the last stanza, therefore, gathers up and summarizes the diction and the sound effects of the four stanzas, and thus unifies the entire poem.

VI. One of the remarkable devices of the poem is the repetition of the word *bells*, in imitation of the sound of the bell. The word, like the stroke of a bell, begins with a strong accent and dies away gradually; thus >. This is true also of the words that rime with *bells* — *tells*, *swells*, *dwells*, *cells*, *knells*, *wells*, etc. It is also true of the word *time*, (>) repeated for imitative effect in lines 9, 96,



etc. The words *toll* — *tolling* and their rimes are imitative in the same way, and more deliberate and resonant. These imitative series should be read so as to bring out more fully the effect of each stanza, the movement and melody of the series varying with the spirit of the stanza. Lines 12 and 13 should suggest the jingle of the merry sleigh-bells; lines 32-34, the glad peal of the wedding-bells; lines 65-68, the harsh, clanging fire-bells; lines 108-112, the heavy, slow, funeral-bells. The resonant ring of the bell is also in the frequently occurring syllable *ing*, which should be pronounced fully and clearly every time it occurs.

Some long words, rather unusual in poetry, are employed with excellent melodic effect: *tintinnabulation*, *voluminously*, *palpitating*, for example. Two of these contain a consonant repetition similar in effect to alliteration.

VII. The meter is trochaic, as befits the animated character of the poem. It is natural to accent the stressed syllable strongly here, and so bring out the metrical structure, and imitate the striking of a bell. This might be bad, because distracting, in a poem that emphasized thought; but it is good in one that emphasizes sound and music. The lines are irregular in length, varying from monometer to octameter. The majority are trimeter and tetrameter. The first three lines and the last three are of the same form in all the stanzas, and this produces a slight suggestion of stanza-structure. In these lines the significant words are joined and emphasized by alliteration, assonance, or internal rime. Adjacent lines usually rime. This frequent rime, especially on the word *bell*, helps much in the imitative effect of the poem, as well as in the melody. Internal rimes in lines 31, 35, 113 give an effect similar to the riming of short lines. Feminine rime is found in *tinkle* — *sprinkle* — *twinkle*,

*twanging* — *clanging*, *jangling* — *wrangling*, *people* — *steeple*, *woman* — *human* (imperfect).

VIII. Practice reading the poem. Try to bring out fully the tone-color and the imitative effects.

#### THE RAVEN

I. Read the poem through for its story and its tone. Tell the story in your own words. What is the tone of the poem?

II. Study the rhetorical devices that produce the sound effects.

1. Meter: Number of lines in stanza; length of lines; foot; lines 2, 4, 5, 6 end with a rest.

2. Rime: The end rime is *abcbbb*; *b* in every stanza is *ōr*; the constant recurrence of this most resonant vowel and most musical liquid has much to do with the effect of the poem. Internal feminine rime in lines 1 and 3 of each stanza breaks in two these long lines. In the middle of line 4 there is, in most stanzas, a feminine rime with the middle of line 3. Line 14 also has internal feminine rime.

3. Other musical devices: Discuss the amount, character, and effect of alliteration. There is not much assonance, because there is so much rime. Repetitions emphasize the emotional effect; line 5 of each stanza repeats more or less line 4; other repetitions occur in lines 3, 82, 83, 88, 102. Find all the examples of onomatopœa.

What sound persists as an undertone through the whole poem? By what devices is it kept up? What is its emotional effect?

III. In a critical essay called *The Philosophy of Composition* Poe has explained his use of rhetorical devices in this poem.

Read the essay carefully. Then read the poem again, this time aloud, in order to feel the effect of its music. Does the poem produce on you the effect intended by the writer? Does it seem to you in the least mechanical and artificial in the use of rhetorical devices? Do you think the lover felt profound grief for the death of the lady?

IV. Read the poem aloud. Bring out clearly the sound of *ōr* every time it occurs; let it be heard as a recurrent minor note beneath the ripple of meter, alliteration, and rime.

If the student wishes to consult authorities other than Poe himself (often a doubtful authority) concerning the origin of this poem, he may turn to pages 156 to 159 of the tenth volume of the Stedman-Woodberry edition of Poe's works. See also the Preface to the same volume, pages xxxi, xxxii. Critics have been very industrious in attempting to prove that Poe plagiarized the poem from various obscure contemporaries, possibly because Poe was so ready to cry "Plagiarist" at others, especially at Longfellow. The most interesting borrowings of Poe in *The Raven* are those from Coleridge and Mrs. Elizabeth Barrett Browning. For his alleged indebtedness to Coleridge, see volume six of the Stedman-Woodberry edition, *A Reply to Outis*. Stedman points out the general similarity between *The Raven* and Mrs. Browning's *Lady Geraldine's Courtship* in meter, stanza, and diction, and the special likeness between Poe's third stanza and Mrs. Browning's fourth. Poe greatly admired Mrs. Browning (then Miss Barrett), and dedicated to her *The Raven and Other Poems*.

Many of Poe's best known poems appeared in several forms. When he had to furnish a poem to a magazine, he apparently preferred to re-write an old one, rather than to compose one altogether new. Persons interested in the changes, improvements, and variant readings will find them collected in the notes to the tenth volume of the Stedman-Woodberry edition. See also Henry E. Legler's *Poe's Raven: Its Origin and Genesis*.

## THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER

I. In his essay on *Short Story Writing* Poe says: —

A skillful literary artist has constructed a tale. If wise, he has not fashioned his thoughts to accommodate his incidents; but having conceived with deliberate care, a certain unique or single *effect* to be wrought out, he then invents such incidents — he then combines such events as may best aid him in establishing this preconceived effect. If his very initial sentence tend not to the outbringing of this effect, then he has failed in his first step. In the whole composition there should be no word written of which the tendency, direct or indirect, is not to the one pre-established design.

Read carefully *The Fall of the House of Usher*, and decide what *effect* Poe wishes to produce with this tale, whose *motifs* are insanity and premature burial.

You will observe that Poe uses the word *house* in the two senses: the “building” and the “family” (paragraph 3). Explain the meaning of the title, using *house* in the second sense. Does Poe intend the word to be understood in the title in *both* senses?

II. The setting of the story (paragraphs 1-7).

The guest approaches the house, which is described as he feels, and sees it. He describes it without and within. Show how this description helps to produce, from the opening phrase of the tale, the *effect* which the author has in view. Note particularly the effect produced by the adjectives. Could a story be a pleasant one with such a beginning? Could anything agreeable happen in such surroundings? Certain expressions are particularly suggestive; as “vacant, eye-like windows,” which reminds the reader of the “vacant” eye of a person of infirm mind. The occasion of the visit, too, is not pleasant (paragraph 2). In this introduction,

note particularly the vivid and prophetic image of the house in the tarn (paragraph 1), and the decayed condition of the old building (paragraph 5, *fissure*).

### III. Characterization.

Besides Roderick Usher, few persons are mentioned in the tale: the servants, the guest ("I"), the doctor, the sister. The servants (paragraph 6) are mere figures. The guest is the person by whom the reader lives through this horrible experience; he is any spectator of normal mind — the reader himself. The doctor is introduced merely to account for keeping the body in the house (paragraphs 6, 21). The sister appears only once (paragraph 13) to the "guest" (*i. e.*, to the reader) before her entrance in the hideous climax, and then as a ghostly apparition; she is significant not as a character but as an occasion for the events of the tale.

The real interest centers about Roderick Usher. His disposition is first described in the French couplet with which the tale opens:

His heart is a lute suspended;  
As soon as one touches it, it gives forth sound.

His nervous and unbalanced mental condition, the extreme of the delicate sensibility described in the couplet, was the occasion of his friend's visit (paragraph 2). His whole heredity (paragraph 3) tended toward an intellectual and artistic sensitiveness that weakened, rather than strengthened, the body and the character. The young man's person is described (paragraph 8) in such a way as to make him seem uncanny, stress being put on the expression rather than on the features themselves. The analysis of his mind is given in paragraphs 9–20. Observe the condition of his nerves, the unnatural acuteness of his senses, his struggle with Fear;

the character of his music and painting, his strange belief, his taste in reading. His composition of *The Haunted Palace* is significant, showing his consciousness of "the tottering of his lofty reason upon her throne." The song is allegorical, depicting the fall of the "Monarch Thought." The description of the intelligent head, face, and voice occurs in stanzas II-IV; that of the insane face and expression in stanzas V, VI. Altogether, Roderick Usher inspires in his friend (*i. e.*, the reader) strange, vague terrors. The influence of the sister's death on this wavering mind is stated in paragraphs 21-24.

IV. The author has now made clear a certain situation, on which he wishes to base his narrative. A young man, predisposed to insanity, and already somewhat unbalanced, is completely unnerved by the death of his twin sister, to whom he was 'especially attached, with whom he had a peculiarly sympathetic affinity, and whose body is temporarily laid in the vault of the house.

V. The narrative of the night of horror (paragraphs 25-41).

1. Introductory (paragraph 25): tempest; nervousness of guest; mysterious sounds. Show why this preliminary paragraph must begin a blood-curdling tale.
2. The entrance of Usher (paragraphs 26-29): his condition; the tempest.
3. The name of the book chosen for reading is significant (paragraph 30). Explain the use, in working up to the climax, of quotations from the book read by the guest. Compare each quotation with the description of the sound that immediately followed it. Observe the progressive nervousness and horror of the guest, and the increasing excitement of Usher.

The use of *sound* in working up to the climax of this story is particularly good because Usher has already been described as peculiarly sensitive to sounds. Notice the progressive clearness of the sounds that proceed from the "distant part of the house." Do they tell you what is taking place?

4. Climax: appearance of sister; terrified flight of guest; death of Usher and his sister; destruction of house.

VI. The motifs of this tale are the two most hideous an author could choose — insanity and premature burial. One dislikes to dwell on such topics. But it would be hard to find another story with such perfect unity of tone as has this one. Poe has followed without a fault his own teaching: "In the whole composition there should be no word written of which the tendency, direct or indirect, is not to the one pre-established design."

Constantine the Great built in Constantinople a magnificent palace of red porphyry, in which princes of the blood royal were born. These princes were called "Porphyrogene." The use of the title for the "Monarch Thought" in Usher's song suggests that the mind is full of conceptions as splendid as the beauties of the Byzantine court at its most prosperous period.

Study of diction and sentence-structure and other rhetorical features may be included in the structural study outlined above, since the same principle of *effectiveness* governs them.

If possible, the class should now read Poe's *Ligeia*, with the excellent analysis of the tale printed in Hamilton's *Materials and Methods of Fiction*, pages 189 to 195.

#### A DESCENT INTO THE MAELSTROM

I. Read the story through, and determine what effect the writer wishes to produce by it. Think through the tale

again, and decide whether it is written with the same unity of effect you found in *The Fall of the House of Usher*.

In this case the story must be told by the one who experienced the adventure, because only through him could it become known. The listener is the reader, as the guest was the reader in *The Fall of the House of Usher*. As in the story just analyzed, the introduction to the narrative is very long, the description being largely disposed of before the narrative begins, so that the narrative may move rapidly and without impediment.

II. Introduction to the man's story: paragraphs 1-19.

1. Note the effect of the abrupt beginning.
2. The character of the adventure is foreshadowed by the effect it had on the man's physique: paragraphs 1, 2.
3. The spot chosen for telling the story is important. It is a high cliff overlooking the scene of the adventure, the proper place to see the phenomena the writer has to describe. The perilousness of the place where the story is to be told also adds to the effect of the story on the hearer. To be on top of the cliff, even far back from its verge, would terrify any normal person. The "old man," even in his "shattered nervous condition," is not disturbed by this situation; and that fact helps us to realize that an experience which he would call "terrifying" must have been fearful beyond the power of an ordinary imagination to conceive.
4. The place of the adventure is located: paragraphs 5-8. Definite naming and placing make it seem real — "that particularizing manner" makes the account more vivid.
5. An account of the Maelstrom in action is given in



paragraphs 9-17. The fearful sight is made more terrible by a stunning noise. Only to look on is frightful beyond the power of words to express; how much worse to be in it! The pretense to scientific accuracy makes the account seem true. The notes in your text doubtless tell you something of the character of Poe's "science."

6. Transition to the narrative: paragraphs 18-19.

III. The "old man's" story: paragraphs 20-51.

1. Introduction: paragraphs 20-23. Habits of the brothers; their courage; the matter-of-fact manner of the narrator gives a semblance of reality to the story; the men are brought reasonably into a dangerous situation. How is the ordinary danger shown? Are these men so reckless as to forfeit your sympathy? Time — a deceptively pleasant day, three years ago.

2. Narrative proper: paragraphs 24-51.

a. Combination of events leading to trouble: (a) "*By my watch*" — significance of italics? (b) Unusual and sudden storm. In the general introduction an ordinary movement of the maelstrom occurred, and it filled the spectator with sickening terror; how much worse is this combination of hurricane and Moskoe-ström!

b. Trace the narrative step by step to its climax. Note the use of *noise* to add to terror. Does the tale seem real in Poe's manner of telling it? The situation is terrible beyond description — beyond the grasp of the imagination; the writer therefore tells its effect on the men. One brother is made insane; the other becomes calm and composed, and is

more conscious of awe and admiration than of fear. He is even able to reason logically. Does terror ever make men abnormally sharp-witted? A calm style is necessary, as corresponding to the spirit of the narrator, and because no language could express the fearfulness of the situation.

- c. The conclusion (paragraph 51) is very brief, and gives few details about the escape. Why? How does the narrator give all this the air of truth? Compare the last five sentences with the two opening paragraphs of the tale.

III. Discuss in a written paragraph unity of effect in this tale.

#### THE PURLOINED LETTER

Nothing is more hateful to wisdom than excessive cleverness.

I. Introduction:—The two stories by Poe already studied were written to produce emotional effect—horror and terror. This tale has quite another purpose. It is purely intellectual. In accordance with his literary theory, Poe tells us this at once. In the first paragraph he mentions two of his earlier detective stories, and the policeman and the amateur detective that figured in them. This, then, is a detective story. It takes us to Paris in the time when France was governed by a king, whose court was full of intrigue. Read the story for pure enjoyment of its plot—of seeing how the puzzle is solved. After that you may study in detail the problem and its solution.

II. Analysis of the tale:—

1. State fully and accurately the problem before the police. Who is the lady compromised? What power over her has the Minister? What have the police

done to obtain the letter? Can you think of anything more they might have done?

2. Study carefully the difference in mind and character between the Prefect and Dupin, as revealed from the beginning of the story through the second visit of the Prefect, and in Dupin's discussion of the Prefect's mistake in the paragraph beginning, "For its practical value it depends upon this."
3. The solution.
  - a. On what broad principle did Dupin begin his work? Exactly what was the fault of the police?
  - b. Follow carefully step by step the procedure of Dupin that ended in the recovery of the letter. To understand this thoroughly, you must remember that before the day of envelopes the letter-paper itself was folded and sealed, and the address was written on the outside.
4. Was Dupin's interest in this affair entirely intellectual and impersonal?
5. Within a few pages from the opening of the story you know how it "comes out;" *i. e.*, you know that the letter was recovered. Does that spoil your interest in the tale? Give the reason for your answer.
6. What does the quotation below the title mean?
7. Does the tale seem true as you are reading it? What is the effect of the discussion about mathematics? Which of all Dupin's illustrations makes most clear to you his reasoning about the principle of his search?

#### THE GOLD-BUG

I. Read the story for the pleasure you get out of it, yielding your mind entirely to the influence of the writer. You will

observe that in this tale, as in some others by Poe which we have read, the author first gets out of the way his general description of place and hero, so that, when he has once begun to narrate, he does not have to stop for description, except as fresh scenes are introduced. The matter-of-fact tone of the first paragraphs tells you this tale is addressed to the intellect and not to the emotions; compare this opening with the emotional introduction to *The Fall of the House of Usher*. The tale has two lines of interest: II 3 (below), the finding of the treasure, and II 4 (below), the solving of the cryptograph. They are inter-dependent, and the unity is therefore good, because II 3 would be impossible without II 4, and II 4 would be pointless without II 3. II 3, which by itself is a good story of adventure, reaches climax and conclusion before II 4 is begun. Besides II 3 and II 4 there is, after the general introduction (II 1), an opening narrative (II 2), introducing both II 3 and II 4; it gives an account of the friend's first visit, explaining what the gold-bug is, and bringing in the tone of mystery. As in some other tales by Poe, the reader is represented by "I," the friend of the hero, and the interested witness of the adventure.

II. Analyze the tale according to the following outline:

1. General Introduction: setting, character.
2. Introductory Narrative: significant points in first visit.
  - a. Season and *weather*.
  - b. The bug had been lent, and must be described by a *drawing*.
  - c. As there was no paper in the desk, Legrand used a *scrap from his pocket*.
  - d. The dog, entering at the door opposite the fire, leaped on the guest, *who would naturally hold the paper away from the animal and toward the blaze*.

## e. Hints of a coming mystery.

- (1) Earnestness of Legrand's reply to Jupiter as to the bug's being "solid gold."
- (2) Appearance of the skull when Legrand had drawn the beetle.
- (3) Conduct of Legrand when he saw the skull.

## 3. The Discovery of the Treasure.

The sense of mystery is at once deepened and connected with *gold* and *gold-bug*; the influence of the bug on Legrand seems strange.

## a. Introductory.

- (1) Invitation to the second visit — mysterious hints in Legrand's letter.
- (2) Jupiter's account of his master's strange condition.
- (3) Jupiter's superstitious fear of the bug — the origin of the "bit of paper."
- (4) Buying of spades and scythes.
- (5) Expedition decided on — Legrand appears unbalanced.

- b. The search for the treasure. Follow carefully the journey to the tree. Was the place described naturally a good hiding-place? Note the difficulty of approach, and the striking appearance of the tulip-tree. Follow the action step by step to the finding of the treasure. Mark the point at which the object of the search is first openly stated; where did you first suspect it? The delays caused by Jupiter's mistakes produce suspense — for the reader as well as for Legrand. His last mistake is properly the most serious, and almost turns Legrand from the search. Note the evidence of the

increasing excitement of Legrand; how did he behave when, because of Jupiter's mistake about the eyes, he for a moment abandoned hope? Mark the point at which the friend (*i. e.*, the reader) begins to have faith; where did your faith begin? List all the signs, from this point on, that there is really a buried treasure. With faith and signs of success the interest increases rapidly to the climax. The minute description of box and contents gives verisimilitude to the story, as scientific accounts make some others among Poe's tales "convincing," in a literary sense. Does Legrand behave naturally when he finds himself successful? The conclusion of this part of the plot is the removal of the treasure to the home of Legrand and the determination of its value.

The paragraph "When at length," etc. is transitional to part 4 below.

4. The solution of the cryptograph.

- a. Introductory: Legrand recounts the circumstances of the friend's first visit; compare with II 1. He adds that the "paper" was parchment, and tells of his mystification about the skull. Is it necessary to the story that the beetle should be found *alive*?
- b. The parchment suggests pirate-treasure. Find four reasons Poe gives for this.
- c. Follow the course of reasoning that led Legrand to develop the writing on the parchment.
- d. After the cryptograph was made legible, by what principle set forth by Dupin (in *The Purloined Letter*) did Legrand decide whether it would be hard or easy to solve? How did he know it was in

English when so many of the old pirates were Spaniards?

- e. Explain clearly how he translated the symbols into letters.
- f. Explain clearly how he divided the clauses and sentences.
- g. Explain clearly how he overcame the difficulties he encountered in trying to apply the directions to the landscape.
- h. Does Legrand explain in the last eight paragraphs any points about the hiding and the discovery of the treasure left obscure by II 3? How does he account for his apparent insanity?

### III. General questions:

1. Which part of the tale is of greater interest, II 3 or II 4? Does II 4 lose in interest because it comes after you know the treasure is found? Should you prefer II 4 before II 3? Compare the management of the plan and the escape in *A Descent into the Maelstrom*.

2. How essential is the gold-bug in II 3? In II 4? What is its office in the tale? Justify the title of the tale. Why does not Poe tell us what became of the bug? Is the story complete without that information?

3. Is the story probable? Does it *seem* probable? Does the introduction of scientific fact (the chemical treatment of the parchment) give it verisimilitude? Compare with the use of scientific material in *A Descent into the Maelstrom*.

4. Is this location a better one than the coast further north for the setting of a pirate story? Give the reason for your answer. Where was "the Spanish main," once infested by pirates? Mention the essential points in the setting.

5. Dialogue is not found very much in Poe's tales. Has he used it successfully here?

6. How does he attempt humor in this story? Is he successful in this regard?

7. Has Poe chosen an appropriate bit of poetry for the opening of this tale? The drama *All in the Wrong* was written by an Irishman, Arthur

Murphy (1727-1805). A scholar who has looked in the play for the quotation tells us he does not find it there.

8. What did Poe know about the coast of South Carolina? Are his descriptions accurate?

9. For a somewhat similar method of solution actually applied to deciphering an inscription in an unknown language, see Dr. Hempl's "The Solving of an Ancient Riddle," in *Harper's Magazine* for January, 1911.



## CHAPTER XIV

### HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

#### REFERENCE BIOGRAPHIES

- Life, Letters, and Journal*, 3 Vol., by Samuel Longfellow; Boston, 1886.  
*Final Memorials*, by Samuel Longfellow; Boston, 1887.  
*Life*, by F. H. Underwood; Boston, 1882.  
*Life, Works, and Friendships*, by G. L. Austin; Boston, 1883.  
*Life*, by T. W. Higginson; Boston, 1902.  
*Life*, by W. S. Kennedy; Boston, 1882.  
*Life*, by Eric S. Robertson; London, 1887.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY READING

A Psalm of Life, The Reaper and the Flowers, The Light of Stars, The Wreck of the Hesperus, The Village Blacksmith, The Rainy Day, Endymion, God's Acre, Maidenhood, Excelsior, Nuremberg, The Belfry of Bruges, Rain in Summer, The Bridge, The Day is Done, The Arrow and the Song, The Builders, The Ladder of St. Augustine, The Ropewalk, St. Filomena, Sandalphon, The Revenge of Rain-in-the-Face, The Three Kings, The Sifting of Peter, Maiden and Weathercock, The Windmill, The Phantom Ship, The Warden of the Cinque Ports.

See also Appendix I, titles 33 to 39 inclusive.

#### THE OLD CLOCK ON THE STAIRS

I. In his Journal entry for November 12, 1845, the poet says:—

Began a poem on a clock, with the words 'Forever, Never,' as a burden; suggested by the words of Bridaine, the old French missionary, who said of eternity, "It is a clock whose pendulum says and repeats without ceasing these two words only, in the silence of tombs—"Tou-

jours, jamais! Jamais, toujours!' And during these solemn revolutions a condemned sinner cries, 'What time is it?' and the voice of another wretch responds, 'It is eternity!'"

The country seat and the clock belonged to relatives of the second Mrs. Longfellow, who lived at Pittsfield, Massachusetts. The clock is still in the Appleton family, and is said to resemble very much the one that stands "half-way up the stairs" in the Longfellow home at Cambridge. The clock suggests to the poet the family life it must have seen in the years it has stood in this central and commanding position.

II. Read the poem by stanzas aloud thoughtfully, with this outline:

Stanza 1. The house and its location.

Stanza 2. The clock — its position and appearance.

Stanza 3. Its voice.

Stanzas 4-7. Its message.

Stanza 8. The family scattered.

Stanza 9. The eternal reunion.

State briefly and clearly Longfellow's purpose in writing this poem.

III. What is the effect of the refrain? You notice in it the predominating sound of the front vowel *e* and the liquid *r*. Review Poe's discussion of his choice of resonant *o* and liquid *r* for the refrain of *The Raven*. Notice that the rhythm of the refrain in *The Old Clock* imitates the swinging of the pendulum, and the accents suggest the ticking. Is Longfellow's refrain as good for his poem as Poe's was for his? Notice how Longfellow has secured variety in the "application" of his refrain; and notice that in the line introducing the refrain in each stanza there is a word particularly suitable to the thought, diction, or figure of that stanza.

IV. Discuss in detail the diction, figures, allusions, sentence-

structure, melody, and harmony of the poem. Pay particular attention to the following notes and questions:

Line 10. Connect with the simile in line 12.

Lines 17ff. Why is the clock so noisy by night?

Line 34. What figure in *Hospitality*? Notice that the pronoun *his* is used in referring to this noun.

Line 37. The skeleton was, in early, ascetic days, placed at the feast to remind the revellers of their mortality. The old exhortation was, "Prepare for *death*." Our modern thought is, "*Live*; get all you can, in the best sense, out of life." When we are happy, we do not wish to hear a warning voice say, "Memento mori;" neither do we think that it would be wholesome to spoil our pleasures with such an admonition.

Line 45. Explain the figure.

Line 46. *Told* has the old meaning "counted."

Line 52. What figure of speech in *snow*?

Lines 65, 68. What emphasis do you make in these lines to bring out the full meaning?

Line 69. Refer to the words of the French missionary in explaining this metaphor.

V. Read the poem again, aloud. Try to express all Longfellow's feeling about the never-ending succession of minutes that make up time and eternity. The unceasing, insistent regularity of the ticking of the clock forces the thought of eternity upon you.

VI. Turn to Longfellow's little poem called *The Tide Rises, the Tide Falls*. After a first reading tell the simple story it relates. Read a second time, giving particular attention to the refrain. How are the two phrases of the refrain imitative? Why is the absolute monotony of this line, recurring so frequently, an artistic feature in this poem? Read

the poem to bring out the sound effect intended by the writer.

### MY LOST YOUTH

I. In his Journal for March 29, 1855, the poet says:

A day of pain; cowering over the fire. At night as I lie in bed, a poem comes into my mind — a memory of Portland, my native town, the city by the sea.

‘Sitteth the city wherein I was born  
Upon the seashore.’

—DANTE, *Inferno* V, 97.

Under March 30 we read:

Wrote the poem; and am rather pleased with it, and with the bringing in of the two lines of the old Lapland song,

A boy's will is the wind's will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.

See *Life, Letters, and Journal*, II, 284.

II. Study first in this poem the stanza structure. There are ten stanzas of nine lines each, and the movement is iambic-anapestic. How many feet in the various lines? What is the rime-scheme? Notice in each stanza the rime of line 6 with *long* in line 9. The movement brings out the tone of quiet, meditative reminiscence. Observe the number of long, retarding vowels.

The last two lines of each stanza repeat the refrain; the two lines immediately before them introduce it. The special thought, then, of each stanza is in its first five lines.

The first stanza introduces the theme and states the source of the refrain; stanzas two to eight speak of the poet's memories of his boyhood in Portland; the ninth and tenth

stanzas conclude the poem by telling how the man feels when he revisits the old home.

III. Each stanza should now be studied as a unit. What is the subject of each? Which speak of events and surroundings of his boyhood? Which of feelings? How does the poet enrich and strengthen his expression, and make his description vivid by his choice of words and use of figures? Does the sound add to the emotional effect in any of the stanzas?

The following notes explain the only allusions that could possibly be obscure:—

The fortifications of Portland were made during the second war with England, Portland then being a much more prominent harbor than now.

Of the naval battle near Portland, Austin (*Longfellow*, p. 42) says:

On September 4, 1813, *The Boxer*, British brig of war, Captain S. Blythe, was captured off the Maine coast by the American brig *Enterprise*, Lieutenant W. Burrows, and on the morning of the seventh was brought into Portland harbor. On the next day both commanders, who had been killed in the encounter, were buried with imposing and impressive ceremonies in the cemetery at the foot of Munjoy's Hill.

Deering's Woods was a grove near Portland, a favorite resort among the young people.

*Hesperides* is explained by books on mythology.

IV. Turn now to the refrain, taken from the "Lapland song." With the first line compare,—"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth."—*John* 3:8. What adjectives used in the poem to describe the song describe also the willfulness of a boy's impulses? Explain the second line from your own thoughts and dreams of the future. Which stanzas in the poem are subjective?

What specific words do you find in these defining the "long, long thoughts" of boyhood?

Is the retard at the end of each stanza in harmony with the thought?

Regarding the use of a refrain, Poe says:—

As commonly used, the *refrain*, or burden, not only is limited to lyric verse, but depends for its impression upon the force of monotone — both in sound and thought. The pleasure is deduced solely from the sense of identity — of repetition. I resolved to diversify, and so heighten, the effect, by adhering, in general, to the monotone of sound, while I continually varied that of thought; that is to say, I determined to produce continuously novel effects by the variation of the *application* of the *refrain* — the refrain itself remaining, for the most part, unvaried.

— *The Philosophy of Composition.*

Poe later explains that the variation of "application" consists in leading up in different ways to the refrain.

Show how Longfellow, in the two lines that lead up to the refrain in each stanza, has attained not only variety, but also harmony with the thought and diction of the stanza.

V. Read the poem from beginning to end aloud. Bring out the note of pathos which must belong to any man's memory of his "lost youth." Remember what Poe says of the value of the "monotone of sound" in the refrain, and of the "variation of the application" in the lines that lead up to it.

### THREE FRIENDS OF MINE

I. These five sonnets form the five stanzas of one poem. The first sonnet is introductory, the last is a conclusion, and the three intermediate ones are addressed to the three friends. The line is iambic pentameter, and the rime-scheme is *abba abba* for the octave, and *cde cde* for the sestet.

The octave of the first, or introductory, sonnet expresses the poet's feeling for the character of his friends; the sestet expresses his sense of loss in their death and his thought of them in the new world to which they have gone.

II. The second sonnet commemorates Charles C. Felton, for many years Professor of Greek at Harvard, and at the time of his death president of the College. For an account of the friendship of Longfellow with Felton and with the two men celebrated in the two stanzas following, the student should consult Longfellow's *Life, Letters, and Journal*. (See their names in the index.) In this sonnet written for Felton the allusions are properly all to Greek literature and history, for he was a celebrated Philhellene ("lover of Greek") in his day. The last three lines of the sestet express the poet's grief for the loss of this friend.

The third sonnet is in honor of Louis Agassiz, a Swiss by birth, Professor of Natural History at Harvard. Longfellow has addressed other poems to Agassiz. (See the index to Longfellow's Poems.) Agassiz was not only a great scientist but a man of high and noble character and poetic soul. Whittier, Lowell, Holmes, and other New England poets have written in his honor. Show how this sonnet appropriately commemorates the greatest scientist of his time. The "cottage door" is that of the summer home by the sea, where Agassiz studied the forms of sea-life.

The fourth sonnet is in honor of Charles Sumner, the famous senator from Massachusetts, to whom, as well as to Charles C. Felton, Longfellow refers in his poem *To the River Charles*. Charles River at Cambridge flows beside Mount Auburn Cemetery ("The City of the Dead"), where are buried Sumner, Agassiz, Longfellow, Lowell, Holmes, and other illustrious men of Boston and Cambridge. Notice

particularly the beauty and suitableness of the figures of speech in this fourth sonnet.

III. The concluding sonnet takes us to the poet's library, and shows us the summer scene he beholds from his window — the lilac hedge that separates his lawn from the street, the winding River Charles at flood tide, the misty Brighton meadows — a view he has often enjoyed with his three friends. The sonnet closes with an expression of the unsatisfied longing felt by one who lingers when his dearest have passed on.

IV. Read the poem aloud. Try to bring out its music and its haunting note of loneliness and longing.

#### THE ARSENAL AT SPRINGFIELD

I. This poem was suggested by a visit Mr. Longfellow, his wife, and Mr. Sumner made to the United States Arsenal at Springfield, Massachusetts. Mr. Sumner remarked that the money paid for the weapons would have been better spent in building and furnishing a library (see stanza 9), and Mrs. Longfellow asked her husband to write a *peace poem*. In response to his wife's request, the poet might write in praise of the arts of peace, or he might show the horrors of war. Which method does he choose? Compare the effect of this poem with that of some poem setting forth the pomp and glories of war — with Tennyson's *Charge of the Light Brigade*. The latter shows us that certain virtues — as courage and prompt, unquestioning obedience — are developed in battle; on reading it we feel as if we should like to be soldiers and do something brave. Do you feel that when you read Longfellow's poem? Has he written a *peace poem*? See *Life, Letters, and Journal* by S. Longfellow, II, 2, 3, 18, 19. The thought of the poem is, however, optimistic: though war



has prevailed in the past (lines 11, 12), peace will some day reign among the nations of earth (lines 41, 42).

II. As the Longfellow party stood before the stacked muskets, Mrs. Longfellow remarked that they looked like the pipes of a great organ, and that Death would bring mournful music from them. The poet adopted his wife's comparison for the base of his poem, and constructed it on simile and metaphor taken from her remark. Read the poem once more, noting every word that belongs to this figure.

In harmony with this predominating figure of speech, the poem speaks chiefly of the *sounds* of war instead of the *sights* of battle. It mentions the war instruments of several nations celebrated for their warlike character. Make a list of instruments; also a list of nations, and tell why these particular ones are mentioned here. What sounds are named as coming from the victims of war? What from the soldiers? What sounding weapons are named? What sounds made by weapons? List the adjectives describing the sounds of war, and observe their character. Mark the onomatopoetic words in all the lists you have made when working out the questions in this paragraph.

In contrast to the terrible sounds of war are the sweet and tender ones of peace. Make a list of peace sounds mentioned in the poem. Observe the character of the adjectives that describe them, and mark all onomatopoetic words. In stanzas 8 and 12 you will find the contrast between sounds of peace and those of war particularly striking.

Discuss the use in this poem of other devices for producing sound-effects; as assonance and alliteration, choice of words containing explosives or spirants, etc. Why is the poem so strong in sound devices? The prevailing foot is iambic, and there are five feet in a line. There is much variety in placing

the accent, but the iambic rhythm prevails. An extra unaccented syllable at the end of lines one and three of each stanza gives them a falling cadence and makes a feminine rime.

III. Study the poem for other figures beside the basal metaphor. The allusion to Cain should be explained by reference to *Genesis* 4:15, and *Ezekiel* 9: 4. A sign was set in the forehead of Cain, which branded him as the murderer of his brother. Explain *dark* (line 41) as "obscure, unknown;" and refer line 43 to stanza 3.

In stanza 8 Longfellow refers to one of the beautiful and poetic notions of ancient science. The old philosophers believed that the spheres which carried about the heavenly bodies made, in their turning, most exquisite melodies — "the celestial harmonies."

IV. Read the poem aloud. Strive to bring out the sound effects studied above — onomatopœa, alliteration, contrast between the harsh and the melodious, etc. They are important because they help greatly to accomplish the purpose of the poem — to make war hateful and peace lovely.

### THE SKELETON IN ARMOR

I. This poem was written in 1840. In 1838 the poet recorded in his journal his interest in Scandinavian Sagas, and his intention to write a series of ballads on the visit of the Vikings to the western world. (*Life, Letters, and Journal*, I, 297). Later he visited Newport, and, passing through Fall River, saw the skeleton which had been unearthed at that place. He decided then on a heroic poem in which the Round Tower at Newport and the Skeleton in Armor should have a part. (*Life, Letters, and Journal*, I, 335, 379.) The skeleton was supposed at first to be that of a Viking, but

scholars do not now believe that it is Norse. (See Justin Windsor's *Narrative and Critical History of the United States*, I, 105.) However, the historical truth or untruth of its story makes no difference in the literary quality of the ballad; and every person who has made a little study of the old Northern Sagas must see how wonderfully the poet has caught their spirit and imitated some qualities of their style. In a letter to his father, December 13, 1840, he says, "Of course I make the tradition myself; and I think I have succeeded in giving the whole a Norse atmosphere." (*Life, Letters, and Journal*, I, 379.) Look through the index to Longfellow's Poems, and see what other tales he has from the Norse.

II. Read the poem carefully, with the outline given below.

1. Introduction: lines 1-24.

- a. Apostrophe of the poet to the Skeleton.
- b. Introduction to the Skeleton's speech.
- c. The Skeleton's introduction to his tale.

2. The Tale of the Skeleton: lines 25-159.

- a. His youth: lines 25-40. What qualities are developed in him by his education?
- b. His young manhood.
  - (1). Life as a Viking: lines 41-64.
  - (2). Love and marriage: lines 65-132.
- c. His life and death in the New World: lines 135-160.

3. The last stanza is the Viking's conclusion to his tale; the last line is the poet's conclusion to his poem.

III. Study the Norse features of the poem.

1. In the general expression: Norse poems and tales sometimes seem to us a little abrupt. They often pass briefly over a dramatic situation that the more effusive poets of southern Europe would make much

of. The Old Norse poetry shows, also, great emotional self-restraint, often speaking briefly and simply of intense feelings. Illustrate these qualities from the ballad.

2. The pictures of Norse customs correspond well with accounts we have of them in the old stories. What do you learn from this poem about the education of young Norsemen; about drinking, feasting, Berserks, story-telling, class feeling, etc.? Make a list of words referring to Norse and mediæval customs, literature, beliefs, etc. Notice particularly in the last stanza their belief that they will drink in Valhal around the table of Odin. *Skoal* is a drinking salutation, like "Your health." *Heart's chamber* for "chest" or "bosom" reminds one of the old Germanic "kenning," or round-about poetic expression. The proper nouns, too, are Germanic. Notice geographical names.
3. Figures. — Give particular attention to the metaphors and similes. Does the Viking use those that a man of his experience as hunter and sailor would be likely to choose? Do not be surprised because he is so poetic; the old Norsemen were full of imagination. How does the Viking speak of the Princess in figure? Of himself? Why? Are the figures used in the first two stanzas in harmony with those in the body of the poem? Do you find other figures besides simile and metaphor? Explain the allusion in line 5. Explain *this* in line 24. To what question is line 24 an answer?

IV. Longfellow could not here use the regular ballad stanza (see Lowell's *The Singing Leaves*), because it would

suggest Early English and not Norse. Neither could he imitate the old Norse line, because that poetry was entirely different from our modern verse in structure. However, he has chosen a rhythm that suggests something of the movement of the old Teutonic. The stanza of this poem is the same as that of a part of an old ballad written in the days of Queen Elizabeth, Drayton's *Battle of Agincourt*. There are three lines of three feet ending in a rest, followed by one line of two feet. The movement is trochaic and dactylic. The rimes are *aaabcccb*; *b* is feminine. There is a pause at the end of most of the lines, and the sentences have the effect of being short (though they are not), because they are made up of short, line-bound phrases. Notice the amount of sentence inversion, and explain its effect here.

V. Read the poem aloud.

In an article by Edward Thorstenberg entitled *The Skeleton in Armor and the Frithjof Saga*, may be found many interesting parallels between Longfellow's poem and the modernization of an old saga by the Scandinavian poet Tegnér. See *Modern Language Notes*, Vol. XXV, No. 6 (June, 1910), pages 189-192. Longfellow knew and admired the work of Tegnér.

### THE BUILDING OF THE SHIP

I. As a boy, Longfellow lived in Portland, Maine, in those days the chief ship-building city in the country. Every boy is, and ought to be, interested in the industries of the town in which he lives. In his poem called *My Lost Youth*, Longfellow tells of his interest in the wharves and the ships, and we may be sure he had watched the construction of more than one vessel. In later life, Longfellow often visited the seashore, near which he always lived. What was the name of the

volume in which this poem first appeared? What other sea-poems did Longfellow write?

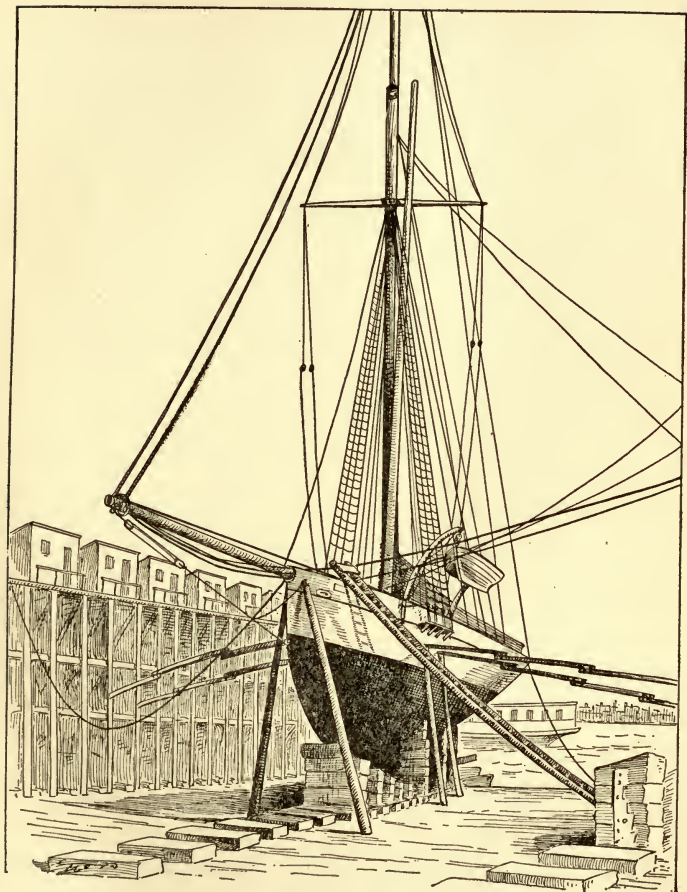
II. Read this poem. You will notice that two lines of action are woven together: (1) the building and launching of the ship, and (2) the courtship and marriage of the Master's daughter. These two lines are united in four ways. (a) The courtship is the *time* of building, and the wedding-day is the day of launching. (b) The ship is named "Union" in honor of the marriage. (c) The *persons* in the two lines are practically identical: those in 1 are the Master and his assistant; those in 2 are the Master's daughter and the assistant. (d) The two lines are interwoven by an *interchange of figures*, the ship and the sea being spoken of in terms of human life, and human life in terms of the ship and the sea.

The building of the ship follows the natural, business procedure. First, the order is given by the merchant (lines 1-4). Then the plans are drawn by the master of the ship-yard (lines 17-54). Then the lumber is brought into the yard (lines 55-69). Then the work of building is actually begun (line 70).

III. Study the style of the poem.

1. Diction. In a poem on ship-building, you will naturally find many technical terms. These need cause you no trouble if you look them up carefully in an unabridged dictionary; the pictures in the dictionary will help you to understand the explanations and definitions. Notice also the words in this poem chosen from the poetic vocabulary.

2. Figures. A large part of the beauty of this poem is in its figures, especially in its figures of comparison. Explain those in lines 10, 20-21, 72-77, 155, 166, 202, 206, 219, 232-245, 255; are they appropriate to this poem? The figure in lines 117-121 finds its reverse in lines 258-284, 350-365, and is



A Ship on the Blocks

continued in lines 368-376. This is the comparison mentioned above as binding together the two thoughts of the poem, the ship being spoken of in terms of the bride (and vice versa) and the sea in terms of the bride-groom (and vice versa). This figure is particularly beautiful and effective in this poem, and should be thoroughly studied. The word *pastor* (line 300) suggests the metaphor of the next four lines, for the original meaning of *pastor* is "shepherd." The metaphor of lines 308-315 is appropriate in discussing a sailor's life; explain it fully. The wedding sermon of the good pastor (lines 317-339) is addressed to a sea-faring company, and he speaks to them, very wisely, in terms of the sea. Explain clearly his metaphors. Discuss also the use of apostrophe and personification in this poem.

3. The poem contains a number of literary allusions. The metaphor "wooden wall" applied to the ship (line 69) refers to a famous utterance of the Delphic oracle when Xerxes was invading Greece. Explain the allusion. The "Great Harry" (line 29) was a ship built in England under Henry VIII; Longfellow tells you its faults in construction. *Argosy* (line 73) recalls the expedition of Jason in quest of the Golden Fleece. "The Spanish Main" (line 151) recalls those romantic days when West Indian seas were infested by the Spanish pirates. Lines 157-162 take us to the shores of the Indian Ocean. Lines 213, 214, contain names from classic mythology. "The Fortunate Isles" (line 337) existed in the belief of seamen of other days as an abode of the blessed after death.

4. Not a great deal of narrative power is required for this poem, the action being the slightest possible. The description of the ship is of the sort sometimes called "dynamic," *i. e.*, the poet describes the ship by giving an account of its



construction: the modeling (lines 17-50); the purchase of timber (lines 55-69); the building of the hull (lines 128-139, 176-207); the placing of the figure-head (lines 208-222); the procuring of timbers for masts (lines 228-245); the raising of the rigging (lines 246-257). A fine picture in words, the one which furnishes the best opportunity for an illustrator of the poem, is that of the evening hour of rest (lines 144-175). The setting is the dim porch of the Master's house. The Master sits in the back-ground in the attitude of a storyteller. The red glow from his pipe lights up his own features and the young people in the foreground — the hero and the heroine of the poem. The picture, with its deep shadows and its one dash of light in the center, might be painted by a disciple of the great master of light and shade, Rembrandt.

#### IV. The conclusion of the poem.

When Longfellow sent the poem to his publisher, it ended as follows: —

Line 360. How beautiful she is! How still  
 She lies within these arms that press  
 Her form with many a soft caress!  
 Modelled with such perfect skill,  
 Fashioned with such watchful care!  
 But, alas! oh, what and where  
 Shall be the end of thing so fair?  
 Wrecked upon some treacherous rock,  
 Or rotting in some noisome dock,  
 Such the end must be at length  
 Of all this loveliness and strength.

They who with transcendent power  
 Build the great cathedral tower,  
 Build the palaces and domes,  
 Temples of God and Princes' homes,  
 These leave a record and a name.  
 But he who builds the stately ships,

The palaces of sea and air,  
When he is buried in his grave  
Leaves no more trace or mark behind  
Than the sail does in the wind,  
Than the keel does in the wave.  
He whose dextrous hand could frame  
All this beauty, all this grace,  
In a grave without a name  
Lies forgotten of his race.

See *Life, Letters, and Journal*, Appendix V.

The publisher objected to this "sad" ending, and the poet wisely consented to change it. It is entirely out of harmony with the poem as a whole, which tells of glad activity and successful achievement. It would not do to conclude such a poem by a cynical arraignment of the world for neglecting its ship-architects, to say nothing of the false statement that it has preserved the names of all its great builders of churches and palaces. Moreover, the day of marriage and of launching the ship is a day for congratulation, not for foretelling evil. And the prophecy of disaster or decay for the ship foretells evil for the bride, so closely have the two been related throughout the poem. We are glad, therefore, that the poet changed lines 360-376 to an expression of good wishes for ship and bride. But two of these new lines (366, 367) are difficult to understand. They are in a paragraph referring to the ship, but they cannot possibly relate to the ship; neither are they coherently related to what is said of the bride in the next paragraph. Lines 375 and 376, also, seem to be rather irrelevant here. The final paragraph, fine as it is and much as we admire it, is national in its reference, has no thought-connection with the rest of the poem, and does not truly belong to it. It is joined by means of the word *Union* (see also line 104) and by a continuation of the figure, used so extensively through

the poem proper, applying to human life terms of the ship and the sea. Think of the dangers that beset our nation in 1849, when this poem was written, and explain the paragraph in detail. For remarks on the political significance of these lines, see Austin's *Longfellow*, page 315. The *Master* and the *Workmen* are doubtless the men who worked out our national constitution. What man do you suppose to be the "Master"? Name some of the "Workmen." Some one has suggested that "Master" (line 382) may mean the Spirit of Liberty, and that the founders of our government may be the "workmen" under that inspiration. These concluding lines were favorites of President Lincoln. See "Lincoln's Imagination," by Noah Brooks, in *Scribner's Monthly*, August, 1879.

V. Study the musical effects of the poem: end rime, internal rime, repetition, alliteration, assonance, onomatopoea. There is no regular line and stanza, but there is poetic rhythm of the most musical sort, and considerable regularity in the meter. The short lines quicken the action, and the longer ones make it slower. Are these devices used in the poem in harmony with the thought? Mr. George S. Hillard wrote to Longfellow: "I think that you deal most happily with that irregular and varying stanza, which sinks and swells under your hand, to my ear, like the gusts of a summer wind through a grove of trees." (*Life, Letters, and Journal*, II, 166.)

The poem is divided according to topics into paragraphs; it has no stanza-structure.

VI. Prepare to read the poem aloud. Try to express all Longfellow wishes us to think and feel in reading it, and bring out the music of the lines. Find in Longfellow's *Journal* for February 12, 1850, the account of Mrs. Kemble's reading of the poem. (See *Life, Letters, and Journal*, II, 172).

Longfellow's poem is the best of the imitations of Schiller's *Song of the Bell*, described in Thomas's *Life and Works of Schiller*. "The bell-founder is an idealist with a feeling for the dignity of man and of man's handiwork. As he orders his workmen to perform the successive operations involved in the casting of a bell, he delivers, from the depths of his larger experience, a little homily, suggested in each case by the present stage of the labor. The master's orders are given in a lively trochaic measure, while the homilies move at a slower gait in iambic lines of varying length. The fiction is handled with scrupulous attention to technical details, and is made to yield at the same time a series of easy and natural starting-points for a poetic review of life from the cradle to the grave. The great charm of the *Song* lies in its vivid pictures of the epochs, pursuits, and occurrences which constitute the joy and woe of life for an ordinary industrious burgher. Childhood and youth; the passion of the lover, sobering into the steadfast love of the husband; the busy toil of the married pair in field and household; the delight of accumulation and possession; the horrors of revolutionary fanaticism; the benediction of civic concord, — these are the themes that are brought before us in a series of stirring pictures that are irresistibly fascinating."

Dr. Thomas's statement about Schiller's meter is suggestive in connection with the study of Longfellow's meter. And it is to be observed that Schiller's poem leads up to the political condition of Europe in 1800, when the horrors of the French Revolution and the international complications rising out of it were uppermost in the thought of every European. Longfellow closes with a reference to the alarming political conditions in America in 1849.

For the influence of Horace on the last stanza of Longfellow's poem, see William Everett's "The Ship of State and the Stroke of Fate" (*Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. 76, pp. 18-23; July, 1895), where the critic shows Longfellow's indebtedness to the Fourteenth Ode of the First Book of Horace. Horace (B. C. 65-8) is probably expressing his fear that the dangers of civil strife are not yet past for Rome,

the rule of Augustus being at this time not acceptable to all the Roman parties. The following is Conington's translation of the Ode.

O luckless bark! new waves will force you back  
To sea. O haste to make the haven yours!  
E'en now, a helpless wrack,  
You drift, despoiled of oars;

The Afric gale has dealt your mast a wound;  
Your sailyards groan, nor can your keel sustain,  
Till lash'd with cables round,  
A more imperious main.

Your canvas hangs in ribbons, rent and torn;  
No gods are left to pray to in fresh need.  
A pine of Pontus born  
Of noble forest breed,

You boast your name and lineage — madly blind,  
Can painted timbers quell a seaman's fear?  
Beware! or else the wind  
Makes you its mock and jeer.

Your trouble late made sick this heart of mine,  
And still I love you, still am ill at ease.  
O, shun the sea, where shine  
The thick-sown Cyclades.

Quintilian says that Horace refers "in allegory" to the "ship of state," in which case Longfellow's metaphor is the same; and his diction is strikingly similar.

#### THE HANGING OF THE CRANE

I. The story of the origin of this poem explains in great measure its form and diction. Longfellow was calling on a younger poet, Thomas Bailey Aldrich, who had just married. As they stood in the dining-room door, Mr. Longfellow

remarked to his friend that the small round table would need to be enlarged year by year as children should come into the family; and that later, when the "young guests" should grow up and make homes of their own, the table would close again and the two original members of the family be left alone once more. Thus the "sweet and pathetic poem of the fireside" was suggested to Longfellow. (See the Riverside Edition of the poem).

The title of the poem refers to an old custom equivalent to our "house-warming." As the last preparation for the occupancy of the new home, neighbors and friends gathered in it and placed the crane in the fireplace. The work of the housekeeper could then begin, and the family life could be taken up regularly. (For a fireplace containing the crane, see the picture of the Whittier kitchen, page 190).

II. At first reading one can easily discover the general structure of the poem. Part I is introductory, and represents the poet as remaining after the guests have spoken their good wishes and departed, and as sitting before the fire to dream about the coming life of the family just established. The other six parts contain the six pictures of home life that drift through the mind of the dreamer, and carry the founders of the family in his imagination from youth to old age. The table is represented as the gathering place, partly from the suggestion of Longfellow's words to Aldrich, and partly because the entire family meets more often at the table than anywhere else. Each picture is preceded by a prelude of six lines. This breaking of the poem by preludes would not be good in a continuous narrative or description, but is an excellent device for keeping separate a series of six pictures scattered over a period of fifty years. Tell what stage in the development of the family each picture describes.

III. After you thoroughly understand the general plan of the poem, study it in detail. Do not pass over a word or an expression without understanding it fully and recognizing its force in the poem. The following notes may be suggestive and helpful.

Lines 7-12: Who speaks these lines? See line 13. Explain the simile in lines 10-12. The word *harmonious* refers to the old belief that the spheres, revolving in their places, made music of ineffable beauty. Why does this simile exalt the home?

Lines 17-22: The prelude to the first picture speaks of the character and transitoriness of the pictures that drift through the poet's mind. Explain the simile in lines 21-22.

Line 31: Explain the simile.

Lines 37-42: The prelude to the second picture indicates that the picture has changed. Explain the figure. The "door" is that of the dining-room.

Lines 43-72: The diction of this part is governed largely by the comparison of the adored and indulged baby to a monarch. Make a list of the words brought into the poem on account of this comparison. The baby is finally compared to King Canute, who was obeyed implicitly by his subjects, but whose word had no power over the tide of the sea. Find the story in your English History. Why is the nurse compared to the sea? And why are the adjectives in line 69 applied to her? Other words in this part which should be associated are *angel* (line 45) and *celestial* (line 52). *Entertain* and *guest* go back to Longfellow's words to Aldrich. What line refers to the old proverb, "Speech is silver, but silence is golden"? Is the playful tone good in the description of this picture?

Lines 73-78: The prelude to the third picture refers to the change of pictures in the poet's mind, and contains two beautiful similes taken from nature. Explain the figures.

Lines 79-99: The comparison of the children to royal persons is continued in this picture; what words are introduced because of this comparison? Observe the difference between the life and energy of the boy in III and the beauty of the little girl in IV. Explain the simile in lines 92-96. The last three lines of this part lead forward to the responsibilities and cares that must come into the lives of these children later on.

Lines 100-105: This prelude recalls the two figures used in prelude IV; explain exactly how. It then looks forward to the picture that follows (line 103). This is the first of the preludes to anticipate the picture; the others (except for a mere reference in prelude III) have simply indicated the fact of change. Explain the simile in lines 104-105.

Lines 106-129: For the reference to Ariadne (lines 107-109) see your book on Greek mythology. Lines 113-115: The hopes and fears which the maidens are too shy to express are compared in simile to birds afraid to leave their nests. Lines 116-125: The young men of the family are compared to knights of old, who went out seeking adventure. Or they may be in pursuit of some ambition, which they will not give up though they find it hard to attain. The "lyric muse" that frequents the solitudes represents the emotions — feelings one may express if he can, but which he must bear alone. Their high expectations are referred to in line 126; hope and desire alternating with fear and discouragement in line 127; the fact that work and hope make life worth living is suggested in lines 128, 129.

Lines 130-135: This prelude indicates the passage of a







considerable interval of time between part V and this part. Explain the figure used.

Lines 136-162: "The magician's scroll" was a parchment that granted wishes for its possessor, but shrank with every wish. See Balzac, *Le Peau de Chagrin* (translated into English under the title *The Magic Skin*). Refer line 142 to line 108. What have the two sons of the family become?

Lines 163-168: This prelude contains a beautiful description of nature. Explain the simile in line 167, and the word *ring*; explain the personifications in line 166.

Lines 169-198: Lines 169-171 utilize in metaphor the description in the prelude, speaking of life in terms of nature. This closing part is remarkable for the way in which it gathers up the earlier parts, and rounds the poem into rhetorical completeness. Compare line 173 with line 1; line 175 with line 2; lines 182, 183 with line 108; line 185 with line 49; line 186 with line 27; line 187 with line 7; line 188 with line 13. The simile in lines 194, 195 refers to the number of the descendants, children and grandchildren.\* The figure in lines 196-198 refers to the apparent endlessness of the home the parents have founded, one generation following another in their imagination, through ages to come.

IV. Study the meter and rime-plan of the poem. The preludes are all regular; state their length, their line-structure, and their stanza-structure. The lines describing the pictures are shorter and therefore more animated. Name the meter. What can you say of the rime? Study the poem for alliteration, assonance, and other devices for securing melody and harmony.

V. Discuss the feeling the author shows in each picture, and the tone he gives the description of each.

VI. The poem as a whole is quiet and meditative — it is a

series of six dream pictures. The poet writes tenderly, as one who has lived through these scenes and loves the memory of them. This poem would earn for Longfellow the title of "Poet of the Home and the Fireside," if he had no other claim upon it. The poem is true to life, inspires the imagination, and pleases the artistic sense by its beauty of expression. Read it once more, this time aloud, that you may enjoy the harmonious whole and the charm of its music.

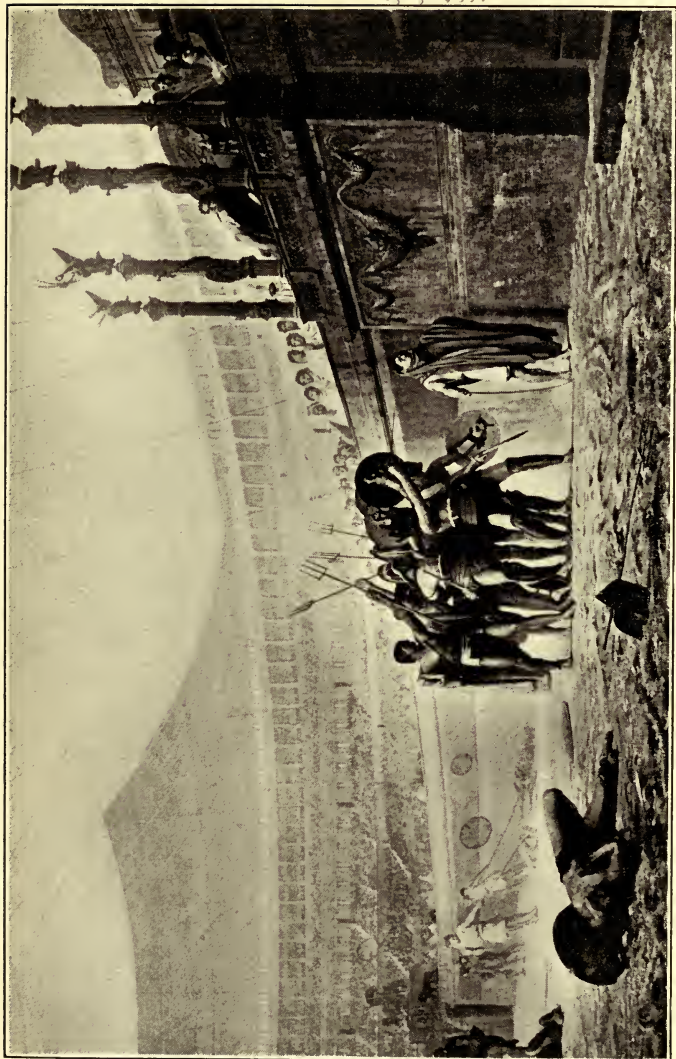
### MORITURI SALUTAMUS

I. As the fiftieth anniversary of the graduation of the class of 1825 of Bowdoin College approached, Longfellow was invited to honor the occasion with a poem. He disliked to write "occasional" poems, and hesitated to accept the invitation. But, on seeing a copy of Gerome's picture, he received an inspiration, and in ten days he had composed what has been called "the grandest hymn to old age ever written." Gerome's picture represents gladiators in the Roman arena saluting the emperor before the combat. "Hail, Cæsar, Emperor! Those about to die salute thee," are their words. Longfellow's title means, "We, about to die, salute" — a very appropriate title for an old man's "hymn to old age." The Latin couplet from Ovid is also appropriate:

Seasons slip away, and we grow old with the silent years;  
And days course by, no bridle restraining.

II. Read the poem with the following outline: —

1. Introduction — explanation of the title, and references to the picture: lines 1-4.



AVE, CESAR, IMPERATOR

Gerome

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2. Poem proper: lines 5ff.
  - a. Salutation to the College and its surroundings: lines 5ff.
  - b. Salutation to the memory of the teachers, only one of whom is living: lines 23ff.
  - c. Salutation and advice to the present students: lines 60ff.
  - d. Address to classmates of 1825: lines 114ff.
    - (1) Words in memory of classmates dead: lines 114ff.
    - (2) Difficulty of speech in face of memory and emotion: lines 128ff.
    - (3) Fifty years of life described under the metaphor of a set of books: lines 148ff.
    - (4) A moral tale, from the *Gesta Romanorum*, story CVII: lines 170ff.
      - (a) Introduction: lines 170ff.
      - (b) The clerk and the treasure: lines 178ff.
      - (c) The moral of the allegory: lines 218ff.
    - (5) Application of the moral: lines 236ff.
      - (a) Much has been done by old men: lines 238ff.
      - (b) Age deprives men of power: lines 254ff.
      - (c) But there are opportunities in age which every man should improve: lines 272ff.

The moral thought of the poem grows out of the story of the clerk. The clerk represents the scholar who, for worldly gain or ambition, forsakes his study, his simple life, his high ideals. Longfellow exhorts his classmates to keep up the life of the mind, scholastic interests and occupations till "the evening twilight" has faded quite away. This thought and exhortation remind us of Tennyson's lines (*Ulysses*, lines 50-59):

Old age hath yet his honor and his toil;  
 Death closes all: but something ere the end,  
 Some work of noble note, may yet be done,  
 Not unbecoming men that strove with gods.  
 Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'  
 We are not now that strength which in old days  
 Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are;  
 One equal temper of heroic hearts,  
 Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will  
 To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

How old was Longfellow when he wrote this poem? What literary work did he do later? Do you think he followed his own exhortation?

III. Study the poem in detail. Explain everything in the least difficult in diction and figures. The following notes may help you in some of the harder passages and some of the more obscure allusions.

Lines 14, 15: *Imperial* and *sovereign* are suggested by the Cæsar of Gerome's picture.

Line 30: The one teacher left was Professor A. S. Packard.

Line 34: Dante; see *Inferno* XV, lines 82-87. His teacher was Brunetto Latini.

Lines 52-59: *St. Luke* 19:12ff.

Line 70: Aladdin's lamp, when rubbed, would call up a spirit, which would grant the wish of the possessor of the lamp. See *The Arabian Nights*. Fortunatus was a mediæval worthy, who possessed an enchanted purse that would never become empty.

Line 75: *St. Matthew* 17:20.

Line 78: Priam, King of Troy. See *Iliad* III, 145-155. Lines 88, 89: Greek heroes of the Trojan war, eagerly watched by the old Trojans because of their famous deeds. So the



aged graduates of the college watch the present students. The simile "like grasshoppers" is Homer's.

Line 90: *I Kings* 20:11. What warning and advice has Longfellow for the young men?

Line 97: See Greek mythology for the story of Marsyas.

Line 101: "Be bold," etc. See Spenser's *Faery Queen*, Book III, Canto XI, Stanza 54.

Line 104: Hector, bravest of the Trojans, was slain in battle. The dandy Paris fled from his foe. Which do we honor more?

Line 109: The names of deceased graduates are marked with asterisks in college catalogues.

Line 165: Longfellow exhorts his classmates to turn from the past to the future. His exhortation forecasts the moral of the story that follows.

Line 184: A *clerk* in the Middle Ages was a student.

Line 219: *Ghostly* means "spiritual."

Line 220: The *Gesta Romanorum* was a set of short stories and anecdotes with morals. It was often used by the mediæval clergy as a store-house of illustrative material. This tale would have been appropriate as an illustration in a sermon on avarice.

Line 235: *Vanity* means a desire to attract attention, to win admiration.

Lines 240ff.: Cato was a Roman statesman and philosopher (second and third century B. C.). Sophocles was a Greek tragedian of the fifth century B. C. Simonides was a Greek poet of the seventh century B. C. Theophrastus was a disciple of Aristotle; his thirty short, lively character-sketches were models for the English sketches of the seventeenth century by Hall, Overbury, etc. Chaucer, the great English poet, died in 1400; his most famous work was *The Canterbury*

*Tales.* Goethe, the German poet, lived from 1749 to 1832; his greatest work was *Faust*.

Lines 278-280: See lines 241, 242, 246-7; Sophocles, Simonides, and Chaucer.

Lines 282-285: Compare Browning's statement in *Rabbi Ben Ezra*, about the wisdom and experience of old age.

IV. The poem is written in iambic pentameter, riming in couplets. Study it for elements producing melody and harmony.

V. The anniversary service for which the poem was written was held in a church in Brunswick, Maine, where Bowdoin College is located. Of the class of 1825, which had numbered thirty-seven, thirteen were alive in 1875, and twelve were present in the church. The poet's voice was low and tremulous with feeling, but was distinctly heard in all parts of the room. The sight of the venerable poet surrounded by his equally aged classmates was most affecting. Imagine the scene. Put yourself in Longfellow's place — the place of an old man revisiting the scenes of his youth. Think of the changes, of the losses that must have saddened him. Realize the poise of character of the man who could, under such overwhelming memories, determine to be strong to the end. Then read the poem as you think Longfellow read it at the fiftieth anniversary of his class. For a description of the reading at Bowdoin College, see Underwood's *Longfellow*, page 223.

#### KERAMOS

I. The title of this poem is from the Greek, and means "potter." The word *ceramics*, which we often see, is connected with it, and means "the art of pottery." About 1876 there was in America a great interest in the making

and decoration of pottery. An excellent display of native pottery had been exhibited at the Centennial Exposition at Philadelphia (1876), and many books had been written about ceramics. One of these books, says the poet's brother, interested Longfellow in the history of ceramics, and inspired this poem. (See *Life, Letters, and Journal*, II, 460). "His memory recalled the old pottery, still standing in Portland, near Deering's Woods, where it had been a delight of his boyhood to stop and watch the bowl or pitcher of clay rise up under the workman's hand, as he stood at his wheel under the shadow of a thorn-tree. There, within doors, amid the shelves of pots and pans, he may have read the inscription upon a glazed tile:—

'No handicraftman's art can with our art compare,  
We potters make our pots of what we potters are.'"

*Keramos* was printed in *Harper's Magazine* for December, 1877. If possible, the class should consult this first edition for the beauty of the illustrations.

II. Read the poem through carefully with the following outline:—

1. Introduction — a picture of the potter at his work:  
lines 1–50.
2. Poem proper: while the potter whistles his interlude, the poet visits in imagination various lands in which famous pottery is made or has been made:
  - a. Holland: lines 51–86.
  - b. France: lines 94–127.
  - c. Majorica: lines 134–145.
  - d. Italy: lines 146–244.
  - e. Egypt: lines 252–293.
  - f. China: lines 301–348.

g. Japan: lines 356–381.

h. The poet discusses the relation of Art to Nature:  
lines 382–399.

3. Conclusion — the potter stops his work at the noon hour of rest (lines 400–411).

The sight of the potter at work at his wheel starts the poet to thinking of what he knows of the history of ceramics.



A Potter at His Wheel

His meditation, or “vision,” to which the potter’s whistle makes the accompaniment, is occasionally interrupted by the potter’s song. A stanza of the song marks the change from one country to another.

III. The constant turning of the potter’s wheel, the continual change in the shape of the clay in the potter’s hands, remind the watching poet of the mutability of all things, material and spiritual. The stanzas of the potter’s song supply the

moral thought of the poem, and all discuss *change* and *progress*. Put them together into one song, and see how this thought holds them, as a thread holds a string of beads together. Even the two stanzas (4 and 6) in which another thought is prominent, begin with the inevitable

Turn, turn, my wheel.

As you go over the poem in detail, you will notice, also, that certain thoughts in the potter's stanzas are suggested by the context. The moral and spiritual thoughts are properly expressed in metaphors drawn from the potter, his clay, and the processes of his art.

IV. Study the poem carefully with the following notes and questions:—

Lines 6, 7: The hand commands the moulding of the clay, though it, too, is made of clay. (*Job* 33: 6).

Lines 9ff.: Refer to Longfellow's brother's remark on the pottery at Deering's Woods, and discuss the fine picture in these lines.

Line 19: A conjurer often read his incantation from a book, and masked his face with a false beard.

Lines 43, 44: Explain the simile.

Line 47: See lines 18–21. For *motley* see lines 11–17, and the "magician" fancy in lines 18, 19.

Lines 51ff.: A description of Holland. Explain. What town is most important for manufacture of pottery? Line 70: The Dutch decorate their houses with blue china. What shapes and patterns are named here? About the fire-places are tiles with pictures on them; sometimes a long story is told by a set of "painted tiles." Line 84: Flowers painted on tiles.

Lines 88, 89: How finely the *bud* and *leaf* unite this stanza to the "vision" (lines 84–86)!

Line 97: The Charente is a river of southern France. On it is the town of Saintes, the home of the great potter Palissy. Palissy (16th cen.) experimented to invent improvements in the glazing of pottery. He was just as poor as Longfellow represents him. (See *Palissy the Potter* by Morley.) Com-

pare him with other inventors of whose poverty and perseverance you have read.

Line 130: *Isaiah* 29:16. "Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay: for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding?" See also *Isaiah* 45:9 and *Romans* 9:20; and *Isaiah* 64:8.

Line 139: Majorica is the largest of the Balearic Islands, east of Spain. Its "softened" Italian name is Majolica, and by this name the fine pottery produced there is called.

Line 147: The enchanter's carpet in *The Arabian Nights* would transport the man who sat on it wherever he wished to go. See the tale of Prince Houssain.

Line 148: The Mediterranean between Spain and Italy.

Lines 152-157: The Italians, as well as the Dutch, decorated their walls with tiles and pottery-ware. Gubbio is a town near Perugia. Faenza is near Ravenna, and gave its name to Faience-ware. Pesaro is on the Adriatic. All these towns were celebrated for pottery. Urbino was the native town of the great painter Raphael. "*Angelic name*," because it belonged first to the Archangel Raphael. See *Sacred and Legendary Art*, I, by Mrs. Jameson. Line 170: Francesco Xanto Arelli do Rovigo (16th cen.), disciple of Raphael; worked at Urbino.

Line 174: Maestro Georgio Andreoli (Gubbio, 16th cen.) "used foliated scrolls as patterns, and terminated them in dolphins, eagles, masks," etc. He was celebrated for golden and ruby lustres, and for iridescent ware (see "*madre-perl*," or mother-of-pearl, line 175). A celebrated piece shows the portrait of "*Cana the Beautiful*," of whom nothing is known except her name on the "*scroll*," or name-place.

Line 197: Florence. The della Robbia family (fifteenth and sixteenth centuries) were great artists in pottery. Luca's most famous work is his *Singing Boys*, (lines 200-204). Andrea's *Bambinos*, or "babies," on the Foundling Hospital at Florence, are also famous (lines 205-211).

Lines 212-225 refer to Luca's monument for Bishop Benozzo Federighi, in the church of San Francesco da Paula, between Florence and Bellosguardo. Is the church easy to find? The life-size figure of the bishop is made of pottery. Lines 222-223 compare the heat of the potter's furnace to "purgatorial fires." From Longfellow's description try to get an accurate mental picture of the tomb.

Line 288: *Ausonian* means "Italian." Line 229: Those dug up; remains of old Etruscan cities. Line 233: The pictures on these may represent private sorrows, or (lines 234-244) classic tales. For allusions here, see mythology. "Alcides" is Hercules; tell the story of his adventure with the "Cretan Bull." "Aphrodite" is Venus, and her "boy" is Eros (Cupid). Tell the story of Helen of Troy. Line 240: Southern Italy was colonized by the Greeks.

Lines 253-260: Explain the geographical allusions in these lines, and the metaphor in lines 258-260.

Lines 258-260: Is this metaphor good in describing the Nile? Lines 264-268: Many of the early Christian hermits came from the neighborhood of Thebes, and lived in the Egyptian deserts. Lines 269-273: Description of Cairo. Lines 275-281: See the story of "The Forty Thieves" in *The Arabian Nights*. Lines 282-293: Patterns on Egyptian ware, celebrated for its beautiful green enamel. Ammon, Emeth, Osiris, and Isis were gods and goddesses; see mythology. The lotus is the flower symbol of Egypt; the ibis, or crane, was a sacred bird; the Scarabee was the sacred beetle.

Cleopatra was an Egyptian queen celebrated for her beauty; Shakespeare has told of her great political influence and last days in his *Antony and Cleopatra*. Line 293: Specimens of ancient Egyptian ware are taken chiefly from the royal tombs in the Pyramids.

Line 296: The poet has, in his imagination, visited these races in Europe and in Egypt.

Line 302. River and mountains of India. Follow the poet on the map and see what "desert sands," "gulf and bay" he passes over. Line 303: "Sing" in poetry.

Line 304: "Cathay" is China. Line 306: The chief Chinese town in the history of pottery. What does the simile in lines 313, 314 tell you of the colors of Chinese pottery? Compare with lines 320-324. What do lines 315-319 tell you of the production of pottery in China? Line 326: The "willow pattern" was a favorite in early New England. It was originally Chinese; there may be one, two, or three men on the bridge, but the form with one man is most common. The series of pictures illustrates a pretty Chinese romance. Line 334: Chinese tiles show dragons and other fabulous beasts interesting to children. The dragon is important in Chinese mythology, and therefore in Chinese art. Lines 338ff.: This celebrated pagoda was an octagon two hundred sixty feet high, in nine stories. It was of fine white porcelain bricks, and the stories were marked by green tiles. The summit was crowned by a great gilt ball. Five pearls on the roof served as good-luck charms, to keep off floods, fires, dust-storms, tempests, and civil wars. From the eaves of the various stories hung one hundred and fifty-two bells and countless colored lanterns. This magnificent pagoda was destroyed in civil war in 1853.

Line 359: The poet in his magic cloak (line 147) flies above



the country, and sees figures common in Japanese art. Lines 363-367: Explain the metaphor. Line 370: The sacred mountain of Japan, Fujiyama, often appears in art. Lines 378-379: See line 359. Lines 368-379 enumerate the commonest characteristics of Japanese art. Lines 380, 381: Where do the Japanese get their patterns? These lines lead us into the next thought-division of the poem.

Lines 382-399: State in your own words the art-theory Longfellow here sets forth. Why is it placed here after the description of Japanese art? Give illustrations. From what sources have the art patterns mentioned in this poem been derived? Do you agree with the poet?

Lines 400ff.: The conclusion properly attaches itself to the introduction. With line 409 compare line 30. Explain the life-thought in lines 415-418. This gives "the perfect round" to the thought of the poem — from clay to art, and back to clay.

If the poem can be illustrated by specimens of pottery it will be far more interesting and vital to the students.

## CHAPTER XV

### JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

#### REFERENCE BIOGRAPHIES

*Life and Letters*, 2 Vol., by S. T. Pickard; Boston, 1894.

*Whittier-Land*, by S. T. Pickard; Boston, 1904.

*Life*, by T. W. Higginson; New York, 1902.

*Life*, by George Rice Carpenter; Boston, 1903.

*Life*, by F. H. Underwood; Boston, 1884.

*Life*, by W. S. Kennedy; Boston, 1883.

*Life*, by Richard Burton; Boston, 1901.

*Life*, by W. J. Linton; London, 1893.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY READING

The New Wife and the Old, Barclay of Ury, The Angels of Buena Vista, Maud Muller, Barbara Frietchie, Skipper Ireson's Ride, The Pipes at Lucknow, The Dole of Jarl Thorkell, The Sisters, The Robin, Kathleen, Mabel Martin, Marguerite, King Volmer and Elsie, Conductor Bradley, King Solomon and the Ants, The Khan's Devil, The Bay of the Seven Islands, The Wishing Bridge, St. Gregory's Guest, How the Robin Came, Toussaint L'Ouverture.

And see Appendix I, titles 56 to 67 inclusive.

#### TELLING THE BEES

I. See Pickard, *Life*, II, 413-415; *Whittier-land*, 17, 18. The title of the poem refers to an old New England custom. When a member of a family died, the bees were informed of it, and their hives were draped in mourning; otherwise they would swarm and seek a new home.

The picture of the New England farm house is that of Whittier's early home. Pickard says:

There were bee hives on the garden terrace near the well-sweep. — The approach to the house from over the northern shoulder of Job's Hill by a path that was in constant use in his boyhood and is still in existence, is accurately described in the poem. The 'gap in the old wall' is still to be seen, and 'the stepping stones in the shallow brook' are still in use. His sister's garden was down by the brook-side in front of the house, and her daffodils are perpetuated and may now be found in their season each year in that place. The red-barred gate, the poplars, the cattle yard with 'the white horns tossing above the wall,' these were all part of Whittier's boy life on the old farm.

We are not to suppose, however, that the "Mary" of the poem was Whittier's older sister. She did not die till 1860, and the poem is not a brother's poem (see line 21). Whittier has merely described, as the setting for his little romance, the farm he knew best.

II. The bereaved lover, a year after Mary's death (line 13), is walking with a friend toward her home. "Here is the place," he says, "to leave the highway and take the path that leads through the gap in the wall, across the stepping stones, and to the top of the hill from which Mary's house may be seen." A little farther on they come in sight of the house ("There" etc.). Then they stop. The lover points out the well-remembered surroundings of the farm house, and tells his friend how, just a year ago, returning after a month's absence (line 25), he had been informed, by the old custom, of the death of Mary. The story is told with the simplicity, dignity, and reserve of a New Englander of the class to which the lover is supposed to belong. In spite of the slightness of the action, the poet puts into it some suspense and leads up to a climax. The slight narrative begins with line 21. As

the lover approached the house, he stopped at the brook to cool his face, for it was a warm day in June. At last he came in sight of the house (line 27). The effect on him of the first sight of the hives is told in line 41. But the lover reassured himself; of course the death must be that of the oldest member of the family (lines 45-48). Line 49 mentions an ill-omen for the dog's mistress. The fact stated in lines 50, 51 proved to the lover that the death was not, as he had supposed, that of the aged grand-father; and finally he heard the words that confirmed his worst premonitions. The natural approach of the lover to the house, his gradual appreciation of the fact that something had happened, his alternate hope and fear, his final certainty, make up the steps of the slight, pathetic narrative from

The short and simple annals of the poor.

### III. Study the style of the poem.

1. Discuss the diction of the poem: the use of specific nouns in description; epithets; poetic compounds; genitives for *of*-phrases; etc.
2. Explain the force of the following figures:
  - a. The simile in line 13;
  - b. The metaphor in lines 18, 19, comparing the sun's rays among the branches to an insect's wings tangled in a cob-web;
  - c. The metaphor in lines 29, 30.
3. Versification: How many lines in a stanza? How many accents in each line? What is the foot? In lines 3, 11, 14, 15, 16 you will find spondees. These retard the movement, and prepare for the pathetic narrative. What is the rime-scheme of the poem? Discuss the use of alliteration; of assonance; of internal rime. The alliteration of *s* in lines 15,

16, 17, 53, 54 is particularly good, the repetition of the spirant suggesting the insistence of memory. What harmony of sound and thought in the line

Heavy and slow?

IV. Read the poem aloud. Bring out clearly its restrained pathos. Imagine that you are the lover, telling the story to a friend. Hear all the time in your ears the sound of the chore-girl's song,

Mistress Mary is dead and gone!

### THE HUSKERS

I. The account of the corn-picking and the corn-husking furnish the poet occasion to make two fine descriptions: one of a New England country landscape on an autumn afternoon, the other of an evening scene by lantern-light in the barn.

Read the poem first with the following outline: —

1. Introductory: —

a. General introduction: time, place, preliminary description.

b. Introductory pictures:

(1) An autumn morning.

(2) An autumn mid-day.

2. The autumn afternoon, and the corn-gathering.

3. Sunset and early evening — transitional.

4. The husking-bee.

The poem is written in four-line stanzas, each line having seven feet with iambic movement. The rime is *aabb*. The melody is smooth and quiet.

II. Study adjectives and epithets used to describe the season in the first stanza.

Does the poet describe the Indian Summer sunrise and mid-day correctly? Observe carefully all the adjectives in the second stanza.

III. Prepare to sketch, on a large sheet of paper, the landscape described in stanzas three to eight. What field is most important in this poem? Is it the one described with greatest minuteness of detail? What persons does it contain? What part of your picture should it occupy? Where will you put the hills, orchards, meadows, woods, and farm-buildings? What signs of life and motion in the picture? Notice the adjectives and epithets. How many of them refer to color? Are they well-chosen? What color-words do you find that are not adjectives? Why should color-words be so prominent in this description? The metaphor in line 10 gives the Indian Summer "atmosphere" to the picture; explain it clearly.

IV. The description of sunset (lines 31-36) follows that of afternoon. With line 31 compare lines 6 and 34. Study word by word the glorious picture of sunset and moon-rise in lines 33-36.

Lines 37-40 bring the farming people to the husking-frolic, and introduce the second of the two main pictures of the poem.

V. The interior of the barn is described as the background of the picture. What, as main object of interest, should occupy the center foreground? Who are gathered about the pile of corn? What persons are to be made most prominent in this group of young people?

From the lanterns hanging above this group light falls particularly on the pile of yellow ears, and on the maiden and the master. The other huskers are outside the brightest cir-

cle of light. The background for this bright center is the shadowy barn, where sit the old men. Here is a study in light and shade worthy of the great master, Rembrandt.

VI. The value of this poem is in its pictures of New England and New England customs. With perfect fidelity and exquisite expression the poet leads us to paint in our imagination scenes familiar to his boyhood, and rural customs fast passing away. For its truthfulness and simple dignity, *The Huskers* deserved to be esteemed most highly among *The Songs of Labor*. What other industries are celebrated in this group of poems? Discuss the *Dedication*.

VII. The master's *Corn-Song* has shorter lines than *The Huskers*, and this gives it a more animated lyric character. The lines contain alternately four and three iambic feet. The rime is *abab*. Corn is compared with and preferred to the fruits of tropic lands (lines 57-64). It is preferred even to other products of our own latitude (lines 93-104). The raising of the corn is described (lines 65-84), and the meal is praised (lines 81-82).

Discuss the epithets used in *The Corn-Song*. Autumn is personified and represented as bearing a horn of plenty (lines 55, 56); possibly the poet had in mind the Roman goddess Ceres. What metaphor in line 76? In line 88? The color of the corn suggests frequent comparison to gold, and that leads us, by metonymy, to wealth in general. See lines 53, 54, 55, 80, 84, 96, 103.

#### THE ETERNAL GOODNESS

I. This is, perhaps, the best of Whittier's religious poems. The student will appreciate better its spirit if he first will read Jonathan Edwards' sermon on *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God* (Stedman and Hutchinson II).

The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider or other loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked: his wrath towards you burns like fire; he looks upon you as worthy of nothing else, but to be cast into the fire; he is of purer eyes than to bear to have you in his sight; you are ten thousand times more abominable in his eyes than the most hateful venomous serpent is in ours. . . . O sinner! Consider the fearful danger you are in: it is a great furnace of wrath, a wide and bottomless pit, full of the fire of wrath, that you are held over in the hand of that God, whose wrath is provoked and incensed as much against you as against many of the damned in hell. You hang by a slender thread, with the flames of divine wrath flashing about it, and ready every moment to singe it and burn it asunder.

The Westminster Shorter Catechism, too, will give some notion of the elaborate system of Calvinistic theology that ruled New England in earlier days. The Quakers were a liberal sect, and opposed to the iron-bound creed of the orthodox New England churches.

For the influence of the Bible on Whittier, see Pickard, *Life*, I, 37.

II. The poem is addressed to Whittier's Calvinistic neighbors. Read it with the following notes.

Lines 3, 4: What virtues have these Calvinists?

Lines 5, 6: The strong point in the creed is its unanswerable logic.

Lines 7, 8: What is Whittier's attitude toward this system of theology?

Lines 9, 10: Explain. Why "iron"?

Lines 13, 14: This theology explains the purposes of the Creator, and his "Plan of Salvation."

Lines 17, 18: See *Exodus* 3:5. The bare feet symbolized reverence.

Line 20: What divine qualities does Whittier emphasize — regard as measureless? Line 21: What quality did the



Calvinists place most stress on? Line 23: They seek one to give them laws and commandments; the Quaker poet desires only healing of spirit. *Matthew* 9:20; 27:35.

Line 25: See *Genesis* 3:16-19. For line 27 see *Matthew* 5:3-11; for line 28 see *Luke* 23:24.

Line 29: Does Whittier regard himself as undeserving of eternal punishment? Line 36: He has no "claim" through merit on divine mercy. Line 37: Whittier is not trying to pretend that there is no sin in this world. Line 42: Explain the figure. Line 44: To what divine attribute does Whittier fasten his hope?

Line 45: See *Isaiah* 6:1-5. Line 47: Since *love* is the best feeling that can possibly enter the human heart, *hate* is the worst. How, then, can a Divine Being cherish the hate that Edwards describes in his sermon? Line 49: The sin of hate.

Line 55: See *Psalms* 19:10.

Line 57: Whittier holds his faith in the midst of sorrow and affliction; and (lines 61-64) in spite of any trouble that may come into his life.

Line 65: No trouble will come to him that he will not be given strength to bear. *Isaiah* 42:3.

Line 69: "I have no merit." Line 71: "Even what I do for others is simply transferring a gift He has given me."

Line 73-80: Do not miss the point of this beautiful metaphor.

Line 81: See Line 1. His belief differs greatly from theirs.

Line 88: His is a religion of the *heart*, not of the *head*.

III. Read the poem aloud.

### SNOW-BOUND

I. *Snow-Bound* is a poem of rural New England in winter. It describes a heavy snow-storm and the appearance of the

world during and after it. It tells of the members of the snow-bound household, and describes their amusements. It is written "To the Memory" of this household, and tells chiefly of those who have gone. Whittier's brother Matthew, therefore, is not especially prominent in the poem, being alive at the time of writing. The poem is largely descriptive — "pictures of old days" (line 747). Read the poem thoughtfully, for its general plan and effect.

II. Why is the poem called "A Winter Idyl"? How long did the storm last (lines 31, 41, 42, 46, 47, 93, 116)? Can you tell what days of the week were stormy (line 97)? How long was the family snow-bound (lines 674, 675)? Pickard describes the family in his *Life of Whittier* I, 27-36; II, 771. See *Whittier-land* 12, 24, 39, 74. Show how the quotations from Cornelius Agrippa and Emerson make an appropriate preface for the poem. Find on a map of Massachusetts the location of Haverhill, where Whittier spent his boyhood. For the publication of the poem, alterations made in proof, etc., see Pickard II, 494 to 505.

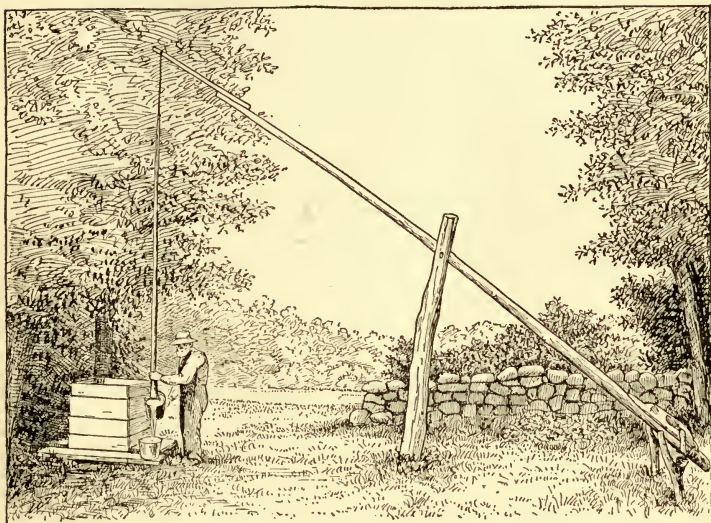
III. Study the poem carefully with the following notes and questions. Observe, without special direction, the excellence of the diction (particularly of the epithets) and the beauty of the figures.

Lines 1-18: A threatening day, before the breaking of the storm. Notice the extreme cold; the snow, at such a temperature, will be dry and drift easily. With line 15 compare this note from Pickard's *Life* (I, 7): "The roar of the storm waves breaking on Salisbury Beach is heard in this secluded valley."

Lines 19-30: A realistic account of life on a farm. Explain *early* (line 27). What metaphor in *helmet* and *challenge*? The barn is described in Pickard I, 18.

Lines 31-40: The beginning of the storm. What are the snow-flakes compared to in the metaphor involved in *swarm, whirl-dance, winged?*

Lines 43-46 refer to the shapes of snow-flakes. Have you ever seen any under the microscope? *Starry* is "star-



A Well, Showing the Curb and the Well-sweep

shaped," and the word suggests *meteor* (falling star) in the next line. *Wonder* (line 50) is "strange thing." What colors are in the picture described by lines 50-54? Line 60: See Pickard I, 16. Line 62: Draw the shape of a Chinese roof. See Pickard, II, 499. Line 65: The white marble Leaning Tower of Pisa is one of the wonders of architecture. Imagine the well-sweep, snow covered, as leaning over the well-curb.

Line 66: What sort of man was Whittier's father? Line 70: What are buskins? Lines 77-80: You can read of Aladdin's cave and lamp in *The Arabian Nights*. Line 86: What figure in *harem*? Line 89: Amun was an Egyptian god with the head of a ram.

Line 97: What day of the week is it? Line 98: Explain *social*. See Pickard, *Life*, I, 6. Lines 101-105. Notice the effect of the diction and figure; could any expression be more dreary? Line 110: *Minded* means "noticed." What figure in lines 112, 113? What excuse in the next lines for the personification?

Line 118: Note the metaphor. Lines 122-128: Study the diction. For a complete word-picture of the kitchen see lines 129-131, 163-174. Study this very carefully, word by word; and study with it the photograph of the kitchen. See Pickard, *Life*, I, 19, 20. The world outside is described in lines 143-154. It is a picture in black and white. Study it carefully; if possible, sketch the landscape. Lines 132-142 describe the reflection of the kitchen in its window. Imagine the scene described in lines 143-154 as the general background of the picture. In the center of that, place the dark lilac-tree. Against that, imagine the red reflection of the fire. *Showed* means "could be seen." The children imagine that witches are making tea about this mimic flame. Have you ever seen so plain a reflection of a room as that described here?

Line 179: The poet leaves the memories of his youth and comes back to the moment of writing the poem, when he is a man of fifty-eight. Line 183: Matthew Whittier died in 1883; the poem was written in 1865. Line 204: The "stars" of hope. Cypress trees are planted on graves. The hope is named in lines 200-202. Line 206: The day of resurrection. Line 209: Faith is an instinct, higher than the knowledge



THE WHITTIER BIRTHPLACE



THE WHITTIER KITCHEN

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gained by sense or reason. Line 210: Life will, in the end, triumph over death, and our "own" will be restored to us. This expression of grief and hope is one of the eloquent passages of the poem.

Line 212: *Sped* means "made it go fast." Notice the simple home-amusements. 214: The name of the "school-book" was *The American Preceptor* (see Pickard, I, 39, 40); and the poem was Mrs. Morton's *The African Chief*. In those days of few books, children knew their readers by heart. Lines 220-223 are quoted from this poem. Life, *liberty*, and the pursuit of happiness are, to an American, three of the *first* and *natural*, as well as the inalienable, rights. Lines 216-219 refer to Whittier's intense interest in the Anti-slavery cause. The Abolitionists complained that Congress favored the slave states (line 217). Telling puzzles and riddles, and "speaking pieces" was the entertainment furnished by the children, perhaps by the boys, since they are not otherwise mentioned.

Line 224: The father tells stories of his youthful days. He had made trips to Canada, riding on horse-back along Lake Memphremagog (see map). He had visited St. François in the province of Quebec, whither the French settlers had brought their old customs and costumes from Normandy. "Idyllic ease" (line 228) — the sort one reads of in old idyls, or pastoral poems. Line 236: Some of the father's stories were about home life. How wide are the sea-marshes at Salisbury Beach? What do we mean by "a bee-line"? From these salt marshes the farmers gathered hay (line 251). They seem to have made of the haying season a holiday; they picnicked on the beach, and, as they drifted home on the great boat-loads of hay, told tales of witchcraft and the supernatural.

Line 256: The mother was never idle. As she spun or knitted, she told of the "narrow escape of her ancestors," who lived "in the Indian-haunted region" of southern New Hampshire. Find Cocheco and the Piscataqua on the map. Was she a good story-teller (lines 262-265)? The "Gray Wizard" was Bantam the sorcerer, and his "book," which he opened and consulted when asked to "conjure," was Cornelius Agrippa's *Occult Philosophy*, from which Whittier quotes to preface his poem. Do you think Mrs. Whittier loved nature? Line 286: Sewel wrote a "painful" history of the persecutions and martyrdoms among the early Quakers. See Pickard II, 500. Line 289: Chalkley was a sea-captain, and a very pious man. His adventure belonged, of course, to the day of sailing-vessels. Becalmed crews and castaways were sometimes obliged to eat one of their own number. Line 306: See *Genesis* 22.

Line 307: Whittier's Uncle Moses lived with them at the old home. See Pickard's *Life* I, 32, 33. His mind and character are clearly described here. Had he been much at school? What did he know? *Lyceum* means "school;" Aristotle taught his disciples in the lyceum, or gymnasium. The French and the Germans call a certain kind of school a "lycée" and a "gymnasium." Lines 311-316: Do you know any out-of-door weather signs? Will the weather be fair or rainy if you see spider-webs on the grass in the morning? Line 320: Apollonius could converse with birds. Line 322: "Hermes Trismegistus," Greek name for Egyptian Dhouth, or Thouth, a theologian-philosopher-magician. See Longfellow's poem to him, and Milton's "thrice great Hermes" (*Il Penseroso*, line 88), where "thrice great" is a translation of the name "Trismegistus." Lines 325ff.: The uncle was not a traveller; hence the region about Haverhill



seemed to him the center of the universe. Gilbert White (1720–1793) wrote *The Natural History of Selborne*, Selborne being a parish in south England. Being intensely interested in the locality, he magnified greatly the charms of the county of Surrey (lines 333ff.). What did the uncle tell stories about? Was he a good story-teller?

Line 350: For Whittier's "Aunt Mercy" see Pickard's *Life I*, 33. What character did she develop (line 360)? What stories did she tell? Do not miss the fine metaphor in "home-spun warp" and "golden woof-thread" (lines 368–371). Explain the beautiful figure in which Whittier tells us that his aunt was always young at heart. Lines 376, 377: "Who thinks, not of her lovely character, but, in a slighting manner, of her lonely lot."

Line 378: The older sister, like the mother, must be busy. What was her character? Pickard's *Life I*, 29. Do you judge that she had an easy life? She died five years before this poem was written. Notice the metaphor in lines 390, 391.

Lines 392ff.: Elizabeth, Whittier's younger sister, was his housekeeper and life-companion. She died a year before the poem was written. Her poems are sometimes printed with her brother's. Pickard's *Life I*, 29–31; II, 481, 482; *Whittier-land*, 74. How much he missed her, lines 418–421 tell us. From line 423 to line 427 the diction is governed by a metaphor comparing his *memory* of her to *wealth*. Find the words that belong to this metaphor; do not overlook the expression "in trust." Lines 428–437: Follow carefully the metaphor comparing the close of life to the close of day. Read Whittier's poems *To my Sister* and *The Last Eve of Summer*.

Line 438: For the schoolmaster, see Pickard, *Life I*, 33, 41. He was George Haskell, from Waterford, Maine. What does the poem tell of his life and character? What do you know of

the early custom of "boarding-round"? Explain lines 470-479. Arachthus was a Greek river that rose in the Pindus Mountains; Olympus was the mountain of the gods.

Lines 481-484: Explain. Lines 485ff.: Whittier thinks that the South should have, after the Civil War (1865), a number of young men like the schoolmaster as immigrants from the North, who might encourage education and the national spirit, and organize industry. They would "reconstruct" not only legally but also socially. Explain the allusions and figures. What was the history of reconstruction after the Civil War? If such Northerners as this young man had gone South in 1865, might conditions have been different? Line 495: To the Quaker poet, war was murder.

Line 510: For an account of Miss Harriet Livermore, see Pickard, *Life I*, 35; *Whittier-land*, 30. She was the daughter of a Judge and Member of Congress, and had spent much time with her father in Washington, hence her "cultured phrase." "She was equally ready," says Whittier, "to exhort in schoolhouse prayer-meetings and to dance in a Washington ball-room." In lines 510-545 Whittier brings out the strange mingling in her nature of "the vixen and the devotee." Kate (line 536), in Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*, was a lady of very bad temper, who was subdued by her husband, Petruchio. Saint Catherine of Sienna (1348-1380) was a noted mystic.

Lines 446-562: Miss Livermore became interested in the doctrine of the Second Advent, and crossed the Atlantic with the message of the Lord's "quick coming." She travelled over a large part of Europe and Asia, and, at the time *Snow-Bound* was written, was living with a tribe of Arabs, who accepted her as a prophetess, believing that insanity was divine inspiration. The "Queen of Lebanon" was Lady

Hester Stanhope, with whom Miss Livermore quarrelled concerning their relative importance in the kingdom to be established by the Lord. Lady Hester expected to ride with the Lord into Jerusalem, on a white horse with saddle-markings of red.

Lines 563-569: Whittier expresses his sympathy for this poor, ill-balanced soul. We cannot tell how much of her unfortunate disposition was due to heredity; we cannot tell how much was *will* and how much *fate*; which of her faults she was morally responsible for, and which she was not. With this thought in mind, explain the passage, word by word. For "the fatal sisters" refer to your mythology. With lines 585ff. compare *Psalms* 103: 14.

Line 592: Describe a "bull's-eye watch." Line 601: Why were they so careful to keep the fire? With "wishes" (line 608) connect lines 612, 613. What does the parenthesis tell you of the mother's practical charity? Compare her with the elder sister (line 383).

Lines 614-628: Observe particularly the harmony between sound and thought. The last four lines are very melodious; why is this appropriate? What devices are used to produce melody? For the exposed chamber of the boys, see Pickard I, 43.

Lines 629ff.: Breaking the roads. See Pickard II, 495.

Lines 657ff.: "Once more" relates back to line 630; line 658 refers to line 631. For the doctor see Pickard, *Life* I, 38. Why had the doctor a right to be autocratic (lines 662, 663)? Line 666 refers to the doctor and Mrs. Whittier. He was an orthodox New England Calvinist, professing to believe the hard, iron creed of that sect. (See *The Eternal Goodness*.) She was a Quaker, very liberal in judgment and creed, believing that every person is, or may be, directed by an

“inward light.” Explain the figure involved in *mail*; in *acid* and *pearl*. The “election of the saints” is a prominent article in the Calvinistic creed.

Lines 676ff.: For the books in the Whittier library, see Pickard, *Life* I, 42 to 46. How many were there (line 678)? Probably the *Almanac* was that of Poor Richard — better reading than the modern pamphlet called an “almanac.” Their one book of poetry was by an early Quaker, Thomas Elwood, a young friend of Milton. The name of his epic was *Davideis*. Do you think it was good poetry (lines 683–685)? For the nine heathen muses, see your mythology. The splendid poetry of the classic languages was supposed to be inspired by them. Explain the figures in lines 689–692. The Creeks were an Indian tribe, then on the war-path. McGregor was a Scotchman who tried unsuccessfully to found a settlement in Costa Rica. General Ypsilanti was a leader in the Greek uprising against the rule of the Turks. Another Greek hero of this period was Marco Bozzaris, subject of Halleck’s poem. Taygetos is a mountain in Greece. Do you think these Greeks made very civilized warfare? Besides this news from all the corners of the earth, the paper contained (lines 700ff.) local news, advertisements, and contributions. “Vendue” sales are auctions. “Goods at cost” are bargain sales. Line 711: What figure in *embargo*? The poem proper ends with line 714, when the family is no longer snow-bound. The remaining lines form a conclusion.

Line 715: Apostrophe to the Angel of Memory; observe the description of the angel. Many of the fine books of ancient times had brazen covers with clasps. Explain the significance of *palimpsest* here. *Characters* means “letters” Line 725 refers to the deaths in the household. Explain *vistaed*. The cypress and the amaranth are funeral tokens,

often planted on graves. Lines 730, 731: Explain by describing the hour-glass. Lines 732, 733: Each hour of life has its insistent duty. Line 734 relates to lines 715, 718. Line 735: The voice of Duty, calling him from dreams of the past to the duties of the present. Line 739: Whittier believed that our liberties, imperfect the first century of our national existence because of the presence of slavery in our country, reached perfection with its abolition. See the date of poem. This paragraph of the conclusion calls the mind of the poet back from his dream of the past.

Line 740: This paragraph justifies the dream by showing its value to several classes of persons — the “worldling,” or man of business, “early friends,” and strangers. In line 740 life is conceived as a warfare; times of rest would then be truces. The Truce of God was instituted by the Church in the days when secular governments were not strong enough to enforce law and order; the Church ordered men to abstain from fighting on certain days. Flemish pictures were realistic representations of common life; they sometimes show a Dutch kitchen as faithfully as Whittier has, in words, pictured a New England kitchen. Line 751 refers to expressions of appreciation by strangers, not even known to the poet by name. Explain the two beautiful similes which show a poet’s gratification at such expressions of appreciation, and which close the poem (lines 752–759).

IV. Make some study of the versification and melody of the poem, especially of the most eloquent passages.

V. To gather up the thought of the poem in a few sentences, so that it shall impress us by its unity: *Snow-Bound* makes us acquainted with winter-life in the family of a poor New England farmer in the early nineteenth century (Whittier was born in 1807). The poem lies altogether in the

time and in the scene of the writer's boyhood, except for the following passages: —

Lines 175–210 express the poet's loneliness in 1865, as one of the two survivors of his family.

Lines 422–437 tell of his grief for the sister who had died a year before the poem was written.

Lines 485–509 give the poet's solution of the problem of reconstruction.

Lines 563–589 show Whittier's charity for an ill-balanced disposition.

Lines 715–759 form the conclusion.

Judging from Whittier's allusions, do you not think he was remarkably well-read for one who had so few early advantages? Does this poem give any hints as to the sources of his culture?

#### THE LAST WALK IN AUTUMN

I. Whittier's theme is praise of his native climate — rugged, cold New England — in its bleakest season. Read the poem through with this outline:

1. Description of two late autumn New England days, a year apart: stanzas I–IV; (a) the day on which the "last walk" is taken, (b) the same day a year before.
2. The year's round: stanzas V, VI.
3. There is as much beauty at home as there is abroad: stanzas, VII–IX.
4. One may travel in imagination while remaining at home: stanzas X, XI.
5. There is as good company at home as abroad, books and men: stanzas XII–XVI.
6. Home is full of loving memories: stanzas XVII–XVIII.

7. There is greater inspiration to energy in a rugged climate than in a warm country: stanzas XIX-XX.
8. There is fuller liberty in New England than in other lands: stanzas XXI, XXII.
9. The practical virtues belong to the temperate lands: stanzas XXIII-XXIV.
10. The pleasures of winter: stanza XXV.
11. Trust expressed that the One who cares for nature will care for the poet: stanza XXVI; and for the cause in which he is interested: stanza XXVII.
12. Envoy: stanza XXVIII.

Describe the stanza, rime, and meter of the poem. What effect have the longer lines at the end of each stanza?

II. Study the poem carefully with the following notes and questions.

Line 1: What figure? Compare "plead" (line 2) and "praying" (line 6). What is the prayer of the trees?

Line 8: Does Whittier show appreciation of the beauties of nature in winter? Is the picture of autumn in stanzas I-III accurate? About what date is this? Study the adjectives. Explain the figures in lines 12 and 20. Note the comparison in line 17.

Line 25: Compare the two autumn days, just a year apart. Which would better be described by Bryant's "The melancholy days have come"?

Line 34: With "pagoda" compare *Snow-Bound* line 62.

Line 42: Whittier seems to have enjoyed sunrise and sunset; see *The Huskers*. With "moonlit snows" compare *Snow-Bound* lines 142ff. Study carefully the diction belonging to the description of each season in stanzas V, VI. Is it appropriate?

Line 49: Observe the coherence between stanzas V-VI

and stanzas VII-VIII (lines 49, 50 make the transition). At this season many of Whittier's friends would be going to a warm climate for the winter. His thoughts follow them. But Whittier was not, except in reading and imagination, a traveller. Line 51: The ardent beauty of the sun in the desert. Line 52: The "Alpine glow." Line 55: The Arno is a river of Northern Italy; Florence is the chief city on it. Line 56: The Alhambra is a magnificent Moorish ruin in Spain.

Line 58: "Is equal to him." Explain the figure in lines 57, 58. Lines 60 to 64 use the diction of Mohammedan lands; explain the figures. Line 66: Pharpar is a river of Damascus praised by Naaman (*II Kings* 5:12). Line 69: The Taj-Mahal ("Gem of Buildings") is a celebrated marble mausoleum. Line 71: Hafiz (14th century) wrote a poem about a Persian Rose-garden. Line 72: St Peter's Cathedral at Rome. Line 73: Explain *thus*. Line 75: Though Whittier lived most of his life in one place, he has seen the universe (Kosmos). Line 81: Explain *thus*. Through the exercise of what faculty does the untravelled poet visit other lands (line 85)? For line 86 see *Acts* 12, and notice *prison* (line 83) and *freedom-giving* (line 85). Is Whittier right? Did he undervalue travel because he had not travelled? Probably his ill-health accounted partly for his remaining at home, since his interests were broad. In a letter to Bayard Taylor, he says: "I travel a great deal, however, by proxy. I have had thee in my service for many years, much to my satisfaction. Dr. Booth has been to Timbuctoo for me, and Burton to Mecca. Atkinson has been doing Siberia for me. I think (if thy Marie does not object) of sending thee off again to find Xanadu and Kubla Khan." (Pickard, *Life* II, 429. See also II, 469 and Whittier's poem to Bayard Taylor.)



Other men, who have travelled, have expressed themselves as Whittier has done in the stanzas we are studying. In a letter to his grandson, apropos of a disappointment about a trip to Europe, Lowell writes: "After all, the kind of world one carries about in one's self is the important thing, and the world outside takes all its grace, color, and value from that." See Lowell's *An Invitation*, Whittier's *To —*, and *Our River*, Emerson's *Written in Naples*, Holmes's *After a Lecture on Wordsworth*. Emerson's *Journal* (at Naples, 1834) says: "This moment, this vision, I might have had in my own closet in Boston." See also Carpenter's *Whittier*, 86.

Line 89: Whittier enjoys the company of his books. Who are "the masters of the ancient lyre"? Bacon was the English philosopher and essayist of the early seventeenth century. Pascal was a French philosopher of the seventeenth century. Explain line 96. Some persons object that dead authors are not as satisfactory as living friends. Explain lines 99, 100. Herbs are simple food (see *Proverbs* 15:17); ambrosia is the food of the gods. "Laurelled shades" are the ghosts of those crowned with laurel because of their poetic gifts. Line 104: Whittier enjoys friends as well as books.

Line 105: Stanza XIV refers to Emerson, whose nature was a strange combination of Yankee shrewdness and Oriental mysticism. As a philosopher, he would have been a fit companion of the old Greek Plato. Notice the contradiction in "shrewd mystic." "Poor Richard's Almanac," compiled by Benjamin Franklin, is a book of practical common-sense, is *shrewd*. The Sufi was a monarch of a Persian dynasty; see Emerson's *Saadi*, a mystic poem. Emerson's *Brahma* (the Gentoo's, or Hindoo's, dream) is also a mystic poem. Manu was a Hindoo deified king, lawgiver, and philosopher. Fulton was the inventor of the steamboat.

Eastern lands are famous for their metaphysical thought; the western world for practical invention and application.

Line 113: This stanza refers to Bayard Taylor and his poems of travel. Prince Houssain, in *The Arabian Nights*, sat on a "wishing carpet," and was transported by magic wherever he wished to be. Phrygia is in Asia Minor; Nubia is in North Africa.

Line 121: This stanza refers to Charles Sumner, interested, like Whittier, in the anti-slavery cause, and its champion in the Senate of the United States. He was attacked in 1856 by Preston Brooks on the floor of the Senate, and so badly injured that he was long an invalid. Aristides the Just was an Athenian general of the 5th century B. C. Find his story in your Greek History. What kind of statesman was Sumner? What reference here to his education and culture? Explain lines 122, 123, 124.

Line 132: "Treasure" — compare the figure with that in *Snow-Bound*, lines 423-427. "Conscious" — compare *Snow-Bound*, line 199. Notice the return to the autumn landscape in lines 133 to 136. Explain "shadowy."

Line 139: Whittier felt the keen winter air of New England bitterly. Explain line 140. Ceylon is a tropic island in the Indian Ocean. Line 148: The "Bear" is the constellation containing the Little Dipper, one of whose stars is the North Star. The "Cross" is the constellation that is related to the South Pole as the Bear is to the North. It is visible south of the Equator. Whittier thinks of the Cross as shining on tropic lands. The same contrast between the summer lands and cold climates is expressed in lines 149, 150, and 151-152. The "Line" is the Equator.

Line 153: Explain the figures in this stanza. Memorize the stanza. What climate does it praise? Why?

Line 162: Versailles was the magnificent home of French kings; Windsor is the palace of English monarchs. What does Whittier compare favorably with these splendid buildings? Why? Line 165: The simple village church. Line 166: Some of the finest cathedrals are of the Gothic style of architecture. Line 168: St. Peter's Cathedral at Rome. There is a beautiful Gothic cathedral at Milan.

Line 169: "Equal" — where the children are regarded as belonging to the same social class. Lines 171, 172: In countries where there is an established church, the schools teach its doctrines, as do the parochial schools established by certain sects in our country. Lines 173-176: He compares our Thanksgiving favorably with the Carnival, or Mardi Gras, that some countries celebrate just before Lent. That is a gay festival, when a great deal of license is permitted on the city streets. The revellers usually go masked. The "chains" are mental and religious. Whittier was earnestly grateful for our liberty of education and conscience. Show why the metaphor in line 174 is particularly good in connection with Thanksgiving customs.

Line 179: Arcadia was a Greek state in the Peloponnesus, isolated from the rest of the country by surrounding mountains. The rustic, simple life of the Arcadians, far removed from the strifes and worldly anxieties of their neighbors, has given the name "Arcadian" the notion of pastoral simplicity and happiness. Line 181: New England has no canonized saints. Whittier prefers ordinary men and women, with characters of mingled strength and weakness. Line 185: What are some of the practical, social virtues he sees in the men and women about him? Were these social virtues valued and cherished by the saints and hermits of the Middle Ages? Line 188: Explain the metaphor. Line 190: Ex-

plain this, referring to *Exodus* 3:5. Doing one's duty puts one in touch with the divine.

Line 191: There were no slaves in New England in 1856, when this poem was written.

Line 194: Trumpets were used by heralds to announce guests; explain the metaphor. Line 196: See line 4. Lines 197ff. speak of winter pleasures in New England.

Lines 201–204: Explain this reference to Nature. Line 208: Explain the figure.

Lines 209–212: Whittier refers to his anti-slavery work. This poem was written in 1856, and the slaves were not freed till 1863.

Line 218: Whittier had written many poems less artistic than this. Line 222: He had many enemies because of his anti-slavery work. Line 224: He was a good Quaker; while he hated the sin, he loved the sinner, and never felt personal enmity — although he did sometimes feel a righteous indignation against the unjust.

III. Study the poem carefully for melody and harmony.

IV. Read the poem aloud. Express clearly Whittier's thought and his love for his home.

## CHAPTER XVI

### JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

#### REFERENCE BIOGRAPHIES

- Life*, 2 Vol., by Horace Scudder; Boston, 1901.  
*Letters*, 2 Vol., by Chas. Eliot Norton; New York, 1894.  
*Life*, by Ferris Greenslet; Boston, 1905.  
*Life*, by F. H. Underwood; Boston, 1893.  
*Life*, by E. E. Brown; Boston, 1887.  
*James Russell Lowell and His Friends*, by Edward Everett Hale; Boston, 1899.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY READING

The Beggar, The Fatherland, The Fountain, The Heritage, Longing, Without and Within, Sonnets 4, 6, 17, 24, 25; For an Autograph, Aladdin, The Parting of the Ways, Masaccio, In the Twilight, To a Pine Tree, Beaver Brook, Al Fresco, The Sower, Yussouf.

An Indian Summer Reverie, Pictures from Appledore.

Bibliolatres, Extreme Unction, Si Descendero in Infernum, The Cathedral.

Poems of the War, Three Memorial Poems, Columbus.

A Good Word for Winter. (Critical essays should be studied in connection with the authors they discuss.)

See also Appendix I, titles 68 to 75 inclusive.

#### THE SINGING LEAVES

I. Read the poem for its story and general impression.

II. Why is this poem called a ballad? The real folk-ballads of our race have come down to us from the Middle Ages. Many modern poets also have written ballads, and

some who know and love the old folk-poems have tried to imitate their style. Lowell here imitates in many ways the mediæval English and Scotch ballads. If you can read a few of them as a background for this poem, you will better appreciate Lowell's effort. Our American poet has chosen his characters from a social organization we have outgrown; they are a *King* and three *Princesses*, and a *page*. The king gives a blind promise, which he cannot in honor break — a *motif* used in many a mediæval tale. The trading was done at a fair, an old custom that still survives in some quaint European towns. Much of Lowell's phrasing, and the great number of archaic words help to revive the atmosphere of the ancient ballads. Some of his peculiar phrases are ballad conventions. *Three* was a favorite ballad number. The articles demanded by the older sisters were popular mediæval adornments. The heroine of an old story is often a good young girl, despised and scorned by her older sisters. (Compare Cinderella.)

Make a study of the archaic and figurative phrasing of the poem. If you are somewhat familiar with the old ballads, you will find that some of the expressions in your lists are common, conventional ballad-phrases.

The rhythmic movement also recalls the ballad measure, the fundamental pattern being 4xa, 3xa, 4xa, 3xa, with the rime-plan *abcb*.

III. Do you think Lowell means any more by this poem than the pretty story itself? Has he a moral thought? What is "Vanity Fair"? Do the "Singing Leaves" stand for something more precious than gold and silks and jewels? Why could not the King find them at Vanity Fair? This spiritual interpretation of the story belongs to Lowell's style and not to the ballad convention.

IV. Tell the story of *The Singing Leaves*. Try to reproduce Lowell's quaint, mediæval atmosphere, by bringing in such of his archaic words and expressions as you can use naturally. Use also such of Lowell's figures as you consider particularly appropriate and significant in a poem of this sort. Suggest the moral thought delicately, as Lowell has done; do not make it obtrusive.

#### THE SHEPHERD OF KING ADMETUS

I. This poem may, at first reading, seem to confuse music and poetry, but reference to an old custom makes it clear. Before the invention of printing made books current, poets were obliged to chant their works to such audiences as they could gather about them, often accompanying their "singing" by striking notes on some musical instrument, as the harp or the lyre. Sometimes men who could not compose sang the works of the more gifted "makers." Alma Tadema's painting called *Reading from Homer* depicts such a scene. The best poets were naturally employed at the courts of kings. Because of this old custom, poets have often been called "singers."

Study in classic mythology the story of the god Apollo at the court of King Admetus. The first four stanzas of this poem tell the same story. What instrument did Apollo use? How did his music affect his hearers? Was King Admetus a good judge of music? How did he reward the poet?

II. Why did men call the poet "shiftless" (lines 3 and 4)? Had he influence over them in spite of their scorn? Describe the songs of the poet (lines 16-20). What were his subjects (lines 27-32)? Do you know any poem of Lowell's addressed to a "Dear common flower"? It was the very

*commonness* of the dandelion, the *weed*, that taught Lowell a beautiful lesson. With lines 31, 32 compare Shakespeare's "tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, and good in everything." (*As You Like It* II, 1.) Explain also Apollo's relation to ancient medical science. Explain stanza 9, comparing it with stanza 6.

After the poet was gone, and almost forgotten as a personality, the beautiful things he had taught men about "weeds and stones and springs" remained in their hearts, and made the earth more lovely and wonderful. And those who came after him and had enough poetry in their souls to sympathize with him finally understood the divine character of his work.

III. This poem is intended to help us appreciate the great and sacred work that poetry, music, and art perform for human society. Does Lowell represent art as a source of pleasure, merely? What significance is there in making a god the founder of an art?

Scudder (I, 147) says of the period of Lowell's life in which *King Admetus* was written: "We do find, recurring in various forms, a recognition of an all-embracing, all-penetrating power which through the poet transmutes nature into something finer and more eternal, and gives him a vantage ground from which to perceive more truly the realities of life. *The Token, An Incident in a Railroad Car, The Shepherd of King Admetus* all in a manner witness to this, and show how persistently in Lowell's mind was present this aspect of the poet which makes him a seer."

In one of his essays Lowell says, "To make the common marvellous is the test of genius." Discuss this statement, and read with it Emerson's poem named *Art*. Put with them these lines from Browning's *Fra Lippo Lippi*: —



We're so made that we love  
 First when we see them painted, things we have passed  
 Perhaps a hundred times nor cared to see;  
 And so they are better, painted — better to us,  
 Which is the same thing. Art was given for that;  
 God uses us to help each other so,  
 Lending our minds out.

With this poem compare Bryant's *The Poet*, and Whitman's *When the Full-grown Poet Comes*, and Holmes's notion (see *The Chambered Nautilus*) that every material thing can be used as an illustration of some spiritual truth.

#### AN INCIDENT IN A RAILROAD CAR

I. Lowell has required only five stanzas to relate his incident and tell what lesson it taught him. Relate the incident (stanzas 1-3). Tell the effect of the scene on the observer (stanza 4) and on the actors (stanza 5). The remainder of the poem sets forth Lowell's theory that the elements of poetry exist in every human heart, however crude, in some primitive form; the poet is only the man who, feeling more deeply, thinking more clearly, is able to formulate and express the universal emotion.

II. Study the poem in detail, consulting the following notes and questions:

Line 4: Explain the metaphor.

Lines 6, 7: Explain the metaphor. In spite of his gifts, Burns always remained one of the "common people," and wrote chiefly of the joys and sorrows of the poor.

Lines 13-20: Explain.

Lines 18: What is the object of "above"?

Lines 21-36: Follow the metaphor comparing the higher impulses of the human heart to seeds that grow up

and produce blossoms; *i. e.* inspiring words and noble deeds.

Lines 37-56: The great poet Wordsworth, too, thought that the "elementary feelings" are more easily found among simple folk than among the great and learned. Another Great Teacher, who lived chiefly among the poor and humble, has admonished us to remain simple-hearted, like little children (see *Matthew* 18:3; 19:14).

Lines 47, 48: Explain the metaphor.

Line 51: *Win* means "climb up," "win their way."

Lines 55, 56: Explain the metaphor.

Lines 57-60: All thought, Lowell says, is founded on the "great mass" of feeling, in which its origin is hidden. When the feeling of the race "narrows up" to the thought of the few more cultivated souls, what form may it, in metaphor, be said to take?

Lines 61-64: Where does human thought and feeling have its origin?

Lines 65-68: What does the poet do for the race? Especially for what class?

Lines 69-72: Compare lines 13-20.

Lines 73-76: Lowell here has in mind difficult poets, such as Milton, who knew he was writing for "fit audience, though few;" the "grand old masters," the "bards sublime." (Longfellow: *The Day Is Done*.)

Lines 77-88: Lowell thinks that the "humbler poet," not too difficult for the simple heart to understand, reaches better the great mass of men, untrained to grasp the more complex thought of the great master. Line 81 relates back to line 77.

III. Read six of Burns's poems. Notice how easy they are to understand; how simply they express feelings common to all men, rich and poor, learned and ignorant. Then read

Lowell's *Incident* once more, and see how much clearer to you it is. The following are good poems to choose from Burns: — *My Heart is in the Highlands*, *John Anderson*, *My Jo*, *Auld Lang Syne*, *Is there for Honest Poverty*, *A Red, Red Rose*, *The Cotter's Saturday Night*.

## RHÆCUS

I. On first reading the poem, you will see that lines 1–35 form a prelude to the old classic tale related in 36–160. It will be best for you to give your attention first to the story part, and come back later to the prelude.

Lowell usually tells his story in such a way as to suggest a moral thought. Read again this “fairy legend of old Greece,” to see what practical thought for life Lowell makes it yield you. You will need to give special attention to lines 129–140, where the Dryad tells the youth how he has offended her. Though she says something about his unkindness to her messenger, the bee, the significant line is 137:

We ever ask an undivided love.

Rhœcus wasted in foolish pleasure the time he should have given to the Dryad, and he forever lost her. “A lost opportunity is gone forever.”

II. Tell the story of Rhœcus as you learn it from Lowell. You may use any of his fine diction and figures that linger in your mind after two or three careful readings. Try particularly to use some of the best epithets.

III. Did you ask yourself, when you were studying the story of Rhœcus, why a man of the nineteenth century should tell a tale written hundreds of years earlier, especially one about a Dryad, a creature in whose existence we have long ceased to believe? Lowell has anticipated such a ques-

tion and has answered it in the prelude to this poem (lines 1-35).

We are prone to think that our time only, our nation alone, knows the truth; what does Lowell say in lines 1-5? Possibly the form of expression each nation and age has used is best fitted to its own development and cast of mind — whether the expression be myth, fable, philosophy, or theology. Notice the figure in “realm,” “rule.” Every religion that has gained followers has had some truth in it (lines 6-12), or earnest men would never, for one moment, have rested in it. Explain the metaphor in “master-key.” “Down” (line 11) contains the same metaphor we use when we say “beds of ease.” There is a germ of truth in every myth and fable. Explain the metaphor in “reign” (line 15) and “right divine” (line 16), referring to the belief of certain kings in the source of their authority. Lines 18, 19 refer to an old superstition that a hazel-twigg will point downward when the person that holds it passes over a subterranean spring. In line 21 Lowell goes back to the figure he began with “germ” (line 9). The “germ” is the principle of life in the seed, the “hull” the outside protection; the story is the hull, the truth it contains is the germ. “Inspirations” (line 26) are artistic expressions — art, poetry, sculpture, etc. The “food” (line 28) comes from the “germ;” the “hull,” or mere expression, is the artistic form in which the truth is current among mankind. Explain the figure in line 27.

The figures are so crowded and press so closely on the heels of one another in this prelude that they seem almost confused; but it is not hard for you to see that Lowell tells this story, which we cannot literally believe, because, as he explains, it contains a truth for all time and all men. The story itself is worth telling for its grace and beauty — which

equal the eternal grace and beauty of a Greek sculptured figure.

If one should feel doubtful about the moral teaching of this poem, he should consult the Greek original. The old story lacks the spirituality of Lowell's adaptation, but Rhœcus is plainly punished for his neglect of the Dryad, *not* for his unkindness to the bee. Of course so short a poem could teach only one lesson without losing in unity of effect. Possibly the words that reprove Rhœcus for bruising the bee distract the mind from the real fault of the neglectful youth; at least some students have regarded them as teaching the main lesson of the poem. *Gentle* (eyes) does not here mean "tender," but rather "noble;" and a man of good breeding would never, under any circumstances, fail in the courtesy to women demanded by the conventions of his time and country. And with this poem compare *The Hamadryad* of Walter Savage Landor.

#### TO THE DANDELION

I. When we see a bed of dandelions, we are struck, not by the shape of the flowers, but by the mass of warm, rich, golden color. So was the poet Lowell. The color of the flower is the basis of expression in the first, second, third, and sixth stanzas of *To the Dandelion*; the poet's association of the flower with memories of his childhood is the basis of thought in the fourth and fifth.

II. There is so much figurative language in the poem that the explanation of thought required the analysis of the figures.

Stanza 1. The color of the flower naturally suggests *gold*. The fact that the flower is found in great beds reminds the poet of the time when the European, especially the Spanish, explorers expected to find gold in unlimited quantities in America. This association of gold in great quantities with the early history of America forms the basis for the meta-

phors for this stanza. The children, joyfully picking and exhibiting the blossoms, are "buccaneers," and the dandelion bed is an "Eldorado." Explain the stanza now in detail.

Stanza 2. The gold of the dandelion, however, is not like the gold of Eldorado; it is "harmless." Think of all the evil the Spaniards did to the natives of the New World, and of all they themselves suffered; the gold for which they sought was not harmless. Neither is the gold of the old miser harmless when it tempts a young girl to forsake for him her youthful lover, his rival. The metaphor now changes. Spring scatters dandelions with lavish hand over the earth, as generous knights and ladies of old threw "largess" (gifts of coin) to the common people on festal days. Unfortunately, most persons do not understand the spiritual treasure the common dandelion offers them, and pass it by with eye unblessed; as a peasant might have failed to pick up the largess scattered by the passing nobility beside the road. Go over the stanza again, and explain it in your own words.

Stanza 3. The warm, rich color of the flower suggests luxuriant tropic lands. It rouses in the memory and imagination pictures associated with kinder climates than that of rugged New England; with far off lands, which the poet has visited long ago. It calls up a feeling of luxury like that experienced by the bee in the lily; a luxury like that of Sybaris of old. Follow the thought of the stanza through again, and explain it in your own words. Make clear the comparison of the bee, in metaphor, to the soldiers who conquered Sybaris ("golden-curassed," "tent"), and tell something about the luxury of Sybaris. What is a *sybarite*?

Stanza 4. The dandelion, by some power of association, calls up in the poet's mind a lovely summer landscape, perhaps a picture of the field in which he, as a child, gathered

the blossoms. Can you sketch the landscape — the trees, the water, the animals, the light and shade, the colors? Should any signs of motion be apparent in your picture? Note the beautiful simile in the last line.

Stanza 5. The dandelion is also associated with the poet's other memories of springtime in his childhood. Explain particularly "untainted" and "peers."

Stanza 6 comes back to the color metaphor in "gold" and "prodigal." The moral thought attaches itself to the notion of *commonness*. Through the profit he gets from his tenderness for this common flower, so rich in power to touch the heart and the imagination, the poet learns to feel more reverence for all human beings. Many of them seem commonplace when he meets them carelessly, but all of them, if he gives them the love due from him to every fellow-mortal, reflect to him something of the divine, as every dandelion seems to reflect the sun. Human hearts are the "living pages of God's book;" see *II Corinthians* 3:2.

III. Study the adjectives and epithets used in the poem. Are these as strong as its figures in beauty and suggestiveness?

IV. Study the meter, the line, the stanza, and the rime-plan. What devices do you find for securing melody and harmony? Give special attention here to the fourth stanza.

V. Read the poem aloud.

#### THE NIGHTINGALE IN THE STUDY

I. "*The Nightingale in the Study* was written when he sought in illness for something that would seclude him from himself." — Scudder I, 269.

I have not felt in the mood to do much during my imprisonment. One little poem I have written — *The Nightingale in the Study*. It is about Calderon, and I am inclined to think it pretty. 'Tis a dialogue

between my cat-bird and me — he calling me out of doors, I giving my better reasons for staying within. Of course my nightingale is Calderon. \* — *Letters I*, 437 (July 8, 1867).

For about a week I could read nothing but Calderon — a continual delight, like walking in a wood where there is a general sameness in the scenery, and yet a constant vicissitude of light and shade, an endless variety of growth. He is certainly the most *delightful* of poets. Such fertility, such a gilding of the surfaces of things with fancy, or infusion of them with the more potent fires of the imagination, such lightness of humor! Even the tragedies are somehow not tragic to me, though terrible enough sometimes, for everybody has such a talent for being consoled, and that out of hand. Life with him is too short and too uncertain for sorrow to last longer than to the end of the scene, if so long. As Ate makes her exit, she hands her torch to Hymen, who dances in brandishing it with an *Io!* The passions (some of the most unchristian of 'em) are made religious duties, which, once fulfilled, you begin life anew with a clear conscience. †

— *Letters II*, 167.

II. Read the poem carefully, and observe which part of the "dialogue" belongs to the bird and which to the scholar.

III. Study the poem minutely with the following notes: —

Line 4: Alcina was a fairy in the poems of the Italian writers, Ariosto and Boiardo. In her garden her guests enjoyed all sorts of delights.

Line 6: Lesbos and Massico are places in Greece and Italy, celebrated for excellent wines.

Line 8: "May not my ode be classic?" *i. e.* as good as the poems of Greece and Rome.

Line 10: Beaver Brook was a favorite haunt of Lowell's. It is near Cambridge. See the poem *Beaver Brook*.

Line 17: *Boot* means "help."

Line 18: Leaves of books.

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† From *Correspondence of James Russell Lowell*. Copyright, 1893, by Harper Brothers.



Lines 21, 22: Contrast with line 18.

Line 27: The cuckoo is called the "rain-crow," because its cries are said to predict rain.

Lines 39, 40: Notice the poet's love for June. Explain the personification of June, and the meaning of the two lines.

Line 41: Comparison of the poet Calderon to the bird, as in the title of the poem. Follow the metaphor through the remaining stanzas. Calderon was a Spanish dramatist and poet (1600-1681). Many of his dramas relate to the Moors in Spain. Tichnor (*History of Spanish Literature* II, 363) says: "Nor is the preservation of national or individual character, *except perhaps the Moorish*, a matter of any more moment in his eyes."

Line 44: Calderon, in the seventeenth century, must have fed his imagination on old mediaeval romances.

Line 47: Subjects of Calderon's poems.

Line 48: Doña Clara is the heroine of Calderon's *Love Survives Life*. Her husband was a Moor.

Lines 49-52: Scenes of which one reads in Calderon.

Line 54: The character of Calderon's plots.

Lines 55, 56: Refer to the note on line 41, and explain these lines.

Lines 57, 58: The adventurous nature of Calderon's plots is referred to.

Lines 59, 60: Explain.

Line 61: Addressed to the cat-bird.

Line 64: Refer to the note on line 41 for explanation.

Line 65: Still addressed to the cat-bird.

IV. Study meter, stanza, and rime; and devices for securing melody.

V. "*The Nightingale in the Study*, written in the summer of 1867, holds in capital form a genuine confession that there

was an appeal to him from nature in literature, which did not antagonize the appeal made to him by the world of natural beauty, yet sometimes constrained and invited him in tones he could not resist, even though the birds without were calling him." Scudder II, 115.

This poem shows the scholar, the man of letters, resisting for love of his books the call of the out-of-doors. It is interesting to compare with it *Al Fresco* (i. e. "In the Open Air"), which shows the nature-lover triumphant; in which the scholar throws aside, for a day, his books and studies, and takes a vacation in his garden and orchard. The two poems are in harmony with the mood of the prose sketch called *My Garden Acquaintance*, in which Lowell tells something of the grounds about Elmwood and of his friendship with the birds. *Sonnet XXV* also is interesting in this connection, as showing, in a less playful manner, that Lowell felt there is no real conflict between the mind of the scholar and the spirit of the nature-lover.

#### MY GARDEN ACQUAINTANCE

I. Lowell's home, "Elmwood," was a large, old-fashioned New England house, surrounded by extensive lawns and gardens. In these grounds Lowell loved to work, being by turns a student and a horticulturist. (See *The Nightingale in the Study* and *Al Fresco*.) The most delightful literary product of his gardening is *My Garden Acquaintance*, a charmingly familiar essay, filled with bright humor, genial comment on life, and a pervading atmosphere of refinement and of easy, natural scholarship.

II. The introduction runs through five paragraphs. It is based on a favorite book of Lowell's earlier years. Gilbert White (1720-1793) lived in the parish of Selbourne, bordering

on the county of Surrey, England. He is the "Fellow of Oriel" College, Oxford, mentioned in the first paragraph. Read the five introductory paragraphs, and be prepared to state the notion you get from them of White's book. What characteristics did Lowell find particularly pleasing? If possible, read some of White's *Natural History* yourself, and see whether you enjoy it as much as Lowell did.

Paragraph 1. Explain the figure in "ambles along on his hobby-horse." — Barrington and Pennant were English naturalists contemporary with White. — Walton was the author of *The Compleat Angler*, a book containing some charming descriptions of English country. — Cowper's *Task* (VI, 560) contains some famous lines on kindness to animals:

I would not enter on my list of friends,  
 (Though graced with polished manners and fine sense,  
 Yet wanting sensibility,) the man  
 Who needlessly sets foot upon a worm.

— Refer to the date of White and explain the significance of the allusion to Burgoyne, and its relation to the sentence before it. — *La Grande Chartreuse* was a monastery in France, whose inmates were entirely separated from the world. — What does this paragraph tell you of White's interests?

Paragraph 2. Do you, too, find amusing such serious interest in trivial things? Does Lowell in this paragraph employ consciously the same humorous method? How does he use the pun for humorous effect? Do you get the point of the joke in his wonder "if metaphysicians have no hind toes"? — Willoughby and Ray were British scientists. — Explain the allusion to Diogenes.

Paragraph 3. This essay was written in 1869. What significance had the word *reconstruction* then? To what

other questions and debates of the day does Lowell refer here? — Contrast *instinct* in the second sentence with *reason* in the fifth. What sarcasm is there in the figure with which the fifth sentence ends? — Lowell was born in the Elmwood home and lived there all his life. — “Martin” was the manufacturer of White’s thermometer. *Natural History*, Letter LIX: “Martin’s, which was absurdly graduated to only 4° above zero, sunk quite into the brass guard of the ball, so that, when the weather became most interesting, this was useless.” — What puns here on *graduation* and *Mercury*? — For the quotation, see Marlowe’s *Jew of Malta*, I, 1.

Paragraph 4. Lowell suggests the value of daily reports by a weather bureau, not systematically organized by the government till four years later. — What is the writer’s feeling about newspaper prophecies and their value? About the economic wisdom of some Members of Congress? *Cloaca Maxima* means “great sewer.”

Paragraph 5. This paragraph is transitional, bridging over from thoughts suggested by White to the observations of the writer.

III. The subject matter of the essay proper has been stated in the transitional paragraph; it had already been suggested in the title.

Paragraph 6. What popular error about animals does Lowell attack? What arguments does he advance to disprove it? What observation has he made on the time of bird migrations? Can he explain their choice of homes? The line of poetry quoted near the middle of the paragraph is from Chaucer’s *Prologue to The Canterbury Tales*, line 11.

Paragraphs 7, 8. What are the faults of the robin? The

virtues? Is Lowell willing to have him in his garden? — The lines from Emerson's *Titmouse* read,

For well the soul, if stout within,  
Can arm impregnably the skin.

— Robert Bloomfield was a shoemaker-poet, not ranked very high. — The Poor Richard ethics were of the thrifty, utilitarian sort, not idealistic nor spiritual; the robin, unlike his "cousins," has nothing inspired about him. — Notice the echo of Burns's "for a' that and a' that." — Dr. Samuel Johnson was noted for his bad table manners. — Explain "right of eminent domain." — For the allusion to the Jewish spies see *Numbers* 13. — The Duke of Wellington fought Napoleon's forces in Spain before he did at Waterloo. — The "fair Fidele" is evidently Mrs. Lowell. — Observe the pun with which paragraph 7 ends. — Why does Lowell compare the robins to fire-worshippers? — The second sentence of paragraph 8 is an echo of Wordsworth's

There are a thousand feeding like one,

from *Written in March*. In the third perhaps there is a reminiscence of Shelley's *Skylark*,

We look before and after,  
And pine for what is not.

— Pecksniff was a hypocrite in Dickens' *Martin Chuzzlewit*. The robin pretends to be as ascetic as a hermit, whose vows forbid him to use flesh foods. Explain "lobby member."

Paragraph 10. The familiar stanza,

Birds in their little nests agree,  
And 'tis a shameful sight  
When children of one family  
Fall out and chide and fight,

is from Dr. Watt's poem on *Love between Brothers and Sisters*. — Explain "armed neutrality." — The quotation is from Shakespeare's *King Henry V*, 1, 2.

Paragraph 11. What sort of people is Lowell making sport of in the sentence about "the famous Battle of the Pines"? — What would be the moral of Æsop's fable about the jays? Compose the fable, using the material Lowell supplies here. — The last sentence parodies and puns on Goldsmith's

And fools who came to scoff remained to pray,

in *The Deserted Village*,

Paragraph 12. Shady Hill was the home of Lowell's friend Charles Eliot Norton, at this time in Europe.

Paragraph 13. Saint Preux was the lover of Julie, heroine of Rousseau's *La Nouvelle Heloise* — a very pattern of a lover. What is the point of comparison between the crow trying to be tenderly sentimental and a Mississippi boatman quoting Tennyson? — The Kanakas were the aborigines of the Hawaiian Islands.

Paragraph 14. Edward E. Hale was a Boston clergyman, author of *The Man without a Country*.

Paragraph 15. Figaro is a character in the plays of Beaumarchais. He is gay, lively, talkative, and full of stratagems. — Mr. H. Dixon wrote a book of travels called *New America*. The Oneida Community in Central New York, like the Mormons of Salt Lake City, held peculiar views on marriage. What feeling does Lowell express in the sentence, "An intelligent . . . matters"? — Chateaubriand was a French essayist. The quotation from his letters (written in America) means, "my horses grazing at some distance." Notice the pun in "mount the high horse."

Paragraph 18. The truce of God was established by the Church in that part of the Middle Ages when secular governments were weak and miscellaneous warfare common. It was a suspension of feuds and hostilities over holy days, including Sunday.

Paragraph 19. Mount Auburn is a cemetery in Cambridge, not far from Elmwood. "Sweet" is a reminiscence of Goldsmith's *Deserted Village*,

Sweet Auburn! loveliest village of the plain.

— *Eheu fugaces!* is, being translated, "Alas, transitory things!" — Fresh Pond is near Cambridge. — Ellengowan is a ruined gypsy village in Scott's *Guy Mannering*.

Paragraph 20. *Trouvaille* means "a find." Captain Kidd was a famous pirate, whose treasure, though supposedly buried somewhere on our Atlantic coast, has never been found. — By "the most poetic of ornithologists" Lowell means the Wilson for whom this thrush was named. — Lowell coins the verb *oölogize*; what does it mean? How did the messmates of the Ancient Mariner feel toward him? See Coleridge's poem. — The Trastevere is the workingman's quarter in Rome. A woman of this quarter (a "Trasteverina") not infrequently sits on the doorstep to remove vermin from the head of a child. — *Eheu* means "Alas!" Ovid was a Latin poet; his *Metamorphoses* is his most famous work, an account of the change of human beings to animals or plants. The plaintive note of this bird would have suggested to Ovid some pathetic tale of transformation.

Paragraph 21. The "involuntary pun" is between the words *mansuetude* and *accustomed*. — How did Penn treat the Indians? How does Lowell say the Puritans treated

them? *Hebraism* means the doctrine of the Bible, the Old Testament having been written in Hebrew. — Whom does Lowell mean by “featherless bipeds”?

IV. What attitude has Lowell toward the birds and squirrels in his garden? Does he talk of them as if they were human beings? Is this essay interesting to you? Explain your answer. Do you find in it any of the qualities Lowell admired in White's *Natural History*? Is Lowell's humor unconscious? How does this essay show the writer's scholarship? Is it in any way pedantic?

#### THE VISION OF SIR LAUNFAL

I. The old romances tell us that the Holy Grail was the cup from which Christ drank at the Last Supper (*St. Matthew* 24: 26ff.), and in which Joseph of Arimathea caught the blood from His side, as He hung on the Cross. Joseph became a missionary to Britain, and carried with him the sacred cup. There it remained many years in charge of his descendants. Finally one of them broke the monastic vows that were upon him, and the Grail disappeared. The young knights of romance often undertook the adventure of finding it, but no one was fit to behold the sacred symbol who was not spotless in heart and life. Their quest, therefore, was usually unsuccessful. Sir Launfal makes the quest of the Holy Grail his first important adventure. The choice of subject throws Lowell's time back into the Middle Ages, and justifies the use of many archaic words. The tale, however, is Lowell's own. There was a Sir Launfal in the old romances, but his story was not at all like this. (See *Launfal* in *Four Lais of Marie de France*, in the series called “Arthurian Romances Unrepresented in Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*,”



published by Nutt, London; sold in America by Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons.) Lowell's moral would hardly have been possible in a mediæval tale; for, in spite of their boasted humility, the knights were full of the pride of rank.

II. The poem is a narrative in two parts, each part preceded by a "prelude." The use of preludes is excellent in this poem, for many years are supposed to elapse between the first part of the narrative and the second, and the prelude to Part II makes the necessary break in narration. They are also good because the description of nature in each prelude strengthens the atmosphere of the part of the narrative that follows it.

We shall study the entire narrative before we take up either prelude.

III. Read Part I and Part II. Point out the line where Launfal is said to go to sleep; and the one where he is said to wake up. Justify the use of "Vision" in the title. Express the moral thought of the poem in your own words. Do you think the two verses, *Matthew* 25: 40, 45, summarize morally the two parts of the narrative? You have noticed that the poem is a story about *life*, and yet that the *nature* element is very strong in it, and re-enforces the atmosphere. With the story clearly in mind, study the following: —

Part I	Atmosphere	{ Youth, Launfal (physically) Summer Landscape	} light life warmth joy
		{ Castle Leper Launfal (spiritually)	} cold, gloom darkness disease
	Contrast		

Part II	{ Atmosphere  Contrast	{ Old Age Launfal (physically) Leper IV-VI Winter Landscape	{ cold darkness weakness poverty
		{ Stanza III Launfal (spiritually) Castle and Launfal in X Leper in VII, VIII	{ brightness sunshine warmth beauty gladness

This is a poem with a happy ending: light, life, and joy win for themselves everything that has been under the power of darkness, disease, and cold — Launfal's heart, the Leper, the castle.

IV. Read the narrative again, this time to understand every word, figure, and allusion. Use the following notes and questions:

Line 100: This was a common vow for a knight to take on beginning a quest.

Line 102: *Begin* means "have," as sometimes in early English. "I will never sleep in a bed till I *have* found the Grail."

Line 103: Rushes were spread over the floor before the day of carpets. Line 104: He superstitiously looked for a dream to guide him in starting on his quest.

Line 115: A metaphor begins in "outpost" and continues through the stanza. The army of Summer besieges this outpost of Winter. Explain the figure in detail.

Line 130: *Maiden* means "young," "on his first adventure."

Line 131: Imagine the brilliant Launfal framed in the dark arch of the castle gate.

Lines 132-136 continue the figure of war above (lines 115 etc.).

Line 138: *Maiden* means "new," "unused;" compare line 130.

Lines 142-144: To what is the castle compared?

Line 147: Explain "made morn."

Line 149: "Sāte" is an old form of the verb, equivalent to *sat*.

Line 166: See the story of the Widow's mite. *Mark* 12:42.

Line 167: In one of his letters Lowell says, "God is the secret, the spring, source and center of all Beauty." The divinity of our common humanity is the thread that is "out of sight," and yet unites us all in one brotherhood, as a thread holds together a necklace of beads. We are kind to each other not merely because it is duty, but because we feel kindly and sympathetic. Duty is a good motive, but love is a far higher one.

Line 171: Explain the figure.

Line 172: What does "store" mean?

Lines 240-241: Contrast with line 113.

Lines 242-243: Explain the metaphor.

Line 244: Contrast with lines 109, 111.

Line 246: For "again" refer to line 140.

Lines 247-249: Explain the metaphor comparing morning to an old person.

Line 252: Compare this Launfal with the one described in Part I, Stanza III.

Line 254: *Recked* means "cared for."

Line 255: Knights engaged in holy adventures often wore on their armor the sign of the cross; for example, those who went on the Crusades.

Lines 56, 57: Explain the meaning.

Line 259: Explain the metaphor in "mail" and "barbed."

Line 261: He tried to keep himself warm by thinking of a visit he had made, in his quest, to a warm country — a desert. Notice the progress of the caravan toward him. In the distance it is only a crooked black line; gradually it approaches till he can count the camels. Explain the beautiful description of the oasis in simile and metaphor (lines 269–272).

Line 273: Before the imaginary camels reach the imaginary spring, Launfal is wakened from his day-dream by the leper's voice.

Lines 276, 278: The two similes are explained by the nature of the leper's disease; it turns the sufferer's skin white. Line 279: "Desolate" because lepers are outcasts.

Lines 280ff.: This time Launfal recognizes in the leper a brother man — an image of the Perfect Man. Explain the metonymy in lines 282–285. In this prayer (lines 286, 287) Launfal responds to the leper's appeal (line 273).

Line 288: The leper's look accuses Launfal of his former pride.

Line 290: Compare line 158.

Line 294: Think of what you have read in the Bible of the Oriental custom of putting ashes on the head as a sign of grief or repentance, and explain the metonymy.

Lines 300, 301: Explain the meaning.

Line 307: See *Acts* 3:2, 10. Pillars are among the usual decorations of beautiful church doors.

Line 308: See *John* 14:6; 10:9. The One who has taught man, by word and by example, the way to make himself more like the divine.

Lines 310–313: Explain the figures.

Line 314: Force of the contradiction in "softer" and "silence." Notice the melody of this passage.

Line 315: See *John* 6: 20.

Lines 320, 321: See *Matthew* 26: 26–28.

Lines 326, 327: Explain the meaning.

Line 328: Refer to line 108.

Line 329: Explain the meaning.

Line 330: *Idle* means “useless.” Explain line 331.

Line 332: What “stronger mail” can one wear? See *Ephesians* 6: 14–17.

Lines 334ff.: Launfal showed by his actions that he had understood the lesson of his dream.

Line 337: See line 142.

Lines 338–341: See line 119 and the metaphor following.

Line 343: Observe the personification.

Line 345: The “hall” was the large, central, common room of the castle; the “bowers” the more private rooms.

Line 346: “North Countree” (see also line 116) is a common expression in the old ballads — one of the many archaisms brought into the poem because of its mediæval *motif*.

V. We have now to study the preludes. The poem opens with eight lines that explain the value of a prelude in leading up to the mood of the work to follow. We are likely to associate the word “prelude” with music, and Lowell therefore discusses the prelude from the musical point of view. The organist is extemporizing; he feels his theme vaguely (line 2); as he goes on, his theme grows more definite in his mind; and his prelude leads gradually up to the body of his composition. A beautiful metaphor in lines 7, 8 compares with the dawn of the morning the gradual approach of the prelude to the main composition. Lowell’s preludes, ought then, to feel for his theme, dimly at first, by producing the atmosphere of the following part, and to lead gradually up to the

story of Sir Launfal. The preludes emphasize the nature element which does so much to give atmosphere to the narrative we have already studied.

VI. The first prelude, dealing with nature and emphasizing the atmosphere of Part I, must have *summer* for its subject. Read it with the following outline:—

1. Nature inspires man (lines 9–12),
  - a. to better life (lines 13–20);
  - b. without pay (lines 21–32).
2. She inspires him through the June day.
  - a. Description of a June day (lines 33–60).
  - b. Effect on man's character (lines 61–92):
    - (1) makes him happier,
    - (2) makes him better;
      - (a) reminds Launfal of his vow to seek the Grail.

Think the prelude through once more, with the outline, and try to see how it begins "doubtfully and far away," with the general influence of nature; then through the description of summer and a statement of its influence on the moral nature of man in general, brings us up gradually to the story of Launfal. The last two lines form a transition to the narrative.

Read the prelude again carefully, with these notes and questions:—

Lines 9, 10: Wordsworth's *Ode on Intimations of Immortality* expresses the thought that our souls, having come from heaven, are nearer heaven in infancy than in later life.

The kernel of the poem is in the fifth stanza.

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:  
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,  
Hath had elsewhere its setting,  
And cometh from afar:

Not in entire forgetfulness,  
 And not in utter nakedness,  
 But trailing clouds of glory do we come  
 From God, who is our home:  
 Heaven lies about us in our infancy!  
 Shades of the prison-house begin to close  
 Upon the growing Boy,  
 But He beholds the light, and whence it flows,  
 He sees it in his joy;  
 The Youth, who daily farther from the East  
 Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,  
 And by the vision splendid  
 Is on his way attended;  
 At length the Man perceives it die away,  
 And fade into the light of common day.

Lowell does not believe that this is true (lines 11, 12). In spite of our faults and imperfections we feel every day high influence. Whom did Moses meet on Mount Sinai? (*Exodus* 19.) See also Lowell's *Letters*, I, 139, and the reference to Sinai in *Bibliolatres*.

Lines 13-20: Five objects or forces of nature are mentioned as inspiring us in mature life: the skies with their attitude of tender care; the winds with their warning and exhortations; the mountain, inciting us to be courageous; the wood with its blessing; the restless sea, urging us to be active and energetic. Explain "druid" (line 17).

Lines 21-24: In this world we have to pay even for things we do not wish to have. Lines 25-28: At Vanity Fair we pay good gold for worthless things: our lives for a little notice and fame, such as was given of old to the court jester with his cap and bells; our soul's salvation for useless, temporary pleasures. Lines 29-32: The influence of nature costs nothing, and is worth more than all the rest.

Lines 35, 36: Explain the metaphor.

Lines 39-42: Explain the meaning.

Line 43: "Flush" refers to the colors of flowers and blossoms.

Line 46: Explain the figure.

Line 52: What is the antecedent of "it"?

Lines 53-55: Explain the meaning.

Line 56: What does "nice" mean?

Lines 57-60: Explain the metaphor.

Lines 61ff.: Has June ever affected you in this way?

Line 78: Explain the metaphor.

Line 87: Why "unscarred"?

Lines 91-93: Explain the metaphor.

This prelude is not the only place in which Lowell has expressed his love for the month of June. If you have time, you should read also *Under the Willows, Al Fresco*, and *The Nightingale in the Study*. This preference was well-known among his friends. Holmes began a poem to Lowell with,

This is your month, the month of 'perfect days.'

— HOLMES: *To James Russell Lowell*.

The influence of nature on the soul is discussed in the first stanza of Lowell's *Freedom*, written about the same time as *Sir Launfal*. In Lowell's *Letters* (I, 164) we find the following passage: "This same name of God is written all over the world in little phenomena that occur under our eyes every moment, and I confess that I feel very much inclined to hang my head with Pizarro when I cannot translate those hieroglyphics into my own vernacular."

VII. The prelude to Part II deals with *winter*, as the nature element of Part II is represented by winter. The prelude is not altogether gloomy, though it is wintry, because gloom would foretell a sad ending. The good cheer in the castle



foreshadows the hospitality which Launfal shows after he awakens (stanza X). Study the prelude with the following notes and questions:—

Line 174: What effect has the sentence-inversion?

Line 179: Note the harmony of sound and sense.

Lines 181–210: These lines are constructed on a metaphor comparing the brook to an architect, and the ice above it to a roof. Mark all the words of building and architecture that belong in this figure. Think of the shapes and figures you have seen in thin ice covering ponds — or even puddles of water beside the road. Use your dictionary freely for architectural terms, and remember that the material used by Architect Brook was all ice; then these lines will be clear to you. Explain lines 205–210 by referring to lines 187–196. In his *Letters* (I, 164) Lowell says he found this picture on an evening walk to Watertown, “with the new moon before me and a sky exactly like that in Page’s evening landscape. Orion was rising behind me, and, as I stood on the hill just before you enter the village, the stillness of the fields around me was delicious, broken only by the tinkle of a little brook, which runs too swiftly for Frost to catch it.” See also the winter picture in *An Indian Summer Reverie*, lines 148–196.

Line 212: Explain the figure.

Lines 215, 216: What figure in “gulf” and “tide”?

Lines 217, 218: Explain the metaphor.

Lines 219, 220: Explain the figure.

Lines 221–224: Explain the figure that describes the movement of the sparks through the soot on the inside of the chimney.

Line 226: In this prelude we find the name of Launfal used earlier than in the first prelude (line 94). We are already interested in him, and ready to continue the story

of his adventures. What word tells you that many years have elapsed since he set out, a young knight, to seek the Grail? What figure is found in lines 226-232? Notice harmony of sound and thought in these lines.

Line 233: Explain the simile. Does a sudden, loud noise ever affect one as a sudden, bright light does?

Lines 238, 239: Explain the metaphor.

Lines 174-180 have expressed something of the desolation of winter. The picture of the brook is all beauty. The picture of the castle gives the gay, social aspect of winter. The last paragraph of the prelude, of which Launfal is the central figure, comes back to the note of desolation. This is made necessary by his condition and by the approach to Part II, which opens most gloomily. The gaiety inside the castle makes the darkness outside only more cold and lonely by contrast.

VIII. Read *The Vision of Sir Launfal* from beginning to end, aloud. Think constantly of expressing the meaning you have found in it, and also of bringing out the music of the poetry.

### THE PRESENT CRISIS

I. This poem (1844) was inspired by the questions that came up in connection with the proposed annexation of Texas. If Texas should be annexed to the United States, the slave territory would be extended, and the slavery faction would become stronger. The Abolitionists, therefore, opposed the annexation. The poem calls on voters to stand for the right, knowing that right will win at last. It exhorts men to put themselves into the class of heroes, who have sacrificed their own present advantage for the good of the race.

For Lowell's interest in abolition, see his biographies.

A "crisis" is a time of decision — a moment when conditions may change for better or for worse.

II. Read the poem with the following outline:

Theme: It is every person's duty to help on the work that *his* generation has to do for the advancement of society.

1. Mankind are one in spirit (lines 1-20).

a. All feel the *good* done in one place;

b. All feel the *evil* done in one place.

2. There comes to every man and nation a *crisis* — a time to decide for or against Truth (lines 21-40).

a. Truth will always win in the end.

3. If we choose the evil, we endanger those that come after us (lines 41-50).

4. It is noble to side with a truth that is unpopular and has yet to fight its way to acceptance (lines 51-70).

a. The heroes of earth have done so;

b. Progress could not be made without such heroes.

5. Every generation has a new test of its devotion to truth (lines 71-90).

a. We are not brave nor progressive if we simply agree to truths already accepted by society.

III. Possibly the poem seems a little difficult to understand in detail. Lowell was so full of enthusiasm that his mind hurried from figure to figure, and he has not given us, on this subject on which he felt so deeply, as smooth and rhetorically logical a poem as he might write in a calmer mood. There is wonderful force, however, in the crowded metaphors and in the vigorous lines — a force that comes not from polished rhetoric, but from the intense moral feeling of the poet. The following notes will help you to understand some of the more difficult lines.

Lines 1, 2: Notice the metaphor. Line 3: The "East" is the place of dawn. Line 4: *Manhood* includes self-direction, freedom. Line 5: Explain the metaphor comparing liberty to the blossom of the century-plant.

Line 11: The third stanza is the reverse of the first. Compare the two, line for line. Line 13: "His sympathies with God" are his aspirations for a fuller life. Line 15: Without the soul of a *man* (self-directing, free) the slave is no better than a corpse — less noble than the dust from which he was made.

Line 6: Return, now, to the second stanza, which continues the thought of the first. The metaphor compares the success of a reform to the birth of a child into the world. Line 7: Social systems are completely changed by some reforms. Line 9: Nations wondering what great change will come next. Line 10: As soon as one reform is completed, another, perhaps a greater, begins to be agitated.

Line 16: The fourth stanza explains the facts stated in the first and third. Line 17: The figure refers to the telegraph. Line 19: Explain "ocean-sundered." What figure in "frame" and "fibers"? "Joy" refers to the first stanza, "shame" to the third. Line 20: This line is a summary of the four stanzas.

Line 22: Is it natural to personify Truth and Falsehood here? Line 23: People revealed themselves as good or evil by taking part for or against the Messiah. Line 24: *Matthew* 25: 32, 33. Line 25: The decision made at the moment of crisis can never be changed; it becomes history.

Line 26: *Party* is "side." Line 27: *Doom* is "judgment." If one does not accept the good, he is judged. *Luke* 9: 5.

Lines 31, 32: We know little about the past. A few important events and movements are recorded; they show in

the sea of oblivion as islands, the tops of sunken mountains, appear above the water of the ocean. Line 33: Busy with the affairs of the world, no one sees the need of social reform. Line 34: "Winnowers" and "chaff" repeat the thought of the earlier metaphor "Messiah" and "goats" (lines 23, 24). Explain. Line 35: No one realizes that the decision is so important till it has been made.

Line 36: "Avenger" of wrong. Line 37: Old social systems and the better order of things. The *Word* is "Messiah" again. *John* 1:1. Do you find this true in the history of human progress? Line 38: Is a new truth always persecuted before it prevails? With lines 39, 40 compare lines 28-30.

Lines 41: Compare line 35. Line 42: Explain the metaphor. Line 43: Compare line 33 — our absorption in worldly affairs. Line 44: The great oracle (line 43) was the one that lived in the cave at Delphi, Greece. What is this voice whispering in the soul? Does a compromise usually strengthen the wrong side? How much harder, then, is the task of crushing the stronger evil later!

Line 46: Thus far Lowell has been stating social principles. Now he mentions the great evil of his day, the specific one he has had in mind all the time. All evils are giants, sons of Force and Ignorance, but slavery is most cruel of all. You can find a description of the terrible Cyclops in the story of Ulysses (Odysseus) in your Greek mythology. Is it true that evil has "drenched the earth with blood"? Destructive Slavery has made a desert about himself, and now reaches for new territory — tries to make himself strong enough to destroy a new generation.

Line 51: Explain the figure. Line 54: *Doubting* means "hesitating," till the struggle is over, and everyone boasts of holding a faith that, till recently, he denied.

Line 57: They were working for society, not for themselves; yet society killed them. *Acts* 7:54-60. Line 58: The beam of the balance of justice; compare lines 28-30, 39-40. Lines 59, 60: They foresee the triumph of their cause because they are mastered by a divine faith; their own high purpose gives them faith in other men and in the moral order of the universe.

Line 61: Is this history — have “heretics” been burned for every advance society has made? Line 63: The “mounts of anguish” are the “Calvaries” where martyrs have suffered at every stage of the race’s progress. A reformer dies, but he does not turn back (line 62). Each generation takes one step forward in social progress. Line 64: Prophet-hearts foresee the triumph (lines 58-60) through their sympathy with the divine; they have confidence in humanity because of their own worth.

Line 66: The movement of the race is always forward. The cause that calls for martyrs today offers a field for selfish mercenaries and traitors tomorrow. *Matthew* 26:14, 15. Line 68: But there is still place for work and suffering *in front* of the majority; see lines 61, 62. Lines 69, 70: Finally society comes up to the position the martyr has taken, and makes a hero of him. Explain the figure.

Lines 71-73: We must not think the times of our fathers were good enough for us and for those that come after us; we must be martyrs and heroes, and lead forward. Explain the figures. Lines 74, 75: We are proud of our New England ancestry. But what were they in their own day? Persecuted exiles, outcasts for a principle now established in America.

Line 76: “Present” in their day — not satisfied with the social conquests of the past. Define “iconoclast.” Line 77:

Persecution did not change them. Lines 78-80: If we profess only the truths they established, we are false to the principle of social progress, which drove them across the sea to plant a freer nation; we are three hundred years behind the times, instead of leading forward. Explain line 79.

Line 81: Traitors to their principle of progress when we cling to *their* time instead of moving on to *our own* present and future. Explain the figure in line 82. Emphasize "new-lit." Line 83: Ought we to be shut in by the knowledge and beliefs of earlier days? We ought to know more than our ancestors, to believe better than they. Lines 83-85: Shall we persecute persons who refuse to cling to the past? Explain the figure. Line 86: *Uncouth* is "out-of-date," "ridiculous." Line 88: Emphasize "before," as you emphasized "in front" in line 68. Emphasize "ourselves," and in line 89 "our." "Pilgrims," i. e. leaders of a new movement; "Mayflower," the movement; "winter"—the Pilgrims landed in December. Line 90: Explain the figure.

IV. Study the meter, rime and stanza of the poem. Is it at all irregular?

V. Read the poem again with the outline, this time aloud. Memorize five sentences or parts of sentences that are, you feel, worth remembering all your life.

VI. This poem was a favorite one with anti-slavery speakers. Speaking of certain lines, George William Curtis said: "Wendell Phillips winged with their music and tipped with their flame the dart of his fervid appeal and manly scorn." The stanza beginning "For humanity sweeps onward" was used by Sumner in the speech that provoked the attack of Preston Brooks. See Greenslet's *Lowell*, 79, 80.

The poem was written specifically against compromise with the slavery power; but it discusses chiefly a universal prin-

inciple. This principle is contained in the statement of the theme above. Find it in the poem, in Lowell's words.

VII. Write a paragraph on what seems to you "The Present Crisis" of the year in which you study this poem: is it municipal reform, civil-service reform, some industrial problem, or what? Use as an introduction to your paragraph a general statement of one's duty to society — the universal principle which Lowell has been trying to impress on us, and which will be as true a thousand years hence as it is now.

#### ODE RECITED AT THE HARVARD COMMEMORATION

I. The occasion of this poem was a service held in honor of the Harvard men who had been killed in the Civil War. The service was held on July twenty-first, 1865, on a lawn near the college grounds, and many prominent men were present. Lowell's recitation of his great *Ode* was most affecting. Underwood, in his *James Russell Lowell*, page 68, describes the scene.

II. The *Ode* was written with the greatest speed. Two days before the services, Lowell had not begun it. On the day before, he says, "Something gave me a jog, and the whole thing came out of me with a rush. I sat up all night writing it out clear, and took it on the morning of the day to Child. 'I have something, but don't know yet what it is or whether it will do. Look at it and tell me.' He went a little way apart under an elm-tree in the college yard. He read a passage here and there, brought it back to me, and said, 'Do? I should think so! Don't you be scared.' And I wasn't, but virtue enough had gone out of me to make me weak for a fortnight after." (*Letters of Lowell*.) See index to *Letters*, edited by Norton, and index to Scudder's *Life of Lowell*; also Greenslet's *Lowell*, pages 161-163.



A poem so hurriedly written necessarily lacks the rhetorical polish of one which the author has revised again and again. The *Ode* is extremely condensed in expression, and is full of involved and difficult sentences and of figures of speech so closely following each other that they hardly escape being "mixed." Moreover, transition and coherence between stanzas is not always clear. But the sentiment is exalted, and the imagery is noble. The poem is well worth all the study required to master its difficulties.

III. The motto of Harvard College suggested the general theme of the poem — *Veritas*. The thesis is this: The soldiers who went from Harvard into the war were following the teachings of Alma Mater in fighting for Truth; and their lives are not wasted, because their influence will be an eternal blessing to the race.

In the preliminary reading of the poem, use the following outline as an aid:

Stanzas 1-3. The soldiers worshipped Truth with deeds; that is, they actually *did* something for the advancement of the race. We offer only words.

Stanza 4. Is there nothing we can do to make our lives helpful to those that come after us?

Stanza 5. The man who follows Truth will have battles to fight.

Stanza 6. Lincoln was the best exponent of the spirit of American democracy.

Stanza 7. Service by action is higher than service by thought and word merely.

Stanza 8. While I try to praise the living, I mourn for the dead. Yet they are not dead; their noble example still lives and inspires us.

Stanza 9. The fame of the individual man passes away,

but the spiritual bequest of the hero remains to the race.

Stanza 10. Our soldiers have proved our democratic nation a country of noble men.

Stanza 11. A song of praise for the soldiers, who have saved the nation, and of gladness for our nationality preserved.

Stanza 12. An apostrophe to our country, expressing the poet's ardent patriotism.

IV. Study the poem with the following notes, questions, and paraphrases.

Lines 1-3: Explain the metaphor comparing poetry to a bird of weak wing, and action to a bird of powerful pinions. Line 5: Is the poet's offering worthy? The robin is not a bird of high flight. Line 6: The antecedent of "who" is "their." Explain "nobler verse." Line 7: "Song" is appositive to "robin's leaf" (line 5). Line 8: The soldiers and generals present. Line 9: A "strophe" is a stanza of an ode. A "squadron" is a platoon of soldiers; the figure of line 6 is continued. Line 10: "Battle-odes" is appositive to "squadron-strophes." Notice the double sense of "lines." Line 11: "Feathered" goes back to the figure in lines 1-3. Line 12: To buoy up and save a gracious memory. Line 13: Find "Lethe" in your mythology. "Grave" is appositive to "ooze." In a poem in honor of soldiers, the life of action will, of course, be exalted above the life of thought.

Line 15: The "Reverend Mother" is the Alma Mater, Harvard. Line 16: "Wisest" is explained in the next lines. A student looks for intellectual truth; but there is a higher kind of truth. Line 17: For "mystic tome" see the seal of Harvard College, on which the word "Veritas" appears. Line 19: Until recent years Greek and Latin were the chief

studies in the college course. Line 20: Reference to the elaborate nomenclature of science. Line 21: Astronomy took the place of the old astrology. Line 22: Mere intellectual knowledge is like poetry, "weak-winged" (lines 1-3). With line 23 compare line 13. Line 24: "Date," or limit, of our existence. Line 25: With "clear fame" compare Milton's *Lycidas*, line 70. Line 27: Harvard never taught that the mere intellectual conception of truth was the end of college training. Line 28: "Trumpet-call" is "teaching," in metaphor, appropriate here because duty had called these sons of Harvard to battle. Line 32: "Half-virtues" because they do not require the strenuous courage of the war-like virtues. Line 34: But [thy teaching was] rather. Line 35: "Sponsors" were the men who founded Harvard in 1636. Line 37: The essence of Truth, the germ or grain, of which the name is only the useless hull. Line 40: "Seed-grain" continues the metaphor in "sheath" (line 38). "Life," "seed-grain," "food," and "thing" are appositive to "Veritas."

Lines 42-45: The scholar seeks Truth thus. The "cast mantle" of words expressing a truth already established, no longer progressive. See *II Kings* 2:14. Line 51: He only who *acts* Truth knows it thoroughly. Line 58: See line 45. Lines 60-62: See line 45. The "lifeless creed" is the "cast mantle." Line 63: Truth, pictured in the garb of Athene.

Lines 66, 67: Life spoken of under the metaphor of a stream. Line 69: *For* means "because of." Line 71: Some immortal work to do for society. Line 73: Explain the metaphor. Line 74: *See* means "know." Line 78: Notice the figure in "hiving." Line 82: See *Sir Launfal*, Prelude I. Lines 83-87: The metaphor is taken from a puppet-show, where the figures are moved about by wires; for a little while the pasteboard figures act extravagantly; then the

manager tosses them into a box, to await the next exhibition. Lines 74–87 are the cynic's answer to the questions asked in lines 68–73. Now Lowell stops the cynic with "But stay!" and begins his own answer to the questions. Line 90: We get the fate we deserve. Line 91: The subjects of "is" are "something" (line 91), "something" (line 93), "something" (line 95), "seed" (line 97), "conscience" (line 101), "gladness" (line 102), "sense" (line 103), "light" (line 105). Line 92: "The cynic's sneer" in lines 74–87. Lines 93, 94 answer lines 70, 71. Line 97: Explain the metaphor. Line 107: "Beaconing" to a glorious future for each one of us. Express in your own words Lowell's answer to the questions in lines 68–73.

Lines 108, 109: The "ampler fates" are those referred to in line 107. Lines 110–112: Explain the metaphor. "Youth's vain-glorious weeds" are boasting words and promises. Line 113: "But [this path leads] up." The world makes progress by means of battle, not by means of words. *Creeds* are "beliefs." The battle-figure for life continues to line 121. Line 118: A man may serve society worthily in time of peace. Line 122: Some day the smouldering passion behind the discussion will, by the initiative of one side or the other, the right or the wrong, burst into actual combat. For the allusion in lines 123–125, see *I Kings* 18:20–40; *Jeremiah* 19:5. Line 126: "The war of tongue and pen" is the "thought" in line 122; discussion of a question. The Lincoln-Douglas debates are a good example in this connection. Line 129: "Pillared state" is the subject of "shakes," and "helpless" (line 128) modifies "state." Is this the history of social reform — first discussion and debate, and then, when passion has risen high on both sides, battle and conflict? Review the history of the agitation against slavery in our country. Line 130: We wooed

with words a pleasant social ideal. Line 131: The battle-stage being reached. Line 132: The "praise," or reputation, of being a reformer. Line 134: See line 112. Line 135: Words that mean nothing. Line 136: Genius for speech, for which your deeds are not mates. Line 139: As bravely in the study as on the battle-field. How? Line 140: Fate kindly provides more than one way of giving life for Truth. But after all (lines 141-149), to fight in physical battle for Truth is heroic after the fashion of the heroes of olden time — strong, natural, assured, self-sufficient men.

Line 150: This stanza "was not in the *Ode* as originally recited, but added immediately after." "Such" refers to "God's plan and measure of a stalwart man" as described in lines 140-149. Lincoln was assassinated about three months before the *Ode* was written. About a year and a half before, Lowell had written an article for *The North American Review* (January, 1864, "The President's Policy"), in which he had praised Lincoln in a manner similar to this. See Lowell's letter of January 16, 1886, to R. W. Gilder. Many of the cultivated people of the nation could, at that time, see in him only a crude Westerner. Line 152: "Ashes" among Eastern nations are worn as a sign of mourning. Line 154: "Present things," *i. e.* praise of Harvard men. Line 156: What old burial custom is referred to? This reference constitutes what figure of speech? Line 157: Is in her dotage — cannot do anything new and original. Line 161: In Lincoln she created a man after a new pattern, of new material. Line 165: Had Lincoln the three qualities mentioned here? Line 167: A shepherd leads his flock ("charge"). Line 170: See line 148. Lincoln was of most humble parentage. Line 173: "They" are "the people" (line 169). He was lacking in outward graces. Line 175: What figure in "sure-footed"? Lines 176,

177: A well-tempered Damascus blade can be bent into a circle, and will spring out straight again for the fencer's thrust. This is a good metaphor for a nature adaptable yet persistent and consistent. Lines 178-183: Explain the metaphor. "Sea-mark," *i. e.* can be seen by vessels a long distance out; but if it is often hidden by vapors, it is an unreliable aid. Are the greatest minds always as practically useful to common men? Think of the world's great philosophers. Line 184: See line 170. Line 185: Or, if he has Old World characteristics, they are those of Europe when she was more primitive and free, before she had such artificial class distinctions as now. "Equal scheme," *i. e.* scheme for equality. Line 189: True race of primitive men, in whom, at least according to Wordsworth, it is easy to trace the fundamental virtues. Plutarch wrote the lives of a great number of classic heroes. Lines 192-195: A strong man does not care for present popularity. He knows that the future will justify him. Line 196: So Lincoln did. Line 200: Time will show whether he was a wise president or not. Lines 201-203: Certain men have great temporary fame. Line 204: "Standing" goes with "fame" (line 205). Lines 206-208: Is this characterization of Lincoln correct? With line 208 compare line 162. "First" means "foremost:" the American who best embodies American principles and ideals.

Line 209: The stanza begins with two rather long time clauses: "As long as" (line 209) and "as long as" (line 214) are their connectives; the correlative beginning the main clause is "so long" (line 216). Lines 209-211 go back to the question in line 70. Lines 211, 212: The figure is that of chariot-wheels turning about the immovable pole on which they are placed. Perhaps the pole represents the line of social progress, on which the great men of earth do their work. Line

215: See line 72. Lines 216ff.: The sentence is very complicated. "Faith" (line 216) and "mood" (line 218) are the subjects; "shall win" (line 223) and "shall be" (line 224) are the verbs; "wisdom" (line 224) and "virtue" (line 226) are complements of "shall be" (line 224). "Names" (line 217) has three appositives in line 218. The adjective clause "that thanks (line 219) and has" (line 222) modifies "mood" (line 218). The participles "feeling" (line 220) and "set" (line 222) go with the relative "that" (line 219). *Ethereal* (line 218) means "exalted." Line 223: All other skills and gifts dear to culture. See lines 19-21. The sentence asserts that courageous service of society in time of danger is the work we praise most highly and longest. Lines 229-231: That is why we hold this service for the Harvard soldiers.

Line 232: The Promised Land is described in *Numbers* 13 and 14 — "a land flowing with milk and honey," to the occupation of which the Israelites had long looked forward, as the Abolitionists had looked forward to complete liberty in America. Line 234: "They," *i. e.*, the soldiers. Line 235: Explain the metaphor in "nettle." Lines 240-244: In the conventional manner, Lowell speaks of poetry in the terms of song accompanied on the lyre. You will understand the spirit of these lines when you know that Lowell lost three nephews in the Civil War, and that, since his only son had died in infancy, he felt for his nephews something of a father's interest and affection. Line 252: Lowell checks himself in the expression of his grief; for the main thing in life is not reaping the reward of labor but doing the work in the proper spirit. For "grapes of Canaan" refer to the Promised Land (line 232). Line 260: Saints wear aureoles. Line 265: *Orient* means "light;" referring to the direction in which the sun rises. Line 271; "Morn" refers to "orient" (line 165). Their shields of Hope

for the future of the race to which they have given their lives.

Line 272: But can we hope to keep forever this exalted inspiration that they now impart to us? Shall we not forget in time their example? Are not all men forgotten, save a few? All books, save a few of the best? — Are lines 274–286 a correct estimate of the past? Notice the metaphor in lines 282, 283. Notice the epigram in line 285. Line 286: Even the things that seem most stable are not. Line 289: Men try to make themselves immortal names by building tombs; clever men are famous as long as they live. Line 291: But we are “leaves,” not fruit, and produce nothing. Line 292: Will not these soldier-boys be forgotten when we, their personal friends, have passed away? Line 298: Their “dying” would not be without results (contrast line 291). But the Soul represents the inference that a man’s influence lives only through the generation that he belongs to; society could not progress if this were true (line 300). Line 301: The Soul claims that a man’s spiritual influence lasts longer than his personal fame. Explain the figure. Lines 303–309: Her influence has been too deep and too far-reaching to cease; it passes on from soul to soul in never-ending line. Line 310: The influence of many qualities lasts longer than the man himself. Lines 312–315: The names and personal deeds will be forgotten soon. Explain the metaphor in line 315. Lines 316–328: But their qualities and the principles on which they based their lives have become the permanent possession of the race. Line 316: “Privilege” of character. *Peers* means “equals.” “Privilege” (line 316), “leap” (line 317), “validity” (line 320), are all united in “these” (line 325) as the subject of “are.” Line 328: The race is regenerated and ennobled by principles and qualities such men bequeath to it.



Line 329: Lowell was much incensed by the statement of an English paper that the Northern army was "officered by tailor's apprentices and butcher-boys." The tenth strophe is directed against this remark, prompted by class prejudice. Line 332: The Roundheads were the Puritans, many of them men of lower class, in the English Revolution against Charles I. The Cavaliers were the courtiers. What does any one care now for these class distinctions? Lines 336, 337: Explain the figure. Lines 339, 340: Lowell names three families that ruled in Europe for a long time, and became somewhat enfeebled before the end of their dynasties. Line 343: The "civic wreath" was given to the common soldier in the Roman army for a certain service. Line 345: "Desert" is the noun. "Whose" has "brave" (line 344) for its antecedent. Line 346: And hears the trumpet shout victory. Line 347 refers to the article in the English paper, mentioned above, and the attitude of England during our Civil War.

Line 349: The last strophe has exhibited some anger against England, and some pride in our democracy. Line 355 contains the main clause of this periodic sentence. "Allied" (line 351) modifies "mixture" (line 350). "Renewed" (line 353) modifies "gratitude" (line 352), as also does line 354. Notice the marching movement of the first twenty-three lines of this stanza. "Martial" (line 358), "prouder tread" (line 359), "march" (line 363) correspond with this movement. Lines 365-367: Napoleon would, perhaps, be an example of such a man. The Commemoration service was not held for such a person, but for the very "manhood" of the whole nation. The nation receives from her children, and gives back to them all they have offered her. Line 375: See *Luke* 8:44. The less courageous are

healed of their infirmity by their love of country. Line 376: See line 349. We have a right to patriotic pride. Lines 381ff.: Signs of rejoicing that the result of the war has been re-union and not dis-union. Line 383: Let the flags dip and signal. Line 385: A line of joyful signal fires to be kindled across the country, from Maine, New Hampshire, and New York to the Pacific. Line 392: See strophe X, and our democratic principles. Line 393: She has a welcome for the poor of all nations. Line 395: As it was during the war — the fire of battle. Line 396: *Front* means "forehead." Line 397: Sends the soldiers home to their ordinary work. Line 401: See the explanation for the indignation of Lowell shown in strophe X. How were our differences with England settled at the close of the Civil War? Line 404: The "children" are the states, some of which had tried to wander away.

Line 406: See line 410. "Release" from the sufferings of war; see also "these distempered days." Line 409: Accomplished the abolition of slavery, which had caused so much dissension for many years. Lines 411, 412: The liberated slaves. Line 413: Emphasize "ours." The nation is, as in the eleventh strophe, personified as a woman. Line 416: "Set" lips show little or no red color (see "pale eclipse"). As they are relaxed, the "rosy" color appears. Line 421 describes our country. Line 424: *Reck* means "care."

V. Find out from the Rhetorical Introduction what an ode is, and make a statement about its meter, rime, and stanza-structure. Study the last strophe of this *Ode* for its poetic form. Study the sixth.

VI. Read Underwood's account of the delivery of the poem. Imagine the deep feeling of all the auditors, many of whom were soldiers, and all of whom had lost dear friends in

the war. These wounds were fresh and bleeding. Think of Lowell's own bereavement in the death of his three nephews. Then read the poem aloud, as you think it was read on the twenty-first of July, 1865.

## CHAPTER XVII

### OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

#### REFERENCE BIOGRAPHIES

*Life and Letters*, 2 Vol., by John T. Morse, Jr.; Boston, 1896.

*Life*, by E. E. Brown; Boston, 1894.

*Life*, by Walter Jerrold; New York, 1893.

*An Appreciation*, by Wm. L. Schroeder; London, 1909.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY READING

Old Ironsides, The Height of the Ridiculous, The Last Leaf, To an Insect, The Ballad of the Oysterman, The Deacon's Masterpiece, Parson Turell's Legacy, Dorothy Q, Grandmother's Story of Bunker Hill, Memorial Verses for Harvard Commemoration Services, The Iron Gate.

The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table.

See Appendix I, titles 76 to 78 inclusive.

### THE CHAMBERED NAUTILUS

I. The Autocrat discoursed thus one morning at the Breakfast-Table:

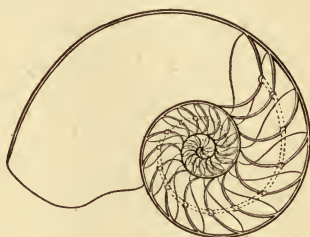
Did I not say to you a little while ago that the universe swam in an ocean of similitudes and analogies? I will not quote Cowley, or Burns, or Wordsworth, just now, to show you what thoughts were suggested to them by the simplest natural objects, such as a flower or a leaf; but I will read you a few lines, if you do not object, suggested by looking at a section of one of those chambered shells to which is given the name of Pearly Nautilus. We need not trouble ourselves about the distinction between this and the Paper Nautilus, the Argonauta of the ancients. The name applied to both shows that each has been compared to a ship,

as you may see more fully in Webster's Dictionary or the Encyclopedia, to which he refers. If you will look into Roget's Bridgewater Treatise, you will find a figure of one of those shells, and a section of it. The last will show you the series of enlarging compartments successively dwelt in by the animal that inhabits the shell, which is built in a widening spiral. Can you find no lesson in this?

And then the Autocrat read them the poem of five stanzas which he had composed to show one of the "similitudes and



The Nautilus



Internal structure of the shell

analogies" that helps to make up the ocean in which "the universe swims."

Read the poem and study the drawings.

II. Since Holmes has told us so clearly that he wishes to show us how a spiritual thought may be expressed in a metaphor relating to the physical world, we should first study his figures, and develop through them his meaning. We will use the following outline:

*Stanza topics*

1. The living nautilus.
2. The broken, abandoned shell.
3. The building of the shell.
4. Thanks for the message.
5. The message, or moral.

*Metaphors*

shell = ship.

shell = dwelling.

See 3.

You notice that the first three stanzas describe the material object, the last one states its analogy in the spiritual world.

Stanza 1. The first metaphor governs the diction of the first stanza and two lines of the second. There was an old belief that this little creature could put out a membrane for a sail, and ride over the seas like a ship. So "poets have feigned." Choose all the words brought into these nine lines because of this metaphor. "Pearl" refers to the beautiful, many-colored effect of the inner shell; see "irised" in line 14; find out from your mythology who Iris was, and why *irised* should mean "many-colored." Explain *unshadowed* as "unvisited," or "lonely;" why? Why "venturous"? On the metaphor which forms the base of the stanza is superimposed another: the sails are called "wings." This comparison has always been a common one; our Anglo-Saxon ancestors used the simile, "a *ship* likest a *bird*." The description of the lovely, mysterious, legend-haunted tropic seas adds greatly to the beauty of the poem.

Stanza 2. The *ship* metaphor extends through the first two lines of stanza 2, in description of the broken, deserted shell. The remainder of the second stanza and the whole of the third is governed by the *house* metaphor; list all the words that are used in this figure. The "dim, dreaming" life refers to the low order of nervous development in this creature. The shell must be broken in order to reveal the internal structure.

Stanza 3. Make a particularly careful study of the third stanza. Understand thoroughly before you go on the habit of the nautilus and the metaphor comparing the enlarging of the shell to the enlarging of a building.

Stanza 4. The fourth stanza opens with an apostrophe.

What are the shell and the sea compared to in the second and third lines? "Dead" refers to the condition described in stanza 2. The "note" is the "message." For "Triton" see your mythology. Triton's trumpet was a spiral — "wreathed" — shell. Other poets have applied the same epithet to this trumpet: "And hear old Triton blow his wreathéd horn." (Wordsworth.) "Caves" is a figure drawn from the rocky coast, whither the reference to Triton has carried us.

Stanza 5. This is the message of the broken shell to the poet's soul. Its metaphor brings in the words "build," "mansions," "low-vaulted," "temple," "dome." The thought of these lines is a thought of building, and this, with its metaphor, carries us back to stanza 3, where the nautilus is spoken of as a builder, preparing for himself each year a larger dwelling. The sight of this preparation for growth and larger development admonishes the poet to give his soul room for constant growth; to make his ideals more spacious year by year; to push away the limitations that shut him down to earth — such limitations as ignorance and sin. As long as he lives in this world he will be subject to some limitation — he cannot fully develop here either mentally or spiritually; but he should make the limitations as few and as little confining as possible (line 5); and he can look forward to the time (lines 6 and 7) when these limitations shall be put off, with the life to which they belong. The last line returns in its metaphor to the material subject of the poem — the shell of the nautilus, broken and abandoned, represents the limitations that belong to this life, outgrown and left behind.

Think over once more the teaching of the poem. Relate the last stanza again to the third. Then read again the

paragraph with which the Autocrat introduced his poem to the family at the Breakfast-Table. Do you understand now what he meant?

III. Study line and stanza-structure. Describe the rime-plan. Go through the poem for alliteration and other devices for producing melody. Where do you find the best music? Make a list of the most effective epithets used in the poem.

IV. Read the poem aloud. Try to express with your voice all you know and feel about it.

#### THE VOICELESS

I. *The Voiceless* is another of the poems printed in *The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table*. The paragraph that introduces it reads as follows: "Read what the singing women — one to ten thousand of the suffering women — tell us, and think of the griefs that die unspoken! Nature is in earnest when she makes a woman; and there are women enough lying in the next church-yard with very common-place blue slate-stones at their head and feet, for whom it was just as true that 'all sounds of life assumed one tone of love,' as for Letitia Landon, of whom Elizabeth Browning said it; but she could give words to her grief, and they cannot. — Will you hear a few stanzas of mine?"

Letitia Elizabeth Landon, better known as L. E. L., was an English poetess and novelist (1802-1838). Her writings are full of "gentle melancholy and romantic sentiment." She is a minor writer, but was admired by the much greater Mrs. Browning.

This poem is an expression of sympathy for those who, feeling intensely, have no power to express what they feel. The writer thinks there is material for poetry in every heart, though many are dumb. The custom of speaking of a poet as



a *singer* dates back to ancient times, when, since books were exceedingly rare, the poet chanted his production before an audience to the accompaniment of the lyre or the harp. The opposite of the singer, or poet, would be "the voiceless," the "silent sister," etc.

The first two stanzas compare the singer and the voiceless in alternating groups of two lines. The third stanza is devoted entirely to those for whose sake the poem was written.

II. Study the poem in detail. The more difficult lines are paraphrased or explained below.

Line 1: Flowers, carefully arranged in the symbolic shape of a broken lyre, decorate the graves of famous poets; we linger over them and count these tokens of regard. But the neglected grave of "the voiceless" is covered only by wild-flowers, to which no person gives any attention.

Line 12: The "cross" stands for suffering; the "crown" for the reward of fame and appreciation. Name the figure.

Lines 13, 14: The Greek poetess Sappho (about 600 B. C.) is said to have thrown herself from the promontory of Leucadia into the sea for love of Phaon, who had rejected her.

Lines 19, 20: Explain the figure.

III. Study the line and stanza construction of the poem. Go through it also for devices used to produce melody and harmony.

IV. Read the poem aloud.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

#### REFERENCE BIOGRAPHIES

- Hawthorne and His Wife*, 2 Vol., by Julian Hawthorne; Boston, 1895.  
*Hawthorne and His Circle*, by Julian Hawthorne; New York, 1903.  
*Memories of Hawthorne*, by Rose Hawthorne Lathrop; Boston, 1897.  
*A Study of Hawthorne*, by G. P. Lathrop; Boston, 1893.  
*Life*, by Henry James, Jr.; New York, 1897.  
*Hawthorne and His Friends*, by F. B. Sanborn; 1908.  
*Life and Genius*, by Frank P. Stearns; Philadelphia, 1906.  
*Memoir*, by "H. A. Page;" London, 1872.  
*Personal Recollections*, by Horatio Bridge; New York, 1893.  
*Life*, by M. D. Conway; New York, 1890.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY READING

- Grandfather's Chair, Mosses from an Old Manse (I and II), Twice-Told Tales (I and II), The Snow Image and Other Tales.  
See Appendix I, titles 47 to 55 inclusive.

#### THE GREAT STONE FACE

I. Read the story through with the following outline and notes. Study with it the picture of the Face.

1. Introduction.

- a. The boy.
- b. The Valley and its inhabitants.
- c. The Face: which is emphasized in the description, the features or the expression? What does the boy's feeling for it tell you about it?

- d. The prophecy of the Great Man; impression on the boy.
2. The first "Great Man" — Gathergold.
  - a. Ernest a boy.
  - b. His character, under the influence of the Face.
  - c. Gathergold's career, appearance, and character.  
What does the long description of his home tell about him?
  - d. Attitude of the people toward him.
  - e. Feeling of Ernest toward him.
  - f. The Face renews the prophecy.
3. The second "Great Man" — Blood-and-Thunder.
  - a. Ernest a young man.
  - b. The character of Ernest.
  - c. The character of the second "Great Man."
  - d. The attitude of the people toward the General.
  - e. Ernest's feeling for him.
  - f. The Face speaks to Ernest.
4. The third "Great Man" — Old Stony Phiz.
  - a. Ernest a man of middle age.
  - b. The development of his character.
  - c. The character of Old Stony Phiz.
  - d. The feeling of the people for the statesman.
  - e. The feeling of Ernest for him.
  - f. The Face speaks again to Ernest.
5. The fourth "Great Man" — the Poet.
  - a. Ernest an old man.
  - b. His character.
  - c. The coming of the Poet.
  - d. The people do not recognize the Poet's work. Why not?
  - e. Ernest has expected the Poet to resemble the Face.

Why? Why is this the most bitter disappointment of all? How does the poet himself explain his failure?

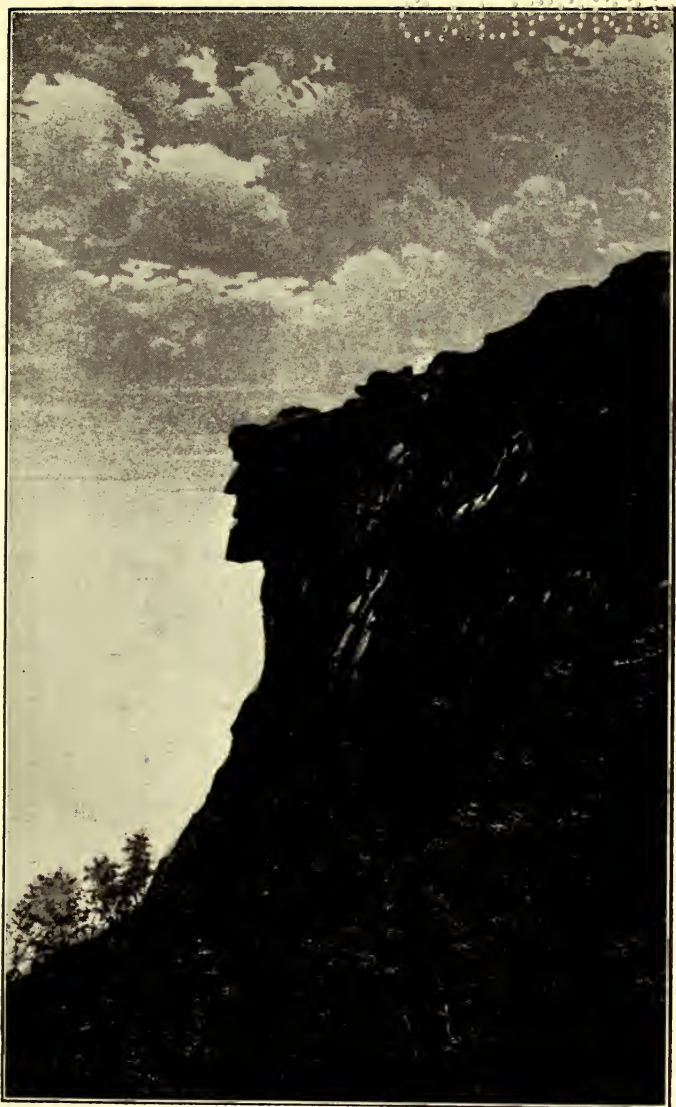
6. The true "Great Man" discovered.
  - a. The discourse of Ernest; the source of his power.
  - b. The Poet discovers the "Great Man." Why should the Poet be the one to make the discovery?
  - c. The humility of Ernest.

II. For the kernel of the story, see *American Note-Books*, 1839. Hawthorne usually has a moral thought in his tales. In this one he plainly means to teach us that we grow like that which we constantly watch and admire and meditate on — to show the influence which the vision of "the Good, the True, and the Beautiful" may have on character. The influence of the Face did not make Ernest rich, or powerful, or famous; but it made him what is far better — a good and wise man.

III. The story, between the introduction (1 above) and the conclusion (6 above), is constructed in four parallel parts. These correspond to four periods in the life of Ernest. The following chart shows this; and see also 2, 3, 4, 5 above.

	2	3	4	5
		Young	Middle	
a. Life of Ernest.	Boyhood.	Manhood.	Life.	Old Age.
b. Influence of Face on Ernest.				
c. "Great Man."	Rich man.	General.	Statesman.	Poet.
d. People receive him.				
e. Ernest disappointed.				
f. Face reassures him.				

The six points are discussed in the four parts, except that *d* and *f* are omitted in 5. You would hardly expect the



THE GREAT STONE FACE



people to recognize the profound wisdom of a great poet (*d*), and *5f* is omitted because the story begins at that point to prepare for its climax; *i. e.*, the conclusion begins. What sentence makes the climax of the story?

A writer without skill could easily fail, in four parallel parts, to make any progress toward his climax. If you follow each of the six points through the four parts you will readily see how the story rises constantly, and why the climax must be where it is. For example, *c* begins with the rich man; how little real greatness there is in a selfish miser, though he may have gathered tons of gold. A good general certainly gives his country valuable service, though war is greatly to be deplored. A statesman serves his country honorably in a more desirable field than war. And a great poet is the benefactor, not only of his country, but of his race. Here we can plainly see progress in the story. The climax goes one step farther, and places the wise and good man above even the poet. Go through the other five points and show how the plot rises through them also toward the climax. The suspense is made by the successive disappointments of Ernest.

#### IV. General Questions.

1. Is it the *features* or the *expression* of the Face that the Great Man is to resemble? What do the people look for? What does Ernest look for? Study the prophecy in the introduction, and the comparison made by Ernest of each man to the Face. Why do not the people recognize Ernest as the man of prophecy? Why does the poet recognize him?

2. Why is not Ernest mistaken when every one else is?

3. Make a list of all the names of persons used in this story, and explain the meaning of each. The suggestiveness of the proper names gives the tale an allegorical tone. Lang-

land, Spenser, and Bunyan, the great writers of allegory in English, use names descriptive of character.

4. Find passages in this story where Hawthorne uses irony — or perhaps something even as stinging as sarcasm.

5. With the structure of this story compare that of *David Swan* by the same author.

### THE AMBITIOUS GUEST

I. Read the tale thoughtfully.

II. The unity of effect in this tale is as good as it is in any of Poe's. The proper atmosphere is given it by the setting. Discuss the location and the weather. Go through the story from the first paragraph to the climax, and list every reference to avalanches and dismal sounds. Put with these allusions, in the writer's exposition and in the conversation of the characters, to impending fate, to disaster, and to death. Notice how these expressions of foreboding increase in frequency and force to the climax. In the paragraph that ends with the shriek of terror, the words gain in power, as they should do as the story approaches its climax. After the climax, quiet, calm sentences "intimate," because no words can adequately "portray," the overwhelming horror of the catastrophe.

III. The persons of this story are the center of interest; the narrative interests us as it affects them. Hawthorne opens his story with them, because characterization is his chief purpose in the tale. Are they individuals, or types? Are the words and wishes of each suited to his age and station? Are any of the wishes fulfilled in their death? Study particularly the nameless stranger, who is more complex of character than the simple mountaineers. "The secret of his character" is clearly explained by Hawthorne, and also



by the young man himself. This young man gives the moral thought to the tale. His was the only ambitious soul there; and his was the double tragedy — death and oblivion. The simple, unambitious family are known by name, and the scene of their death is pointed out to every traveller through the White Mountains. But the “high-souled youth, with his dream of earthly immortality! His name and person utterly unknown; his history, his way of life, his plans, a mystery never to be solved; his death and his existence equally a doubt!” Whose indeed was the agony of death?

Hawthorne founded this story on an actual event. See Spaulding's *Historical Relics of the White Mountains*. “Some time in June, before the great slide in August, 1826, there came a great storm, and the old veteran, Abel Crawford, coming down the Notch, noticed the trees slipping down, standing upright, and as he was passing Mr. Willey's he called and informed him of the wonderful fact. Immediately, in a less exposed place, Mr. Willey prepared a shelter to which to flee in case of immediate danger, and in the night of August 28 in that year he was, with his whole family, awakened by the thundering crash of the coming avalanche. Attempting to escape, the family, nine in number, rushed from the house and were overtaken and buried alive under a vast pile of rocks, earth, and water. By a remarkable coincidence, the house remained uninjured, as the slide divided about four rods back of the house, against a high flat rock, and came down on either side with overwhelming power.”

## CHAPTER XIX

### SIDNEY LANIER

#### REFERENCE BIOGRAPHIES

*Memorial*, by Wm. Hayes Ward, in *Poems*. New York, 1900.  
*Life*, by Edwin Mims; Boston, 1905.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY READING

Clover, Corn, The Waving of the Corn, The Mocking Bird, The Revenge of Hamish, The Stirrup-Cup, My Springs, The Symphony, How Love Looked for Hell.

#### THE SONG OF THE CHATTAHOOCHEE

I. This poem is a description of the course of a river that rises in the mountains of Georgia, passes in its upper course through the counties of Hall and Habersham, and flows through the lowlands into the Gulf of Mexico.

II. The movement of the poem is rippling and animated, as befits the song of a mountain stream. The stanzas contain ten lines each, the first two and the last two having three accents each, and the intermediate six having four accents each. The foot has sometimes one unaccented syllable, sometimes two, the two very short ones occupying the same time as the one longer one. The effect is good, for it makes the alternately rippling and flowing movement of the stream in the uplands. Irregularity in meter and reversal of accent help to produce a rippling effect. The movement is

suggested also by the pauses at the end of lines, by the occasional run-on lines, and by a few rather abrupt pauses within the lines (27, 28). Most of the internal pauses harmonize the movement of the poem to the thought, the writer enumerating the obstacles and hindrances in the path of the stream. (Stanzas 2, 3, 4.) The long vowel in "abide" and the pause between the repetitions retard the movement of the poem, and suit it to the movement of the stream. Note also line 28. Retard is necessary for careful articulation in "grass said *Stay*."

III. The melody of the poem is smooth and flowing, a large proportion of the consonants being liquids or spirants. There is a great deal of alliteration, and some of it is double. This helps in the rippling movement. (Find examples.) The explosives, also, are so used as to add to the rippling effect; see particularly line 5.

IV. The rime is *abcbeddcab*. The final *cab* is identical in wording with the initial *abc*; *ab* is identical throughout the poem. Internal rime occurs in the third line of every stanza, in the eighth line of most of them, and in the sixth line of the last. This repetition of sound helps to make the rippling movement. Similar is the effect of riming "glades" — "shades" (lines 29–30).

V. The movement of the last stanza is slower than that of the first four, as the river anticipates its slower movement on the plain. The pauses after "avail" and "downward," and the spondee in "fields burn," with the medial pause in the same line, and the great number of long vowels and final spirants throughout the stanza, retard the flow of verse. This corresponds to the deeper seriousness of the fifth stanza, in which the poet turns from mere artistic pleasure in the beauty of nature to consideration of the activities of human

life. The presence of the word "Duty" in the stanza gives it a different note.

VI. Observe how the poet has obtained variety in the "application" of the refrain at the beginning and at the end of each stanza. See Poe's theory of the refrain, quoted in the study of Longfellow's *My Lost Youth*.

VII. Prepare to read the poem aloud. Think, as you read, of the course of the river and of its movement in its bed — alternately rippling and flowing.

Compare Tennyson's *The Brook*, with its short lines, frequent pauses, onomatopoeic words, abundant alliteration, and extra short syllable at the end of lines 2 and 4 of each stanza. Which poem speaks more of the *sound* made by the stream? What differences in diction and form depend on imitations of sound and of movement?

#### TAMPA ROBINS

I. The poem personifies the robin, and represents him as defying, from his safe refuge in a Florida orange-tree, the northern winter.

II. Study the following details of the poem.

Line 2: Explain the words of defiance.

Line 4: What are the oranges called metaphorically?

Line 5: Think of "Time" as personified in the figure of an old man with a scythe over his shoulder.

Line 6: What joys does the robin find in his Florida home?

Line 7: Refer "globes" to line 4. The "globe" suggests a metaphor taken from astronomy. What is the "leafy sky"? What are the oranges called, in metaphor, in line 8? In line 9? Why is the robin metaphorically a "meteor"? Line 10 refers to the ancient superstitious fear of meteors. Refer "heavenly" in line 11 to "sky" in line 7. The path of

the robin ("meteor") is an "orbit" (line 12). What trail does he leave behind him, as he flies about in the tree?

Line 13: The leafless trees of the North are as bare and unattractive as "gibbets." "Grave" harmonizes in tone with "gibbet," and so do "slave" and "tyranny." In line 18 the robin again defies the stormy North. The color contrast between the sunny South (stanza 2) and the cold, desolate, gray-white North (stanza 3) is effective.

Line 20: "King" contrasts with "slave" above.

Line 21: The "torch" (metaphor) of the robin's breast is a reflection of sun-light.

Line 22: "Green" and "gold" of what?

Line 23: See line 5 above.

III. The poem consists of four six-line stanzas, riming *aabbcc*. There are four accents in each line, and one or two unaccented syllables in a foot. The movement is iambic. The many liquids and sibilants make a smooth melody. Find examples of alliteration. Find one example of internal rime. The poem is animated and gay, except lines 13 to 16, which are cold and sombre. Line 15 particularly, by spondee, cross-assonance of long vowels, and alliteration of gutturals, harmonizes the movement to the thought.

IV. Throw yourself into the gay, saucy, defiant spirit of the robin, and read the poem aloud. Bring out clearly all the sound effects you have studied under III.

### THE MARSHES OF GLYNN

I. The poet is describing the salt marshes of Glynn County, Georgia, on the coast near the city of Brunswick.

He has spent the day in the live-oak forest, and has been refreshed in the noon-tide heat by its shade (lines 12, 19-21,

25). As twilight comes on (lines 21, 22) he steps out into the open marshes (lines 22-25, 35-47), and faces eastward (lines 55, 56), toward a world of marsh, and sea, and sky. For some reason his heart is troubled (lines 15, 17, 26-28, 63, 69, 70); he needs the comfort and the inspiration that Nature can give those who truly love her. And Nature teaches him her lesson and offers him her consolation. From "the length and the breadth and the sweep" of the marsh and the sea, there comes to him a sense of infinity (lines 71-78). Their beauty, their vastness, "nothing-withholding and free," speak to him of the omnipresence, the omnipotence, and the benevolence — the "greatness" — of the Infinite Spirit that pervades the universe. The tide comes in;

The sea and the marshes are one. (Line 94.)

The poet feels and believes in (line 29) the harmony and the perfect oneness of the universe and its Creator. The tide reaches its height (line 95); night falls (line 98). Peace has flowed into and over the troubled soul, as the sea has covered the Marshes of Glynn; and the poet goes home (line 100) to rest and sleep.

II. Make a statement about the character of the thought in this poem. Then show how the style harmonizes with the thought in the following particulars: —

1. Diction: choice of nouns; of verbs; of adjectives; epithets, poetic-compounds, color-words, words indicating light and shade; contrast of the dusky forest, the green marshes, and the silvery beach; other methods of description.

2. Sentences: structure; length.

3. Figures: simile; metaphor; apostrophe; personification.

4. Versification: stanza or paragraph; rime; meter, use of spondee; effect of long and short lines; pauses; run-on lines.

5. Melody: use of liquids and spirants; alliteration; assonance; internal rime.

6. Harmony: repetition; onomatopœa; other harmonic effects.

III. With lines 30–34 compare Lanier's *From the Flats*. Evidently the low coast did not always inspire poetic exaltation in Lanier's soul. For the influence of the marshes on Lanier, one should read also *Marsh Song — at Sunset*, and *Sunrise*. The sunrise brings the poet strength and courage, as the sunset brings him peace.

Is the last paragraph of the poem in perfect harmony with the rest? Should you prefer to close with the line

And it is night?

Does the poet do well to remind us that his peace is, after all not too profound; that underneath it lie the uncertainties that belong to all discussion of and meditation on the problems of life? Should he show us that he has attained peace and self-control while facing with courage and strength the fact that he does not — cannot — know below the surface? Or would it be better here to end with the peace, and ignore the ignorance he could not enlighten? Which method would end the poem most effectively? There would have been nothing false to life in the omission of the last paragraph, for there occasionally come to men moods in which faith is, for the time, absolute, and doubt and uncertainty are forgotten. Such a mood Wordsworth has expressed in *Tintern Abbey*:

that blesséd mood,  
In which the burden of the mystery,  
In which the heavy and the weary weight  
Of all this unintelligible world,  
Is lightened: — that serene and blesséd mood,

In which the affections gently lead us on,  
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame  
And even the motion of our human blood  
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep  
In body and become a living soul:  
While with an eye made quiet by the power  
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,  
We see into the life of things.

Was Lanier's such a mood? Has he used in the course of the poem expressions that would lead you to suppose it was? Is there any suggestion of the grotesque in the last lines? Do you feel that they are in any way out of harmony with the rest of the poem?

IV. Do you consider this poem strong in rhetorical effects? Do these devices distract you from the thought? Do you think a simpler style would be better for the expression of a thought so vast and sublime? Would you prefer a different meter? Bryant has expressed sublime thoughts in simpler and more stately verse; do you think he has suited his expression to his thought better than Lanier? As well?

V. Read the poem aloud. Make the thought as forcible as possible. Bring out the music of the lines.



## CHAPTER XX

### WALT WHITMAN

#### REFERENCE BIOGRAPHIES

- Whitman*, 2 Vol., by Horace Traubel; Boston, 1905.  
*Walt Whitman*, by Thos. Donaldson; New York, 1896.  
*Reminiscences*, by W. S. Kennedy; Philadelphia, 1896.  
*Life*, by R. M. Bucke; Philadelphia, 1883.  
*Walt Whitman*, by Wm. Clarke; New York, 1892.  
*A Study of Whitman*, by John Burroughs; Boston, 1896.  
*Whitman, A Study*, by John Addington Symonds; London, 1893.  
*An Approach to Walt Whitman*, by Carleton Noyes; Boston, 1910.  
*Life*, by Bliss Perry; Boston, 1906.  
*Life*, by George Rice Carpenter; New York, 1909.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY READING

A careful selection of Whitman's poems should be made for young people. There is a volume by Oscar L. Triggs (Boston, 1898), another by E. Holmes (London and New York, 1902), and yet another by Wm. M. Rossetti (London, 1895).

### O CAPTAIN! MY CAPTAIN!

I. Whitman was a nurse and attendant in the hospitals of the Civil War. His best work for the sick and wounded soldiers is said to have been his ministrations to their lonely hearts. He had the tenderness and thoughtfulness of a woman. The chronicle of his life from 1862 to the end of the War is one of great and unselfish devotion. Whitman, therefore, though not a soldier himself, had a right to feel toward

the Commander-in-chief of the Northern armies as the soldiers felt. He had seen President Lincoln, and recognized in him the great man the whole nation has since learned to know and honor. See Whitman's prose works, particularly *Specimen Days*. The best of the poems in honor of Lincoln were written by this then obscure hospital attendant.

II. *O Captain! My Captain!* is a lamentation for the death of Lincoln. The poem is constructed entirely in metaphor, conceiving the nation under the image of a ship. The ship has safely arrived in port after a stormy, dangerous voyage; and amid all the rejoicing and congratulations, the Captain, to whom is due the credit for the safety of the ship, has fallen dead on the deck. As Lincoln was killed just at the close of the Civil War, the figure is an excellent and appropriate one. One remembers, too, that the same metaphor was used for the nation in the last paragraph of Longfellow's *Building of the Ship*, and that President Lincoln listened to that passage in silence, with tearful eyes. (See *Scribner's Monthly*, August, 1879, "Lincoln's Imagination," by Noah Brooks.) This fact gives the figure an almost sacred significance in the poem which laments the untimely death of the great President.

III. The poem has also great beauty of movement and melody. In April, 1865, the nation was divided in feeling between joy over the successful end of the war and sorrow for the death of the President. The first four lines of the first two stanzas are of descriptive character; they give an account of the entrance of the ship into port, and express the nation's joy at the safety of the ship. These lines are long and smooth — 7xa. The last four lines of these stanzas are short and broken; they express the deep distress of the poet at the death of the Captain. After the passion of grief expressed in the latter

part of the first two stanzas, the poet masters himself with the restraint of a strong man, and utters in the last stanza the abiding sorrow that tempers and sobers the exultation of the victor.

IV. Try to imagine yourself back in 1865. You have often seen Lincoln, and have felt his tenderness and greatness. You love as well as admire him. You are glad that the Union is preserved, but you mourn the death of the President. Read the poem, and show your emotions in your reading.

#### WHEN LILACS LAST IN THE DOORYARD BLOOM'D

I. This is Whitman's burial hymn for Lincoln. The President was killed in Washington, on April 14, 1865, and his body was taken for burial to Springfield, Illinois. The particulars of the assassination and the account of the passage of the funeral train through the country may be read in any biography of Lincoln. The following brief account, taken from Butterworth's *History of America*, tells all that it is necessary to know in reading this poem. "The sad procession moved on its long journey of nearly two thousand miles, traversing the states of Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. Everywhere, as the funeral train passed, the weeping people sought to give expression to their reverential sorrow. At the great cities the body lay in state, and all business was suspended." \*

The poet begins his funeral chant in great sorrow; but, through meditation and the healing power of Nature, he regains serenity and cheerfulness.

For Whitman's attitude toward death see: *Assurances*, *Whispers of Heavenly Death*, *Song of Myself* (sections 6, 48),

\* Used by permission of Estes and Lauriat.

*Joy, Shipmate, Joy, and Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking.*

II. The central figure of the poem is *The Man* (stanzas 1, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16); because of the occasion, *Death* is the burden of the thought (stanzas 7, 14, 15). Three objects of nature are associated with the occasion: the *lilac* (stanzas 1, 3, 6 (end), 7, 13, 16); the *star* (stanzas 1, 2, 8, 9, 13, 16); and the *bird* (stanzas 4, 9, 13, 14, 15, 16).

III. Read the poem carefully with the following notes:

Line 1: Lilacs are in bloom in April in Washington.

Line 4: The "trinity" are named in the next two lines.

Line 7: The "star" of the west, in figure, is Lincoln, though we must understand that the poet has in mind, in the poem, an actual star as well. The "murk" is, in figure, death; the "cruel hands" and the "cloud" are the atmosphere of grief.

Line 12: Whitman shows his reverence for nature in his description of the lilac-bush.

Line 19: The hermit thrush is one of the most timid of birds, as well as one of the most musical.

Line 24: The poet needs the relief of expression as much as the bird does.

Line 26: This stanza and the next describe the route of the funeral train through the country and through the cities, and mention the honor everywhere paid the body of the martyred President. Services were held along the route, as the train passed. Line 45 goes back to line 17.

Line 46: Whitman turns from the death of one to the thought of death as the fate of all. What adjectives does he apply to death in line 48?

Line 55: Whitman remembers that he had had, a month ago, while watching the evening star, premonitions of trouble

and disaster. The disappearance of the star (lines 63-65) is again symbolic (see lines 7-9) of the death of Lincoln.

Line 66: See stanza 4.

Line 75: Springfield is thought of as near the center of the country. Lines 74-77 answer line 73. In spirit the poet is at the tomb.

Line 78: The decoration of the tomb is the poet's next theme. The pictures he mentions (lines 81-89) are national. They represent all parts of the land — country and city; every class and every occupation. Why is this appropriate?

Line 90: Whitman's home was New York. All the beauty of our varied and beautiful earth and sky should be pictured on the tomb of the great President, who worked to keep us a united nation.

Line 99: See stanza 9.

Line 106: See line 70.

Line 108: The poet surveys the whole country, and finds that the shadow of death darkens everywhere, that no class or age or station is exempt from it.

Lines 120-122: Name the three "companions" holding hands in the night. What is the thought that drives the poet out into the night?

Line 126: See stanzas 13, 9, 4.

Line 127: See line 120.

Line 133: See line 122.

Lines 135-162: These are the thoughts that the song of the thrush in the darkness inspires in the poet. List the adjectives used to describe Death. What names is she called? What is the poet's attitude toward her? Whitman believed that everything natural is right, wise, and wholesome. Death is natural; therefore he chants a song of praise to Death.

Line 163: See line 134.

Line 164: See line 126.

Line 166: See line 130.

Line 168: See lines 120-122.

Lines 170-184: The poet sees in imagination the panorama of war and death, which he has so often seen in reality. What comforting reflection does he find in all this painful picture (lines 180, 181)?

Line 185: The visions of stanza 15. "Passing" by in thought. Line 186: See line 122. Line 187: See line 134. Line 188: See line 24. Line 193: See line 13. Lines 195-197: See line 70. As the end of the poem approaches, the poet gathers up his material — the bird, the lilac, the star. Line 200: See line 134. Line 201: See line 61. Line 202: See line 133. Line 203: See line 122. Notice the return to the personal in lines 203-204.

What has the poet "to keep" (line 198) out of this night's visions and revelations?

IV. Whitman has certain peculiarities of style which must be understood in a measure before one can read his poems successfully.

1. He uses broken sentence-structure and exclamation to express intense feeling. For examples see stanzas 2 and 13. We have found the same use of broken sentences in *O Captain!*

2. He makes long series of phrases and clauses in parallel structure, usually for the purpose of cataloguing in description. Find examples in stanzas 5, 6, 8, 11, 14.

3. These series sometimes form very long periodic sentences. See stanzas 5, 6, 14, 16.

4. Instead of the conventional poetic line made up of a certain number of feet with regularly arranged accents, Whitman often uses a rhythmic, swinging chant. The

phrases or clauses should be read rather rapidly, as the units of the composition, and the pauses should be clearly and fully marked. In reading, have in mind the phrasing and the monotone of the musical chant, and give the poetry the same movement.

In some of Whitman's poems he exaggerates his mannerisms offensively; but in this funeral hymn the chant is most appropriate. It is used effectively also in *Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking*, and in a number of the other of his best poems.

#### OUT OF THE CRADLE ENDLESSLY ROCKING

I. This poem was first called *A Child's Reminiscences*. It is an account of Whitman's earliest conscious, strong poetic impulse. The boy lived in a small town on Long Island, which he calls by its Indian name, Paumanok. The circumstances under which his soul was so deeply touched we learn from the poem.

II. Read the poem carefully with these notes.

Lines 1-22 give the circumstances under which the man recalls the experience and writes the reminiscence (lines 20-22). Line 1: "The cradle endlessly rocking" is the sea. Line 3: At what time of year does Whitman revisit his old home? When does he go down to the beach to muse? Line 4: The child he remembers had gone out in the night, too. Line 11: The bird-notes recall the bird-song of earlier days (lines 8, 9). The paragraph is composed of one of Whitman's long series, and the main part is at the end; it is a periodic sentence. "I, a man, sing a reminiscence out of all" these things, which bring to memory my boyhood experience in the same scene.

Line 23 begins the reminiscence. Line 24 gives the time

of the experience. Lines 23-31 tell of the boy's love for and interest in the birds. Lines 32-40 give the song of the male bird; he shows his happiness in his union with his mate by the repetition of "we two."

Lines 41-45 tell of the disappearance of the female. Lines 46-129 show the loneliness of her mate through the remainder of the season, and the boy's sympathy with the bird. Line 62: "Has treasured" them because they taught him so much (line 69). The poet "translates" the bird's song into English words.

Lines 130ff. describe the scene in which the boy hears the bird's song of "lonesome love." The "fierce old mother" is the sea. With line 135 compare line 10; the scene of the boy's experience is identical with the scene of the man's reverie.

Line 136 turns to the effect of the scene and the song on the boy. Line 139: See line 18. The trio (line 140) are the *bird*, the *sea*, and the *boy's questioning soul*. Line 142: Whitman, receiving his first poetic impulse. Line 144: *Demon* has its old meaning, "spirit." Lines 146-149: The poetic spirit of the boy is awakened by the scene, the music, and the emotion. Line 151: In his poetry. Line 153: The cries he heard from the bird. Line 154: See lines 146, 147. Line 155: See line 135. Lines 156, 157: The "divine fire" of poetic inspiration. Line 160: He wants the clue to the unknown longing (line 157). The word is given in line 169. Line 169: The first time "the knowledge of death" and "the thought of death" came to the boy personally and powerfully must have been with the loss of the bird. Line 170: See line 140. Line 175: "Demon," see line 143. Line 176: See line 134. Line 177: He has heard the same song many times since in the world. See line 12.



Line 178: This was the beginning of his poetic inspiration.  
Lines 179-183: See lines 165-169 and 14.

III. The poem draws material from nature — the *sea*, the *bird*, the *moonlight scene*. These are brought into connection with humanity, teaching the boy's soul the great secret of existence — *Death*. Compare this with the influence of the *lilac*, the *star*, the *bird* on the man who wrote the burial hymn for Lincoln, and reached, through the song of the thrush, serenity and cheerfulness in the presence of death. In both poems the listener gives articulate language to the bird's song — “translates” it. In *Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking* the bird sings him a song of unsatisfied love (line 153); the boy's questioning soul demands the clue to this mystery of life (line 158); and the sea whispers him the final word, superior to all (line 161): the word that names the condition in which all mysteries shall be made manifest and all longings shall be satisfied. The poem is important as giving an account of the beginning of conscious poetic inspiration in Whitman. For Whitman's attitude toward death, see again the references given in the study of *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*. Make a list of the adjectives applied to death in this poem, and compare them with those used in other poems.

IV. Refer to the list of Whitman's peculiarities of style given in the study of *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*, and illustrate each item from this poem.

V. Read the poem aloud. Remember that Whitman has written a rhythmic chant, not a poem in conventional meter.

## CHAPTER XXI

### RALPH WALDO EMERSON

#### REFERENCE BIOGRAPHIES

*Life*, by George Willis Cooke; Boston, 1881

*Life*, by O. W. Holmes; Boston, 1886.

*Life*, by Richard Garnett; London, 1888.

*Life and Works*, by Elizabeth L. Cary; New York, 1904.

*Emerson*, by John S. Harrison; New York, 1910.

*Emerson*, by F. B. Sanborn; Boston, 1885.

*Life*, by George E. Woodberry; New York, 1907.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY READING

Voluntaries (1863), Terminus, Threnody, Dirge, The Apology, The Humble-Bee, Fable, Concord Hymn, Boston Hymn, The Rhodora, The Snow-Storm, Each and All, Woodnotes I.

Representative Men, Nature, The Over-Soul.

See also Appendix I, titles 40 to 46 inclusive.

#### SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR THE STUDY OF EMERSON'S ESSAYS

Emerson's purpose is not so much to think a subject through for his readers and give them the result of his meditation as it is to startle them into thinking for themselves. This his style is peculiarly fitted to do. He does not "look at both sides of a question," and load his sentences with clauses qualifying the main statement; rather he throws at the reader a strong assertion, so one-sided that at first it almost provokes contradiction. His purpose being to stimulate thought, he could use no better device. His short, pointed sentences rouse the mind to vigorous action. Another effect of his

short sentences is that when he writes, in different essays or in different parts of the same essay, on different phases of a subject, he seems to contradict himself. As we read him, we are always to understand that we are looking at his theme from one angle only. He looks out upon society and sees a tendency to bend too far in one direction; he declares strongly for a bias in the opposite direction; and the resultant is a perpendicular — the correct position, and the one he really desires and expects to obtain. We cannot choose a sentence expressing in his strong fashion a one-sided opinion, and say, "Emerson thought thus or so." We must make a composite picture of his utterances on a subject. We shall then find him well-balanced, temperate, and reasonable.

Since Emerson's purpose is to put strongly one side or phase of a subject, we can readily see that his essays do not outline as easily as those of a more formal writer, who regards his subject, in an orderly and logical fashion, first on one side, then on another, from every angle and point of view. Neither could they be studied as models of coherence. Words of transition are conspicuously wanting, and the progress and connection of his thought is not always immediately apparent. These characteristics, also, tax the reader's powers of interpretation and stimulate his mind.

Statements of abstract truths must be illustrated by examples, stories, anecdotes, etc., that they may become not only more clear but more vital. Frequently Emerson does this for the reader; when he does not, the reader should do it for himself.

The studies suggested here assume that the student is provided with an annotated text, which gives him sufficient help on allusions; the notes and questions here will not then, as a rule, mention allusions to mythology, history, biography, etc. The student is expected to explain also, without special question, the figures and comparisons used by the author. If he will note carefully the sources from which they are drawn, he will learn much of the mind and scholarship of Emerson. He should study also, without further question, every sentence in its relation to the general thought. The expression is often so unique that, without careful attention, a

sentence is nothing but empty words. Sometimes the key to the sentence is in some peculiarity of diction.

Since Emerson's purpose is moral, since he is trying to uplift the heart and mind he touches, since the sphere of his thought is common and universal human life, the student should constantly illustrate and test the author's assertions from his own observation and experience of life. And he should memorize daily a sentence worth remembering for its influence on practical living.

### FRIENDSHIP

Paragraphs 1, 2: Human beings feel more kindness for one another than they express.

Do you think Emerson is right? Illustrate your opinion from your experience. Do you know any persons who do not agree with Emerson? What effect has the opinion of such a man on his disposition?

Paragraph 3: We exert ourselves to show friendliness and hospitality.

Does Emerson describe correctly our preparations for a guest? Have you ever had his experience with a stranger whom you hoped to make a friend?

Paragraphs 4-6: We are drawn to friends by the mutual affinity of the best that is in us, and friendship is the source of the most beautiful emotions we can feel.

Examine your friendships: do you find them, as Emerson found his, based on moral and intellectual comradeship? Do you find in them the beauty and joy he found in his? Are you as appreciative and generous toward your friends as he is toward his? Do you think his ideal is too high?

Paragraphs 7-10: We idealize our friends — perhaps un-

reasonably; and lose them because they do not satisfy the ideal we have made.

*Doubt* (paragraph 7) means "suspect." If we cannot offer perfection to our friends, have we a right to expect them to be perfect? Do we learn to know our friends at their best in a short time?

Paragraphs 11, 12: Real friendship permits — even demands — perfect sincerity.

Can you show your true self to your friends? Do you feel enough confidence in them to wish to know their true selves?

Paragraph 13: Friendship implies disinterested love and service.

Illustrate this phase of friendship from your observation or reading.

Paragraphs 14, 15: The best conversation can occur only between two congenial persons.

Is Emerson right in limiting the number to *two*? Can you explain why two can converse better than three? Why can you converse with some persons and not with others?

Paragraphs 16, 17: Friendship does not demand absolute likeness, nor perfect agreement in opinion; it demands individuality and sincerity.

Does Emerson express your opinion in paragraph 16? Do you wish your friends to treat your individuality as Emerson recommends in paragraph 17? If so, is it fair that you should respect theirs? Does this mean that you must be blind to a friend's faults?

Paragraph 18: Friendship does not intrude nor demand too much.

Does Emerson describe here a friendship less personal and more purely intellectual than you would enjoy? Would a

more personal attitude necessarily imply lack of respect or "reverence"?

Paragraphs 19, 20: We need time to show our best nature to those we would have for friends.

Have you had the experience Emerson mentions in paragraph 19? When (paragraph 20) can men become true friends? What men can become true friends? Does Emerson here contradict paragraphs 16, 17?

Paragraph 21. The ideal friendship seems beyond attainment in this world; yet we cannot afford to let ourselves decline to any one lower than the highest.

Define "God;" "demonstrate."

Paragraphs 22, 23: We cannot afford to be too dependent on our friends.

Does Emerson mean to say that books, and travel, and society are of no value? What is the danger of too much society? See also paragraph 16.

Paragraph 24: A real friendship may be one-sided; even if the object is unworthy, the feeling exalts the one who experiences it.

Should you enjoy such a friendship as is here described? Do the thoughts expressed in the last three sentences belong to your ideal of friendship?

Write a paragraph expressing in your own words Emerson's ideal of friendship. Write another which shall express your own.

### HEROISM

Paragraphs 1-4: Introduction. Paragraphs 1, 2: Heroism as shown in literature; paragraphs 3, 4: Our need of such pictures.

How does the quotation from *The Triumph of Honor*

illustrate the statement of Emerson? Illustrate from your own reading. Have we in ordinary life any need of heroism? Can you mention more instances than Emerson has put into paragraphs 3 and 4?

Paragraph 5: Some characteristics of heroism.

Find all the characteristics of heroism mentioned here. Does Emerson state any of them in too extreme a fashion? Think of some heroic action — as the defence of the Greeks at Thermopylæ — and test these characteristics by that. Why does Emerson put *feeling* above *reason*? Discuss this principle as worked out concretely in a story named "Greater Love," in *Harper's Magazine* for April, 1908. (See Appendix II.) Do you wish to add to or subtract from Emerson's statement?

Paragraphs 6, 7: Heroism makes a man despise popularity and pleasure.

Illustrate paragraph 6 from your knowledge of history and biography. Why should this be the law of society? Has Emerson made a perfectly accurate line of division in paragraph 7? Do all heroic men scorn pleasure?

Paragraph 8: The heroic man offers a simple and generous hospitality.

Why should this topic be included in this essay?

Paragraphs 9, 10: The heroic man gives no attention to trifles; he concentrates on the essential.

May one make plainness of dress and living as burdensome as extravagance? What does the quotation from Eliot illustrate? What did the conduct of David mean? Why "better still"?

Paragraph 11: The heroic man is cheerful.

Illustrate this statement from your observation or reading. Can you give any examples that contradict it? Is the

“martyr air” agreeable or becoming? Is it affectation to pretend to do hard tasks easily? Does a heroic soldier ever *feel* afraid?

Paragraph 12: The heroic appeals to us in proportion as we are capable of becoming heroic.

Do you ever feel that “all virtue is the past’s”? Think over the environment in which the ordinary person is placed, and mention opportunities for the sort of heroism Emerson means. Do you know any examples of men who have lived heroically in sordid surroundings?

Paragraph 13: Intellectual promise and ambition produce nothing without heroic determination and independence.

What quality is more necessary than mere intellect for a leader of men? What “new and unattempted problem” has each person to solve? In what good sense does Emerson use the words “decided,” “proud,” “careless,” “wilful,” “lofty”? Are they generally used in a complimentary sense?

Paragraph 14: The heroic man is persistent and consistent.

Is Emerson advising you to stick to your determination even when you know you are mistaken? Or to be peculiar for the sake of being peculiar? Is there any virtue in doing things simply because we are afraid to, or because they are unpleasant to us? An aunt of Emerson’s used to say to him, “Always do what you are afraid to do.”

Paragraph 15: A heroic man accepts even his own blunders philosophically.

Should we care nothing for the impression we make on others? Is our vanity responsible for our discomfort when we are conscious that we have made a poor appearance? Is it a good thing to cultivate “sensitiveness”?

The last sentence suggests that we refrain from doing those things that we find disagreeable in other persons.



Paragraph 16: Heroism requires us to face the disagreeable circumstances of life.

Where in this essay have you already found this doctrine stated and illustrated? Give names of heroes who illustrate Emerson's last sentence in this paragraph.

Paragraphs 17-19: There is opportunity to cultivate heroism in every-day life.

This essay was published in 1841. What opportunity had an American then to be heroic? What opportunity has he now? Do you read of any heroes in the daily papers? Do you think that the past offered greater opportunities than the present offers?

Write a short paper on *A Hero* or *A Heroine*. You may choose a historical character whom you admire, or a person from your own acquaintance, or you may sketch an ideal character for some field of activity in your own generation. But discuss the character in such a way as to make prominent the heroic qualities.

### CHARACTER

Paragraph 1: Character defined.

Find the sentence in which Emerson defines character; explain what he means by "directly," "without means." Have you called this force by some other name than character? Have you ever met persons that were greater than their words or works? Socrates and Joan of Arc claimed to be guided by a "familiar," or "genius," or spirit. Give examples of your own to show the difference that existed between Hercules and Theseus.

Paragraph 2: Character is needed in the political world.

Give examples of men in the political world who have "character;" examples of those who have it not. What do

you imagine a man of character doing in office? How does the country feel toward such men?

Paragraph 3: Character counts in the commercial world.

What more than honesty is intended here? Think over the list of "Captains of Industry": do they seem to you "born to succeed"?

Paragraph 4: A man of character masters other men.

Illustrate this statement by examples from your reading or observation.

Paragraph 5: Truth is the basis of character.

What is meant here by "Truth"? Compare *Heroism*, paragraph 13. Have you found truth and justice as powerful among men as Emerson says they are?

Paragraph 6: Character makes a man independent of externals — of circumstances, environment, fear, etc.

Does the fact stated in the first sentence naturally follow that discussed in paragraph 5? Try yourself by the tests Emerson mentions in this paragraph; do you meet them all?

Paragraph 7: A man of character is a non-conformist.

Is this discussion a natural consequence of that in paragraph 6? Observe "is" in the second sentence. Is Emerson in this paragraph advising us to be peculiar, or rude?

Paragraphs 8, 9: What we can *do* depends, not on our ambition, but on what we *are*.

Emerson illustrates this statement from his reading and observation. Add illustrations from your experience.

Paragraph 10: A man of character grows.

Do you observe growth in the persons of forcible personality whom you know? Could you be greatly impressed by one who did not seem to you to have a "controlling future"? Can a person who wishes to be strong afford to cherish ill-

will? To explain to other persons all the springs of his action? Illustrate or give reasons for your answers.

Paragraph 11: The man himself is greater than his benevolences.

What sentences in this paragraph state the moral that Lowell's *Sir Launfal* teaches? Why is approbation dangerous for us; and why are doubt and suspicion wholesome?

Paragraph 12: Character is above intellectual power.

Explain the metaphor in the first sentence. Do you wonder that Emerson despaired of expressing his ideal of character? What does he consider the inspiration of his intellectual power?

Paragraphs 13-16: A man of character receives his gift from Nature; he does not depend on the praise or the blame of others.

Compare with paragraphs 5, 6, 7 above. Can any one be absolutely indifferent to public opinion? Ought he to be? Give examples of "divine" men in the world's history; of famous men who were *not* "divine." Explain clearly the point of each example given by Emerson in paragraph 16. At the end of paragraph 16 he says that we cannot "go abroad" without feeling the influence of such men. Can you give examples from your experience?

Paragraphs 17-21: Men of character are drawn to one another.

Illustrate from history and observation. See also *Friendship*, paragraph 5. To what person does the last half of paragraph 20 refer particularly — what "youth that owed nothing to fortune"? Has the life of every great man been, in a measure, the life, self-sacrifice, and death of this one? Would Emerson judge a person as having or not having character partly by his attitude toward such "gods and saints" —

by his ability to recognize their greatness? See paragraphs 18 and 21. And see Lowell's *The Present Crisis*.

### MANNERS

Paragraph 1: Introductory: Manners and customs differ among different nations.

Explain the illustrations of Emerson, and add others of your own.

Paragraph 2: The *gentleman* is the product of modern civilization.

What does Emerson mean by "gentleman" here? Is your notion exactly like his? Do not think of *gentle* in this word as meaning what our adjective *gentle* means now. The "gentles" were the nobles, and the "commons" were the lower class. Why should the manners of the "gentles" come to be our ideal manners? What does the phrase *noblesse oblige* mean? Why should words originally referring to the "commons" (as *vulgar*, *villain*, *knave*) have taken on a bad moral significance?

Paragraph 3: Some qualities of Emerson's ideal "gentleman" are named here.

What are these qualities? Why does not Emerson like the words we have to express the summary of these qualities? Show that "politics and trade" have with us taken the place of war. Does this change in social conditions require change in the character of the gentleman? Compare the mediæval knight with the modern gentleman in respect to qualities named in this paragraph. "The young soldier took his oath of chivalry; he solemnly swore to defend the church, to attack the wicked, to respect the priesthood, to protect women and the poor, to preserve the country in tranquility, and to shed his blood, even to the last drop, in

behalf of his brethren." — (Mill: *The History of Chivalry*.) If any of these vows are obsolete in their mediæval form, do they stand for universal principles that you can state in a modern form? For example, the vow to defend the church. What was the purpose of the church? Is it a gentleman's duty to defend all institutions that do the work the church professed to do in the Middle Ages? What was "personal force" called in the last essay you read?

Paragraph 4: Strength, courage, and independence are qualities of a gentleman.

Discuss Emerson's examples. Add examples from your own knowledge. Can you think of any that seem to contradict his statement? Do you think these three qualities are necessary to a gentleman? Does Emerson make too much of "personal force"?

Paragraph 5: Wealth is not necessary to a gentleman.

Would wealth be an advantage or a hindrance to him? Give as many ways as you can think of in which it would help or hinder him before you balance your account for your answer. Is it true that a wealthy person and a poor person cannot be friends?

Paragraph 6: Manners are the product of society.

Memorize the third and fourth sentences of this paragraph. State clearly, then, how certain forms come to be regarded as "good manners." Does Emerson understand truly how persons of inferior manners feel in the presence of persons of better breeding? What is the value of manners in society?

Paragraph 7: Strong men admire and imitate polished men.

State clearly Emerson's theory of this relation in a family of three generations. Which generation contains the "gentleman"? Which the mere "man of fashion"? Do you, from

your own observations, reach the same conclusion? How necessary to the gentleman, then, are formal manners?

Paragraph 8: Gentle manners are irresistible, and make men leaders.

Illustrate from your own experience. Do you observe this fraternity among persons of the same manners? Is it the same as "class prejudice"—aristocratic snobbery?

Paragraphs 9–11: Good manners are natural and sincere, not artificial.

Do you notice in persons "accustomed to good society" the naturalness and independence of forms mentioned by Emerson? Have you ever seen or read of such dignity in a humble person suddenly introduced into formal society? What is objectionable in a "parvenu"—ignorance or pretension? What does Emerson call a man who places all stress on forms? How does Emerson show that self-reliance is necessary to real dignity? That truth is also necessary? Can you give other examples?

Paragraphs 12, 13: Self-respect and deference are necessary to good manners.

Illustrate paragraph 12 from customs of our times. In connection with paragraph 13 discuss the old sayings, "Familiarity breeds contempt"—"No man can be a hero to his valet." In what words does Emerson express the thought that "Stillness of person and steadiness of features are signal marks of good breeding"? Does Emerson deprecate thoughtful care for the comfort of others?

Paragraph 14: Wit is necessary to determine what manners are suitable to circumstances.

Notice the summary under the words "kindness" and "independence" of qualities of good breeding already discussed. What does Emerson say "makes the good and bad of man-

ners"? What do we mean when we say a person "is all angles and sharp corners"? Does such a person get on happily with others? Can a person who wants tact appear kind however kindly he may feel?

Paragraph 15: The gentleman is not too strenuous.

Illustrate with examples. "Haste can make you slipshod, but it can never make you graceful." — Higginson.

Paragraph 16: The gentleman is "good-natured."

How does this quality differ from that discussed in paragraph 14? Illustrate its value from your own observation.

Paragraphs 17, 18: The basis of good manners is benevolence.

If one has only external manners, is he likely to betray sometime his cold heart? If he is kind-hearted and thoughtful, will he be likely to commit any serious blunders in his social relations? Nevertheless, have rules and forms of conduct a certain value? Are they ever burdensome or absurd? Can you think of any rules of conduct that are not intended to make us more agreeable to each other, or to express the benevolence we *ought*, at least, to feel? Do you think of rules of etiquette as "an attempt to organize beauty of behavior"?

Paragraph 19: Fine manners do not belong to any one class of society.

Discuss the relation of manners to character. Which is better, physical beauty or "beauty of manners"? Have you ever seen a person that impressed you as the one Emerson speaks of ("I have seen" etc.) impressed him?

Paragraph 20: Women have a special instinct for manners.

Discuss and illustrate the doctrines of this paragraph. With Emerson's quotation compare Wordsworth's *She was a phantom of delight*. Name some women who have been to the social life of their time what Emerson describes, as

Madame de Staël. Study thoughtfully the account of Lilla. Understand every characteristic named by Emerson. Is this a concrete summary of the essay on *Manners*?

Paragraph 21: To persons who have them not, forms seem to be more than they really are.

What two virtues will take one safely into every society? Are forms current everywhere? Are the *same* forms current everywhere?

Paragraphs 22, 23: After all, it is benevolence that gives one currency in society. Conventionalities, though sometimes useful, are not essential.

Explain the meaning of the fable.

Read thoughtfully Emerson's essay on *Behavior*. Make a list of the thoughts identical in the two essays. Make a list of the thoughts you find in *Behavior* which you did not find in the essay on *Manners*. Memorize and recite in the class at least one fine passage, worth remembering all your life. Bring into the class at least two passages which you would like to contradict, discuss, or illustrate by examples.

#### **Outline of Topics Treated in Behavior**

Definition of Manners.

They are partly formal.

Influence of manners in society.

The primary use of good manners.

Influence of environment and position on manners.

Relation between power and manners.

Influence of birth on manners.

Expressiveness of the body.

Manners of royal persons.

Importance of manners in business.

Importance of manners in society.

Independence of manners desirable.



Manners and haste incompatible.  
 Character shows itself in spite of manners.  
 Manners impressive only as they show personality.  
 Value of novels in teaching manners.  
 Heroic manners win confidence.  
 Manners more potent than beauty.  
 Relation between benevolence and manners.  
 It is ill-mannered to talk about unpleasant subjects.  
 Manners to be taught by principles, not by specific rules.

Write a paragraph on the relation between *good* manners and *formal* manners. Are they necessarily the same? Are they ever opposed? Cite rules of form not absolutely necessary to *good* manners; cite other rules that are necessary. What is the principle on which you have decided whether or not the rule is essential? See the first sentence in paragraph 6 of *Behavior*.

#### COMPENSATION

Paragraphs 1-6: Introduction: How long had Emerson been planning this essay? Why did he wish to write on this subject? What was the doctrine set forth by the sermon that occasioned the writing of the essay? Is it commonly held? What is Emerson's criticism of it as moral teaching? Is it a doctrine to live by?

Paragraphs 7-9: Compensation, or balance, is a law of the natural world.

Can you add examples?

Paragraphs 10-12: In human life and society, every gain is accompanied by a loss, every loss by a compensating gain.

How many times does Emerson state this truth in an expository sentence? In what figures does he express it? With what examples does he illustrate it? Add other examples. Explain the third sentence in paragraph 11. With paragraph

11 compare Bacon's essay *Of Great Place*, and these lines from Lowell's *Sir Launfal*, Prelude I:—

At the devil's booth are all things sold,  
Each ounce of dross costs its ounce of gold;  
For a cap and bells our lives we pay,  
Bubbles we buy with the whole soul's tasking.

Paragraphs 13-14: Natural laws are universal in operation.

Find all the sentences that express this thought. What examples are given to prove and illustrate it?

Paragraphs 15-16: The law of compensation is also universal and eternal in its operation.

Explain the third sentence of paragraph 15. How does Emerson prove that "Justice is not postponed" till the next world? Explain the quotation from the Greek. How does Emerson regard punishment for sin? Explain carefully the figure in the last three sentences of paragraph 16.

Paragraph 17: Men fail to see that, in a well-conducted universe, the moral must balance the physical.

Add to Emerson's examples.

Paragraph 18: Men constantly strive for the gain without the loss.

Illustrate by examples.

Paragraphs 19, 20: But the law of compensation operates in spite of us.

Explain the figures and illustrations with which Emerson makes his statement more forcible. Explain the second and third sentences of paragraph 20.

Paragraphs 21-23: The fables of the race teach the law of compensation.

Tell, in such a way as to bring out clearly his moral, the

stories to which Emerson alludes. What is meant by the third sentence in paragraph 21? Explain the figures in the last sentence in paragraph 21. With the first sentence of paragraph 23 compare Lowell's prelude to his *Rhæcus*. What does an artist gain by choosing an old story for his subject? Name some poets that have done this. Name some poems that are more the product of the race than of any individual.

Paragraphs 24-26: The proverbs of all nations teach the law of compensation.

Proverbs grow out of the experience of the race, and are therefore intended to express truths. Do you understand the significance in this essay of each of those quoted in paragraph 25? Emerson probably expected us to think for ourselves of such familiar ones as, "There is no loss without some gain," "You can't eat your cake and have it too," and "There are two sides to every question." Can you make the list still longer?

Paragraph 27: Find the topic sentence of this paragraph. How many times is it repeated. Does each repetition make it clearer? More forcible? Explain the metaphors in the last two sentences.

Paragraph 28: Find the topic sentence of this paragraph. How does Emerson illustrate this truth? Find illustrations of it in your own life and in the society about you.

Paragraphs 29-30: Failure to live up to one's social obligations re-acts on the delinquent person.

Why do men feel afraid of those they have injured? Is *fear* as terrible a sign as the figure in paragraph 30 indicates? Discuss historically the statement that it is "the herald of all revolutions." If the ruling class were always just and fair, would there ever be any revolutions?

Paragraph 31: Superstitious fears come from a sense of our unworthiness.

Explain the examples used by Emerson.

Paragraphs 32, 33: We are obliged, willing or unwilling, to pay our debt to society.

Explain the second sentence in paragraph 32. Is the sense of obligation as painful as Emerson says it is? Should it be? Should not one be able to receive gratefully as well as to give generously? Could a poor person ever associate with a rich one and live up to this doctrine? Or is Emerson merely speaking against the selfish policy of "getting all one can" out of other people and out of society, without any thought of one's privilege of sharing in the pleasure of *giving*? With the third sentence from the last in paragraph 33 compare the notion of "passing on a kindness to some one else," when one can make no return to his benefactor.

Paragraphs 34, 35: The law of compensation rules in the industrial world.

Give examples to show that cheap labor is dear. Did you ever buy a cheap article that proved to be dear? Would sweat-shop garments, made in filthy attics by diseased persons, be cheap at any price? What moral price does a swindler pay for his dishonest gains? If the workman does not receive a fair price for his wares, what is his compensation?

Paragraph 36: Crime cannot hide itself.

Explain all the figures in this paragraph. Does the experience of society justify the old saying "Murder will out"?

Paragraph 37: Goodness re-acts upon the actor.

Discuss the quotation, "Indeed, to do the best for others is finally to do the best for ourselves; but it will not do to have our eyes fixed on that issue." — Ruskin.

Paragraph 38: Even a man's faults have their compensating advantages.

Study the paragraph carefully, and explain how Emerson proves this. Add to his examples from your own experience or observation. What compensation for a quick temper has a quick person usually in his disposition? What compensation has a conceited person usually? A slow person?

Paragraph 39: Every affliction and hindrance and temptation has its compensation.

Give a concrete example for each instance named by Emerson. Do you feel that prosperity is as dangerous as he says it is? Which would you rather have, the discomforts with their compensations or the ease with its compensations? Memorize the last two sentences.

Paragraph 40: No one can really injure a man but himself.

In what sense is no other person able to cheat us? Who is "the third silent party"? See the next sentence. Do you believe what is said in the last two sentences?

Paragraph 41: There is compensation for martyrs, victims of all sorts of persecutions.

Review the history of persecution: does Emerson paint it in colors too dark? Do any of his remarks refer to conditions in America in 1841? Have martyrs usually suffered cheerfully? Can you imagine what compensations have sustained their spirits in the hour of agony? Have they usually had faith that their cause would triumph in the end? Does it? See Lowell's *The Present Crisis*, stanza 14. Explain the first sentence. Is the progress of the race natural and inevitable?

Paragraph 42: A transitional paragraph,

a. Summarizing the doctrine of compensation;

- b. Introducing the discussion intended to show that good and evil are not equal in effect.

Would the discussion of the first 41 paragraphs influence you to think that it would make no difference whether one should do good or evil, that the balance of his life would be the same in either case? If that were Emerson's doctrine, would the essay have a good moral influence? Would it be true to the constitution of the universe?

Paragraph 43: Good is positive, active, really existent; evil is negative, non-existent.

Emerson suggests an analogy between *good* and *light*, and between *evil* and *darkness*, or absence of light. Browning uses another figure to express the same negative character of evil.

The evil is null, is naught, is silence implying sound.

— BROWNING: *Abt Vogler*.

Paragraph 44: The compensation for evil that apparently goes unpunished is in the character of the individual.

Do you feel that this punishment is adequate for any crime?

Paragraphs 45, 46: There is no moral penalty attached to a virtuous action; and its great reward is in its effect on character.

Discuss the proverb "Virtue is its own reward." Does Emerson seem to think that a man is living out his *natural* self in living his *best* self? Compare Hawthorne's tale called *Drowne's Wooden Image*: "Yet, who can doubt that the very highest state to which a human spirit can attain, in its loftiest aspirations, is its truest and most natural state."

With this paragraph compare Lowell's:

'Tis Heaven alone that is given away,  
'Tis only God may be had for the asking.

— *Sir Launfal*, Prelude to Part I.

Can one train himself to care more for this moral reward than for material rewards? How much is it worth to know that we are in harmony with the constitution of the universe, and with the laws of its progress?

Paragraph 47: Circumstances are comparatively unimportant to one whose mind is fixed on the soul's development.

Are all men created equal? How can a person that has little learn not to envy one who has much? Explain the third and fourth sentences from the end of the paragraph.

Paragraphs 48–50: Calamities develop character.

Illustrate this statement by specific examples: what could a rich man gain by losing his money? what may the loss of friends do for us? what may physical suffering teach us? Compare the figure in the third sentence in paragraph 48 with Holmes's *The Chambered Nautilus*. Does the fourth sentence in paragraph 48 mean that it is desirable to cultivate indifference to persons and surroundings? Make sure you understand the beautiful figure in paragraph 49. Have you ever observed in life the truth expressed in paragraph 50? Notice the beautiful and significant figure that closes the essay.

How much of the compensation for misfortune comes in the way of character-discipline? What would this essay mean to a person not seriously interested in the improvement of his character?

Would this essay influence you at all to decide your actions on motives based on the expectation of rewards and punish-

ments? Are such motives high or low? To what extent do they come into your school-life now? Into other phases of your life?

Write a paragraph summarizing Emerson's doctrine of compensation. Write another stating your own point of view.

### SELF-RELIANCE

Paragraph 1: Every man has the thoughts and feelings the great artist expresses.

Is it your experience that you recognize your own thought often in the expressions of great men? Can you explain why this should be so? Do you care much for a piece of art or literature that does not express your observation or experience? Of course, you may not have put your thought into words, but you recognize your subconscious thought in the picture or the poem. Why do you sometimes find yourself interested in a book to which you were indifferent a year or two before? What is Emerson's definition of "genius"? What is the fundamental difference between it and that given by the great critic, Matthew Arnold: "Genius is mainly an affair of energy"? Or that given by the painter, Hogarth: "Genius is nothing but labor and diligence"? Or that given by the scientist, Buffon: "Genius is nothing but a great capacity for patience"? Can you see why a scientist should give Buffon's definition, or an artist give Hogarth's?

Paragraphs 2, 3: Every man is of unique importance in the world.

Explain the first sentence in paragraph 2. Compare yourself with others whom you know well; do you find yourself *exactly* like them? Or could you, if you would, do something for society that no other person could do? Compare *Heroism*,



paragraph 13. Is the feeling described in paragraph 3 the same as *conceit*?

Paragraphs 4, 5: Independence is natural to man.

Emerson proves his assertion by describing the behavior of children, and contrasting it with that of grown persons. Does your observation of the world tally with his? Do you think that young persons who behave as he describes are unpleasantly bold?

Paragraph 6: Society demands conformity, not independence.

But self-reliance is a *centrifugal* force; if society is to be held together, must it not be by a *centripetal* force, like conformity? Is it possible to live so detached a life in the world?

Paragraph 7: The true man judges everything from his own point of view.

What sort of man should you take Emerson to be from what he says in this paragraph? What sort of man was he in his dealings with others? Have you seen such philanthropists as he describes? Ought you to be prejudiced against a good cause by their failings? Does Emerson mean that we are never to take advice? How significant, as a limitation to this extreme statement, is the clause "when my genius calls me"? Is it manly to give to a cause in which we have no interest, simply because we are asked to do so?

Paragraph 8: A man ought not even to do good from a lower motive.

Have you ever done a good deed to atone for a bad one? Or "to be seen of men"? Are such motives high?

Paragraph 9: One must "live his own life."

But should one be absolutely indifferent to the opinion of others? Have you experienced the truth of the third sentence? Why is it impossible for another person to understand

your duty as correctly as you do? Can another person choose your profession for you? Memorize the last sentence. Name some such "great" man.

Paragraph 10: Insincere conformity is bad.

What profession did Emerson give up because he could not sincerely conform to its usages? What is the harm in such conformity? Explain "one or another handkerchief." Does the latter part of the paragraph express a common experience?

Paragraph 11: Non-conformists must brook the rage of society.

Compare with paragraph 6. Why is the disapproval of the cultivated classes so much less fearful than that of the ignorant? In our own small circle of society are we more critical of those that do not conform in small matters or of those that disregard great principles?

Paragraphs 12-14: We are afraid of being inconsistent if we are independent.

The *first* terror is that explained in paragraph 11. Try to state clearly the difference between a stubborn consistency and a reasonable consistency; between a reasonable consistency and fickleness. You will make your statements clearer if you illustrate them by examples. What value do you give to the saying "Consistency, thou art a jewel"? Is the last sentence of paragraph 14 true? Is the great man ahead of his times? See Lowell, *The Present Crisis*. In how far is consistency in social institutions opposed to social progress?

Paragraphs 15, 16: A man should live out his own nature, honestly, day by day, and he will be, on the whole, consistent.

Explain the second sentence in paragraph 15; the fourth; the last two. Explain the figure in paragraph 16 comparing

life to the path of a ship. Emerson is not in this paragraph advising us to be shortsighted, but to do every moment what seems right and best in the light we have at that moment — not in the light we had yesterday. Explain the doctrine of “the cumulative force of character.”

Paragraphs 17–20: All true men should regard themselves as the equals of “great men.”

The first sentence in paragraph 17 puts aside the two “terrors” that have just been discussed. With sentences 5 and 6 compare the preparations made in *Friendship*, paragraph 3. Is it wise for us all to aspire to become “centers” and “causes”? Is one likely to become what he does not aspire to be? Emerson advises also, “Hitch your wagon to a star.” If every man has in him the elements of greatness, why should one be over-awed by a famous man? Every man may have the dignity of a prince, in character and in self-respect.

Paragraphs 21, 22: Original, creative action comes from intuition, which proceeds from the fountain of universal life. A man’s intuitions are, therefore, always to be trusted, and what he knows by intuition is always true. In matters where the intuitions guide us, we are not bound to listen to the teaching of other men. The past has no claim upon a man.

Paragraphs 23, 24: We are too much bound by the traditions of the past.

What civilization was there until recently in China, where men have said for centuries, “What was good enough for my father is good enough for me”? Explain the last two sentences of paragraph 23. Principles are eternal, but each generation has its own way of expressing them (paragraph 24). This we saw in our discussion of the mediæval knight and the modern gentleman, in connection with the

essay on *Manners* (paragraph 3). What lines in Lowell's *The Present Crisis* express the thought of progress Emerson has put into this essay?

Paragraph 25: How can men recognize the leading of this divine intuition? Are example and experience of no value? Does it lead one to or from conformity? Is this the *feeling* that is higher than reason? (See *Heroism*, paragraph 5).

Paragraph 26: There is life only in progress.

Memorize the first sentence. Have you ever heard thoughtful persons say that one cannot stand still when he is going up the hill of life — that if he is not climbing upward he is slipping backward? Notice that the words "plastic" and "permeable" in the last sentence imply change, also.

Paragraphs 27, 28: The power of self-help is necessary to a complete existence.

How does Emerson show this by examples from nature? Cite some examples from your own observation of nature, and from your experience of life.

Paragraphs 29–33: No man must permit himself to be hindered by others or by the ideals of others.

Does Emerson advise you to become a hermit and abjure all social duties and responsibilities? Or simply to be "in the world but not of it"? With paragraph 30 compare the statement in *Heroism*, paragraph 13, that every person has "a new and untried problem" to solve. He cannot work it out successfully on rules that apply to other problems. Does Emerson condemn under the terms "lying hospitality" and "lying affections" those courteous expressions by which we sometimes try to disguise an indifference, a vexation, or a dislike of which we are ashamed? Should we always "speak our minds" to people? Will the doctrine of one's duty to

oneself lead a sane, sincere person astray? Have you ever known unbalanced persons to harm themselves under what they supposed to be an application of this principle? Or self-indulgent persons to make it an excuse for breaking social laws? Is it a dangerous principle? How can we be certain we are not self-indulgent or unbalanced when we undertake to be independent in this way? Is Emerson too pessimistic in paragraph 33?

Paragraph 34: Self-reliance is necessary in business.

Can you cite examples of persons who have failed because they had not patience to wait for success, or courage to wring it from failure? In the lives of great inventors you can find plenty of examples of men who have had to toil patiently and courageously for success to which no person but themselves looked forward with any hope.

Paragraph 35 is transitional, looking forward to coming topics.

Paragraphs 36-38: Self-reliance should be practiced in religion.

State Emerson's notion of what prayers are right and proper, and what are improper. Compare his statement that there is "prayer in all actions" with Whittier's *Snow-Bound*, lines 608-611. In the first half of paragraph 37 is Emerson unsympathetic and cold-hearted? What words of Emerson express the thought, "To him that hath shall be given"? What does Emerson think of the value of formal creeds? Of the harm they may do? Because a certain creed satisfied the spiritual need of Calvin or Wesley or John Fox, does it necessarily satisfy the need of other men? Does history show that men usually place what Emerson would call a false value on creeds? Should a growing mind expect to cling to one creed from childhood to old age? Compare paragraphs

12 to 14. Explain the metaphor in the last sentence of paragraph 38.

Paragraphs 39-42: We need to be more self-reliant in conforming to educational ideals.

For a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of travel, see the notes on Whittier's *The Last Walk in Autumn*, lines 49ff. What great pictures have you seen that prove that a real artist may take his subjects from the life about him, however humble it may be? What great poems besides *Snow-Bound* do you know that show that a poet may write greatly on the simple life he knows at home?

Paragraph 43: Men must be self-reliant in the choice of a life-work or profession.

What considerations should determine every young person in the choice of a profession or business? Should he think chiefly of how he can make the most money? Of how he can rise to the best social position? Of how he can make the most for himself and society of such talents as he has? Who is to make the choice? If parents have studied the characters and dispositions of their children faithfully, can they give them material help in choice of a life-work?

Paragraph 44 is transitional; refer to paragraph 35, and to the coming topic.

Paragraphs 45-48: We need to be self-reliant in our modes of living — in our social relations.

How is the law of "compensation" shown in paragraphs 45 and 46? Is it true that society, after all its centuries of struggle, has made no real progress? Are all our boasted comforts and conveniences of no real value? What harm can there be in "improving machinery"? And have we no higher moral ideals than men of a thousand years ago? Is it nothing that we have abolished slavery and ceased to practice

religious persecution, and a hundred other evils? Explain the metaphor in paragraph 48.

Paragraph 49: Men must learn to be independent of property and of the support of other men.

Is the statement made in the third sentence correct? Is this a loss that compensates a rich man for the advantages he gains through his wealth? Is a real man content to be judged by what he has? Ought a "self-made man" to be judged by his wealth any more than a man of inherited means? Is there no advantage in numbers — in belonging to a large party, or society, or club? To what extent is the work of society carried on through such agencies? Does a man who belongs to such an organization sacrifice anything of his own individuality?

Paragraph 50: Men must learn to be independent of circumstances, and think only of the working of great social and spiritual laws.

Memorize the last two sentences.

## CULTURE

I. Read the essay carefully with the following outline.

A. Introduction:

I. The Purpose of Culture:

To develop symmetrically all our powers. Memorize paragraph 9.

II. Opposites of Culture:

1. Narrowness:

- a. In intellectual matters;
- b. In social relations.

2. Egotism, manifested by:

- a. A desire to be noticed and admired;
- b. An exaggerated opinion of our own importance.

B. Body: There are four sources of culture: *books, travel, society, solitude* (paragraph 11).

I. Books.

1. Advantages of formal, school education:

- a. The value of training is universally acknowledged;
- b. Education should not be reformatory merely, but preventive;
- c. Familiarity with great books prevents one from becoming egotistic.

2. Books are not the only instruments of education — games and amusements are necessary:

- a. They broaden one's view of life;
- b. If practiced, they will not seem to be too important.

II. Travel.

1. Advantages of travel:

- a. It brings broader knowledge of world and people;
- b. It brings one into contact with great men;
- c. It furnishes new interests and resources.

2. Limitation to the advantages of travel:

- a. It draws away power that should be used at home;
- b. There is not so much that is novel in foreign lands — men are men the world over.

III. Society.

1. Advantages of society (city life):

- a. It brings one into contact with things and persons worth knowing;
- b. It teaches quiet, unpretentious manners.

2. Limitations in society:

- a. It forces trifles on our attention;
- b. It brings us into contact with persons not helpful to us.

IV. Solitude.

1. Advantages of solitude (country life, quiet room, etc.):

- a. It gives one opportunity to regain poise and cultivate individuality;



- b. It releases one from petty cares, and gives one time to see life in its proper proportions;
  - c. It gives one time to cultivate some artistic taste;
  - d. It gives one time to study thoroughly his trade or profession.
  - e. Even involuntary solitude—social ostracism for opinion or principle, for non-conformity—is good discipline, and cultivates self-reliance.
2. Why does Emerson name no losses to compensate the gains from solitude? Is IV 1, sufficiently balanced by III 1? Does the absence of a discussion that would, if present, fill IV 2, suggest that Emerson is particularly impressed by the advantages of "solitude"? What does his own life suggest in this connection?

C. Concluding paragraphs:

- 1. Heredity plays its part in the culture of the individual.
- 2. The race is cultivated through all its experiences.

II. Has Emerson succeeded in making you feel that intellectual one-sidedness is deformity? If so, how?

With Emerson's discussion the students may compare that of Matthew Arnold in *Sweetness and Light* (found in a volume called *Culture and Anarchy*).

After reading *Culture* the class should turn to *The American Scholar*. A brief outline of the essay is given below, and the students should consult also Cooke, pages 59 and 60, and Holmes, pages 107 to 115.

- A. Preface: the occasion; the subject (paragraphs 1, 2).
- B. Introduction: The man is more than his trade or profession (paragraphs 3-7).
- C. Body:
  - I. Influences that form the scholar (paragraphs 8-28):
    - 1. nature;
    - 2. books;
    - 3. action.

II. Duties of the scholar (paragraphs 29-35);

III. Application of these ideas to our own country and times  
    (paragraphs 36-43).

D. Conclusion.

If it is accessible, the class will also be interested in George William Curtis's oration on *The Leadership of Educated Men*.

## APPENDIX

### I. A LIST OF ESSAY SUBJECTS

The subjects in the following list have been found very useful as work supplementary to the study of the history of American literature. For older students they have been used as subjects for essays and reports. For less mature students they should be rather topics for class conversation and study, expanding the most interesting topics in the text-books.

1. *Interesting Tales from Early Documents of Virginia.*

Material in Stedman and Hutchinson, Library of American Literature, I.

2. *Stories of Colonial Days in New England.*

Material in Stedman and Hutchinson I. Has this material literary value?

3. *Jonathan Edwards.*

Judge him by the selections from his works published in Stedman and Hutchinson II.

4. *Examples of Self-reliance and Self-direction from the Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin.*

5. *The Good Advice of "Poor Richard."*

6. *The Writings of Thomas Paine.*

Material in Stedman and Hutchinson III.

7. *The Orators of the Revolution.*

The text-book should give a starting-point. See also biographies, histories, and Stedman and Hutchinson III.

8. *Our National Songs.*

The text-book on history of American literature should give a starting-point.

9. *New York as a Literary Center.*

Histories of American literature and biographies of men will furnish material.

10. *Influence on Irving's Work of his Youthful Travels on the Hudson.*

See Life and Letters of Irving, edited by Pierre Irving, Vol. I, chapters 2 and 3. Compare with stories and sketches relating to the Hudson in Irving's works.

11. *Old Christmas Customs in Merry England.*

The Sketch Book. Find origin and history of customs if you have the material in your library

12. *Irving's Attitude toward the Indian.*

The Sketch Book. Knickerbocker's History of New York.

13. *English Life as Portrayed in Bracebridge Hall.*14. *Irving's Power of Description as Shown in The Sketch Book.*15. *The Humor and Pathos of The Sketch Book.*16. *Why some Descendants of Old Dutch Families were Offended by Knickerbocker's History of New York.*17. *An Illustrated Paper on The Alhambra.*18. *The Romance of the North-west as Told in Irving's Astoria.*19. *The Influence of Spain on Irving.*

See biographies, criticisms, and works.

20. *Irving as a Writer of Biography and History.*

Enumerate his books of this sort and tell how they are regarded. Make a more careful study of one, as Washington, Columbus, The Conquest of Granada, or Goldsmith.

21-24. *The Style and Purpose of Irving's Tales.*

Think over the following extract from one of Irving's letters. "For my part, I consider a story merely as a frame, on which to stretch the materials. It is the play of thought, and sentiment, and language; the weaving in of characters, lightly yet expressively delineated; the familiar and faithful exhibition of scenes in common life; and the half-concealed vein of humor that is often playing through the whole, — these are among what I aim at, and upon which I felicitate myself in proportion as I think I succeed." With this ideal in mind, study four of Irving's tales:

21. *Rip Van Winkle.*

22. *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow.*

23. *The Spectre Bridegroom.*

24. *Dolph Heiliger.*

Has Irving accomplished his purpose in these tales? How? Notice how he emphasizes local color and social setting.

(It might be well to defer this topic till after the class has studied the short-stories of Poe and Hawthorne. They will then be able to say why Irving's tales are not exactly short-stories.)

25. *Bryant and Abolition.*

See index to Godwin's Life; Bryant's prose; his poems written during the Civil War; Lowell's On Board the '76.

26. *Bryant as a Writer on American Nature.*

How his nature poems illustrate his advice to his brother (Letter of Feb. 19, 1832): "I saw some lines by you to a skylark. Did you ever see such a bird? Let me counsel you to draw your images, in describing Nature, from what you observe around you, unless you are confessedly composing a description of some foreign country, when, of course, you will learn what you can from books. The skylark is an English bird, and an American who has never visited Europe has no right to be in raptures about it."

27. *Bryant's Style in his Blank Verse Poems.*

Summary of points of style in poems studied in detail: a. Character of thought; b. Rhetorical devices used to express the thought effectively.

Contrast with these in tone and style other nature poems, as *Green River* and *June*, not written in blank verse.

28. *Poe's Criticisms of Longfellow and Bryant.*

29. *Poe's Critical Work on Hawthorne.*

30. *Poe's William Wilson and Stevenson's Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.*

See also St. Paul in Romans 7:23.

31. *Poe's The Gold-Bug and Conan Doyle's The Adventure of the Dancing Men.*

Which is the better story? Doyle's story is in a volume called *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*.

32. *Compare Poe's Dupin and Doyle's Sherlock Holmes.*

What is the principle on which each works? Use Poe's *The Purloined Letter*, and Doyle's *The Adventure of the Second Stain* (in *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*) and *The Scandal in Bohemia* (in *Sherlock Holmes Series*, Vol. II).

33. *Longfellow's Tales of a Wayside Inn.*

Plan and Poems. See Index to Life, Letters, and Journal.

34. *Longfellow's Anti-slavery Poems.*

See Poems and Index to Life, Letters, and Journal.

35. *Longfellow's The Building of the Ship and Schiller's The Song of the Bell.*

See Longfellow's Journal of March 18, 23, 1850, just after publication of his poem. And see Scholl, "Longfellow and Schiller's 'Lied von der Glocke,'" in *Modern Language Notes*, February, 1913.

36. *Longfellow's Autobiographical Poems.*

See references to wife and children in Index to Life, Letters, and Journal. Poems: *Footsteps of Angels*, *To a Child*, *Resignation*, *Auf Wiedersehen*, *The Two Angels*, *My Lost Youth*, *The Children's Hour*, *The Haunted Chamber*, *The Cross of Snow*, *From My Armchair*, *The Iron Pen*. Consider also the prose romance *Hyperion*.

37. *Longfellow's Friends in his Poetry.*

Wm. E. Channing, Agassiz, Bayard Taylor, Hawthorne, Charles Sumner, The River Charles, Three Friends of Mine, The Herons of Elmwood, The Two Angels, The Burial of the Poet. See Index to Life, Letters, and Journal for these persons and Longfellow's friendship with them.

38. *Longfellow's Scholarship in his Poetry.*

See biographies for an account of his scholarship. Speak of figures, allusions, imitations, and adaptations. From his poems themselves discover the amount and scope of his work as a translator. Add a paragraph or two on the Dante translation. G. W. Curtis says that his "scholarship decorated his pure and limpid song as flowers are mirrored in a placid stream."

39. *Longfellow's Imagination.*

In Hyperion Longfellow writes thus of his hero, Paul Flemming (who is his own counterpart): "His thoughts were twin-born; the thought itself, and its figurative semblance in the outer world. Thus, through the quiet, still waters of his soul each image floated double, 'swan and shadow.'" Discuss this statement; illustrate the characteristic by examples from Longfellow's poems.

40. *Emerson's Method of Compiling his Essays and its Effect on his Style.*

Find out from biographies about his note-book habit. Discuss its effect on sentence-structure and coherence of paragraphs.

41. *The Short Sentence in Emerson.*

42. *Emerson's Mind and Range of Interests as Shown by his Figures of Speech and his Allusions.*

43. *Emerson's Attitude toward Nature.*

Nature poems and prose work called Nature.

44. *Thoreau's Life and Character as it Appears in his Walden.*

45. *What Makes Thoreau's Walden Literature and not Mere Scientific Record.*

Style, imagination, lack of scientific system. For the accuracy of Thoreau's observation, see Emerson's essay on Thoreau.

46. *The Friendship of Emerson and Thoreau.*

Biographies of both men (indexes). Emerson's Essay on *Thoreau*, Emerson's poem, Woodnotes I. Of the poem, Emerson's son writes:

"He (E.) delighted in being led to the very inner shrines of the wood-gods by this man (T.), clear-eyed and true and stern enough to be trusted with their secrets, who filled the portrait of the Forest-seer of the *Woodnotes*, although those lines were written before their author came to know Thoreau." "The passages about the Forest-seer fit Thoreau so well that the general belief that Mr. E. had him in mind may be accepted, but one member of the family recalls his saying that a part of this picture was drawn before he knew Thoreau's gifts and experiences."

The reference to the "Forest-seer" is in stanza 2 of Woodnotes I. The two men were acquainted when the entire poem was published (1840). With stanzas 3 and 4 compare Thoreau's Maine Woods.

47. *Hawthorne's Descriptions of Colonial Life.*

See the Colonial tales in collections of short stories; Grandfather's Chair; The Scarlet Letter.

• 48-54. *Analysis of Hawthorne's Short Stories.*

Read the story for general impression; decide on its moral teaching; trace the plot; discuss characterization; show how the author, through his style and suggestions, brings out the moral; if he states the moral in so many words, quote them.

48. *The Minister's Black Veil.* (*Twice Told Tales* I.)

The isolation of the soul.

49. *Young Goodman Brown.* (*Mosses* I.)

"A Vision of Sin:" how it came and its effect.

50. *The Snow-Image.*

How a good man may do much harm.

51. *The Birthmark.* (*Mosses* I.)

See American Note-Books, 1839: "A person to be the death of his be-



loved in trying to raise her to more than mortal perfection; yet this should be a comfort to him for having aimed so highly and so holily." Does the story as developed seem to you to show the moral idea of the Note?

52. *Drowne's Wooden Image.* (*Mosses* II.)

Ah, how skillful grows the hand  
That obeyeth Love's command!  
It is the heart, and not the brain,  
That to the highest doth attain.  
And he who followeth Love's behest  
Far excelleth all the rest!

— LONGFELLOW: *The Building of the Ship.*

53. *Rappaccini's Daughter.* (*Mosses* I.)

The transmission of poison.

54. *The White Old Maid.* (*Twice Told Tales* II.)

The sinner and the sufferer.

"A change from a gay young girl to an old woman; the melancholy events, the effects of which have clustered around her character and gradually imbued it with their influence, till she becomes a lover of sick chambers, taking pleasure in receiving dying breaths and in laying out the dead; also leaving her mind full of funeral reminiscences, and possessing more acquaintance beneath the burial turf than upon it."—*American Note-Books.*

55. *Poe and Hawthorne as Short-story Writers.*

Compare them on these points: 1. Themes chosen; 2. Plot construction; 3. Characterization; sympathy with and interest in human beings; 4. Choice of setting (strange or commonplace); 5. Power in description, attitude toward nature; 6. Use of the supernatural; the possible and the impossible; the unreal; verisimilitude; 7. Power to write conversation; 8. Pathos and humor; 9. Shrewd comment on questions of life and social relations; 10. Moralizing; 11. Moral teaching; 12. Power to produce effect intended. After the student has worked out his own thoughts, he may consult the following references: Barrett, *Short-story Writing*, p. 20; Matthews, *The Philosophy of the Short-story*, p. 39; Stedman, *Poets of America*, p. 254; Canby, *The Short Story in English*, Chapters

XI and XII. Publications of the Modern Language Association of America, New Series XVIII, 1, "The Supernatural in American Literature."

56. *Whittier's Autobiographical Poems.*

Snow-Bound, The Barefoot Boy, To My Old Schoolmaster, In School-days, My Playmate, Memories. For references explaining poems, see index to Pickard's Life and Letters of Whittier.

57. *Local Color in Whittier's Poems of Contemporary New England.*

58. *Whittier and War.*

See Pickard's index for references to Whittier's attitude toward universal peace, and see index to Poems. For his attitude toward the Civil War, see Pickard II, 476.

59. *Whittier's Anti-Slavery Poems.*

See Poems. See Pickard's Life, index. Note particularly Vol. I, pp. 122, 131, 141, 189, 191, 203, 218.

60. *Our Anti-Slavery Orators.*

The text-book in American literature should furnish a starting-point.

61. *Whittier's Political Poems.*

See Poems. Discuss particularly Ichabod (1850) and The Lost Occasion. Pickard I, 327. Compare Browning's The Lost Leader. Webster's speech of March 7, 1850, and the feeling of the Abolitionists toward the Compromise Bill. Webster felt that the preservation of the Union was more important than the abolition of slavery, and that compromise was necessary to the preservation of the Union.

62. *Whittier's Poems to Persons.*

See Poems. For his relations to these persons, see Pickard, index.

63. *Whittier's Songs of Labor.*

Discuss each for literary style, and as an exposition of life. See Pickard, I, 297, 348-350.

64. *Whittier's Nature Poems.*

See Poems. See books of criticism, and histories of American literature.

65. *Whittier's The Tent on the Beach.*

Plan. Poems included. See Pickard, index.

66. *Whittier's Poems of Early New England Life.*

What phases have particularly attracted him? Cassandra Southwick, The Exiles, The Quaker of the Olden Time, How the Women went from Dover, Banished from Massachusetts, Calef in Boston, Mary Garvin, The Witch's Daughter, The Garrison of Cape Ann, The Prophecy of Samuel Sewall, The Double-headed Snake of Newbury, The Swan Song of Parson Avery, The Truce of Piscataqua, Amy Wentworth, The Countess, Nauhaught the Deacon, Norembega, Cobbler Keezar's Vision, The Pennsylvania Pilgrim, John Underhill, The Witch of Wenham, In the Old South, The King's Missive.

67. *Whittier's Religious Poems.*

See "Religious Faith" in Pickard's index, particularly pp. 265, 478, 567, 628, 629, 631, 632, 655, 683, 709, 747, 751. Hymns, 684. State in a paragraph the thought and feeling you find in the poems: Religious Poems, The Vaudois Teacher, The Female Martyr, The Chapel of the Hermits, Tauler, The Hermit of the Thebiad, Mary Garvin, The Preacher, Miriam, The Two Rabbins, Centennial Hymn, Ein' feste Burg, The Reformer, The New Exodus, The Great Awakening, At Last, What the Traveller Said at Sunset, Between the Gates. How does Whittier's teaching differ from that of the orthodox New England churches of his day?

68. *Lowell's Love Poems.*

See "White, Maria," and "Lowell, Maria W." in indexes to Scudder's Life and Norton's Letters. The influence of Mrs. Lowell over her husband. Poems: Irene, My Lover, Love, O Moonlight Deep and Tender, Sonnets II, III, VIII, IX, X, XIII, XXI, XXII. Written after Mrs. Lowell's death: The Wind-harp, Auf Wiedersehen and Palinode, After the Burial, The Dead House.

69. *Lowell's Poems of Family Life.*

References to Lowell's children in Scudder's Life and Norton's Letters. Poems: She Came and Went, The Changeling, The First Snowfall, After the Burial, An Indian Summer Reverie (end of poem).

70. *Lowell's Friendships in his Verse.*

See poems addressed to various persons. For his relations to these men, consult Life and Letters.

71. *Lowell's The Biglow Papers, First Series.*

General plan; use of dialect; special purpose of each paper. Use in connection with *The Present Crisis*.

72. *Lowell's The Biglow Papers, Second Series.*

Compare with First Series: note change in poet's feeling; how expressed? Purpose of each paper. Use in connection with Civil War poems and Commemoration Ode.

73. *Lowell's A Fable for Critics.*

Character of criticism; persons criticised. Consult Life and Letters.

74. *Lowell's Books and Libraries and Emerson's Books.*

A comparison of the thoughts and the advice of the two men.

75. *Lowell's Prose Abraham Lincoln and Stanza VI of the Commemoration Ode.*

Use in connection with the study of the Ode.

76. *Holmes's Friendships in his Verse.*

See his poems addressed to various persons. Consult biographies for his relations to these persons.

77. *Holmes's Best Occasional Poems.*

Speak especially of those written for reunions of the Class of '29, and particularly of *The Old Man Dreams*, *The Boys*, *The Last Survivor*, *After the Curfew*; also poems for "*The Saturday Club*;" *The Iron Gate*; and poems written to be read at banquets, etc. Consult biographies of Holmes. Compare Holmes's later class poems with Longfellow's *Moriturus Salutamus*. Discover characteristics of good occasional poems.

78. *The Wit and Wisdom of the Autocrat of the Breakfast-table.*79. *Across the Sea with Bayard Taylor.*

Poems of travel; books of travel.

80. *Our Great Historians.*

Prescott, Motley, Bancroft, Parkman, Sparks.

81. *American Orators Since the Civil War.*

The text-book in American literature should furnish the names.

82. *The Concord Group of Authors.*

Minor men as well as famous men. The place; the life; the spirit.

83. *Brook Farm.*

Use accessible books telling of life and residents. Biographies and letters of men connected with the community. Speak of Hawthorne's *The Blithedale Romance*.

84. *The Cambridge Group of Authors and Scholars.*

Consult Matthew Arnold's essay, "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time," for his theory concerning the need of an "atmosphere of ideas" before great creative work can be done. Picture the intellectual life of Cambridge as a background and environment for the work of Longfellow, Holmes, and Lowell. Great educators and men of letters are important. Relation between Cambridge and Concord.

85. *Houses Famous in American Literature.*

Biographies, histories of literature, pictures.

86. *The Personality of the Poet as Revealed by his Poetry.*

Choose some poet (or prose writer), and discuss his personality as revealed by his works: his logical power, imagination, emotional force, interest in social and national affairs.

87. *A Conversation with a Great Writer.*

Report an imaginary conversation that some American writer might hold with you, or with some other person. Setting, subject, opinions, style, manner, etc., must be true to the author's personality as you find it revealed in his works.

88. *A Scientist among the Poets.*

See Longfellow's *Three Friends of Mine*, Noël, *The Fiftieth Birthday of Agassiz*, Lowell's *Agassiz*, Whittier's *The Prayer of Agassiz*, Holmes' *Farewell to Agassiz*, *At the Saturday Club*, and *Parsons' Agassiz*.

89. *American History in American Literature.*

1. Irving on the Colonial Period.
2. The Colonial Stories of Hawthorne.
3. The Colonial Poems of Longfellow.
4. The Colonial Poems of Whittier.
5. The Revolutionary Period.
6. The Anti-slavery Struggle (see particularly Lowell, Whittier, and Longfellow).
7. The Civil War.

90. Short stories by the following writers are particularly worthy of study. Some of them are valuable for their "local color," *i. e.*, they show the peculiarities of life in the localities which form their setting.

Edward Everett Hale, Bret Harte, S. L. Clemens, ("Mark Twain"), H. C. Bunner, T. B. Aldrich, Sarah Orne Jewett, Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, Mary E. Murfree ("Charles Egbert Craddock"), George W. Cable, Hamlin Garland, William S. Porter ("O. Henry"), Margaret Deland, Joel Chandler Harris, Thomas Nelson Page, W. D. Howells, Henry James, Jr., Myra Kelly.

## II. AN ABSTRACT OF FORMAN'S GREATER LOVE \*

This story, written by Justus Miles Forman and published in *Harper's Magazine*, April, 1908, is referred to in the study of Emerson's *Heroism*.

Copley Kent, a rising lawyer, and his fiancée, Miss Eversleigh, were walking together on the street when a wretched beggar approached, asking alms. Kent refused from principle to give him money. Miss Eversleigh agreed that, as a matter of reason, one should not encourage beggars, but would have been better pleased if Kent had given from pity. A few minutes later the beggar tried to cross the street, and fell in the path of a run-away team. Miss Eversleigh urged Kent to go to his assistance, but Kent remained on the pavement. At the last moment Jimmie Rogers leaped from an automobile, and rescued the beggar. Kent saw that both Rogers and Miss Eversleigh had lost esteem for him,

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and discussed the affair with them both. They agreed with him that his life was worth more to society than that of the wretched beggar, and that the truly altruistic attitude was the one which he had taken. But Rogers explained frankly, at Kent's urgent request, that a man of the best breeding and finest intuitions would have *felt* that he should have risked his life for the beggar, whatever *reason* told him. Kent became thoroughly unhappy about the affair. One day a message called Rogers to the hospital, where he found Kent dying from injuries he had sustained in trying vainly to save the life of a poor child, who had strayed into the middle of the street. Rogers left the bedside of his dead friend with the words, "I am going to break somebody's heart. I am going to take the news to the girl who helped me kill him." — "He went out of the room, faltering in his steps, his hands pressed over his face."

Throughout the story the reader has supposed the author to be in full sympathy with Rogers and Miss Eversleigh, but the last words leave him in doubt; the author does not seem to decide the question. Should one follow the dictates of *reason* in such matters, or be governed by a *feeling* that reason condemns as quixotic? When one gives up what reason tells him is a broader life for himself and a greater good for society to do something which seems of doubtful advantage to any one and disastrous for himself, does he "lay down his life to find it again"?

### III. ADDISON: THOUGHTS IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY

When I am in a serious humor, I very often walk by myself in Westminster Abbey; where the gloominess of the place, and the use to which it is applied, with the solemnity of the building, and the condition of the people who lie in it, are apt to fill the mind with a kind of melancholy, or rather thoughtfulness, that is not disagreeable. I yesterday passed a whole afternoon in the churchyard, the cloisters, and the church, amusing myself with the tombstones and inscriptions which I met with in those several regions of the dead. Most of them recorded nothing else of the buried person, but that he was born upon one day, and died upon another; the

whole history of his life being comprehended in those two circumstances, that are common to all mankind. I could not but look upon these registers of existence, whether of brass or marble, as a kind of satire upon the departed persons; who had left no other memorial of them but that they were born and that they died. They put me in mind of several persons mentioned in the battles of heroic poems, who have sounding names given them, for no other reason but that they may be killed, and are celebrated for nothing but being knocked on the head. The life of these men is finely described in holy writ by "the path of an arrow," which is immediately closed up and lost.

Upon my going into the church, I entertained myself with the digging of a grave; and saw in every shovelful of it that was thrown up, the fragment of a bone or skull intermixed with a kind of fresh mouldering earth, that some time or other had a place in the composition of a human body. Upon this I began to consider with myself what innumerable multitudes of people lay confused together under the pavement of that ancient cathedral; how men and women, friends and enemies, priests and soldiers, monks and prebendaries, were crumbled amongst one another, and blended together in the same common mass; how beauty, strength, and youth, with old age, weakness, and deformity, lay undistinguished in the same promiscuous heap of matter.

After having thus surveyed this great magazine of mortality, as it were, in the lump, I examined it more particularly by the accounts which I found on several of the monuments which are raised in every quarter of that ancient fabric. Some of them were covered with such extravagant epitaphs, that, if it were possible for the dead person to be acquainted with them, he would blush at the praises which his friends have bestowed upon him. There are others so excessively modest, that they deliver the character of the person departed in Greek or Hebrew, and by that means are not understood once in a twelvemonth. In the poetical quarter, I found there were poets who had no monuments, and monuments which had no poets. I observed, indeed, that the present war had filled the church



with many of these uninhabited monuments, which had been erected to the memory of persons whose bodies were perhaps buried in the plains of Blenheim, or in the bosom of the ocean.

I could not but be very much delighted with several modern epitaphs, which are written with great elegance of expression and justness of thought, and therefore do honor to the living as well as to the dead. As a foreigner is very apt to conceive an idea of the ignorance or politeness of a nation, from the turn of their public monuments and inscriptions, they should be submitted to the perusal of men of learning and genius, before they are put in execution. Sir Cloudesly Shovel's monument has very often given me great offence: instead of the brave rough English Admiral, which was the distinguishing character of that plain gallant man, he is represented on his tomb by the figure of a beau, dressed in a long periwig, and reposing himself upon velvet cushions under a canopy of state. The inscription is answerable to the monument; for instead of celebrating the many remarkable actions he had performed in the service of his country, it acquaints us only with the manner of his death, in which it was impossible for him to reap any honor. The Dutch, whom we are apt to despise for want of genius, show an infinitely greater taste of antiquity and politeness in their buildings and works of this nature, than what we meet with in those of our own country. The monuments of their admirals, which have been erected at the public expense, represent them like themselves; and are adorned with rostral crowns and naval ornaments, with beautiful festoons of seaweed, shells, and coral.

But to return to our subject. I have left the repository of our English kings for the contemplation of another day, when I shall find my mind disposed for so serious an amusement. I know that entertainments of this nature are apt to raise dark and dismal thoughts in timorous minds and gloomy imaginations; but for my own part, though I am always serious, I do not know what it is to be melancholy; and can therefore take a view of nature in her deep and solemn scenes, with the same pleasure as in her most gay and delightful ones. By this means I can improve myself with those

objects which others consider with terror. When I look upon the tombs of the great, every emotion of envy dies in me; when I read the epitaphs of the beautiful, every inordinate desire goes out; when I meet with the grief of parents upon a tomb-stone, my heart melts with compassion; when I see the tomb of the parents themselves, I consider the vanity of grieving for those whom we must quickly follow; when I see kings lying by those who deposed them, when I consider rival wits placed side by side, or the holy men that divided the world with their contests and disputes, I reflect with sorrow and astonishment on the little competitions, factions, and debates of mankind. When I read the several dates of the tombs, of some that died yesterday, and some six hundred years ago, I consider that great day when we shall all of us be contemporaries, and make our appearance together.

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