

## Notes on English Literature.

ELEANOR ROBINSON.

## Addison's "Sir Roger de Coverley."

Discuss the suitability of the title of the *Spectator* as applied (a) to the periodical; (b) to the writer. Use as matter for this discussion, not only "The Spectator's account of himself," but also the statements and hints about his attitude towards other people that are scattered through the Essays. What effect did this attitude have on his popularity? Are *Spectators* usually popular? For how long a period did Addison's *Spectator* continue to be published? Is there a paper of that name published at present? What do you know of its age and character? What are the chief differences between the newspapers of the eighteenth century and those of our own day?

Study page xxii of the Introduction. "It was not a reading age." Note all the reasons given for this, point by point, and compare them with the conditions of modern life. What are the advantages of reading newspapers and magazines? Are there any disadvantages?

What has been the aim of the editor in selecting the essays in this volume? What two reasons does she give for studying Addison?

"They are invaluable as history."

Read the essays with particular attention to their historical value. The following questions may help you. What public events are referred to? What public characters? People of what different rank, political opinions, and religious beliefs appear? What are we told of the following phases of the life of the time: Travelling, sport, town amusements; social life; the position of the clergy; relations between masters and servants; between landlords and tenants; superstitions; manners?

Compare the two descriptions of clergymen with some others of the kind; e. g., Goldsmith's "Village Preacher," in "The Deserted Village;" or Chaucer's "Poor Parson," in the Prologue to the "Canterbury Tales." What side of a clergyman's life as emphasized in the last two descriptions does Addison ignore?

Notice how fully Addison characterizes Sir Roger. That is, he shows him in relation to many different people, in different surroundings, and different occupations. He is what kind of a master? friend? lover? parishioner? landlord? host? politician? How does he show his country breeding when in London? What does Addison mean by saying that he is "something of a humourist?" Note the uses of these words, "humour, humourist, humour-some." All through the essays what words would be substituted for them in modern writing? Give instances of the use of these words in Shakspeare. Is Sir Roger an ideal character? How does Addison show him to us—through Sir Roger's own words and actions? or by description? or by both? If so, in what proportion? What conversation raised the Spectator's idea of Sir Roger above what he had ever had before? Why did it do so? What great advantage did the Spectator get from the Club? Why was he much better suited for town life than for country life? Collect the opinions that other

people expressed about him, and see how they compare with his statements about himself in "The Spectator's account of himself."

What does the Spectator say is "the height of good breeding? What is it that, in his opinion, shows more than anything else "the nobleness of the soul?" With what feeling does he say "people not too goodnatured usually conceive of each other at first sight?" Do you agree with him on these three points?

"If this *shameless practice* of the present age endures much longer, praise and reproach will cease to be motives of action in good men." What is the "shameless practice" referred to? Was it confined to Addison's time? Discuss his conclusion. To what extent ought "praise and reproach" to affect the motives of good men?

Explain the following: "*Justice of the quorum*;" "*within the liberties*;" "*when a tenement falls*?" The paragraph before the last in "Sir Roger at the Club," from "*This debate*," to "*a very decent execution*."

Study carefully Addison's use of the following words: *Wit, pronounce, husband, discovered, nice, carry, bride-man, smoke* (verb), *pleasant, incommodious, the great fortune*. Rewrite the sentences in which these occur, substituting their modern equivalents.

Study Addison's account of the London street cries. Write a description of the street sounds in the town you live in. Are there any "Cries" among them? Find out whether there used to be more "Cries," forty or fifty years ago. Are there as many in London now as in Addison's time? Why not?

## Botany for Public Schools.—VIII.

L. A. DEWOLFE.

We have only a few weeks to wait for the first spring flowers. In the meantime, however, there are many winter observations and experiments that are either interesting in themselves, or have a practical bearing on our economic welfare.

Every country home has its wood-pile. Is there anything to see in this except a good supply of fuel and a tremendous amount of work in cutting and carrying it into the house? We all pity the boy who sees nothing else.

Too many students in our provinces do not know the common forest trees. Many know them in summer by their leaves, but do not know them in winter. Would not the wood-pile be a convenient place to begin our acquaintance with them?

Why not have our students bring us a list tomorrow of the kinds of wood they saw at home today? A written list alone would not be very valuable. In addition have them bring small pieces of each kind. How many can they identify by the wood without the bark? How many more when the bark is present? Which pieces are classed as soft-