

## English.

All articles and communications intended for this department should be addressed to the ENGLISH EDITOR, EDUCATIONAL JOURNAL, Room 5, 11½ Richmond Street West, Toronto.

### "THE EVENING CLOUD."

BY JOHN WILSON.

1. 1—*Cradled*. Can you see any peculiar force, or appropriateness, or beauty, in the choice of this word, or anything in the appearance of the cloud, as described, to suggest it? (One of the aspects of the cloud on which the poet wished particularly to dwell was its peaceful, restful appearance. Perhaps, too, the peculiar intermittent movement described in lines 5 to 8 may have suggested the soothing motion of the cradle in whose "very motion there is rest." To our thinking it is, however, more probable that there was something in the way in which the cloud appeared to be lying embosomed in the blue ether, near the horizon, which suggested the word, apart from any idea of motion.)

1. 2—*Its braided snow*. What kind of cloud is pictured to your mind by these words? (The teacher can, probably, with a little patience and skill in questioning, develop this idea by getting the more observant of the children to describe different kinds of clouds which they have observed, especially towards sunset. The cloud is evidently not dense or thick, else it would be dark instead of snowy. It is, moreover, not exactly fleecy, or castle-like, but rather floats in thin, semi-transparent, wavy lines, such as are suggested by the beautiful fancy of "braided snow".)

1. 3. What is meant by "the glory"? (It denotes, evidently, not simply the cloud itself, but, rather, the cloud in all its effects and surroundings, especially with the "gleam of crimson" produced by the glowing rays of the setting sun shining dimly through its semi-transparent layers.)

1. 4—*Still radiance*. What is the meaning of "radiance"? What produced the radiance of the lake? Is the surface of a lake often still about sunset? What effect, if any, had the stillness and radiance of the surface of the lake upon the appearance of the cloud, or why should the poet introduce the appearance of the lake into his description of the cloud? (No doubt the crimson-tinged cloud was mirrored in the lake. Mrs. Stowe somewhere describes such a scene, when skies and trees and all surrounding objects are reflected from the glassy surface of a sheet of water, by saying that the on-looker is sometimes almost at a loss to know which is the real world, the upper or the under. The teacher may find out by questioning whether the children have ever observed such a scene, and how many of them have been struck with its beauty. The lesson will fail of a large part of its proper effect if it does not lead them to open their eyes more widely than ever before to such visions in nature.)

1. 5—*Tranquil*. What is the meaning of "tranquil"? Do you see or feel any fitness in the word to express the idea? Can you think of any synonym which seems to express it quite as well? (The teacher will not fail to note the preponderance of liquid sounds in it.) What do you understand by the "spirit" of the cloud? (Dwell a little upon the poetic effect of conceiving the cloud as a living thing guided by an indwelling spirit of its own, or as we should prefer to conceive the poet's idea, as merely the dwelling place or visible habitation, the mantle, of a spirit.) What is the grammatical subject of "floated"? Does the poet mean to say the "spirit" floated, or merely that the "cloud" floated? Give reasons for your opinion. Is, then, the sentence grammatically correct? If not, is the defective construction an allowable poetic license? (We should be disposed to say that it is not, though it is easy to supply "it" as a subject.)

1. 6—"Motion" and "rest" are contradictory or antithetic words, as generally used, since, strictly speaking, a thing cannot be in motion and at rest at the same time. So when the poet says that in the motion of the clouds there was rest he seems to contradict himself and so to make nonsense of the sentence. Yet even a child can see a beautiful meaning and truth in the poet's way of putting his thought. Such a saying, involving an apparent contradiction in terms, and yet conveying a clear idea, is what is known as a "paradox." It is

often used with good effect. Explain, as clearly as you can, what you understand to be the poet's real meaning. (Every boy or girl who knows what it is to recline and sway gently back and forth in a hammock when tired will readily understand how a gentle motion like that of the cloud can be suggestive of rest.)

1s. 7 and 8—*Chanced*. Even a child must have observed how, on the shore of a sheet of water, on a calm evening, a gentle puff of air will now and again rustle the leaves, or fan the cheek, or, perhaps, cause a gentle ripple on the water's surface. If we were to analyze closely, we might note a peculiarity in the form of expression by which a breath or gentle breeze is spoken of as "chancing to blow," as if it produced itself, so to speak. The usage is very similar to that by which we say "it rains," "it snows," using an indefinite, or, as the grammarians call it, an impersonal expression to denote the undefined cause of the effect produced. *Wafted*. Note, again, the well chosen and beautifully expressive word. Elicit, by questioning, the children's ideas of its meaning, to see how fully they appreciate its delicate shade of thought.

1s. 9-14—*Emblem*, etc. The remaining six lines of the poem constitute, it will be observed, but a single complex sentence, and that dependent, for the word "emblem" itself, which is its leading or key word, is in apposition, grammatically, with "traveler," in line 8. An "emblem" is defined as a real or painted object which represents one thing to the eye and at the same time suggests to the mind another and entirely different thing, to which it bears some real or fancied resemblance. The teacher will need to dwell a little upon the word to assure himself that the children understand it. Ask them to give examples of emblems in common use (such as the lion as an emblem of strength, the sceptre and the crown as emblems of sovereignty, etc.) As the construction is slightly complicated, it will be well to ask the pupils for both a paraphrase and an analysis of these last lines. Observe that the last five lines are used simply to modify the word "soul," and, in so doing, to bring out the points of resemblance between the soul and the cloud which justify the writer in calling the latter an emblem of the former. As the cloud travels on to the glowing western horizon, which is glorified by the crimson rays of the setting sun, so the soul is wafted onward towards the glorious gates of heaven. The white cloud is likened to the white robes of the soul; the crimson gleam given the former by the sun's rays to the gleam of heavenly bliss in the latter; the gentle breeze of evening which moves the cloud forward to the glowing west, mercy which carries the soul onward to its glorious destiny; as the ordinary eye sees, on the far horizon, the floating cloud, so the eye of faith sees the departed soul on the verge of the golden gates of heaven. If the class have become thoroughly interested, they will delight in following out these and other analogies. A few grammatical questions will also be in order, such as, What is the subject of the verb "roll"? What part of the verb is "made"? (It will be seen that there is really a defect in the grammatical construction. The subject of "made" must be supplied from the preceding lines. It is not quite clear whether it is "soul" as found in the relative "whose" or (the soul's) "robe," corresponding to the cloud which is but the vehicle of the spirit of the cloud in the emblem. Probably the latter is better. That is, the poet's meaning is probably rather "and which (viz., the robe) is by the breath of Mercy," etc., than "and which soul is," etc.) Can you point out any other instance of poetic license in the sentence? ("peaceful" for "peacefully").

### WHICH?

Two little old ladies, one grave, one gay,  
In the selfsame cottage lived day by day;  
One could not be happy, "Because," she said,  
"So many children were hungry for bread."  
And she really had not the heart to smile  
When the world was so wicked all the while.  
The other old lady smiled all day long,  
As she knitted or sewed or crooned a song;  
She had not time to be sad, she said,  
When hungry children were crying for bread;  
So she baked and knitted and gave away,  
And declared the world grew better each day.  
Two little old ladies, one grave, one gay;  
Now which do you think chose the wiser way?  
—St. Nicholas.

## Hints and Helps.

### APPARATUS IN DISTRICT SCHOOLS.

The following is from *School Education*. Is there anything in it for Canadian teachers and school boards?

Said a director: "I have done buying things for our school. Nothing is cared for. That globe, bought two years ago, is so out of order that no one can use it. Those outline maps and reading charts are badly torn and defaced, when they should be nearly as good as new. Our dictionary is in pieces. No, we can't waste any more money."

The director who gave the above information was somewhat excited, and things were not quite so bad as he represented, still there was ground for his complaint. Many districts in Minnesota have had similar experiences, and are so discouraged that good teachers often find it hard to get what their schools really need.

Where districts have failed to provide closets, tables, or even shelves, for apparatus, reference books, etc., teachers who use reasonable care cannot be held responsible for damage. In such cases their duty may lie in the direction of persuading officers to make adequate provision for the preservation of apparatus and other property.

A district clerk writes: "One year ago I placed a mark on our globe, and there it is to-day engraved in the same old dust. I learn that our wall maps were not unrolled during the past term, although there were two classes in geography. What think you of these things?"

Such complaints are common. They are heard all over the State, and we do not wonder that so many school boards have come to the conclusion that outlays for apparatus do not pay. We are of the opinion that they do not, as a rule, for the reason that so many teachers cannot or will not use apparatus. To have it is not enough. It may be ornamental, but it is dead property.

Our remedy would be to employ teachers known to be competent, and then hold them to strict accountability. The ability to use the globe and other apparatus commonly found in rural schools should be tested by the examiner and indicated in the certificate, so that trustees may know what to depend on. The incompetent should be set adrift.

### LANGUAGE LESSONS.

#### FORMS OF LIE (TO RECLINE) AND LAY (TO PLACE.)

Copy the following sentences, filling blanks with correct form of one of above words:

- Children, — your books aside and give attention.
- I think I will — down on the couch, for I am tired.
- The sick boy — on the bed all day yesterday.
- The cat will — on a rug by the stove.
- I think the pencil is — on the table.
- The men were — a brick walk in front of the schoolhouse yesterday.
- I — my book on my desk, and wish that you would let it — there until the close of school.
- The rain has — the dust.
- I — the key on the desk.
- The cows are — in the shade.
- As soon as he arrived at the hotel the sick man — down to rest.
- He has been — there an hour.
- The soldiers — on the frozen ground several nights.
- The men will — the stones with care.

#### FORMS OF SIT (TO REST) AND SET (TO PLACE).

- We — under the tree and ate apples.
- the basket on the table, Nellie.
- May John and I — together to study our language lesson?
- James, if you will — that bucket on the bench, you can — nearer the window.
- The duck — on her nest.
- The gardener — on a small box while he — the plants in a bed.
- Henry is — by Robert.