

[For the REVIEW.]

Notes on English.

Only two communications have been received for this department of the REVIEW since the last Notes were written. No, I lie—as Swift says so often in his Journal to Stella—there have been three. But it's not likely that more than two of them can be disposed of in the space allowed by the editor this month.

One has no name to it, not even a sham name. It has evidently been sent by some one who read the Notes in the last number and the questions on Macaulay's Essay on Addison in the October number. I don't know whether it will satisfy the reader who asked for a set of questions on *Ben Hur*, but I do know it is all he will get in these columns. There is about as much blood relationship between a jewel of gold and a swine's snout as there is between anything worth calling literature and such pretentious balderdash as *Ben Hur*.

Here is what my anonymous correspondent has to say:

"If I were asked to write a set of questions on *Ben Hur* I should 'begin, continue and end it' with 'who borrowed my copy?'—not that I particularly value its contents; but it had pretty red covers, and it is a bad principle not to return borrowed books. A little eleven-year-old friend of mine once had presented to her a book of Bible stories. She said, 'I don't like that book; I like the stories in the Bible words.' I read a review of a book the other day which said that the author had *experienced* literature in the technical religious sense of *experience*. In answer to Question* No. 20, on Macaulay's Addison, I should say that the person, or persons, who put *Ben Hur* as an alternative with Macaulay's Essays on Addison and on Johnson had not *experienced* literature."

M.'s In Memoriam class sent a note of thanks for the December response to their first query. The note goes on:

"Would you kindly throw a little light upon Canto XLIV—

? How fares it with the happy dead? etc.

It proved so hard for us that we had almost given it up, but thought, before leaving, to again ask assistance."

The recently published Memoir of Tennyson—by his son Hallam, the present Lord Tennyson—tells us that "the best analysis of In Memoriam is by Miss Chapman." So I suppose the best thing to do is to quote what Miss Chapman has to say as to the general sense of Canto XLIV.—

"If it be not so, if the dead sleep not, perchance they are too happy, as well as too perfect, to think upon the things of Time. The poet prays that if, at any time, some little flash, some hint of earth, should surprise his friend in heaven, he would know that it is a message of his love."

Perhaps the light given by this comment from Miss Chapman's book is just the sort of light that M.'s class wanted, but if so, that class must be made of other stuff than were one or two classes that I have had the pleasure of watching while they were studying this poem. They preferred to be put in the way of untying knots instead of having the knots cut for them.

Students who find trouble in XLIV. should go back to XL. and read on to and through XLV. Then back up again to XXX. and read to the end of XLVII. If these two readings have been done with thoughtful care—and if the readers are familiar with the earlier poems in which Tennyson has dwelt on the same subject—there should be little or no trouble in grasping the general meaning of XLIV. On the possible meanings of particular lines and passages in this Canto one might easily write a dozen columns, but I would rather have thirty minutes' talk with an interested class on the subject. In the course of that talk we would refer to passages in Cantos XLV., XLVII., XLIV., XCVIII.; to parts of the Invocation and the Epilogue; to lines in such poems as *Locksley Hall* and *The Two Voices*. Some of these illustrative passages would throw gleams of light on the substance of the thought in XLIV., some on the form in which it is expressed. At the end of the half-hour, and especially at the end of another hour's review of the work by each student for himself, we might not be fully satisfied that we understood everything in XLIV., but we would find our fog-bank much less thick than before, and we would have learned how to go to work and let bright rays break into the next fog-bank we encountered.

A. CAMERON.

Yarmouth, Jan. 1, 1898.

Thou must be true thyself,
If thou the truth wouldst teach;
Thy soul must overflow, if thou
Another's soul wouldst reach:
It needs the overflow of heart
To give the lips full speech.

Think truly, and thy thoughts
Shall the world's famine feed;
Speak truly, and each word of thine
Shall be a fruitful seed;
Live truly, and thy life shall be
A great and noble creed.

—Horatio Bonar.

School libraries will continue to increase in size and grow in numbers as the days go by. And the character and quality of the books will grow better as the needs and wants of the children become better understood by book writers and book buyers. The time is not far off when not a schoolroom in the state but will have at least a small library of well selected books suited to the grade of pupils for whom they are intended.—*Pennsylvania School Journal*.

* EDUCATIONAL REVIEW, Oct., 1897.