

## Notes on "The Deserted Village".

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OLIVER GOLDSMITH (1728-1774).

Goldsmith was born in the county of Longford, Ireland. His father was curate at this place. As a boy, Goldsmith attended the village school taught by an old soldier, whom he afterwards pictured in the "Deserted Village." At the age of seventeen he went to Trinity College as a sizar (a free student receiving tuition in return for certain work). He quarreled with his tutor and left, but afterwards returned.

He tried different professions, and while on the continent as a medical student, toured Europe, supporting himself by playing on the flute. On his return he tried teaching, but finally took up work as a hack writer.

The Vicar of Wakefield, his first important work, he sold in 1764 for £60 to pay rent. In 1770 the "Deserted Village" appeared.

Among his other works are: "The Traveller," "She Stoops to Conquer," "Histories of Greece, Rome, and a History of Animated Nature."

It is presumed, of course, that the first lesson assigned on the poem is the reading it all through at home. When that has been carefully done, the class is ready to begin its study. This applies equally as well to all the selections for the year. The more the pupil absorbs and retains, the greater will be the benefit derived by him; and there is no royal road to this result. Repeated reading on the pupil's part, and constant questioning by the teacher, alone can accomplish the purpose aimed at.

Concerning the title, the children should be asked to tell in their own words the cause of its desertion. Is the same cause at work in Nova Scotia? Where is the village supposed to be? Grade VIII may be given an occasional word or phrase for parsing, and any questions of that kind in these notes are intended for that class.

Page 1, line 1. In what case is *Auburn*, and what figure of speech would you call it? *Plain*; in other parts of the poem he applies another title to it. What is it?

7. *Green*. What would we call it? Have we anything similar?

27. *Smuttet face*. Very likely many of the children have a game of this character. There used to be one among the boys some years ago.

On this page the following words are worthy of a little dictionary work by the pupil: *swain*, *parting*, *seats*, *cot*, *decent*, *train*, *feats*. There are also some other figures of speech besides those mentioned; find a metonymy and also give a definition. If the children know the different metrical feet, have them scan a few lines as practice. Those who have read

\* Pages and lines as in reading for grades 7 and 8, Nova Scotia School Series.

Gray's "Elegy" could see a similarity and a difference. What are they?

Page 2, line 2. *Taught toil to please*. Ask for explanation.

6. Is the verb *are fled* active or passive? Why? Compare with the forms *is come*, *was gone*.

10. What does this line mean?

13. Why *solitary*?

20. *O'ertops*. Try to get a list of words similarly formed. English formerly, like modern German, compounded its words thus.

24. Meaning? How are new words created?

25. One of the problems of England is the restoration of physical vigour to the so-called lower classes.

28. How many people to the square mile would this allow for? Was England or any other country ever so thickly peopled?

Word study: *Lawn*, *tyrant*, *stints*, *desert*, *spoiler*, *wholesome*, *glades*.

Page 3, line 3. Meaning? Look up the derivation of *wealth*.

4. Parse *train*. What is the meaning?

8. As an illustration, take some of the modern large cities, such as London and New York. The greater poverty seems always to be found nearest the greatest wealth.

22. Compare *train* here with the same word in line 4.

24-25. Consult the life of Goldsmith as an illustration of these, and all will agree as to the truthfulness of them.

26. Meaning of last clause?

28. Compare *husband*, the verb, with the noun. *Life's taper* is what figure?

29. What does this mean?

Word study: *Opulence*, *allied* (especially pronunciation).

Page 4, line 10. What is the meaning of the word *world*?

12-15. Meaning of these lines? *Why guilty state*?

15-18. Figures of speech?

21. Meaning?

22 *et seq.* Compare the opening stanzas of Gray's "Elegy" for a description of the same time of day. One of the facts mentioned does not suit our hours; which one?

Word study: *Deep*, *vacant*.

Page 4, line 1. Why *sweet confusion*? How can the adjective be true?

*The Preacher*. Those who can should read parts of the "Vicar of Wakefield," where we have him