

ful fleet, and that they threatened to throw an army into Britain to conquer it. Why should the English people care? Your class will give you the answer.

Now the class will be able to understand how Wordsworth felt. He was a young man then,—thirty-two years of age. He had been in France at the time of the Revolution; he had seen some of its horrors and had become an ardent English patriot; and now when Napoleon was threatening England he expressed the feelings of all Englishmen,—feelings which are just as strong now as then.

In the first eight lines of the sonnet Wordsworth speaks of British freedom as "a stream". The best way to make the comparison clear to the class is first to sketch on the blackboard the course of an imaginary stream—its rise in the dark forests or swamps, and its progress till it reaches the sea. Now follow up the course of the "flood\* of British freedom"—its rise in dark antiquity, and its steady growth through the centuries till it finally reaches "the open sea", when it is known and famed throughout the world. (In making this comparison it is better to bracket off lines 5 and 6 and omit them for the present.) Now change the blackboard sketch, and instead of having this splendid stream empty into the sea, represent it as flowing into a great swamp, where its current is broken up, and it is lost among the "bogs and sands". An ignominious ending, surely, for this great "flood". And if Napoleon should conquer Britain "the flood of British freedom" would end in the same way and it could neither receive further checks nor make further progress.

The class may now return to lines 5 and 6, which have been omitted, and here again the teacher should develop the idea involved in the comparison with the stream. The stream is held in check by its banks; but in times of flood the banks are overflowed and the stream carries everything before it. So also with "the flood of British freedom"—there are certain laws and customs which hold the people in restraint, and this restraint is a good thing (salutary); but sometimes in the history of Britain these restraints have been thrown off and the desire for freedom has carried people to extremes. (Illustrate from history when people have broken out in riots or rebellion.)

It is perhaps better, at this point, for the class to review briefly the first eight lines, so as to bring out the points in the comparison, by reference to the sketch on the blackboard.

The class will notice now that these eight lines contain a general statement—a resolve that British freedom must not perish. The remaining six lines give the poet's reason for this resolve. It is an

\* It may be necessary to make clear to the class that the word *flood* is here used to suggest, not a deluge, but a large, full, stately stream.