



Life, Literature and Education.

Our Literary Society.

STUDY NO III.

Break, Break, Break.

Break, break, break,
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy
That he shouts with his sister at play!
O well for the sailor lad,
That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill;
But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me.

—Tennyson.

Read this poem very carefully, to get the central idea embodied in it, then study it minutely, and answer the following questions:

1. State in a single sentence the central idea in this poem.
2. Describe what the poet's mood likely was when he wrote it.
3. What effect is produced by the bringing in of the boy "shouting," and the sailor lad "singing" in his boat on the bay?
4. What connection of thought is there between lines 3-4, 11-12, 15-16, and those immediately preceding?
5. Does the poet's language seem to you to express his feelings? If so, explain how he has accomplished this harmony between the emotion and the language used to express it.
6. Can you quote lines from any other poet embodying thoughts in any way similar to those contained in lines 3-4, 15-16?
7. Why is the word "Sea" written throughout with a capital letter?
8. Comment on the form, rhyme, rhythm, etc., of this poem.
9. Write a critical essay, not exceeding 500 words (very much shorter will do) on the poem as a whole, explaining, especially, wherein its charm consists.

RULES.

1. Write only on one side of the paper.
2. Answer questions by number.
3. Send us your answer so that it may reach us by Nov. 29, at the latest.

As before, a book or a pin will be sent to those who write us the best critical essays (No. 9), in addition to answering any six out of the nine questions. When writing, kindly state whether you would prefer a Literary Society pin or a book, giving the names of any two of the following which you would like to have: *Idylls of the King* (Tennyson); *Burns' Poems*; *Comedy of Errors* (Shakespeare); *The Light that Failed* (Kipling); *Last Days of Pompeii* (Lytton); *Treasure Island* (Stevenson). We request you to name two, in order that, in case of too many ask-

ing for the same book, we may substitute.

We shall also be glad to receive, in addition to this purely "study" work, essays on any live topics which may suggest themselves to our members. Our aim is not only to assist the members of our great society to a keener appreciation of the beautiful and noble in literature, but also to help each one to realize his or her own individuality, and to recognize the benefit which comes from independent thought. In no way, we think, can we accomplish this better than by always leaving it open to our members to select topics for themselves. So now, if you have a thought worth speaking, speak it. You will have a good audience in the readers of the *F. A. & H. M. L. S.* If your thought be such as is likely to stir up a little discussion, all the better. Let us hear from you. And remember that our columns are not confined to the discussion of literary and educational subjects alone. "Life" also figures in our *L. L. E.* heading, and we shall be pleased to receive any articles dwelling upon any phase of that most important of all subjects.

Why Rev. C. W. Gordon is Known as Ralph Connor.

The query as to how the Rev. C. W. Gordon came to assume the name "Ralph Connor," which was again resurrected in the editorial rooms the other day, elicited so many versions that we determined to send to headquarters for the whole truth of the story, and consequently wrote about it to the Rev. J. Macdonald, editor of the *Globe*, who, at the time of the "finding" of Ralph Connor, was editor of *The Westminster*. As Mr. Macdonald's answer may be of interest to others beside ourselves, we are glad to publish it in full. He writes as follows:

"When Gordon sent me the MS. of his first sketch, as it appears in 'Black Rock,' he did not sign his name. Just before going to press I telegraphed him for a nom de plume. He replied, 'Sign sketch Connor.' He intended it to be 'Can Nor,' a contraction for Canadian Northwest; the telegraph operator made it one word. I changed it to 'Connor,' and put a front name to it, and so it appeared 'Ralph Connor.'"

The considerations which induced Mr. Macdonald to prefer "Connor," rather than "Connor," are interestingly told in an article from his pen, which appeared in the *Westminster Christmas number* for 1900, and which has been kindly forwarded to us, at his request, by the *Westminster Co.*

"We had decided upon a name for the story, but not for the man who wrote it. The manuscript reached me just in time for the issue for January, 1897. It would not do to give the author's name, for the text of the tale might be regarded by some as out of keeping with the conventions of the clerical profession. What name shall it be? was the question sent to Winnipeg. At the last moment a telegram came, 'Sign sketch Connor.' Connor? That would not do. That would betray the fact of a mask. He must have

a proper name. But why Connor? Perhaps the operator made a mistake. Should it be Connor? More likely. But he must be given a Christian name, even though he consorts with heathen of various types. What shall we christen this newborn Canadian litterateur? 'Frank'? 'Chris'? 'Fred'? No, none of these would suit. Here it is: 'Ralph,' 'Ralph Connor'! And it was so. Without his knowledge or consent, he was introduced to the world with that new-coined name, to make or mar. When he got his copy of the *Westminster* in Winnipeg that week, he turned to page 14, and saw the cross-page heading, 'Tales from the Selkirks. By Ralph Connor.'

The "Young Idea's" Views on Poetry.

A teacher in a public school in one of our larger cities thought to teach the Young Idea something about the beauty and meaning of poetry. Her class consisted of boys and girls from fourteen to eighteen years of age, and of fair average intelligence. She read them Browning's "Meeting at Night," and asked them to write out their opinions of the subject and its treatment. This they did with the unhesitating confidence of youth. Here is the poem:

I
The gray sea and the long black land;
And the yellow half-moon large and low;
And the startled little waves that leap
In fiery ringlets from their sleep,
As I gain the cove with pushing prow,
And quench its speed in the slushy sand.

II.
Then a mile of sea-scented beach;
Three fields to cross till a farm appears;
A tap at the pane, the quick sharp scratch
And blue spurt of a lighted match,
And a voice less loud, through joys and fears,
Than two hearts beating each to each!

Some of the more candid criticisms are here given, "as they were wrote," spelling, punctuation, and all:

"I think it presents a fine moonlight picture, it tell how far he has to travel and the greeting when he arrives, at the farm house. I think it is a sailor coming home from a voyage. The peace is wrote in Irving's style being compact and expresses a clear idea in a very few lines."

"Poor. Because it starts to quickly and because it tells nothing of where he was or how he came to be in the book and he skipped from the ocean to the moon & then back to the water."

"I think it is pretty good because it is taken from life and that when a man goes home he always kisses his wife."

"I don't like it because it is not natural and I don't think it is a piece of poetry."

"It is very pretty for the reason that it shows affection and because of the beautiful description of the road which the gentleman takes at sunset."

"It is no good. Because I think it is foolish."

"I think it is good because it tells

the hard time a man has in coming home sometimes."

"Good, because as a short passage it gives a good description from being to end of a Lovers course to his most Beloved."

"I think it has very good descriptions, but I don't fancy sentimental things, and that closes in that way."

"I think it is a very beautiful piece of poetry. For one reason I think it must have tickled the young girl to see her lover coming to see her and how happy she must have felt to be in his company for the remainder of the evening. As I am not interested in love and no but very little about it, I can give no further explanation in regard to it."

"Pretty Bum because its to wishy-washy and because I don't think it likely also because I don't like rhythm."

We think the above is very "rich." Nevertheless, "to point a moral," if not "to adorn a tale," we may observe that the criticisms given represent very fairly the half-formed ideas which a certain percentage of people, much older than from "fourteen to eighteen years of age," perhaps, have in regard to much of the very highest class of poetry. To merely read poetry, to give it such superficial study as is evident from the answers of these young people, is not sufficient. We must sift and probe and get to the heart of it, if we would appreciate it, and just this is one of the tasks we are setting for ourselves in our "studies" in the *L. L. E.*

Just here we may remark that our observations have been in no way drawn from the answers to the "Three Fishers" questions, which have been coming in lately on every mail. Before people write "to a paper" in regard to any matter, they study it, and such study is evident in every answer so far received. We do not insist that all answers shall be good, or even right; but we do hope to find in each evidences of thought, ear-marks by which we shall know that it is the very best possible to the writer. Work, thought, interest, appreciation—this is the sequence which, we trust, will be followed in all our literary endeavors during the Society's session of 1906-7. Don't be afraid. Get to work, anyway, and you will wonder how you will be able to think things out. Get the very best you can out of our work, and give the very best you can, also.

Proverbs and Their Significance.

A proverb is a concise expression of some truth, or a maxim of wisdom. The most important collection of proverbs are those of Solomon in the Bible, but various other collections have been made.

Aristotle regarded the ancient proverbs as wrecks or vestiges of an extinct philosophy, and thought that they had probably been reserved on account of their brevity and their deep significance. The most ancient poem in the Eddas, "The Sublime Speech of Odin," consists chiefly of proverbs, peculiarly descriptive of the ancient Scandinavians. History assures us that, in the primitive ages