

* English. *

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS ON LONGFELLOW AND SHAKESPEARE.

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IN order to prevent misunderstandings, and to make clear the general aim of these questions, a few preliminary observations seem to be necessary.

1. One object is to direct the attention of teachers and students to the æsthetic side of the literature. Matters not strictly æsthetic are involved in the questions, but only to a limited extent. The aim has been to keep them as free as possible from all that does not relate directly or indirectly to poetry as a fine art. There may be differences of opinion as to the relative prominence that should be given to art and to other matters in the study of literature; these questions fairly express my present opinions on that subject.

2. Another object is to impress on teachers and students the idea that the text, and not either notes or comments, should be the chief subject of study. I have seen papers on literature so constructed that 75 per cent. of the marks might be obtained without any but the most superficial acquaintance with the text; a glance at these questions will show that it is not possible to secure 10 per cent. of the marks without an intimate and intelligent acquaintance with the works to which they relate. Neither notes nor comments will do much for the candidate, and it should not be assumed that he has seen either.

3. A third object is to promote the use of the comparative method. This involves a knowledge of other works by Longfellow and Shakespeare, and of works not by either of them; but the questions that imply such knowledge should be so used as to confer an advantage on those who have the wider knowledge, and yet inflict no disability on those who are without it. This can easily be done by fixing the maximum of marks at two-thirds of the paper, and keeping the number of outside questions down to less than one-third of the whole. Assuming that to each question ten marks are assigned, and that for a division of two hours and a half ten questions are sufficient, then there should be fifteen questions on the paper, the candidate being forbidden to touch more than ten.

4. The intention is that each question, whether numbered or lettered, shall count one for the purposes of such a paper. Thus the first question by number is made up of three questions, to each of which ten marks are assigned, and which are grouped only because they are related to each other. The questions are supposed to be of about equal difficulty and importance, and on every examination paper the candidate should be told beforehand the value of each question.

5. These questions are not put forward as exhaustive of the subject. On both "Evangeline" and the "Tempest," and especially the latter, the list might be extended indefinitely. These are simply specimens, prepared at the request of the editor and in the hope that they may serve a useful purpose in connection with the "Idylls of the King" and the "Merchant of Venice," which are the texts for the coming year. The teacher who gives himself up to the æsthetic treatment of these highly artistic works, who succeeds in banishing annotated texts from his class, and who induces his pupils to procure a complete collection of the works of each author—say Macmillan's editions—may have a most enjoyable time. Those who are haunted by the shadow of impending examinations that make the annotator with his critical comments and his various readings a necessity, have my sincerest compassion.

LONGFELLOW'S "EVANGELINE."

THIS is the forest primeval. The murmuring pines
and the hemlocks.

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List to a Tale of Love in Acadie, home of the
happy.

Still stands the forest primeval; but far away from
its shadow,

* * * * *

Speaks, and in accents disconsolate answers the
wail of the forest.

1. (a) Give an accurate account of the structure of the poem, and show what evidences of artistic design are afforded by its peculiar mechanism.

(b) Discuss the appropriateness of the terms "prologue" and "epilogue" as applied to the above extracts.

(c) Compare or contrast prologue and epilogue with each other in form, contents, and the respective purposes they are intended to serve in relation to the whole poem.

2. (a) Give a brief account of the plot of "Evangeline," connecting its various stages with the author's divisions of the poem.

(b) Characterize the plot with reference to degree of simplicity or complexity, and show how far the reader's interest is made to depend on the development of the plot, and how far on elements of other kinds.

(c) Compare or contrast "Evangeline" in this respect with any other epic you are acquainted with, as for instance Tennyson's "Princess" or "Idylls of the King," or Scott's "Lady of the Lake" or "Lay of the Last Minstrel."

3. (a) Show by internal evidence whether the poet's motive (conscious or unconscious) is mainly æsthetic (artistic), or mainly ethical (didactic).

(b) There is a popular impression that "Evangeline" was written for the purpose of arousing sympathy on behalf of the expatriated Acadians. What ground does the poem itself afford for this opinion? Could Longfellow, from his point of view, have chosen a Polish maiden (say) for his heroine? Show the æsthetic gain or loss that would result from such a substitution.

(c) What was the poet's avowed object in writing "Evangeline"? Show whether he has been so faithful to his purpose that it might have been inferred from a study of the poem, if he had not specified it.

4. (a) Point out with some fulness the evidence afforded by "Evangeline" of the possession of dramatic power by the author.

(b) As dramatic "persons" compare or contrast (1) "Benedict" with "Basil"; (2) "Evangeline" with "Gabriel"; and (3) "Father Felician" with "René Leblanc."

5. Discuss the question of the poet's faithfulness to

(a) Historic truth, and

(b) Poetic truth.

6. Give as many instances as you can of devices introduced with a view to relieve the tragic character of the narrative, showing in each case how the device is calculated to produce the effect.

7. Campbell makes the wizard in "Lochiel's Warning" assert that "coming events cast their shadows before."

(a) Give as many instances as you can of the use of premonition as an artistic device in "Evangeline."

(b) Discuss the probability of the poet's belief in premonition as an actuality, and the legitimacy of the artistic use he makes of it, on the assumption that he did not believe in it.

8. Quote, or give the substance of five passages of exceptional literary beauty or other merit in "Evangeline," stating the reason in each case for the selection made.

9. (a) What is the poet's favorite figure of speech? Give five notable examples of its use with a brief analysis of each.

(b) Describe the general effect of its frequent use as an element of the text of the poem.

(c) Compare Longfellow's style, as to the use of figurative language, with that of any other poet, giving illustrations in support of your contentions.

10. (a) Discuss the use made by Longfellow of "nature," whether in the way of objective description or as part of the "machinery" of the poem.

(b) Compare "Evangeline" in this respect with any other narrative or poem, as for example those written by Scott, Southey, Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, Tennyson, Mrs. Browning, etc.

11. Discuss Longfellow's treatment of human nature with reference to

(a) Affection and love,

(b) Patriotism, and

(c) Religion.

12. (a) State the general law of the rhythm of "Evangeline," and describe the modifications to which the poet allows himself to resort, showing how far this laxity is æsthetically advantageous or disadvantageous.

(b) Discuss the merits of this general metrical form for narrative purposes, as exemplified by

this poem, and compare or contrast it with any one of the following forms: (1) the iambic pentameter blank verse; (2) the iambic pentameter rhyming couplet; (3) the so-called "octosyllabic" rhyming iambic verse, or (4) the trochaic blank verse of "Hiawatha."

(c) Compare "Evangeline" in the matter of rhythm with any other poem you know of in any language that exhibits similar rhythmical structure, as for instance Goethe's "Hermann and Dorothea," Longfellow's "Courtship of Miles Standish," or Clough's "Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich" or "Amours de Voyage."

LONGFELLOW'S LYRIC POEMS.

"THE ARSENAL AT SPRINGFIELD," "RESIGNATION,"
"THE BUILDERS," AND "THE LADDER OF ST.
AUGUSTINE."

1. WHAT evidences of artistic design are afforded by a comparison of the arrangement of stanzas with the development of theme in "The Arsenal at Springfield"?

2. Discuss the appropriateness of the epithet "imaginative," as applied to "The Arsenal at Springfield," and mention some other poems by Longfellow to which the term is applicable in a similar sense.

3. Compare "The Arsenal at Springfield" with "Resignation" in rhythmical form, and discuss the suitability of the form to the theme in each case.

4. Mark accurately the transitions of thought in "Resignation," and point out the relations of the successive phases to each other, and to the motive of the poem as a whole.

5. Indicate clearly the sense in which the term "lyric" is applicable to each of the two poems, "The Arsenal at Springfield" and "Resignation," and discuss the value of such a classification as this use of the term implies.

6. "Not as a child shall we again behold her;
For when with raptures wild
In our embraces we again enfold her,
She will not be a child;

"But a fair maiden in her Father's mansion,
Clothed with celestial grace;
And beautiful with all the soul's expansion
Shall we behold her face."

(a) Longfellow in these stanzas propounds a theory of life in heaven; discuss the artistic appropriateness of its introduction here (1) on the assumption that he held this theory as a belief, and (2) on the assumption that he did not.

(b) On the latter assumption cite a parallel case of the use by another poet of a philosophical theory which was not part of his philosophical creed.

7. (a) State, as fully as you can, Longfellow's view of the poetic art, as embodied in "The Builders," and discuss its truth.

(b) Quote from any other poem by Longfellow a similar estimate of the value of his art, and compare the quoted passage with the first two stanzas of "The Builders" in poetical form and treatment of theme.

(c) Quote from any other poet a similar estimate, and make a similar comparison with the same two stanzas.

8. Give, with reasons, your opinion of "The Ladder of St. Augustine,"

(a) As a work of art, and

(b) As a philosophy of life.

9. Write out in full, from memory, any poem by Longfellow.

10. (a) Criticise Longfellow as a writer of lyrics: (1) in the adaptability of his verse to musical purposes, (2) in his use of epithets, and (3) in his use of imagery.

(b) Compare or contrast him in these respects with any other writer of lyrics in any language.

11. De vitis nostris scalam nobis facimus, si vitia ipsa calcamus.

"St. Augustine! well hast thou said
That of our vices we can frame
A ladder, if we will but tread
Beneath our feet each deed of shame!"

"We grow by things that are, neath our feet,
By what we have mastered of good or gain,
By the pride deposed, and the passion slain,
And the thousand ills that we hourly meet."