

* English. *

Edited by F. H. Sykes, M.A., of the Parkdale Collegiate Institute, Toronto, to whom communications respecting the English Department should be sent.

THEMES FROM IVANHOE.

OF the themes upon which a study of Ivanhoe would suggest the writing of essays, the following rough classification may be made:—

- I.—Nature-sketches.
- II.—Character-sketches.
- III.—General sketches in subjects suggested by or explanatory of the text.
- IV.—Imaginative sketches.
- V.—A biographical sketch of the author.
- VI.—A general critical sketch.

I.—NATURE-SKETCHES.

The description of the forest-glade given in the introductory chapter may serve to show that there is an art of Description. It will be observed here that the ordinary rhetorical principles are observed:—

(1) A general plan or outline is given first. It is a "rich, grassy glade," where "hundreds of broad-headed, short-stemmed, wide-branched oaks" fling "their gnarled arms over a thick carpet of the most delicious greensward."

(2) The description of the details follows the succession of aspects disclosed to a spectator surveying the whole. That is to say, the description is given from the traveller's point of view: the trees in thick clusters, shutting out the sunlight, the "long, sweeping vistas," the open space in the centre, the placid streamlet, etc.

(3) The description is made *individual, i.e.*, presented under all the conditions of a particular moment of time—"The level beams of the sinking sun."

(4) Associated human feelings are adduced. The charm of nature is heightened by the interest of human associations. This is effected here by the references to "the stately march of the Roman soldiery," and "the rites of Druidial superstition."

This and other similar passages may be made models of nature-sketches, in which the student, taking any natural scene as subject, may follow the same plan.

II.—CHARACTER-SKETCHES.

A two-fold division may be made:—

- A. *Characters of Fiction: The Knight Templar.*
- B. *Characters of History.*

Among the former may be noted Rebecca, Ivanhoe, The Templar, Rowena, Isaac the Jew, Cedric, Athelstane, and Wamba—the last interesting as illustrating that peculiar type of human character in which Instinct, taking the place of Reason, prompts to greater faithfulness and heroism, and is attended by a more unerring sagacity than are found in rational creatures. These character-sketches may be treated in the following manner:—

1. Introduction and first description of the character. Here it will be noticed that Scott usually takes the observer's point of view—*i.e.*, presents details in the order in which they would naturally present themselves to an observer. In most of the characters the dress is described before the physiognomy; in the case of the Templar, it is the expression of the countenance that is first described, because that is what would first strike the observer.

2. The chief scenes in which the character figures.

(a) In the dining hall of Cedric.
(b) In the Tournament.
(c) In connection with the plot for the capture of Rowena and Cedric's party. So far the bad side of the character is presented, and we do not even suspect that there is a better side.

(d) In the interview with Rebecca in the castle of Front-de-Bœuf—where our first feelings of detestation give way almost to admiration when we discover a latent nobility in the Templar's soul

capable of being touched by the display of the nobility and heroism of Rebecca.

(e) In the defence of the castle, and the carrying off of Rebecca.

(f) In the trial of Rebecca, and in the after-interview—where our admiration and sympathy become decided.

(g) In the trial by combat with Ivanhoe—Rebecca's champion—where the Templar falls a victim to the violence of his own feelings.

3. General estimate and criticism of the character. Is the character a life-like one? Is it consistent? Is its delineation a real work of art? If so, where are the master-strokes, etc.?

The other characters of fiction may be similarly treated.

B. *Characters of History.*—

These are King Richard, Prince John, Robin Hood. These may be treated in the following way:—

First, as characters of the story, following the same plan as the above.

Second, as historical characters, showing how the characters as presented by history correspond with their counterparts in the story.

III.—GENERAL SKETCHES.

Of subjects of interest suggested by or explanatory of the text. The following may be noted:—

A. *Social State of England at Time of Story.*—

The following heads may be taken:—

(1) Classes of society and the relations subsisting among them. The relations between Normans and Saxons should receive especial attention.

(2) Domestic Life.—The structure of the houses (*e.g.*, the description of Cedric's house and Front-de-Bœuf's castle). The ordinary occupations of the male and female members of the family, their ordinary dress, their treatment of domestics, their habits in eating and drinking, their exercise of hospitality, etc.

(3) Their social relations, and forms of recreation.

(4) The state of religion and morality. Does Scott give too unfavorable an impression of the lives of the ecclesiastics? Compare Green's English History.

(5) The state of the towns and country, means of inter-communication, condition of roads, etc.

(6) Protection afforded by law and order to citizens and subjects.

(7) General view of the political situation so far as it affected the state of society.

B. *The Jews.*—

(1) Their position and importance in the kingdom—chief occupation, business relations with the people, etc.

(2) Their position as members of (or outcasts from) society.

(3) Their legal position.

(4) Their treatment at the hands of kings, barons, etc.

(5) Their general character—how far a result of this treatment, etc.

It would be well, in the treatment of this subject, to go outside the limits of Ivanhoe, to compare Scott's presentation of the case of the Jews in England with that given by history. See Green's English History, especially noting the *resume* given in the narrative of Edward I.'s reign. To make a more satisfactory treatment of the subject, two other headings might be added.

(6) The expulsion of the Jews from England by Edward I.

(7) The present position of the Jews in Europe, especially in Austria and Russia. For an interesting article on the latter subject consult the *Contemporary Review* for March, 1891.

C. *The Knights Templars.*—

This will be purely an explanatory sketch. The following outline may be filled in:—

(1) The circumstances under which the order was formed—*i.e.*, Influence of the Crusades, 1118 A.D. Hugh de Paganis.

(2) Comparison with the two other orders formed by the same influences—the Teutonic Knights and the Knights of St. John.

3. Their part in the Crusades.

(4) Influence of the order throughout Europe—and wealth acquired, political influence, etc.

(5) Constitution and administration—power of the Grand Master, vows taken by members, etc.

(6) Suppression of Order—Philip IV. of France—charges brought against them.

Any history of the Crusades may be consulted.

IV.—IMAGINATIVE SKETCHES.

Here, by way of variety, the pupil may take any one or group of the characters, and imagine other situations in which they might be placed, or place one character in the situation occupied by another in the story, or create other characters to be associated in some way with those in the story, or change some of the incidents of the narrative, make the story end differently, or change the time or scene, transport some of the characters to modern times, for instance, or—but it would be an insult to clip the wings of imagination by further suggestions.

V.—BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF SCOTT.

Consult the sketch given in the "Great Writers" series, or Lockhart's "Life of Scott," or any sketch in any good History of Literature.

VI.—GENERAL CRITICAL SKETCH.

This will treat of Ivanhoe as a work of art. Its peculiar excellencies, its defects, the general style of the author as illustrated by it, will here be noticed. It would be well to make a comparative study—for instance, a comparison between Scott and George Eliot, representatives of two opposite types of authorship, would be interesting. Her presentation of human character, her manner of describing nature, her introspectiveness, her language and general style will be found to offer as marked a contrast to Scott's style as it is possible to find in the whole range of English authorship.

TRIAL EXAMINATION PAPERS ON THE WORK PRESCRIBED FOR 1891.

FIRST SERIES.*

Leaving Examination.

ENGLISH LITERATURE.

1. Give (a) origin of the composition of "Evangeline."

(b) Its historical foundation, and the extent to which the story is true to fact.

(c) Short description of history and character of the system of versification.

2. Quote any passage of "Evangeline" that is specially worthy.

3. What use does Longfellow make in the poem of (a) "The Priest," (b) "The Blacksmith"?

4. "Art presents nature idealized." Illustrate from Longfellow's treatment of *Homes and Home Life*, and *The Roman Catholic Religion*.

5. Strange forebodings of ill, unseen and that cannot be confess'd.

As, at the tramp of a horse's hoof on the turf of the prairies

Far in advance are closed the leaves of the shrinking mimosa,

So, at the hoof-beats of fate, with sad forebodings of evil,

Shrinks and closes the heart, ere the stroke of doom has attain'd it.

But Evangeline's heart was sustain'd by a vision."

(a) Criticise Longfellow's use of supernatural influences in the above and elsewhere in the poem.

(b) Criticise his use of *tramp, shrinking, stroke, sustain'd*.

(c) Expand the comparison.

(d) Describe the vision referred to.

ENGLISH GRAMMAR.

1. What constitutes the difference between *nouns* and *pronouns*? What reasons can you give for disagreeing with the usual (8 classes) classification of parts of speech, taking the difference between nouns and pronouns as a basis for your opinion.

2. Exemplify and explain the processes by which words change their meanings.

* This series is sent us by the kindness of Mr. W. H. Huston, Principal of the Woodstock College, and contains papers actually set in that College.