



Life, Literature and Education.

[Contributions on all subjects of popular interest, whether relating to the Literary Society discussions or not, are always welcome in this Department.]

Our Literary Society.

Out of a collection of suggestions, for our next essay contest we have selected the following topics:

1. The function and place of the Kitchen in home-life improvement.
2. Canada's National Destiny.
3. Remodelling old houses.
4. The ideal farm home.
5. Essay on Wordsworth's "Intimations of Immortality."

Some of the above topics are practical rather than literary, and as such will, we trust, induce into essay-writing many who have hitherto kept out of the more purely literary work of the society. Each contributor is asked to write on but one topic, and to send his or her contribution not later than March 7th.

Study, "Peele Castle" (concluded).

It is impossible to give all the quotations sent in answer to question 8, hence we have made a selection of the most apt. Two or three very good ones were omitted by reason of their length. Question 8 was as follows: "Quote from any other poet who has given expression to thoughts similar to any expressed or suggested in Peele Castle."

"Weep a while if ye are fain,—
Sunshine still must follow rain.
Be ye certain all seems love
Viewed from Allah's throne above;
Be ye stout of heart, and come
Bravely onward to your home."
—Sir Edwin Arnold.

Sent by M. Jose.

"We will be patient and assuage the feeling
We may not wholly stay—
By silence sanctifying, not concealing,
The grief that must have way."
—Longfellow.

Sent by L. E. H., and others.

"Then welcome each rebuff
That turns earth's smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids nor sit, nor stand, but go!
Be our joy three parts pain,
Strive, and hold cheap the strain,
Learn, nor account the pang; dare,
never grudge the throe!"
—Browning.

Sent by "Zorra."

"But now afflictions bow me down to earth.
Nor care I that they rob me of my mirth.
But oh! each visitation
Suspends what Nature gave me at my birth.
My shaping spirit of Imagination."
—Coleridge.

Sent by E. B. Augustine.

"Tis better to have loved and lost,
Than never to have loved at all."
—Tennyson: In Memoriam.

Sent by D. MacCallum.

"But the tender grace of a day that is dead,
Will never come back to me."
—Tennyson.

Sent by Marion, Nanor, and S. E. Oill.

"The shade by which my life was crost,
Which makes a desert in the mind,
Has made me kindly to my kind."
—Tennyson.

Sent by A. L. McDiarmid.

"What sorrow was thou bad'st her know,
And from her own she learned to melt
at others' woe."
—Gray.

Sent by S. E. Leeson.

"They learn in suffering what they teach
in song."
—Shelley.

"Patience is more oft the exercise
Of saints, the trial of their fortitude,
Making them each his own deliverer,
And victor over all
That tyranny or fortune can inflict."
—Milton.

Sent by Mrs. Whelpley.

"Beyond the eye's horizon's outmost
girth,
Garners all beauty, on all mystery
pores:—
Like some ethereal fountain in its flow
Finds heavens where the senses may
not go."
—William Wilfred Campbell.

Sent by J. D. Taylor.

"We see but dimly through the mists and
vapors,
Amid these earthly damps,
What seem to us but sad funeral
tapers
May be Heaven's distant lamps."
—Longfellow.

Sent by "Bruce" and others.

"The glory and the levelness have
passed away from earth."
—(Bernardo del Carpio).

Sent by "Sed."

M. MacDonald, W. B. Fallis and
others refer to Tennyson's "Palace
of Art" and "Lady of Shalott";
"Elic" and others, to Longfellow's
"Psalm of Life."

"Within the surface of the fleeting river,
The wrinkled image of the city lay,
Immovably unquiet, and for ever
It trembles, but it never fades away."
—Shelley.

Sent by A. G. McIntosh and L. McDermid.

"Heaven is not mounted to on wings of
dreams,
Nor doth the un'hankful happiness of
youth
Aim thitherward, but floats from bloom
to bloom,

With earth's warm patch of sunshine
well content.

"Tis sorrow builds the shining ladder
up,
Whose golden rounds are our calamities,
Whereon our firm feet planting, nearer
God,
The spirit climbs, and bath its eyes
unsealed."
—Lowell.

Sent by H. J. Brillinger.

THE ESSAYS ON "PEELE CASTLE."

The following essays have been selected as best. The arrangement does not necessarily indicate the order of merit. It will be noted that the names of some of the writers given below did not appear last week in the "highest" list. This was due to the fact that the total number of marks won on the paper, not those awarded for the essay alone, determined the standing.

ESSAY I.

Peele is a thriving seaport town on the western extremity of the Isle of Man. The harbor is large and commodious. The southern extremity is formed by Peele Island, on which is situated the ruins of Peele Castle, also two cathedrals and churches. Sir Walter Scott, who was a contemporary and friend of Wordsworth, has practically made it the scene of one of his novels—"Peveril of the Peak." Wordsworth had visited these ruins, which, with their historic facts and legends, together with their beautiful situation, would naturally leave a strong impression upon the mind of this ardent lover of nature. He says to those in search of his whereabouts, to look for him on

"Some tall craig
That is the eagle's birthplace, or some
peak
Familiar with forgotten years."

He had looked upon this scene for four weeks, and had been a painter of the brush, instead of the pen, he would, if he could, have painted it with a beauty not of earth—a "sea pure as crystal," and in a world where no dark clouds lower—no sign of stress or storms. If we study Wordsworth's life, we find, thus far, it runs parallel with this poem. Constantly in communion with nature, and entranced with his muse, so self-centered and self-appreciative that the ridicule of reviewers could not move him; supplied with a modest competency which sufficed for a man of his simple tastes; happy in the companionship and sympathy of his sister Dorothy, and, later, of his wife—life, like the summer scene upon which he had looked, presented a tranquil sea. Then the relentless sea, that looked so fair, has brought to him a sudden, crushing sorrow, had robbed him forever of a dear brother. Then, the painting of the scene by his friend, under such different conditions—the angry, storm-tossed waves, the lowering clouds, and the battered hulk, at the mercy of wind and wave—all suited his altered mood. He felt himself like the dismayed ship, left to the fury of the gale.

The Castle now speaks to him in

another strain; it illustrates strength and endurance. Notwithstanding this new aspect of life, sorrowful though it was, the loss irreparable, there were things that came through this bitter experience which he could not lightly esteem: fortitude, patience, cheerfulness, and amid all, the hope beyond—that hope to which another great poet, at the death of his friend, has given expression in the following words:

"And doubtless, unto thee is given
A life that bears immortal fruit
In those great offices that suit
The full-grown energies of heaven."
Rouville, Que. "MILLA."

Our members will be pleased to read the above excellent essay from the pen of "Milla," who, it will be remembered, told us, in connection with her "Three Fishers" study, that she was sixty-four years of age, and had never written on such examinations previously.

ESSAY II.

This poem is typical of Wordsworth, inasmuch as the language is simple, its subject is an ordinary scene, it is of a didactic nature; but, unlike some of his poems, the lack of poetic fire is scarcely perceptible.

While some critics hold that the province of poetry is not to inculcate a truth, this poem not only does so, but does it in such a manner as to convince one that it is expedient to do so. Let me try to explain this statement.

In the poem we have two distinct pictures of the same scene, namely, Peele Castle. The first picture appeals to the taste, or expresses ideal beauty. The second picture appeals to the reason, or expresses simple, every-day truth. That the latter is the more excellent one, is brought home to him in the remembrance of his brother's death by shipwreck. He realizes the folly of presenting such a scene as one of ideal beauty alone, when it may so readily be transformed, in fact, into a scene of danger and death. Hence, it would appear to him that truth is preferable to mere beauty.

Following out the same line of thought, he reproves the folly of all those who attempt to withdraw themselves from the stern realities of life and establish themselves in an ideal world, as the Lady of Shalott did. He believes that it is much better to understand those things that we may be called upon to endure, and look for happiness, not in escaping from trials, but rather in learning to meet and master them.

The philosophy of the poem is unquestionably, sound, and if a fault could be found, it would be that its beauty is surpassed by its logic. Not that it is lacking in beauty, however. The rhythm, the ease of expression, and the poetical words and phrases indicate a master hand. We cannot but admire such phrases as "A deep distress hath humanized my soul," or, "Merely silent nature's breathing life." While such pleasing and comprehensive pictures as are presented in the second and twelfth stanzas would be difficult to excel.

Lanark Co., Ont.

J. S.