

## NOTES ON HIGH SCHOOL LITERATURE.

BY ELEANOR ROBINSON.

## THE ISLAND OF THE SCOTS.

*Author.* William Edmondstone Aytoun, born in Edinburgh, 1813, died in Edinburgh, 1865. A Scottish poet and miscellaneous writer, for years on the staff of Blackwood's Magazine. Professor of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres at Edinburgh University.

The poem is one of the "Lays of the Scottish Cavaliers" published in 1849.

The incident of the poem is told by Sir Walter Scott in "Tales of a Grandfather."

After the defeat and death of Graham of Claverhouse, Viscount Dundee, at the pass of Killiecrankie, in 1689, a band of about one hundred Lowland Scots, who had served as officers under him, preferred exile in France with King James II, to accepting the rule of King William. These gentlemen formed themselves into a company, and engaged in the French service.

In a campaign in Alsace this company of Scottish officers distinguished themselves by their voluntary attempt to storm a fort upon an island in the Rhine, defended by five hundred Germans. Their attack was so fierce that the Germans were seized with a panic and attempted to escape, which they did only after heavy loss, leaving the island in possession of the brave assailants. The French general declared it was the boldest action that had ever been performed. The place was long called *L'Isle des Ecosais*, the Island of the Scots.

When at the peace of Ryswick, the company was disbanded, there remained but sixteen out of the original number, and few of these ever again saw their native land.

For a fuller account see *Tales of a Grandfather*, second series, chapter 24.

Line 24. Bertrand Du Guesclin, 1314-1380, Constable of France, the most famous French warrior of his age.

Line 41. The pass of Killiecrankie, where Claverhouse was defeated. It is a rocky defile shut in by precipices and wooded hills, between Dunkeld and Blair, in Perthshire. The "furious river Garry" rages through the glen.

Line 65. Scott says that they waded into the stream with their ammunition about their necks, and linked arm-in-arm, according to the Highland fashion.

## CRANFORD SOCIETY.

Cranford is usually identified with Knutsford, in Cheshire, where the author, Mrs Gaskell, spent her childhood and youth. She was born in London in 1810, and spent her married life in Manchester, the "Drumble" of the book. Among her other books are *North and South*, *Ruth*, *Mary Barton*, *Cousin Phillis*, *Sylvia's Lovers*, and the *Life of Charlotte Bronte*. She died in 1865.

The extract called "Cranford Society" is taken from the first chapter of *Cranford*.

*Amazons.* A fabled race of women warriors who lived near the Black Sea, or in Africa, according to Greek mythology.

Give an instance of "verbal retaliation."

*Manx laws.* Laws of the Isle of Man. *Tinwald* or *Tynwald*. The governing body of the Isle.

How would you fix the date of this description of Cranford?

*The Spartans.* It was a matter of pride with the Spartans not to show any sign of suffering.

*Esprit de corps.* Literally, "spirit of the body." Feeling of fellowship.

*Pattens.* Wooden soles raised on iron frames to protect the feet from mud or wet.

*Half-pay captain.* Retired on half pay.

*Sent to Coventry.* To send a person to Coventry is to take no notice of him. The explanation of the phrase is that at one time the people of Coventry disliked soldiers so much that no intercourse was allowed between the garrison and the town. So that when a soldier was sent there, he was cut off from all social intercourse.

What is the point of view of the writer of *Cranford*?

For notes on *Sir Galahad* see EDUCATIONAL REVIEW for January, 1916.

## SONG FOR SAINT CECILIA'S DAY.

November 22, 1687.

*Author.* John Dryden, 1631-1701, poet, play wright and satirist. Poet Laureate, 1670-1688.

*Saint Cecilia.* The patron saint of music. Dryden wrote two odes for the celebration of her festival, the second and more famous one, *Alexander's Feast*, in 1697.

*This universal frame began.* The whole fabric