

## English.

All communications intended for this column should be sent to W. H. Huston, care of THE EDUCATIONAL JOURNAL, Toronto, not later than the 5th of each month.

## ENGLISH LITERATURE.

IN the teaching of no English subject has there been throughout the schools of Ontario more improvement than in English Literature. Not very long ago the subject was as a branch of study entirely unknown in the high schools, while, at the University, all that was required at the various examinations was an acquaintance with some text-book dealing with the historical aspect of the subject. Such study can never do much good and little advance was made when it was extended to the high schools; for, though the pupil came to see that there is a great body of English Literature, yet he was not permitted to become acquainted with it except by the perusal of a few selections in the text-book, and the study of certain critical opinions which he was compelled to learn and adopt as his own. The result of such study was easily seen in the output of a vast number of "priggish" young people ready to pass, with enviable confidence, an opinion on the merits of any of our writers, or to discuss the beauties of our literary masterpieces without ever having read a line of them.

It was, therefore, a decided improvement when, about twelve years ago, certain literary selections were prescribed for school work; for the pupil then actually came into some sort of real contact with the author, though for a long time it seemed the object of teachers and of examiners to allow as little of this contact as they could. Boys and girls were expected to learn how to analyze and parse the whole extract, "to study all the derivations," and while they thus went over it all to learn as they plodded along what they found in their notes—how familiar the expression "What do your notes say?"—made up for the most part of extracts from dictionaries and encyclopædias, thrown together without method and seemingly with a desire to make the book of respectable size, and to give the pupil something to learn. Some teachers—and these were supposed to be far ahead of their time—were accustomed to read, that is, dictate to their classes criticisms "not in the notes," while it was an exception for a teacher not to think that pointing out figures—where pointing out meant giving long names—was the most excellent method of all literary study. Even those teachers who did permit intercourse with the author, did so in the worst of ways, and made the intercourse a burden, by requiring the pupils to learn by rote the extracts, good and bad alike, from beginning to end, the whole recitation, especially just before the time of examinations, often consisting of the repetition, in a prosaic way, of the poem by members of the class, every ten lines counting a mark. Great as was such drudgery it could be profitable only when the matter was worth the trouble, which is by no means always the case even in very good poetry, much less in prose. To such an extreme did this folly extend that frequently children were required, in the public schools, to recite word for word the prose extracts prescribed for examination, in order that they might be able to "give the substance in their own words."

Common sense, however, could not long stand this, and by degrees there came into use better methods, which of late have been greatly encouraged by a decided change in the style of examinations which render it impossible for a student to succeed who does not understand and, to a certain extent, appreciate the author's thought. So that to-day it is perhaps true that English Literature is in Canada taught as well as in any other English speaking country. At any rate it is now possible—judging by recent circulars of the Education Department—for a teacher to take hold of his work, examine it, and talk with his class about it, asking and answering questions, dwelling especially on the worthy portions and giving less attention to the inferior, until the class have—perhaps unconsciously—learned to understand the meaning of the language, and to come to some opinion of their own with respect to the art displayed in the production.

Perfection has, however, not been attained, and faulty theories of the nature and object of the study are still more or less prevalent. These, however, cannot now be pointed out, and will, therefore, be considered in another issue.

## NOTICE.

FOR the benefit of public school teachers, it has been decided for the present to give the English column a place in every issue of the JOURNAL instead of, as heretofore, in every second issue. The design is to pay special attention, in the first number of each month, to public school work, and to reserve the second monthly issue of the column for the general benefit of the profession. Arrangements are now being made by which, in each number, will appear a series of notes on the extracts for Entrance Literature. Prominent teachers will write the notes, no two lessons being treated by one person.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

## QUESTIONS.

1. WHAT is the subject of the first paragraph on page 295 Fourth Reader?
2. What are the subordinate subjects?
3. Is there an example of parallel construction in this paragraph?
4. Give the full etymology of "beef."

M.O.

## ANSWERS.

1. The first sentence of the paragraph.
2. Military renown or greatness is of less consequence than the moral condition of the people. The writer thinks the crown, monarchy, and constitution are worthy of respect, but only so far as they improve the condition of the nation, that is, the people in general.
3. Yes, the second and the third sentence are to some extent constructed on the same plan. The first three clauses of the last sentence are also similar in construction.
4. M.E. *beef*.—O. French *bœuf*, *buef*.—Lat. *bovem* from *bos*, an ox.

## EXERCISES.

## ENTRANCE COMPOSITION.

- I. Substitute equivalents for the italicized words in:—

If you desire *to be honored*, deserve it.  
*Having seen the President*, we went home.  
*When morning dawned*, all fears were dispelled.  
*Unless you study*, you will not become learned.  
*He came when he heard that he was wanted*.  
*Taking an axe in his hand*, he went into the woods.

I called on my neighbor *who lives over the way*.

II. Change to the natural order:—*A man he was to all the country dear. Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight. Here rests his head upon the lap of earth. His arrow, the hero sent flying on its way. On the island lived Napoleon.*

III. Write sentences containing words meaning the opposite of:—*warm, high, happy, angry, narrow, curious, large, wealthy, gentle, thoughtful, bright, noble.*

## IV. Improve.

The man regretted that he ran away five minutes after he escaped.

It is not my hope to succeed, but to do my duty. Guilt is more likely to meet with indulgence than misfortune.

The young man sent a description of the sad accident to his father.

I like him as well as John.

The fire was checked before any extensive damage had been done by the firemen.

The teacher punished the boy for his rudeness before the class.

## THIRD CLASS LITERATURE.

## THE BARD.

- I. IN what sense is "The Bard" an appropriate title? Would it be better to substitute for it "Edward I." or "The Conquest of Wales"?

II. (a) Show what is the office of each of the three divisions in the development of the poem.

(b) Examine each stanza as to its connection with the central thought of the poem, and discuss whether it would be well to transpose stanzas I. and II.

III. By what artifices does the poet add energy and force to his narrative? Point out passages illustrating your answer with respect to alliteration, apostrophe, personification, and repetition.

IV. Select the passage which seems to you to afford the best illustration of (1) word-painting, (2) pathos, (3) harmony of sound.

V. Discuss the effect as to simplicity and probability of the detailed prophecy in the poem. What special feature of Gray's studies probably explains the obscurity of the allusions, that seems a fault to the average reader.

VI. What effect is gained by the use of the spirits of the departed bards? Had the poet any special object in dismissing them at the particular time he did? Discuss the advisability of retaining them till the conclusion of the prophecy.

VII. On the existence of what human passions does the poem depend for its main effect?

VIII. Discuss the appropriateness of figure in (1) *mock the air, crested pride*; (2) *haughty brow, stream'd like a meteor*; (3) *sighs to the torn, raven sail, sad eyes, weave the tissue of thy line*. (II. 1) *Scourge of heaven, terrors round him wait, sorrow's faded form*; (2) *fair laughs the morn, expects his evening prey*; (3) *sparkling bowl, urge their distant course, with midnight murder fed*. (III. 1) *Glittering skirts unroll*; (2) *tremble in the air, round her play, they breathe a soul*; (3) *fierce war and faithful love, pleasing pain*.

IX. Develop the force of the italicized words:— (I. 1) *Crimson wing*; nor *d'en thy virtues*; *nightly tears*; *shaggy side*; *quivering lance*; (2) *sable garb*; *desert cave*; *hundred arms*; *dreary terrors*; and passes by; *dying country's cries*; *bloody hands*. (II. 1) *Characters of hell*; *verge enough*; re-echo with *affright*. (2.) *Noontide beam*; *azure realm*. (3.) *Battle bray*; *destined course*; *blushing foe*; *thorny shade*; *accursed loom*. (III. 1.) *Fires the western skies*; *descending slow*. (2.) *Gorgeous dames*; *bearded majesty*; *virgin grace*. (3) *Fairy fiction*; *buskin'd measures*; *lessen on my ear*; *fond impious man*; *redoubled ray*; *our fates assign*; *roaring tide*.

- I. Point out any example of the effect of brevity of statement.

## SECOND CLASS LITERATURE.

## THE TASK, BOOK III.

I. WHAT divisions of "The Garden" could be omitted without loss of (1) connection, (2) beauty?

II. Take your book and point out what part each division bears in the development of the central thought.

III. Discuss the merits of the poem as manifesting *love of nature*; *sympathy with mankind*; *a correct philosophy of life*.

IV. Discuss Cowper's claim to be called a humorous poet, and show whether the passage descriptive of the cultivation of the cucumber is humorous or serious.

V. What are the chief merits of Cowper as seen in "The Garden," with reference to poetical imagery, choice of apt words, close observation, and melody of versification.

THE English Bible is "translated out of the original tongue;" the common phrase now is "translated from;" a former phrase lately revised is "done into English;" or even "Englished." The latest volume in the Franklin Square Library, "For the Right," by K. E. Franzos, is given in *English*, a slight variation of the common "rendered in English." But there is no verb derived from "version," the synonym of "translation." *Done into English* is, perhaps the homeliest and best of all these phrases, and differs pleasantly from "done in English."—*The Beacon*.