

have understood it. But in the case of a shorter poem where each stanza presents difficulty, it is better to develop the story stanza by stanza. A study of Browning's *Boot and Saddle* will help to illustrate the method to be followed.

Introduction.—The teacher asks the class to give careful attention to the poem, and to find out what the speaker says of himself.

The teacher reads the first stanza twice:

Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!
Rescue my castle before the hot day
Brightens to blue from its silvery gray.
Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!

Questions.—Who is the speaker? To whom is he speaking? What does he wish them to do? What time of day is it? What time of year? What is meant by "Boot, saddle, to horse, and away"? Where do you suppose the speaker and his companions are? Let us read the second stanza and see if it tells us:

Ride past the suburbs, asleep as you'd say;
Many's the friend there will listen and pray,
"God's luck to the gallants that strike up the lay,
Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!"

They are evidently in a city. How do you know? Why does the speaker say, "asleep, as you'd say"? In what danger do you suppose the castle is? Do you know of any struggle in English history in which an Englishman might find his castle besieged, so that he might need to "rescue" it? In this struggle between the Cavaliers and the Roundheads, where were the Cavaliers the strongest, in the city or in the country? To which party, then, does the speaker probably belong? Let us read the next two stanzas for further details:

Forty miles off, like a roebuck at bay,
Flouts Castle Brancepeth the Roundheads' array.
Who laughs, "Good fellows, ere this, by my fay,
Boot, saddle, to horse and away."—

Who? My wife Gertrude, that, honest and gay,
Laughs when you talk of surrendering, "Nay,
I've better counsellors. What counsel they?
Boot, saddle, to horse, and away."

Here we are given the name of the castle, and we are told who is besieging it. How far do the Cavaliers have to ride to reach the castle? Is the castle likely to hold out? Question on *flouts* and *like a roebuck at bay*. Are there any signs that the castle is hard pressed? Who is defending it? How does she attempt to cheer up her men?

Conclusion.—Now re-read the poem, with expression, and ask one or two members of the class to give the substance of it orally, or the whole class to write an account of it.