

Literature is the Essence of All History

Expressions of praise and appreciation from so many concerning the Literary Section of last issue, and its offerings have been truly gratifying and encouraging. We, the literary editors, members of the PILOT staff, and contributors find the true reward for all endeavor in such appreciative recipience.

Decision has been made by the Editorial Board of the PILOT that awards will be made at the conclusion of the school year for the best literary works published by the 1953-54 PILOT. There will be two such awards. The *Tributum Pilotum Pro Excellentia Poetica* will be given for the best poem written during the year, and the *Tributum Pilotum Pro Excellentia Littera* will be given for the best essay, short story, play, etc. The medals will be given according to the decision of a faculty committee. The members of which are Professors Francis B. Dedmon, and J. Y. Hamrick, Mrs. Dana Harris, and Dr. Phil Elliott. Only those works published by the PILOT will be considered for selection by the judges. No special consideration will be given to the works of those persons in any way affiliated with the PILOT or the Gardner-Webb Department of English, and each student has an equal opportunity for selection as recipient of either or both of the awards. A word of thanks to Mr. Meredith Henderson, and Dr. T. C. Holland for their assistance in naming our awards.

Since the last publication of the PILOT, a member of the faculty suggested that one immortal great poem with commentary be published each issue. According to this suggestion, the following appears as feature in this issue.

The Romantic Period of English Literature represented a complete revolt against the view, both of society and of literature, possessed by the classicists. The importance of personal feeling and emotion, which had been recognized during the Transition Period, was an even more marked characteristic of the romantic point of view. The classicist had sought as his ideal the general, the impersonal, the typical; the romanticist, on the other hand, strove to express his own personality and to give voice to his own reactions on life, regardless of whether he followed the established rules of literature or of society. To be specific in our comparison of the Classical to the Romantic, whereas the classicist had sought to view the world objectively, the romanticist was apt to be highly subjective in his attitude toward himself and his fellows. His test of things was more often his heart than his head, his emotions than his reason. In short, he was likely to be an individualist. As a result romantic poetry and prose are frequently most interesting for the view they give us of the writer's own opinions, prejudices, hopes, fears, joys, and sorrows.

John Keat's "Ode to a Nightingale" is one of the most beautiful of the Romantic odes. The almost fragrant mixture of joy and sorrow is sweet to all the senses. We invite you to a sphere of the sublime for Keat's immortal.

First a historical comment, concerning its composition. In the spring of 1819 Keats was visiting a friend in whose garden a nightingale was building her nest. He was deeply moved by the sweetness and gladness of the nightingale's singing. One morning, on leaving the breakfast table, he went into the garden, took his seat under a tree, and several hours later came back to the house with the "Ode to a Nightingale" written off on two half sheets of paper. The tone of sadness that pervades the poem is probably due to the recent death from tuberculosis of Keat's loved brother, Tom; to Keat's own danger from the same disease; and to his hopeless love for the lady of his heart, Fanny Brawne.

The poem has won universal praise because of its melody, its rich imagery, and its perfect combination of beauty and sadness. It is no exaggeration to say that this great poem has brought home the mystery and magic of poetic beauty to more readers than has any other in English poetry. We invite you now through the enchanted door to enchanted lands beyond.

"Ode To A Nightingale"

By JOHN KEATS

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk.
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past, and Lethwards had sunk;
'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
But being too happy in thine happiness,
That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees,
In some melodious plot of beechen green,
And shadows numbness, singest of summer in
Full-throated ease.

(John drinking the bubbling
beauty of the Nightingale's
song is swayed almost to
tears. He silently wishes
his song could be so sweet.)

O for a draught of vintage! that hath been
Cooled a long age in the deep-delved earth,
Tasting of Flora, and the country green,
Dance, and Provencal song, and sunburnt mirth!
O for a beaker full of the warm South,
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
With beaded bubbles winking at the brain,
And purple-stained mouth; that I might drink,
And leave the world unseem, and with thee
Fade away into the forest dim:

(The poet wishes for the cup
that he might drink and as
a result of the magical drafe
escape with the Nightingale.)

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget,
What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where palsied shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs,
Where beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new love pine at them beyond tomorrow.

(To oblivion, let fade the
failures of being a mortal,
and the sorrow of old age,
impossible faithfulness, and
death.)

Away! Away! for I will fly to thee,
Not charioted by Bacchus, and his pards,
But on the viewless wings of Poesy.

(Bacchus, the God of wine,
who rides in a chariot pulled
by Leopards, is not necessary,
as the poet will ride in the
magical cart of poetry.)

Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:
Already with thee! tender is the night,
And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
Clustered around by all her starry Fays;

(The poet is saying that the
"viewless wings of poesy" have
given him flight and his presence
is now with the bird.)

from verse

We Grow Strong!