

LESSONS IN

ENGLISH LITERATURE

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LESSONS

St Louis College

IN
ENGLISH LITERATURE.

San Antonio
WITH A *Texas*

SHORT DICTIONARY

OF

BRITISH, IRISH, AND AMERICAN AUTHORS.

By

JOHN O'KANE MURRAY, M.A., M.D.,

Author of "The Prose and Poetry of Ireland," "The Catholic Pioneers of America,"
"Little Lives of the Great Saints," and "Popular History of the Catholic
Church in the United States."

The foundation of knowledge must be laid by reading.—DR. JOHNSON.

It is only great names and great works that make a literature.
—DR. CRAIK

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M. 8.

THIS BOOK

IS MOST AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED TO MY SISTER

Miss Murray.

“To thee no star be dark!
Both heaven and earth
Befriend thee ever.”



FONDO
RODRIGO DE LLANO

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PREFACE.

THE title of this little volume scarcely conveys an adequate idea of the wide range of subjects discussed between its covers. The work is divided into four Books. Book I. gives a brief history of the English Language, a bird's-eye view of its composition, and a history of English Literature from Cædmon to Chaucer. Book II. covers the English Literature of Great Britain from Chaucer to the present time. Book III. treats of the Literature of Ireland—Celtic and English. Book IV. embraces in brief the English Literature of America, and ends with a Short Dictionary of Authors.

The Historical Introductions—each of which should be carefully read before proceeding to the lessons that follow—give a rapid view of British, Irish, and American history, with special reference to the progress of letters, learning, and civilization. Literature takes a color from the times in which it is produced. It is best studied in connection with history.

I have omitted long extracts. In a work of this nature they serve no good purpose. A literary masterpiece should be read from the first word to the last—or not at all. The whole should never be judged by a part. How silly and illogical it is to represent *Julius Cæsar* or *Evangeline* by two or three pages! The quotations I have scattered here and there are so many gems to be fixed in the mind as an exercise of taste and memory.

My book has grown by degrees during the last ten years. It has been prepared with a high, well-defined purpose, and has cost me much earnest, patient labor. The final chapters, I may be permitted to say, were written during periods of painfully poor health. It now goes forth on its mission, and may that be *ad majorem Dei gloriam!* I hope it will be found a pleasant guide over the wide world of English Literature—a guide equally safe and suitable for the class-room and the home-circle.

JOHN O'KANE MURRAY.

1734 OXFORD STREET.
PHILADELPHIA, July 22, 1884.

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LESSONS IN ENGLISH LITERATURE.

DEFINITIONS.

1. LANGUAGE is the instrument by which we communicate our thoughts to each other.

2. LITERATURE is thought, feeling, or imagination expressed in written language.*

3. LITERATURE is divided into *Poetry* and *Prose*.

4. POETRY is the product of an excited creative imagination expressed in the form of *verse*.

Examples: Longfellow's *Evangeline*, Moore's *Irish Melodies*.†

5. PROSE is the term applied to all compositions that are not in verse.

Ex.: Edmund Burke's *Speeches*, Lingard's *History of England*.

6. RHYME is the chiming of one syllable with

* Everything written or printed is not literature. Books intended only for certain trades, professions, or classes of people belong not to literature; such are works on navigation, engineering, law, medicine, theology, grammar, arithmetic, book-keeping, etc. These, and all similar productions, are published for the uses of particular classes of men. But the distinctive feature of literature is that it addresses all mankind. It speaks to every head and every heart. It embraces all forms of composition from the simple rhyme or charming story to the dignified history and the sublime poem. The choice, artistic productions in English poetry, history, biography, fiction, travels, oratory, criticism, and popular scientific and religious works—whether written by English, Scotch, Irish, or American authors—constitute what we term *English Literature*.

† The student will do well to read the examples carefully.

another at regular intervals in poetry—generally at the end of a line.

Ex.: "There is not in the wide world a valley so sweet
As that vale in whose bosom the bright waters meet."
Moore.

7. BLANK VERSE is poetry that does not rhyme.

Ex.: "There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune."
Shakspeare.

8. A COUPLET is two successive lines rhyming together.

Ex.: "Who has not felt, with rapture-smitten frame,
The power of grace, the magic of a name?"
Campbell.

9. A TRIPLET is three successive lines rhyming together.

Ex.: "Round thy path white lilies twine,
True emblems of that soul of thine,
Yearning to grow e'er more divine."
Murray.

10. A STANZA is a number of lines taken together, and properly adjusted to each other, the whole forming a distinct portion of a poem.

A stanza may consist of almost any number of lines from two upwards.

11. A POEM is a composition in verse.

Ex.: Longfellow's *Evangeline*, Griffin's *Sister of Charity*.

12. LYRIC POETRY is so called because among the ancients it was sung to the accompaniment of the lyre. It includes *songs*, *odes*, and *sonnets*.

13. A SONG is a short poem intended to be sung.

Ex.: *The Angel's Whisper*, *The Last Rose of Summer*, *The Star-spangled Banner*.

14. A BALLAD is a popular song.

15. AN ODE is a short dignified song or poem.

Ex.: Dryden's *Ode on St. Cecilia's Day*.

16. A SONNET is a poem of *fourteen lines*, with the

rhymes arranged in a particular manner, and ending in some pointed thought or sentiment.

Ex.: The Sonnets of Shakspeare, Milton, or Wordsworth.

17. A HYMN is a sacred song.

Ex.: Mother Seton's *Jerusalem, My Happy Home*.

18. AN ELEGY is a short pathetic poem in commemoration of the death of some person.

Ex.: Milton's *Lycidas*, Gray's *Elegy written in a Country Churchyard*.

19. PASTORAL POETRY is poetry in which country scenes, life, and manners are celebrated.

Ex.: Pope's *Pastorals*, Shenstone's *Pastoral Ballad*.

20. NARRATIVE POETRY recounts the particulars of some interesting event, enterprise, or transaction. It embraces metrical tales, romances, and historical poems.

Ex.: Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, Moore's *Lalla Rookh*, Scott's *Lady of the Lake*.

21. DIDACTIC POETRY is poetry employed for the purpose of instruction in some branch of knowledge.

Ex.: Pope's *Essay on Criticism*, Dryden's *Hind and Panther*.

22. DRAMATIC POETRY is poetry founded upon a regular plot or story, and fitted for representation on the stage.

Ex.: Shakspeare's *Plays*, Sheridan's *Plays*.

23. DRAMATIC POETRY is of two kinds—*tragedy* and *comedy*.

24. A TRAGEDY is a dramatic poem representing some remarkable deeds performed by illustrious persons, and generally having a fatal termination.

Ex.: Shakspeare's *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, and *Romeo and Juliet*.

25. A COMEDY is a dramatic poem of a light and amusing character.

Ex.: Sheridan's *Rivals*, Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*.

26. AN EPIC POEM is the poetical recital of some great and heroic enterprise.*

Ex.: Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

The epic poem is the highest kind of poetry. Among the most celebrated epics of all time are Homer's ILLIAD in Greek, Virgil's AENEID in Latin, Tasso's JERUSALEM DELIVERED in Italian, and Milton's PARADISE LOST in English. No literature has reached perfection till it can boast of a great epic poem and a great history.

27. A LETTER is a written communication from one person to another.

Ex.: Goldsmith's *Letters*, Lord Macaulay's *Letters*, the *Letters of Junius*.

28. A REVIEW is generally a critical examination of some new book.

Ex.: Macaulay's *Review of Boswell's Life of Johnson*.

29. A LECTURE is an instructive discourse on any subject.

Ex.: Father Burke's *Lectures and Sermons*, Reed's *Lectures on English Literature*.

30. A SPEECH is a discourse in a court of justice, legislative assembly, or other popular convention.

Ex.: Grattan's *Speeches*, Webster's *Speeches*, O'Connell's *Speeches*.

31. AN ORATION is a discourse of the most formal and elaborate kind.

Ex.: Everett's *Orations*.

* The subject of the epic poem must be some one great complex action. The principal personages must belong to the high places of society, and must be grand and elevated in their ideas. The measure must be of a sonorous dignity, befitting the subject. The action is developed by a mixture of dialogue, soliloquy, and narrative.
Thomas Arnold.

32. AN ESSAY is a composition on any particular subject.

Ex.: Bacon's *Essays*, Macaulay's *Essays*, Brownson's *Essays and Reviews*.

33. TRAVELS give an account of a long journey.

Ex.: Vetromile's *Tour in Both Hemispheres*.

34. A FICTION is a story invented for some purpose.

Fictions are commonly divided into NOVELS and ROMANCES.

35. A NOVEL is a work of fiction, either founded on events of real life, or at least bearing some resemblance to them.

Ex.: Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield*, Dickens' *David Copperfield*.

36. AN HISTORICAL NOVEL is one in which the events and personages of history are introduced under the guise of fiction.

Ex.: Scott's *Waverley Novels*.

37. A ROMANCE is an extravagant fiction, whose wild and unnatural incidents place them beyond the bounds of probability.

38. HISTORY is a written account of past events.

Ex.: Parkman's *Jesuits in North America*, Prescott's *History of the Conquest of Mexico*, Justin McCarthy's *History of Our Own Times*.

Like the epic in poetry, history holds the highest place in prose composition.

39. A BIOGRAPHY is the history of one person.

Ex.: Boswell's *Life of Dr. Johnson*, Fitzpatrick's *Life and Times of Bishop Doyle*.

40. AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY is the life of a person written by himself.

Ex.: Franklin's *Autobiography*, Trollope's *Autobiography*.