UNIT ONE
THE GIFT OF THE MAGI

By O. Henry

I. Introduction
O. Henry, whose real name was William Sydney Porter (1867 – 1910), is famous chiefly for his short stories. These stories are usually set amid the poorer working – class life of the cities, the characters being ordinary simple people with their daily living to earn, a life which O.Henry knew well. But the stories are not mere realistic sketches. O. Henry had both the craftsmanship of a writer and the compassion of a man. As a writer he constructs a clever plot with an unforeseen and an unexpected climax suddenly released so that the reader is kept guessing till the last moment what the outcome is to be. As a man he saw the drab surrounding and narrow circumstances which he described, but he lit them with sympathy and humour. Though in most of his stories humour seems to be predominant, yet the sympathy is always there, so the humour is warmed and enriched by its humanity. The story that follows, however, is an example of the reverse process. There are more tears in it than laughter. Yet laughter is implied and one might say that because of it the tears are touched with a more tender compassion.

II. Text
One dollar and eighty – seven cents. That was all. And sixty cents of it was in pennies. Pennies saved one and two and a time by bulldozing the grocer and the vegetable man and the butcher until one’s cheeks burned with the silent imputation of parsimony that such close dealing implied. Three times Della counted it. One dollar and eighty seven cents. And the next day would be Christmas.

There was clearly nothing left to do but to flop down on the shabby little couch and howl. So Della did it, which instigates the moral reflection that life made up of sobs, sniffles, with sniffles predominating.

While the mistress of the home is gradually subsiding from the first stage to the second, let’s take a look at the home, a furnished flat at $8 per week.

In the vestibule below was a letter – box into which no letter would go, and an electric button from which no mortal finger would coax a ring.
Also appertaining thereunto was a card bearing the name “Mr. James Dillingham Young.” But whenever Mr. James Dillingham Young came home and reached his flat above, he was called “Jim” and greatly hugged by Mrs. James Dillingham Young, already introduced to you as Della, which is all very good.

Della finished her cry and attended to her cheeks with the powder rag. She stood by the window and looked out dully at a grey cat walking over a grey fence in a grey backyard. Tomorrow would be Christmas Day, and she had only one dollar eighty seven cents to buy Jim a present. She had been saving every penny she could for months, with this result. Twenty dollars a week doesn’t go far. Expenses had been greater than she had calculated. They always are. Only $1.87 to buy present for Jim. Her Jim. Many a happy hour she had spent planning for something nice for him. Something fine and rare and sterling. Something just a little bit near to being worthy of the honour of being owned by Jim.

There was a pier glass between the windows of the room. Perhaps you have seen a pier glass in a $8 flat. A very thin and very agile person may, by observing his reflection in a rapid sequence of longitudinal stripes, obtain a fairly accurate conception of his looks. Della, being slender, had mastered the art.

Suddenly she whirled from the window and stood before the glass. Her eyes were shining brilliantly, but her face had lost its colour within twenty seconds. Rapidly she pulled down her hair and lit it fall to its full length.

Now, there were two possessions of the James Dillingham Young’s in which they both took a mighty pride. One was Jim’s gold watch that had been his father’s and his grandfather’s. The other was Della’s hair.

So now Della’s beautiful hair fell about her, rippling and shining like a cascade of brown waters. It reached below her knee and made itself almost a garment for her. And then she did it up again nervously and quickly. Once she faltered for a minute and stood still while a tear or two splashed on the worn red carpet.
On went her old brown jacket, on went her old brown hat with a whirl of skirts and with the brilliant sparkle still in her eyes, she fluttered out of the door and down the stairs to the street.

Where she stopped, the sign read: “Mme Softronie, Hair Goods of All Kinds”. One flight up Della ran, and collected herself, panting. Madame, large, too white, chilly, hardly looked the “Softronie”.

“Will you buy my hair?”

“I buy hair”, said Madame. “Take yea hat off and let’s have a sight at the looks of it”.

Down rippled the brown cascade.

“Twenty dollar”, said Madame, lifting the mass with a practiced hand.

“Give it to me quick”, said Della.

On, and the next two hours tripped by on rosy wings. Forget the hashed metaphor. She was ransacking the stores for Jim’s present.

She found it at last. It surely had been made for Jim and no one else. There was no other like it in any of the stores, and she had turned all of them inside out. It was a platinum chain, simple and chaste in design, properly proclaiming its value by substance alone and not by meretricious ornamentation – as all good things should do. It was even worth of THE WATCH. As soon as she saw it she knew it must be Jim’s. It was like him – quietness and value – the description applied to both. Twenty one dollars they took from her for it and she hurried home with the eighty – seven cents. With that chain in his watch, Jim might be properly anxious about the time in any company. Grand as the watch was, he sometimes looked at it on the sly on account of the old leather strap that he used in place of a chain.

When Della reached home, her intoxication gave way a little to prudence and reason, she got out her curling irons and lighted the gas and went to work repairing the ravages made by the generosity added to love. Which is always a tremendous task, dear friends – a mammoth task.
Within forty minutes her head was covered with tiny, close lying curls that made her look wonderfully like a truant school – boy. She looked at her reflection in the mirror, long, carefully and critically.

“If Jim doesn’t kill me”, she said to herself, “before he takes a second look at me, he’ll say I look like a Coney Island chorus girl. But what could I do – oh, what could I do with a dollar and eighty seven cents?”

At seven o’clock the coffee was made and the frying – pan was on the back of the stove hot and ready to cook the chops.

Jim was never late. Della doubled the chain in her hand and sat on the corner of the table near the door that he always entered. Then she heard his steps on the stairs away down on the first flight, and she turned white just for a moment. She had a habit of saying little silent prayers about the simplest everyday things, and now she whispered. “Please God, make him think I’m still pretty”.

The door opened, and Jim stepped in and closed it. He looked thin and very serious. Poor fellow, he was only twenty – two and to be burdened with a family! He needed a new overcoat, and he was without gloves.

Jim stepped inside the door, as immovable as a setter at the scent of a quail. His eyes were fixed upon Della, and there was an expression in them that she could not read, and it terrified her. It was not anger, nor surprise, nor disapproval, nor horror or any of the sentiments that she had been prepared for. He simply stared at her fixedly with that peculiar expression on his face.

“Don’t look at me that way. I had my hair cut and sold it because I couldn’t have lived through Christmas without giving you a present. It will grow again, you won’t mind, will you? I just had to do it. My hair grows awfully fast. Say “Merry Christmas” Jim and let’s be happy. You don’t know what a nice – what a beautiful nice gift I’ve got for you”.

“You’ve cut off your hair?” asked Kim, laboriously, as if he had not arrived at that patent fact yet, even after the hardest mental labor.

“Cut it off and sold it”, said Della. “Don’t you like me just as well, anyhow? I’m me without my hair, am not I?”
Jim looked about the room curiously.

“You say your hair is gone?” he said, with an air almost of idiocy

“You needn’t look for it”, said Della. “It’s sold I tell you – sold and gone, too. It’s Christmas Eve, boy. Be good to me, for it went for you. Maybe the hairs of my head were numbered”, she went on with a sudden serious sweetness, “but nobody could ever count my love for you. Shall I put the chops on, Jim?”

Out of his trance, Jim seemed quickly to wake. He enfolded his Della. For ten seconds let us regard with discreet scrutiny some inconsequential object in the other direction. Eight dollars a week or a million a year – what is the difference? A mathematician or a wit would give you the wrong answer. The Magi brought valuable gifts, but that was not among them, the dark assertion will be illuminated later on.

Jim drew a package from his overcoat pocket and threw it upon the table.

“Don’t make any mistake, Della”, he said, “about me. I don’t think there is anything in the way of a hair cut or a shave or a shampoo that could make me like my girl any less. But if you’ll unwrap that package you may see why you had me going a while first”.

While fingers and nimble tore at the string and paper. And then an ecstatic scream of joys and then, alas! A quick feminine change to hysterical tears and wails, necessitating the immediate employment of all the comforting power of the lord of the flat.

For there lay The COMBS – the set of combs, side and back, that she had worshipped for long in a Broadway window, Beautiful combs, pure tortoise – shell with jeweled rims – just the shade to wear in the beautiful vanished hair. They were expensive combs, she knew, and her heart had simply craved and yearned over them without the least hope of possession. And now, they were hers, but the tresses that should have adorned the coveted adornments were gone.

But she hugged them to her bosom, and at length she was able to look up with dim eyes and a smile, and said “My hair grows so fast, Jim”.
And then Della leapt up like a little singed cat, and cried “oh, Oh”.

Jim had not yet seen his beautiful present. She held it out to him eagerly upon her open palm. The dull precious metal seemed to flash with a reflection of her bright and ardent spirit.

“Isn’t it a dandy, Jim? I hunted all over town to find it. You’ll have to look at the time a hundred times a day now. Give me your watch. I want to see how it looks on it”

Instead of obeying, Jim tumbled down on the couch and put his hands under the back of his head and smiled.

“Della”, said he, “let’s put our Christmas presents away and keep them a while. They are too nice to use just at present. I sold the watch to get the money to buy your combs. And now suppose you put the chops on”.

The Magi, as you know, were wise men – wonderfully wise men – who brought gifts to the Babe in the manger. They invented the art of giving Christmas presents. Being wise, their gifts were no doubt wise ones. And here I have lamely related to you the chronicle of two foolish children in a flat who most unwisely sacrificed for each other the greatest treasures of their house. But in a last word to the wise of these days let it be said that of all who give gifts these two were the wisest. Of all who give and receive gifts, they are wisest, everywhere they are wisest. They are the Magi.

III. Exercises
   A. Exercises for Language Understanding
      a. Paraphrase the Underlined Parts of the Following Sentences:
         1. The money she saved by bulldozing the grocer and the vegetable man is not much.
         2. Della finished her cry and attended to her cheeks with the powder rag.
         3. Twenty dollars a week doesn’t go far.
         4. They took a mighty pride in their possession.
         5. One flight up Della ran, and collected herself.
         6. She was ransacking the stores for Jim’s present.
         7. Although the watch was grand, he sometimes looked at it on the sly on account of its old fashion leather strap.
8. When she heard him coming, she turned white for just a moment.
9. He was so much burdened with his family.
10. Jim seemed quickly to wake out of his trance.
11. “But if you unwrap that package, you may see why you had me going for a while first.”
12. She always looked at that beautiful fur overcoat without the least hope of possession.

b. **What Abstract Nouns are From the Following Words:**

c. **For Each Word in List I, Find a Word of Similar Meaning in list II:**

d. **Distinguish Between the Following:**
1. art – draft
2. sketch – plot – design
3. chorus – song
4. flat – house – porch
5. vestibule – staircase
6. flight – house
7. backyard – garden
8. couch – sofa
9. store – shop
10. dollar – cent – penny
11. platinum – silver
12. manger – stable
13. palm – hand
14. tresses – hair
15. powder – shampoo
16. chop – slice
17. sickle – knife – chopper
18. mammoth – elephant

e. **Show the Difference Between**
1. Climax – conclusion
2. metaphor – imagery
3. sympathy – compassion - sentiment
4. intoxication – ecstasy – hysteria – trance
5. parsimony – prudence – close dealing

B. **Exercises for Literary Appreciation:**
a. **Questions for Comprehension:**
1. How much money was there in Jim’s and Della’s house at Christmas? In what way did Della get them?
2. How was Della when she counted the money? What did she do?
3. What did she intend to do for her Jim at Christmas? How was their living condition?
4. What sudden idea did she have? How did she realize her idea?
5. How was Della’s hair described?
6. How did Della find Jim’s present? How was the present described?
7. What did she do when she got home? How did she look after doing her hair?
8. How was Jim when he saw Della’s new haircut? What did he think of Della?
9. How was Della when she looked at Jim’s present for her?
10. How were the couples when they both had revealed their gifts for each other?
11. What is the author’s remark about their acting?

b. **Questions for Literary Appreciation:**
1. Why does O.Henry call his story “The gift of the Magi”?
2. Tell in a few words about the theme, the plot, and the characters of this story. Among them which do you think is the most important factor that makes this story successfully and interesting? How does the plot serve to reveal the theme? And how do the characters help to develop the plot?
3. How did Della prepare for Jim’s return?
4. By what descriptions, details, characteristics, turns of expressions e.t.c does O.Henry bring two personalities to life in so short a story?
5. What are the chief qualities in the two characters?
6. What do you think about the last phrase of the author’s remark? What do you think is his point of view of love, and sacrifice?
7. What is the tone and atmosphere of the story?
8. What do you think about the style of the story?
9. In writing a story, a writer has first of all to choose his standpoint, or in other words, to choose his attitude towards his characters. What do you think about the author’s attitude in this story?

IV. **Discussion**
What makes a happy marriage?

V. **Writing topics**
1. Summarize the story in not more than  words.
2. What do you think about William Shakespeare’s poem:
   “........................ love is not love
   Which alters when it alteration finds, or bends with remover to remove”

UNIT TWO

HOPE

By John Galsworthy (1867 – 1933)

I. Introduction
John Galsworthy’s novels are realistic studies of English life. His characters are usually chosen from the wealthier professional classes. His books are like pictures painted upon a wide canvas, so true both in background and detail that a foreigner or a man born a hundred years hence, might obtain a very clear impression of the manners, behavior, and outlook of the so-called upper-middle classes in England at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. His writings, however, is photographic rather than moving. He can make his reader see, but he does little to make him feel. It is as though Galsworthy himself was a dispassionate spectator of human behavior, whose duty was to record what he observe, not pass judgement upon it. He sets down the facts, and leaves them to the reader to judge for himself. If he has favorites among his characters, it is seldom that he permits it to be seen. As author, his themes are human, but they are not stirring or romantic. His material is that of normal daily existence, and he treats it in exact details, often is trivial details. Yet he does not write satirically like some other authors, for example, Jane Austen. He does not hold his characters up either to ridicule or to admiration, he simply brings them to life. Whatever the reader feels for them, contempt, sympathy, approval, is his own, not the author’s concern. To some, this reserved attitude seems too cold and severe, to some others, this complete repression of the author’s personal judgement seems the highest achievement of creative art, on the ground that the artist’s duty is to present a picture, not illustrate a theory or preach a sermon.
However, the story that follows differs from much of Galsworth’s works in two respects: it treats of humble life and instead of letting it convey its own message, galsworth concludes it with a comment of his own, indeed, the book from which it is taken is called “A Commentary”. It consists of a series of separate stories – or portraits, rather – each one suggesting some comment on human conduct. Consequently, though the style is still as precise, the details still as picturesque as in his better-known novels, yet the stories strike a deeper chord of sympathy and emotion.

II. Text
Wet or fine, hot or cold, nothing was more certain than that the lame man would pass, leaning on his twisted oaken stick, his wicker basket hanging from his shoulder. In that basket, covered by a bit of sacking, was groundsel, and rarely, in the season, a few mushrooms, kept carefully in a piece of newspaper.

His blunt, wholesome, weather-beaten face with its full brown beard, now growing grey, was lined and sad because his leg continually gave him pain. That leg had shrunk through an accident, and being now two inches shorter than it should have been, did little save remind him of mortality. He had a respectable, though not prosperous appearance, for his old blue overcoat, his trousers, waistcoat, and hat were ragged from ling use and stained by weather. He had been a deepsea fisherman before his accident, but now he made his living by standing on the pavement at a certain spot, in Bayswater, from ten o’clock to seven in the evening. And anyone who wished to give her bird a treat would stop before his basket and buy a pennyworth of groundsel.

Often – as he said – he had “a job” to get it, rising at five o’clock, and going out of London y an early tram to the happy hunting grounds of those who live on the appetites of caged canaries. Here, dragging his shrunken limb with difficulty through ground that the Heavens seldom troubled to keep dry for him, he would stoop and toilfully amass the small green plants with their yellow centered head, though often, as he mentioned – “there doesn’t seem any life in the stuff, the frosts have spoiled it’. Having
collected all that fate permitted him, he would take the tram back home, and started out for his day’s adventure.

Now and again, when things had not gone well, his figure would be seen trudging home through the darkness as late as nine or ten o’clock at night. On such occasions his gray blue eyes, which had never quite lost their look of gazing through sea – mists, would reflect the bottom of his soul, where the very bird of weariness lay with its clipped wings, for ever trying to regain the air.

In fact, as he had no need to tell you – he was a “trier” from year’s end to year’s end, but he had no illusion concerning his profession – There was “nothing in it”, though it was better on the whole than selling flowers, where there was less than nothing. And, after all, having got accustomed to the struggles of that bird of weariness within his soul, he would even perhaps have missed it, had it at last succeeded in rising from the ground and taken flight.

“A hard life!” he had been herd to say when groundsel was scarce and customers scarcer, and the damp had struck up into his shrunken leg. This, stated as a matter of fact, was the extent of his general complaint, though he would not unwillingly enlarge on the failings of his goundsel, his customers, and leg, to the few who could appreciate such things. But, as a rule, he stood or sat silent, watching the world go by, as in old days he had watched the waves drifting against his anchored fishing – smack, and the look of those filmy – blue, far – gazing eyes of his, in their extraordinary patience, was like a constant declaration of the simple and unconscious creed of man: “I hold on till I drop”.

What he thought about while he stood there, it was difficult to say – possibly of old days round the Goodwins, of the yellow buttons of his groundsels that refused to open properly, of his leg, and dogs that would come sniffing at his basket and showing their contempt, of his wife’s gouty rheumatism, and herrings for his tea, of his arrears of rent, of how few people seemed to want his groundsel and once more of his leg.
Practically no one stopped to look at him, unless she wanted a pennyworth of groundless for her pale bird. And when people did look at him, they saw nothing symbolic – simply a brown-bearded man, with deep furrows in his face, and a lame leg, whose groundsel was often of a quality that they did not dare to offer their canaries. They would tell him so, adding that the weather was cold, to which, knowing a little more about it than themselves, he would reply “yes, ma’am – you wouldn’t believe how I feel it in my leg”. In this remark, he was extremely accurate, but they would look away, and pass on rather hastily, doubting whether a man should mention a lame leg – It looked too much as if he wanted to make something out of it. In truth he had the delicacy of a deep-sea fisherman, but he had owned his leg so long that it had got on his nerves, it was too intimate a part of all his life, and speak of it he must, and sometimes, but generally on warm and placid days, when his groundsel was properly in bloom and he had less need of consolation, his customers would let their feelings get the better of them and give him pennies, when half pennies would have been enough. This unconsciously had served to strengthen his habit of alluding to his leg.

He had, of course, no holidays, but occasionally he was absent from his stand. This was when his leg, feeling that he was taking it too much as a matter of course, became what he would call “a mass of pain”. Such occasions threw him into arrears with his rent, but, as he said: “If you can’t get out, you can’t”. After these holidays, he would make special efforts, going far afield for groundsels, and remaining on his stand until he felt that if he did not get off it, he never would.

Christmas was his festival, for at Christmas people were more indulgent to their birds, and his regular customers gave him sixpence. This was just as well, for, whether owing to high-living, or merely to the cold, he was nearly always laid up about that time. After his annual attack of bronchitis, his weather-beaten face looked strangely pale, his blue eyes seemed to have in them the mist of many watches – so might the drowned ghost of a deepsea fisherman have looked, and his pale, roughened
hand would tremble, groping among the groundsels that had so little bloom, trying to find something that a bird need not despise.

“You wouldn’t believe the job I had to find even this little lot”, he would say. “Sometimes I thought I would leave my leg behind I was so weak I couldn’t seem to drag it through the mud at all. And my wife, she’s got the gouty rheumatism. You will find that I’m all trouble! ”. And summoning an unexpected spirit of cheerfulness, he smiled. Then, boastfully, “you see, it’s got no strength in it at all – there’s not a bit of muscles left ... very few people.” His eyes were proudly saying. “have got a leg like this”.

To the dispassionate observer of his existence it was a little difficult to understand what attraction life could have for him, a little difficult to penetrate down through the blackness of his continual toil and pains, to the still living eyes of that bird of weariness, lying within his soul, moving always, if but slightly, its wounded stumps of wings. It seemed, on the whole, unreasonable of this man to ling to life, since he was without prospect of anything but what was worse in this life. And in the matter of a life to come, he would dubiously remark: ‘My wife’s always telling me we can’t be worse off where we’re going. And she’s right, no doubt, if so be as we’re going anywhere”.

And yet so far as could be seen, the thought:” Why do I continue living” never came to him. It almost seemed as if it must be giving him a secret joy to measure himself against his troubles, and this was fortunate, for in a day’s march, one could not come across a better presage for the future of mankind.

In the crowded highway, beside his basket, he stood, leaning on his twisted stick, with his tired, steadfast face, a ragged statue to great, unconscious human virtue, the most hopeful and inspiring of all things on earth, courage without hope.

III. Exercises
A. Exercises for Language Understanding
a. Paraphrase the Underlined Parts of the Following Sentences:
1. His leg continually gave him pain.
2. His leg did little save remind him of mortality.
3. A judge must not take side.
4. He does not hold his enemies up to ridicule.
5. The story treats of humble life.
6. The story strikes deep chord of emotion and sympathy.
7. He said he had a job to get it.
8. As a rule, the man stood silently at his post.
9. He must hold on till the end.
10. People thought he wanted to make something out of his lame leg.
11. The weather got on his nerves.
12. Sometimes his customers let their feelings get the better of them and gave him pennies.
13. He took his lame leg as a matter of course.
14. He was nearly always laid up at Christmas.
15. He couldn’t be worse off. He would not unwilling enlarge on the failing of his groundsel, his customers, and leg.

b. For Each Word in List I, Find a Word of Similar Meaning in List II:

c. Distinguish Between the Following:
1. sermon – address
2. series – list
3. wicker – straw
4. basket – sack
5. commentary – criticism

6. canvas – cloth
7. outlook – prospect
8. spectator - bystander

d. Give at least two meanings of the following words:
Class – treat – moving – stirring – stick – job - respect
B. Exercises for Literary Appreciation:
   a. Questions for Comprehension:
   1. What had the man been before the accident?
   2. How did the lame man earn his leaving?
   3. How was he dressed?
   4. How did he obtain his groundsel?
   5. What hardships and worries did he have to endure?
   6. How did he passers-by treat him?
   7. What might happen on the warm and placid days? and at Christmas?
   8. What were the man’s thoughts that helped him to relieve his hardships and sufferings?
   9. How did he look after the illness?
  10. What was the man’s bitter pride?
  11. What did he represent for?

b. Questions for Literary Appreciation:
   1. How was the old man described in the story?
   2. What are the chief qualities in the character of the old man?
   3. Can you find passages in the text to show the old man’s courage and unyielding spirit before hardships of life?
   4. Why does the author say “he’s a ragged statue to the great, unconscious human virtue, the most hopeful and inspiring of all things on Earth – Courage without Hope”.
   5. In writing this story, the writer gives forth one of the most difficult questions. What is that question? How do you answer that question?
   6. What feelings do you think the author wants to express towards the old man?
   7. What can you remark on the passers-by, or rather, of the happy, strong, wealthy people in the society in comparison with the statue of the old man?
   8. What is the author’s main technique in writing this story?
   9. Prove that the author uses the techniques of comparison and symbolism in the story?
  10. Speak about the Tone and Atmosphere of the story?

IV. DISCUSSION

1. Should we consider the old man’s life as complete failure? Why and why not?
2. What according to you, are the most important qualities of a “Man”? Why?
3. What makes a person respectable? Why?

V. TOPIC FOR WRITING
“Life doesn’t turn out to be as bad as it seems to be.” Discuss this saying by your own experiences.

UNIT THREE

MY OEDIPUS COMPLEX
By Frank O’conor

I. INTRODUCTION
Small children often resent sharing their mother’s attention with anyone else. In the story that follows a little boy resents sharing his mother’s attention with his father. This tendency of a boy to become attached to his mother and to resent his father is referred to as the “Oedipus Complex”. Oedipus is a character in an old Greek legend. Oedipus, so the legend says Kite, a man – without knowing that the man was his father – and married the man’s wife, without knowing that she was his mother. In this way he fulfilled a strange prophecy that he had heard and had been unable to believe.

II. TEXT
Father was in the army all through the war – the first war, I mean – so, up to the age of five, I never saw much of him, and what I saw did not worry me. Sometimes I woke and there was a big figure in khaki peering down at me in the candlelight. Sometimes in the early morning I heard the slamming of the front door and the clatter of nailed boots down the cobbles of the lane. There were father’s entrances and exits. Like Santa Claus he came and went mysteriously.

In fact, I rather liked his visits, though it was an uncomfortable squeeze between Mother and him hen I got into the big bed in the
early morning. He smoked, which gave him a pleasant musty smell, and shaved, an operation of astounding interest. Each time he left a train of souvenirs: model tanks and Gurkha knives with handles made of bullet cases, and German helmets and cap badges and button sticks and all sorts of military equipment—carefully stowed away in a long box on top of the wardrobe, in case they would ever come in handy. There was a bit of the magpie about father, he expected everything to come in handy. When his back was turned, mother let me get a chair and rummage through his treasures. She didn’t seem to think so highly of them as he did.

The war was the most peaceful period of my life. The window of my attic faced southeast. My mother had curtained it, but that had small effect. I always woke with the first light and, with all the responsibilities of the previous day melted, feeling myself rather like the sun, ready to illumine and rejoice. Life never seemed too simple and clear and full of possibilities as then. I put my feet out from under the clothes—I called them Mrs. Left and Mrs. Right—and invented dramatic situations for them in which they discussed the problems of the day. At least Mrs. Right did, she was very demonstrative, but I hadn’t the same control after Mrs. Left, so she mostly contented herself with nodding agreement.

They discussed what Mother and I should do during the day, what Santa Claus should give a fellow for Christmas, and what steps should be taken to brighten the home. There was that little matter of the baby, for instance. Mother and I could never agree about that. Ours was the only house in the terrace without a new baby, and mother said we couldn’t afford one till Father came back from the war because they cost seventeen and six. It was probably a cheap baby and mother wanted something really good, but I felt she was too exclusive. The Greneys baby would have done us fine.

Having settled my plans for the day, I got up, put a chair under the attic window, and lifted the frame high enough to stick out my head, The window overlooked the front gardens of the terrace behind outs, and beyond these it looked over a deep valley to the tall, red—brick houses terraced up the opposite hillside, which
were all still in shadow, while those at our side of the valley were all lit up, though with long strange shadow that made them seem unfamiliar, rigid and painted.

After that I went into Mother’s room and climb into the big bed. She woke and I began to tell her of my schemes, by this time, though I never seemed to have noticed it, I was petrified in my nightshirt, and I thawed as I talked until the last frost melted, I ell asleep beside her and woke again only when I heard her below in the kitchen, making the breakfast.

After breakfast we went into town, heard Mass at St. Augustine’s and said a prayer for father, and did she shopping. If the afternoon was fine and either went for a walk in the country or a visit to mother’s great friends in the convent, Mother St. Dominic. Mother had them all praying for father, and every night, going to bed, I asked God to send him back safe from the war to us. Little, indeed, did I know what I was praying for!

One morning, I got into the big bed, and there, sure enough, was father in his usual Santa Claus manner, but later, instead of a uniform, he put on his best blue suit, and mother was as pleased as anything. I saw nothing to be pleased abut, because, out of uniform, father was altogether less interesting, but she only bearned, and explained that our prayers had been answered, and off, we went to Mass to thank God for having brought father safely home.

The irony of it! That very day when he came in to dinner he took off his boots and put on his slippers, donned the dirty old cap he wore about the house to save him from colds, crossed his legs, and began to talk gravely to mother, who looked anxious. Naturally, I disliked her looking anxious, because it destroyed her good looks, so I interrupted him.

“Just a moment, Larry” she said impatiently. “Don’t you hear me talking to Daddy?”. This was only what she said when we had boring visitors, so I attached no importance to it and went on talking.
“Do be quiet, Larry!” she said impatiently. “Don’t you hear me talking to Daddy?” This was the first time I had heard those ominous words. “Talking to Daddy”, and I couldn’t help feeling that if this was how God answered prayers, he couldn’t listen to them very attentively.

“Why are you talking to Daddy?” I asked with as great a show of indifference as I could master.

“Because Daddy and I have business to discuss. Now, don’t interrupt again!”

In the afternoon, at mother’s request, father took me for a walk. This time we went into town instead of out to the country, and I thought at first, in my usual optimistic way that it might be an improvement. It was nothing of the sort. Father and I had quite different notions of a walk in town. He had no proper interest in trams, ships, and horses, and the only thing that seemed to divert him was talking to fellows as old as himself. When I wanted to stop he simply went on dragging me behind him by the hand. When he wanted to stop I had no alternative but to do the same. I noticed that it seemed to be a sign that he wanted to stop for a long time whenever he leaned against a wall. The second time I saw him do it, I got wild. He seemed to be settling himself forever.

pulled him by the coat and trousers, but unlike mother who, if you were too persistent got into a wax and said. “Larry, if you don’t behave yourself, I’ll give you a good slap”, father had an extraordinary capacity for amiable inattention. I sized him up and wondered would I cry, but he seemed to be too remote to be annoyed even by that. Really, it was like going for a walk with a mountain! He either ignored the wrenching and pummeling entirely, or else glanced down with a grin of amusement from his peak. I had never met anyone so absorbed in himself as he seemed.

At tea time “talking to Daddy” began again, complicated this time by the fact that he had an evening paper, and every few minutes he put it down and told mother something new out of it. I felt this way a foul play. Man for man, I was prepared to compete with him at any time for mother’s attention, but when he had it all made up for him by another people it left me no chance. Several times I tried to change the subject without success.
“You must be quiet while Daddy is reading, Larry”, mother said impatiently.

It was clear that she either genuinely liked talking to father better than talking to me, or else that he had some terrible hold on her which made her afraid to admit the truth.

“Mummy”, I said that night when she was tucking me up. “Do you think if I prayed hard God would send Daddy back to the war?” She seemed to think about that for a moment.

“No, dear”, she said with a smile. “I don’t think he would.”
“Why wouldn’t he, Mummy?”
“Because there isn’t a war any longer, dear.”
“But, mummy, couldn’t God make another war, if he liked?”
“He wouldn’t like to, dear, it is not God who makes wars, but bad people.”
“Oh” I said.

I was disappointed about that. I began to think that God wasn’t quite what he was cracked up to be.

Next morning I woke at my usual hour, feeling like a bottle of champagne. I put out my feet, and invented a long conversation in which Mrs. Right talked of the trouble she had with her own father till she put him in the home. I didn’t quite know what the home was but it sounded the right place for father. Then I got my chair and stuck my head out of the attic window. Dawn was just breaking, with a guilty air that made me feel I had caught it in the act, my head was bursting with stories and schemes. I stumbled in next door, and in the half-darkness scrambled into the big bed. There was no room at mother’s side, so I had to get between her and father. For the time being I had forgotten about him, and for several minutes I sat bolt upright, racking my brains to know what I could do with him. He was taking up more than his fair share of the bed, and I couldn’t get comfortable, so I gave him several kicks that made him grunt and stretch. He made room all right, though. Mother waked and felt for me. I settled back comfortably in the warmth of the bed with my thumb in my mouth.

“Mummy!” I hummed loudly, and contentedly.
“Sh! dear”, she whispered, “don’t wake Daddy.”

This was a new development, which threatened to be even more serious than talking to Daddy. “Life without my early-morning conferences was unthinkable.”

“Why?” I asked severely.
“Because poor Daddy is tired.”

This seemed to me a quite inadequate reason, and I was sickened by the sentimentality of her “poor Daddy”. I never liked that sort of gush, it always struck me as insincere.

“Oh!” I said lightly. Then in my most winning tone: “Do you know where I want to go with you today Mummy?”
“No, dear.” She sighed.
“I want to go down the Glen and fish for thorny backs with my new net, and then I want to go out to the Fox and Hounds, and…”
“Don’t wake - Daddy!” she hissed angrily, clapping her hand across my mouth.

But it was too late. He was awake or nearly so. He grunted and reached for the matches. Then he stared incredulously at his watch.

“Like a cup of tea, dear?” asked Mother in a meek, hushed voice I had never heard her use before. It sounded almost as though she was afraid.
“Tea?” he explained indignantly. “Do you know what the time is?”
“And after that I want to go up the Rathcooney Road.” I said loudly, afraid I’d forget something, in all those interruptions.
“Go to sleep at once, Larry”, she said sharply, I began I snivel, I couldn’t concentrate. The way that pair went on smothering my early-morning schemes was like burying a family from the cradle.

Father said nothing, but lit his pipe and sucked it, looking out into the shadows without minding mother or me. I knew he was mad. Every time I made a remark, mother hushed me irritably. I was mortified. I felt it wasn’t fair, there was even something sinister in it. Every time I had pointed out to her the waste of making two beds when we could both sleep in one, she had told me it was healthier like that, and now here was this man, this stranger, sleeping with her without the least regard for her health.
He got up early and made tea, but though he brought mother a cup he brought none for me.

“Mummy” I shouted. “I want a cup of tea too.”

“Yes, dear,” she said patiently: “you can drink from Mummy’s saucer.”

That settled it. Either father or I would have to leave the house. I didn’t want to drink from Mummy’s saucer. I wanted to be treated as an equal in my own home, so just to spite her I drank it all and left none for her. She took that quietly, too.

But that night when she was putting me to my bed she said gently:

“Larry, I want you to promise me something?”

“What is it?” I asked.

“Not to come in and disturb poor Daddy in the morning. Promise?”

“Poor Daddy” again! I was becoming suspicious of everything involving that quiet impossible man.

“Why?” I asked.

“Because poor Daddy is worried and tired and he doesn’t sleep well.”

“Why doesn’t he, Mummy?”

“Well, you know, don’t you, that while he was at the war Mummy got the pennies from the Post Office?”

“From Miss MacCarthy?”

“That’s right, but now, you see. Miss MacCarthy hasn’t any more pennies, so Daddy must go out and find us some. You know what would happen if he couldn’t?”

“No”, I said, “tell us”.

“Well, I think we might have to go out and beg for them like the poor old woman on Fridays. We wouldn’t like that, would we?”

“No”, I agreed. “We wouldn’t”.

“So you will promise not to come in and wake him?”

“Promise.”

Mind you, I meant that. I knew pennies were a serious matter, and I was all against having to go out and beg like the old woman on Fridays.
Mother laid out all my toys in a complete ring round the bed so that, whatever way I got out I was bound to fall over one of them.

When I woke, I remembered my promise all right. I got up and sat on the floor and played – for hours, it seemed to me. Then I got my chair and looked out the attic window for more hours. I wished it was time for father to wake. I wished someone would make me a cup of tea. I didn’t feel in the least like the sun, instead, I was bored and so very, very cold. I simply longed for the warmth and depth of the big feather bed.

At last I could stand it no longer. I went into the next room. As there was still no room at mother’s side, I climbed over her and she woke with a start.

“Larry,” she whispered, gripping my arm very tightly, “what did you promise?”
“But I did, Mummy,” I wailed, caught in the very act. “I was quiet for ever so long.”
“Oh, dear, and you are perished!” she said sadly, feeling me all over.
“Now, if I let you stay, will you promise not to talk?”
“But I want to talk, Mummy,” I wailed.
“That has nothing to do with it,” she said with a firmness that was new to me “Daddy wants to sleep. Now, do you understand that?”

I understood it only too well. I wanted to talk – He wanted to sleep – Whose house was it, anyway?

“Mummy,” I said with equal firmness.
“I think it would be healthier for Daddy to sleep in his own bed.”

That seemed to stagger her, because she said nothing for a while.

“Now, once for all,” she went on, “you’re to be perfectly quiet or go back to your own bed. Which is it to be?”

The injustice of it got me down, I had convicted her out of her own mouth of inconsistency and unreasonableness, and she hadn’t even attempted to reply. Full of spite, I gave father a kick, which she didn’t notice but which made him grunt and open his eyes in alarm.
“What time is it?” he asked in a panic—stricken voice, not looking at mother but the door, as if he saw someone there.

“It is early yet” she replied soothingly.

“It’s only the child. Go to sleep again now, Larry,” she added, getting out of bed, “you’ve wakened Daddy and must go back.”

This time, for all her quiet air, I knew she meant it and knew that my principal rights and privileges were as good as lost unless I asserted them at once. As she lifted me, I gave a screech, enough to wake the dead, not to mind father. He groaned.

“That dammed child! Doesn’t he ever sleep?”

“It’s only a habit, dear,” she said quietly, though I could see she was vexed.

“Well, it’s time he got out of it,” shouted father, beginning to heave in the bed. He suddenly gathered all the bedclothes about him, turned to the wall, and then looked back over his shoulder with nothing showing but only two small, spiteful, dark eyes. The man looked very wicked.

To open the bedroom door, mother had to let me down, and I broke free and dashed for the farthest corner, screeching. Father sat bolt upright in bed.

“Shut up, you little puppy!” he said in a choking voice.

I was so astonished that I stopped screeching. Never, never had anyone spoken to me in that tone before. I looked at him incredulously and saw his face convulsed with rage. It was only then that I fully realized how God had coddled me, listening to my prayers for the safe return of this monster.

“Shut up, you!” I bawled, beside myself.

“What’s that you said?” shouted father, making a wild leap out of bed.

“Mick, Mick!” cried mother. “Don’t you see the child isn’t used to you?”

“I see he’s better fed than taught”, snarled father, waving his arms wildly, “he wants his bottom smacked”.

All his previous shouting was as nothing to these obscene words referring to my person. They really made my blood boil.
“Smack your own!” I screamed hysterically.
“Smack your own! Shut up! Shut up!”

At this he lost his patience and let fly at me, he did it with the lack of conviction you’d expect of a man under mother’s horrified eyes, and it ended up as a mere tap, but the sheer indignity of being struck at all by a stranger, a total stranger who has cajoled his way back from the war into our big bed as a result of my innocent intercession, made me completely dotty. I shrieked and shrieked and danced in my bare feet, and father, looking awkward and hairy in nothing but a short gray army shirt, glared down at me like a mountain out for murder. I think it must have been then that I realized he was jealous too. And there stood mother in her nightdress looking as if her heart was broken between us. I hoped she felt as she looked. It seemed to me that she deserved it all.

From that morning out my life was a hell. Father and I were enemies, open and avowed. We conducted a series of skirmishes against one another, he trying to steal my time with mother and I his. When she was sitting on my bed, telling me a story, he took to looking for some pair of old boots which he alleged he had left behind him at the beginning of the war. While he talked to mother, I played loudly with my toys to show my total lack of concern. He created a terrible scene one evening when he came in from work and found me at his box, playing with his regimental badges, Gurkha knives and button – sticks. Mother got up and took the box from me.

“You mustn’t play with Daddy’s toys unless he lets you, Larry”, she said severely. “Daddy doesn’t play with yours”.

For some reason father looked at her as if she has struck him and then turned away with a scowl.

“Those are not toys”, he growled, taking down the box again to see has I lifted anything. “Some of those curios are very rare and valuable”.

But as time went on I saw more and more how he managed to alienate mother and me. What made it worse was that I couldn’t grasp his method or see what attraction he had for mother. In every possible way he was less winning than I. he has a common accent and made noises at his tea. I thought for a while that it might be the newspapers she was interested in. so I made up bits of news of my own to read to her. Then I thought it might be
the smoking, which I personally thought attractive and took his pipes and
grew round the house dribbling into it till he caught me. I even made noises
at my tea, but mother only told me I was disgusting. It all seemed to hinge
round that unhealthy habit of sleeping together, so I made a point of
dropping into their bedroom and nosing around, talking to myself, so that
they wouldn’t know I was watching them, but they were never up to
anything that I could see. In the end it beat me. It seemed to depend on being
grown – up and giving people rings, and I realized I’d have to wait.

But at the same time I wanted him to see that I was only waiting, not
giving up the fight. One evening when he was being particularly obnoxious,
chatting away well above my head, I let him have it.

“Mummy” I said, “Do you know what I’m going to do when I grow
up?”

“No, dear”, she replied. “What?”
“I’m going to marry you” I said quietly.

Father gave a great guffaw out of him, but he didn’t take me in. I
knew it must only be pretend. And mother, in spite of everything, was
pleased, I felt she was probably relieved to know that one day father’s hold
on her would be broken.

“Won’t that be nice?” she said with a smile.
“It’ll be very nice”. I said confidently.
“Because we’re going to have lots and lots of babies”.
“That’s right, dear”, she said placidly.
“I think we’ll have one soon, and then you’ll have plenty of
company.”

I was no end pleased about that because it showed that in spite of the
way she gave into father she still considered my wishes. Besides, it would
put the Geneys in their place.

It didn’t turn out like that, though. To begin with, she was very
preoccupied – I supposed about where she would get the seventeen and six –
and though father took to staying out late in the evenings it did me no
particular good. She stopped taking me for a walk, become as touchy as
blazes, and smacked me for nothing at all. Sometimes I wished I’d never
mentioned the confounded baby – I seemed to have genius for bring calamity on myself.

And calamity it was! Sonny arrived in the most appalling hullabaloo – even that much he couldn’t do without a fuss and from the first moment I dislike him. He was a difficult child – and demanded far too much attention. Mother was simply silly about him, and couldn’t see when he was only showing off. As company he was worse than useless. He slept all day and I had to go round the house on tiptoe to avoid waking him. It wasn’t any longer a question of not waking father. The slogan now was “Don’t – wake – Sonny!” I couldn’t understand why the child wouldn’t sleep at the proper time, so whenever mother’s back was turned I woke him. Sometimes to keep him awake, I pinched him as well. Mother caught me at it one day and gave me a most unmerciful spanking.

One evening, when father was coming in from work, I was playing trains in the front garden. I let on not to notice him, instead, I pretended to be talking to myself, and said in a loud voice: “If another bloody baby comes into this house, I’m going out”.

Father stopped dead and looked at me over his shoulder.
“What’s that you said?” he asked sternly.
“I was only talking to myself,” I replied, trying to conceal my panic.
“It’s private.”
He turned and went in without a word.

Mind you, I intended it as a solemn warning, but its effect was quite different. Father started being quite nice to me. I could understand that of course. Mother was quite sickening about Sonny. Even at mealtime she’d get up and gawk at him in the cradle with idiotic smile, and tell father to do the same. He was always polite about it, but he looked so puzzled you could see he didn’t know what she was talking about. He complained of the way Sonny cried at night, but she only got cross and said that Sonny never cried except when there was something up with him – which was a flaming lie, because Sonny never had anything up with him and only cried for attention. It was really painful to see how simple minded she was. Father wasn’t attractive, but he had a fine intelligence. He saw through Sonny, and now he knew that I saw through him as well.
One night I woke with a start, there was someone beside me in the bed. For one wild moment I felt sure it must be mother, having come to her senses and left father for good, but then I heard Sonny in compulsions in the next room, and mother saying: “There! There! There!” and I knew it wasn’t she. It was father. He was lying beside me, wide awake. Breathing hard and apparently as mad as hell.

After a while, it came to me what he was mad about. It was his turn now. After turning me out of the big bed, he had been turned out himself. Mother had no consideration now for anyone but that poisonous pup, Sonny. I couldn’t help feeling sorry for father. I had been through it all myself and even at that age I was magnanimous. I began to stroke him down and say “There! There!” He wasn’t exactly responsive.

“Aren’t you asleep either?” he snarled.
“Ah, come on and put your arm around us, can’t you?” I said, and he did, in a sort of way. Gingerly, I suppose, it was how you’d describe it. He was very bony but better than nothing.

At Christmas he went out of his way to buy me a really nice model railway.

III. EXERCISES

A. Exercises for language understanding:

a. Paraphrase the underlined word in the following sentences:

1. His toys are carefully stowed away in a long box on top of the wardrobe, in case they would ever come in handy.
2. Mother said we couldn’t afford a new car now.
3. I put a chair under the window, and a stick out my head.
4. I attached no importance to my mother’s advice.
5. Father had an extraordinary capacity for amiable inattention.
6. I began to think that God wasn’t quite what he was cracked up to be.
7. He was taking up more than his fair share of money.
8. Father stared incredulously at his watch.
9. I was all against having to go out and beg like the old woman on Fridays.
10. The injustice of her behaviors got me down.
11. I had convicted her out of her own mouth of inconsistency and unreasonableness.
12. From that morning on my life was a hell, father and I were enemies, open and avowed.
13. Mother was very preoccupied with her work.
14. Sonny never cried except when there was something up with him.
15. Even at that age, I was magnanimous.

b. Give the corresponding adverbs from the following adjective – Explain their meanings:


c. Give as many words as you can which are formed from or connected with the followings, name their parts of speech:


d. Distinguish between the followings:

- immense – immeasurable
- manner – manners
- clutch – clench
- soothing – smooth
- function – faculty
- discord – noise
- significant – emphatic
- baby – infant – child

e. Give the abstract nouns connecting with the followings:

- image – corrupt – profound – obey – brilliant
- reveal – dignify – illustrate – oppose

f. Construct the sentences using the following expressions:
mysteriously – in a word – for instance – make out – by means of –
despite – judge by – keep something going – have a mind to (do…) –
break into – by and by – more or less – in some cases – in common.

**B. Exercises for literary appreciation:**

**a. Questions for comprehension:**

1. Why was the First World war the most peaceful period in the boy’s life? What change occurred when the war ended?
2. What was the particular early morning delight which climbing into his mother’s bed brought to the boy?
3. As seen through the son’s eyes, what kind of man was the father? On their walk together, how did he appear?
4. What incident caused the boy to remark that his life was a hell? What change did he notice in his father? How did he attempt to meet that change?
5. What incident brought the boy and his father together? Do you think that they finally understood each other?

**b. Answer the following questions:**

1. What is theme of this short story?
2. What is the plot of the story? How does the plot develop? Give an action line of the developing plot?
3. Analyze the main character? How are other characters described?
4. What problem does the author want to show us behind this story?
5. What effect does the first narrator’s point of view in this story bring us?
6. What is the tone, and atmosphere of the story?
7. What decides the author’s success in this story? Why?
8. What can you remark on:
   - the technique of writing
   - the role of theme, plot and characters in this story?

**IV. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION**

1. What main reasons make the parents usually angry and impatient with their children when they are at the age of three or four?
2. Discuss the English proverb: “Make hay while the sun shines”. Do you agree with the proverb? Why? and why not?

V. TOPICS FOR WRITING

1. Being a dear friend to the children or keeping the authority of a father or a mother, which way is better? Why?
2. Make a summary of the short – story in not more than 200 words.
UNIT FOUR

JANE EYRE

(From “Jane Eyre”
by Charlotte Bronte 1816 – 1855)

I. INTRODUCTION

Charlotte Bronte was the author of “Jane Eyre”, a very well-known novel in English literature. She was the daughter of the curate of Haworth, Yorkshire. Her mother died in 1821, leaving five daughters and a son. Four of the daughters were sent to a boarding school (of which Charlotte gives her recollections in “Jane Eyre”), an unfortunate step which hastened the death of Charlotte’s two elder sisters.

In 1831 – 1832 Charlotte Bronte stayed at another boarding school, from which she returned with a teacher’s license. She became subsequently a governess, and in 1842 went with her sister Emily to study the French language at a school in Brussels, where she was employed as a teacher. Back at Haworth in 1846, a volume of verse appeared entitled “Poems by Currer Ellis, and Acton Bell” (i.e. Charlotte, Emily and Ann Bronte) but it had not much sound on the readers. “The Professor”, Charlotte’s first novel, was refused by several publishers and did not appear until 1857, after her death. Her second novel, “Jane Eyre” was published in 1847 and achieved immediate success. Fresh sorrow now descended on the author. In 1848 Charlotte’s brother died, before the end of the same year tuberculosis brought the death of Emily, and shortly afterwards that of Anne. Charlotte alone, survived of the six children. Despite her grief, she went on writing. In 1849, she produced “Shirley”, and in 1853 “Villette”. She married in 1854, and died in 1855 at the age of 39. All her works appeared under the pen name of Currer Bell. Charlotte Bronte’s last work is “Emma”, a fragment of which was published in 1860, long after her death.
“Jane Eyre” was Charlotte Bronte’s most popular novel. Jane Eyre, a penniless orphan, became a governess at Thornfield Hall to a little girl, named Adele, who was the natural daughter of Mr. Rochester, a wealthy Aristocrat of grim aspect and sardonic temper. The governess’ morality, her modesty and her beauty attracted the attention of Mr. Rochester, who nearly lost all interest in women because of his unsuccessful love – affairs with some of them. He loved Jane, and on her part Jane also loved her master. However, she tried in vain to avoid an engagement, and then the marriage, which she considered unequal on her part. When at last she yielded to the sincere and true love of her beloved master, Jane Eyre discovered that Mr. Rochester had a wife, who was lunatic. The marriage was prevented, and Jane, in her hopelessness, fled away from Thornfield Hall.

This extract is from the part when Jane, after living far from her master for a long time, and being persuaded by St. John, her cousin, to be his wife and to go to India with him as a missionary’s wife, suddenly heard a strange voice of her master from the sky calling for her. And she decided to come back to Thornfield Hall to ask for the information of her beloved master.

II. TEXT

The daylight came. I rose at dawn. I busied myself for an hour or two with arranging my things in my chamber, drawers, and wardrobe, in the order wherein I should wish to leave them during a brief absence. Meantime, I heard St. John quit his room. He stopped at my door. I feared he would knock – no, but a slip of paper was passed under the door. I took it up, it bore these words.

“You left me too suddenly last night. Had you stayed but a little longer, you would have laid your hand on the Christian’s cross and the Angel’s crown. I shall expect your clear decision when I return this day fortnight. Meantime, watch and pray that you enter not into temptation: the spirit, I trust, is willing, but the flesh, I see, is weak I shall pray for you hourly – Yours, St. John”.

“My spirit”. I answered mentally, “is willing to do what is right; and my flesh, I hope, is strong enough to accomplish the will of Heaven, when once that will is distinctly known to me. At any rate, it shall be strong
enough to search – to inquire – to grope an outlet from this cloud of doubt, and find the open day of certainty”.

It was the first of June; yet the morning was over-cast and chilly: rain beat fast on my casement. I heard the front – door open, and St. John pass out. Looking through the window, I saw him traverse the garden. He took the way over the misty moors in the direction of Whitcross – there he would meet the coach.

“In a few more hours I shall succeed you in that track, cousin”, thought I. “I too have a coach to meet at Whitcross. I too have some to see and ask after in England, before I depart for ever”.

It wanted yet two hours of breakfast-time. I filled the interval in walking softly about my room, and pondering the visitation which had given my plans their present bent. I recalled that inward sensation I had experienced; for I could recall it, with all its unspeakable strangeness. I recalled the voice I had heard. Again I questioned whence it came, as vainly as before, it seemed in me – not in the external world: I asked “was it a mere nervous impression – a delusion?”. I could not conceive or believe it was more like an inspiration. The wondrous shock of feeling had come like the earthquake which shook the foundations of Paul and Silas’s prison; it had opened the doors of the soul’s cell and loosed its bands – it had wakened it out of its sleep, whence it sprang trembling, listening aghast; the vibrated thrice a cry on my startled ear, and in my quaking heart, and through my spirit, which neither feared nor shook, but exulted as if in joy over the success of one effort it had been privileged to make, independent of the cumbrous body.

“Ere many days”, I said, as I terminated my musings, “I will know something of him whose voice seemed last night to summon me. Letters have proved of no avail – person inquiry shall replace them.”

At breakfast I announced to Diana and Mary that I was going on a journey and should be absent at least for four days.

“Alone, Jane?”, they asked.
“Yes, it was to see or hear news of a friend about whom I had for some time been uneasy.”
They might have said, as I have no doubt, they thought, that they had believed me to be without any friends save them: for, indeed, I had often said so; but, with their true natural delicacy, they abstained from comment: except that Diana asked me if I was well enough to travel. I looked very pale, she observed. I replied that nothing ailed me save anxiety of mind, which I hope soon to alleviate.

It was easy to make my further arrangements; for I was troubled with no inquiries – no surmises. Having once explained to them that I could not now be explicit about my plans, they kindly and wisely acquiesced in the silence with which I pursued them, according to the privilege of free action I should, under similar circumstances, have accorded them.

I left Moor House at three o’ clock pm, and soon after four; I stood at the foot of the sign-post of Whitcross, waiting the arrival of the coach which was to take to distant Thornfield. Amidst the silence of those solitary roads and desert hills, I heard it approach from a great distance. It was the same vehicle whence, a year ago, I had alighted one summer evening on this very spot – how desolate, and hopeless, and objectless! It stopped as I beckoned. I entered – not now obliged to part with my whole fortune as the price of its accommodation. Once more on the road to Thornfield, I felt like the messenger – pigeon flying home.

It was a journey of six and thirty hours. I had set out from Whitcross on a Tuesday afternoon, and early on the succeeding Thursday morning the coach stopped to water the horses at a wayside inn, situated in the midst of a scenery whose green hedges and large fields and low pastoral hills (how mild of feature and verdant of hue compared with the stern North – Midland moors of Morton!) met my eyes like the lineaments of a once familiar face. Yes, I knew the character of this landscape. I was sure we were near my bourne.

“How far is Thornfield Hall from here?” I asked of the ostler.
“Just two miles, ma’am, across the fields”.

“My journey is closed”, I thought to myself. I got out the coach, gave a box I had into the ostler’s charge to be kept till I called for it, paid my fare, satisfied the coach man, and was going. The brightening day gleamed on the sign of the inn, and I read in gilt letters “The Rochester Arms”. My heart
leapt up: I was already on my master’s very land. It fell again: the thought struck it:

“Your master himself may be beyond the British Channel, for aught you know; and then, if he is at Thornfield Hall, towards which you hasten, who besides him is there? His lunatic wife; and you have nothing to do with him: you dare not speak to him or seek his presence. You have lost your labor; you had better go no farther”, urged the monitor. “Ask information of the people at the inn; they can give you all you seek, they can solve your doubts at once. Go up to that man, and inquire if Mr. Rochester be at home”.

The suggestion was sensible, and yet I could not force myself to act on it. I so dreaded a reply that would crush me with despair. To prolong doubt was to prolong hope. I might yet once more see the Hall under the ray of her star. There was the stile before me – the very fields through which I had hurried, blind, deaf, distracted, with a revengeful fury tracking and scourging me, on the morning I fled from Thornfield: ere I well knew what course I had resolved to take, I was in the midst of them. How fast I walked – How I ran sometimes! How I looked toward to catch the first view of the well-known woods! With that feelings I welcomed single trees I knew, and familiar glimpses of meadow and hill between them!

At last the woods rose; the rookery clustered dark; a cloud cawing broke the morning stillness. Strange delight inspired me: on I hastened. Another field crossed – a lane threaded – and there were the courtyard walls, the back offices, the house itself, the rookery still hid. “My first view of it shall be in front,” I determined, where its bold battlements will strike the eye nobly at once, and where I can single out my master’s very window”. Perhaps he will be standing at it – he rises early; perhaps he is now walking in the orchard, or on the pavement in front. Could I but see him! – but a moment! Surely, in that case, I should not be so mad as to run to him? I cannot tell – I am not certain. And if I did – what then? God bless him! What then? Who would be hurt by my once more tasting the life his glance can give me? I rave: perhaps at this moment he is watching the sun rise over the Pyrenees, or on the tideless sea of the south.”

I had coasted along the lower wall of the orchard – turned its angle: there was a gate just there, opening into the meadow, between two stone pillars, crowned by stone balls. From behind one pillar, I could sleep round quietly at the full front of the mansion. I advanced my heard with precaution,
desirous to ascertain if any bedroom window-blinds were yet drawn up: battlements, windows, long front – all from this sheltered station were at my command.

The crows sailing overhead perhaps watched me while I took this survey. I wonder what they thought: they must have considered I was very careful and timid at first, and that gradually I grew very bold and reckless. A peep, and then a long stare, and then a departure from my niche and a straying out into the meadow; and a sudden stop full in front of the great mansion, and a protracted, hardly gaze towards it. What affection of difference was this at first!” they might have demanded, “what stupid regardlessness now?”

Here’s an illustration, readers.

A lover finds his mistress asleep on a mossy bank; he wishes to catch a glimpse of her fair face without waking her. He steals softly over the grass, careful to make no sound; he pauses – fancying she has stirred: he withdraws, not for worlds should he be seen. All is still: he again advances; he bends above her, a light veil rests on her features: he lifts it, bends lower; now his eyes anticipate the vision of beauty – warm and blooming and lovely in rest. How hurried was their first glance! But how they fix! How he starts! How he suddenly and vehemently clasps in both arms the form he dared not, a moment since, touch with his finger! How he calls aloud a name, and drops his burden, and gazes on it wildly! He thus grasps and cries, and gazes, because he no longer fears to waken her by any sound he can utter – by any movement he can make. He thought his love slept sweetly: he finds she is stone-dead.

I looked with timorous joy towards a stately house: I saw a blackened ruin.

No need to cower behind a gate-post, indeed! – to peep up at chamber lattices, fearing life was astir behind them! No need to listen for doors opening – to fancy steps on the pavement or the gravel-walk the lawn, the grounds were trodden and waste: the portal yawned void. The front was, as I had once seen it in a dream, but a shell-like wall, very high and very fragile looking, perforated with paneless windows: no roof, no battlements, no chimneys – all had crashed in.
And there was the silence of death about it: the solitude of a lonesome wild. No wonder that letters addressed to people here had never received an answer: as well dispatch epistles to a vault in church-aisle. The grim blackness of the stones told by what fate the Hall had fallen — by conflagration: but how kindled? What story belonged to this disaster? What loss, besides mortar and marble and wood-work, had followed upon it? Had life been wrecked as well as property? If so, whose? Dreadful question: there was no one here to answer it — not even dumb sign, mute token.

In wandering round the shattered walls and through the devastated interior, I gathered evidence that the calamity was not of late occurrence. Winter snows, I thought, had drifted through that void arch; winter rains beaten in at those hollow casements; for, amidst the drenched piles of rubbish, spring had cherished vegetation: grass and weed grew here and there between the stones and fallen rafters. And oh! Where, meantime, was the hapless owner of this wreck? In what land? Under what auspices? My eye involuntarily wandered to the gray church tower near the gates, and I asked, “Is he with Damer de Rochester, sharing the shelter of his narrow marble house?”

Some answer must be hard to these questions. I could find it nowhere but at the inn, and thither, ere long, I returned. The host himself brought my breakfast into the parlour. I requested him to shut the door and sit down: I had some questions to ask him. But when he complied, I scarcely knew how to begin; such horror had I of the possible answers. And yet the spectacle of desolation I had just left, prepared me in a measure for a tale of misery. The host was a respectable-looking, middle-aged man.

“You know Thornfield Hall, of course?” I managed to say at last.
“Yes, ma’am; I lived there once.”
“Did you?” not in my time, I thought: you are a stranger to me.
“I was the late Mr. Rochester’s butler”, he added.

The late! I seemed to have received, with full force, the blow I had been trying to evade.

“The late!” I gasped. “Is he dead?”
“I mean the present gentleman, Mr. Edward’s father,” he explained. I breathed again: my blood resumed its flow. Fully assured by these words that Mr. Edward — my Mr. Rochester (God bless him, wherever he was!) —
was at least alive: was, in short, “the present gentleman”. (Gladdening words!), it seemed I could hear all that was to come – whatever the disclosures might be – with comparative tranquility. Since he was not in the grave, I could bear, I thought, to learn that he was at the Antipodes.

“Is Mr. Rochester living at Thornfield Hall now?” I asked, knowing, of course, what the answer would be, but yet desirous of deferring the direct question as to where he really was.

“No, ma’am – oh, no! No one is living there. I suppose you are a stranger in these parts, or you would have heard what happened last Autumn. Thornfield Hall is quite a ruin: it was burned down just about harvest time. A dreadful calamity! Such an immense quantity of valuable property destroyed: hardly any of the furniture could be saved. The fire broke out at dead of night; and before the engines arrived from Millcote, the building was one mass of flame. It was a terrible spectacle: I witnessed it myself.”

“At a dead of night!” I muttered. Yes, that was ever the hour of fatality at Thornfield. “Was it known how it originated?” I demanded.

“They guessed, ma’am: they guessed. Indeed, I should say it was ascertained beyond a doubt. You are not perhaps aware”, he continued, edging his chair a little nearer the table, and speaking low, “that there was a lady, a lunatic, kept in the house?”

“I have heard something of it.”

“She was kept in very close confinement, ma’am: people even for some years were not absolutely certain of her existence. No one saw her: they only knew by rumor that such a person was at the Hall; and who or what she was it was difficult to conjecture. They said Mr. Edward had brought her from abroad; and some believed she had been his mistress. But a queer thing happened a year since – a very queer thing.”

I feared now to hear my own story. I endeavoured to recall him to the main fact.

“And this lady?”
“This lady, ma’am,” he answered, “turned out to be Mr. Rochester’s wife! The discovery was brought about in the strangest way. There was a young lady, a governess at the Hall, that Mr. Rochester fell in”.

“But the fire?”, I suggested.

“I’m coming to that, ma’am – that Mr. Edward fell in love with. The servants say they never saw anybody so much in love as he was: he was after her continually. They used to watch him – servants will, you know, ma’am – and he set store on her past everything: for all, nobody but him thought her so very handsome. She was a little small thing, they say, almost like a child. I never saw her myself, but I’ve heard Leah, the housemaid, tell of her. Leah like her well enough. Mr. Rochester was about forty, and this governess not twenty; and, you see, when gentlemen of his age fall in love with girls, they are often like as if they were bewitched: well, he would marry her.”

“You shall tell me this part of the story another time,” I said, “but now I have a particular reason for wishing to hear all about the fire. Was it suspected that this lunatic, Mrs. Rochester, had any hand in it?"

“You’ve hit it, ma’am: it’s quite certain that it was her and nobody but her, that set it going. She had a woman to take care of her called Mrs. Poole – an able woman in her line, and very trustworthy, but for one fault – a fault common to deal of them nurses and matrons – she kept a private bottle of gin by her, and now and then took a drop over much. It is excusable, for she had a hard life of it. But still it was dangerous; for, when Mrs. Poole was fast asleep. After the gin and water, the mad lady, who was as cunning as a witch, would take the keys out of her pocket, let herself out of the chamber, and go roaming about the house, doing any wild mischief that came into her head. They say she had nearly burnt her husband in his bed once: but I don’t know about that. However, on this night, she set fire first to the hangings of the room next her own; and then she got down to a lower story, and made her way to the chamber that had been the governess’s – (she was likely as if she knew somehow how matters had gone on, and had a spite at her) – and she kindled the bed there; but there was nobody sleeping in it, fortunately. The governess had run away two months before; and for all Mr. Rochester sought her as if she had been the most precious thing he had in the world, he never could hear a word of her, and he grew savage – quite savage on his disappointment: he never was a wild man, but he got dangerous after he lost her. He would be alone, too. He sent Mrs. Fairfax, the housekeeper, away to
her friends at distance; but he did it handsomely, for he settled an annuity on her for life: and she deserved it – she was a very good woman. Miss Adele, a ward he had, was put to school. He broke off acquaintance with all the gentry, and shut himself up, like a hermit, at the Hall”.

“What! Did he not leave England?”

“Leave England? Bless you, no! he would not cross the door-stone of house; except at night, when he walked just like a ghost about the grounds and in the orchard as if he had lost his senses – which it is in my opinion he had; for a more spirited, bolder, keener gentleman than he was before that midge of a governess crossed him, you never saw, ma’am. He was not a man given to wine, or cards, or racing, as some are, and he was not so very handsome; but he had a courage and a will of his own, if ever man had. I knew him from a boy, you see: and for my part I have often wished that Miss Eyre had been sunk in the sea before she came to Thornfield Hall.”

“Then Mr. Rochester was at home when the fire broke out?”

“Yes, indeed was he; and he went up to the attics when all was burning above and below, and got the servants out of their beds, and helped them down himself – and went back to get his mad wife out of her cell. And then they called out to him that she was on the roof; where she was standing, waving her arms, above the battlements, and shouting out till they could hear her a mile off: I saw her and heard her with my own eyes. She was a big woman, and had long, black hair: we could see it streaming against the flames as she stood. I witnessed, and several more witnessed Mr. Rochester ascended through the skylight on to the roof: we heard him call “Bertha!” We saw him approach her, and then, ma’am, she yelled and gave a spring, and the next minute she lay smashed on the pavement.”

“Dead?”
“Dead? Aye, dead as the stones on which her brains and blood were scattered”.
“Good God!”
“You may well say so, ma’am: it was frightful!”

He shuddered.
“And afterwards?” I urged.
“Well, ma’am, after wards the house was burnt to the ground: there are only some bits of walls standing now.”
“Were any other lives lost?”
“No, perhaps it would have been better if there had.”
“What do you mean?”
“Poor Mr. Edward!” he ejaculated, “I little thought ever to have seen it! Some say it was a just judgment on him for keeping his first marriage secret, and wanting to take another wife while he had one living: but I pity him, for my part.”
“You said he was alive?” I exclaimed.
“Yes, yes: he is alive, but many think he had better be dead.”
“Why? How?” My blood was again running cold.
“Where is he?” I demanded. “Is he in England?”
“Aye – Aye – he’s in England; he can’t get out if England, I fancy – he’s a fixture now.”
What agony was this! And the man seemed resolved to protract it.
“He is stone-blind,” he said at last. “Yes – he is stone-blind – is Mr. Edward.”

I had dreaded worse. I had dreaded he was mad. I summoned strength to ask what had caused this calamity.

“It was all his own courage, and a body may say, his kindness, in a way, ma’am: he wouldn’t leave the house till every one else was out before him. As he came down the great staircase at last, after Mrs. Rochester had flung herself from the battlements, there was a great crash – all fell. He was taken out from under the ruin, alive, but sadly hurt: a beam had fallen in such a way as to protect him partly; but one eye was knocked out, and one hand so crushed that Mr. Carter, the surgeon, had to amputate it directly. The other eye inflamed: he lost the sight of that also. He is now helpless, indeed – blind and a cripple.”

“Where is he? Where does he now live?”
“At Ferndean, a manor-house on a farm he has, about thirty miles off: quite a desolate spot.”
“Who is with him?”
“Old John and his wife: he would have none else. He is quite broken down, they say.”
“Have you any sort of conveyance?”
“We have a chaise, ma’am, a very handsome chaise.”
“Let it be got ready instantly; and if your post-boy can drive me to Ferndean before dark this day, I’ll pay both you and him twice the hire you usually demand.”

III. EXERCISES

A. Exercises for language understanding

a. Paraphrase the underlined parts of the following sentences:

1. She felt strong enough to accomplish the will of Heaven.
2. It was the first of June, yet the morning was overcast and chilly.
3. It wanted yet two hours of breakfast time. I filled the interval in walking softly about my room, and pondering about the plan.
4. They had believed me to be without any friends save them, but with their true natural delicacy, they abstained from comment.
5. I replied that nothing ailed me save anxiety of mind, which I hope soon to alleviate.
6. I looked into the yard with precaution, desirous to ascertain if any bed – room window-blinds were yet drawn up.
7. In wandering round the shattered walls and through the devastated interior, I gathered evidence that the calamity was not of late occurrence.
8. The master settled an annuity on her for life.

b. Give synonyms of the following words:


c. Distinguish between the following:

1. Spectator – spectacle
2. Realm – country
3. Regret – remorse
4. Commodity – stock
5. Clasp – grasp
6. Desolate – solitary

d. Show that the following words can be used with two or more meanings:
B. Exercises for literary appreciation:

a. Questions for comprehension:

1. Where did Jane want to go that day? What did she receive from John?
2. What did Jane think about that morning when she was preparing to come back to Thornfield Hall?
3. How did her cousins, Mary and Diane, receive the news of her departure?
4. How did Jane feel when she took the same vehicle back to Thornfield Hall? And when she reached Mr. Rochester’s land?
5. What did Jane do when she came to the mansion at last? What did she see then?
6. How did Jane explain her thoughts and feelings before the dead silence of the burned house?
7. What did Jane do after seeing the ruined house?
8. How did the inn-keeper tell Jane about the accident?
9. How was Mr. Rochester after the fire?
10. What did Jane do after hearing all the story?

b. Questions for literary appreciation:

1. Tell the plot of the extract.
2. How was the character Jane described in the extract?
3. How was Mr. Rochester described through the inn-keeper’s words?
4. Try to find sentences which Jane described her different feelings about her old home on the way towards it and when she saw it with her own eyes. Analyze her feelings then.
5. Jane uses the comparison (or similes) in her autobiography. Can you find some examples of comparison from the text? Prove that the author (or Jane) uses the technique of symbolism in the text.
6. The author also uses the “casting back” technique (i.e. to look back at the past while speaking about the present) at several places of the text. What’s the effect of that technique?
7. Show the places in the text where the writer uses dramatic technique.
8. Notice the varieties of sentence-structures, of the different devices in the style of the author. What effects do they bring to the readers?
9. Recall the effect of the first narrator point of view in this novel and in “Quality” and “My Oedipus Complex”. Compare the autobiographical method of those stories with that of this one.

IV. TOPIC FOR DISCUSSION

After the marriage had been prevented in the church Jane fled away from Thornfield Hall in despair. She could not suffer that mortal blow. Discuss her action in that circumstance. Could Jane do otherwise? Why? And why not?

V. TOPICS FOR WRITING

1. Make a summary of the extract in not more than 200 words.
2. There is nothing to learn from the feudalist morality.
I. INTRODUCTION

The novel of Joseph Conrad and of Jane Austen might be said to be at the opposite poles of literary works. Conrad’s work also has practically nothing in common with that of Galsworthy or Thackeray. His stories are not of home, but of life in distant and lonely places and among foreign peoples. The do not take place in a simple setting of English countryside, but against as wild strange background of sea and swamp and jungle. His characters are not of any particular class or nationality, but of diverse types, colour, and race. His world is a real world, but to the majority of his readers it is unfamiliar, and one enters it in a spirit of exploration and discovery. His characters too, though vigorously human, are of different order from those of one’s everyday acquaintance, they have a greatness of action and outlook beyond the normal. But more important, the themes of which Conrad writes do not arise from the vaster surroundings, in which the characters move, as though the purpose of life were to search the soul to its depths.

Joseph Conrad was of Polish birth. Even in boyhood his ambition was to become a seaman. This was strange as at that time Poland had no coastline, and consequently no ships. Yet in spite of this, and on spite of the opposition of his family, he achieved his ambition, and eventually joined the British Merchant Service and learnt to speak English.

His literary work is remarkable in may ways. It was written in what was to him a foreign language, yet by resolute and painstaking effort he so mastered it that his style is acknowledged to be one of almost incomparable
beauty. Also he began to write comparatively late in life after amassing a store of experience through many years of travel and adventure, so that even his earliest stories bear the mark of mind trained and tried in hardship and suffering, and enriched and deepened by a wide knowledge of life and a wise understanding of men. Lastly, his stories have a majesty of movement and loftiness of vision which come only from the very highest genius. They are realistic in their truth to fact, and romantic in their background of strange places and vigorous adventure, but beyond this they have a quality of their own – a vastness, a splendor, a penetration – which to many critics sets them supreme in the world of prose fiction. One feels in reading Conrad’s books that he is presenting more than a powerful record of people and events, beneath and around the action one is conscious of the play of profound and moving forces which disturb yet uplift one with a sense of the essential mystery of life. His characters, despite their striking portraiture and individuality, are symbolic of all mankind, and their story, however personal it may be, is the whole human story, because they represent humanity at strife with the elemental influences of nature and the overruling compulsion of fate.

Some people are repelled by Conrad’s books because they seem dark and gloomy and usually end in tragedy. Yet this gives an entirely false impression of his work. Gloom there may be, but it is not the gloom of defeat, tragedy there certainly is, but it is not the gloom of despair. The fact is that Conrad’s characters are always engaged in a struggle, whether against themselves, one another, or forces beyond human control. His stories move in an atmosphere of unceasing strain and endeavour. The power opposed to them is often too great to withstand, and they are vanquished, yet this is only half the truth because even in defeat they are victorious. And they are victorious through what to Conrad seemed the supreme human virtue – loyalty. Conrad’s heroes have many human feelings, they are proud, stubborn, simple, credulous, romantic but they all have one feature in common – they are loyal, though they show their loyalty in different ways. It may be loyal, though they show their loyalty in different ways. It may be loyalty to a friend, to a ship, to a cause, or even to an idea. It often seems a foolish loyalty, founded on a illusion, leading them to danger or death, but it is the master motive of all their actions. By reason of it they may die, but they are not defeated, because they triumph in spirit. This indeed is the heart of Conrad’s message. Man may move in a world beyond his comprehension, the plaything of powers beyond his measurement or control, believing without reason, acting without understanding, deceived into creating for
himself some illusory goal yet drifting he knows not where, all his
endeavour, and all his achievement made futile at last in death, yet in spite
of this, by remaining steadfast in loyalty to some single conviction within
him, he attains to spiritual victory in the end.

Youth is a short narrative, largely autobiographical, of a young
sailor’s first voyage to the East. Everything went contrary on the journey.
The ship, the Judea, was old and leaky, and had to return to port to be
repaired. There were continual heartbreaking delays before she could be put
to sea again, and meanwhile the crew looked else where for another ship,
and a fresh crew – composed mostly of such scalawags that no respectable
captain would employ them – was engaged. The ship ran into furious storm
and began to leak again, so that for days on end the men had to pump to
keep her afloat. Then in the Indian Ocean a fire started. As the Judea was
carrying coal, the fire was difficult to put out, and now water had to be
pumped into her to prevent her from burning. The fire smouldered for many
days, and just when it seemed to have been got under, there was a violent
explosion. Eventually, another ship came to the rescue, and began to tow the
Judea on her way. It is from here that the following extract continues.

II. TEXT

At noon the steamer began to tow. She went ahead slim and high, and
what was left of the Judea floated at the end of seventy fathoms of tow –
rope – followed her swiftly like a cloud of smoke with mast – heads
protruding above. We went aloft to furl the sails. We coughed on the yards,
and were careful about the bunts. Do you see the lot of us there, putting a
neat furl on the sails of that ship, doomed to arrive nowhere? There was not
a man who didn’t think that at any moment the masts would collapse. From
aloft we could not see the ship for smoke, and they worked carefully,
passing the gaskets with even turns. “Harbor furl aloft there!”, cried Mahon
from below.

You understand this? I don’t think one of those men expected to get
down in the usual way. When we did, I heard them saying to one another
“Well, I thought we could come down overboard, in a lump, sticks and all.
Blame me if I didn’t!”. “That’s what I was thinking to myself”, would
answer wearily another battered and bandaged scarecrow. And mind, these
were men without the drilled-in habit of obedience. To an onlooker they
would be a lot of profane scalawags without a redeeming point. What made
them do it – what made them obey me when I was thinking consciously how fine it was that made them drop the bunt of the foresail twice to try and do it better? What? They had no professional reputation – no examples, no praise. It wasn’t a sense of duty; they all knew well enough how to laze and shirk – when they had a mind to it – and mostly they had. Was it the two pounds ten a month that sent them there? They didn’t think their pay half good enough. No, it was something in them, something inborn and subtle and everlasting. I don’t say positively that the crew of a French or German merchantman wouldn’t have done it, but I doubt whether it would have been done in the same way. There was a completeness in it, something secret – of that hidden something, that gift of good or evil that makes racial difference, that shapes the fate of nations.

It was that night at ten that for the first time since we had been fighting it, we saw the fire. The speed of the towing had fanned the smoldering destruction, blue gleam appeared, shining below the wreck of the deck. It waved in patches, it seemed to stir and creep like the light of glowworm. I saw it first, and told Mahon. “Then the game’s up”, he said, “We had better stop this towing, or she will burst out suddenly fore and aft before we can clear out”. We set up a shout, rang bells to attract their attention, they towed on. At last Mahon and I had to crawl forward and cut the rope with an axe. There was no time to cast it off. Red tongues could be seen licking the wilderness of splinters under our feet as we made our way back to the poop.

Of course they very soon found out in the steamer that the rope was gone. She gave a loud blast of her whistle, her lights were seen sweeping in a wide circle, she came up ranging close alongside, and stopped. We were all in a tight group on the poop looking at her. Every man had saved a little bundle or a bag. Suddenly a conical flame with a twisted top shot up forward ad threw upon the black sea a circle of light, with two vessels side by side and heaving gently in its center. Captain Beard had been sitting on the deck still and mute for hours, but now he rose slowly and advanced in front of us, to the mizzen shrouds. Captain Malls hailed: “Come along! Look sharp! I have mail – bags on board. I will take you and your boats to Singapore.”

“Thank you! No!” said our captain. “We must see the last of the ship.” “I can’t stand by any longer”, shouted the other, “Mails – you know.” “Ay! Ay! I’ll report you in Singapore… Goodbye!”
He waved his hand. Our men dropped their bundles quietly. The steamer moved ahead, and passing out of circle of light, vanished at once from our sight, dazzled by the fire which burned fiercely. And then I knew that I would see the East first as commander of a small boat. I thought it fine, and the loyalty to the old ship was fine. We should see the last of her. Oh, the glamour of youth! Oh, the fire of youth, more dazzling than the flames of the burning ship, throwing a magic light on the wide earth, leaping challengingly to the sky, presently to be quenched by time – more cruel, more pitiless, more bitter than the sea – and like flames of the burning ship surrounded by an impenetrable night.

The old man warned us in his gentle and inflexible way that it was part of our duty to save for the underwriters as much as we could of the ship’s gear. Accordingly we went to work aft, while she blazed forward to give us plenty of light. We dragged out a lot of rubbish. What didn’t we save? An old barometer fixed with an absurd quantity of screws nearly cost me my life, a sudden rush of smoke came upon me, and I just got away in time. There were various stores, bundles of canvas, coils of rope, the poop liked like a harbor bazaar, and the boats were cumbered to the gunwales. One would have thought the old man wanted to take as much as he could of his first command with him. He was very quiet, but off his balance evidently. Would you believe it, he wanted to take a length of un old cable and a cadge – anchor with him in the long – boat. We said: “Anyway, sir”, respectfully, and on the quiet let the things slip overboard. The heavy medicine – chest went that way, two bags of coffee, tins of paint – fancy, paint! A whole lot of things. Then I was ordered with two hands into the boats to get them ready for the time when it would be proper for us to leave the ship.

We put everything straight, set up the long-boat’s mast for our captain, who was to take charge of her, and I was not sorry to sit down for a moment. My face felt raw, every limb ached as if broken. I was aware of all my ribs, and would have sworn to a twist in the backbone. The boats, fast eastern, lay in a deep shadow, and all around I could see the circle of the sea lighted by the fire. A gigantic flame rose forward straight and clear. It flared fierce with noises like the rush of wings, with rumbles as of thunder. There were cracks, explosions, and from the cone of flame the sparks flow upwards, as man is born to trouble, to leaky ships, and to ships that burn.
What troubled me was that the ship, lying broadside to the swell and to such wind as there was – a mere breath – the boats would not keep astern where they were safe, but persisted, in a pigheaded way, in getting under the counter and then swinging alongside. They were knocking about dangerously and coming near the flame, while the ship rolled on them and of course, there was the danger of the mast going over the side at any moment. I and my two boat-keepers kept them off as best as we could with bars and boat-hooks, but to be constantly at it became enraging, since there was no reason why we should not leave at once. We could not see those on board, nor could we imagine what caused the delay. The boat-keepers were swearing feebly, and I had not only my share of the work, but also had to keep at two men who showed a constant inclination to lay themselves down and let things slide.

At last I hailed, “On deck there” and someone looked over “We’re ready here”, I said. The head vanished, and very soon appeared again. The captain said: “All right sir, and to keep the boats well clear of the ship.”

Half an hour passed. Suddenly there was a frightful turmoil, rattle, clanking of chain, hiss of water, and millions of sparks flow up into the swaying column of smoke that stood leaning slightly above the ship. The cat-heads had burned way, and the two red-hot anchors had gone to the bottom, tearing out after them two hundred fathoms of red-hot chain. The ship trembled, the mass of flame swayed as if ready to collapse, and the fore gallant mast fell. It darted down like an arrow of fire, shot under, and instantly leaping up within an oar’s length of the boats, then floated quietly, very black on the glowing sea. I hailed the deck again, after sometime a man in an unexpectedly cheerful but also muffled tone, as though he had been trying to speak with his mouth shut, informed me “Coming directly, sir” and vanished. For a long time I heard nothing but the crackle and roar of the fire. There were also whistling sounds. The boats jumped, heaved at the painters, ran at one another playfully, knocked their sides together, or swung in a bunch against the ship’s side. I couldn’t stand it any longer, and climbing up a rope, scrambled aboard over the stern.

It was as bright as day. Coming up like this, the sheet of fire facing me was a terrifying sight, and the heat seemed hardly bearable at first. On a sofa cushion dragged out of the cabin, Captain Beard, his legs drawn up and one arm under his head, slept with the light playing on him. Do you know
what the rest were busy about? They were sitting on deck right aft, round an open case, eating bread and cheese and drinking bottled beer.

On the background of flame twisting in fierce tongues above their heads, they seemed at home like salamanders, and looked like a band of desperate pirates. The fire sparkled in the whites of their eyes, gleamed on patches of white skin seen through the torn shirts. Each had the marks as of a battle about him-bandaged heads, tied-up arms, a strip of dirty rag round a knee and each man had a bottle between his legs and a lump of cheese in his hand. Mahon got up, with his handsome head and ruffled hair, his hooked nose, his long white beard, and with an uncorked bottle in his hand, he resembled one of those desperate sea-robbers of old making merry amidst violence and disaster. “The last meal on board” he explained solemnly. “We had nothing to eat all day, and it was no use leaving all this.” He flourished the bottle and indicated the sleeping captain “He said he couldn’t swallow anything, so I got him to lie down”, he went on, “and as I stared, I don’t know whether you are aware, young fellow, the man had no sleep in the boats.” “There will be no boats by and by if you fool about much longer”, I said indignantly. I walked up to the captain and shook him by the shoulder. At last he opened his eyes, but did not move.

“Time to leave her, sir”, I said quietly.

He got up painfully, looked at the flames, at the sea sparkling round the ship, and black, black as ink father away. He looked at the stars shining dim through a thin veil of smoke in a sky as black as the pit.

“Youngest first!” he said.

And the ordinary seaman, wiping off his mouth with the back of his hand, got up, scrambled over the rail, and vanished. Others followed. One, on the point of going over, stopped short to drain his bottle, and with a great swing of his arm flung it at the fire, “Take this!” he cried.

The captain lingered disconsolately, and we left hi to meditate alone for a while with his first command. Then I went up again and brought him away at last. It was time, the ironwork on the poop was hot to the touch.

Then the painter of the long-boat was cut, and the three boats, tied together, drifted clear off the ship. It was just sixteen hours after the
explosion when we abandoned her. Mahon had charge of the second boat, and I had the smallest – the fourteen-foot thing, the long-boat would have taken the lot of us, but the captain said we must save as much property as we could for the underwriters and so I got my first command. I had two men with me, a bag of biscuits, a few tins of meat, and a cask of water, I was ordered to keep close to the long-boat, that in case of bad weather we might be taken into her.

And do you know what I thought? I thought I would part company as soon as I could. I wanted to have my first command all to myself. I wasn’t going to sail in squadron if there were a chance for independent cruising. I would make land by myself. I would beat the other boats. Youth! All youth! The silly, charming, beautiful youth.

But we did not make a start at once. We must see the last of the ship. And so the boats drifted about that night, heaving and setting on the swell. The men dozed, waked, sighed, groaned. I looked at the burning ship.

Between the darkness of earth and heaven she was burning fiercely upon a disc of water glittering and sinister. A high clear flame, an immense and lonely flame, ascended from the ocean and from its summit the black smoke poured continuously at the sky. She burned furiously, mournful and imposing like a funeral pile kindled in the night, surrounded by the sea, watched over by the stars. A magnificent death had come like a grace, like a gift, like a reward to that old ship at the end of her laborious days. The surrender of her weary ghost to the keeping of stars and sea was stirring like the sight of a glorious triumph. The masts fell just before daybreak, and for a moment there was a burst and turmoil of sparks that seemed to fill the sky with flying fire. The night was patient and watchful, the vast night lying silent upon the sea. At day light she was only a charred shell, floating still under a cloud of smoke and bearing a glowing mass of coal within.

Then the oars were got out, and boats forming in a line moved round her remains as if in procession – the long boat leading. As we pulled across her stern, a slim dart of fire shot out viciously at us, and suddenly she went down, head first, in a great hiss of steam. The unconsumed stern was the last to sink, but the paint had gone, had cracked, had flaked off, and there were no letters, there was no word, no stubborn device that was like her soul, to flash at the rising sun her creed and her name.
We made our way north. A breeze sprang up, and about noon all the boats came together for the last time. I had no mast or sail in mine, but I made a mast out of a spare oar and set up a boat-awning for a sail, with a boat hook for a yard. She was certainly over-masted, but I had the satisfaction of knowing that with the wind aft I could beat the other two. I had to wait for them. Then we all had a look at the captain’s map, and after a sociable meal of hard bread and water, got our last instructions. These were simple: steer north and keep together as much as possible. “Be careful with that jury-rig, Marlow”, said the captain, and Mahon, as I sailed proudly past his boat, wrinkled his curved nose and hailed, “You will sail that ship of yours under water, if you don’t look out, young fellow.” He was a malicious old man and may the deep sea where he sleeps now rock him gently, rock him tenderly to the end of time.

Before sunset a thick rain – squall passed over the two boats which were far astern, and that was the last I saw of them for a time. Next day I sat steering my cockle-shell – my first command with nothing but water and sky around me. I did sight in the afternoon the upper sails of a ship far away, but said nothing, and my men did not notice her. You see, I was afraid she might be homeward bound, and I have no mind to turn back from the gateways of the East. I was steering for Java – another blessed name – like Bangkok, you know I steered many days.

I need not tell you what it is to be knocking about in an open boat. I remember nights and days of calm when we pulled, we pulled and the boat seemed to stand still, as if bewitched within the circle of the sea horizon. I remember the heat, the deluge of rain-squalls that kept us bailing for dear life (but filled our water – cask), and I remember sixteen hours on end with a mouth dry as ashes and a steering oar over the stern to keep my first command head onto a breaking sea. I did not know how good a man I was still then. I remember the drawn faces, the disconsolate figures of my two men, and I remember my youth and the feeling that will never come back any more, the feeling that I could last for ever, outlast the sea, the earth and all men, the deceitful feeling that lures us on to joys, to perils, to love, to vain effort, to death, the triumphant conviction of strength, the heat of life in the handful of dust, the glow in the heart that with every year grows cold, grows small, and fades – and fades too soon, too soon – before life itself.

And this is how I see the East, I have seen its secret places and have looked into its very soul but now I see it always from a small boat, a high outline of
mountains, blue and afar in the morning, like faint mist at noon, a jagged wall of purple at sunset. I have the feel of the oar in my hand, the vision of a scorching blue sea in my eyes. And I see a bay, a wide bay, smooth as glass and polished like ice, shimmering in the dark, a red light burns far off upon the gloom of the land, and the night is soft and warm. We drag at the oars with arching arms, and suddenly a puff of wind, a puff of faint and tepid and laden with strange odors of blossom, come out of the still night – the first sight of the East on my face. That I can never forget. It was impalpable and enslaving, like a charm, like a whispered promise of mysterious delight.

We have been pulling thus finishing spell for eleven hours, two pulled, and he whose turn is to rest sat at the tiller. We had made out the red light in that bay and steered for it, guessing it must mark some small boating port. We passed two vessels, outlandish and high sterned, sleeping at anchor, and approaching the light, now very dim, ran the boast’s nose against the end of a protruding wharf. We were blind with fatigue. My men dropped the oars and fell off the benches as if dead. I made fast to a post. A current rippled softly. The scented darkness of the shore was grouped into vast shadows, a density of vegetation, probably mute and fantastic shapes. And at their foot, the semicircle of beach gleamed faintly, like an illusion. There was not a light, silent like death, dark like a grave.

III. EXERCISES

A. Exercises for language understanding:

a. Rewrite the underlined parts of the following sentences using other words or expressions:

1. The crew of the ship was mostly “scalawags” that no respectable captain would employ them.
2. The fire smouldered for many days, inside the coal.
3. These were the men without the drilled-in habit of obedience.
4. The people’s memory about him was everlasting.
5. The ship would burst out suddenly fore and aft before they can clear out.
6. He told us that it was part of our duty to save for the underwriters as much we could of the ship’s gear.
7. The captain was very quiet, but off his balance, evidently.
8. We let some heavy things slip overboard on the quiet.
9 I was ordered with two hands into the boats to get them ready for the time when it would be proper for us to leave the ship.
10 I had not only my share of the work, but also had to keep at two men who showed a constant inclination to lay themselves down and let things slide.
11 It was just sixteen hours after the explosion when we were abandoned the ship.
12 We had struggled so hard with the oars for our dear life.

b. What words are formed from, or connected with the following? Name their parts of speech:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compare</th>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Convince</th>
<th>Redeem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Major</td>
<td>Lofty</td>
<td>Element</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Element</td>
<td>Illusion</td>
<td>Respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal</td>
<td>Penetrate</td>
<td>Essence</td>
<td>Compel</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Comprehend</td>
<td>Leak</td>
<td>Disclose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flexible</td>
<td>Aware</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derive</td>
<td>Critic</td>
<td>Repel</td>
<td>Futile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Race</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

c. Distinguish between the followings:

1. Vessel, merchantman, smack
2. Coast, beach, shore
3. Bandage, band, patch
4. Bundle, parcel, package
5. Cone, overall, semicircle, spiral, coil
6. Barometer, clock
7. Bazaar, bench, chair
8. Cushion, pillow
9. Cork, lid, coverlet
10.Squadron, fleet
11.Squall, deluge, hail
12.Nostril, nose

d. Construct sentences using the following words or expression:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. at opposite poles</th>
<th>11.all right</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. despite</td>
<td>12.stand (endure)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. in common</td>
<td>13.to speak of</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
e. What qualities should characterize the following people, and what work do they do?
1. Monarch, prime, minister, ambassador, statesman, Member of Parliament.
2. Captain, guardian, doctor, nurse, host, guide.
3. Judge, juryman, counsel, solicitor, barrister, prosecutor, witness, jailer.
4. Historian, scientist, specialist.
5. novelist, essayist, poet, critic, editor.

**B. Exercises for literary appreciation:**

**a. Questions for comprehension:**
1. Why was it strange that the men furled the sail carefully?
2. How were the characteristics of the crew on board stated by the writer?
3. What, according to the writer, was the reason for the crew’s obedience in the situation?
4. What did the sailors when they saw the fire clearly for the first time?
5. What did the writer think of the captain’s behavior in refusing to leave the ship?
6. How did the men receive the decision?
7. Why did the captain wish to save as much of the ship’s as possible?
8. What was the danger for the boats as they drifted alongside with the ship?
   Why did the captain and the crew want to linger there?
9. How did the men behave while they were waiting for the other to abandon the ship?
10. How did the writer feel as he watched the “Judea”?
11. Why did he separate from the other two boats?
12. How did he reach the East? What difficulties did he meet with while steering the small boat to the end?

**b. Questions for literary appreciation:**
1. What is the theme of this extract?
2. What is the plot of the extract?
3. What about the characters? What device do you think take the most important role in writing this story? How do they work together to bring about the total effect of the story?
4. What is the main contrast in the appearance and the quality of the crew on board and their behavior during the accident?
5. Can you find passages to prove the heroic deeds of the sailors in this extract?
6. How was the captain of the ship described? What do you think of that man?
7. What are the tone and the atmosphere of the extract? Especially in the descriptions of the ship when burning and sinking?
8. What are the techniques of writing that you can find in this extract? How do they serve to express the author’s idea and to convey the total meaning of the extract?
9. What is your first impression about the men and their life as reflected in this story?
10. Compare the old man in “Hope” by John Galsworthy and the captain in this extract as symbols of humanity.
11. What do you think is Joseph Conrad’s feeling and attitude towards the sea and the life of the seamen?
12. What can you say about the style of this writer? (Especially in language, images, and the power of description?)

IV. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. People often think of sea man’s life as something desirable, lofty and respectable. What do you think about this?
2. What are the most important qualities of a “MAN” according to you?

V. TOPICS FOR WRITING EXERCISES

1. Summarize the extract in no more than 200 words.
2. Courage is one of the most important and the loftiest qualities in human beings.

I. INTRODUCTION
Charles Dickens (1812-1870) was born at Portsmouth where his father served as a clerk in the Navy Bay Office. Dickens’ education was badly neglected due to his family poverty. Nevertheless, he had a craze for reading since his early days. He read with eagerness the novels of Defoe, Fielding Goldsmith and Swift and absorbed their writings and thinking.

When the boy was five years old, his father was dismissed. As a result, the family moved to a poor suburbs of London, things went from bad to worse. His father was arrested and imprisoned for debt. At this serious incident in the family’s fortunes, Dickens, now eleven years old, had to earn his living in a blacking factory where he was employed to stick labels on bottles.

This painful experiences through his laboring days and his close contacts with people in society provided Dickens with much valuable material and knowledge of life for writing his novels of the leading class in the world.

Dickens taught himself and became a Parliamentary reporter at nineteen. Soon afterwards he began to contribute articles to several magazines though he was very young, the world soon recognized in him a new talent, a novelist of the first rank of the world. His first work was “Sketches by Boz (1834), then came “The Pickwick Papers” which establish his fame. Then came rapid succession until his death: “Oliver Twist” (1838), “Nicholas Nickleby” (1839), “Old Curiosity Shop” (1840), “The Little Dorrit” (1852-1857), “Christmas Carols” (1843), “David Coperfield” (1849-1850) and others.

Dickens wrote about the poorest, the most unprivileged sections of the population; he looked into the darkest corners of the large cities and there found the victims of the capitalism.

Thus Dickens’ immortal works became an accusation of the bourgeois system as a whole. Though he did not believe in revolutionary actions, he was on the side of the people with all his heart. He wanted what people wanted.

Not yet thirty, Dickens was the most popular writer in England. In 1842 he and his wife paid a visit to the United States. They spent nearly five months
traveling from town to town and everywhere. Dickens received a very hearty welcome.

Like most Europeans, Dickens had idealized American democracy. He became extremely disappointed when he heard of the false elections and he saw the awful greed of money-makers. The discrimination against foreigners and immigrants and worst of all, Negro slavery. He expressed his opinions of what he saw in his “American Notes”, where he condemned these crimes with his usual humorous exaggeration of fact. But the book roused a bitter anger in America,

The years between 1844 and 1848 he traveled in Italy, France, and Switzerland because he found it easier to concentrate on English problems from afar.

When back in England, Dickens organized an amateur theatrical company and for the next five years, they put on performances for charity, giving all money they collected to the poor. Though he engaged in those activities, he continued writing without a break. His genius was at its height; his best novel was written at this time. With great energy, he began to give dramatic reading from his novels in Britain and then in the United States. His readings were so beautiful that thousands of people came to here their warm-hearted beloved writer. But this also undermined his health badly. He died suddenly on June 9, 1870.

Dickens was burnt in Westminster Abbey.

b. Some words about “David Copperfield” and the extract

“David Copperfield” is to some extent autobiographical. In the early part of the book, particularly which describes David’s boyhood. Dickens draws very largely on his own experiences and sufferings as a child.

David was born after his father had died. His mother married again but while David was still a boy she also died. David’s stepfather had no love for him and instead of educating him properly; he took him from school and sent him to work in a London factory. David found life so hard and miserable that he decided to run away. His only relative was an aunt. Her name was Miss Betsey Trotwood and she lived in Dover, some seventy miles from London. David knew no more of her than what his mother had told him about her. From his mother’s account, David pictured her as a sharp-
tongued, strong-willed woman, very decisive in her opinions and very masterful in her ways, in fact by no means the kind of woman to win the confidence of a young boy in need of comfort and protection. Indeed she had a particular quarrel with David himself, because before his birth, she had determined that the child was to be a girl and was to take her own name as Betsey Trotwood; consequently when the child proved to be a boy she was very indignant and chose to treat matter as a personal offence. Yet there was one other thing that David remembered from his mother’s account of Miss Trotwood. In spite of her sternness and severity, she had once shown a momentary gentleness, just enough to give evidence of a kind and affectionate nature hidden beneath her forbidding manner. With this in mind, David decided to risk his aunt’s displeasure and run away to her to beg her protection. But a cart-driver robbed all his belongings and the half-guinea he had, and David had to travel with only his bare hands.

The following passage describes David’s adventure on the road to Dover. But it must be remembered that Dickens is writing of England as its was a hundred years ago.

Dickens’ style was very free and easy, his aim being to tell his story in the following conversational manner. He does not shaped his phrases with care like other authors. Indeed, his sentences are very often carelessly joined together but his words and images are extremely expressive and picturesque, so that his writing is always full of force and life.

II. TEXT

CHAPTER 13

For anything I know, I may have had some wild idea of running all the way to Dover, when I gave up the pursuit of the young man with the donkey-cart, and started for Greenwich. My scattered senses were soon collected as to that point, if I had; for I came to a stop in the Kent Road, at a terrace with a piece of water before it, and a great foolish image in the middle, blowing a dry shell. Here I sat down on a doorstep, quite spent and exhausted with the efforts I had already made, and with hardly breath enough to cry for the loss of my box and half-guinea.

It was by this time dark; I heard the clocks strike ten, as I sat resting. But it was a summer night, fortunately, and fine weather. When I had recovered
my breath, and had got rid of a stifling sensation in my throat, I rose up and went on. In the midst of my distress, I had no notion of going back. I doubt if I should have had any, though there had been a Swiss snow-drift in the Kent Road.

But my standing possessed of only three-halfpence in the world (and I am sure I wonder how they came to be left in my pocket on a Saturday night!) troubled me none the less because I went on. I began to picture to myself, as a scrap of newspaper intelligence, my being found dead in a day or two, under some hedge; and I trudged on miserably, though as fast as I could, until I happened to pass a little shop, where it was written up that ladies’ and gentlemen’s wardrobes were bought, and that the best price was given for rags, bones, and kitchen-stuff. The master of this shop was sitting at the door in his shirt-sleeves, smoking; and as there were a great many coats and pairs of trousers dangling from the low ceiling, and only two feeble candles burning inside to show what they were, I fancied that he looked like a man of a revengeful disposition, who had hung all his enemies, and was enjoying himself.

My late experiences with Mr. and Mrs. Micawber suggested to me that here might be a means of keeping off the wolf for a little while. I went up the next by-street, took off my waistcoat, rolled it neatly under my arm, and came back to the shop door. ‘If you please, sir,’ I said, ‘I am to sell this for a fair price.’

Mr. Dolloby—Dolloby was the name over the shop door, at least—took the waistcoat, stood his pipe on its head, against the door-post, went into the shop, followed by me, snuffed the two candles with his fingers, spread the waistcoat on the counter, and looked at it there, held it up against the light, and looked at it there, and ultimately said:

‘What do you call a price, now, for this here little weskit?’
‘Oh! You know best, sir,’ I returned modestly.
‘I can’t be buyer and seller too,’ said Mr. Dolloby. ‘Put a price on this here little weskit.’
‘Would eighteen pence be?’—I hinted, after some hesitation.

Mr. Dolloby rolled it up again, and gave it me back. ‘I should rob my family,’ he said, ‘if I was to offer nine pence for it.’
This was a disagreeable way of putting the business; because it imposed upon me, a perfect stranger, the unpleasantness of asking Mr. Dolloby to rob his family on my account. My circumstances being so very pressing, however, I said I would take nine pence for it, if he pleased. Mr. Dolloby, not without some grumbling, gave nine pence. I wished him good night, and walked out of the shop the richer by that sum, and the poorer by a waistcoat. But when I buttoned my jacket that was not much.

Indeed, I foresaw pretty clearly that my jacket would go next, and that I should have to make the best of my way to Dover in a shirt and a pair of trousers, and might deem myself lucky if I got there even in that trim. But my mind did not run so much on this as might be supposed. Beyond a general impression of the distance before me, and of the young man with the donkey-cart having used me cruelly, I think I had no very urgent sense of my difficulties when I once again set off with my nine pence in my pocket.

A plan had occurred to me for passing the night, which I was going to carry into execution. This was, to lie behind the wall at the back of my old school, in a corner where there used to be a haystack. I imagined it would be a kind of company to have the boys, and the bedroom where I used to tell the stories, so near me: although the boys would know nothing of my being there, and the bedroom would yield me no shelter.

I had had a hard day’s work, and was pretty well jaded when I came climbing out, at last, upon the level of Black heath. It cost me some trouble to find out Salem House; but I found it, and I found a haystack in the corner, and I lay down by it; having first walked round the wall, and looked up at the windows, and seen that all was dark and silent within. Never shall I forget the lonely sensation of first lying down, without a roof above my head!

Sleep came upon me as it came on many other outcasts, against whom house-doors were locked, and house-dogs barked, that night—and I dreamed of lying on my old school-bed, talking to the boys in my room; and found myself sitting upright, with Steerforth’s name upon my lips, looking wildly at the stars that were glistening and glimmering above me. When I remembered where I was at that untimely hour, a feeling stole upon me that made me get up, afraid of I don’t know what, and walk about. But the fainter glimmering of the stars, and the pale light in the sky where the day was coming, reassured me: and my eyes being very heavy, I lay down again and
slept—though with a knowledge in my sleep that it was cold—until the warm beams of the sun, and the ringing of the getting-up bell at Salem House, awoke me. If I could have hoped that Steerforth was there, I would have lurked about until he came out alone; but I knew he must have left long since. Traddles still remained, perhaps, but it was very doubtful; and I had not sufficient confidence in his discretion or good luck, however strong my reliance was on his good nature, to wish to trust him with my situation. So I crept away from the wall as Mr. Creakle’s boys were getting up, and struck into the long dusty track which I had first known to be the Dover Road when I was one of them, and when I little expected that any eyes would ever see me the wayfarer I was now, upon it.

What a different Sunday morning from the old Sunday morning at Yarmouth! In due time I heard the church-bells ringing, as I plodded on; and I met people who were going to church; and I passed a church or two where the congregation were inside, and the sound of singing came out into the sunshine, while the beadle sat and cooled himself in the shade of the porch, or stood beneath the yew-tree, with his hand to his forehead, glowering at me going by. But the peace and rest of the old Sunday morning were on everything, except me. That was the difference. I felt quite wicked in my dirt and dust, with my tangled hair. But for the quiet picture I had conjured up, of my mother in her youth and beauty, weeping by the fire, and my aunt relenting to her, I hardly think I should have had the courage to go on until next day. But it always went before me, and I followed.

I got, that Sunday, through three-and-twenty miles on the straight road, though not very easily, for I was new to that kind of toil. I see myself, as evening closes in, coming over the bridge at Rochester, footsore and tired, and eating bread that I had bought for supper. One or two little houses, with the notice, ‘Lodgings for Travelers’, hanging out, had tempted me; but I was afraid of spending the few pence I had, and was even more afraid of the vicious looks of the trampers I had met or overtaken. I sought no shelter, therefore, but the sky; and toiling into Chatham,—which, in that night’s aspect, is a mere dream of chalk, and drawbridges, and mastless ships in a muddy river, roofed like Noah’s arks,—crept, at last, upon a sort of grass-grown battery overhanging a lane, where a sentry was walking to and fro. Here I lay down, near a cannon; and, happy in the society of the sentry’s footsteps, though he knew no more of my being above him than the boys at Salem House had known of my lying by the wall, slept soundly until morning.
Very stiff and sore of foot I was in the morning, and quite dazed by the
beating of drums and marching of troops, which seemed to hem me in on
every side when I went down towards the long narrow street. Feeling that I
could go but a very little way that day, if I were to reserve any strength for
getting to my journey’s end, I resolved to make the sale of my jacket its
principal business. Accordingly, I took the jacket off, that I might learn to do
without it; and carrying it under my arm, began a tour of inspection of the
various slop-shops.

It was a likely place to sell a jacket in; for the dealers in secondhand clothes
were numerous, and were, generally speaking, on the look-out for customers
at their shop doors. But as most of them had, hanging up among their stock,
an officer’s coat or two, epaulettes and all, I was rendered timid by the
costly nature of their dealings, and walked about for a long time without
offering my merchandise to anyone.

This modesty of mine directed my attention to the marine-store shops, and
such shops as Mr. Dolloby’s, in preference to the regular dealers. At last I
found one that I thought looked promising, at the corner of a dirty lane,
ending in an enclosure full of stinging-nettles, against the palings of which
some second-hand sailors’ clothes, that seemed to have overflowed the shop,
were fluttering among some cots, and rusty guns, and oilskin hats, and
certain trays full of so many old rusty keys of so many sizes that they
seemed various enough to open all the doors in the world.

Into this shop, which was low and small, and which was darkened rather
than lighted by a little window, overhung with clothes, and was descended
into by some steps, I went with a palpitating heart; which was not relieved
when an ugly old man, with the lower part of his face all covered with a
stubbly grey beard, rushed out of a dirty den behind it, and seized me by the
hair of my head. He was a dreadful old man to look at, in a filthy flannel
waistcoat, and smelling terribly of rum. His bedstead, covered with a
tumbled and ragged piece of patchwork, was in the den he had come from,
where another little window showed a prospect of more stinging-nettles, and
a lame donkey.

‘Oh, what do you want?’ grinned this old man, in a fierce, monotonous
whine. ‘Oh, my eyes and limbs, what do you want? Oh, my lungs and liver,
what do you want? Oh, goroo, goroo!’
I was so much dismayed by these words, and particularly by the repetition of the last unknown one, which was a kind of rattle in his throat, that I could make no answer; hereupon the old man, still holding me by the hair, repeated: ‘Oh, what do you want? Oh, my eyes and limbs, what do you want? Oh, my lungs and liver, what do you want? Oh, goroo!’—which he screwed out of himself, with an energy that made his eyes start in his head.

‘I wanted to know,’ I said, trembling, ‘if you would buy a jacket.’
‘Oh, let’s see the jacket!’ cried the old man. ‘Oh, my heart on fire, show the jacket to us! Oh, my eyes and limbs bring the jacket out!’

With that he took his trembling hands, which were like the claws of a great bird, out of my hair; and put on a pair of spectacles, not at all ornamental to his inflamed eyes.

‘Oh, how much for the jacket?’ cried the old man, after examining it. ‘Oh—goroo!—how much for the jacket?’
‘Half-a-crown,’ I answered, recovering myself.
‘Oh, my lungs and liver’ cried the old man, ‘no! Oh, my eyes, no! Oh, my limbs, no! Eighteenpence. Goroo!’

Every time he uttered this ejaculation, his eyes seemed to be in danger of starting out; and every sentence he spoke, he delivered in a sort of tune, always exactly the same, and more like a gust of wind, which begins low, mounts up high, and falls again, than any other comparison I can find for it.

‘Well,’ said I, glad to have closed the bargain, ‘I’ll take eighteen pence.’
‘Oh, my liver!’ cried the old man, throwing the jacket on a shelf. ‘Get out of the shop! Oh, my lungs, get out of the shop! Oh, my eyes and limbs—goroo!—don’t ask for money; make it an exchange.’

I never was so frightened in my life, before or since; but I told him humbly that I wanted money, and that nothing else was of any use to me, but that I would wait for it, as he desired, outside, and had no wish to hurry him. So I went outside, and sat down in the shade in a corner. And I sat there so many hours, that the shade became sunlight, and the sunlight became shade again, and still I sat there waiting for the money.

There never was such another drunken madman in that line of business, I hope. That he was well known in the neighborhood, and enjoyed the
reputation of having sold himself to the devil, I soon understood from the
visits he received from the boys, who continually came skirmishing about
the shop, shouting that legend, and calling to him to bring out his gold. ‘You
ain’t poor, you know, Charley, as you pretend. Bring out your gold. Bring
out some of the gold you sold yourself to the devil for. Come! It’s in the
lining of the mattress, Charley. Rip it open and let’s have some!’ This, and
many offers to lend him a knife for the purpose, exasperated him to such a
degree, that the whole day was a succession of rushes on his part, and flights
on the part of the boys. Sometimes in his rage he would take me for one of
them, and come at me, mouthing as if he were going to tear me in pieces;
then, remembering me, just in time, would dive into the shop, and lie upon
his bed, as I thought from the sound of his voice, yelling in a frantic way, to
his own windy tune, the ‘Death of Nelson’; with an Oh! Before every line,
and innumerable Goroos interspersed. As if this were not bad enough for
me, the boys, connecting me with the establishment, on account of the
patience and perseverance with which I sat outside, half-dressed, pelted me,
and used me very ill all day.

He made many attempts to induce me to consent to an exchange; at one time
coming out with a fishing-rod, at another with a fiddle, at another with a
cocked hat, at another with a flute. But I resisted all these overtures, and sat
there in desperation; each time asking him, with tears in my eyes, for my
money or my jacket. At last he began to pay me in halfpence at a time; and
was full two hours getting by easy stages to a shilling.

‘Oh, my eyes and limbs!’ he then cried, peeping hideously out of the shop,
after a long pause, ‘will you go for two pence more?’

‘I can’t,’ I said; ‘I shall be starved.’
‘Oh, my lungs and liver, will you go for three pence?’
‘I would go for nothing, if I could,’ I said, ‘but I want the money badly.’
‘Oh, go-roo!’ (it is really impossible to express how he twisted this
ejaculation out of himself, as he peeped round the door-post at me, showing
nothing but his crafty old head); ‘will you go for four pence?’

I was so faint and weary that I closed with this offer; and taking the money
out of his claw, not without trembling, went away more hungry and thirsty
than I had ever been, a little before sunset. But at an expense of three pence I
soon refreshed myself completely; and, being in better spirits then, limped
seven miles upon my road.
My bed at night was under another haystack, where I rested comfortably, after having washed my blistered feet in a stream, and dressed them as well as I was able, with some cool leaves. When I took the road again next morning, I found that it lay through a succession of hop-grounds and orchards. It was sufficiently late in the year for the orchards to be ruddy with ripe apples; and in a few places the hop-pickers were already at work. I thought it all extremely beautiful, and made up my mind to sleep among the hops that night: imagining some cheerful companionship in the long perspectives of poles, with the graceful leaves twining round them.

The trampers were worse than ever that day, and inspired me with a dread that is yet quite fresh in my mind. Some of them were most ferocious-looking ruffians, who stared at me as I went by; and stopped, perhaps, and called after me to come back and speak to them, and when I took to my heels, stoned me. I recollect one young fellow—a tinker, I suppose, from his wallet and brazier—who had a woman with him, and who faced about and stared at me thus; and then roared to me in such a tremendous voice to come back, that I halted and looked round.

‘Come here; when you’re called,’ said the tinker, ‘or I’ll rip your young body open.’

I thought it best to go back. As I drew nearer to them, trying to propitiate the tinker by my looks, I observed that the woman had a black eye.

‘Where are you going?’ said the tinker, gripping the bosom of my shirt with his blackened hand.

‘I am going to Dover,’ I said.

‘Where do you come from?’ asked the tinker, giving his hand another turn in my shirt, to hold me more securely.

‘I come from London,’ I said.

‘What lay are you upon?’ asked the tinker. ‘Are you a prig?’

‘N-no,’ I said.

‘Ain’t you, by G—? If you make a brag of your honesty to me,’ said the tinker, ‘I’ll knock your brains out.’
With his disengaged hand he made a menace of striking me, and then looked at me from head to foot.

‘Have you got the price of a pint of beer about you?’ said the tinker. ‘If you have, out with it, afore I take it away!’

I should certainly have produced it, but that I met the woman’s look, and saw her very slightly shake her head, and form ‘No!’ with her lips. ‘I am very poor,’ I said, attempting to smile, ‘and have got no money.’

‘Why, what do you mean?’ said the tinker, looking so sternly at me, that I almost feared he saw the money in my pocket.

‘Sir!’ I stammered.

‘What do you mean,’ said the tinker, ‘by wearing my brother’s silk handkerchief! Give it over here!’ And he had mine off my neck in a moment, and tossed it to the woman.

The woman burst into a fit of laughter, as if she thought this a joke, and tossed it back to me, nodded once, as slightly as before, and made the word ‘Go!’ with her lips. Before I could obey, however, the tinker seized the handkerchief out of my hand with a roughness that threw me away like a feather, and putting it loosely round his own neck, turned upon the woman with an oath, and knocked her down. I never shall forget seeing her fall backward on the hard road, and lie there with her bonnet tumbled off, and her hair all whitened in the dust; nor, when I looked back from a distance, seeing her sitting on the pathway, which was a bank by the roadside, wiping the blood from her face with a corner of her shawl, while he went on ahead.

This adventure frightened me so, that, afterwards, when I saw any of these people coming, I turned back until I could find a hiding-place, where I remained until they had gone out of sight; which happened so often, that I was very seriously delayed. But under this difficulty, as under all the other difficulties of my journey, I seemed to be sustained and led on by my fanciful picture of my mother in her youth, before I came into the world. It always kept me company. It was there, among the hops, when I lay down to sleep; it was with me on my waking in the morning; it went before me all day. I have associated it, ever since, with the sunny street of Canterbury,
dozing as it were in the hot light; and with the sight of its old houses and
gateways, and the stately, grey Cathedral, with the rooks sailing round the
towers. When I came, at last, upon the bare, wide downs near Dover, it
relieved the solitary aspect of the scene with hope; and not until I reached
that first great aim of my journey, and actually set foot in the town itself, on
the sixth day of my flight, did it desert me. But then, strange to say, when I
stood with my ragged shoes, and my dusty, sun-burnt, half-clothed figure, in
the place so long desired, it seemed to vanish like a dream, and to leave me
helpless and dispirited.

I inquired about my aunt among the boatmen first, and received various
answers. One said she lived in the South Foreland Light, and had singed her
whiskers by doing so; another, that she was made fast to the great buoy
outside the harbor, and could only be visited at half-tide; a third, that she
was locked up in Maidstone jail for child-stealing; a fourth, that she
was seen to mount a broom in the last high wind, and make direct for Calais. The
fly-drivers, among whom I inquired next, were equally jocose and equally
disrespectful; and the shopkeepers, not liking my appearance, generally
replied, without hearing what I had to say, that they had got nothing for me.
I felt more miserable and destitute than I had done at any period of my
running away. My money was all gone, I had nothing left to dispose of; I
was hungry, thirsty, and worn out; and seemed as distant from my end as if I
had remained in London.

The morning had worn away in these inquiries, and I was sitting on the step
of an empty shop at a street corner, near the market-place, deliberating upon
wandering towards those other places which had been mentioned, when a
fly-driver, coming by with his carriage, dropped a horsecloth. Something
good-natured in the man’s face, as I handed it up, encouraged me to ask him
if he could tell me where Miss Trotwood lived; though I had asked the
question so often, that it almost died upon my lips.
‘Trotwood,’ said he. ‘Let me see. I know the name, too. Old lady?’
‘Yes,’ I said, ‘rather.’
‘Pretty stiff in the back?’ said he, making himself upright.
‘Yes,’ I said. ‘I should think it very likely.’

‘Carries a bag?’ said he—‘bag with a good deal of room in it—is gruffish,
and comes down upon you, sharp?’
My heart sank within me as I acknowledged the undoubted accuracy of this description.

‘Why then, I tell you what,’ said he. ‘If you go up there,’ pointing with his whip towards the heights, ‘and keep right on till you come to some houses facing the sea, I think you’ll hear of her. My opinion is she won’t stand anything, so here’s a penny for you.’

I accepted the gift thankfully, and bought a loaf with it. Dispatching this refreshment by the way, I went in the direction my friend had indicated, and walked on a good distance without coming to the houses he had mentioned. At length I saw some before me; and approaching them, went into a little shop (it was what we used to call a general shop, at home), and inquired if they could have the goodness to tell me where Miss Trotwood lived. I addressed myself to a man behind the counter, who was weighing some rice for a young woman; but the latter, taking the inquiry to herself, turned round quickly.

‘My mistress?’ she said. ‘What do you want with her, boy?’

‘I want,’ I replied, ‘to speak to her, if you please.’

‘To beg of her, you mean,’ retorted the damsel.

‘No,’ I said, ‘indeed.’ But suddenly remembering that in truth I came for no other purpose, I held my peace in confusion, and felt my face burn.

My aunt’s handmaid, as I supposed she was from what she had said, put her rice in a little basket and walked out of the shop; telling me that I could follow her, if I wanted to know where Miss Trotwood lived. I needed no second permission; though I was by this time in such a state of consternation and agitation that my legs shook under me. I followed the young woman, and we soon came to a very neat little cottage with cheerful bow-windows: in front of it, a small square graveled court or garden full of flowers, carefully tended, and smelling deliciously.

‘This is Miss Trotwood’s,’ said the young woman. ‘Now you know; and that’s all I have got to say.’ With which words she hurried into the house, as if to shake off the responsibility of my appearance; and left me standing at the garden-gate, looking disconsolately over the top of it towards the parlor window, where a muslin curtain partly undrawn in the middle, a large round green screen or fan fastened on to the windowsill, a small table, and a great
chair, suggested to me that my aunt might be at that moment seated in awful state.

My shoes were by this time in a woeful condition. The soles had shed themselves bit by bit, and the upper leathers had broken and burst until the very shape and form of shoes had departed from them. My hat (which had served me for a night-cap, too) was so crushed and bent, that no old battered handleless saucepan on a dunghill need have been ashamed to vie with it. My shirt and trousers, stained with heat, dew, grass, and the Kentish soil on which I had slept—and torn besides—might have frightened the birds from my aunt’s garden, as I stood at the gate. My hair had known no comb or brush since I left London. My face, neck, and hands, from unaccustomed exposure to the air and sun, were burnt to a berry-brown. From head to foot I was powdered almost as white with chalk and dust, as if I had come out of a lime-kiln. In this plight, and with a strong consciousness of it, I waited to introduce myself to, and make my first impression on, my formidable aunt.

The unbroken stillness of the parlor window leading me to infer, after a while, that she was not there, I lifted up my eyes to the window above it, where I saw a florid, pleasant-looking gentleman, with a grey head, who shut up one eye in a grotesque manner, nodded his head at me several times, shook it at me as often, laughed, and went away.

I had been discomposed enough before; but I was so much the more discomposed by this unexpected behavior, that I was on the point of slinking off, to think how I had best proceed, when there came out of the house a lady with her handkerchief tied over her cap, and a pair of gardening gloves on her hands, wearing a gardening pocket like a toll-man’s apron, and carrying a great knife.

I knew her immediately to be Miss Betsey, for she came stalking out of the house exactly as my poor mother had so often described her stalking up our garden at Blunderstone Rookery.

‘Go away!’ said Miss Betsey, shaking her head, and making a distant chop in the air with her knife. ‘Go along! No boys here!’

I watched her, with my heart at my lips, as she marched to a corner of her garden, and stooped to dig up some little root there. Then, without a scrap of
courage, but with a great deal of desperation, I went softly in and stood besides her, touching her with my finger.

‘If you please, ma’am,’ I began.
She started and looked up.
‘If you please, aunt.’
‘Eh?’ exclaimed Miss Betsey, in a tone of amazement I have never heard approached.
‘If you please, aunt, I am your nephew.’
‘Oh, Lord!’ said my aunt. And sat flat down in the garden-path.

III. EXERCISES

A. Language exercises

a. Paraphrase the underlined parts of the following sentences

1. For anything I know, I may have some wild ideas of running all the way to Dover when I gave up the pursuit of the young man with the donkey cart.
2. I sat down on a door-step, quite spent and exhausted with the efforts I have already made.
3. I trudged on miserably, though as fast as I could until I happened to pass a little shop.
4. My late experience suggested to me that my selling the waistcoat might be a means of keeping off the wolf for a little while.
5. A plan had occurred to me passing the night which I was going to carry into execution.
6. It cost me some trouble to find out Salem House but I found it.
7. I lay down again and slept though with the knowledge in my sleep that it was cold.
8. I had not sufficient confidence in my friend Trades.
9. At least, I found one shop that I thought looked promising.
10. The boy connecting me with the establishment on account of the patience and the perseverance I had, pelt me all day.
11. When I took the road again next morning I found that it lay through an orchard.
12. The tramper called after me to come back and speak to them and when I took to my heel, stoned me.
13. “Have you got the price of a pint of beer about you” asked the tinker.
14. I inquired about my aunt among the boatmen first and received various answers.
15. The morning had worn away with these inquiries.
16. I accepted the money thankfully, and bought a loaf with it. Dispatching this refreshment by the way, I went to the direction my friend had indicated.
17. My hair had known of no comb or brush since I left London.
18. My heart sank within me when I heard the news.
19. His questions were in reference to my appearance.
20. I couldn’t keep pace with him.

b. What adjectives are connected with the following words:


c. What nouns are connected with the following words:


d. Connect each group of words in List I with List II. Show the connection by the describing or explaining use of the objects in List II.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List I</th>
<th>List II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>House</td>
<td>Novel, essay, autobiography, scripture, treasure, price, pence, coin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Dew, rain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brushing</td>
<td>Spade, pick, chisel, hammer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money</td>
<td>Chamber, cabinet, cottage, hut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tool</td>
<td>Jacket, waist, handkerchief, shirt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Collar, shawl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>Twig, branch, chunk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothes</td>
<td>Brush, comb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm</td>
<td>Court, palace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Flower</th>
<th>Coach, cab, cart, ticket, booking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Earth</td>
<td>Haystack, orchard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tree</td>
<td>Chalk, clay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lily, blue bell</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

e. Make more sentences after this model:

1. It’s necessary to practice everyday.
2. Practicing everyday is necessary.
3. It makes Jim tired to work all day long.
4. It frightens Barbara to be alone.
5. It annoys Mrs. Hasting to hear people talk.
6. It makes me happy to win the contest.
7. It pleases the cat to get fish for dinner.
8. It requires time and effort to learn English.
9. It isn’t safe to drive John’s car.

B. Exercises for literary appreciation

a. Questions for comprehension

1. What did David decided to do?
2. In what condition did he find himself when he started the journey?
3. What did David do to raise his money?
4. How did David make the bargain with Mr. Dolloby?
5. What feelings and thoughts did he have as he slept outside his old school?
6. What did David do at Chatham? Where did he want to sell his jacket?
7. How did he sell the jacket?
8. Who did David meet on the way? What did the tinker do to David?
9. Why did he feel miserable when he reached Dover?
10. How did he find the way to his aunt’s house?
11. Why was he ashamed to introduce himself?
12. How was his aunt described?
13. What did the hand-maid and Miss Trotwood think of David at first?
14. How was the aunt when she heard David’s words?

b. Literary appreciation

*Answer these suggested key questions*

1. What are your first impressions when you read the extract?
2. The story is written in the first person “I”. What is the advantage of using the first person’s point of view?
3. What do you think are achievements of Dickens in this passage: the power of description? The analysis of human mind? And the using of language?
4. What do you think about Dickens’ style?
5. In this short passage, you can see Dickens two times describing the shopkeepers. What is his main method in describing the first shop-keeper and what about the second one?
6. You can see very vividly the two shop-keeper described here! Why? Why they are so living and credible?
7. Let’s read the sentences from: “Mr. Dolloby…I buttoned my jacket. It was not much”. Why does Dickens use almost all the short and simple sentences in this passage? What effects do they have upon the readers’ imagination?
8. David is described as a courageous, determined, strong-willed, but sentimental boy. Can you prove this?
9. What examples can be given of his determination and endurance, and his ability to meet difficult situations?
10. From the description of David, what can you say about Dickens’ attitude towards his character?
11. Besides showing us the life of David Copperfield what does Dickens want to say to us through that story?
12. You have read “David Copperfield” in the Vietnamese translation. What are your general impressions about the book? What do you think Dickens want to shoe us in this story?

IV. DISCUSSION

1. Explain the proverb: “where there is a will, there is a way”
2. Is Dickens unjust in describing shopkeepers? What can you say about the shopkeepers, the small traders from your own experience?
3. Why do you say “Bringing up and educating children is the duty of not only parents but of the whole society.”?

V. TOPIC FOR WRITING

1. David Copperfield is a courageous, sentimental boy. Can you prove this from above this text?
2. From “David Copperfield”, prove that Dickens is a writer with profound humanism.

UNIT SEVEN

QUALITY

(By John Galsworthy)

I. INTRODUCTION

John Galsworthy was born at Croydon, Surrey, and Devonshire in August 1867. He came from a well-to-do bourgeois family. His father was a rich lawyer, and he wanted his son to follow the same career. John studied law at Oxford, but he was more interested in literature than law. Probably due to this fact he gave up his practice a year after graduation and went traveling all over the world.

Though the profession of lawyer was considered to be more honorable and more profitable than that of a writer, he was ready to give up law for literature. His cherished desire was to expose all the evil of society and to reveal the truth forgive and he hoped that the profession of a writer would help him to realize his life-long dream.

In the field of literature, he was not only a novelist, but also a short-story writer and essayist taken together. His works give the most complete and critical picture of English bourgeois society at the beginning of the 20th century.

John Galsworthy may be said to be one of the last representatives of Critical Realism in English literature. The author deals with the contemporary social problems. He is critical of injustice, tyranny and all the evils of life, especially the evils of Capitalism. But his criticism is not destructive: he himself was too much a member of the privileged classes to wish to rebuild the world he lived in. he had no conscious desire to change the existing society fundamentally. His characters are mostly of the upper-middle class and the aristocracy with which he was wholly familiar. However, his characters of the proletarians are not less vivid and well-observed. Unlike the decadent writers of the period who wanted to escape from reality into the world of dream and proclaimed the theory of “Art for art’s sake”,
Galsworthy tried to receive the realistic traditions of his predecessors, Dickens and Thackeray. Though his criticism is not so acute as that of Dickens and his satire is much less sharp than Thackeray’s, he is justly considered to be one of the greatest realists of his time. His mastery as a writer lies in his keen criticism of national prejudice, of capitalism, his exciting plots and observation of life and characters.

In the old type of short-story, the author must introduce his characters and the scene briefly, vividly. In the body of the story, the readers see the characters perform and the plot rises step by step to climax. This climax has to come near the end of the story with the untangling of the problem.

The modern technique in writing short stories has a little difference. It is usually the direct technique, and the subject matter is limited to what the character sees, hears, feels and does. There is little description and the reader must supply the details of time, place and situation. We judge the character indirectly by what he says and does. Galsworthy’s is one of the modern types of short story.

Many present-day stories may be called “narrative essays” – portraying some seemingly ordinary situation, but doing it in such a way as to express an idea or mood of the author or to reveal some interesting character trait. You will see through the following short story what Galsworthy wants to say. The time he was writing was also the time machines and quick, cheap manufacture became a prominent factor of our civilization. To him, it seems that something fine and valuable is disappearing from the world. And his story gives us a glimpse of what we are losing. It is a simple story, just a series of purchases from a shoe-maker, but it has a deep gravity behind it.

II. TEXT

I knew him from the days of my extreme youth, because he made my father’s boots; inhabiting with his elder brother two little shops led into one in a small bystreet, now no more, but then most fashionably placed in the West End.

That tenement had a certain quite distinction: there was no sign upon his face that he made for any of the Royal family – merely his own German name of Gessler Brothers, and in the window a few pairs of boots. I
remembered that it always troubled me to account for these unvarying boots in the window, for he made only what was ordered, reaching nothing down, and it seemed inconceivable that what he made could ever fail to fit. Had he bought them to put there? That too seemed unconceivable. He would never tolerate in the house leather in which he had not worked himself. Besides, they were too beautiful – the pair of pumps, so expressively slim, the patent leathers with cloth tops, making water come in to one’s mouth, the tall brown riding boots with marvelously sooty glow, as if though new, they had been worn a hundred years. Those pairs could only have been made by one who saw before him the Soul of Boot – so truly were they prototype incarnating the very spirit of all footgear.

These thoughts, of course, came to me later, though even when I was promoted to him, at the age of fourteen, some inkling haunted me of the dignity of himself and his brother. For, to make boots – such boots as he made – seemed to me then, and still seems to me mysterious and wonderful.

I remembered well my shy remark one day, while stretching out to him my youthful foot.

“Isn’t it awfully hard to do, Mr. Gessler?”

And his answer given with a sudden smile from out of the sardonic redness of his beard: “Id is an Ardt!”

Himself, he was a little as if made from leather, with his yellow crinkly reddish hair and beard, and neat folds slanting down his cheeks to the corners of his mouth, and his guttural and one-toned voice, for leather is a sardonic substance and stiff and slow of purpose. And that was the character of his face, save that his eyes, which were gray-blue, had in them the simple gravity of one secretly possessed by ideal. His elder brother was so like him – though watery, paler in every way, with a great industry – that sometimes in early days I was not quite sure of him until the interview was over. Then I knew that it was he if the words “I will ask my brudder” had not been spoken and that if they had, it was his elder brother.

When one grew old and wild and ran up bills, one somehow never ran them up with Gassler Brothers. It would not have seemed becoming to go in there and stretch out one’s foot to that blue iron-spectacled glance, owing him for
more than – say – two pairs, just the comfortable reassurance that none was still his client.

For it was not possible to go to him very often – his boots lasted terribly, having something beyond the temporary, some, as it was, essence of boot stitched into them.

One went in, not as into most shops, in the mood of: “please serve me, and let me go!” but restfully as one entered a church and sitting on the single wooden chair, waited, for there was never anybody there. Soon over the top edge of that sort of well rather dark and smelling soothingly of leather – which formed the shop there would be seen his face or that of his elder brother peering down. A guttural sound, and the tip – tap of bast slipper beating the narrow wooden stairs. And he would stand before one without coat, a little bent, in leather apron with sleeves turned backed, blinking – as if awaken from some dream of boots, or like an owl in the daylight, disturbed at this interruption.

And I would say: “How do you do Mr. Gessler? Could you make me a pair of Russian leather boots?”

Without a word, he would leave me, retiring whence he came, or into the other portion of the shop and I would continue to rest in the wooden chair, inhaling the incense of his trade. Soon he would come back, holding in his thin, veined hand a piece of gold-brown leather. With eyes fixed on it he would remark: “What a beautiful biece!” When I, too, had admired it, he would speak again: “when do you wand dem?”. And I would answer: “Oh! As soon as you conveniently can”. And he would say: “Tomorrow fortnight?” Or if it was his elder brother: “I will ask my brudder!”

Then I would murmur: “Thank you! Good morning, Mr. Gessler”. “Good morning!” he would reply, still looking at the leather in his hand, and as I moved to the door, I would hear the tip-tap of his bast slippers retiring him, up the stairs, to his dream of boots. But if it were new kind of footgear that he had not yet made me, then indeed he would observe ceremony – divesting me of my boot and holding it long in his hand, looking at it with eyes at once critical and loving, as if recalling the glow with which he had created it, and rebuking the way in which one had disorganized this masterpiece. Then placing my foot on a piece of paper, he would two or three time tickle the
outer edge with a pencil and pass his nervous gingers over my toes, feeling himself into the heart of my requirements.

I cannot forget that day on which occasion to say to him: “Mr. Gessler, that last pair of town walking boots creaked, you know.”

He looked at me for a time without replying as if expecting me to withdraw or qualify the statement then said:

“Id shouldn’t ev greaked”.
“It did, I’m afraid”.
“You got them wed before dey found demselves?”
“I don’t think so”.

At that he lowered his eyes, as if hunting for memory of these boots and I felt sorry I had mentioned this grave thing.

“Zend dem back!” he said: “I will look at them”.

A feeling of compassion for my creaking boots surged up to me so well could I imagine the sorrowful long curiosity of regard which he would bend on them.

“Zome boods” he said slowly. “Are bad from birdt. If I can do nodding wid them, I dake dem of your bill”.

Once (once only) I went absent-mindedly into his shop in a pair of boots I bought in an emergency at some large’s firm’s. he tool my older without showing me any leather, and I could feel his eyes penetrating the inferior integument of my boot. At last he said:

“Dose are nod my boods”

The tone was not one of anger, or of sorrow, not even of contempt, but there was in it something quiet that froze the blood. He put his hand down and presses a finger on the place where the left boot, endeavoring to be fashionable, was not quite comfortable.

“Id urds you dere”, he said: “Dose big virms ve no self-respect. Drash!”. And then, as if something had given way within him he spoke long and
bitterly. It was the only time I ever heard him discuss the conditions and hardships of his trade.

“Dey get id all” he said, “Dey get it by adverdisement, not by work. Dey dake id awy from us, who lofe our boods. Id gomes to this presently I haf no work. Every year id gets less – you will see”. And looking at his lined face I saw things I had never noticed before, bitter things and bitter struggle and what a lot of gray hair there seemed suddenly in his red beard!

As best as I could, I explained the circumstances of the purchase of those ill-omened boots. But his face and voice made so deep an impression that during the next few minutes I ordered many pairs. Nemesis fell! They lasted more terribly than ever. And I was not able conscientiously to go to him for nearly two years.

When at last I went I was supposed to find that outside one of the two little windows of his shop another name was painted also that of a boot maker – making, of course for the Royal Family. The old familiar boots, no longer in dignified isolation, were huddled in the single window. Inside, the now contracted well of the one little shop was more scented and darker than ever. And it was longer than usual too, before a face peered down, and the tip-tap of the bast slippers began. At last he stood before me, and gazing through those rusty iron spectacles, said:

“Mr……….. isn’t id?”

“Ah! Mr. Gasaler” I stammered, “but your boots are really too good, you know! See, these are quite decent still”. And I stretched out to him my foot. He looked at it.

“Yes”, he said, “people to nod wand good boot, it seems”

To get away from his reproachful eyes and voice I hastily remarked: “What have you done to your shop?”

He answered quietly: “Id is too expensif. Do you wand some boods?”

I ordered three pairs, though I had only wanted two, and quickly left. I had, I do not know quite what, feeling or being part, in his mind of a conspiracy against him; or mot perhaps so much against him as against his idea of boot.
One do not, I suppose, care to feel like that for it was again many months before my next visit to his shop, paid I remembered, with the feeling “Oh! Well, I can’t leave the old boy – so here goes! Perhaps it’ll be his elder brother!”

For his elder brother, I knew, had not character enough to reproach me, even dumbly.

And, to my belief, in the shop there did appear to be his elder brother, handling a piece of leather.

“Well, Mr. Gessler” I said, “how are you?”
He came closer and peered at me
“I am breddy well” he said slowly “but my older brudder is dead”.

And I saw that it was indeed himself – but how aged and worn. And never before had I heard him mention his brother. Much shocked, I murmured: “Oh! I am sorry!”

“Yes”, he answered, “he was a good man, he made a good boot but he is dead”. And he touch the top of his head, where the hair had suddenly gone as thin as it had been on that of his brother, to indicate, I suppose, the cause of death. “He could nod get over losing the order shop. Do you want any boods?” and he held up the leather in his hand. “I had a beautiful biece”.

I ordered several pairs. It was very long before they came but they were better than ever. One simply could not wear them out. And soon after that I went abroad.

It was over a year before I was again in London and the first shop I went to was my old friend’s. I had left a man of sixty, I came back to one of seventy-five pinched and worn and tremendous who genuinely, this time, did not at first know me.

“Oh! Mr. Gessler” I said, sick at heart, “how splendid your boots are! See, I’ve been wearing this pair nearly all the time I’ve been abroad; and they are not half worn out, are they?
He looked long at my boots – a pair of Russian leather, and his face seemed
to regain steadiness. Putting his hand on my step he said:

“Do they vid you here? I’ad drouble wid dat bair, I remember”. I assured
him that they had fitted beautifully.

“Do you wand any boods?” he said “I can make dem quickly, id is a slack
dime”.

I answered: “Please! Please! I want boots all around – every kind!”

“I will make a vresh model. Your food must be bigger”. And with utter
slowness, he traced round my foot, and felt my toes, only one looking up to
say:

“Did I dell you my brudder was dead?”

To watch him was painful, so feeble had he grown; I was glad to get away.

I had given those boots up, when one evening they came. Opening the
parcel, I set four pairs out in a row. Only by one I tried them on. There was
no doubt about it. In shape and fit, in finish and quality of leather, they were
the best he had ever made me. And in the mouth of one of the town walking
boots I found his bill. The amount was the same as usual, but it gave me
quite a shock. He had never before sent it in till quarter day I flew
downstairs, and wrote a cheque, and post it at once with my own hand.

A week later, passing the little street, I thought I would go in and tell him
how splendidly the new boots fitted. But when I came to where his shop had
been, his name was gone. Still there, in the window, were the slim pumps,
the patent leather with cloths top, and the sooty riding boots.

I went in, very much disturbed. In the two little shops again made into one
was a young man with an English face.

“Mr. Gessler in?” I said.

He gave me a strange, ingratiating look.
“No, sir” he said, “no. but we can attend to anything with pleasure. We’ve taken the shop over. You’ve seen our name, no doubt, next door. We make for some very good people”.

“Yes, yes” I said, “but Mr. Gessler?”
“Oh!” he answered, “dead”

“Dead! But…but I only received these boots from him last Wednesday week”

“Ah!” he said: “A shockin’ go. Poor old man starved himself”

“Good God”

“Slow starvation, the doctor called it! You see he went to work in such a way! Would keep the shop on; wouldn’t have a soul touch his boots except himself. When he got an order, it took him such a time. People wouldn’t wait. He lost everybody. And there he’d sit, going on and on – I will say that for him – not a man in London makes a better boot! But look at the competition! He never advertised! Would have the best leather, too, and do it all himself. Well, there it is. What could you expect with his ideas?”

“But starvation!”

“That may be a bit flowery, as the sayin’ is. But I know myself he was sittin’ over his boots days and nights to the very last. You see, I used to watch him. Never gave ‘imself time to eat; never had a penny in the house. All went in rent and leather. How he lived so long I don’t know. He regularly let his fire go out. He was a character. But he made good boots”.

“Yes” I said: “He made good boots”.

And I turned and went out quickly. For I do not want that youth to know that I could hardly see.

III. EXERCISES

A. Exercises for language understanding:

a. Paraphrase the underlined part of the following sentences:
1. He inhabited with his elder brother two little shops led into one.
2. It seemed inconceivable what he made could ever fail to fit.
3. The beautiful pairs of boots on the shop windows made water com into one’s mouth.
4. I was not quite sure of him until the interview was over.
5. When one grew old and wild and run up bills one somehow never ran them up with the Gesslers.
6. She had no occasion to interrupt his speech.
7. I went absent-mindedly into his shop in a pair of boots bought in an emergency.
8. As best as I could I explained the circumstances of purchase of those ill-omened boots.
9. He could not get over losing the other shop.
10. He said that he could make the boots quickly because it was a slack time.
11. The shopkeeper said to the customer: “We can attend to anything with pleasure”.
12. The English shoe-maker had taken the shop over.
13. He gave me a strange, ingratiating look.

b. Give the corresponding adverbs from the following adjectives:


c. Give the synonyms of the following words as they are used in the sentences. State the difference between them, if possible.

1. I know him from the day of my extreme youth.
2. That tenement has a certain quiet distinction.
3. It always troubled me to account for those unvarying boots in the window.
4. He would never have tolerated in the house leather on which he had no worked himself.
5. Making boots seemed to me mysterious and wonderful.
6. His brother was so very like him, with a great industry.
7. It could not have seemed becoming to ask a lady such question.
8. That house is only for temporary use.
9. Once I went absent-mindedly into his shop.
10. He had become so feeble and weak and worn away.

d. **Distinguish between the following:**

1. Skeptic – Stoic
2. Ally – Mate
4. Sample – Extract
5. Species – Type
6. Contemporary – Currency
7. Memorable – Notable
8. Glimpse – View
9. Prominent – Predominant

e. **What abstract nouns are connected or formed from the following words:**


B. **Exercises for literary appreciation:**

a. **Questions for comprehension:**

1. What nationality was the Gesslers?
2. What was their profession? How did they advertise their trade?
3. How did they make boots and shoes?
4. Who usually served the customers?
5. What happened to the Gesslers and their trade?
6. How did the author feel when he met the two brothers? And when he brought into their shop one pair of boots that he bought from a big firm?
7. Did the Gesslers compromise with the new rising mass production? What did they maintain? Who succeeded in the competition?
8. Why did the elder Gessler die? How was the survival Gessler after his brother’s death?
9. What feelings did the author have when he heard that shocked news?
10. Why did Gasworthy choose “Quality” as the title of his short story?

**b. Questions for literary appreciation**

*Answer the following questions:*

1. What are your general impressions about the story?
2. What is the theme of the story?
3. What is the plot of the story? How does the plot develop? Can you describe the developing line of the plot according to:
   - Complication
   - Conflict
   - Climax
   - Denouement?
4. Again in the story you see the author use the first person point of view. What effects does it bring to the readers?
5. How are the characters (the Gesslers) described in the story?
6. In describing the Gesslers, Galsworthy uses the technique of comparison and symbolism. Prove this. What is the effect of these techniques?
7. Prove that the author uses the dramatic technique in the story. Why does he use this technique?
8. The panorama and scene in this story are manifold and suggestive. Can you prove this?
9. The description of the Gesslers’ environment very vivid and it helps create the tone and atmosphere of the story. Prove this.
10. Select and discuss the passages which portray the Gesslers attitude towards their work. Would it be true to say that the Gesslers’ life was a complete failure?
11. Read the description of the Gesslers on the story, study the effectiveness of the following adjectives:
   - “Crinkly reddish hair”, “guttural one toned voice”.
   - “Simple gravity of one possessed by an ideal…”
   How does the “sardonic substance of leather” summarize the character of the Gesslers?
12. State out the meaning of the story; the part and the whole meaning?
13. What do you think is the idea of the author wants to say to us?

**IV. DISCUSSION**
1. What catastrophe did the industrial Revolution bring to the life of the Gesslers? How does the mass production affect the individual craftsmen today? Do you think that most of them still take pride in their craftsmanship? Why and why not?
2. Do you agree with Galsworthy’s implied criticism of mass production? Why and why not?

V. TOPICS FOR WRITING:

1. Summarize the short story in about 250 words.
2. Quality and Quantity are always two disagreeable requirements in production. Do you agree with this remark?

REFERENCES


