

THE LIVERPOOL INSTITUTE

Margaret Bryce Smith Scholarships, 1954

ENGLISH PAPER

TIME ALLOWED—2 HOURS

Answer the questions in the order in which they appear.

1. Read the following passage **carefully**, and then answer the questions underneath:

I do not know whether he was a mandarin bound for the capital of the province, or some student travelling to a seat of learning, nor what the reason that delayed him in the most miserable of all the miserable inns in China. Perhaps one or other of his bearers, hidden somewhere to smoke a pipe of opium, could not be found. Perhaps a storm of torrential rain had held him for an hour an unwilling prisoner. 5

The room was so low that you could easily touch the rafters with your hand. The mud walls were covered with dirty whitewash, here and there worn away, and all round on wooden pallets were straw beds for the coolies who were the inn's habitual guests. The sun alone enabled you to support the melancholy squalor. It shone through the latticed window, a beam of golden light, and threw on the trodden earth 10 of the floor a pattern of an intricate and splendid richness.

And here to pass an idle moment he had taken his stone tablet and mixing a little water with the stick of ink which he rubbed in it, seized the fine brush with which he could execute the beautiful Chinese writing, and with a bold hand he drew on the wall a branch of plum-blossom and a bird perched on it. It was done very lightly, 15 but with an admirable ease; I know not what happy chance guided the artist's touch, for the bird was all a-quiver with life and the plum-blossoms were tremulous on their stalks. The soft airs of spring blew through the sketch into that sordid chamber, and for the beating of a pulse you were in touch with Heaven.

(a) Consider carefully the subject of this passage. Is it, for instance, 'A Chinese Inn'? Choose a title for the passage, and explain why you have chosen it.

(b) What would be the effect of placing the first paragraph last, after what is here the third paragraph?

(c) From which words in the first paragraph does the second paragraph grow?

(d) What phrase of two words in the second paragraph best sums up the general impression conveyed by the whole paragraph?

(e) The writer says that the picture 'was done very lightly' (line 15). (i) Find any groups of words before this which also describe how the artist undertook the painting of the picture. (ii) In a few words of your own sum up what is meant by them all.

(f) Describe in your own words the striking quality of the picture.

(g) Explain in your own words the effect of the picture upon the writer in those surroundings.

(h) How do you know that the writer never met the artist? (Give all the reasons you can find.)

2. Write between twenty-five and thirty-five lines on **one** of the following subjects:

(a) Pirates.

(b) How to play the game of ——. (Choose any game you like.)

(c) An Unexpected Journey.

(d) Washing Day.

(e) Our Neighbours.

(f) 'How to get on with human beings.' (A cat advises her kittens.)

TURN OVER.

3. Read the following poem **carefully**, and then answer the questions underneath :

Snow in the Suburbs.

Every branch big with it,
Bent every twig with it;
Every fork like a white web-foot;
Every street and pavement mute:
Some flakes have lost their way, and grope back upward, when 5
Meeting those meandering down they turn and descend again.
The palings are glued together like a wall,
And there is no waft of wind with the fleecy fall.
A sparrow enters the tree,
Whereupon immediately 10
A snow-lump thrice his own slight size
Descends on him and showers his head and eyes,
And overturns him,
And near inurns him,
And lights on a nether twig, when its brush 15
Starts off a volley of other lodging lumps with a rush.
The steps are a blanched slope,
Up which, with feeble hope,
A black cat comes, wide-eyed and thin;
And we take him in. (THOMAS HARDY.) 20

- (a) Explain **carefully** what is meant by (i) the third line, and (ii) the seventh line.
- (b) Why does the poet describe streets and pavements as 'mute'?
- (c) Explain **carefully** the meaning of (i) 'meandering' (line 6), (ii) 'waft' (line 8), (iii) 'fleecy' (line 8), and (iv) 'blanched slope' (line 17).
- (d) Describe **fully, in your own words**, all that the poet describes in lines 9-16.

4. Read the following passage **carefully**, and then answer the questions underneath :

'Now,' said Mrs. Joe, unwrapping herself with haste and excitement, and throwing her bonnet back on her shoulders: 'if this boy an't grateful this night, he never will be.'

I looked as grateful as any boy possibly could, who was wholly uninformed why he ought to assume that expression.

'It's only to be hoped,' said my sister, 'that he won't be kidnapped. But I have my fears.'

'She an't in that line, Mum,' said Mr. Pumblechook. 'She knows better.'

She? I looked at Joe, making the motion with my lips and eyebrows, 'She?' Joe looked at me, making the motion with *his* lips and eyebrows, 'She?' My sister catching her husband in the act, he drew the back of his hand across his nose with his usual conciliatory air on such occasions, and looked at her.

'Well?' said my sister, in her snappish way. 'What are you staring at? Is the house afire?'

'Some individual,' Joe politely hinted, 'mentioned—she.'

'And she is a she, I suppose?' said my sister. 'Unless you call Miss Havisham a he. And I doubt if even you'll go so far as that.'

'Miss Havisham, up town?' Joe asked his wife.

'Is there any Miss Havisham down town?' returned my sister. 'She wants this boy to go and play there. And of course he's going. And he had better play there,' said my sister, shaking her head at me as an encouragement to be extremely light and sportive, 'or I'll work him.'

NOTE. **Answer these questions as fully as you can, giving in each case all the reasons you have found for your answer.**

- (a) What sort of a person is Mrs. Joe?
(b) How does Joe behave towards her?
(c) What sort of a person is Joe?
(d) What does his wife think of him?
(e) What are the feelings of the boy towards Mrs. Joe?
(f) What are the feelings of the boy towards Joe?

5. A sea-gull flying over the River Mersey hears a conversation between a ferry-boat and an ocean liner. Tell the story in the sea-gull's own words.