

## Section II

Total time—2 hours

### Question 1

(Suggested time 40 minutes. This questions counts as one-third of the total score for Section II.)

In the short story “Reginald’s Choir Treat” Saki contrasts two philosophies of life. In a well-organized essay, identify and discuss these two views and which of them the reader can infer is preferred by the narrator. Develop your discussion referring to at least two elements of the writer’s craft such as irony, contrast, narration, dialogue, allusion, and tone.

#### Reginald’s Choir Treat by Saki

“Never,” wrote Reginald to his most darling friend, “be a pioneer. It’s the Early Christian that gets the fattest lion.”

Reginald, in his way, was a pioneer.

None of the rest of his family had anything approaching Titian hair or a sense of humour, and they used primroses as a table decoration. 5

It follows that they never understood Reginald, who came down late to breakfast, and nibbled toast, and said disrespectful things about the universe. The family ate porridge, and believed in everything, even the weather forecast.

Therefore the family was relieved when the vicar’s daughter undertook the reformation of Reginald. Her name was Anabel; it was the vicar’s one extravagance. Anabel was accounted a beauty and intellectually gifted: she never played tennis, and was reputed to have read Maeterlinck’s “Life of a Bee.” If you abstain from tennis and read Maeterlinck in a small country village, you are of necessity intellectual. Also she had been twice to Fecamp to pick up a good French accent from the Americans staying there; consequently she had a knowledge of the world which might be considered useful in dealings with a worldling. 10 15

Hence the congratulations in the family when Anabel undertook the reformation of the wayward member.

Anabel commenced operations by asking her unsuspecting pupil to tea in the vicarage garden; she believed in the healthy influence of natural surroundings, never having been in Sicily, where things are different. 20

And like every woman who has ever preached repentance to unregenerate youth, she dwelt on the sin of an empty life, which always seems so much more scandalous in the country, where people rise early to see if a new strawberry has happened during the night.

Reginald recalled the lilies of the field, “which simply sat and looked beautiful, and defied competition.” 25

“But that is not an example for us to follow,” gasped Anabel.

“Unfortunately, we can’t afford to. You don’t know what a world of trouble I take in trying to rival the lilies in their artistic simplicity.”

“You are really indecently vain in your appearance. A good life is infinitely preferable to good looks.” 30

“You agree with me that the two are incompatible. I always say beauty is only skin deep.”

Anabel began to realize that the battle is not always to the strong-minded. With the immemorial resource of her sex, she abandoned the frontal attack and laid stress on her unassisted labours in parish work, her mental loneliness, her discouragements—and at the right moment she produced strawberries and cream. Reginald was obviously affected by the latter, and when his preceptress suggested that he might begin the strenuous life by helping her to supervise the annual outing of the bucolic infants who composed the local choir, his eyes shone with the dangerous enthusiasm of a convert. 35

Reginald entered on the strenuous life alone, as far as Anabel was concerned. The most virtuous women are not proof against damp grass, and Anabel kept to her bed with a cold. Reginald called it a dispensation; it had been the dream of his life to stage-manage a choir outing. With strategic insight, he led his shy, bullet-headed charges to the nearest woodland stream and allowed them to bathe; then he seated himself on the discarded garments and discoursed on their immediate future, which, he decreed, was to embrace a Bacchanalian procession through the village. Forethought had provided the occasion with a supply of tin whistles, but the introduction of a he-goat from a neighbouring orchard was a brilliant afterthought. Properly, Reginald explained, there should have been an outfit of panther skins; as it was, those who had spotted handkerchiefs were allowed to wear them, which they did with thankfulness. Reginald recognized the impossibility in the time at his disposal, of teaching his shivering neophytes a chant in honour of Bacchus, so he started them off with a more familiar, if less appropriate, temperance hymn. After all, he said, it is the spirit of the thing that counts. Following the etiquette of dramatic authors on first nights, he remained discreetly in the background while the procession, with extreme diffidence and the goat, wound its way lugubriously towards the village. The singing had died down long before the main street was reached, but the miserable wailing of pipes brought the inhabitants to their doors. Reginald said he had seen something like it in pictures; the villagers had seen nothing like it in their lives, and remarked as much freely.

Reginald's family never forgave him. They had no sense of humour.

Question 2

(Suggested time 40 minutes. This question counts as one-third of the total score for Section II.)

In "The Tables Turned" by William Wordsworth, the speaker compares the natural world to the artificial world of David, About His Education" by Thomas Gray. In a sense, both poems address the same issue: the relationship between nature and education. You may wish to compare and contrast the two poems, focusing on their themes, structure, and imagery.	
Up! up! my friend, and you Or surely you'll grow weary Up! up! my friend, and you Why all this toil and sorrow Down to a wondrous world of ready wealth, Where peace and hearts to bless,— Up! up! my friend, and you Why all this toil and sorrow Down to a wondrous world of ready wealth, Where peace and hearts to bless,— Up! up! my friend, and you Why all this toil and sorrow Down to a wondrous world of ready wealth, Where peace and hearts to bless,—	8
The sun, above the mountains A freshening lustre Through all the long, green meads has spread, His first sweet evening yellow.	8
Books! 'tis a dull and endless strife: Come, hear the woodland linnet, How sweet his music! on my life, There's more of wisdom in it.	12
And hark! how blithe the throstle sings! He, too, is no mean preacher: Come forth into the light of things, Let Nature be your teacher.	16
	Sweet is the lore which Nature brings; Our meddling intellect Misshapes the beauteous forms of things,— We murder to dissect.  Enough of Science and of Art; Close up those barren leaves; Come forth, and bring with you a heart That watches and receives.